

THE VIEWS
OF ADOLESCENTS
ENTERING
JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL

A RESEARCH PROJECT

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of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Science in Education

by

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approved by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents
Tom A. Pendleton
and
Mary A. Pendleton
for the wisdom, encouragement, and unconditional love
they have given me throughout my life

to my grandmother
Panzie M. Pendleton
who has been my greatest inspiration

and to my husband
Jerome P. Alexander
who has given me unlimited support
in all my endeavors

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose for the Study

Imagine young adolescents experiencing a negative transition from elementary school to junior high school. These individuals feel as though they have lost all of their close friends; it is difficult to meet new peers; classes are more demanding; teachers do not give them personal attention; school is too crowded; the food in the cafeteria is not very good; and the ninth graders are always pushing them around.

Contrary to the previous scene, imagine young adolescents experiencing a positive transition from elementary school to junior high school. These students feel as though all of their friends attend their new school; they have the opportunity to "hang" around more people; they have a wide variety of classes to choose from; the subject areas in their classes are more specialized; they have new teachers for every class; the school lunches are good; and they are more independent.

These two distinct sets of students are similar in that they are moving from the elementary school to the junior high school, but differ in the perception of the transition. It is probable that some adolescents adapt well to the transition, whereas others find the transition more difficult.

Research Problem and Rationale

The purpose of this study was to analyze perceptions toward school of adolescent students who are making the transition from elementary school to junior high school. Because "the years from ten through fourteen are a critical turning point in life's trajectory" (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1996, p.4), understanding students' attitudes toward their

school change is an important issue for study. The transition from elementary school to junior high school occurs at a crucial time when most young adolescents are also experiencing the physical, psychological, and social changes associated with adolescence, including the new role demands presented by parents, peers, and teachers (Lord et al., 1994). Many experience a decline in their self-esteem as a result.

Because early adolescence marks the passage from primary to secondary education, the latter being the final stage of formal education for a sizable proportion of Americans, it is imperative that educators be aware of how adolescents feel. It is also imperative that adolescents be provided with a suitable learning environment in which they can thrive. The early adolescent's academic success/failure is not only important with respect to his or her psychological development and welfare, but also has implications for how he or she transitions to, and fares through, high school (Guerin et al., 1994). This, in turn, has a direct impact on eventual educational attainment and occupational status.

Recently, there has been an effort to reform middle grade schooling. Stimulated in part by the landmark 1989 *Turning Points* report of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, as well as by other national calls for school reform, many state offices of education are currently taking a close look at how their middle grade schools are organized and structured (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). Many are also in the process of changing their middle grades to better serve the needs of early adolescents. Thus, research in the area of adolescent needs, perceptions, and experience is a necessity.

Little is known about the impact of the school on the development of the emerging adolescent (Hill, 1993). Despite efforts over the past few decades to provide a better educational

environment for young adolescents, little is known regarding the students' perceptions of school (Schulenberg et al., 1984). There is a need to directly tap these young students' views. In fact, before conclusive statements and decisions are made regarding the best educational design for this age group, there is a need to know what school, as it is presently structured, is like from these youngsters' perspectives.

Definitions of Terms

Academics refers to that part of the school experience that is directly related to teaching and learning. Academics is operationally defined here as the responses to items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 on the instrument "What Junior High School is Like"

Early Adolescence is the time between childhood and adulthood which typically encompasses the profound physical and social changes that occur with puberty as maturation begins, and as social interactions become increasingly centered on members of the opposite sex.

Elementary School consists of grades 1-6.

Junior High School consists of grades 7-8.

Peer Relations refers to that part of the school experience that is most related to personal interactions among students. Peer Relations was operationally defined here as the responses to items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 on the instrument.

School environment refers to that part of the school experience that encompasses the overall climate and culture of the school, including organizational structure, size, cafeteria, cleanliness, and rules. School environment was operationally defined here as the responses to items 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 on the instrument.

Transition Period refers of the first and second semesters of the seventh grade school year.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some researchers have argued that the junior high school transition is inherently stressful because early adolescents are not developmentally ready to move to a larger school with different teachers for each subject, particularly because that move often coincides with the physical and psychological changes of puberty (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Other researchers have argued that the typical junior high school is a less desirable environment for adolescents than is the typical elementary school (Eccles & Midgley, 1989). Teacher-student relationships usually are less personal in junior high school than in elementary school. In addition, junior high school teachers usually place more emphasis on discipline and academic competition than do elementary school (Eccles et al., 1993). Thus, for most adolescents, moving to junior high school means moving to a more stressful environment. Last, early adolescents hold negative perceptions about the transition to junior high school is because of developmental declines in interest in school, intrinsic motivation, self-concept, self-perception, and confidence in one's intellectual abilities, especially following failure (Epstein & McParland, 1976; Eccles, Midgley, & Adler, 1984; Harter, 1982; Simmons, Blyth, Van Cleave, & Bush, 1979; Parsons & Ruble, 1977).

