

A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC, INDEPENDENT,
FREE, AND CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENTS
REGARDING SELECTED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES
IN THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
OF MICHIGAN

By

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ABSTRACT

A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PUBLIC, INDEPENDENT, FREE, AND CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENTS REGARDING SELECTED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES IN THE PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF MICHIGAN

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The purpose of the study was to obtain information about the perceptions of Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic Elementary School parents regarding selected programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools of Michigan. With this information public school administrators might develop future programs and practices which would better meet the expectations of parents from the four types of schools concerning public elementary education in their communities.

While much research has been done about public elementary education from the perspective of educators, little research has been done regarding Public Elementary School parents' perceptions of public elementary education. Research concerning Independent, Free, and Catholic Elementary School parents' perceptions of public elementary education--except for two Gallup surveys--is virtually non-existent.

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To obtain information, questionnaires were mailed to 1,352 parents who sent their children to twenty-nine Michigan elementary schools located in Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Oakland, and Wayne counties. The study was limited to parents with children enrolled in grades one through six or who were enrolled in age-equivalent, non-graded, or multi-level groups within the four types of elementary schools.

Three hypotheses were formulated to assess information regarding parental perceptions. These were:

- I. There is a difference in the perceptions of parents included in this study (regardless of school type) between selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.
- II. There is a difference between the perceptions of parents from the four types of schools toward selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.
- III. There is an interaction between parent types and selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.

A factor analysis of the attitudinal statements included in the questionnaire showed that the concepts could be placed into three measures. The focus of the

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study was placed on two of the measures, subsequently designated the instructional process and discipline.

An analysis of variance procedure was used to interpret the data obtained from the questionnaires. This analysis showed an interaction between parent types and educational measures which was significant at the .05 level. No straightforward test of the first two hypotheses was possible because of the interaction between types and measures. The third hypothesis concerning the interaction between types and measures was supported.

Conclusions

1. Public Elementary School parents were not concerned with the concepts included in the questionnaire about recent instructional trends but were concerned with the concepts regarding teacher effectiveness in the classroom in the Public Elementary Schools.

2. Public Elementary School parents were concerned with concepts regarding disciplinary methods and standards in the Public Elementary Schools.

3. Independent Elementary School parents were concerned with the concepts included in the questionnaire regarding recent instructional trends but were not concerned with the concepts regarding teacher effectiveness in the classroom in the Public Elementary Schools.

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4. Independent Elementary School parents were not concerned with those concepts regarding disciplinary methods and standards in the Public Elementary Schools.

5. Free Elementary School parents were concerned with those concepts regarding recent instructional trends but were not concerned with the concepts regarding teacher effectiveness in the classroom in the Public Elementary Schools.

6. Free Elementary School parents were not concerned with those concepts regarding disciplinary methods and standards in the Public Elementary Schools.

7. Catholic Elementary School parents were not concerned with those concepts regarding recent instructional trends in the classroom, and they were not concerned with those concepts regarding teacher effectiveness in the classroom in the Public Elementary Schools.

8. Catholic Elementary School parents were not concerned with those concepts regarding disciplinary methods in the Public Elementary Schools but were concerned with the disciplinary standards of the Public Elementary Schools.

Recommendations

1. Public school administrators should conduct attitudinal surveys periodically to obtain information about the perceptions of Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic Elementary School parents regarding programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools.

2. Parents who send their children to Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic Elementary Schools should be encouraged to attend Public School meetings so that they may contribute information to public school administrators regarding programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools of their communities.

3. Prior to the introduction of new programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools, administrators should provide parents with information about them through conferences, workshops, and the news media.

4. Administrators should use the information obtained from these procedures to determine whether parents need information about school programs and practices, as well as whether they (the administrators) should develop new programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools.

5. Public school administrators should use available public relations services to help them use

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effectively the news media in their communities to inform parents about elementary school programs and practices. The Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA), affiliated with the Michigan Education Association, and the Information Services Office of the Michigan Department of Education provide public relations information to administrators. Moreover, in some Michigan communities private public relations firms are available to help local school administrators assess and develop public relations programs in their communities.

6. Parents should be encouraged to participate frequently in selected aspects of the development, implementation, and assessment of Public Elementary School programs and practices.

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print. Filmed as received.**

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

School administrators are concerned about the growing parental discontent with the Public Schools. Much has been written in periodicals and magazines about this discontent of parents with programs and practices. Indeed, one has only to read the daily newspaper to learn of problems related to these concerns. Some parents have doubts as to whether the Public Schools are capable of providing worthwhile programs for children. Even though these parents express dissatisfaction with the schools, many continue to send their children to them. Other parents, however, have abandoned the Public Schools, apparently believing that other types of schools can better fulfill their expectations for their children. These parents have withdrawn their children from the Public Schools and enrolled them in Non-Public Schools.

This flight from the Public to Non-Public Schools should not be underestimated. John H. Fischer, president of Teachers College, Columbia University, recently said

this about parental discontent with the Public Schools:
" . . . by the thousands they are removing their children
from the public schools and competing desperately and at
high cost for the limited places available in private
schools . . . " ¹

Further, it has been estimated in America's
twenty largest cities that four out of every ten whites
and one out of every ten Negroes have fled the Public
Schools for Non-Public Schools.² These withdrawal
figures are significant, despite the possibility that
they may also include numbers of children whose parents
are not dissatisfied with the Public Schools, but who
enroll their children in Non-Public Schools with program
offerings which they believe will satisfy their familial
needs. Whether numbers of parents continue to withdraw
their children from the Public Schools is of concern to
administrators. The need to obtain additional information
about parental perceptions of the Public Schools is
apparent.

¹John H. Fischer, "Who Needs Schools?" Saturday
Review, September 19, 1970, p. 78.

²Edward W. Brooke, "Education for Progress: Social
Change and the American School," National Association of
Secondary School Principals, LIII (May, 1969), 101.

Need for This Study

Administrators need information about parents' perceptions so that they will be aware of parental expectations about the schools and establish mutual communication for the exchange of ideas and the development of future programs and practices. Studies support the idea not only that parental attitudes improve when parents are involved in school affairs, but the schools have greater success in educating children.

Jablonsky reported that schools which have open doors to parents and community members have greater success in educating children.¹ Hess and Shipman reported that involving parents in school activities may assist the child in developing better images about school.² Furthermore, Cloward and Jones found parental involvement in school affairs to be positively correlated

¹Adelaide Jablonsky, "Some Trends in Education of the Disadvantaged," IRCD Bulletin, IV (March, 1968), 1-11, cited by Carol Lopate, et al., "Decentralization and Community Participation in Public Education," Review of Educational Research, XL (February, 1970), 142.

²Robert D. Hess and Virginia C. Shipman, "Maternal Attitude Toward the School and the Role of the Pupil: Some Social Class Comparisons" (paper prepared for the Fifth Work Conference on Curriculum and Teaching in Depressed Urban Areas, New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1966), cited by Lopate, et al., "Decentralization and Community Participation in Education."

with parents' evaluations of the importance of education and their attitudes toward the school as an institution.¹

While the foregoing discussion indicates a need for information about parental perceptions of public education, relatively little research has been done in this area. Few studies have been made regarding Public School parents' perceptions of the Public Schools, and even fewer studies have been done concerning types of Non-Public School parents' perceptions of the Public Schools. This lack of information prompted the writer to make this study.

To obtain information about parental perceptions, the writer selected parents with children in four types of elementary schools. These were Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic Schools.

Public Elementary School parents were included in the study because they represent the majority of parents who send children to Michigan elementary schools. Approximately 86 per cent of the children who are enrolled in Michigan elementary schools attend Public Schools. Public School enrollments have increased steadily over the years.

¹Richard A. Cloward and James A. Jones, "Social Class: Educational Attitudes and Participation," in Education in Depressed Areas, ed. by A. H. Passow (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963), pp. 190-216, cited by Lopate, et al., "Decentralization and Community Participation."

During the past five years, however, Public Elementary School enrollments have increased at a decreasing rate, as indicated in Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1.--Michigan Public Elementary School enrollments, grades 1-6, 1966-1971.^a

Year	Total Grades 1-6 Enrollment	Percentage of Increase Over Preceding Year
1966	942,840	. .
1967	968,206	3
1968	978,150	1
1969	988,296	1
1970	993,132	<1
1971	993,433	<1

^aMichigan Department of Education, Bureau of Administrative Services, Public School Enrollments by Grades for Selected Years.

Independent School parents were surveyed because they represent a group who are willing to incur the expense of this type of Non-Public Education for their children rather than send them to the Public Schools. Less research has been published about this school type of parents than is the case regarding the other parent types. Approximately .1 per cent of the children enrolled in Michigan elementary schools attend Independent Elementary Schools. National enrollment trends indicate that Independent Schools have grown at the steady rate

of 3 to 4 per cent annually during the past twenty years.¹
There are over 700 Independent Schools in the United States.²

Free School parents were included in the survey because they have been dissatisfied enough with the Public Elementary Schools to withdraw their children from them. Approximately .015 per cent of the children enrolled in Michigan elementary schools with grades one-through-six programs attend Free Elementary Schools. While these schools have not been in existence long enough to indicate national enrollment trends, one source reported that Free Schools are being established at a relatively rapid rate. In January, 1971, there were 1,600 Free Schools in the United States, enrolling approximately 60,000 students. In 1973, it is predicted that there will be 7,000 Free Schools which will enroll 340,000 students. (These estimates include elementary and secondary students.)³

Catholic School parents were included because the children of these parents comprise 11 per cent of the

¹Cary Potter, "The Independent School Today" (address given at a meeting of parents and alumni of North Country School, New York, April 28, 1967).

²Edward Yeomans, The Changing Role of the Independent School (Boston: National Association of Independent Schools, 1969), p. 6.

³Mike Rossman, "Projections on the New Schools Movement," New Schools Exchange, No. 52, p. 8.

students enrolled in Michigan elementary schools and 83 per cent of the students enrolled in Michigan Non-Public Elementary Schools. Non-Public Elementary School enrollments in this state have decreased steadily during the past four years, as indicated by the enrollment figures presented in Table 1.2.

TABLE 1.2.--Michigan Non-Public Elementary School enrollments during the past five years, 1967-1971.^a

School Year	Percentage of Enrollment Decline
1967	17
1968	16
1969	15
1970	14
1971	13

^aMichigan Department of Education, Department Services Division.

Because Catholic Elementary Schools comprise a majority of the Non-Public Elementary School enrollment, it is suspected that Catholic Elementary Schools have shown a corresponding decrease in enrollment. Moreover, the national enrollment of students in Catholic Schools is down 16 per cent from the 1964-65 high.¹

Table 1.3, page 8, indicates percentages of students attending Michigan Non-Public Elementary Schools,

¹Edd Doerr, "What Is A Catholic School?" Education Digest, February, 1971, p. 39.

and Table 1.4 provides the percentages of students who attend Public, Independent, Free, Catholic, and other Non-Public Elementary Schools in this state.

TABLE 1.3.--Michigan Non-Public Elementary School enrollments, grades 1-6, 1971.^a

Total Non-Public Elementary School Enrollment: 151,419		
Type of School	Enrollment	Percentage of Total Non-Public State Enrollment
Catholic	126,219	83
Independent	1,696	>1
Free	175	.1
Other Non-Public	23,329	>15

^aMichigan Department of Education, Department Services Division.

TABLE 1.4.--Michigan elementary enrollment by school type 1970-1971.^a

Total Public and Non-Public School Enrollment: 1,144,852		
Type of School	Enrollment	Percentage of Total State Enrollment
Public	993,433	>86
Independent	1,696	>.1
Free	175	.015
Catholic	126,219	>11
Other Non-Public	23,329	> 2

^aMichigan Department of Education, Department Services Division.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to obtain information about the perceptions of Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic Elementary School parents concerning selected programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools.

The Research Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated to assess information regarding parental perceptions. These were:

- I. There is a difference in the perceptions of parents included in this study (regardless of school type) between selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.
- II. There is a difference between the perceptions of parents from the four types of schools toward selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.
- III. There is an interaction between parent types and selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.

Assumption

The assumption is made in this study that the parents who were surveyed were objective in their responses and that their perceptions can be measured.

