INDICATORS AND INFLUENCES OF GRADE SIX STUDENTS

BONDING WITH SCHOOL

by

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing concern among Canadians regarding early withdrawal from school. Finn(1989) addresses this issue by presenting a developmental model of identification and participation with school-related goals that might explain students' early withdrawal or completion of high school. In the past, there has been little examination of these variables and their influences on students in elementary grades. This study examines identification indicators to see whether they correlate with participation indicators. In addition, this study examines the experiences of elementary-aged students to provide a deeper understanding of how school and family influences affect students.

Two hundred and fourteen grade six students from the Abbotsford School District in British Columbia participated by answering a Five-point Likert Scale Identification Questionnaire and 14 grade six students participated in an interview. Data were also gathered from students' Permanent Record Cards and Canadian Achievement Tests. Findings show that identification with school correlates with the participation indicator,

teacher-assigned marks. The qualitative analysis of student interviews

shows that parent and teacher interaction and communication with students have an

impact on students' view of school. Findings are discussed in terms of implications for

Finn's model, and directions for future research.

To my husband,

Thank you for believing in me.

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Chapter One

Background

Introduction

Canadians are becoming aware that education is vital to our economic and social success (Lafluer, 1992). As a result, there is increased public concern regarding dropouts. This concern, which continues to grow despite falling dropout rates, is largely due to economic reasons (Rumberger, 1987). According to the Conference Board of Canada, "Canadian society will lose more than four billion over the working lifetime of the nearly 137,000 individuals who withdraw" (Lafluer, 1992, p.1). This is a staggering amount of money considering the figure of four billion dollars represents one year of monetary loss to Canadians.

When an individual drops out of secondary school, he/she can lose an average of between $107,000 and $139,000 in wages over a lifetime. The financial cost of dropping out can be high, but equally high are the personal costs. A person who withdraws from secondary school can experience higher unemployment, reduced job opportunities, decreased mobility, and lower rates of personal health and longevity (Lafluer, 1992). These personal losses can impact some of the social costs to Canadian taxpayers.

Another immediate economic and social concern of Canadians is that of meeting the increasing need for technical knowledge and skills which will enable the country to

remain competitive in the global economy. Statistics Canada (1989) predicts 65% of new jobs created between the years 1990 and 2000 will require over twelve years of education. Therefore, individuals who withdraw will find it even more difficult in the future to find employment. Because of these concerns, there is a flurry of research that focuses on identification of dropouts and prevention of early withdrawal from school. Despite this research the solutions to the dropout problem are far from clear.

Much of the research examines the correlates of dropping out----socioeconomic status, race, absenteeism, ability, school performance and family related factors (Finn, 1989). An education system cannot change correlates like socioeconomic status or race. In addition, many studies examining the dropout phenomenon are often retrospective in nature and describe the dropout at an endpoint---when he/she leaves school. At this point it is too late to understand what early factors led to the student's final decision. At a deeper level, research in the past did not recognize that withdrawal from school is a process rather than a single act. Although correlates can be detected at an early age (Lloyd, 1978), they fail to answer the question: What causes an individual to drop out of school early? Understanding the process that led to this decision is important so the potential dropout can be identified at an early age. When this is done, development of prevention strategies can also be commenced at an early age.

Developmental Theories of Early Withdrawal From School

What leads one individual to drop out and not another? This question implies a

difference in the educational experience of a student who graduates and that of one who does not graduate. Two models focusing on the individual's educational experiences and proposing developmental process of dropping out of school that appear in the literature (Finn, 1989) are: (1) frustration/self-esteem model and (2) participation/identification model.

Berstein and Rulo (1976) describe the frustration/self-esteem process in cyclic terms. It begins with poor school performance which lowers the student's self-esteem. Low self-esteem leads the student to engage in problem behavior. The problem behavior limits the student's academic achievement and becomes the focus of attention, both for the student and the teacher, escalating until the student leaves the school system. The link between self-esteem and academic failure has been confirmed by many studies (Byrne, 1984). These studies are base on correlation and assume that the direction of poor academic performance lowers self-esteem (Finn, 1989). However, the model is severely weakened by its post hoc affirmation, since the student's early withdrawal from school is the point at which the application of the model is affirmed. It is impossible to develop identification and prevention strategies from a cycle of behavior that is acknowledged only after the irreparable damage of failure has been done. Thus one must question the practicality of a model whose premise is based on an "after fact."

Conversely, the participation/identification model proposed by Finn (1989) deals with the gradual disengagement from school rather than the act of dropping out of school.

Like the frustration/self-esteem model, the identifcation/participation model is cyclic and is concerned with behavioral and psychological aspects of disengaging from school. The underlying premise of this model is that participation in school activities increases a sense of belonging and valuing of school-related goals thereby, increasing identification with school and lowering the likelihood of withdrawing from school.

Finn suggests low participation in school leads to low identification that leads to even lower participation, setting in motion a downward spiral of minimized engagement in school which may end in eventual withdrawal from school. Behavioral indicators such as school performance, achievement and absenteeism measure the participation level of a student (Finn & Cox, 1992), while the psychological indicators of commitment, belonging, bonding or attachment (Finn, 1989) measure the identification level of a student.

Finn (1989) describes this cycle of participation and identification as developmental. A child enters kindergarten as an excited and eager participant. This early positive experience combined with achievement gains and appropriate instruction develops a sense of belonging in a child. This in turn increases participation in school activities by a child fostering a sense of identification with school and its goals. The child with a strong sense of identification with school can meet increasing demands later in high school. However, if a child arrives in kindergarten without enthusiasm or is not intellectually stimulated by a teacher, this child may start on a path of disengagement. This

developmental view of identification and belonging to school is the strength of the model. It provides many points in the education of a child at which the school system can identify problems and intervene on behalf of the potential dropouts.

Examining developmental processes that lead to withdrawal from school is important. Equally important is examining influences that affect this developmental process of identification with school. Family and school are two of the largest influences upon a young child. One must not ignore the effect of these factors on the child's experience of school. Where does a child's enthusiasm for starting kindergarten originate? Parents encourage or discourage their child by their own actions and attitudes. Also, in their daily interactions with a student teachers can influence a student's attitude toward school. Other teachers do not help a student to become engaged in educational tasks. What are these teachers doing that causes students to feel school is not an exciting place to be? Research must examine the process of identification and participation and the influences of teachers and others that increase or decrease bonding with school.

The Problem

There has been little examination of the identification and participation indicators of students in elementary grades with the purpose of identifying those who are potentially at risk from withdrawing from school. In addition, there is little examination of the positive or negative impact of educational and parental practices upon participation and identification with school.

Statement of Purpose:

The first purpose of this study is to examine identification indicators such as commitment, sense of belonging and perception of the teacher, to see whether they correlate with participation indicators such as school performance, achievement and absenteeism.

The second purpose of this study is to help provide a deeper understanding of how influences such as school and family affect students' bond with school. This will be achieved by examining the experiences of several grade six students in depth. This will create a developmental data base describing what grade six students think about school, parents and the future.

Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1. Student attitude scales for a) perception of teachers, b) sense of belonging, and c) personal responsibility and commitment to school will be positively correlated.

2. Student attitudes (including the three scales combined together) will be correlated with measures of achievement, absenteeism, and teacher-assigned marks.

3. Student attitude scales will not be associated with student characteristics such as sex and family status.

4. Student attitude scales will be associated with school location (i.e, different schools will have different effects upon attitudes).

5. Students will express experiences and attitudes toward learning, school, homework, peers, parents and the future which will reveal patterns of bonding with school.

Rationale

The initial inquiry into a relationship between identification indicators and participation indicators will help establish patterns of bonding with school. Once this pattern is established, researchers can get a sense of how individuals value school and educators can begin to intervene at an early age. British Columbia's School Districts keep a record of grades, absences, achievement tests, number of schools attended and any special services received by the student on individual Permanent Record Cards. If school districts can combine these data with data collected from surveys focusing on identification and participation indicators they can track students over the years.

Family status, sex and school location are examined in this study for several reasons. Family status, in particular single parent families, in past research has been associated with high school dropout (Mutadi, 1990). However, recent studies point to communication regarding the importance of school related goals between parent/s and children as a critical variable in children staying in school (Finn, 1989). However, family status alone probably is not the sole influence on a student's attitude towards school. The variable, sex was examined to check the researcher's perception that a child's sex should not make any significant differences in attitude towards school. The final variable, school location, was chosen to determine if there was any variation between specific school

center and attitude. All schools vary in terms of personal and socioeconomic characteristics of their students, teaching staff, and leadership. The interaction between all three may result in a difference in student attitudes across schools, and thus affecting the bonding process.

Knowing that participation and identification indicators affect a student's bond with school is not enough to begin to develop intervention strategies. Bonding with school is a complex issue. Understanding this process will help establish levers of change for the individual student. This information will also help provide a preliminary data base for a participation/identification developmental model. It will help answer the question of what grade six students think about school.

Limitations of Study

1. This study is limited to grade six students who have parental permission to complete a questionnaire and to engage in a possible interview in seven schools in the Abbotsford School District, and who have Permanent Record Cards that include information from grade four onwards.

2. Evaluation by grades of academic achievement begins in grade four in the Abbotsford School District. District-wide achievement tests are administered in grade four and in grade seven. This limits the development of a pattern of school performance and achievement since there are not several achievement test scores to use.

3. At this time, there is no standardized identification questionnaire. However, Coleman

(1991, 1992), in his Co-production of Learning Project, is developing such scaled surveys of student attitudes. Questions used in the present study were derived from this research.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided for the purposes of this study:

1. Participation: Actively taking part in school and classroom activities. Completing assignments and homework, answering questions in class and attendance are examples of measures of participation.

2. Identification: A feeling of belongingness in the school environment and of valuing school related goals.

3. Marks: An evaluation used by the classroom teacher to measure school performance in relation to knowledge or skills and completion of assignments.

4. Achievement test: A standardized test used to measure students' abilities in various areas of school-related knowledge and skill.

5. Absenteeism: A period of time a student is not in school when expected to be present.

6. Grade six student: A student who is currently placed in grade six.

7. Permanent Record Card: The official document of British Columbia's Ministry of Education required for each student in the public school system.

8. Family status: Describes the persons living in the child's home.

Organization of the Balance of the Paper

The balance of this paper proceeds in the following order: Chapter 2, Review of Literature, Chapter 3, Methodology, Chapter 4, Results, and Chapter 5, Discussion.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This chapter reviews the literature that is pertinent to the questions of this study. In the first section, the literature on participation is divided into three topics: school performance, achievement and absenteeism. The next section discusses identification literature in terms of commitment and attachment. The third section examines parental influence in school. This discussion includes literature focusing on parent/child relationships, implementing parent involvement programs and parent involvement in school. The final section examines students' perception of teachers and principals.

Part 1 Literature Related to Participation

Participation is active engagement in school and classroom activities. It is one outward manifestation of a student's attitude towards school. Examining patterns of participation will provide insight into the bonding process of students to their school. Participation can be measured as generally as grades, achievement, or absenteeism or as specifically as time on task, completion of an assignment, or question-answering.