One reason early adolescents possess positive perceptions about the transition to junior high school is because self-image has been found to increase and to be relatively stable even during the transitional period between childhood and adolescence (Abramowitz et al., 1984; Petersen, 1981; Petersen et al., 1984). Findings by Simmons et al. (1979) indicate that it is not school transition, but the timing of transition from elementary school to secondary school that is crucial. A second reason early adolescents have positive perceptions about the transition to

junior high school is because not all adolescents have problems, and thus factors that are used to identify disturbed youth must be differentiated from those used to identify nondisturbed youth (Petersen, 1981). Finally, early adolescents have positive perceptions about the transition to junior high school because they enjoy having a larger selection of classes and more independence (Berndt & Mekos, 1995).

Individual differences may be critically important in understanding why some children function well in the junior high school setting and why others do not (Guerin et al., 1994). It is likely that individual differences play a role in early adolescents' responses to the transition to junior high school (Lord et al., 1994). The transition to junior high school can be conceptualized from the perspective of stress and coping; thus, from this perspective, any change, or transition, can be considered a stressful event in that it taps the individual's resources for adaptation (Lord et al., 1994). Personal coping resources that buffer against the detrimental effects of stress on children and adolescents include a sense of autonomy, a sense of personal efficacy, and confidence in one's competence (Bandura, 1986; Compas, 1987; Garnezy, 1983; Harter, 1990).

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The methods employed to study the perceptions of transitioning seventh grade students are described in this chapter. First, the setting of the study is described. Next, the research design is reviewed. The four sections that follow include the subjects, the instrument, data collection and data analysis strategies.

Setting

This study took place in the junior high school of a school system outside a large southwestern Ohio city. The student population of this school was approximately five hundred, consisting of grades seven and eight. The average class size was twenty to twenty-five students. This study was conducted during the second semester of a junior high school grading period, in order to examine the thoughts of adolescents as they reflected back on their experiences, instead of as they encountered initial shock.

Research Design

This research was designed as what is commonly called an ex post facto study. Borg and Gall (1989), however, use the term "causal-comparative" to describe essentially the same design. Ex post facto research is used when the researcher does not manipulate any independent variables. The data are collected after the effects of the independent variable have taken place.

Newman and Newman (1994) define three types of ex post facto research: with hypotheses, without hypotheses, and with hypotheses and tests of alternative hypotheses. This design was ex post facto research without hypotheses because the research question required an exploratory analysis, not a test of significance. The purpose was to describe students' perceptions

of what their junior high school experience was like. Ex post facto research is highly appropriate for this research purpose. It does not allow one to infer causation, however.

Subjects

The subjects in this study were second semester, seventh grade students. The ages of these students ranged from eleven to fourteen. The academic, physical, and social abilities of these students varied between low, medium, and high. Approximately seventy-four percent of the students were African American, 10% European American, 7% Native American, 4% Latin American, 1% Asian American, and 4% no response.

Instrument

The instrument What Junior High School Is Like, was designed by the researcher (Appendix A). Items were categorized into three themes to be consistent with the objectives of the survey: (1) peer relations, (2) academics, and (3) school environment (Table 1). Each category contained five questions. In addition, three open-ended questions followed the three categories, probing in an open-ended way, the perceptions of junior high school. Demographic items were placed at the end of the survey. According to Dillman (1978), placing them last allows the more interesting and appealing items to be placed first. The researcher inquired about the age, gender, and grade point average of each student. A code book was constructed to organize the data. Code numbers from one to four occurred after each question, indicating a range from strongly agree to strongly disagree, respectively.

A written survey instrument was selected for several reasons. First, survey instruments are efficient when a researcher wants to collect various data on a large number of subjects. Second, such instruments can be responded to anonymously, lending objectivity to the results

(Isaac & Michael, 1981). Third, the written survey allowed the researcher to collect the data from students during the regular school day, a paper/pencil exercise that is natural and unobtrusive in the school environment.

The content validity of the instrument was built in as evidenced by the Table of Specifications (Table 1). Popham (1990) requires the researcher to "define, in clear and unambiguous language, the universe of content ... and the purpose for which the test is intended to be used." (p. 97-98). The content studied here included peer relations, academics, and school environment. These three constructs were selected because they cover areas of concern to both students and educators at the junior high level.

The purpose was to assess students' perceptions of these three constructs in a school to which they had recently moved. Their perceptions as new junior high school students was the focus. To accomplish this purpose, items were written in the language of typical junior high school students. Most students at these grade levels would be able to easily read and understand all items. A 4-point scale was used to eliminate the possibility of a neutral, middle point, response. Students would be forced to choose one side or the other of a nonexistent neutral mathematical position. The higher the student's rating the more he/she agreed with the statement. Survey design strategies suggested by Borg and Gall (1989) and Isaac and Michael (1981) were followed.