Limitations of the Study

This study of elementary education is limited to:

1. Selected programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools.
2. Selected types of Public and Non-Public Elementary School parents with children enrolled in schools located in the following Michigan counties: Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Oakland, and Wayne.
3. Parents with children who are enrolled in grades one through six or who are enrolled in age-equivalent, non-graded, or multi-level groups. Parents with children enrolled only in the kindergarten level were excluded from the study because the Catholic Schools in the sample did not include kindergarten programs in their school curriculum.

Definition of Terms

The parents who have participated in this study send their children to four types of schools, defined as follows:

Public School.--

A public school in the United States is an elementary or secondary school that is part of a system of schools maintained by public taxes and supervised by municipal, county, or State authorities. It offers education, usually free, to the children and youth of the district.¹

¹Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition, 1969, p. 1,177.

Independent School.--

In contrast to the public school, it is supported chiefly by nonpublic funds, and it is controlled by a nonpublic body, usually a board of trustees. It is relatively independent of state control; conditions and regulations vary from state to state, but as a general rule it has considerable freedom to set its own standards and curriculum, admit and dismiss students, and hire and dismiss teachers, without state supervision or control. . . . The independent school is usually nonsectarian . . .¹

The financial resources for operation come largely from tuitions, but also from various kinds of essential voluntary support, and in a few cases from endowments accumulated over the years. The curricula, in general, are in the liberal arts tradition and are oriented toward some kind of higher education.²

Free School.--

Free Schools are sometimes called new schools or community schools. . . . They charge little or no tuition, are frequently held together by spit and string, and run mainly on the energy and excitement of people who have set out to do their thing. Their variety seems limitless. No two are alike. They range from inner-city black to suburban and rural white. Some seem to be pastoral escapes from the grit of modern conflict while others are deliberate experiments in integrated multicultural, multilingual education. They turn up anywhere--in city storefronts, old barns, former barracks, abandoned church buildings and parents' and teachers' homes.³

Free School parents maintain that their schools provide child-centered curriculums for children, whereas

¹Francis Parkman, "Independent Schools," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 4th ed., 1969, p. 633.

²National Association of Independent Schools, Inc., Admission to Independent Schools (Boston: National Association of Independent Schools, 1966), p. 1.

³Bonnie Barrett Stretch; "The Rise of the 'Free School,'" Saturday Review, June 20, 1970, p. 76.

the Public Schools are perceived to provide mainly teacher-centered curriculums. Schools of this type may implement programs and policies which are not fully recognized by state boards of education. Further, curriculum requirements may not meet all of the educational standards of receiving institutions. The Free School is non-public and nonsectarian.

Catholic Schools.--

The Catholic Schools in America offer a God-centered education which is both sectarian and secular in nature and purpose. The schools generally benefit from subsidies provided by a parish, parishes or a diocese and tuition fees from the parent group. Public assistance has been granted to many Catholic Schools by way of auxiliary service. Increasingly, Catholic Schools are coming under the jurisdiction of elected lay boards of education.¹

The Instructional Process.--The interaction of students with teachers regarding subject matter. This interaction occurs primarily in the classroom.

Discipline.--The process of imposing expectations and limitations on the social behavior of students by educators.

Types.--One of the two independent variables of this study; used interchangeably with the phrases parent types and parents from the four types of schools.

¹William Blackburn, Associate Superintendent of Education, private interview held at Office of Catholic Education, Diocese of Lansing, Lansing, Mich., May 26, 1971.

Measures.--The second independent variable of this study; used interchangeably with the terms educational measures and the instructional process and discipline.

Categories.--Subordinate concerns within the measures; each of the two primary measures of the study has two subordinate concerns within it.

Attitudinal Statements.--The fifty-four statements within the questionnaire which were concerned with selected programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools.

Overview of the Study

In Chapter I a discussion of parental discontent with the Public Schools is presented. National estimates of numbers of parents who have withdrawn their children from Public for Non-Public Schools also are presented. The need for more research about parents' perceptions of the Public Schools, together with the benefits frequently derived by parents who participate in school affairs are discussed. The reasons for selecting Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic parents for this study are presented. The purpose and research hypotheses provide the reader with the objectives of the study, and a discussion of assumptions, limitations, and definition of terms provide supportive information about the operational conditions

of the study. The chapter is concluded with an overview of the study and a description of chapters to follow.

A selected review of the literature regarding the perceptions of the four types of school parents about the instructional process and discipline in the Public Elementary Schools is presented in Chapter II.

In Chapter III the research procedures used in this study are described. The development of the questionnaire, the sampling technique used to obtain information from parents, and the methods used to analyze the data also are described.

An analysis of the data is made in Chapter IV, with attention given to differences and similarities of parental perceptions regarding the instructional process and discipline in the Public Elementary Schools.

The relationship of the findings to those presented in the literature is discussed in Chapter V. Presented also in Chapter V are the conclusions, together with the recommendations made for further study.

CHAPTER II

SELECTED REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Public and Non-Public Elementary School parents share concerns about the kinds of education they believe are practiced in the Public Elementary Schools. A difference lies in the manner in which these concerns are expressed. Some parents express mild remonstrances about the Public Elementary Schools, while others show less restraint. Still others are downright vitriolic in their expressions about the schools. The literature reviewed, relative to the types of Public and Non-Public Elementary School parents, will be discussed in four sections.

The literature about Public Elementary School parents' perceptions of the Public Elementary Schools is presented in section one. In comparison with the amount of literature about the other three types of school parents' perceptions of the Public Elementary Schools, literature about Public Elementary School parents' perceptions was not difficult to obtain.

Selected literature about Independent Elementary School parents' perceptions of the Public Elementary Schools is presented in section two. While these parents presumably have had direct or indirect contact with the Public Elementary Schools--through their readings or conversations with others--little has been published about their perceptions in either Public or Non-Public School materials. This section includes primarily information obtained from two studies.

Free School parents' perceptions are discussed in section three. These parents also have not had many of their perceptions about the Public Elementary Schools published. This is not to say that no writings exist by Free School supporters. Quite the opposite is true. An abundance of literature, largely critical, exists about the Public Elementary Schools. This literature, however, is written mostly from the perspective of the professional educator or journalist. Nevertheless, some Free School parents have been able to get their concerns about the Public Elementary Schools into print.

The literature about Catholic School parents' perceptions of the Public Elementary Schools is presented in section four. While the amount of literature about these parents' perceptions regarding the Public Schools is limited, the findings are more substantive than those about the aforementioned types of Non-Public

School parents. The discussion about the schools begins with a look at Public School parents' perceptions of the Public Elementary Schools.

Section I. Public Elementary
School Parents

Perceptions About the Instructional
Process in Public Elementary
Schools

The literature concerning parental perceptions of the instructional process in the Public Elementary Schools is derived largely from two recent Gallup surveys. While other sources make significant contributions to this discussion, they are less comprehensive in scope. The 1969 and 1970 Gallup surveys provide the reader with information about the parental outlook on specific concerns regarding the Public Elementary Schools.

Although a number of parents withdrew their children from the Public for Non-Public Schools because of discontent with the Public Schools, Gallup reported that the majority of Public School parents either had no strong beliefs about the public schools or they were not dissatisfied with Public School practices. In the 1970 Gallup survey it is reported that the majority of Public Elementary School parents--59 per cent--had no opinion or reported that the schools were "just about right" in trying new ideas and methods. Only 21 per cent

of these parents reported that the schools were "too ready" to try new ideas and methods, while another 20 per cent indicated that the Public Schools were not interested enough in trying new ideas and methods.¹

In the 1969 Gallup survey, 45 per cent of the parents replied "yes" to the question: "Do you think there are some teachers in the local Public School system who should be dropped or fired"? Of this 45 per cent, 24 per cent cited incompetence as reason for dismissal of some Public School teachers.² Some parents disliked receiving from educators what they believed to be doubtful information about their children's school progress.

These parents expressed dissatisfaction about educators when they declared new instructional ideas or gadgets to be the panaceas to their children's learning problems, only to find, however, that these educators' expectations had missed their mark.³ Further, some parents expressed dissatisfaction with educators for placing limitations on their participation in Public School activities in their children's behalf. These

¹George Gallup, "Second Annual Survey of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools," Phi Delta Kappan, LII (October, 1970), 104.

²George Gallup, How the Nation Views the Public Schools (Princeton, N.J.: Gallup International, 1969), p. 59.

³Martin Essex, "Getting Through to the Establishment," The Education Digest, XXXV (January, 1970), 42.

parents were displeased when educators stated that little could be done for the education of children from impoverished backgrounds. Finally, parents also were displeased when educators stated that parents had no right to initiate change or criticize the schools.¹

Perceptions About Discipline in
Public Elementary Schools

The import of the information provided in the readings about discipline is one of discontent. Whether parents experienced disciplinary problems with their children in schools or whether they obtained information about discipline in the schools through the news media is not known. Gallup reported that parents perceived discipline to be the biggest problem faced by the schools, believing it to be an even greater problem than school finance.² Parents also believed that lack of school discipline is associated with "poor education," and school administrators who cannot keep students in order are poor administrators.³

Parents, however, did not believe discipline to be as great a problem in the schools as did the general

¹Rudolph Dreikurs and Marvin Chernoff, "Parents and Teachers: Friends or Enemies?" Education, XCI (November-December, 1970), 147.

²Gallup, "How the Nation," p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 10.

public. Fifty-three per cent of the general public reported that discipline "is not strict enough" in Public Schools, while only 2 per cent indicated that discipline was "too strict" in the schools. Parents, however, were evenly divided in their responses, for as many indicated that discipline was "just about right" as indicated that it was "not strict enough."¹

Gallup further reported that parents favored physical punishment, with 63 per cent of the parents indicating that they supported spanking by educators. A recent NEA survey of teachers' beliefs about spanking, however, indicated that only 57 per cent of the teachers surveyed favored this form of discipline.²

Section II. Independent Elementary School Parents

Perceptions About the Instructional Process in Public Elementary Schools

Independent School parents succinctly expressed themselves in their perceptions about the instructional process in the Public Elementary Schools. While there is a paucity of literature dealing with the instructional process, these parents unequivocally stated their beliefs,

¹Gallup, "Second Annual Survey," p. 101.

²Ibid.

as indicated in a study by the Danforth Foundation, which provides the basic information for this section of the chapter.

Independent School parents cited more individual attention for students as a chief reason for choosing Independent Elementary Schools over Public Elementary Schools for their children. Smaller classrooms enabling teachers to give students more personal attention also was cited as an advantage of Independent over Public Schools.¹ Smaller classrooms, however, was not the only factor of importance in parental choice of schools. Some parents stated that the Public Schools were "bad scholastically," while others indicated better school programs as the primary reason for preferring Independent over Public Elementary Schools.² Other parents reported that Independent Schools hired better teachers than Public Schools.³ Still others believed that the Public Schools

¹Charles E. Johnson, Jr. and Larry E. Suter, "Private Schools: Enrollment Trends and Student Characteristics," Education, XCI (February-March, 1971), 237.

²Danforth Foundation, How the Public Views Nonpublic Schools: A Study of the American Independent School (Cambridge, Mass.: The Danforth Foundation, 1969), p. 9.

³Ibid.

had only limited success in providing adequate school programs for intellectually gifted children.¹

Perceptions About Discipline in
Public Elementary Schools

The literature about Independent School parents' perceptions of discipline in the Public Elementary Schools is more limited than the literature regarding their perceptions of the instructional process. The intent of the literature, however, is unmistakably clear. Independent Elementary School parents generally disapproved of the type of discipline used in the Public Elementary Schools. The Danforth Foundation also provided the basic information for this section of the chapter.

Independent School parents expressed themselves in the following ways about discipline in the Public Elementary Schools:

They [Independent School educators] don't have to stand for nonsense the way the Public Schools do. Independent Schools supervise their students better.
Children have to behave [in Independent Schools].²

According to the literature, some of these parents were so strong in their dislike of Public School discipline

¹Terry Ferrer, "The Independent School," Public Affairs Pamphlet Number 238 (New York: Public Affairs Pamphlets, 1956), p. 11.

²Danforth Foundation, How the Public Views Non-public Schools, p. 9.

that they were willing to pay for Independent School education in the belief there would be less likelihood of student disorders in this type of school.¹

Section III. Free Elementary
School Parents

Perceptions About the Instructional
Process in Public Elementary
Schools

While the literature about the aforementioned types of Public and Non-Public School parents described several types of weaknesses regarding the instructional process in the Public Schools, the literature concerning Free School parents mainly emphasized one such weakness: Public School educators. Public School educators were believed to be incompetent, as is observed in the following discussion.