1. School Performance

School performance is a direct outcome of student participation in daily classroom activities (Finn, 1989). Students must participate in class to be able to learn. Completing

assignments, answering questions, paying attention, participating in group discussions and projects is part of the learning process. These are also the activities many teachers use to evaluate their students on report cards. The following studies associate classroom participation with academic achievement.

Anderson (1975) investigated the relationship between student involvement in learning and achievement. The results demonstrated a significant positive relationship between participation (time on task) and academic achievement (unit test scores). Anderson concluded that to increase participation in learning, students must be provided with cognitive and affective prequisites within a supportive environment. McKinney et al. (1975) arrived at similar findings and further suggested that the analysis of classroom participation can predict future achievement.

Kerr et al. (1986) suggested that successful students take an active approach to learning while unsuccessful students take a more passive approach. Active students came to class prepared, were on task, asked questions of the teacher and acted appropriately toward the teachers. The authors recommend that these school survival skills may need to be actively taught to passive learners.

In this literature it appears that school performance is measured by either reported grades or standardized achievement tests. Ekstrom et al. (1986), in their analysis of the data from the High School and Beyond Project, found a gap between stayers and leavers

in school performance as measured by reported grades, rather than by standardized

achievement tests. However, Finn and Cox (1992) found achievement as measured by

standardized achievement tests (Stanford Achievement Tests and Basics Skills First) were

related to grade four students' participation in the classroom.

2. Achievement

If school performance is related to academic performance it is not surprising that

achievement is related to early withdrawal from school. A literature review by Howard

and Anderson (1978) determined that a characteristic of the dropout is low achievement.

Peng and Takai (1983), Radwanski (1987), and Mutadi (1990) also found low

achievement was a characteristic of the early school leaver. The studies examined

dropouts after they left school. There are several retrospective studies that use

achievement as a predictor of withdrawing from school.

Lloyd (1974) found that the level of educational achievement was a major factor in

predicting dropouts. In a follow-up study Lloyd (1978) examined records of 788 young

men and 774 young women who later became either high school graduates or dropouts.

In this study, two measures of achievement, reading and language skills in grade three, had

independent predictive power in school graduation or dropping out. In addition, a global

ability measure (California Test of Mental Maturity) had predictive power. Barrington and

Hendricks (1987) found differences between the achievement of stayers and dropouts.

Cairns et al. (1989) concluded that students in grade seven can be identified by "low levels

of academic performance (p. 1448)." Simmer and Barnes (1991) examining school records found that 80% of students with D or F marks in reading and arithmetic in grade one dropped out of high school.

3. Absenteeism

Lloyd (1978) feels increased absence from third grade was not a cause but a symptom of a gradual psychological process of withdrawing from school. High absenteeism is also identified by several studies as the strongest correlation of dropping out (Raudenbush & Bryk, 1986) and a characteristic of a potential dropout (Rawandaski, 1987; Mutadi, 1990). Other factors related to both absenteeism and dropout are delinquency (Reid, 1981) and behavior problems (Ekstrom et al., 1986).

There are several studies that use absenteeism as a predictor for early withdrawal from school. However, these studies do not agree on the grade level for which one can use absenteeism to predict eventual dropout (Prupus, 1991). Lloyd (1978) found absences in grade six were related to dropping out whereas absences in grade three were not. Yet, Barrington and Hendricks (1987) used a cutoff of six absences per year to identify dropouts with 66 percent accuracy as early as grade three.

Part II Literature Related to Identification

Identification represents the psychological dimension of the participation/identification model. It is a feeling of belongingness to school and valuing

school related goals. Commitment and attachment are terms in the research literature that are related to bonding. Research in this area is conducted under many different labels (Finn, 1989) which make it difficult to find the relevant factors related to identification with school. This literature is useful because it lists possible indicators that cause students to identify with their school.

1. Commitment

Much of the research under the label of commitment is related to delinquency. Gold and Mann (1984) describe the effects of three model alternative schools on behavioral and scholastic performance of disruptive adolescents. Areas of study included examining school related attitudes such as commitment to the student role. Results showed that problem behavior was mediated by the students' attitude toward school. A change in the students' attitude depended on changes in their commitment to school.

Polk and Halferty (1972) analyzed questionnaires and school records of 410 male delinquent respondents from a sample of 1,800 adolescents. The factor analysis of responses to the questionnaire found three dimensions: peer involvement, commitment and rebellion. The commitment dimension consisted of questions regarding school attitude, school related activities, future plans and homework. Delinquency among some adolescents varied with a lack of commitment to school. The authors noted that, "the uncommitted youth, it would appear, is characterized by behavioral withdrawal from school . . . there is a pattern of psychological discomfort and alienation (1972, p.85)."

Elements of alienation, popular in the "dropout" literature, is another perspective examining noninvolvement in school (Finn, 1989). Newmann (1981) in a literature review of student alienation states that student involvement in school is a necessary ingredient for learning and achievement. Newmann develops six guidelines to reduce alienation in school. This can be done by: (1) creating small schools with (2) clear goals, (3) voluntarily chosen by students with (4) cooperative roles between students and staff that include (5) the operation of the school, and finally (6) student work that allows for individual development in many curricula areas.

In a study of urban and rural high schools Firestone and Rosenblum (1988) relate student alienation and commitment to teacher commitment. Students react positively to teachers who treat them with respect, present interesting curriculum and are helpful. Teachers also react to the response they receive from students. If the cycle between students and teachers is negative, commitment to school decreases. Thus, feelings of alienation increase in both teachers and students. Intervention must focus on changing conditions for teaching which motivate staff which influences classroom environments that will influence students' bonding with school (Fullan, 1991).

2. Attachment

Literature related to attachment also focuses on delinquent behavior. Specifically, social control theory as described by Hirschi (1969) assumes that delinquent acts result

when an individual's bond to society is weakened. Elements of this bond are attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Family and school play a role in developing this bond to society. Hirschi (1969) in a study of social control theory and delinquency, found that attachment to parents was a central variable in commitment of delinquent acts. The link is mediated by the amount of communication between parent and child. In addition, school involvement, measured by the number of school activities, attitudes toward teachers, attendance, and discipline, was inversely related to delinquent acts.

Liska and Reed (1985) examined the assumption in social control theory of the recursive nature of delinquency and attachment. Causal models were developed from data collected originally from the Youth in Transition Study (as cited, Liska & Reed, 1985). Findings revealed that parental attachment affects delinquency, that delinquency affects school attachment, and that school attachment affects parental attachment. This nonrecursive causal model suggests that school attachment does not directly affect delinquency but it does not imply that the school has no influence (Finn, 1989).

An interesting area of research in attachment is in the area of work satisfaction. Several theoretical perspectives of attachment are applied to measure work satisfaction. Hazan and Shaver (1990) used Bowlby's theory of attachment as a theoretical basis to analyze job satisfaction. This theoretical application may be useful in identifying psychological indicators of identification with school.

Part III <u>Literature Related to Parental Influence and School</u>

The influence of a parent on a child is undeniable. The role of the parent in education has been studied since formal education began. However, a shift in the nature of the family has occurred. The increase of single parent and two income families over the last thirty years has affected how children approach school (Marx & Grieve, 1988). This societal shift is a challenge in building relationships between a student, parent and teacher. Despite this challenge there continues to be a belief that parental involvement has positive benefits for children (Henderson, 1988). Parents who are involved with a child's education communicate to the student that school is important. This translates into a positive attitude toward school. This increases the likelihood of a child participating and bonding with school.

The literature in this area is abundant. It is divided into three areas: parent/child relationship, parent involvement in school, and parent involvement programs.

1. <u>Parent/Child Relationship</u>

Research has shown that children who are not encouraged regarding school related goals at home may not participate or identify with school (Finn, 1989). Ekstrom et al. (1986) found that dropouts did not have parents who created a supportive home environment. A supportive home environment was measured in terms of mother's educational aspirations for the student, the number of study aids, parental involvement in

academic choices, and extracurricular activities. The authors contend that the students'
home environment has an indirect but critical impact on student leaving or staying in
school.

In examining the idea of a supportive home it appears that communication
between parent and child is a key for success at school. As discussed previously,
parent/child communication plays a role in delinquency (Ekstrom, 1986). In a review of
43 studies, The National Committee for Citizens in Education found that parent
involvement raises student achievement (Henderson, 1988). In particular, several studies
focusing on improving parent/child relationships found the building of a strong learning
environment at home results in higher student achievement. It is the communication of
high expectations combined with encouragement by parents who influenced the positive
attitudes in children (Henderson, 1988). Children develop positive attitudes needed for
achievement and for staying in school. This is further supported by Walberg (1984) who,
in a synthesis of 3,000 research studies, found parent/child communication to be a
powerful predictor of achievement.

Communication of high expectations and encouragement about school by parents
stems from their own values and beliefs toward education. Hanson and Ginsburg (1988)
in an analysis of High School and Beyond data found parental values significantly
influence educational outcomes of their children. Schaefer (1991), in a review of literature
on parent values and behavior, found the parents' educational and child rearing beliefs are

highly related. These beliefs are correlated with levels of parent education, child

intelligence, and teacher ratings of a child's ability. Teaching parents to alter their

parenting style to improve their relationship with their child can be an effective approach

to parent education and eventual parent involvement in school.

2. Implementing Parent Involvement Programs

The implementation of parent involvement programs was brought on by varous

societal shifts after WWII that altered the home and school relationships (Walberg, 1986).

To bridge this gap, educators saw the value of building parent/school relationships.

Parents who are involved in school feel more empowered (Cochran & Dean, 1991).

Parents evaluate teachers as more effective if they make connections with the home

(Epstein, 1985). Parents who perceive teachers as concerned about parent involvement

will also be willing to communicate with the school more (Coleman et al., 1992). Building

a collaborative parent/teacher relationship appears to benefit students the most. Therefore,

the implementation of parent involvement programs is crucial.

The Yale Study Center developed a comprehensive parent involvement program

to establish the parent/school relationship (Walberg, 1986). Results of this ongoing

program showed improvements in school climates, teacher efficacy, and parent support for

schools. However, this is a rare example of a comprehensive parent program. Often,

parent involvement is left soley to the classroom teacher. The use of parent involvement

strategies by teachers is dependent on their sense of efficacy and family socio-economic

status   (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987). Despite the positive effects of parental involvement, there are few parents involved in schools (Epstein & Dauber, 1991).

3. Parent Involvement

Epstein (Brandt, 1989) divides parent involvement in five major areas: basic obligations of parents, basic obligations of schools, parent involvement in school, parent involvement in learning activities and parent involvement in governance and advocacy. The basic obligations of parents refer to the responsibilities of families to care, discipline, supervise, guide and provide supportive home environment. Esptein (1986) surveyed parents of 1,269 students in eighty-two first, third, and fifth grade classrooms. Esptein assessed parents' attitudes toward the school and teachers, responses to teachers' programs and practices. Basic obligations were the most common involvement by parents. The provision of school supplies, general support, and supervision at home were done by 90% of parents.