Data Collection

Data were collected in the spring of 1996. This time period was chosen because it was important to capture the students' responses during a time when the transition period was assumed to be operating. The students had been at the school for one semester and the

researcher assumed that while they had formed some perceptions of junior high school, they remained close enough to their elementary experience to remember it and to be able to make comparisons to their current school experience.

With the approval and cooperation of teachers, the data collection instrument was distributed at the beginning of ten separate class periods, containing approximately twenty-two students each. The total N was 222. Every student in each class was asked to participate. The researcher gave a brief description of what would be taking place within the next five minutes. After the researcher disseminated the data collecting instrument, she read directions aloud; answered the students' questions; informed students there would be a five minute time limit; and asked students to answer the questions truthfully and honestly. After the five minute time interval, the researcher collected the data collection instruments. The researcher counted the total number of instruments from all classes and assigned identification numbers to them.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to profile the students and their perceptions. The statistical software, SAS (Statistical Analysis System, 1991), was used to analyze the data. Frequencies were calculated for each question. The results were organized into tables. Each table was identified with a title, and included response descriptions, frequencies, and percents. Tables describing demographic information were also constructed.

Subscale scores for the three constructs: peer relations, academics, and school environment were calculated and plotted in order to compare one to the others. Because there were five items within each subscale and each rating scale went from 1 to 4, the possible scores for each subscale ranged from 5 to 20. Whether or not patterns of perceptions differed across the

three areas could then be discerned. Which of the three areas that are most problematic for these seventh graders in transition from elementary school to junior high school could then be determined.

Limitations

Several limitations could have affected this study. One limitation may have been the adolescents surveyed. Not having been randomly selected, it is not clear that these students are representative of all seventh graders at the school. On the other hand, there is no logical reason to believe that they are any different. A second limitation may have been the homogeneity of demographic information, thus preventing a generalization to be made from results. Generalizability beyond the school in which the research took place is not possible (Borg and Gall, 1989). The participants in the study were not sampled from a larger population but represent a convenience sample for this study. However, the results of the study are important for the administrators and teachers in this particular school and this school district. The perceptions of students about the change from one school to another are important for educators in both schools to consider: the elementary schools from which the students came and the junior high schools they now attend. A third limitation may have been the time of year, and day, at which the survey was completed. While it was important from a design standpoint to collect the data fairly soon after students began attending the school, this schedule was limiting in another way. The length of experience on which students based their responses to these items was only one semester.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter is organized in the following way. First the demographic profile of the subjects is described. Secondly, the responses to the individual items on "What Junior High School is Like" are reported in text and tables. Third, the subscale scores to the three constructs: peer relations, academics, and school environment are reported in text, tables, and graphical display.

Demographic Results

A total of two-hundred twenty-two students were surveyed. Through quantitative analysis, the researcher found that the majority of these students were African-American. Approximately seventy-four percent of the students were African American, 10% European American, 7% Native American, 4% Latin American, 1% Asian American, and 4% no response (Table 2). More males than females participated in the study. Fifty-five percent of the students who responded were male, while 43.7% were female (Table 3). About 60% of the students were 13 years of age (Table 4). Most students had previously maintained a B or C grade point average. About one-third reported they usually received B's and almost 40% listed their usual grades are C's. Only a little over 7% were A students. (Table 5).

Results on Items 1 - 20 on "What Junior High School is Like" Instrument

Nearly all students responded positively to peer relations. Somewhat over eleven percent replied seldom true or never true to the statement "I have close friends at this school," while 88.3% replied really true or sometimes true (Table 6). Eighteen percent replied seldom true or never true to the statement "It has been easy to meet people," while 82% replied really true or

sometimes true (Table 7). Eighteen percent replied seldom true or never true to the statement “I feel comfortable around other students,” while 82% replied really true or sometimes true (Table 8). A slight drop occurred with the statement “I am included in group activities,” where only 77.4% indicated that this statement was really true or sometimes true (Table 9). Likewise, only 78.4% answered really true or sometimes true to the statement “I like interacting with my classmates” (Table 10).

Students were positive towards the academic theme of the data collection instrument as well. While only fifteen percent answered seldom true or never true to the statement “My teachers help me,” 85% answered really true or sometimes true (Table 11). This was the largest percentage in this theme. Very close in percentage was the response to “I like having different teachers for each subject.” Somewhat over sixteen percent of the students replied seldom true or never true to this statement, while 83.4% responded really true or sometimes true (Table 12). Approximately twenty percent replied seldom true or never true to the statement “I like having a variety of classes,” while 79.3% replied really true sometimes or true (Table 13). The statement which received the lowest percentage of agreement was “School work isn’t too difficult for me.” A little over twenty-seven percent replied seldom true or never true to this statement, while 72.5% replied really true or sometimes true (Table 14). Almost 75% of the students believed that teachers make information easy to understand (Table 15).