Public School parents were believed to implement school programs which were designed to prevent rather than help children acquire an elementary education. Free School parents saw the Public Elementary Schools as hopelessly committed to irrelevant instructional practices. These parents also believed public educators placed undue emphasis on memorization of information

¹Johnson and Suter, "Private Schools," p. 237.

that would soon be outdated.¹ Moreover, Free School parents reported that learning in the Public Schools was no longer something children did for themselves, but something teachers imposed on them.² Authoritarian teaching practices also were considered commonly used in Public School classrooms. Teachers were believed to stifle whatever originality and creativity children possessed because of their obsession with educational conformity.³ These objections regarding the practices of public educators are exemplified in the following quotations:

Why should our kids sit with folded hands and glazed eyes in their assigned seats because it's 11:05 and this is the day they start a unit on Mesopotamia, like it or not.⁴

My daughter is beginning to understand [because of her participation in a Free school program] that learning is something you do for yourself and not something you do for the teacher.⁵

A man educated at Harvard spoke of the enrollment of his four children in a Free School and his subsequent

¹Allen Graubard and Tim Affleck, The Community School (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Community School Incorporated, n.d.), p. 1.

²Stretch, "Rise of the 'Free School,'" p. 76.

³Graubard and Affleck, The Community School, p. 1.

⁴Jane Howard, "We Can Too Start Our Own Schools," Life, LXX (January 8, 1971), 45.

⁵"Summerhill in Ithaca," Newsweek, February 23, 1970, p. 65.

adjustment to his children's "sassiness and indifference to spelling." The father exclaimed, however, that he was determined " . . . not to set standards of achievement for them the way they were set for me. Let them discover for themselves where they are heading."¹

Some supporters of Free School programs believed the Public Schools had placed children in differentiated programs according to social class. Children of working class parents, for example, were believed to be placed in "dead end" programs designed to "slot" these children for future work roles in adulthood.² These supporters also believed that public educators administered culturally biased intelligence tests and implemented ability-grouping procedures as ways of limiting children's opportunities for educational advancement.³

Perceptions About Discipline in Public Elementary Schools

Free School parents were dismayed by the types of discipline they believed to be practiced in the Public Elementary Schools, maintaining that disciplinary methods of public educators were purposely oppressive. Discipline

¹"Chaos and Learning: The Free Schools," Time, April 26, 1971, p. 82.

²"Perspectives for Teachers," The Red Pencil (Boston, Mass.: Radical Teachers Group, December, 1970), p. 2.

³Ibid.

in Public Schools was seen by Free School parents to cause children to fear school. These parents also maintained that the Public Schools were overly concerned with discipline, that it had become the primary interest of these schools, frequently at the expense of learning itself.¹

It was believed by some Free School advocates that the Public Schools used different kinds of discipline for children from working-class backgrounds than were used with children from other backgrounds. Children from working-class backgrounds, for example, were believed to be disciplined by more repressive methods than were children from executive and professional backgrounds.²

One Free School parent had this to say about the harshness of discipline in the Public Schools:

In a public school, we turn our children over to the wardens; there is no illusion about the possibility of influence to torture us. . . . I suggest that, unless we find a way of dealing with the real anxieties and concerns that this type of enterprise arouses, then we'll fail before we've hardly started . . .³

¹Stretch, "Rise of the 'Free School,'" p. 76.

²"perspectives for Teachers," The Red Pencil, p. 15.

³Stretch, "Rise of the 'Free School,'" p. 79.

Section IV. Catholic Elementary
School Parents

Perceptions About the Instructional
Process in Public Elementary
Schools

Catholic School parents were less critical of classroom instruction in Public Elementary Schools than were Independent and Free School parents. After reviewing the literature, one could easily believe that these parents implicitly approved of Public School efforts to educate children. The following survey made in Indiana and Kentucky is a comprehensive study of Catholic parents' perceptions of the Public Schools.

In a 1968 attitudinal survey in which 48,000 Catholic parents from the Indianapolis, Evansville, and Louisville Dioceses participated, one out of four parents believed the Public Schools to be better than the Catholic Schools. When only the attitudes of suburban Catholic parents were considered, one out of three of these parents believed the Public Schools to be better than Catholic Schools.¹ The reader, however, is cautioned by the author of this survey not to draw presumptive conclusions from the results of these comparisons between Public and Catholic Schools:

¹George Elford, "Alternatives in Catholic Education," National Catholic Education Association, February, 1969, p. 9.

It is important to note that, in any comparison of Catholic and public schools concerning the relative merits of either type of school, the majority opinion does not establish the fact of superiority but rather the image or impression of superiority conveyed by one or the other school. The question can be fairly raised whether these responses are related to real differences in program or in public relations or in both.¹

In a study of the Diocese of Buffalo, New York, Catholic School parents reported that the Public Elementary Schools were worthwhile. The perceptions of (a) 468 Catholics who persisted in sending their children to Catholic Elementary Schools and (b) 329 Catholics who withdrew their children from Catholic Elementary Schools and enrolled them in Public Schools were sampled. The perceptions of both groups of Catholic parents were sought on three factors: (1) "perceived better quality of education in the Public Schools"; (2) "concern over increasing parental costs for Catholic Elementary Schools"; and (3) "opinion of need for Catholic Elementary Schools."^{*} The parents who persisted in sending their children to Catholic Schools indicated the factors in order of importance to be: opinion of need for Catholic Elementary Schools; perceived better quality of education

¹Elford, "Alternatives in Education," p. 9.

^{*}"Opinion of need" in this study of the parents of Buffalo, New York, basically refers to providing children with the teachings of the Catholic faith.

in the Public Schools; and concern over increasing parental costs for Catholic Elementary Schools.

The Catholic parents who withdrew their children from the Catholic Elementary Schools in the Diocese of Buffalo and enrolled them in Public Elementary Schools within this city indicated the factors in order of importance to be: perceived better quality of education in Public Schools; concern over increasing parental costs for Catholic education; and opinion of need for Catholic Elementary Schools.¹

While the above study indicated that Catholic parents generally considered public education to be worthwhile, Gallup's survey presented contrasting information concerning teacher competence in the Public Schools. Gallup reported that 39 per cent of the parents in his survey replied "yes" to the question: "Do you think there are some teachers in the Public School system who should be dropped or fired"? More than half of this 39 per cent cited incompetence as the most important reason these teachers should be dismissed.²

¹S. Theodore Berg, "Factors Influencing Parental Decision to Transfer Children from Catholic Elementary School to Public Elementary School" (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, State University of New York at Buffalo, May, 1969), p. 78.

²Gallup, "How the Nation," p. 59.

Perceptions About Discipline in
Public Elementary Schools

While Catholic parents believed classroom instruction in the Public Elementary Schools to be worthwhile, they were as critical of discipline in the Public Schools as were the other types of parents. They also believed discipline to be the chief concern of public educators, with 39 per cent ranking discipline as the biggest problem faced by the schools.¹ When asked the question: "How do you feel about discipline in the local schools--is it too strict, not strict enough, or just about right"? 58 per cent stated that it was not strict enough.² Gallup's 1970 survey also reported that Catholic School parents believed that discipline was a major problem in the schools. Fifty per cent of the Catholic School parents indicated in this survey that discipline was "not strict enough" in the Public Schools.³

Summary of Chapter II

In this chapter the selected readings from the literature about Public and Non-Public Elementary School parents' perceptions regarding instruction and discipline

¹Gallup, "How the Nation," p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 43.

³Gallup, "Second Annual Survey," p. 104.

in the Public Elementary Schools were presented. While the literature indicated that Public Elementary School parents were to some extent dissatisfied with programs and practices in the schools, their dissatisfactions were not so strongly expressed as were those of the Non-Public School parents.

A discussion of the development and implementation of the parental questionnaire is presented in Chapter III, with attention given to the research techniques used to analyze the questionnaire data.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to obtain information about the perceptions of parents in four types of elementary schools regarding selected programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools. A questionnaire was used to obtain this information from parents. Discussed in this chapter are the procedures for selecting parents from the four types of schools, the locations of the schools to which they sent their children, and family income data. Discussed also are the number of parents included in the survey, together with the procedures used to develop and implement the questionnaire. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the methods used to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires.

Design of the Study

Two independent and one dependent variables were included in this study, with parent types and educational measures the independent variables and parent perceptions the dependent variable. The schools included in this

study were nested within types, and the subjects were nested within schools. No analysis was made of the school dimension. Table 3.1 presents a design matrix.

TABLE 3.1.--Design matrix.

Types of Parents		Educational Measures		
Public	P ₁	The Instructional Process (M ₁)	Discipline (M ₂)	M ₃ ^a
	.			
	.			
	P ₃₄₆			
Independent	P ₃₄₇			
	.			
	.			
	P ₅₀₉			
Free	P ₅₁₀			
	.			
	.			
	P ₅₉₅			
Catholic	P ₅₉₆			
	.			
	.			
	P ₇₃₅			

^aMeasure could not be interpreted.

Description of the Sample

Geographic Location

The parents in this survey sent their children to Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic Elementary Schools. The latter three types are Non-Public Schools. Of the four types only Catholic Schools include religious

education in their educational programs. Only parents with children in grades one-six (or age-equivalent groupings) were included in the study. Because the Catholic Schools in this survey did not include kindergarten classes in their programs, the writer excluded parents with children enrolled only in kindergartens or comparable early-age programs in the other three types of schools.

The parents who were surveyed sent their children to twenty-nine schools located in five counties of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. All of the parents were from urban or suburban areas. Additional information about the schools to which these parents sent their children is provided in the following four sections.

Public Schools

Public School parents sent their children to one of eight Public Elementary Schools located in Grand Rapids, Jackson, and Taylor School Districts. Parents from two of the fifty-four Grand Rapids Public Elementary Schools, four of the twenty-one Jackson Public Elementary Schools, and two of the twenty-three Taylor Public Elementary Schools participated in the study. These school districts are located respectively in Kent, Jackson, and Wayne counties. These Public Schools were not randomly selected but were selected because of their closeness

to Michigan State University. The parents within these schools, however, were randomly selected.

Independent Schools

Independent School parents sent their children to one of nine elementary schools located in Oakland and Wayne counties, the only Michigan counties in which Independent Schools are located. Parents from nine of the ten available schools participated in the survey.

Free Schools

Free School parents sent their children to one of six schools located in Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Oakland, and Wayne counties. These are the only Free Schools in the state with grades one-through-six programs. All of the parents were included in the survey.

Catholic Schools

Catholic School parents sent their children to one of six schools located in Jackson, Michigan. These are all of the Catholic Elementary Schools located in Jackson, Michigan. This survey of Catholic parents was restricted to the Jackson area because of budget and time limitations.

Income Level

The majority of parents who completed the questionnaire were willing to provide information about their

annual incomes, the concern of questionnaire statement five, included in the section entitled Information About You.

Fifty-three per cent of the Public School parents earned family incomes which were between \$9,000 - \$14,999. At the lower and upper income levels 20 per cent earned less than \$9,000 while 19 per cent earned \$15,000 or more.

The family income levels of Catholic School parents generally corresponded with those of Public School parents, except at the upper income level, in which 9 per cent more Catholic School parents than Public School parents earned \$15,000 or more per year.

Independent and Free School parents earned generally higher incomes than Public and Catholic School parents. Eighty-nine per cent of the Independent and 90 per cent of the Free School parents earned incomes above \$9,000. More Independent School than Free School parents, however, earned \$15,000 or over, with 75 per cent of the Independent School parents' incomes in this top level, while 56 per cent of the Free School parents had incomes at this top level. Table 3.2, p. 37, and Figure 3.1, p. 38, provide information regarding the annual family incomes of the four types of parents.

TABLE 3.2.--Income levels of parents who participated in the study.

Type of School Parents	Percentage Who Reported Income on Questionnaire	Annual Income ^a	Percentage Who Earned This Amount
Public	92	\$ 5,999 or less	6
		6,000 - 8,999	14
		9,000 - 11,999	28
		12,000 - 14,999	25
		15,000 or over	19
Catholic	94	\$ 5,999 or less	6
		6,000 - 8,999	10
		9,000 - 11,999	31
		12,000 - 14,999	18
		15,000 or over	28
Independent	97	\$ 5,999 or less	4
		6,000 - 8,999	4
		9,000 - 11,999	4
		12,000 - 14,999	10
		15,000 or over	75
Free	98	\$ 5,999 or less	5
		6,000 - 8,999	2
		9,000 - 11,999	14
		12,000 - 14,999	20
		15,000 or over	56

^aTotal family income for 1969-70.