Schools also have basic obligations to parents. Basic obligations of schools include communications from school to home about school programs and children's progress (Brandt, 1989). In British Columbia, the School Act (1989) ensures that the progress of the child is reported to the parents. In addition, parents have the right to be informed about, and to request information on attendance, behavior, and the effectiveness of school programs.

In ongoing research, Lindle (1989) reports that parents want a personal touch rather than business-like professionalism. A personal touch is described as teachers or principals who take interest in their children and call home if there is a problem. Parents also indicated appreciation for schools who scheduled school activities such as plays and parent/teacher conferences in the evenings to accommodate work schedules. Despite this desire for a personal touch by parents Epstein and Becker (1982) found that communication was often limited. Sixty percent of parents never spoke to a teacher on the phone.

Parent involvement in school can refer to parents who volunteer to help in school and to parents who support student performances, sports, or other events (Brandt, 1989). Epstein (1984) discovered 70 percent never help in school or participate in the administration of fund-raising activities. In addition, most parents cannot or do not become involved in school because they work. This is an issue that education must deal with more effectively. As more and more parents are working and time becomes precious, schools must acknowledge and create other opportunities for parents to become involved in school. Parents appreciate and will become involved more in school activities if they are held in the evening (Lindle, 1989).

Parent involvement in learning activities refers to parent or child initiated activities at home (Brandt 1989). This also includes any teacher initiated ideas for home activities that will help parents with their child's learning. Successful efforts to link home and

school by teachers include formal reading programs, signing of papers and folders (for example, signing of math tests), and use of supply materials such as flashcards (Epstein & Becker, 1982).

Often parents are unsure of how to help their child (Epstein & Becker, 1982). This may be influenced by parents' own educational level or feelings about school. The Follow Through Program used home visits and development of Parent Education programs to teach parents how to teach their children (Olmstead, 1991). Results of these programs indicated a positive relation between parent membership and these programs and their child's reading achievement. Barth (1986) found increased achievement among students when reviewing programs that taught parents to reinforce positive behavior such as homework completion.

Spinoffs from parent involvement in children's learning activities often go beyond improving a child's educational performance. Ostlaund et al. (1985) conducted a naturalistic study of children and their parents in a family learning course in science. Reports said that both parents and children made significant gains in learning and most important, both found it a valuable experience enhancing their relationship.

Parent involvement in school governance and advocacy refers to parents taking decision-making roles in parent groups, advisory councils, or other committees at the school, district, and provincial or state level (Brandt, 1989). Again, the Follow Through

Program describes how parent involvement increased advocacy at all levels (Olmsted, 1991). The parents played a key role in lobbying for continued funding for the Follow Through Program when it was to be phased out. At the local level, parents attended more school board meetings and city council meetings. Most important, parents became advocates for their own children.

The Olmsted article is one of the few that highlights governance and advocacy. Governance and advocacy are less developed that other parent involvement activities and this is reflected in the literature (Raddysh, 1992). In Canada, The Charter of Human Rights gives parents of children with special needs an impetus for advocacy. This may lead to more research and development of parental involvement programs involving advocacy.

Part IV Literature Related to Teachers and Principals

Outside the family, school occupies most of children's lives. Many hours are spent listening and completing assignments throughout the school life of a child. Yet, how does an enthusiastic kindergarten child become a grade nine dropout? Researchers suggest the student perceptions of teachers play a role in determining attitudes toward school (Berliner, 1985). Dropouts often comment on how teachers did not seem to take an interest in them while they were in school (Persuad & Madak, 1992, Purkey & Novak, 1984, Rawandaski, 1987). Early leavers point to the irrelevance of the curriculum, boredom, negative teacher attitudes, and teacher stress (Pawlovich, 1985 & Fullan,

1991). Teaching not only involves instruction in reading and arithmetic, but also the building of relationships so students feel they are valued participants (Coleman et al., 1992). Clearly, an understanding of students' perceptions will provide insights into how children bond with school.

1. Teachers

Teachers create the environment within the classroom. If students are engaged in learning and feel valued by the teacher, it is more likely that school will be meaningful (Fullan, 1991). Students who perceive teachers as collaborators rate school higher (Coleman et al., 1992). Often, teachers do not perceive correctly student attitudes are toward school (DuCette & Wolk, 1972). Knowledge of these perceptions will facilitate an understanding of student identification with school. Literature examining students' perceptions of teachers falls into three general areas: significant adults in a child's world, differential treatment of students and perception of teachers by students.

Adolescents perceive their parents as the most significant adults in their lives (Galbo, 1985). This is not surprising since parents are primary caregivers. Galbo (1989), in his review of literature, found that teachers were only significant to a few adolescents. Galbo further comments that much of this research does not provide a comprehensive picture of how adolescents perceive adults as significant. It must be noted that in high school there is less student/teacher interaction, by the very nature of its structure. If there is limited teacher/student interaction, teachers can exert limited influence. Changes in high

school structure that increase meaningful teacher/student interaction may result in teachers having greater influence on students.

An abundant amount of research has examined differential treatment of students based on perception of low or high student achievement (Weinstein, 1983). Weinstein et al. (1982) examined student perceptions of differential treatment by teachers. Low achievers were perceived as receiving more negative reactions and more direction. Yet high achievers were perceived as receiving more opportunities and choices and had higher expectations. This pattern of perceived differences is consistent with other findings (Weinstein et al., 1982). Differential treatment has consequences for how a child experiences school and influences how the child bonds with school.

In an interesting qualitative study of grade seven students' perception of teachers, Mergendoller and Packer (1985) revealed that students categorize teachers in terms of academic work, instructional facility, classroom experience, and personal characteristics. Good teachers are described as clear communicators, helpful, enjoyable, and maintain interest in the students. On the other hand, poor teachers fail to provide individual help, punished, and were viewed as uncaring. The awareness of what students' value in teachers may be helpful in understanding problems that arise between teachers and students.

2. Principals

If teachers create the environment in the classroom, principals create the

environment within the school by their leadership. Effective schools are led by principals who have strong instructional leadership that promotes high expectations for student learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). They have the achievement and happiness of a student at heart (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). They are also effective at building parent/school communication. There is virtually no information regarding student perception of principals (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Fullan (1991) reports on an intensive research project on the role of students in Ontario schools. Students were asked open-ended questions regarding vice-principals and principals. High school students responded that they did not really know him/her. Perhaps examining the student perception of the principal will give clues to the effectiveness of the school's administration.

Conclusion

Dropping out is a complex issue. Much of the literature points to a developmental process of withdrawing from school. The gradual disengagement with school begins early. This is seen in behavioral (participation) and psychological (identification) indicators. However, one cannot limit intervention to the behavioral and psychological states that a child exhibits. Family and school are two institutions that have a large impact in a child's attitudes and decisions. Identifying and examining the impact of these influences broadens the ability of educators to manipulate other variables to increase a child's bonding with school and decrease the likelihood that a student drops out of school.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology for this study in four parts. The first

section describes the Sample according to district, school, students, and interviewees. The

next section, on Measures, describes qualitative and quantitative measures. The third

section, on Procedures, describes how the study was carried out. The final section, on

Data Analysis, explains the quantitative and qualitative analyses that were completed to

obtain the results of the study. However, before describing the methodology of the study,

the research perspective is discussed. This explains the rationale for the qualitative and

quantitative approaches that constitute the methodology of the study.

Research Perspective

In the past, quantitative and qualitative perspectives existed in separate realms in

empirical research (Palys, 1992). The debate between methods focuses on how human

behavior is articulated. Quantitative approaches attempt to understand behavior by

objectively and mathematically predicting it. On the other hand, qualitative approaches

attempt to comprehend behavior by understanding people's perceptions and experiences of

behavior. Both perspectives provide researchers with different but valuable information.

As a researcher I am interested in the information both approaches provide. I want

to be able to predict behavior but also understand how those behaviors are experienced.

Using each in a complementary way helps "enhance, illustrate or clarify results from the other (Caracelli & Greene, 1993, p. 196)." To understand identification and participation of grade six students, the ability to predict the relationship between these variables is important. Understanding the grade six students' experience of school and influence of teachers, parents, and peers not only enhances understanding but may also give insight into grade six students' experiences of bonding with school.

Part I Sample

1. School District

The grade six students studied are from schools in the Abbotsford School District #34 located in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia. The School District is composed of two Regional Districts, Matsqui and Abbotsford. These two Regional Districts are growing rural and urban communities with a population of 100,000. Presently, 16,600 students receive services from the school district. Educational services are provided from kindergarten through grade twelve, with support services for gifted and special needs students. There are seven secondary schools, one secondary technology training center, and thirty-six elementary schools.

2. Schools

A stratified random sampling of 36 elementary schools was used to identify grade six students. Two schools were eliminated from the sample because the schools did not have a grade six class. Seven schools were chosen for the study.

a) School 1 (305 student population): This school is considered a high risk school by the Abbotsford School District. The population is transient and the school is surrounded by low-cost rental apartments. At the time of the study the school was being renovated. A total of 22 of a possible 33 students chose to participate in the study from this school.

b) School 2 (239 student population): This school is two years old. It is not uncommon for a student to have attended two previous schools before attending this school. It is also located a block from a new secondary school. Fifteen of a possible 24 students chose to participate in the study from this school.

c) School 3 (213 students): This school typifies a country school. It is surrounded by fields and diary farms. Almost all the children live on farms and are bussed to school. Seventeen of a possible 21 students chose to participate in the study.

d) School 4 (168 student population): This school only has grade 4, 5, and 6. Half a block away is the primary feeder school. Although the students attend a different school for intermediate grades most of the students come from the same primary school. Twenty-five of the 30 grade six students chose to participate in the study.

e) School 5 (648 student population): The principal commented that the population of school is changing. At one time there were no children with English as a Second Language. Now 40 percent of the kindergarten class has children with English as their

second language. Sixty-eight of a possble 85 students chose to participate in the study.

f) School 6 (542 student population): This school population has grown steadily over the last few years. At the time of the study an expansion of the school was occurring. There was no staff room and the computer classes were held in the hallway. Thirty-two of a possible 48 students chose to participate in the study.

h) School 7 (469 student population): This is another school that was being renovated. Four classrooms were being added to the school. At the time of the study classes had moved into the new wing. Thirty-five of the 44 students chose to participate in the study.

3. Students

A total of 214 grade six students received parental permission to complete a questionnaire and possible interview. In this study grade six students were used for several reasons. Firstly, marks in the Abbotsford School District are used as a form of evaluation from grade four to grade twelve. To be able to see a pattern of participation using marks the researcher needed marks from several grades. Secondly, older children are better at expressing their feelings, perceptions and attitudes about an experience. Edelbrock et al., (1985) in a study that interviewed both children and parents found children over the age of ten are better informants regarding their own behavior. The information these older children provided was reliable. Though older students provide more reliable information, Grade 7 students and high school students were not chosen for

this study for several reasons. Grade 7 students were not chosen because these students already are preparing for the transition to high school. It was felt that grade 7 students would find it difficult to talk about their elementary school experience. High school students were not chosen because of the early schooling, developmental focus of this study.