Responses towards school environment were not as positive as those towards peer relations and academics. Although eighty-two percent agreed with the statement “I like changing classes,” agreement for all other thematic statements ranged from thirty to fifty percent (Table 16). Forty-one percent answered seldom true or never true to the statement “Rules and

punishments are fair,” while only 59% answered really true or sometimes true (Table 17). Forty-four percent answered seldom true or never true to the statement “Everything in my school is neat/clean,” while only 55.4% answered really true or sometimes true (Table 18). Forty-six percent answered seldom true or never true to the statement “School isn’t too big or crowded,” while only 54% answered really true or sometimes true (Table 19). Last, somewhat over sixty-seven percent answered seldom true or never true to the statement “I like cafeteria food,” while only 32.4% answered really true or sometimes true (Table 20).

Results on the Patterns Related to Peer Relations, Academics, and School Environment

Figures 1, 2, and 3 show the patterns of student responses to peer relations, academics, and school environment, respectively. These figures were derived from the data on Table 21 (Peer Relations), Table 22 (Academics), and Table 23 (School Environment). For the most part, while students, overall, were positive about junior high school, the areas of peer relations and academics were more positively perceived than was the area of school environment. On peer relations students scored at all levels of the scale, but the bulk of students scored at the higher end of the scale. On academics, on the other hand, no students scored at the lowest end, and students clustered at the higher end of the scale. The school environment subscale revealed a different pattern of student perceptions. Students were not overly positive about school environment. Most students scored in the middle of the scale; this pattern clearly differs from the first two.

Results of the qualitative analysis of responses to open-ended items

Items 16, 17, and 18 on the instrument asked students about their likes, dislikes, and what they would change about junior high school. Through qualitative analysis of what students wrote

to these questions, the researcher discovered a wealth of information. Various answers were given to the questions “What do you like about junior high school?”; “What don’t you like about junior high school?”; and “What would you change about junior high school?”

The students surveyed liked quite a bit about junior high school. Many of them mentioned that they liked their friends and members of the opposite gender. This was a sign of positive peer relationships. Also, many of the students liked their teachers, and “nice grown-ups who are patient with them.” A few liked having different subjects and changing classes. Some said that they liked the freedom they received in junior high, and felt more mature. Several students said that they liked exploratory classes, the variety of activities offered, and experiences such as dances and field trips.

Students also had a long list of what they did not like about junior high school. The most frequent comment was that they do not like the cafeteria food. The second most frequent comment was that they do not like Saturday school or detention. The third most frequent comment was that they do not like wearing uniforms. In addition to these dislikes, the students felt that the lockers were too small, the hallways were too crowded, and there was not enough time to pass between classes.

In response to the question “What would you change about junior high?,” students said that they would change school rules and regulations; get rid of Saturday school and detention; not require uniforms to be worn; and improve school lunches. Students also said they would expand school hallways, classroom space, and locker space. One student mentioned that he would have a dance every holiday.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions towards school of adolescent students who are making the transition from elementary school to junior high school. The subjects were second semester, seventh grade students. This study was conducted during the second semester of a junior high school grading period in order to examine the thoughts of adolescents as they reflected back on their experiences, instead of as they encountered initial shock. The school system was located outside a large southwestern Ohio city.

The data collection instrument was coded into three themes for positive perceptions of junior high school: (1) peer relations, (2) academics, and (3) school environment. Each category contained five questions. Three open-ended questions followed the three categories, probing for qualitative information. The data collection instrument was distributed at the beginning of ten separate class periods, containing approximately twenty-two students each.

Conclusions

Many conclusions can be drawn from these results. First of all, junior high school students need to interact with their classmates. As Eccles and Midgley (1989) have stated, changing from elementary to junior high school places these students in a less personal environment. Teachers need to be aware of the fact that these seventh graders have a need to belong to a group, to be included with their peers. The vast majority of these students felt that they had friends, but less than that number felt always included in group activities. A second conclusion is that while students feel that their teachers help them and make information easy to

understand, a number of them still do not think school work is not too difficult for them. It is evident that the students surveyed in this study like having a different teacher for each subject. Also, they like having a variety of classes to choose from. Berndt and Mekos (1995) found similar attitudes in their study. Students like the variety of classes and teachers they can choose.

Educators in this school can build on this positive perception to encourage the growing maturity of seventh graders. This study was not sensitive enough to measure fine distinctions among students (Lord et al., 1994). It was not the purpose here; however, teachers need to know that the perceptions of students can provide openings for teachers to intervene in ways to help students be successful. Because earlier research showed a decline in school interest at junior high levels it is important for teachers to be aware of students' perceptions so they can take advantage of and build on positive attitudes where they exist.

A third conclusion is that school environment may become problematic for these students. Compared to other themes (peer relations and academics) the pattern of student perceptions of the environment were much less positive (Figure 3). Several explanations for this finding are possible. First of all, the other two themes are more personal. Perhaps more students responded to them positively merely because they were personal. The environment of the school (cleanliness, cafeteria, rules, etc.) is more impersonal. Students may have felt freer to be more judgemental and less positive. A second explanation is simply that as new seventh graders, the climate and physical facilities are unfamiliar and less pleasing. Lower perceptions of class size, cafeteria food, and cleanliness may be indicators of the unfamiliarity the students feel.