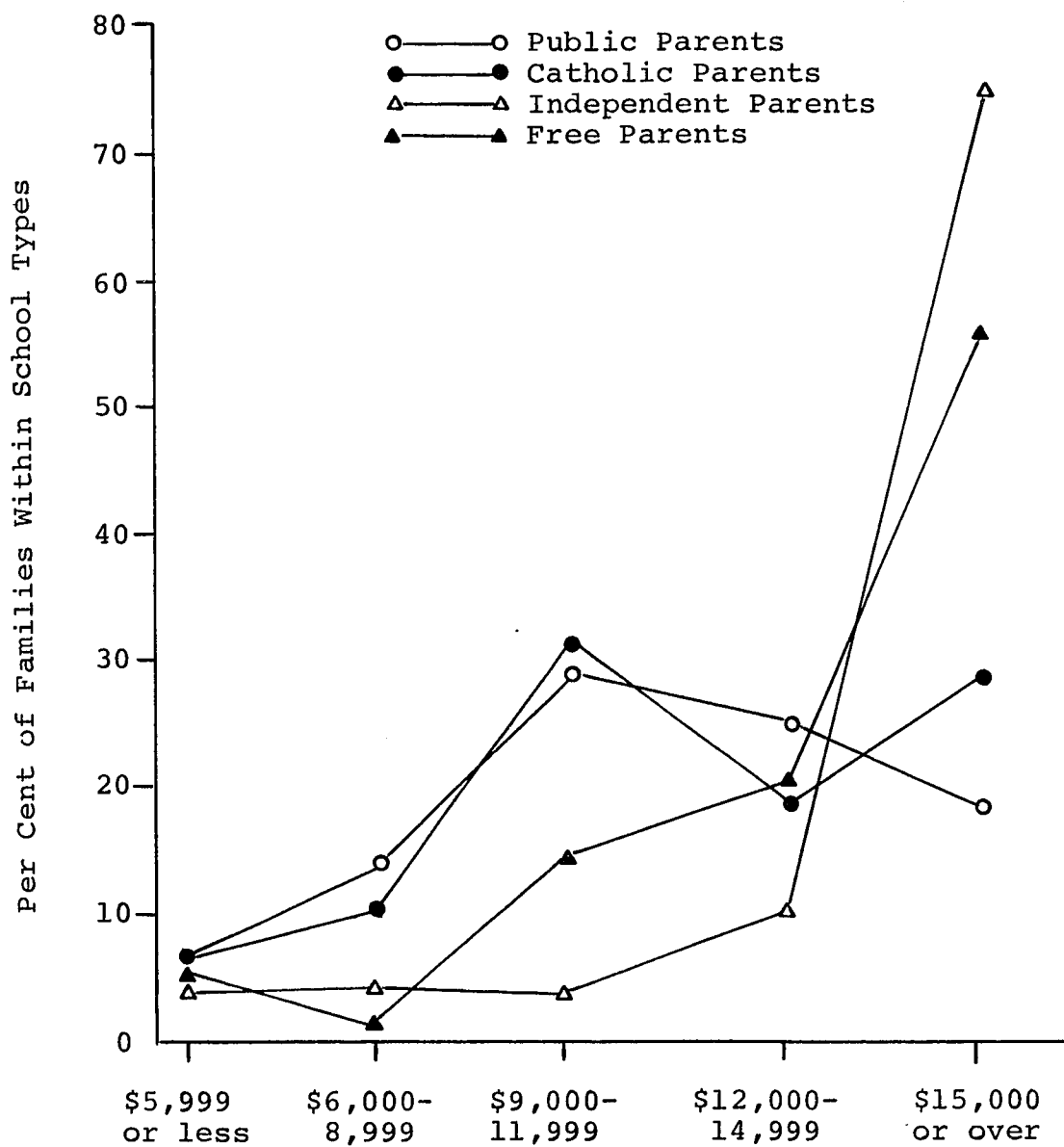


FIGURE 3.1.--Annual Family Income

Sample Size

A sample size was selected for the entire group of parents and sub-groups within this group that was thought to be large enough to provide valid information about the perceptions of parents from the four types of schools. Of the 1,352 questionnaires mailed to parents, 600 were mailed to Public, 300 to Independent, 152 to Free, and 300 to Catholic School parents. The Public School sample represents the parent population from three relatively large Public School Districts in Michigan. The Independent and Catholic School samples each represent parent populations located respectively in one area of this state. The 152 parents in the Free Schools represent the total Free School population in the state. Table 3.3, p. 40, presents the types of schools, student enrollments, and sample sizes, and Appendix A provides the names of the twenty-nine schools, together with the number of questionnaires mailed to parents in each of the schools.

Development of the Questionnaire

Construction of the Questionnaire Statements

A questionnaire was constructed to elicit from parents (a) information regarding their perceptions of selected programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools and (b) demographic information about themselves. The first fifty-four statements, which were called

TABLE 3.3.--Types of schools, student enrollments, and parent sample sizes.

Type of School	Student Enrollment in Grades 1-6	Size of the Sample
<u>Public</u>		
8 Schools:		
Grand Rapids Public Schools	15,047	200
Jackson Public Schools	6,285	200
Taylor Public Schools	10,254	200
Total	31,586	600
<u>Independent</u>		
9 Schools	1,346	300
<u>Free</u>		
6 Schools	171	152
<u>Catholic</u>		
6 Schools	1,770	300
Total	34,873	1,352

attitudinal statements, were concerned with parent perceptions of the Public Elementary Schools; the last seventeen statements were concerned with demographic information about the parents.

Sources of Information for the Statements

The sources of information for the fifty-four attitudinal statements came chiefly from the writer's occupational experience, educational conferences, the news media, and educational readings. Sources of information for the seventeen demographic statements came from survey studies previously written by graduate students and a census publication.¹ These statements were concerned with the level of education of parents, occupational and income information, marital status, age, and number of dependents. A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

Response Categories

Parents were instructed to indicate their responses to the attitudinal statements by placing a (✓) check beside one of these five response categories: "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." In their responses to the demographic

¹U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Data Access Description, Collection, Evaluation, and Processing Series, CEP-1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March, 1970), pp. 3-11.

statements parents were asked to place a (✓) check beside one of the alternatives within each of these statements which appropriately described their familial situations.

Materials Included With the Questionnaire

Two cover letters were included with the questionnaire. The first cover letter explained the purpose of the questionnaire and identified the writer as a graduate student at Michigan State University. The second letter, while prepared by the writer, was written from the perspective of school principals to parents. In these letters the principals also explained the purpose of the study and identified the writer as a graduate student. Further, the principals in these letters asked school parents to complete the questionnaires if they were so inclined. Each of the principals signed his cover letter and forwarded it to this writer who then had copies made. Copies of these cover letters are included in Appendix C.

Stamped, return-addressed envelopes also were included with the questionnaires mailed to parents.

Administration of the Questionnaire

The Initial Questionnaire

On Wednesday, November 11, 1970, the questionnaires were mailed to parents. Wednesday was chosen so that parents would receive the questionnaires on Thursday

or Friday. Research indicates that the percentage of returns frequently is higher when people receive questionnaires during the latter part of the week.¹

The Follow-Up Questionnaire

Two weeks later follow-up questionnaires were mailed to Public, Independent, and Free School parents. Catholic parents did not receive follow-up questionnaires because their returns from the first mailing effort were higher than the returns from the other three types of school parents. Thus, at the time, more information was provided about Catholic School parents than was provided about the other three types of school parents. Table 3.4 shows the number of questionnaires mailed to and completed by parents from the four types of schools.

TABLE 3.4.--Number of questionnaires mailed to and completed by parents.

Type of School	Number of Questionnaires Mailed to Parents	Number of Questionnaires Completed by Parents			
		1st Mailing	2nd Mailing	Combined Mailings	
Public	600	269 45%	77 13%	346 58%	
Independent	300	91 30%	72 24%	163 54%	
Free	152	61 41%	25 16%	86 57%	
Catholic ^a	300	140 47%	. .	140 47%	
Total	1,352	561 41%	174 13%	735 54%	

^aone mailing only

¹Donald S. Longworth, "Use of A Mail Questionnaire," American Sociological Review, XVIII (June, 1953), 311.

Methods of Interpreting the Data

Designating and Weighting the Responses

Parent responses to the attitudinal statements were designated "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Each of these descriptors was weighted respectively: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The mean responses indicated by each of the four types of parents were subsequently derived by averaging the weighted responses rendered to each of the fifty-four attitudinal statements.

Analysis of the Questionnaire

A factor analysis of the questionnaire was performed to determine the categories into which the attitudinal statements could be placed. The results of this analysis showed that the statements could be placed in three measures. These were designated the instructional process, discipline, and a third measure which could not be interpreted and was not considered for further analysis. A scale was then constructed to determine which attitudinal statements had a high loading on a given measure.

Following the determination of the two measures in which most of the attitudinal statements could be grouped, subordinate categories within each measure were then developed. Within the instructional process,

attitudinal statements were placed in one of two categories, called recent instructional trends and teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Within discipline, attitudinal statements were placed in one of two categories, called disciplinary methods and disciplinary standards.

The dependent variables for this study now became the sub-factor scores. These sub-factor scores were obtained by summing over the items which appear under the sub-groupings that were determined by the factor structure of the questionnaire.

Analytical Technique

An analysis of variance procedure was used to interpret the data. The first step was to analyze the results of the interaction between types and measures. The second step was to determine whether main effects results could be interpreted.

Following the use of the analysis of variance procedure to assess types and measures, a Scheffé post hoc analysis was made. This procedure was used to show whether specific differences between types of parents on the two measures could be determined.

Summary

In Chapter III a discussion was presented of the criteria used to select parents from the four types of schools. Discussed also were the procedures used to analyze the questionnaire. An analysis of the data is presented in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Overview

An analysis of the perceptions of parents from the four types of schools regarding the educational measures of the study is presented in this chapter. First, a discussion of main effects results is presented, followed by a discussion of the results of the interaction between school types and educational measures, as determined by the analysis of variance procedure. Second, a discussion of parent responses to the concepts within the educational measures, as determined by the Scheffé post hoc analysis, is presented.

An analysis of the data showed that there was an interaction between parent types and educational measures. Table 4.1, p. 48, and Figure 4.1, p. 49, provide data regarding this interaction, and Table 4.2, p. 48, indicates the means and standard deviations for each educational measure by parent type. Main effects were difficult to interpret because of the interaction between types and measures.

TABLE 4.1.--Interactions between parent types and educational measures.

Source	d.f.	S.S.	M.S.	F.
Interaction (Parent Types X Educational Measures)	6	3,003.76	500.63	34.98 ^a
Error (Subjects and Measures Within Parent Types)	1,460	20,893.41	14.31	. .

^aSignificant at the .05 level.

TABLE 4.2.--Means and standard deviations of educational measures by parent types.

Type of School	N ^a	The Instructional Process		Discipline	
		\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.
Public	346	41.145	5.870	11.295	2.920
Independent	163	40.883	5.955	13.687	3.964
Free	86	37.306	8.942	15.353	5.318
Catholic	140	43.100	5.889	11.636	2.791

^aNumber of parents of each school type who completed questionnaires.