The 214 students consisted of 113 boys and 101 girls, ranging in the age from eleven to thirteen. The family status of the students at the time of the study was: 4 living with father only, 26 living with mother only, 20 living with a stepparent, 4 living with other than their parents, and 150 living with both parents.

4. Interviews

Random sampling was used to identify 16 students for interviews. Two students declined to be interviewed. Six females and eight males participated in the interviews. Psuedynoms are used to protect confidentiality.

a) Susan (11 years old): Susan's parents moved to the Fraser Valley from a small interior community to seek employment. This was Susan's fourth move since she started school. The family shares a house with another family to save money. Susan's father did not finish high school and works in a trade. Her mother works at a fast food restaurant. Susan was currently receiving learning assistance for reading difficulties. She maintains a C average in her academic subjects.

b) Sanjeet (13 years old): Sanjeet repeated grade one because of his difficulty mastering English as his second language. He lives with his mother, a homemaker and his father, a builder and two older brothers and an older sister. Sanjeet maintains a C+ average in his academic subjects. He is very interested in basketball and played on the school team. He wants to play professional sports though his parents discourage him from doing so.

c) Paul (11 years old): Paul is the youngest child and has three older sisters. Paul lives with his father, who is a microbiologist and his mother, who is a pharmacist. Paul stated that he enjoys going to work with his father every Saturday morning. The entire family is very involved in their church. Paul participated in the school's track and field team. Paul maintained a B average in his academic subjects.

d) Sara (11 years old): Sara is the older of two girls. Her mother is a nurse and father is an RCMP officer. Sara is a B average student. She is very involved in figure skating and baseball in the community.

e) Sam (12 years old): Sam lives with his parents and a younger brother who is in kindergarten. His mother works as a waitress and his father is a sheet metal worker. Sam has a keen interest in archeology. He spends time reading and researching this area of interest. Sam enjoys being on the school's basketball and track and field team. He maintains an A average in academic work.

f) Matt (11 years old): Matt is the middle child between an older sister and a younger brother. His mother is a homemaker and his father is a custodian. His father is learning disabled and so is his younger brother. Matt is part of the gifted program at the school. His area of interest is music and he plays the piano and trumpet. He maintains an A average in his academic work.

g) Amanda (12 years old): Amanda has three older brothers and lives with her mother and father. Her father works as a mechanic and her mother as a noon hour supervisor at the school she attends. She is a B average student in academic subjects.

h) Rob (12 years old): Rob lives on a dairy farm. His mother, a veterinarian and father, a farmer and a small appliance repairperson are originally from England. Rob also has one older sister. Rob plays on a community soccer team and school volleyball team. He maintains a B average in academic work.

i) James (11 years old): James also lives on a large diary farm. He is father runs the farm and his mother does the bookkeeping for the farm on their computer. James is diagnosed with a learning disability and receives remedial help. His father also had learning difficulties when he was going to school. James has a younger brother and two older sisters. He maintains a C- average.

j) Lisa (11 years old): Lisa moved to Abbotsford two years ago from Richmond. She

lives with her mother, a homemaker and her step-dad, a truck driver. She sees her father on weekends. Lisa stated her difficulties in school stem from her wanting to socialize with her friends instead of completing assignments in class. She has one younger sister. Lisa maintains a C+ average in school work.

k) John (13 years old): John lived in California for three years and stated when he moved to Abbotsford he was put back a grade. He is the middle child with an older sister and younger brother. Last year John was involved in many fights and was being considered for a behavior management class. However, in the past year, his behavior improved. His mother works at a drugstore and his father is a carpenter. John maintains a C average in academics.

l) Cindy (12 years old): Cindy lives with her mother who runs a daycare from her house and makes her own jewelry. Cindy's mother never finished high school because of an unexpected pregnancy. She sees her father occasionally but speaks to him on the phone weekly. Cindy has an older sister and two step-sisters and one step-brother. Cindy has a C average in academic subjects. She is also involved in basketball and track and field at school.

m) Alana (11 years old): Alana has an older sister and a younger brother. Her mother is a bookkeeper for a small business and her father is principal of a secondary school in the school district. Alana enjoys sports and plays on school teams. She maintains an A

average. n) Jeff (11 years old): Jeff receives learning assistance for reading and math

difficulties. He also receives counseling because of his behavior problems at school. Jeff's

mother is a housekeeper and father is a carpenter. He has two older brothers. Jeff moved

to Abbotsford three years ago from Surrey. He maintains a C- average in schoolwork.

Part II Measures

1. Quantitative Measures

a) Marks

Marks are an evaluation by a teacher of a student's school performance. This

evaluation includes test results, homework completion, group work, assignment

completion and other activities a teacher considers important to evaluate. The Abbotsford

School District assigns marks from grade four to grade twelve. Marks for mathematics,

language arts, science, and social studies were gathered from each students' Permanent

Record Card for grade 4, 5 and the first term of grade 6 on a Data Gathering Sheet (See

Appendix B). The twelve marks were assigned a numerical value for each subject: A=4.0,

A-=3.67, B+=3.33, B=3.0, B-=2.67, C+=2.33, C=2.0, C-=1.67, D=1.0. Next the

numerical values of twelve marks were averaged and coded as: A=1(Excellent), B=

2(Above Average), C+ =3(Average), C=2(Below Average), C-and below=5(Poor).

b) Absences

In British Columbia, teachers must keep daily records of who is present and

absent. The sum of these absences is recorded every year on the students' Permanant

Record Card. Absences of each participant were gathered on the Data Gathering Sheet for Kindergarten to Grade 5 from Permanent Record Cards. The absences were averaged, then rated and coded as: 0-3 absences=1 (Excellent), 4-6 absences=2 (Above Average), 7-10 absences=3 (Average), 10-13 absences=4(Below Average), and 14 and above absences=5(Poor).

c) Canadian Achievement Test

The Canadian Achievement Test is a group achievement test that uses norm referenced and criterion referenced assessment. The major subtest areas include reading, spelling, language, mathematics and reference skills. Norms are based on stratified random sampling of school districts, random sampling of schools within districts and on achieving a high participation rate. Whyte's (1985) review of the Canadian Achievement Test in the The Ninth Mental Measurements Yearbook (1985) recommends the use of this achievement test because it provides norm and criterion referenced information and has an excellent format for summarizing and meaningful reporting of results. This achievement test is given district-wide in grade 4, grade 7, and grade 9 in the Abbotsford School District. The results are tabulated and returned to the school. Copies are kept at the District School Board Office. For the puposes of this study math, reading, language and overall achievement percentiles from grade 4 results of the Canadian Achievement Test were recorded on the Data Gathering Sheet. It is noted that grade four achievement results may not be valid or reliable for grade six. However, these are the only achievement scores avaliable in the Abbotsford School District, and the academic

achievement of elementary school children tends not to vary greatly beyond the first few years of schooling. The percentiles were used as codes.

d) Questionnaire

The questionnaire (See Appendix C) consisted of twenty-eight questions with a Likert Rating Scale ranging from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5). The questions chosen for the study were based on attitudes toward schools that reflected an identification with school. The questions are from several sources, mainly Coleman (1992) and Liska and Reed (1985). The questionnaire was used as an indicator of general identification of school with three subscales: Questions 1 to 9: Perception of Teacher, Questions 10 to 19: Sense of Belonging to School, Questions 20 to 28: Responsibility and Commitment to school. The entire questionnaire and the subscales were compared to each other and other qualitative data. The entire questionnaire and each subscale were coded by adding up answers, i.e., Strongly Agree=1. and then the total was used to code the results.

The questionnaire also asked student participants their sex, family status and parents' occupation. Parents' occupation was discarded since many students did not know their parents' occupation.

2. Qualitative Measures

a) Interview

Interviewing is an important method of research for gathering information regarding children's feelings, perceptions, and attitudes regarding school experiences. However, interviewing as a research technique is fraught with many problems of reliability and is especially difficult with children. These difficulties are a result of the differences between linguistic and interactive competencies between children and adults (Garbino et al., 1992). To obtain accurate information, an interviewer must be sensitive to these difficulties. Garbino, Stott, and The Faculty of the Erikson Institute (1992) recommend using open-ended questions in a semi-structured format which reflect the linguistic competency of the children being interviewed. Open-ended questions, as opposed to closed questions, provide opportunities for a child to express ideas more freely. In addition, simple, clear, and concise questions help the child understand what is asked.

Another important factor in gathering reliable information from interviewing children is the setting and context of the interview (Garbino et al., 1992). The interviews for this study were held in a separate room in the school, with doors closed. This setting was neutral and relaxed, and reinforced the confidentiality of the interviews for the children. Building of rapport before the interview was important to help the student feel comfortable (Garbino et al., 1992). This comfort level was established by asking the students to help with the setting up of the tape recorder, and asking about family, hobbies or interests before the interview started. In addition, the confidentiality and the purpose of the interview was stated at the time of the interview. The students were also given the option of not answering questions they did not feel comfortable answering. This gives the

student the feeling of control in the interview, which Garbino, Stott, and the Faculty of the Erickson Institute (1992) suggest is important in obtaining reliable information.

The questions for the interview (See Appendix D) were developed based on six themes adapted from research by Coleman et al., (1992) and Raddysh (1992). Miles and Huberman (1984) suggest the use of a conceptual framework such as the use of themes to help keep the interview focused on the researcher's questions. Also, this thematic organiztion allows the researcher to create codes with relative ease.

Part III Procedure

1. Pilot Study

After the development of the questionnaire and interview questions a pilot study was completed in December 1993 in two schools in the Surrey School District in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. The purpose of the pilot study was to "fine-tune" the questionnaire and interview questions. A grade six class from each school was approached regarding participation in the study. A total of 50 students from a possible 62 students received parental permission to participate in the study. The group consisted of 22 males and 28 females, ranging from 10 to 12 years old of age.

During the completion of the questionnaire the students were asked which questions that they found confusing or difficult to understand. The internal reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The Alpha level was .77. Two

questions were removed as the result of the internal reliability test and in consideration of what students stated regarding the questions.

Three interviews were completed for the pilot study. Each interview was taped and later transcribed by a secretary. The transcriptions were analyzed for length and clarity of questions. The analysis was done at this level to avoid bias for future interviews.

2. Formal Study

Principals of the selected schools were contacted in March, 1994. The principals were given a brief explanation of the study, copies of the Parent Permission Form (See Appendix F), and questionnaire and interview questions. A convenient time was set to visit the grade six classrooms to explain who the researcher was and the purpose of the study to the students before the parent permission forms went home. Before entering the classrooms to explain the study, data were gathered on a Data Collection Sheet from the Permanent Record Cards and Canadian Achievement Test.

The students were told the purpose of the study in terms of how fast food restaurant chains researched the students' interest in certain types of food. Fast food restaurants research new food products by asking people's opinions and examining people's attitudes towards certain foods. The idea behind this type of research was to find products that students would buy. This explanation was made analogues to the study on attitudes and beliefs about school. The students were told that the author was interested in

researching what they thought about school so teachers and principals could improve the chances of students staying in school. Then, the Parent Permission Form was read to the students, with an explaination of confidentiality and the choice they had in participating in the study. Parent permission forms were sent home that day by the teacher.

Four or five days later, students who returned parent permission forms completed the questionnaire. Again, students were reminded of confidentiality and the purpose of the study. Teachers left the classroom while the questionnaire was being completed. Following the completion of the questionnaire, interviews were conducted in a private room in the school. All questionnaires and interviews were administered and conducted by the author of this study to maintain consistency in the procedure of the study. The collection of data was completed by the end of April 1994.

Part IV Data Analysis

1. Quantitative Anaylsis

The data collected from the students was placed in large binders according to school. Then, the data on the collection sheet and questionnaire were coded. Codes were then entered into Lotus 123 spreadsheet. Each student was assigned an identity number, school code and, sex and family status codes. Then the remaining quantitative coded data was entered. While the coded data were entered, they were checked for accuracy, and then rechecked by comparing coded data in the binders and a printed spreadsheet of the coded data.

Statistical procedures completed in this study were done in consultation with a

statistician. The Lotus 123 spreadsheet was then exported into SPSS Windows

Professional Statistical Package for IBM. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the entire

questionnaire and the subscales. Next two One-way Anovas were calculated. In the first

one-way Anova the dependent variable was the total score of the questionnaire and the

independent variable was family status. Family status consisted of five categories: living

with (1) father only, (2) mother only, (3) a step-parent, (4) other than parent, (5) both

parents. In the second one-way Anova, the dependent variable was the total score on the

questionnaire and the independent variable was school location. Each student was

identified in the data by the school (1-7) they attended. Then a t-Test was completed

using sex as the independent variable and the total score on the questionnaire the

dependent variable. Next Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated between the

entire questionnaire scale, subscales one, two and three, and marks, absences, and math,

reading, language and general achievement on the Canadian Achievement Test. This

generated a matrix of correlation coefficients.

2. Qualitative Data Analysis

a) Before Analysis

Each taped interview was transcribed by a secretary. When the first four tapes

were transcribed, the researcher listened to each tape with the transcription. The purpose

of listening to the tapes was to ensure all the questions were asked and answered, and to

determine if any new themes arose. Two new themes arose, and as a result, two questions

were added to the remaining interviews. The remaining tapes were transcribed by the same secretary. Each tape was checked to ensure the transcription was accurate. After the transcriptions were corrected each interview on the computer was translated into a text file for use with Hyperresearch by Researchware. Hyperresearch is a computer program which allows a researcher to analyze interview material by attaching codes to text. Coding allows a researcher to organize material according to ideas or themes for further analysis.

b) During Analysis

Before coding the interviews a "start list" of codes was developed from the themes in the interview questions (Huberman & Miles, 1984). This helped focus research questions directly to the data. The "start list" was then further defined and revised when coding the first two interviews. Each code was defined by a statement to clarify the meaning of each code. This coding list was discussed with two other colleagues to ensure that meanings were clear and precise. The unit of analysis for coding was a sentence. Several times throughout the coding process coding a sentence involved considering several sentences so the meaning of the sentence would not be taken out of context. See Appendix E for the list of codes.

Huberman and Miles (1984) suggest the ongoing coding of material while completing fieldwork. In this study, the first two interviews were transcribed and coded. The remaining interviews were coded at the completion of all the interviews. Ongoing coding was not done in this case to ensure against researcher bias entered the interview

process. I was interested in experiences of grade six student, and therefore, I felt it was important that the interviews were not conducted to lead to a certain conclusion. In other words, I wanted to ensure I was not "fishing" for themes and patterns.

The first two interviews were re-coded to ensure they were coded with accuracy. Then, the nterviews were coded. The interviews were not coded by another person for a reliability check. The research community is divided if reliability checks are needed in this type of ethnographic research (J. Martins, personal communication, November, 21, 1994). It was felt by this researcher that reliability checks were not needed because of the percise list of codes. When coding each interview, the name of the speaker and the text that illustrated the code was highlighted. After coding was completed a data set was generated by code and printed.

c) After Analysis

When the data were generated, the text of each code was analyzed for patterns and themes the students expressed in the interview. Notes were taken for each code after the initial analysis of patterns and themes. Three weeks later this initial analysis was reexamined for new patterns and themes. The codes were then organized into more general themes and headings for ease of interpretation.

Chapter 4

Results

This study has two purposes. The first purpose is to determine if identification indicators correlate with participation indicators. Results relevent to this first purpose are described in the quantitative section of this Results chapter. Included in this section are statistics that compare participation indicators (marks, achievement and absences) and identification indicators (the three student attitude scales and the three scales combined). The second purpose of this study is to examine school experiences of grade six students. This is to help clarify and enhance results from purpose one. Results relevant to the second purpose are described in the qualitative section. Included in the analysis of students' interviews are descriptions of Perception of Teachers and Principals, Sense of Belonging, Responsibility and Commitment, Peers, Parents, Future Plans and Summary.

Part I Quantitative Results

This section describing the quantitative results begins with the description of internal reliability of the Identification Questionnaire. There are several calculations that examine whether answers to the Identification Questionnaire were influenced by students' sex, family status or school. Finally, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships among several variables and the Identification Questionnaire and its subscales.

Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to determine the internal reliability of the total questionnaire and the three subscales within the Questionnaire. The internal consitency reliability for the total score of the Questionnaire is .85. This is considered moderate to high reliability and acceptable for research purposes (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1991). Internal consistency reliability for Scale 1, Perception of Teacher, is .89, for Scale 2, Sense of Belonging, is .65 and for Scale 3, Responsibility and Commitment, is .65. The internal consistency reliability for Scale 1 is considered moderate to high (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1991) while the internal reliability for Scale 2 and 3 are considered low yet acceptable for research purposes (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1991). Also, Scale 1, 2 and 3 have a positive significant interrelationship. The strength of the correlation is considered high (Cormier & Bounds, 1974). Thus, Perception of the Teacher, Sense of Belonging and Responsibility and Commitment are related. In addition, each scale is significantly and strongly related to the total score of the Identification Questionnaire.

A T-Test was calculated to determine if a student's sex affected the variation of answers (Total Score) to the Identification Questionnaire. Results of the two-tail probability indicate significance level above .05 (t(df)=.25, p>.05; See Table 1). As hypothesized, there was no variation of scores on the Identification Questionnaire that could be attributed to a student's sex.

A One-way Anova was conducted to determine whether significant variation of answers (total score) to the Identification Questionnaire was the result of family status of

the students. As predicted, the results of a One-way Anova showed no significant variation due to family status, $F(4, 209)=.70$, $p>.05$ (See Table 2.).

A final One-way Anova was conducted to detect whether significant variation of answers (total score) on the Identification Questionnaire was the result of students attending different schools. As hypothesized, the results of the One-way Anova show there was a significant variation between the results of the questionnaire and the school $(F=(6, 207)=2.5$, $p<.05$; see Table 3). A follow-up multiple range test (Student-Newmann-Kuels) showed a significant variation in scores on the Questionnaire for Schools 2, 3, 6 and 7 (See Table 4). School 2, 6, and 7 were significantly different at the .05 level from School 3. Schools 2, 6, and 7 had a lower mean score of the questionnaire which suggest students had an overall more positive attitude (or high identification) towards the schools they attend. School 3 had the highest mean score of the questionnaire. This suggests that students who attend School 3 may had a poorer attitude (or lower identification) towards the school they attend. In addition, this suggests that the variation in scores on the Questionnaire can be explained in part by differences between the schools attended.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients were calculated to determine if there was a relationship between total score on the Identification Questionnaire, subscales scores, Absences, Marks, Grade Four Achievement Scores in reading, math, language, and overall achievement. (See Table 5 for the matrix of correlation coefficients'.) A probability level

of .0001 or higher was adopted. The probablity level of .0001 was chosen because when doing multiple comparisions within a single data set, the probability of Type I error is much larger than the nominal alpha level associated with each individual comparision. As seen in Table 5 there are several significant results.

Marks, a participation indicator, correlated with several scales of the Identification Questionnaire. Scale 2, Sense of Belonging, correlates with Marks but only at an .005 significance level. Scale 3, Responsibility and Commitment, correlates with marks at the .0001 significance level. However, both scales show a weak relationship with Marks. Surprisingly, Marks and Perception of Teacher, Scale 1, are not related.

The total score on the Identification Questionnaire was significantly related to Marks. The strength of the relationship, .79, is strong (Cormier & Bounds, 1974). This suggests there is a correlation between identification with school and Marks. There was no correlation between total score on the Identification Questionnaire and Absences. Yet, there is a significant but weak correlation between Marks and Absences. There is no correlation between Total Score on the Identification Questionnaire and subscales and the Grade Four Achievement scores in reading, math, language and overall achievement. In this study, Marks and Grade FourAchievement indicators are significant by but negatively correlated. Other significant results are not pertinent to this study's purposes.

Table 1

T-Test for Variance of Total Score on Identification Questionnaire
Attributed to Sex

Variable	# of Cases	Mean	SD	SE of Mean
Male	113	60.37	14.63	1.376
Female	101	58.28	11.54	1.149

*Significant at the .05 level
*2-tailed Significance

Table 2

One-way Analysis of Variance of the Total Score on Identification Questionnaire for
Family Status

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	P
Between Groups	4	497.65	124.41	.70	.59
Within Groups	209	37030.93	177.18		
Total	213	37528.58			

*Significant at the .05 level
*2-Tailed Significance

Table 3

<u>One-way Analysis of Variance of Total Score on Identification Questionnaire for School Attended</u>

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	F Ratio	P
Between Groups	6	2531.12	421.86	2.50	.02*
Within Groups	207	34991.45	169.06		

*Significant at the .05 level
*2-tailed significance

Table 4

<u>Follow-Up Multiple Range Test on Total Score of Identification Questionnaire and Schools</u>

		S c h 2	S c h 6	S c h 7	S c h 5	S c h 1	S c h 4	S c h 3
Mean	School							
54.27	2							
56.00	6							
56.52	7							
60.07	5							
60.86	1							
61.76	4							
68.00	3	*	*	*				

* Significant at the .05 level.
*2-tailed significance.

Table 5

Correlation Coefficients

	Total Score	Subscale 1	Subscale 2	Subscale 3	Marks
Subscale 1	.79*				
Subscale 2	.80*	.39*			
Subscale 3	.76*	.35*	.55*		
Marks	.79*	.13	.19**	.31*	
Absences	.08	.02	.09	.10	.26*
Math	-.07	-.04	.01	-.17	-.65*
Reading	-.08	-.05	-.13	-.14	-.61*
Language	-.05	.03	.02	-.12	-.65*
Overall Achievement	-.09	-.04	-.02	-.15	-.69*

	Absences	Math	Reading	Language	Overall Achievement
Subscale 1					
Subscale 2					
Subscale 3					
Absences					
Marks					
Math	-.11				
Reading	-.12	.65*			
Language	-.11	.75	.77*		
Overall Achievement	-.11	.87*	.87*	.91*	
Total Score	.08	-.07	.08	-.05	-.08

*Significant level at .0001 / 2-tailed Significance
**Significant level at .005 / 2-tailed Significance

Part II Qualitative Results

This section describes the analysis of fourteen interviews with grade six students. The analysis of is divided into six themes with subcategories within each theme. Summary statements conclude this section.

A) Perception of Teachers and Principals

The relationship between a teacher, principal and student appears to depend on the personal interaction between teacher and student. If teacher and principal communicates to a student respect and care for his/her needs, students are excited about learning.

General Attitude Toward Teachers

All students interviewed thought of a favorite teacher. Seven of fourteen of the students stated they enjoyed all their teachers and cannot remember a teacher they entirely disliked. These students did not like certain behaviors of teachers. As one student reflected, "Well, I don't dislike any of my teachers, but I don't like it when they force you to do things." All students felt that they had gotten along with most teachers they have had so far in school.

Positive Statements Regarding Teachers

Well-liked teachers are perceived as helpful. They took the time to help or explain an academic and/or a personal problem to a student. As described by one interviewee, a

favorite teacher is someone who " . . . helped you along the way." Many teachers considered helpful were also viewed as kind and thoughtful. Students said well-liked teachers took an interest in them as a person. One student described the personal interest his favorite teacher took in him as, "It feels like he's just looking at you." Such teachers wanted to know what students were interested in outside school and seriously considered their opinions. Students felt at ease sharing information with these teachers. Many students described the relationship with their favorite teachers as that of a "friend." Teachers treated each student with respect. A student summarized it well when she described her favorite teacher as, "My favorite teacher is not like your best friend you play with but like a friend that is like a good neighbor."

Favorite teachers were also considered excellent instructors. Students commented on how much they learned academically, but also about life. One student described how his teacher always took the time to explain why certain academic subjects would be important in the future. The curriculum was made interesting and teachers considered students' opinion regarding activities. As well as excellent instructors, well-liked teachers disciplined fairly. They treated everyone equally and consistently in their discipline. The demands by the teachers were seen as reasonable. As one student summarized it, "If you got into trouble you deserved it."

Negative Statements Regarding Teachers

Two consistent themes emerged regarding unfavorable statements about teachers.

Yelling was the first theme. One student described it as, "She always blew her lid..... she'd get mad really easy and start yelling at the kid." Students said that teachers who yelled excessively made them feel uncomfortable. An interviewee expressed her discomfort by stating, "You just wanted to change class." Sometimes students were not certain why or what was expected when they were yelled at by the teacher. In addition, students felt embarrassed when teachers yelled at them. These teachers are seen as unfair and mean. Not surprisingly, students did not like the teachers. As one student said, "I didn't really want to be around her." Students also felt teachers who yelled did not have control of the class, and that they did not learn as much as in other classes. The relationship between disliked teachers and students was summed up by one interviewee as, "Not so good."

The second theme centered on unreasonable expectations of students. Students felt teachers who did not help expected too much from students. Many students expressed the sentiment of "too many rules." These teachers were viewed as unreasonable because they did not help the student. As one student said regarding an unreasonable teacher, "I always got hard work and no help." Assignments were considered harder, and students stated that they became easily frustrated.

Positive Statements Regarding Principals

Many themes that arose with teachers arose with principals. Principals who were liked knew students' names, and as one student stated, "knows you in a good way." Principals who were favored were visible not only during recess and lunch, but were

involved in the school. As one interviewee said about her favorite principal, "He's always around." "Like if not, not learning how to be a better principal or something, he's always around most of the time." Good principals visited or taught in classrooms and were directly involved in extra curricular activities. These principals were perceived as friendly and approachable. Well-liked principals not only listened to students but also disciplined students fairly. As summed up by one student, "The punishment always fits the crime."

Negative Statements Regarding Principals

Principals who were seen negatively were not visible in the school. The students did not know them and perceived them as unfriendly. Also, similar to students' opinions about teachers principals who had unreasonable rules in the school were not liked. Students felt rules like "no throwing balls against outside school walls" were irrational. Like teachers, principals who yelled were not liked. As one student said, "He yells and he's mean."

B) Sense of Belonging

This question was not easy for students to answer. The interviewees needed time to think about their answer. This may suggest that many students have not thought about whether they feel a sense of belonging in school.

Generally, a sense of belonging in school was attributed to a student's peers. Students who felt they had a sense of belonging felt they had many friends in school. As

one student said about friends and a sense of belonging, "They make you feel wanted."

Two interviewees who were older because they had repeated a grade were not bothered

by the fact they were older. Again, they felt they had friends in the classroom, and they felt

they had a sense of belonging in school. Those students who felt they did not have a sense

of belonging in school had difficulties with peer relationships. One student expressed her

feelings about belonging by saying, "Cause there are lots of people who really do not like

me." These students had problems getting along with others. Verbal fighting was the

most common problem between friends. This fighting made the students feel like they did

not "fit in" at school.

When students were asked whether a teacher or teachers play a role in their sense

of belonging in school, the general answer was no. When asked why teachers did not

contribute to their sense of belonging, the students referred to their peers or were not able

to state why.

C) Sense of Responsibility and Commitment

Learning Environment

All but two of the students interviewed enjoyed school. These two students both

had great difficulties reading and found school extremely difficult. One of these two

students said, "I hate school." These two students enjoyed non academic subjects such as

art or P.E. and extracurricular activities.

Variety and fun were two themes that arose that made learning enjoyable. Extracurricular activities were also part of an enjoyable time at school. Enjoyable subjects were ones in which students did well, "It is easy for me," and there was variety within the subject, "We do some hard things and some easy things and some fun things." Another student described her favorite subject as "kinda challenging and it's not too challenging, it's like in between." Students found the subject interesting and therefore, they were enthusiastic about completing assignments. Math was mentioned by ten of the fourteen interviewees as a favorite subject.

Disliked subjects were ones in which students did not do well. They were easily frustrated. A common comment was "It's hard for me." Subjects they also disliked were boring. Boring was defined as repetitive (e.g., dinosaurs' units for three consecutive years), or not applicable to students' interests (e.g., third class levers). Students said they wavered in their commitment to these subjects, by not trying as hard or giving up.

Marks and Working Hard

Commitment and responsibility were discussed in terms of working hard and marks. All students recited what it meant to work hard: "Do all your homework," "Pay attention in class," "Try your best," "Finish assignments," and "Review your work." Though students knew what it meant to work hard, the difference between students lay in was their commitment to doing this. This commitment was manifested in how the students approached low marks, studying for tests, and homework.

When discussing marks, all students were aware of their marks in each subject and their progress in each subject. Almost all the students had their personal standard for what was considered a good mark for themselves. For example, one student maintained an A average in all her marks except math. She had difficulty with math and considered a "B" in math an excellent mark for herself. Another student felt a C plus average was very good for himself. If students received a lower mark than their personal standards, they were disappointed and/or upset. As one student said, "I don't like to get lower than 80% on a test. I don't like it." However, students reacted differently to how they went about improving marks. There were generally two ways students tried to improve their marks. Some students set personal goals. They organized what they needed to do and followed through on their commitment to improve marks. These students seem to have learning strategies in place to reach their goals. They knew how to review, find out what the teacher wanted, and receive extra help from parents and teachers. Other students set goals to improve a low mark but wavered on the commitment to follow through. Some students appeared not to have strategies to improve their marks. They were not organized. One student said that she tried to improve her marks by, "memorize everything." Some same students appeared not to care. It seems that those students who were responsible and committed to improving marks, have the ability and strategies to do so.

Students learn to set goals for themselves from various sources. Some students learned from past teachers who actively worked on goal-setting with them. One student

reported that he won an award from his teacher for reaching his goal. These students

continued to use goal setting as a strategy, even if their present teacher did not

emphasized goal setting. Other students learned goal setting from coaches on sport teams.

One student learned about goal setting from her ice-skating coach. This student applied

this strategy to her schoolwork. Many of these students found the idea of setting goals

very satisfying and a good way to motivate them not only academically but personally.

There were several approaches to studying for tests. Similar to students' approach

to improving marks, students' approach to studying for tests differed in terms of

strategies. These students reviewed daily, created their own tests, and were quizzed by

their parents or peers. These students had an organized, systematic manner in

approaching tests. Other students tried to memorize everything before a test or had no

organized approach. Two students refused to study for tests because they "got stressed

out."

Students differentiated between studying for tests and homework. They saw these

activities as separate. All students claimed to do their homework all the time, except one

student who freely admitted he did not always do it. When students asked if they ever did

not complete homework assignments, some students did admit that they often left

assignments incomplete. Some stated they sometimes forgot to bring it home or just did

not finish it. Other students never forgot homework or never failed to complete it because

their parents always monitored homework. These parents also appear to help students

study for tests. Some parents sent notes if the student had difficulty with the work and asked to assist the student.

D) Parents

All interviewees said that their parents felt school was very important. However, how parents expressed this attitude to their children varied. Again, parents' interaction and communication with students appeared to influence students.

Parent Communication Regarding School

Two patterns of parent communication emerged as reported by the interviewees. There were parents who discussed school with their children every day. Parents always asked about homework, what was assigned, and if the students needed assistance or help obtaining learning materials. Many parents looked over the homework, helped study for tests, or provided extra material for projects. These parents knew when tests were occurring or when projects were due. Not only did parents take an interest in homework, but there was daily discussion about school in the home. Discussion, often around the dinner table, centered on events in school but also specifics about what the students were learning. Parents asked their children specifically about curriculum content and new skill attainment, about what the students liked or disliked. One student mentioned that his father bought some tapes on how to improve math skills. Both father and the student sat and listened to the tapes, and tried to learn some new skills. These parents took an active interest in what the students were doing in school.

Other parents were reported by interviewees to take an interest in school; however, discussion was limited to homework or humorous events that occurred in school. There was no discussion regarding specific learning and curriculum. Often the parents only wanted to know if the student completed his/her homework assignments. One student stated, "Not much, 'cause they're usually busy." These parents seem to become involved in discussion about school if there was a problem. For example, one student reported she came home crying about events that occurred at school and remembers speaking to her mom only then about school. There seems to be limited communication in such instances. Four of the five students who reported limited parent communication had the lowest grades of the fourteen interviewees.

Parent Communication Regarding Future Plans.

Communication between interviewees and parents regarding future plans followed the same pattern as communication regarding school. Some parents discussed the future educational plans with students while other rarely did so. Parents who discussed school on a regular basis did talk to thier children regarding the future. Discussions between parents and children regarding future plans did not occur daily but occured frequently enough for students to remember details of conversations. Some parents shared their own experiences or careers, while others discussed the economic implications regarding poor school achievement or no post secondary education. These students were asked by their parents what they would like to do in the future. Other interviewees reported talking

about educational plans, but this discussion was limited to whether they were going to attend post secondary school.

Parents and Assistance

All the students reported that they could ask for assistance from their parents if they needed help. Mothers were reported as helping most with homework, but if their dad was better at one subject then the student would go to him for assistance. However, as noted the parents who communicated more about school with their child provided more assistance.

E) Peers

It appears that peers do not have a significant influence on a student's approach to learning or learning strategies. They do help each other with schoolwork. As mentioned, peers and a sense of belonging in school are related.

Peer Activities

All interviewees but three reported having many friends. The three students that reported poor peer relationship all said they have one friend they did activities with in and out of school. Friendships centered on similar interests, such as sports.

Peers and Assistance

All students had at least one person in the class whom they asked for help if they needed it. Peers helped explain assignments or helped explain how to solve a problem. The students interviewed all did their homework on their own, but helped each other study for tests. They all reported having at least one person to call if they forgot homework assignments.

Peers and Future Plans

Generally, students did not talk among their peers about future educational plans. Typical answers from interviewees were, "Not really." They did not know what many of their friends would like to do when they finish high school. However, five of the fourteen students did talk to one friend, usually their best friend, about what they wanted to do after high school. This discussion took place between best friends because they had similar interests. However, even between best friends, this was not a dominant topic of conversation.

F) Future Plans

All students reported they planned to finish high school. All students were aware of the importance of graduating from high school in order to obtain a good job.

Future Goals

Every student wanted to try to attend university or college. One reason cited for

going to college was that someone cannot get a good paying job without university or college education. A typical response regarding questions about the importance of post secondary school was " . . . to get a good job and stuff." Another frequently cited reason was "... my mom and dad want me to go." Two students wanted to go to college because their parents did not finish high school and saw the negative economic consequences of dropping out of school. One of these interviewees mentioned how her mother talked to her about finishing school regularly. This mother expressed how difficult it was for her to get a good job because she did not finish high school.

Interestingly, not one student mentioned that they wanted to go to school because they enjoyed learning and being in school. It appeared that the motivation for students to go to college or university was economic.

All the students had some idea of a future career choice. However, there were differences in students' knowledge about their career choice. Students who differed in strategies on how to improve their marks, also differed in knowledge regarding their career choice. Some students knew exactly what they needed to do to become what they wanted. They knew whether had to go to college or university and for how long from doing research projects or parents providing information on a career. These were some of the same students who knew how to go about improving their marks. Other students had no idea what they had to do to become what they wanted. They had not researched, or even asked their parents about a career choice. Some were not even sure what their

parents did on their jobs. All students mentioned they must obtain good grades so that they can do what they wanted when they finish high school.

Influences of Career Choices

As expected, the career choices of the students were varied. Two themes emerged as influences on career choices. Media, especially television and movies, were cited as influences on their choice of career. Some careers were portrayed as exciting or interesting to them on television or in the movies. For example, one student wanted to be a archeologist because he liked the Indiana Jones series of movies. The students stated they had an idea of what a job is like from what they saw. The other reason cited was that the students liked what their parents did so they thought it might be a good career choice. Parents talked about their jobs or had taken students to their jobs, so the students knew what these jobs were like. Again, parents who appeared to communicate with their children about school, talked to their children about their career choice. One student expressed his interest in being a microbiologist because he thought his dad did interesting work. His father took the student to work every Saturday, and the student helped his father in the lab. It appears that these interviewees entertained caree choices limited by what they were exposed to through their parents or the media.

School Curriculum and Career Choices

Generally, students reported that there was no formal discussion about different types of careers or their future career choice in school. Some students in one school

reported doing a library project on a career. At times, there was an informal discussion in class regarding future career choices. This often centered on obtaining good grades to be able to attend college or university.

Students were ambivalent regarding whether they wanted formal curriculum regarding careers. There was no clear theme or pattern of opinion. Some students thought it would be interesting while others had no opinion or thought it would be more appropriate at high school.

G) Summary

Examining all the data, a general conclusion can be made that among grade six students there are already different patterns of personal interaction and communication between students and teachers and parents. These patterns of personal interaction and communication appear to influence students in how they approach learning, study for tests, and do homework. It appear that grade six students already have preferences regarding how teachers interact with them. Parents' communication regarding school appears to differ across students. Peers' influence seemed limited to students' sense of belonging. Parent and teachers seem to have an influence on school-related goals, while peers influence students' feeling of "fitting in."

Chapter 5

Discussion

This final chapter includes a summary of the problem and method used to complete this study. There is a discussion of the following: Results, Implications for Finn's Participation/Identification Model, and Future Research.

<u>Summary of Problem and Method</u>

The research problem examined in this study was: Do participation indicators (Marks, Absences and Grade Four Achievement scores) correlate with Identification indicators (Identification with School, Perception of Teacher, Sense of Belonging and Responsibility and Commitment) for Grade Six students. Marks, Absences and Grade Four Achievement scores were collected from students' Permanent Record Cards. These indicators were statistically correlated with students' answers to a five-point Likert Scale Identification Questionnaire(which included three subscales). In addition, fourteen interviews were conducted to enhance understanding of grade six students' experience of school and enhance understanding of the quantitative results.

<u>Discussion of Results</u>

Results of the study are divided into two parts: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative results included statistical analysis of an Identification Questionnaire and participation indicators. Generally, there seems to be a pattern of participation and

identification indicators established by grade six. Identification is correlated to school performance as defined by teacher-assigned marks. Therefore, students' marks may reflect to a certain extent how students' are bonding with school.

There was no differences in answering the questionnaire because of association with a student's sex or family status. There was a variation in answers according to school location. This result is not surprising since schools vary in a principal's leadership, teaching and non-teaching personnel, and student population. Such variations may affect students' reaction to school, and perhaps their bonding with school.

The three scales of the Identification Questionnaire are all significantly correlated. This suggests that Perception of Teacher, Sense of Belonging and Responsibility and Commitment are all related to Identification with school. This suggests further that Finn's participation/identification model is correct in some of its assumptions. However, the Identification Questionnaire is limited in measurement of identification indicators. There are many other psychological indicators that can be used in combination with the present scales to measure identification with school.

Marks and Total Score of Identification Questionnaire were strongly correlated. If Marks is a measure of school performance, it not surprising that these indicators are highly correlated. These results are similar to past research on participation and school performance. Also, correlated was Sense of Belonging and Commitment and

Responsibility with Marks. However, this correlation was weak. This may be due to the low internal consistency reliability of the scales. There was no correlation between Perception of Teacher and Marks. This suggests students' perception of the teacher may not be dependent on how a teacher evaluates the student. As seen in the results of qualitative analysis, students evaluate the relationship with their teacher based on how they are treated. This has implications for teachers and their role in the bonding process for students.

There was also a correlation between Absences and Marks, but not a correlation between Absences and Total Score. Research on the role of absences in bonding with school is mixed. Absences have been used as a predictor of dropout and as a characteristic of the student who drops out. As Lloyd (1978) stated, perhaps absenteeism is a psychological symptom of a gradual withdrawal from school. The correlation between Marks and Absenteeism may suggest the beginning of this psychological withdrawal from school. Perhaps in higher grades absenteeism becomes a reflection of identification with school.

There was no correlation between Achievement scores and Total Score of the Identification Questionnaire and the subscales and the Grade Four Achievement scores in reading, math, language, and overall achievement. This is a surprising result since past research studies have found significant results using achievement scores. Interestingly, in this study Marks and Grade Four Achievement indicators are significantly but negatively

correlated. This suggests Marks do not reflect Achievement scores. In addition, this result may suggest that Marks is an indicator of school performance rather than Achievement. However, one must be cautious with this statement since the Achievement scores used in this study are based solely on Grade 4 achievement results.

The qualitative results from the fourteen interviews suggested several patterns that present a more complex picture of identification with school. Generally, personal interaction and communication of the importance of school-related goals by teachers and parents appeared to have a profound influence on students and their approach to school.

As mentioned students evaluate teachers based on their personal interactions with the students. This is consistent with past research. A key to enjoying school is on the relationship students have with a teacher. This relationship is based on respect, fair treatment and excellent instruction. The relationship the teacher has with a student may have impact on bonding with school. Well-liked teachers may influence students' attitudes towards school and perhaps bonding with school. Similar findings were found for the principal. How students perceive a principal may have larger significance since principals have the responsibility of leadership of the school and can determine the general "feeling" of the school.

It appears a sense of belonging for students was based on peer relatiosnhips. Students felt they belonged in school if they had positive friendships. Interviewees were

not clear on the role of the teacher and their sense of belonging. Peers do begin to have a larger influence than adults at the developmental age of grade six students .

All students knew how and what it meant to be responsible and committed to school. The difference between students was in their ability to follow-through on their commitment and responsibility. It appears that students differed in the strategies in approaching their goals. Students who were committed knew how to reach their goals, and followed through on personal goals. These students were also strongly supported by their parents who assisted with studying, and helped with homework. As Kerr (1986) recommends, perhaps students need to be taught basic strategies to improve how they approach their goals, since this may have implications for bonding with school.

All students said their parents thought school was important; however, how this attitude was expressed differed among parents. It is evident in this study that there are different communication patterns between parents and children. Those parents who supported their children communicated more about school with their children. This is clearly articulated by students in grade six. Walberg (1986) and other research studies suggest that parent/child communication is a powerful indicator of achievement. Interestingly, four of the students interviewed who had the lowest grades indicated poor communication with parents. Perhaps parent/student communication plays a much deeper role in bonding. This is stated cautiously since there was no parent/child communication indicator on the Identification Questionnaire.

All students wanted to finish high school primarily for economic reasons. Students knew they could not get a good paying job without a college or university degree. Interestingly, economics or parental pressure appeared to be the sole motivator for going to college or university. Enjoyment of learning was not mentioned. This may be a reflection of the students' developmental age. Perhaps for students it is not "cool" to like school. Perhaps enjoyment of learning is not an area grade six students have ever discussed or perhpas it is too much to expect from grade six students. This area needs exploration before more conclusions are made. All grade six students interviewed believed they needed to finish high school and go to college.

Career influences on the students were limited to media or parental influence. This suggests that grade six students have limited knowledge regarding careers. Perhaps expanding the knowledge of students' career choices through a curriculum may help students see the relevance of school-related goals. Therefore, students may identify more with school.

Identification/Participation Model

Generally, this study confirms some aspects of the Participation/ Identification Model developed by Finn (1986). The participation indicator, Marks, is related to identification with school. Perception of Teacher, Sense of Belonging, and Commitment and Responsibility are related to each other and to identification with school. The qualitative results highlight the complexity of these relationships and how teachers and

parents have an influence in bonding with school. It appears that by grade six students' experiences have already established patterns of participation and identification with school and those are related to teacher and parent influences. However, Finn fails to include parent and teacher influences in his participation/identification model. To develop effective strategies to increase bonding with school, this model must include teacher and parental influences as part of the bonding process. Teachers can play a role in identification with school by developing positive relationships with students, teaching strategies for goal attainment, and instruction on career choices. Parents express an attitude toward school in how they communicate with their child. Parents may need to be educated in how to communicate to their child the importance of school through their attitude and actions. Therefore, Finn's model must include teacher and parent roles for effective analysis of the participation/identification process for a student.

Future Research

This study is very limited in its scope and implications. Further research in the following areas will help and enhance knowledge identification and participation in school:

1. To date there is no standardized Identification Questionnaire. A standardized questionnaire will help establish criteria that all researchers can use to further understand bonding with school. This standardized questionnaire must contain subscales like perception of teacher, sense of belonging, commitment and responsibility and other indicators such as parent/child communication to help in a detailed assessment of the

students' identification with school.

2. Replication of this study with a standardized questionnaire should be undertaken in other school districts in British Columbia and other provinces. This replication should include standardized achievement scores for several grades (not just grade 4) to see if there are similar or different results to this study. This will also help develop a database of information for grade six students and how they experience school. Once this database is, established researchers will have a standard to help identify students who deviate from the norm.

3. Research using triads of parents, students, and teachers will help identify patterns of experiences, attitudes and beliefs that affect identification with school. This will allow also for the development of intervention strategies at three levels: parent, child and teacher.

4. Further research should examine the role of peers in bonding with school. How do peers influence bonding with school? How can peers play an effective role in increasing bonding with school with their friends? This area needs to be examined more closely.

5. Research must examine the role of the principal and identification with school. Schools may be examined in terms of how leadership styles differ in schools to create a feeling of belongingness within the school.

6. Longitudinal study of identification/participation of students should be undertaken. It would be of value to follow these grade six students until the students withdraw or graduate from school. This would allow researchers to study changes in students in bonding with school and provide insight into the withdrawal process.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Permanent Record Card

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Province of British Columbia

This card is prescribed for use in B.C. public schools and is authorized for use in Group 2 independent schools.

Form

Date of Birth ___|___|___|___ Year Month Day

Surname _____

S.I.N. _____|_____|_____

Given Names _____ Home Phone _____

JUNIOR SECONDARY (8–10)

Subjects	19___ 19___		19___ 19___		19___ 19___		19___ 19___	
	Course	L.G.	Course	L.G.	Course	L.G.	Course	L.G.
English								
Social Studies								
Physical Education								
Health/Guidance								
Mathematics								
Science								
Consumer Education								
Days Absent								

SENIOR SECONDARY (11-12)

Form 2

Course Grade No.	19___ 19___			19___ 19___			19___ 19___		
	No.	L.G.		Course	No.	L.G.	Course	No.	L.G
English									
Social Studies									
Physical Education									
Consumer Education									
Days Absent									

Summary Statement _____

Program and Program Status _____

Principal's Signature _____   Date _____

Pupil's Surname _____ Given Names _____

BRITISH COLUMBIA
PERMANENT SCHOOL RECORD

Surname _____

Given Names _____

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Sex _____ Birthplace _____ Parent(s) or Guardian(s) _____

Date of birth _____ |ʸ _____ |ᴹ _____ |ᴰ _____ Verified by _____ Position _____

Pupil's Address _____ Home Phone _____

ENTERED FROM _____

SCHOOL	No. AND DISTRICT	Entry Date	G PL.	Transfer Date	G.PL.	WITHDRAWAL DATE AND REASON

STANDARDIZED TESTS

Name of Test	Form	Date	Subtest	%ile	Subtest	%ile	Subtest	%ile		

ELEMENTARY (K–7)

School Year	Grade or Program		Days Absent
	K		
	1		
	2		
	3		

		L. Arts	Math.	Science	Soc. St.	P.E.	Art	Music		
	4									
	5									
	6									
	7 (L.G. only)									

Special Programs
or
Comments _____

PSC ...

APPENDIX B

Data Gathering Sheet

<u>DATA COLLECTION SHEET</u>

Name of Student
(First name and last name initial)_____

The following data can be taken off the PR card (except grade 6 marks):

<u>**MARKS(averages)**</u>

	Grade 4	**Grade 5**	**Grade 6**
Math	_____	_____	_____
Language	_____	_____	_____
Science	_____	_____	_____
Socials	_____	_____	_____

<u>**ABSENCES**</u>

K:____   Gr. 1:____   Gr. 2:____   Gr. 3 ____   Gr.4____   Gr. 5____

The following information will have to be taken from the file:

<u>CANADIAN ACHIEVEMENT TEST (GRADE FOUR TEST)</u>

Please indicate overall achievement in :

Math:_____   Language:_____

Reading:_____   Overall Achievement:_____

APPENDIX C

Identification Questionnaire

Student Survey

Please answer every statement by circling the most appropriate response.

17. I feel proud of my school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18. If I had a choice I would choose to go to this school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19. I don't feel school is important.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20. I have to have good grades in school to get anywhere in life.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21. I really want to go to college/university.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22. I often have difficulty with school work.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
23. It bothers me if I am late handing in assignments.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
24. It is important to my friends to have school assignments finished.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25. I stick with a math problem until I have solved it.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26. It is my responsibility to work hard in school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
27. I try my best to do well at school.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
28. I give up if a school assignment is hard.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

29. I am a   Boy   Girl

30. I live with   Father   Mother   Step— Parent   Other

Mother's Occupation:

Father's Occupation:

ID Number:

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Please answer every statement by circling the most appropriate response.

1. My teacher lets me suggest ideas and
    activities for the class.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2. My teacher really cares about
    how well I do.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3. It is important to my teacher that I understand
    my homework assignments.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4. My teacher treats me fairly in this school.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5. My teacher asks me to help other students.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

6. My teacher cares about how I feel.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

7. I know I can get help from my teacher when
    I need it.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

8. My teacher listens to my ideas.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

9. My teacher tries hard to answer all my questions.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

10. My parents feel school is important.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

11. I feel like I "fit in" at this school.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

12. I act up in my class.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

13. I don't stay away from school unless I am
    really sick.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

14. I stay away from school whenever I can.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

15. I participate in lots of school activities.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

16. My friends really like this school.   Strongly Agree Agree   Not Sure   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Questions for the Interview

Learning
1. Tell me what school is like this year.
Probes: What are your favourite subjects? What do you dislike? How are your marks? If good(alright): How do you get your good marks? If bad (not great): How would you improve them? Does that bother you that you don't get great marks?

Homework
2. I am curious to know how often you do homework.
Probes: How much time do you spend on your homework? Do you have a set time you do homework? Are the assignments easy? Do you ever not do your homework? (How many times? What happens when your sick?) Do you understand what to do? I was wondering if anyone helps you with your homework? (Friends? Family?) I wondering how much time you spend studying for tests?

Peers
3. Tell me about your friends.
Probes: What things do you like to do together in school? Do you help each other with school work? What do your friends do together outside of school? Tell me if your friends know what they plan to do after they finish school. Do you feel like you "fit it?" Does your teacher help you "fit in."

Teachers
4. Tell me about one of your favourite teachers you have had in school. (Please do not use any names of teachers.) What made/him/her your favourite? How would you describe the your relationship with that teacher (helping, fair strict, learn alot, teaches well)?
Probes: Are there any you disliked? What do they do that makes you dislike him /her? How would you describe your relationship with that teacher? What do you think about the principal?

Parents
5. I am wondering if you talk to your parents about school.
Probes: If yes: What kinds of things do you talk about? Do you talk about other things besides school? What do they say about your school? If no: What do you talk about with your parents?

Future
6. I am curious if you plan to go on with school after high school?
Probes: How far are you planning to go in school? You are now "x" years old, when you are "x' what do you think you will be doing? What career do you think you would like ? Do you talk about this with your
parents? Friends? In school? Would you like to?

General Probes: Use reflective listening and the general probes
"Tell me more about.....," "Why is that?"" Why do you feel that way?"

APPENDIX E

List of Codes

List of Codes

Learning

/subjects+	Subjects students enjoy learning.
/subjects-	Subjects students disliked.
/working hard	Statements regarding how students work hard.
/goals	Statements regarding how students set goals.
/goals, learned	Statements regarding how students learned about goals.
/strategies marks.	Statements regarding strategies for improving
/strategies, test	Statements regarding strategies for studying for tests.
/homework	Statements regarding homework.
/homework, assist	Statements regarding who helps students with homework.
/pressure	Statements regarding students feeling pressure in school.
/marks	Statements describing marks.
/marks, feeling	Statements regarding how students felt about their marks.

Peers

/activities	Statements regarding what students did with peers.
/assistance	Statements regarding how peers helped.
/future, peer	Statements regarding peers' future plans.

Sense of Belonging

/person   Statements regarding who helped students feel
                                 like they belong in school.

/belonging+   Statements regarding a positive feeling of belonging.

/belonging-   Statements regarding a negative feeling of
                                 belonging.

Teachers

/teachers+   Positive statements about teachers.

/teachers-   Negative statements about teachers.

/relationship   Statements regarding relationship between
                                 teachers and students.

/discipline, teach   Statements regarding how teachers discipline.

/principal+   Positive statements regarding principals.

/principal-   Negative statements regarding principals.

/relationship   Statements regarding relationship between
                                 principal and students.

/discipline, princ   Statements regarding how principals discipline.

Parents

/communication   Statements regarding parents communication
                                 regarding school.

/assist   Statements regarding how parents assist
students.

/future, parent   Statements regarding parents and their
students future plans.

Future Plans

/level of education	Statements regarding students' future level of education.
/career goal	Statements regarding career goals.
/career influence	Statements regarding influence on career choice.
/career knowledge	Statements regarding knowledge of chosen career.
/career curriculum	Statements regarding school curriculum and careers.

APPENDIX F

Parent Permission Form

Simon Fraser University
Faculty of Education
Burnaby, BC
V5A 1S6

Counselling Program

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The Abbotsford School District and the principal of your school have given permission for me, a graduate student from Simon Fraser University, Faculty of Education to conduct a research project. I am interested in the attitudes and beliefs grade six students have towards learning, teachers, homework, peers and future educational plans. This project is entitled "Opting Out: Grade Six Student Participation in School." Previous research suggests students attitudes and beliefs in elementary school effect their future education plans. Parents, teachers, principals and peers influence positive attitudes and beliefs.

Your child will be asked to complete a pen and paper questionnaire and some children will be asked to participate in a short audio-taped interview. You and your child may, of course, choose not to participate at all. If you allow your child to participate at this time, you and/or your child can withdraw at any time later.

All information provided by your child during this project will be held in confidence by me the researcher. Your child's responses to a questionnaire and possible interview will be coded so your child's name will not appear on data files. All questionnaires and audio-tapes will be kept under lock and key throughout the project. In addition, questionnaires and interview audiotapes will be destroyed after completion of the project. At no time will anyone at the school have access to the information your child provides. Your child's anonymity is thus assured.

If you have any concerns about the project or wish a copy of the research results you may contact me, Adriana Belsher at 850-7960. You also may communicate with the principal or Dr. Peter Coleman (Faculty of Education) at 291-3622.
Please complete the attached form and return it in the envelope to school.
Thank you for your assistance

Yours Truly

Adriana Belsher
SFU Graduate Student

OPTING OUT: GRADE SIX STUDENT PARTICIPATION
CONSENT FORM

I understand the information that my child will provide through
questionnaire and a possible interview will be used exclusively for the research project
entitled: **Opting Out: Grade Six Student Participation**, about which I have received
information about and in which I agree to let my child participate.

The terms upon which my child will provide the information sought here are that the
information will be given an identifying code to ensure anonymity. No-one at the school
or in the district will ever be able to identify the information provided through the
questionnaire or the interview.

School Name: _____

Print Name (Child):   _____

Child's Signature: _____

Print Name (Parent):   _____

Parent Signature: _____