Recommendations

Junior high school educators should intervene and encourage positive interaction among students, and encourage group activities where all students will feel included. Since students at this age are developing their social skills, and social interactions are becoming increasingly centered on members of the opposite sex this type of encouragement is very important.

Secondly, educators should continue to help their students academically, caring for their role as learners in proactive ways. From the results of this study, it is evident that students feel that their teachers are helping them and are making information easy to understand. In addition to these excellent characteristics, educators should support their students as unique individuals. Last, it is very important to create a good environment. A neat, clean, spacious classroom where rules and regulations are fair is very favorable. A bright, relaxing, non-threatening atmosphere can set the tone for an great school year.

Table 1
Content Validity of "What Junior High School is Like"
Table of Specifications:

	Peer Relations	Academics	School Environment
1. I have close friends at this school.	X		
2. It has been easy for me to meet new people.	X		
3. I feel comfortable around other students.	X		
4. I am included in group activities.	X		
5. I like interacting with my classmates.	X		
6. I like having a variety of classes to choose from.		X	
7. I like having a different teacher for each subject.		X	
8. My school work is not too difficult for me.		X	
9. My teachers make information easy to understand.		X	
10. My teachers help me.		X	
11. I like changing classes for each subject.			X
12. My school is not too big or crowded.			X
13. I like the cafeteria food.			X

	Peer Relations	Academics	School Environment
14. Everything in my school is neat and clean.			X
15. The rules of my school, and punishments for breaking them, are fair.			X

Table 2

Responses to the Question: Ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent
African American	164	73.9
European American	22	9.9
Latin American	8	3.6
Native American	16	7.2
Asian American	3	1.4
No Response	9	4.1

Table 3

Responses to the Question: Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	122	55.0
Female	97	43.7
No Response	3	1.4

Table 4

Responses to the Question: Age

	Frequency	Percent
0	3	1.4
12	52	23.4
13	143	64.4
14	23	10.4
21	1	0.5

Table 5

Responses to the Question: Grade Point Average

	Frequency	Percent
A	17	7.7
B	77	34.7
C	87	39.2
D	29	13.1
F	9	4.1
No Response	3	1.4

Table 6

Responses to the Question: I Have Close Friends At This School

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	137	61.7
Sometimes True	59	26.6
Seldom True	13	5.9
Never True	13	5.9
No Response	0	0.0

Table 7

Responses to the Question: It Has Been Easy To Meet People

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	99	44.6
Sometimes True	83	37.4
Seldom True	27	12.2
Never True	13	5.9
No Response	0	0.0

Table 8

Responses to the Question: I Feel Comfortable Around Other People

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	77	37.4
Sometimes True	105	47.3
Seldom True	27	12.2
Never True	12	5.4
No Response	1	0.5

Table 9

Responses to the Question: I Am Included In Group Activities

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	98	44.1
Sometimes True	74	33.3
Seldom True	26	11.7
Never True	24	10.8
No Response	0	0.0

Table 10

Responses to the Question: I Like Interacting With My Classmates

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	85	38.3
Sometimes True	89	40.1
Seldom True	34	15.3
Never True	13	5.9
No Response	1	0.5

Table 11

Responses to the Question: My Teachers Help Me

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	106	47.7
Sometimes True	84	37.8
Seldom True	23	10.4
Never True	9	4.1
No Response	0	0.0

Table 12

Responses to the Question: I Like Having A Different Teacher For Each Subject

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	144	64.9
Sometimes True	41	18.5
Seldom True	16	7.2
Never True	21	9.5
No Response	0	0.0

Table 13

Responses to the Question: I Like Having A Variety Of Classes

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	127	57.2
Sometimes True	49	22.1
Seldom True	24	10.8
Never True	20	9.0
No Response	2	0.9

Table 14

Responses to the Question: School Work Is Not Too Difficult For Me

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	44	19.8
Sometimes True	117	52.7
Seldom True	46	20.7
Never True	14	6.3
No Response	1	0.5

Table 15

Responses to the Question: Teachers Make Information Easy To Understand

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	57	25.7
Sometimes True	109	49.1
Seldom True	45	20.3
Never True	11	5.0
No Response	0	0.0

Table 16

Responses to the Question: I Like Changing Classes

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	136	61.3
Sometimes True	46	20.7
Seldom True	22	9.9
Never True	18	8.1
No Response	0	0.0

Table 17

Responses to the Question: The Rules And Punishments of My School Are Fair

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	47	21.2
Sometimes True	84	37.8
Seldom True	52	23.4
Never True	37	16.7
No Response	2	0.9

Table 18

Responses to the Question: Everything In My School Is Neat/Clean

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	18	8.1
Sometimes True	105	47.3
Seldom True	68	30.6
Never True	31	14.0
No Response	0	0.0