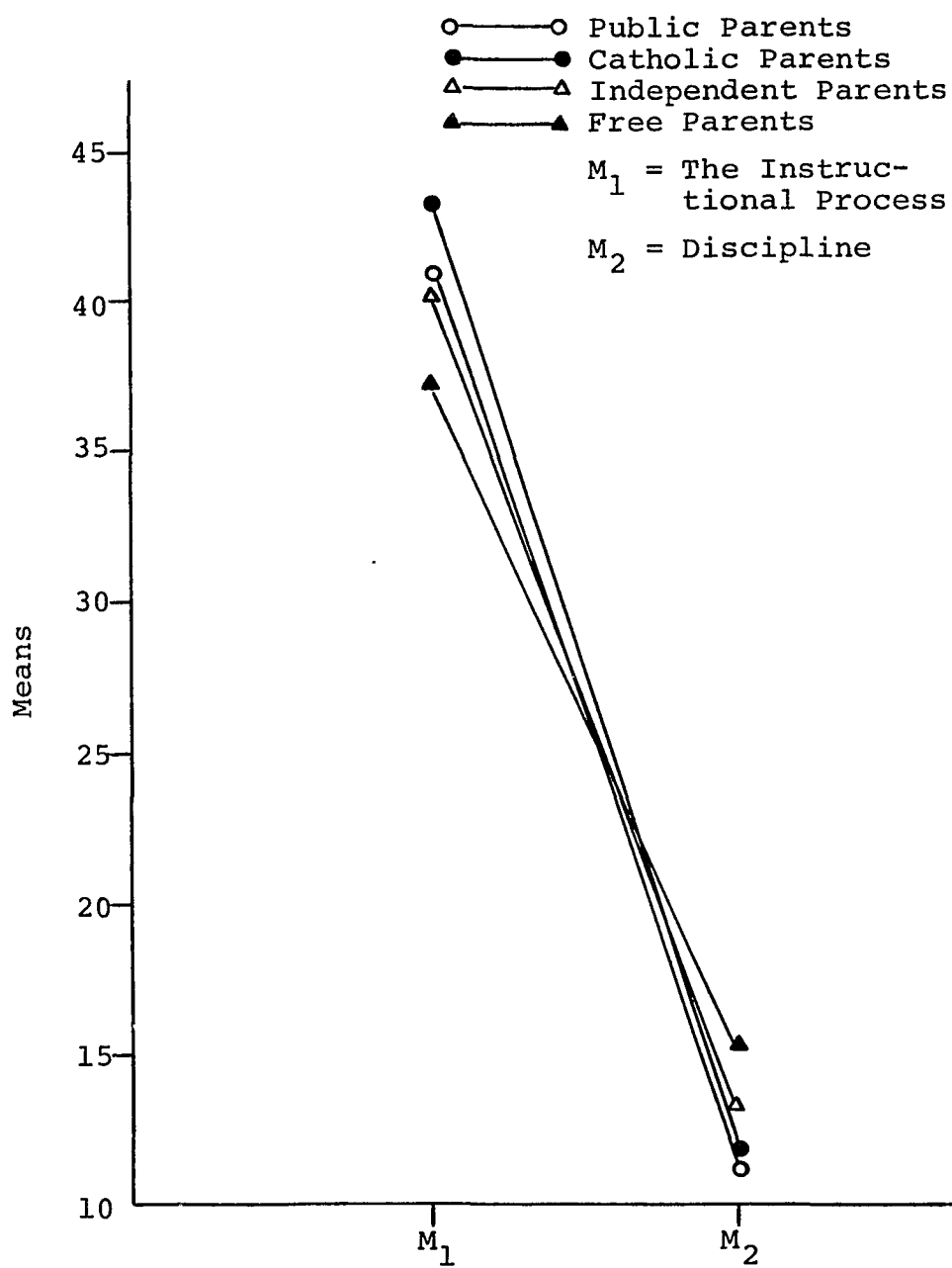


FIGURE 4.1.--Graph of the Interactions

Interaction Between Types and Measures

Looking first at the results of the interaction between parent types and educational measures, Free and Independent School parents showed more concern for the concepts regarding the instructional process than did Public School and Catholic School parents. The results of this analysis were summarized as follows:

$M_1 - P_3 > P_2 > P_1 > P_4$, where M_1 --signifies the instructional process, P_1 --Public School parents, P_2 --Independent School parents, P_3 --Free School parents, P_4 --Catholic School parents.

Regarding discipline, however, the concerns of parent types were reversed. Public and Catholic School parents showed greater concern for the concepts about discipline than did Free and Independent School parents. These results were summarized as follows: $M_2 - P_1 > P_4 > P_2 > P_3$, where M_2 --signifies discipline, P_1 --Public School parents, P_2 --Independent School parents, P_3 --Free School parents, and P_4 --Catholic School parents.

In summary, Free and Independent School parents showed greater concern for the instructional process than did Public and Catholic School parents. Public and Catholic School parents, on the other hand, showed greater concern for discipline than did Free and Independent School parents.

With the information provided in the foregoing discussion, the outcome of the hypotheses could now be stated. Regarding the first hypothesis, there is a difference in the perceptions of parents included in the study (regardless of school type) between selected Public Elementary School programs and practices, the results showed that there appeared to be a difference between selected programs and practices. This difference, however, must be interpreted in light of the interaction between types and measures, subsequently described in this section, which is actually a component of the main effects statistics. The second hypothesis, there is a difference between the perceptions of parents from the four types of schools toward selected Public Elementary School programs and practices, also must be interpreted in light of the interaction between types and measures. The results of the third hypothesis, there is an interaction between parent types and selected Public Elementary School programs and practices, could be determined.

The results of the analysis showed this hypothesis was supported at the .05 level of significance.

A look at specific differences regarding measures by types as indicated by the Scheffé post hoc analysis is presented in the following discussion.

The Plan for Presenting the Analysis

A discussion of the perceptions of parents from the four types of schools concerning the instructional process will be presented in two sections. In the first section the concepts related to the category designated recent instructional trends are discussed. The second section contains a discussion of concepts related to the category designated teacher effectiveness in the classroom.

The presentation of parents' perceptions regarding discipline also is presented in two sections, the first section designated disciplinary methods, the second designated disciplinary standards.

Finally, the concepts included in the thirteen attitudinal statements which were not shown to be related to the primary educational measures of this study (as revealed by the factor analysis) are discussed.

The criteria for using the labels "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree" are as follows:

$$0.5 - 1.5 = 1$$

$$1.6 - 2.5 = 2$$

$$2.6 - 3.5 = 3$$

$$3.6 - 4.5 = 4$$

$$4.6 - 5.0 = 5$$

Parent Perceptions Concerning the
Instructional Process

Recent Instructional Trends

Public and Catholic School parents showed relatively little concern about recent instructional trends in the Public Elementary Schools, with Public School parents indicating neutral responses to ten of the twelve concepts and Catholic School parents to nine of the twelve concepts included in the attitudinal statements related to this category.

Free and Independent School parents showed more concern for recent instructional trends than did Public and Catholic School parents. Free School parents agreed with five of the twelve concepts and Independent School parents with four of the twelve concepts included in the attitudinal statements related to this category.

Catholic and Free School parents disagreed more with the statements regarding recent instructional trends than did Public and Independent School parents; their "disagree" responses, however, tended to be about different concepts.

Interestingly, Free School parents recorded the only "strongly agree" mean response to an attitudinal statement, responding in this manner to the concept presented in statement thirteen, "more non-graded school programs should be developed in the elementary schools

. . . "

Public, Independent, and Free School parents agreed with the concept in statement forty-five, "More teacher aides should be employed in the Elementary Public Schools," while Catholic School parents were neutral about this concept. All of the parent types disagreed with the instructional trend in the Public Schools frequently called "social promotion," indicated in statement nineteen, ". . . students should be promoted to the next grade whether or not they have learned the work of the previous grade." Lastly, parents from the four types of schools were neutral about the place of arts and crafts in the curriculum, indicated in the concepts presented affirmatively and negatively in statements thirty-eight and sixteen, ". . . time is spent working on arts and crafts activities."

Teacher Effectiveness in the Classroom

Public School parents perceived that teachers were effective in the classroom, as indicated by their "agree" responses to eleven of the twenty-three statements about this category. Independent, Free, and Catholic parents were neutral regarding this category.

Parent responses to concepts regarding teacher effectiveness in the classroom showed interesting results. Catholic School parents, for example, believed that not enough time is spent on "the 3 R's," statement twelve,

while the other three types of parents were not generally concerned with this concept. Free School parents, on the other hand, were the only parent type to respond neutrally about too much time spent on "the 3 R's," statement forty-nine, with the other three parent types reporting that teacher effectiveness was not reduced by teachers who gave what was perceived to be too much attention to "the 3 R's."

Independent and Free School parents did not believe Public School teachers showed classroom effectiveness through the study habits with which they provided students, statement thirty, while Public and Catholic School parents were neutral about this concept. Public and Catholic School parents, however, agreed that teachers sufficiently praised children for doing good work in class, statement twenty-four, whereas Free and Independent School parents were neutral regarding this concept.

Catholic School parents perceived moral education differently from the other three types of parents. "Not enough time is spent on moral training in the Public Schools," statement three, elicited "agree" responses from Catholic School parents, whereas Public, Independent, and Free School parents were neutral regarding this concept. Only Free School parents responded neutrally

about the same concept when positively phrased, statement thirty-five, while the other three parent types recorded "disagree" responses.

Lastly, the diverse perceptions expressed by parent types concerning teacher effectiveness in teaching children to respect all racial groups--statement twenty-six--is significant. Public School parents agreed that teachers do teach such respect, while Free School parents did not believe teachers did so; Independent and Catholic School parents were neutral about this concept.

Summary of Parent Perceptions
Regarding the Instructional
Process

Free and Independent School parents showed the most concern for the category designated recent instructional trends, whereas Public and Catholic School parents were neutral regarding this category. Free and Independent School parents responded in the same way to seven of the twelve concepts included in the attitudinal statements concerning recent instructional trends, while Public and Catholic School parents responded in the same way to nine of the twelve concepts. The perceptions of parents from the four types of schools were the same about only four attitudinal statements.

Parent perceptions regarding teacher effectiveness in the classroom showed Public School parents were more

concerned with this measure than were the other three parent types. Public School parents agreed with eleven of the twenty-three concepts included in the attitudinal statements regarding teacher effectiveness; these parents disagreed with only two of the twenty-three concepts regarding teacher effectiveness. Independent School parents agreed with none of the concepts regarding this measure, but disagreed with three of the concepts. Free School parents agreed with one of the concepts regarding teacher effectiveness in the classroom and disagreed with two of the concepts regarding teacher effectiveness. Catholic School parents agreed with four of the concepts concerning teacher effectiveness and disagreed with two of the concepts regarding teacher effectiveness.

Independent, Free, and Catholic School parents perceived similarly fourteen of the twenty-three concepts regarding teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Public School parents, however, agreed with the other three parent types in only seven of the twenty-three concepts.

None of the twenty-three concepts related to teacher effectiveness in the classroom elicited four different mean responses from the four parent types.

Parent Perceptions Concerning Discipline

Disciplinary Methods

Public School parents perceived that the disciplinary methods used by educators in Public Elementary Schools were proper, whereas Independent, Free, and Catholic School parents were not concerned with this category.

Disciplinary Standards

Free and Independent School parents were mostly neutral in their responses about disciplinary standards, with Free School parents indicating neutral responses to all of the four and Independent School parents to three of the four concepts concerning this category. Public and Catholic School parents, however, tended to agree regarding disciplinary standards, with Catholic School parents responding similarly to the concepts included in the four attitudinal statements and public parents with three of the four concepts in these statements.

Summary of Parent Perceptions Regarding Discipline

Free School parents showed no concern and Independent School parents little concern for the disciplinary methods and standards of the public elementary schools. Public and Catholic School parents, however, were concerned with methods and standards of discipline in the

Public Elementary Schools. Both types of parents recorded "agree" or "disagree" responses to six of the eight concepts contained in the eight attitudinal statements regarding the combined categories about discipline.

Parent Perceptions Regarding Other
School Concerns

As previously indicated, the factor analysis of the questionnaire showed that thirteen of the fifty-four concepts included in the fifty-four attitudinal statements were unrelated to the two primary measures of this study. Consequently, the concepts within these thirteen statements have only incidental relationship with the study. The following discussion, therefore, provides only supplemental information which may be of interest to the reader.

Parents from the four types of schools were neutral in their responses to statement forty-four, "Elementary schools are involved in too many matters that should be left up to the home." Further, the four parent types responded neutrally to statements thirty-three, one, and twenty-three, respectively concerned with school boundaries, teacher dedication, and bus discipline. The four types of parents recorded "agree" responses to only one statement in the questionnaire, statement fifty-three: "Adequate safety provision is made at the streets in which children must cross to and from school."

Public School parents agreed with statement twenty-nine: "Elementary Public Schools keep parents adequately informed of their children's school progress," while the other three types of parents responded neutrally to the statement. Public School parents agreed with statement forty-six--concerned with whether school administrators keep parents informed adequately about the schools--while the other three parent types responded neutrally to this statement.