Table 19

Responses to the Question: My School Is Not Too Big Or Crowded

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	59	26.6
Sometimes True	61	27.5
Seldom True	51	23.0
Never True	51	23.0
No Response	0	0.0

Table 20

Responses to the Question: I Like The Cafeteria Food

	Frequency	Percent
Really True	8	3.6
Sometimes True	64	28.8
Seldom True	77	34.7
Never True	73	32.9
No Response	0	0.0

Table 21

Responses to the Theme: Peer Relations

	Frequency	Percent
5	1	0.5
6	4	1.8
7	2	0.9
8	2	0.9
9	3	1.4
10	2	0.9
11	4	1.8
12	10	4.5
13	8	3.6
14	17	7.7
15	21	9.5
16	34	15.3
17	36	16.2
18	36	16.2
19	28	12.6
20	14	6.3

Table 22

Responses to the Theme: Academics

	Frequency	Percent
5	0	0.0
6	0	0.0
7	0	0.0
8	3	1.4
9	2	0.9
10	4	1.8
11	12	5.4
12	9	4.1
13	14	6.3
14	20	9.0
15	18	8.1
16	32	14.4
17	48	21.6
18	34	15.3
19	19	8.6
20	7	3.2

Table 23

Responses to the Theme: School Environment

	Frequency	Percent
5	3	1.4
6	2	0.9
7	3	1.4
8	5	2.3
9	9	4.1
10	12	5.4
11	30	13.5
12	28	12.6
13	27	12.2
14	34	15.3
15	24	10.8
16	19	8.6
17	16	7.2
18	7	3.2
19	2	0.9
20	1	1.5