Only Free School parents agreed with statement twenty-seven: "Parents don't have enough voice in determining school policies," while the other three parent types were neutral in their responses to this statement. Further, only Free School parents believed that parents should be able to enroll their children in any school of their choice that is located in their Public School District, statement thirty-four, whereas the other three types of parents responded neutrally to this statement.

Catholic School parents agreed and the other three types of parents were neutral in their responses to statement thirty-nine, "Elementary teachers should give more attention to the personal appearance of students." Further, Catholic School parents agreed with statement forty-seven, "Teachers are too concerned about salary increases and not enough with the educational welfare of children," whereas the other three types of parents were neutral regarding this statement.

Public and Free School parents disagreed with statement forty-three: "Parents have too much voice in determining school policies," while Independent and Catholic School parents were neutral about this statement. Finally, Public and Catholic School parents agreed with statement eighteen: ". . . elementary schools that have lunch programs do a satisfactory job of operating them," while Independent and Free School parents were neutral in their responses to this statement.

Table 4.3, p. 62, provides the responses of parents from the four types of schools to the concepts presented in the fifty-four attitudinal statements, and Table 4.4, p. 67, summarizes these responses. Table 4.5, p. 68, provides data regarding the specific concerns of parents as indicated by the Scheffé post hoc analysis.

Summary

An analysis of the results of the data obtained from the questionnaires that were sent to parents from Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic Elementary Schools was presented in this chapter. This analysis showed that an interaction between types and measures could be interpreted (the concern of hypothesis three). Because an interaction could be determined, main effects were difficult to interpret (the concerns of hypotheses one and two).

TABLE 4.3.--Parental responses to the attitudinal statements of the questionnaire.

Attitudinal Statements ^a	Mean Responses ^b			
THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS				
<u>Recent Instructional Trends</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>C</u> ^c
13 - More non-graded programs should be developed.	N	A	SA	N ^d
19 - Students should be promoted to the next grade whether or not they have learned the work of the previous grade.	D	D	D	D
51 - There is too much shifting children about, from room-to-room and one activity to another.	N	N	N	N
20 - Too much time is spent worrying about tests and grades.	N	A	A	N
9 - Sex education is an essential subject.	N	A	A	N
10 - Sex education is satisfactorily taught.	N	N	D	N
31 - Children should help determine subject matter.	N	N	A	D
32 - Children should help determine how subjects are taught.	N	N	A	D
45 - More teacher-aids should be employed.	A	A	A	N
21 - Too much money is spent on educational gadgets.	N	N	D	N
16 - Not enough time is spent on arts and crafts activities.	N	N	N	N
38 - Too much time is spent doing arts and crafts activities.	N	N	N	N

Table 4.3 Continued.

Attitudinal Statements ^a	Mean Responses ^b			
	<u>P</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>C</u> ^c
<u>Teacher Effectiveness in the Classroom</u>				
12 - Not enough time is spent on "the 3 R's."	N	N	N	A
49 - Too much time is spent on "the 3 R's."	D	D	N	D
5 - Elementary mathematics gives students a good foundation for high school math.	A	N	N	N
6 - The teaching of reading is better today than it used to be in the Public Schools.	A	N	N	N
7 - The teaching of science is a strong area in the Public Elementary Schools.	N	N	N	N
8 - Physical education programs are properly conducted.	N	N	N	N
42 - Elementary Public School teachers use up-to-date methods.	A	N	N	A
2 - Teachers spend too many days attending workshops and professional conferences on school time.	N	N	N	N
17 - Teachers adequately test students over subject matter.	A	N	N	N
30 - Public Schools provide children with good study habits.	N	D	D	N
50 - Teachers correct enough students' work to know the kind of work they do.	A	N	N	N
54 - Teachers use good judgment in assigning homework.	A	N	N	N
11 - Too much teachers' time is spent working with below-average children.	N	N	N	N

Table 4.3 Continued.

Attitudinal Statements ^a	Mean Responses ^b			
	<u>P</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>C</u> ^c
<u>Teacher Effectiveness in the Classroom</u>				
22 - Teachers adequately help children with problems that affect their school performance.	N	N	N	N
24 - Teachers praise children when they do good work.	A	N	N	A
48 - Teachers do a good job of teaching good citizenship.	A	N	N	N
4 - Public Schools teach children respect for the rights and property of others.	A	N	A	N
26 - Schools do a good job of teaching children to respect all racial groups.	A	N	D	N
40 - Schools teach respect for all religious groups.	N	N	N	N
41 - Too much time is spent teaching about other countries and not enough about our country.	N	N	N	N
52 - Teachers provide students with good field trips.	A	N	N	N
35 - Too much time is spent on moral training.	D	D	N	D
3 - Not enough time is spent on moral training.	N	N	N	A
DISCIPLINE				
<u>Disciplinary Methods</u>				
14 - Teachers use proper discipline with children.	A	N	N	N
15 - Principals use proper discipline with children.	A	N	N	N

Table 4.3 Continued.

Attitudinal Statements ^a	Mean Responses ^b			
<u>Disciplinary Standards</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>C</u> ^c
25 - Teachers should be more strict with children.	A	A	N	A
36 - Students are permitted to talk too much.	N	N	N	A
37 - Teachers should demand more respect from students.	A	N	N	A
28 - Teachers should do more to prevent children from using foul language in the schools.	A	N	N	A
OTHER SELECTED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES ^e				
1 - Teachers are as dedicated today as they were in the past.	N	N	N	N
47 - Teachers are too concerned with salary increases and not enough with students' educational welfare.	N	N	N	A
29 - Schools inform parents of children's progress.	A	N	N	N
46 - Administrators keep parents informed of new programs and policies.	A	N	N	N
43 - Parents have too much voice in determining school policies. ^f	D	N	D	N
27 - Parents don't have enough voice in school policies.	N	N	A	N
33 - Administrators use good judgment in setting school boundaries.	N	N	N	N
34 - Parents should be able to enroll their children in any elementary school in their school district.	N	N	A	N
18 - Schools with lunch programs satisfactorily operate them.	A	N	N	A

Table 4.3 Continued.

Attitudinal Statements ^a	Mean Responses ^b			
	<u>P</u>	<u>I</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>C</u> ^c
OTHER SELECTED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES ^e				
23 - Discipline on Public School busses is good.	N	N	N	N
39 - Teachers should give more attention to the personal appearance of students.	N	N	N	A
44 - The schools are involved in too many matters that should be left up to the home. ^f	N	N	N	N
53 - Adequate safety provision is made at the streets in which children must cross to and from school. ^f	A	A	A	A

^aAbbreviated statements--see Appendix B for complete questionnaire statements.

^bResponses were derived from the mean scores of parents from each of the four types of schools.

^cP - Public School parents' responses; I - Independent School parents' responses; F - Free School parents' responses; C - Catholic School parents' responses.

^dSA - "strongly agree"; A - "agree"; N - "neutral"; D - "disagree"; SD - "strongly disagree."

^eAttitudinal statements of the measure which could not be interpreted.

^fNon-statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 4.4.--Summary of parents' responses regarding the fifty-four attitudinal statements in the questionnaire.

School Type of Parents	Number of Items Characterized by Response Categories ^a				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS					
<u>Recent Instructional Trends</u>					
Public	0	1	10	1	0
Catholic	0	0	9	3	0
Independent	0	4	7	1	0
Free	1	5	3	3	0
<u>Teacher Effectiveness in the Classroom</u>					
Public	0	11	10	2	0
Catholic	0	4	17	2	0
Independent	0	0	20	3	0
Free	0	1	20	2	0
DISCIPLINE					
<u>Disciplinary Methods</u>					
Public	0	2	0	0	0
Catholic	0	0	2	0	0
Independent	0	0	2	0	0
Free	0	0	2	0	0
<u>Disciplinary Standards</u>					
Public	0	3	1	0	0
Catholic	0	4	0	0	0
Independent	0	1	3	0	0
Free	0	0	4	0	0
OTHER SELECTED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES					
Public	0	4	8	1	0
Catholic	0	4	9	0	0
Independent	0	1	12	0	0
Free	0	3	9	1	0

^aMean responses to the fifty-four attitudinal statements.

TABLE 4.5.--Scheffé Post-Hoc analysis of questionnaire statements.

Measure	Comparison	$\hat{\psi}$	$S\sqrt{\text{var}\hat{\psi}}$	Significant at .05
The Instructional Process	P ₁ - P ₂	.262	1.3498	No
	P ₁ - P ₃	3.839	.9597	Yes
	P ₁ - P ₄	-1.955	1.4237	Yes
	P ₂ - P ₃	3.577	1.2636	Yes
	P ₂ - P ₄	-2.217	1.6439	Yes
	P ₃ - P ₄	-5.794	1.3423	Yes
Discipline	P ₁ - P ₂	-2.392	1.3498	Yes
	P ₁ - P ₃	-4.058	.9597	Yes
	P ₁ - P ₄	-.341	1.4237	No
	P ₂ - P ₃	-1.666	1.2636	Yes
	P ₂ - P ₄	2.051	1.6439	Yes
	P ₃ - P ₄	3.717	1.3423	Yes

Legend: P₁ - Public School parents; P₂ - Independent School parents; P₃ - Free School parents; P₄ - Catholic School parents.

A post hoc analysis procedure was then used to look at specific differences regarding the perceptions of the four types of parents concerning the educational measures. The results of this analysis showed that Free School and Independent School parents were more concerned about new instructional trends than were Public and Catholic School parents. Public and Catholic School parents, on the other hand, were more concerned with discipline than were Free and Independent School parents. Finally, Public School parents were more concerned about teacher effectiveness in the classroom than were Independent, Free, and Catholic parents.

The chapter was concluded with a discussion of those concepts that were presented in the thirteen attitudinal statements of the questionnaire which were unrelated to the primary measures of the study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The information included in this chapter is presented in five parts. The first provides a summary of the primary concerns of the first four chapters; the second presents a comparison of the major findings of this study with the chief emphases of the literature; the third provides the conclusions; the fourth includes the research questions generated by this study; and the fifth provides the recommendations for further research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to obtain information about the perceptions of Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic parents regarding selected programs and practices in the Michigan Public Elementary Schools. From this information public school administrators might develop future programs and practices which would meet the expectations of parents from the four types of elementary schools concerning public elementary education

in their communities. While much research has been done about public elementary education from the perspective of educators, relatively little has been done from that of parents. Whereas research about Public Elementary School parents' perceptions was scarce, research regarding Independent, Free, and Catholic School parents' perceptions of public elementary education--except for the Gallup surveys--was virtually non-existent. This lack of research prompted the writer to undertake this study.

Public School parents were included in this study because they represent the majority of parents who send children to Michigan Elementary Schools; Independent School parents were included because relatively little is known about their perceptions of public elementary education; Free School parents were included because they demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the Public Elementary Schools by withdrawing their children from them; and Catholic parents were included because they increasingly turned to the Public Schools for their children's education.

Three hypotheses were formulated to assess the data to be obtained from the questionnaires. These were:

- I. There is a difference in the perceptions of parents included in this study (regardless of school type) between selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.

II. There is a difference between the perceptions of parents from the four types of schools toward selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.

III. There is an interaction between parent types and selected Public Elementary School programs and practices.

The questionnaire consisted of seventy-one statements, fifty-four of which were designed to obtain the attitudinal concerns of parents regarding public elementary education in Michigan Schools, and seventeen of which were included to obtain demographic information from parents. While the attitudinal statements were used to obtain parental perceptions about selected programs and practices, the demographic statements were considered beyond the scope of this study. One demographic statement regarding family income, however, was used merely as a description of parent types.

A factor analysis of the questionnaire showed that the concepts within the fifty-four attitudinal statements could be placed in three measures. These measures were subsequently designated as the instructional process, discipline, and a third measure which was not analyzed because it was difficult to interpret and because it was a measure which was not a primary concern of this study.

Each primary measure had two categories within it, with recent instructional trends and teacher effectiveness in the classroom grouped within the instructional process and disciplinary methods and disciplinary standards grouped within discipline.

The questionnaires were mailed to 1,352 parents in the fall of 1970. These parents sent their children to twenty-nine elementary schools located in five counties of the Lower Peninsula. Follow-up questionnaires were mailed to parents two weeks after the first mailing effort. Fifty-four per cent of the parents completed the questionnaires.

An analysis of variance procedure was then used to analyze the information obtained about parental perceptions as indicated by the primary measures of the study. The results of this analysis showed an interaction between parent types and educational measures which was significant at the .05 level.

The next step in the analysis was to use a Scheffé post hoc procedure to analyze specific differences between the perceptions of parent types and educational measures. The results of this procedure showed that Public and Catholic School parents were generally more concerned with discipline than they were in the instructional process, while Free and Independent School parents were generally more concerned with the instructional process than they were in discipline.

Comparison of the Major Findings of This
Study With the Chief Concerns
Expressed in the Literature

Public School Parents

The findings of this study regarding Public Elementary School parents' perceptions of the instructional process tended to agree with those presented in the literature. This study indicated that Public School parents were not concerned with recent instructional trends but were concerned with teacher effectiveness in the classroom. The literature indicated that the majority of the parents believed that the curriculum "is all right as it is." Further, the literature indicated that parents were concerned with teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Regarding discipline, the findings agreed with the focus of the literature, with parents perceiving discipline to be the chief problem which confronts the Public Schools of today.

Independent School Parents

The findings of this study indicated that Independent Elementary School parents were more concerned with recent instructional trends than they were in teacher effectiveness in the classroom. The literature, however, tended to focus on limited aspects of the instructional process, giving attention to the high pupil-teacher ratios

in public elementary classrooms rather than the categorical concerns included within the instructional process and discipline.

The findings indicated also that parents were not concerned with discipline, whereas the literature tended to focus on the inability of the Public Schools to do much about students who were uncooperative with educators. The writer suspects that these parents may not have been concerned with discipline because it was not a chief problem of the suburban Public Elementary Schools which are located in the same geographical areas as are the Independent Schools.

Free School Parents

The differences between the findings of this study and the foci of the literature regarding the instructional process and discipline were greater than they were for each of the other three types of schools. This study indicated that parents were concerned with recent instructional trends but were not concerned with teacher effectiveness in the classroom, whereas the literature indicated that parents were concerned about both of these categories.

A contrast also existed between the findings of the study and the focus of the literature regarding discipline, with the study indicating that parents were not concerned with discipline in the Public Elementary Schools

while the literature stated that parents were very much concerned with it. The writer suspects that those parents who were strongly dissatisfied with Public School discipline were more likely to get their perceptions into print than were those who were only mildly dissatisfied with it.

Catholic School Parents

The findings of this study and the focus of the literature agreed that Catholic School parents were not concerned with the instructional process in the Public Elementary Schools. Further, the findings of this study and the focus of the literature agreed that school discipline was the chief problem faced by the Public Schools.

Conclusions

Specific Conclusions

Public School Parents.--

1. Public School parents were more concerned with whether teachers were effective as classroom educators than they were with recent instructional trends in the curriculum.
2. These parents supported the disciplinary methods used by educators and at the same time maintained that disciplinary standards in the Public Schools were not high enough.

Independent School Parents.--

1. These parents were concerned with recent instructional trends but were not concerned whether public elementary teachers were effective in the classroom.

2. Disciplinary methods and standards in the Public Elementary Schools were not of concern to Independent School parents.

Free School Parents.--

1. Free School parents also were concerned with recent instructional trends but were not concerned with whether public elementary teachers were effective in the classroom.

2. Disciplinary methods and standards in the Public Elementary Schools were not of concern to Free School parents.

Catholic School Parents.--

1. Catholic School parents were neither concerned with recent instructional trends nor teacher effectiveness in the classroom.

2. While Catholic School parents were not concerned with the disciplinary methods used by public elementary educators, they were more concerned with disciplinary standards than were parents from the other three types of schools.

General Conclusions

1. Public and Catholic School parents tended to perceive similarly the attitudinal concepts included in this study.

2. Independent and Free School parents tended to perceive similarly the attitudinal concepts included in this study.

3. Notwithstanding the environmental differences between Independent and Free Schools, both schools attracted parents who were more concerned with the instructional process than they were with discipline in the Public Elementary Schools. ("Environmental differences": refers to the differences regarding school facilities and school reputation between Independent and Free Schools. Independent Schools, for example, tend to have attractive buildings. Moreover, these schools have established, in the minds of some parents, excellent school reputations. Free Schools, on the other hand, frequently teach with books and materials which are no longer useful to parents and others in the community. Further, Free Schools are often housed in less than desirable rental units. Moreover, these schools have not been in existence long enough to establish school reputations which are relatively stable.)

4. Notwithstanding the pervasive influence of religious education in the Catholic School curriculum and the absence of such education in Public School curriculum, both types of schools have parent constituencies that tended to perceive similarly the educational concepts included in this study.

5. This study did not indicate a significant degree of dissatisfaction with programs and practices from public elementary parents, a contention frequently suggested in the news media.

6. Public School parents were interested in teacher effectiveness in the classroom whereas the other three types of parents were not interested in this category. The writer suspects that the direct experience which Public School parents had with the Public Elementary Schools influenced their perceptions in this direction.

Questions Generated by This Study

Several questions arose during the course of this study which at the time could not be pursued. These questions raised concerns which could be of interest to the writer and others who might undertake future research regarding parental perceptions about public elementary education. These questions were:

1. Why were Public School parents not concerned with recent instructional trends in the Public Elementary Schools?

(a) Could the reason be that they were not adequately informed about such trends by public school administrators?

(b) Were these parents disillusioned with the results of previous efforts of the Public Schools to improve programs and practices, and therefore had little interest in current instructional trends?

(c) Did Public School parents tend to have conservative views about public elementary education, only reluctantly accepting educational innovations that were introduced by administrators?

2. Why were Public and Catholic School parents so interested in disciplinary standards in the Public Elementary Schools?

(a) Could the reason be that disciplinary situations which were perceived to be negatively resolved were the ones which predominated the news media?

(b) Did parents who perceived discipline to be the chief problem do so because it was a convenient "scapegoat" for some of the other problems which faced the schools?

A study of the perceptions of the following types of parents also might provide interesting information regarding the Public Elementary Schools:

1. Do parents who have one child enrolled in a Public Elementary School and another in one of the three types of Non-Public Elementary Schools included in this study perceive public elementary education differently from parents who have children enrolled in only one of the four types of elementary schools?

2. Do parents who withdrew their children from the Public Elementary Schools for Independent, Free, or Catholic Schools because of dissatisfaction with Public Elementary School programs and practices, then re-enrolled their children in the Public Elementary Schools because they were even more dissatisfied with non-public education, perceive the Public Schools differently from (a) parents who have always sent their children to the Public Elementary Schools or (b) parents who have withdrawn their children from the Public Schools for Non-Public Schools and maintain they never plan to return their children to public classrooms?

Recommendations

1. Public school administrators should conduct surveys periodically to obtain information concerning

Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic parents' perceptions of programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools of their communities.

2. Parents who send their children to Public, Independent, Free, and Catholic Elementary Schools should be encouraged to attend Public School meetings so they may contribute information regarding the programs and practices of the Public Elementary Schools in their communities.

3. Prior to the introduction of new programs and practices in the Public Elementary Schools, administrators should provide parents with information about them through conferences, workshops, and the news media.

4. Parents who withdraw their children from the Public Elementary Schools during the year should be asked to submit written information to the principal regarding their perceptions of the programs and practices implemented in the schools attended by their children. Guidelines for obtaining such information from parents are presented in Appendix D.

5. At the close of each school year, parents should be asked to submit written information to the principal regarding their perceptions of the programs and practices which were implemented in the Public

Elementary Schools attended by their children. Guidelines for obtaining such information from parents also are presented in Appendix D.

6. Administrators should use the information obtained from the methods described above to determine whether parents need information about school programs and practices, as well as whether they (the administrators) should develop new programs and practices in Public Elementary Schools.

7. Public school administrators should use available public relations services to help them use effectively the news media in their communities to inform parents about elementary school programs and practices. The Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA), affiliated with the Michigan Education Association, and the Information Services Offices of the Michigan Department of Education provide public relations services to school administrators. Further, in some Michigan communities private public relations firms are available to help local school districts assess and develop public relations programs in their communities.

8. Parents should be encouraged to participate frequently in selected aspects of the development, implementation, and assessment of Public Elementary School programs and practices.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LOCATION AND NUMBER OF SCHOOL PARENTS
WHO WERE MAILED QUESTIONNAIRES

TABLE A-1.--Location and number of public elementary school parents who were mailed questionnaires.

School District and Schools	Location		Number of Questionnaires Mailed to Parents
	County	City	
<u>Grand Rapids Public Schools</u>	Kent	Grand Rapids	
Riverside School			100
North Park School			100
Total			200
<u>Jackson Public Schools</u>	Jackson	Jackson	
Blackman School			38
Blair School			40
Bennett School			69
Griswold School			53
Total			200
<u>Taylor Public Schools</u>	Wayne	Taylor	
Two Schools ^a			
Total			200
Total number of Public School parents receiving questionnaires			600

^aNames of participating schools undisclosed to writer.

TABLE A-2.--Location and number of Independent Elementary School parents who were mailed questionnaires.

School	Location		Number of Questionnaires Mailed to Parents
	County	City	
Brookside School Cranbrook	Oakland	Bloomfield Hills	51
Friends School in Detroit	Wayne	Detroit	46
Grosse Pointe Academy	Wayne	Grosse Pointe	32
Ilsley School	Oakland	Lake Orion	3
Kensington Academy	Oakland	Bloomfield Hills	21
Kingsbury School	Oakland	Oxford	19
Academy of the Sacred Heart ^a	Oakland	Bloomfield Hills	30
Roeper City and Country School	Oakland	Bloomfield Hills	72
Detroit Waldorf School	Wayne	Detroit	26
Total			300

^aWhile the Academy of the Sacred Heart School, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, has religious ties with the Catholic Church, the school program--according to a resumé of school offerings provided the writer by this school's headmistress--does not include religious education in its curriculum. Further, the vice president of the National Association of Independent Schools, Boston, Mass., informed the writer that the headmistress of this school maintains active membership in NAIS.

TABLE A-3.--Location and number of Free Elementary School parents who were mailed questionnaires.

School	Location		Number of Questionnaires Mailed to Parents
	County	City	
City School of Detroit	Wayne	Detroit	58
Earl Kelly School	Jackson	Jackson	19
East Main Learning Village	Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo	16
Leeward School	Oakland	Lake Orion	6
The Children's School	Kent	Grand Rapids	41
The Detroit Free School	Wayne	Detroit	12
Total			152

TABLE A-4.--Location and number of Catholic Elementary School parents who were mailed questionnaires.

School	Location		Number of Questionnaires Mailed to Parents
	County	City	
Our Lady of Fatima School	Jackson	Jackson	31
Queen of the Miraculous Medal	Jackson	Jackson	96
St. John School	Jackson	Jackson	55
St. Joseph School	Jackson	Jackson	36
St. Mary School	Jackson	Jackson	58
St. Stanislaus School	Jackson	Jackson	24
Total			300

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The Public Elementary Schools

Please check (✓) the box that is the best response for each statement. Be sure to answer every question. We would like for the mother to answer the questionnaire. If the questionnaire is answered by someone other than the mother, please indicate this on page 5 of the questionnaire.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1. Elementary school teachers are as dedicated to their work today as they were in the past.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Public school teachers spend too many days attending workshops and professional conferences on school time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Not enough time is spent on moral training in the public schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. In general, the elementary public schools try to teach children respect for the rights and property of others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The teaching of mathematics in the public schools gives children a good foundation for high school mathematics.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The teaching of reading is better today than it used to be in the public schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The teaching of science is one of the strong areas in the public elementary schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Generally speaking, physical education programs are being properly conducted in the elementary schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Sex education is an essential subject in the elementary school curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Sex education is being satisfactorily taught in the elementary public schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | <i>Strongly
Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Neutral</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly
Disagree</i> |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 11. Too much of the regular classroom teachers' time is spent trying to educate below-average children at the expense of children who are more capable of learning. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 12. Not enough time is spent on basic subjects, like reading, writing, and arithmetic. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 13. More non-graded school programs should be developed in the elementary schools, to replace the grade-level programs. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 14. For the most part, elementary teachers use proper methods of discipline. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 15. In general, elementary principals use proper methods of discipline. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 16. Not enough time is spent working at arts and crafts activities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 17. Generally speaking, teachers adequately test their students over the subject matter that is covered in class. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 18. Generally speaking, elementary schools that have lunch programs do a satisfactory job of operating them. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 19. So that they can remain with their own age group, students should be promoted to the next grade whether or not they have learned the work of the previous grade. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 20. Too much time is spent worrying about tests and grades, and not enough about whether children are enjoying school while they learn. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| 21. Too much money is spent in the elementary schools on educational gadgets, such as: tape recorders, record players, film projectors, etc. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <hr/> | | | | | |