PEER RELATIONS

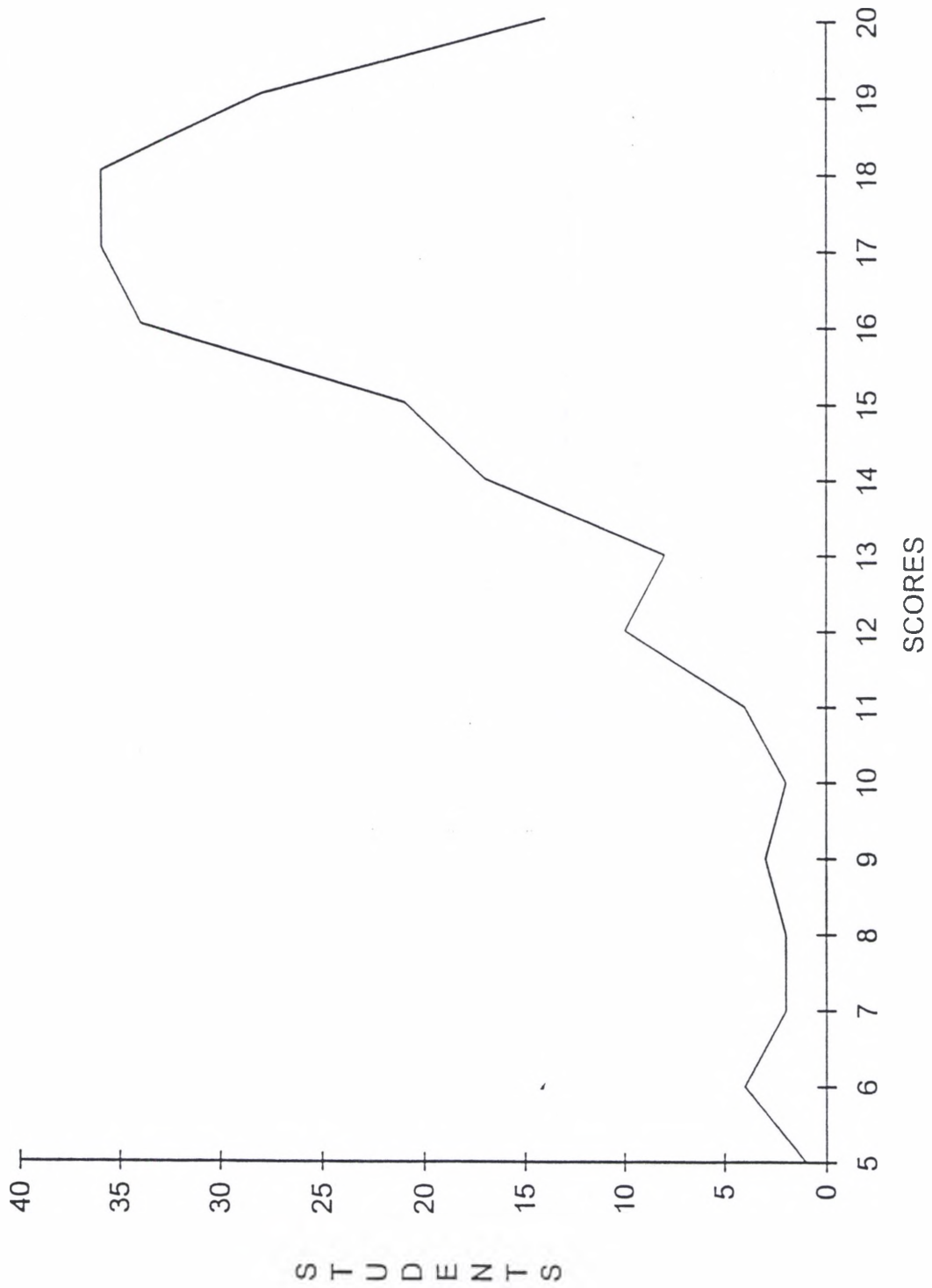


Figure 1

ACADEMICS

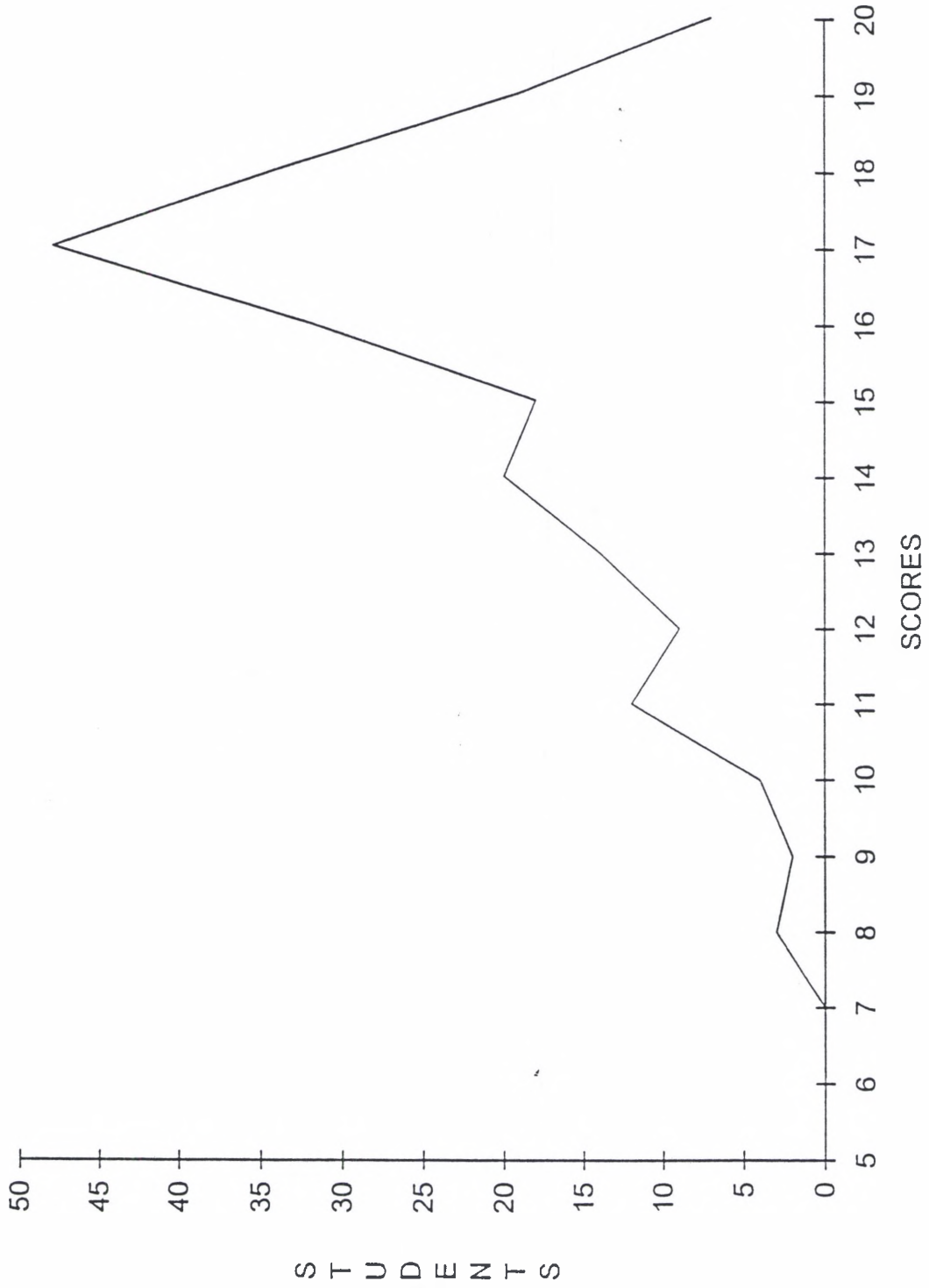


Figure 2

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

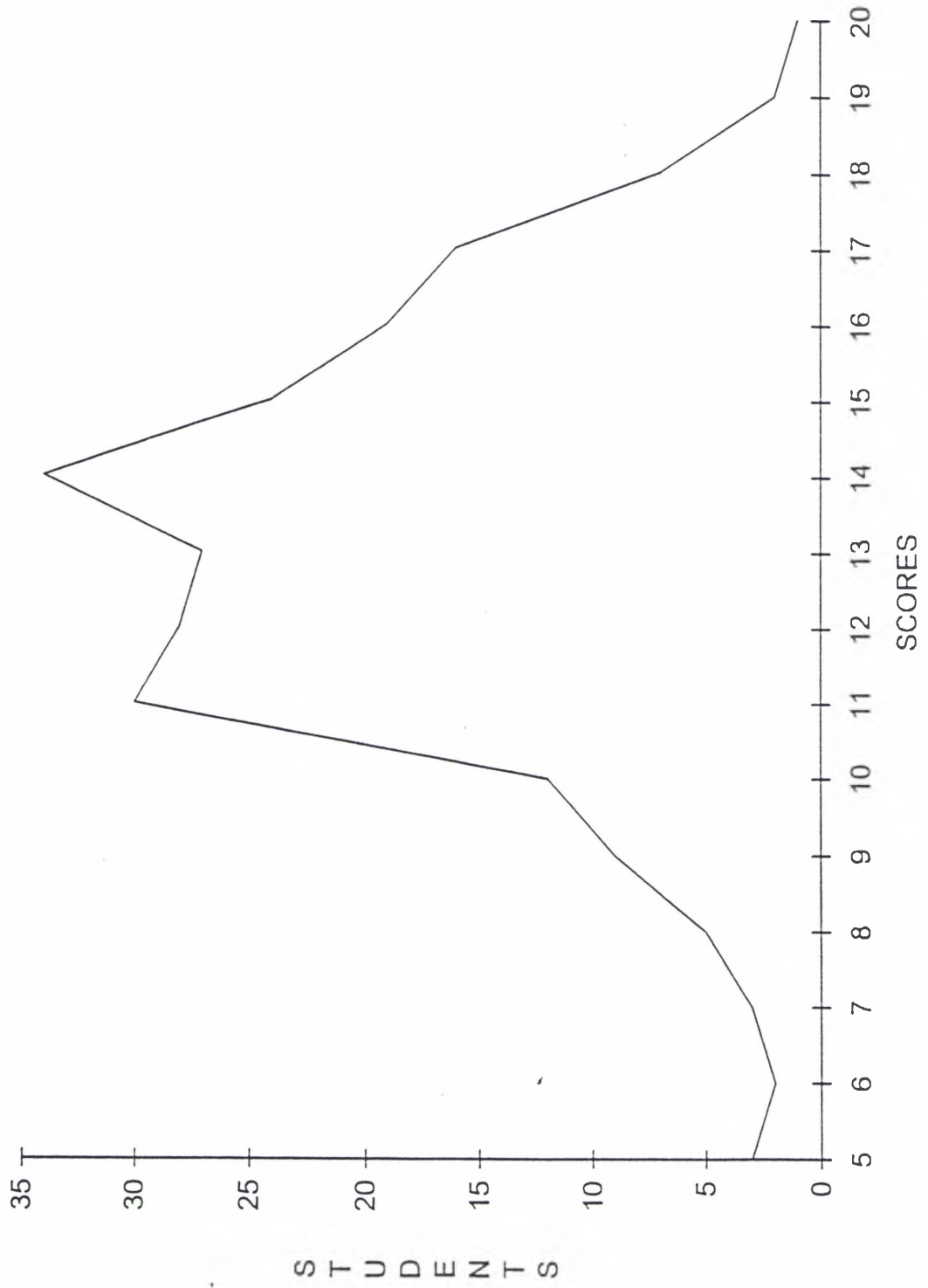


Figure 3

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APPENDIX A

WHAT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IS LIKE
A SURVEY

Directions: For each statement, circle the number that tells how you feel about being in the seventh grade compared to being in the sixth grade. There are no right or wrong answers. This is not a test. Please do not put your name on this survey. It is anonymous.

4 = really true
3 = sometimes true
2 = seldom true
1 = never true

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I have close friends at this school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. It has been easy for me to meet new people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. I feel comfortable around other students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. I am included in group activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. I like interacting with my classmates. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. I like having a variety of classes to choose from. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. I like having a different teacher for each subject. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. My school work is not too difficult for me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. My teachers make information easy to understand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. My teachers help me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. I like changing classes for each subject. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. My school is not too big or crowded. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. I like the cafeteria food. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. Everything in my school is neat and clean. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. The rules of my school, and punishments for breaking them, are fair. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

16. What do you like about junior high school?

17. What don't you like about junior high school?

18. What would you change about junior high school?

20. Your Gender

_____ male
_____ female

21. Your Age

_____ years

22. Your Race

_____ African-American
_____ European-American
_____ Latin-American
_____ Native-American
_____ Asian-American

23. What grades do you usually make in your classes?

_____ A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____ F