- | | <i>Strongly
Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Neutral</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly
Disagree</i> |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 22. Generally speaking, teachers do a good job of helping children work out problems that affect their school performance. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Discipline on public school busses is usually good. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. Elementary teachers sufficiently praise children when they do good work in class. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Elementary public school teachers should be more strict with students who cause trouble in the classroom. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. The elementary public schools are doing a good job of teaching children to respect all racial groups. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27. Parents don't have enough voice in determining public school policies. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. In general, teachers should do more to prevent children from using foul language in the elementary public schools. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. Elementary public schools keep parents adequately informed of their children's school progress. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. The elementary public schools provide children with good study habits for their future education. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. Children should have some voice in helping to determine the kinds of subject matter that is taught to them in school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. Children should have some voice in helping to determine how subject matter is taught to them in school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. Generally speaking, public school administrators use good judgment in setting up school boundaries which determine the particular schools that children must attend. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(please turn over)

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
34. Parents should have the right to enroll their children in any elementary public school in their school district -- on a first-come-first-serve basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. Too much time is spent on moral training in the public schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. Students are permitted to talk too much with one another when they should be busy doing their school work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. Elementary teachers should demand more respect from their students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. Too much time is spent working at arts and crafts activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. Elementary teachers should give more attention to the personal appearance of students..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. The elementary public schools are doing a good job of teaching children to respect all religious groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. Too much time is spent teaching about other countries and not enough about our own country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. Elementary public school teachers use up-to-date classroom methods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. Parents have too much voice in determining public school policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. Elementary schools are involved in too many matters that should be left up to the home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. More teacher-aides should be employed in the elementary public schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. Public school administrators usually keep parents adequately informed of the new programs and policies that occur in the elementary schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
34. Parents should have the right to enroll their children in any elementary public school in their school district -- on a first-come-first-serve basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. Too much time is spent on moral training in the public schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. Students are permitted to talk too much with one another when they should be busy doing their school work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. Elementary teachers should demand more respect from their students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. Too much time is spent working at arts and crafts activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. Elementary teachers should give more attention to the personal appearance of students..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. The elementary public schools are doing a good job of teaching children to respect all religious groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. Too much time is spent teaching about other countries and not enough about our own country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. Elementary public school teachers use up-to-date classroom methods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. Parents have too much voice in determining public school policies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
44. Elementary schools are involved in too many matters that should be left up to the home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45. More teacher-aides should be employed in the elementary public schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
46. Public school administrators usually keep parents adequately informed of the new programs and policies that occur in the elementary schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Please check the category which describes the work you do:
 (1) housewife (2) unemployed (3) unskilled laborer
 (4) semi-skilled laborer (5) craftsman or foreman
 (6) sales (7) business or managerial (8) professional
 (9) other (please specify): _____
5. Check total yearly income for family:
 (1) \$2,999 or less _____ (2) \$3,000-\$5,999 _____ (3) \$6,000-\$8,999 _____
 (4) \$9,000-\$11,999 _____ (5) \$12,000-\$14,999 _____ (6) \$15,000 or over _____
6. Are you the head of household? Yes No
7. Marital status: Married Widowed Divorced Separated
8. Number of children 12 or under living with you: _____
9. Number of children between 13 and 18 living with you: _____
10. Do any of your children presently attend the public elementary school? Yes No
11. If your answer is no to question 10, have any of your children in the past attended the public elementary school? Yes No
12. Are you presently a teacher? Yes No
13. If your answer is no to question 12, were you ever a teacher? Yes No
14. Is your spouse presently a teacher? Yes No
15. If your answer is no to question 14, was your spouse ever a teacher? Yes No
16. Your age:
 (1) under 20 _____ (2) 20-25 _____ (3) 26-30 _____ (4) 31-35 _____
 (5) 36-40 _____ (6) 41-45 _____ (7) 46-50 _____ (8) 51 and older _____
17. The age of your spouse:
 (1) under 20 _____ (2) 20-25 _____ (3) 26-30 _____ (4) 31-35 _____
 (5) 36-40 _____ (6) 41-45 _____ (7) 46-50 _____ (8) 51 and older _____

Please include any comments that you would like to make about the questionnaire:

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire and returning it promptly.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE LETTERS INCLUDED WITH
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Erikson Hall Room 517
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
November 11, 1970

Dear Parents,

You have more direct contact with the elementary public schools than most other people. Day in and day out, you are the ones who must listen to the praises and complaints about school that come from your children. Your opinions, therefore, are very important. Moreover, you read a lot about the schools. This, along with your children's opinions, gives you an understanding about some of the issues and concerns that face the public schools.

The enclosed questionnaire is about ELEMENTARY public school education. The questionnaire has been approved by the Grand Rapids Public Schools. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out how parents feel about elementary education in Michigan Public Schools. It is hoped that the results of the questionnaire will provide information that might help public school administrators know more about how well informed Michigan parents are about elementary education in the public schools.

Your responses of course will be held in strictest confidence. Please do not sign your name. I will be pleased to send you a summary of questionnaire results if you so desire. Just send a card to the address given at the heading of this letter.

Our experience with the questionnaire indicates that it should take you about 15 minutes to complete it. A self-addressed envelope is provided for you to return the questionnaire. It will be especially helpful if you will return the questionnaire by: November 18.

Please contact your school principal if you have further questions about the study.

Remember: the questionnaire is concerned only with ELEMENTARY public school education.

Thank you. Your help with this educational study is very much appreciated.

Yours truly,

William H. Sumner

Erikson Hall Room 517
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
November 11, 1970

Dear Parents,

You send your children to an independent school. You have your reasons for doing so. But this does not prevent your having important opinions about the public schools--even though your children may never have attended one. Some of you, however, have at one time or another sent your children to the public schools, so you speak from actual experience.

But whether or not your children have attended the public schools makes no difference. You read many things about the public schools. You have a background of information on which to base your opinions. Your opinions are needed.

The enclosed questionnaire is about PUBLIC ELEMENTARY school education. The questionnaire has been reviewed and approved by your school principal. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out how parents feel about elementary education in Michigan public schools. It is hoped that the results of the questionnaire will provide information that might help public school administrators know more about how well informed Michigan parents are about elementary education in the public schools.

Your responses of course will be held in strictest confidence. Please do not sign your name. I will be pleased to send you a summary of questionnaire results if you so desire. Just send a card to the address given at the heading of this letter.

Our experience with the questionnaire indicates that it should take you about 15 minutes to complete it. A self-addressed envelope is provided for you to return the questionnaire. It will be especially helpful if you will return the questionnaire by: November 18.

Please contact your school principal if you have further questions about the study.

Remember: the questionnaire is concerned only with PUBLIC ELEMENTARY school education.

Thank you. Your help with this educational study is very much appreciated.

Yours truly,

William H. Sumner

Erikson Hall Room 517
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
November 11, 1970

Dear Parents,

You send your children to a private school. You have your reasons for doing so. But this does not prevent your having important opinions about the public schools--even though your children may never have attended one. Some of you, however, have at one time or another sent your children to the public schools, so you speak from actual experience.

But whether or not your children have attended the public schools makes no difference. You read many things about the public schools. You have a background of information on which to base your opinions. Your opinions are needed.

The enclosed questionnaire is about PUBLIC ELEMENTARY school education. The questionnaire has been reviewed and approved by your school principal. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out how parents feel about elementary education in Michigan public schools. It is hoped that the results of the questionnaire will provide information that might help public school administrators know more about how well informed Michigan parents are about elementary education in the public schools.

Your responses of course will be held in strictest confidence. Please do not sign your name. I will be pleased to send you a summary of questionnaire results if you so desire. Just send a card to the address given at the heading of this letter.

Our experience with the questionnaire indicates that it should take you about 15 minutes to complete it. A self-addressed envelope is provided for you to return the questionnaire. It will be especially helpful if you will return the questionnaire by: November 18.

Please contact your school principal if you have further questions about the study.

Thank you. Your help with this educational study is very much appreciated.

Yours truly,

William Sumner

Erikson Hall Room 517
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
November 11, 1970

Dear Parents,

Some parents prefer parochial schools for their children. Others want their children to attend private schools. Still others prefer the public schools. But no matter what kind of school your children attend -- parochial, private, or public -- you have important opinions about the quality of education that ALL Michigan schools provide for children.

The enclosed questionnaire is about PUBLIC ELEMENTARY school education. The questionnaire has been reviewed and approved by the Diocesan Office of Education, Lansing, Michigan. Moreover, it has the approval of the Jackson Area Board of Education, the regional body that helps direct educational policy for the Catholic Schools in the Greater Jackson area.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out how parents feel about elementary education in Michigan Public Schools. It is hoped that the results of the questionnaire will provide information that might help public school administrators know more about how well informed Michigan parents are about elementary education in the public schools.

Perhaps at this point you are saying: "I've never had a child attend the public schools -- of what worth are my opinions?" Your opinions are worth a lot. You pay public school taxes. You read many things about the public schools -- even though your children may never have attended one. Those of you whose children at one time or another have attended the public schools of course speak from actual experience.

But whether or not your children have attended the public schools makes no difference. Your opinions are needed.

Your responses of course will be held in strictest confidence. Please do not sign your name. I will be pleased to send you a summary of questionnaire results if you so desire. Just send a card to the address given at the heading of this letter.

Our experience with the questionnaire indicates that it should take you about 15 minutes to complete it. A self-addressed envelope is provided for you to return the questionnaire. It will be especially helpful if you will return the questionnaire by: November 18.

Please contact your school principal if you have further questions about the study.

Remember: the questionnaire is concerned only with PUBLIC ELEMENTARY school education.

Thank you. Your help with this educational study is very much appreciated.

Yours truly,

William H. Sumner
William H. Sumner

November 11, 1970

Dear Parents,

This letter will introduce to you Mr. William Sumner, doctoral student at Michigan State University. Mr. Sumner is doing a study about PUBLIC ELEMENTARY education in Michigan schools. His questionnaire is concerned with obtaining parents' opinions about public school practices in this state. It makes no difference whether or not you have children attending the public elementary schools. He believes you have important opinions about them.

I would appreciate your extending to Mr. Sumner the privilege of considering his questionnaire and completing it if you are so inclined.

Remember: the questionnaire is concerned only with PUBLIC ELEMENTARY education.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

Erickson Hall Room 517
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan
December 5, 1970

Dear Parents,

Recently you received a letter from me asking you to complete a questionnaire about public elementary education. Since I have not heard from you, I assume that you have been busy, and that you have not had time to complete the questionnaire.

Your contribution is very important to this study. Without it, the study will be incomplete. Your responses will be held in strictest confidence. Please do not sign your name.

Thank you very much for participating in this study. Your contribution may indeed provide information previously unknown or overlooked by educators.

Please disregard this letter if you have already mailed your questionnaire.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Sumner

APPENDIX D

PARENT INFORMATION FORMS

School Improvement Information

Dear Parents,

Please help us improve the program provided for children at _____ School. Complete the following statements, then return this form to your school in the enclosed return-envelope. Thank you.

1. Why are you withdrawing your child from _____ School? Your Comments:

2. Have you approved of the curriculum provided your child by this school? ___Yes ___No
Your Comments:

3. Have you approved of how the subjects are taught in this school? ___Yes ___No
Your Comments:

4. Have you approved of the disciplinary methods used by the teachers and principal of this school? ___Yes ___No
Your Comments:

5. Do you have further suggestions which might help the teachers and principal improve the school program? ___Yes ___No

Parent Information Concerning This
Year's Program at _____ School

Dear Parents,

Please help your teachers and principal determine whether the school program provided your child during this school year has been satisfactory. Complete the following statements, then return this form to your school in the enclosed return-addressed envelope.

Thank you.

1. Have you been pleased with the curriculum provided your child during this school year? Yes No

Your Comments:

2. Do you approve of how the subjects are taught in this school? Yes No Your Comments:

3. Have you approved of the disciplinary methods used by the teachers and principal of this school?

Yes No Your Comments:

4. Do you have further suggestions which might help the teachers and principal improve the school program? Yes No

Your Comments: