SIXTH GRADE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL-RELATED STRESS

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Date May 11, 2001

Sixth Grade Perceptions of School-Related Stress

A Field Study

Presented to the

Graduate and Research Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Educational Specialist

Stacey Patton Denney

May 2001

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family: my mother, Marie K. Patton, who is my best teacher, and from whom I still continue to learn; my father, James Patton, who is always there to help; my brother, Greg Patton, who is always supportive of my efforts; Lisa Patton, who is understanding of my forgetfulness; and finally, to my son, Matthew Denney, who is the greatest inspiration to achieve any mother could ever need.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my professors at Austin Peay State University who challenge teachers to continue to be good pupils so that we may be better teachers. Thank you to the director of this study, Dr. Ann Harris. Her high expectations, and good sense of humor, helped complete this study. Thank you to Dr. Masden and Dr. Simms, for the time they spent reviewing this project. Thank you to Dr. Williams for his inspiring confidence. A special thank you to the many teachers I work with each day who helped to make this a successful project.

ABSTRACT

This research attempted to identify the sources of school-related stress perceived by sixth grade students during their transition year to a middle school environment. Sixth grade students completed a standardized survey, the School Situation Survey (Helms & Gable, 1989) to rate their feelings, and identify concerns related to school. The survey measured the students' perceptions of possible sources of school-related stress within two different domains to measure four scale of stress, peer interaction, teacher interaction, academic stress, academic self-concept, and identify the ways in which school-related stress may be displayed within the school environment. No differences were found between the genders for the sources of school-related stress, or the behavioral, emotional, physiological manifestations of stress in the school environment. The socioeconomic area of the elementary school does not effect the sources of stress students feel at school, or the ways in which these stresses are conveyed at school.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time of change for children who are growing into young adulthood. They are experiencing changes in their families, social relationships, physical maturity, and at school. During this time they are leaving the dependable elementary environment they have been accustomed to and making the transition to a different learning environment in a middle school setting. "In the move from elementary school, where a student has spent most of the day in one classroom with the same teacher and classmates, to the larger, more impersonal environment of middle school or junior high school farther from home, an adolescent's capacities to cope are often severely tested". (Carneige Council on Adolescent Development, 1995). This transition from elementary to middle school forces the student to learn to adapt to many new and unfamiliar situations. This change in schools is stressful and may lead to academic problems. When they enter middle school, they are expected to master increasingly difficult academic requirements, establish psychological and emotional independence from adults while maintaining respect for adult values and authority, and to form positive and healthy relationships with peers (Wentzel, 1996).

It was proposed that a study be initiated to determine which types of stress are school-related and how they are manifested by sixth grade middle school students making the transition from the elementary school learning environment to middle school. Understanding the types of stress students feel at this time will help educators design activities, information, and instruction to address the concerns felt by students as they prepare to make this change.

Statement of the Problem

Students leaving the elementary school environment to enter middle school face numerous changes. This transition can produce heightened levels of anxiety. These changes can lead to stress that is related to the school environment and may be manifested in emotional, behavioral, or physiological reactions at school.

Importance of the Problem

Identifying school-related stress factors can aid educators in planning programs to help elementary school students make the transition to middle school less stressful. Students who have a better understanding about the middle school environment will feel less anxious about the changes associated with middle school, which will help them to feel more confident, and complete the transition to middle school with a positive attitude.

Relationship of the Problem

The focus of a transition program is to help prepare students for middle school. This transition program must address the issues that are important to the student. Identifying the students' perceived sources of stress will help educators gain a better understanding of the students and their concerns. Educators who understand the sources of school-related stress can plan programs that will effectively address student concerns about the transition to middle school.

Research Questions

1. What are the different sources of school-related stress that sixth grade students feel during their first year in middle school?
2. How do male and female expressions of stress, differ in the school environment?

3.How do students from differing socioeconomic elementary school environments perceive sources of stress and the way it is manifested in the middle school environment?

Hypothesis

The sources of stress perceived by students within the school environment and the ways in which the sources of stress are manifested within the school environment are not related to gender differences, or the socioeconomic differences of the elementary schools they previously attended.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are provided for better understanding of certain terms that will be used in this study.

1. school-related stress- anxious feelings directly related to, or caused by school.
2. transition-major events that bring about a change, such as the change from an elementary school to a middle school.
3. middle school- schools with grades six through eight.
4. socioeconomic-involving a combination of social and economic factors.

Assumptions

The following assumptions apply to this study:

1. The School Situation Survey (Helms & Gable, 1989) was administered and scored in an objective and consistent manner (see Appendix A).

2. The students who completed the survey for this study were sixth graders who volunteered and were selected on the basis of a signed a parental consent letter.

3. The socioeconomic determination of each elementary school was based on the free and reduced lunch information reported by the school system.

Limitations

1. This study was limited to students in grade six in a southeastern United States school system.

2. The students who completed the survey for this study were sixth grade students from a single middle school, whose population was approximately 1,000 students, primarily from five elementary schools within the same school zone.

3. The elementary schools are located in urban, and suburban areas within a city population of approximately 103,000 people.

4. The sample of sixth grade students who completed the survey was limited to those who obtained signed parental permission letters.

5. The results may have been affected by the volunteer aspect of the sample.

Preview

This study reviewed current research concerning middle school transition and school related stress. Students completed a standardized survey to identify concerns that may indicate stress and anxiety as it relates to middle school. The students' perceptions of school-related stress were analyzed to ascertain which topics should be included in the middle school transition program. Analysis of the data provided information about the influence of gender differences on the manifestation and source of school-related stress. The socioeconomic area of the elementary school was examined to determine if there was any difference in the sources or expression of school-related stress and the students' previous elementary school.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Transition Stress

Researchers studying stress in adolescents with life-changing events have identified many factors that increase the stressful nature of the transition to middle school. Among these were increased academic demands, more critical social comparisons, exposure to unfamiliar peers and teachers, and the struggle for autonomy and independence (Eccles, Wigfield, & Blumenfeld, 1993). Studies have shown that some children show declines in academic achievement and motivation, while behavior problems and emotional distress increase during the middle school years (Roeser, Eccles, & Freedman-Doan, 1999). In their study, patterns of academic success and mental health were analyzed using data collected over a ten year period from 184 students. They found moderate to strong correlation's between academic success, peer success, and conduct both in school and at home.

The students perceptions of the middle school environment are especially important to the transition between elementary and middle school and can positively or negatively affect the students' adjustment (Berndt & Mekos, 1995). Negative perceptions can result in a decline in the students' self-esteem as a reaction to their new school environment (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994). Odegaard and Heath (1992) surveyed 225 fifth grade students who identified significant anxieties concerning the size of the school and getting lost, being in contact with older students, and more homework. Oftentimes elementary students enter a middle school which may be too large to foster a comfortable educational environment, resulting in a negative effect on the students' perceptions of teacher support (Bowen, Bowen, & Richman, 2000). This change in the school size

causes a decrease in student motivation, due to a difference in the performance focus of the classes, as opposed to the task- focused activities they had been accustomed to in elementary school (Midgley & Anderman, 1995).

Student-Teacher Relationships

The teacher plays an important role in facilitating the students' transition from elementary to middle school. Students need warm and caring relationships with their teachers, as they are seeking more autonomy, but often have more distant connections with their teachers as a result of more rules and an increased need for more classroom discipline by the teacher (Baer, 1999). In direct contrast with those findings, Ryan and Stiller (1994) found in their study of 606 middle school students' relationships to teachers, that a sense of emotional security with teachers was associated with a greater sense of control, autonomy, and engagement in school. This type of student-teacher relationship encourages more positive student attitudes and motivation in school which will lessen student stress. The study by Murray and Greenberg (1999) focused on "children's perceptions of their bonds with school as well as their perceptions of relationships with teachers" (p.427). The fifth and sixth graders surveyed in this study were classified into four groups according to their own self-reported perceptions. While the majority of the 289 students completing the series of surveys experienced school as a supportive, positive environment, 25% of the students were classified as dysfunctional, and 9% were classified as anxious in school. The results of the study are disturbing "because feeling a positive connection to the teachers and schools can influence children's social, emotional and academic adjustment" (p.441). Positive student-teacher relationships can reduce the stress associated with the transition to middle school.

Self-Concept and Peers

A study by Wenz-Gross and Siperstein (1997) examined middle school stress, social supports, and adjustment of 482 middle school students in grades six through eight. They studied three school-related stress factors: academic stress, peer stress, and teacher rules stress. Also considered in this study were students' feelings about school, and who they relied on for social support. Findings revealed that higher academic stress and less emotional support from the family were related to lower academic self-concept, and as expected, lower social self-concept was associated with higher feelings of peer stress. Particularly important were the results that focused on the middle school group, and the feelings of depression that were described as a result of peer group stress as this "threatened the individual's sense of relatedness and belonging within the peer group and is most critical to emotional adjustment, reflecting the emotional significance of this type of stress at this age" (p 129). However, strong emotional support from family lessened the influence of peer stress on feelings of depression. Important results from the data validates the significance of studying stress and social support to understand adolescent adjustment in middle school.

"A Prospective Study of Changes in Global Self Worth and Strain during the Transition to Middle School" (Fenzel, 2000) examined a model of the stress process in early adolescence. Data was collected at three different times. The first was before the transition to middle school occurred and two subsequent collections were made during the first year of middle school. Results from the study showed that the data collected before the transition to middle school revealed peer strain and predicted changes in feelings of self worth and social competence. However, the data collected after the

completion of the transition to middle school indicated school strain was the only significant predictor of change in feelings of self worth, and this change was in a negative direction. Fenzel presented support for the negative effects of both peer and school strain on changes in feelings of self worth, as well as a significant influence for perceived social competence and support from friends during this time of transition from elementary to middle school. The development of social competence has been linked with emotional distress that decreases as prosocial behavior and greater acceptance by a peer group increase to become a feeling of emotional well-being (Wentzel & McNamara, 1999). Peer acceptance is an important part of the development of children's self-concepts and social skills (Jackson & Bracken, 1998).

Gender Differences

Gender differences were noted in several studies throughout the literature. In a study by Ryan and Stiller (1994), gender differences were noted in the willingness to use friends for emotional support. They found boys in their sample were less likely than girls to turn to their friends with school concerns, and reported they were more inclined to turn to no one with these problems. Sixth grade girls made more negative comments about the changes in their relationships with their peers than boys after the transition from elementary school (Berndt & Mekos, 1995). However, boys in the same study commented more negatively about the academic demands of junior high school. Similar results were noted by Lord and Eccles (1994) who reported the effects of gender on changing self-esteem; the extent of self-consciousness about academic achievement was more strongly associated with a decrease in the self-esteem of boys. Girls had a more positive perception about their physical appearance, this was interpreted as a predictor

of rising self-esteem for girls. Girls in this study also reported "liking junior high" better than boys. A study of 3,983 adolescents in Ireland (Gallagher & Millar, 1998) was initiated to determine if a relationship existed between gender and age to adolescents self-reported worries. It revealed that girls were more anxious with regard to transition from school, personal issues relating to confidence and self-esteem, and academic concerns such as exams.

Socioeconomic Influence

The obtainable literature was limited when addressing stress in the school setting and socioeconomic influences of a students' home environment. Arunkumar, Midgley, and Urdan (1999) surveyed 475 ethnically diverse students, investigating home and school dissonance to evaluate the amount of conflict in the beliefs, values, and behavioral expectations of home and school. They found no significant differences in the representation of students receiving free or reduced lunch in the low and high dissonance groups. However, they did find limited support for their hypothesis that students who experience a high level of dissonance between home and school exhibit a more negative transition, both academically and emotionally, from a fifth grade elementary class to a sixth grade middle school environment.

Transition Programs

Stress that is created by transition, such as the one from elementary school to middle school, can be minimized by a middle school environment that is responsive to each particular age group who attends (Schumacher, 1998). These transitions are major events in the lives of elementary students and their parents. Identifying the specific challenges students will face is vital to understanding the issues that cause them to feel

stress or worry about school. Stress management programs can help students feel better about school in many different ways. A study by De Wolfe and Saunders (1995) researched the effectiveness of a competency promoting stress management program implemented in sixth grade classrooms with 157 students. Their results supported using skill oriented programs in classrooms to reduce stress. Analysis of the data showed statistically significant improvement for all children, but the greatest positive gains were made by the children with the poorest scores at the beginning of the program, as they experienced the most positive change from the program.

Educators can develop programs to facilitate the students' transition effectively and help to build a sense of community that responds to the concerns and individual needs of the student (Schumacher, 1998). One example of an effective program is the "Shadow" transition program (Ferguson & Bulach, 1996) in a middle school near Atlanta, Georgia. Fifth graders were given an opportunity to shadow, or follow a sixth grader through a whole day at middle school. The authors concluded that students who were involved with the Shadow transition program had lower anxiety levels, and scored significantly higher for social adjustment. An effective transition program can establish a sense of belonging among all of the incoming students. The transition to middle school is only one of many social, emotional, physical and intellectual changes students will encounter at this time in their lives. Educators who can understand the diverse nature of adolescent concerns about personal identity, conflict resolution, and social relations (Reed & Rossi, 2000) will be better prepared to identify the sources of stress for sixth grade students and help them to manage them in positive ways within the school environment.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The Sample

The purpose of this study was to identify the sources of stress and recognize the ways in which it is manifested in the school environment for boys and girls during their first year in a middle school environment. The school system from which the sample was selected was located in a suburban school district of 29 schools; five of which are middle schools with grades six through eight. Permission to collect data for the study was obtained from the appropriate school system officials (see Appendix B), and approval for research involving human subjects was obtained from the Austin Peay State University's Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs, the Institutional Review Board and the College of Graduate Studies (see Appendix C).

The data was collected and analyzed from a sample group of sixth grade students at a local middle school which is divided randomly into three large heterogeneous groups or teams. The teams had approximately 120 students of varying ethnic, and socioeconomic levels for a total of 360 sixth grade students. The students who participated in the study by completing a survey were selected based on their willingness to participate and contingent upon parental consent. Letters were printed on blue paper to attract the parents attention, and sent home with the students to explain the purpose of the study, testing instrument, and how the information was to be used in the future. The letter requested formal consent from the parent for their child's participation in the study by completing a survey on school-related stress (see Appendix D).

Students received a reward, a mechanical or decorated pencil, from their teacher for returning a signed parental consent letter. The reward was not contingent upon their

participation in the study; only upon the return of the letter with a parent signature. The students completed the survey during their advisory class period as this was not an instructional time, and thus viewed as a non-threatening, non-academic class period. This time frame also presented the least amount of interruption to the students' academic day.

The Survey

The "School Situation Survey" was selected to collect information about the sources of school-related stress and the manifestations of stress in the school environment. This instrument was designed to be completed by students in grades four through twelve to identify sources of school-related stress, and is constructed of seven scales. It is not intended to be used as a diagnostic instrument to measure school-related stress. The authors of the survey, Helms and Gable (1989), include information in the manual for the content and construct validity and reliability of the test. Scale scores and standard deviation data from 7,036 students who had previously completed the survey were also noted in the manual. The data reported included 2,531 students who were in grades 6-8. The four scales that assess school related sources of stress are defined as:

- Teacher Interactions- assesses students' perceptions of their teachers' attitudes toward them.
- Academic Stress- assesses situations that relate to academic performance or achievement.
- Peer Interactions- assesses students' social interactions or their perceptions of their classmates feelings toward them.
- Academic Self-Concept- assesses students feelings of self worth, self-esteem, or self-concept relevant to perceived academic ability.

The remaining three scales assess manifestations of stress in the school environment. They are defined by the authors as:

- Emotional- assesses feelings such as fear, shyness and loneliness.
- Behavioral- assesses actions, reactions, or behavior toward others, such as striking out or being hurtful or disrespectful.
- Physiological- assesses physical reactions or functions such as nausea, tremors, or rapid heart beat.

These items are measured on a five point Likert scale. The frequency ranges are: "Never" (1), "Rarely" (2), "Sometimes" (3), "Often" (4), and "Always" (5).

The School Situation Survey (SSS) has 34 items and was completed within 15 minutes. It was designed to be administered by classroom teachers to small or large groups of students. The primary qualification to administer the test, as outlined by the authors of the test, is an established rapport with the students.

Data Collection

The demographic information gathered at the beginning of the survey included: grade level, age, gender, elementary school attended during fifth grade, and the date the survey was completed. The students were told that learning more about their feelings at school will help teachers understand the different areas of middle school that make them feel stress, and how they can help future sixth graders adjust to middle school. The teacher explained that the survey asked them to rate their feelings concerning different statements about school situations. The teacher emphasized that there were no correct or incorrect responses. Students were encouraged to choose an answer which reflected their feelings and views about each item. The students were told that they could leave any

answer blank, or stop participating in the survey at any time they felt uncomfortable. Students were assured of the confidentiality of their answers in a non-threatening situation by the teacher. The survey was administered during a non-instructional advisory class period. Teachers and assistants were available to answer questions, help distribute pencils, and survey materials to the students. Completed surveys were placed in an envelope by the student and turned into a box to insure confidentiality.

Statistical Procedures

The raw scores obtained from the SSS survey were interpreted by the seven individual scales. Each answer sheet has a grid for plotting a profile of scale scores as high, medium, or low as shown in the categories of scales. The raw scores that yielded high scale scores, identifying the sources of school-related stress, were interpreted based on predetermined levels included with the testing manual. The sources of stress with the highest scores were noted and will be targeted within the current transition program for elementary students who enter middle school during the next school year.

Mean scores were obtained for the seven measured dimensions by gender for each of the five elementary schools in this middle school zone. Mean scores for students who did not attend an elementary school in this school zone were categorized as attending school number 6, which was identified as "my elementary school is not listed here" on the demographics portion of the survey. The SSS mean scores were analyzed to determine if a relationship existed between gender, and each of the school-related stress scales. The mean scores were sorted by each of the five individual elementary schools in this middle school district to examine the possible influences of the socioeconomic area of the elementary school the student previously attended for fifth grade and sources of school-

related stress. The elementary schools that were listed on the demographic portion of the survey were the five elementary schools that were zoned in this middle school district. The students' raw scores were used to measure the standard deviation for each of the school-related sources of stress, or their manifestations, by gender.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND RESULTS

Demographics

The survey was completed by 188 sixth graders from the total enrollment of 360 students, 52% of sixth graders completed the survey. The sample group contained 76 males and 112 females who were between eleven and thirteen years of ages. The students were from five different elementary schools, with 16 students indicating they attended an elementary school that was not located in this middle school zone. These 16 students will be referred to as attending "School 6" in the data results. (Figure 4-1)

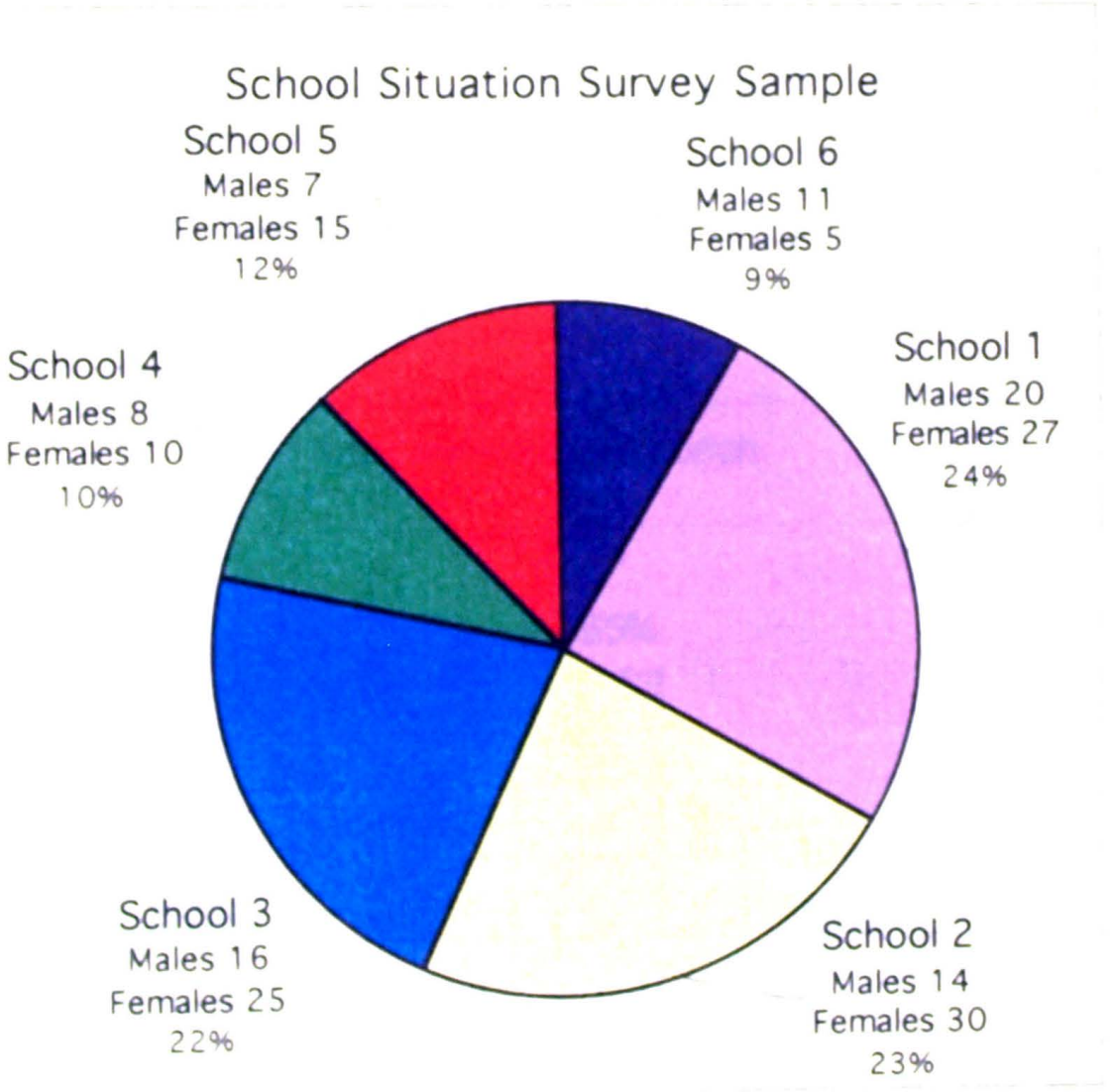


Figure 4-1 Sixth grade students, by previous elementary school, who completed the S.S.S.

The socioeconomic area for each of the five elementary schools in the study was determined by the April 2000 State Report. This report listed the following schools, the number of free lunches, and the number of reduced price lunches, total, and the average daily attendance (ADA) for each school (Table 4-1, Figure 4-2).

Table 4-1 Free and Reduced Lunch, April 2000 State Report

	Free	Reduced	Total	ADA
School 1	175	58	233	605.25
School 2	52	33	85	512.70
School 3	245	44	289	442.70
School 4	49	36	85	843.40
School 5	300	53	353	596.05

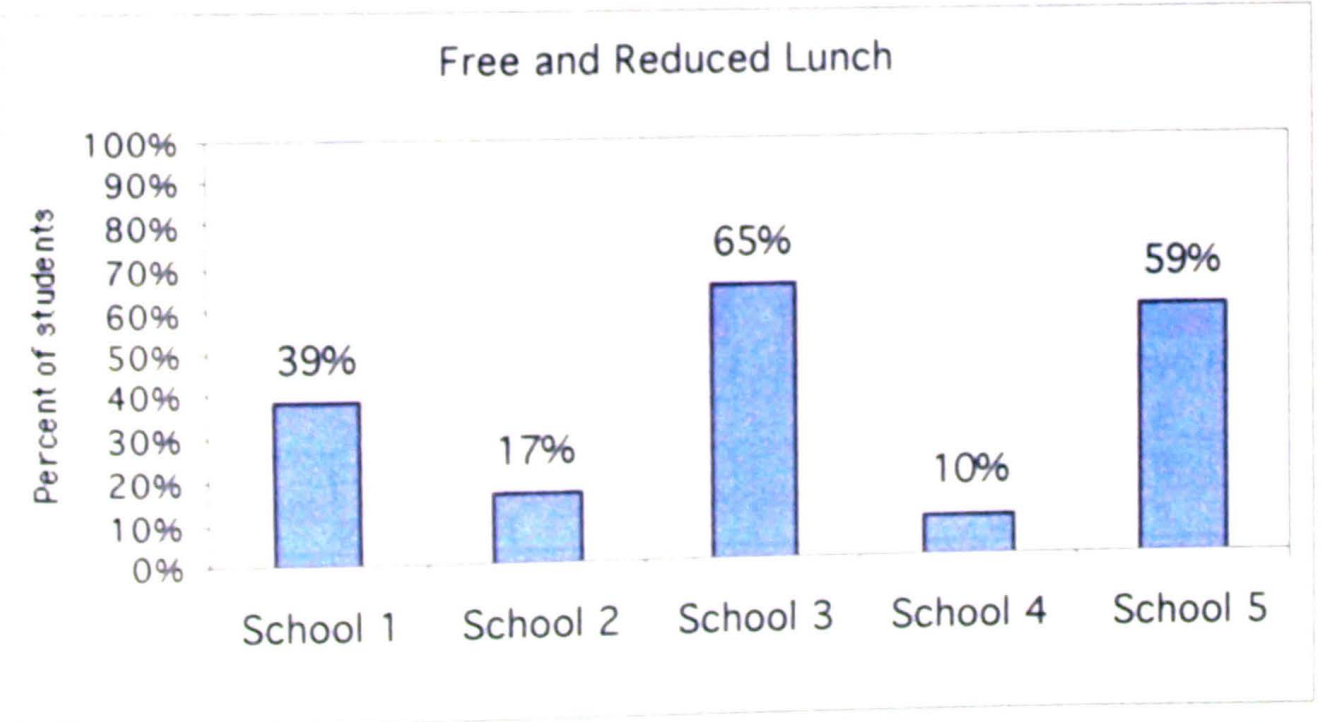


Figure 4-2. The percentage of each school population who received free or reduced lunch.

Student Responses

The student surveys were scored and a raw score for each of the seven scales relating to stress was obtained. The raw scores were compared with three pre-determined levels of student perceived stress. These scores were organized by gender and by the students' perception of each source of stress, or manifestation of stress. Figures 4-3 to 4-17 show the total number of male and female responses to each of the seven categories and classify them as high, medium, or low. These are presented by individual schools to facilitate a visual comparison of the different levels of stress. There are six items on this scale that relate to peer relationships. School 3 male responses indicate a slightly higher level of stress at school resulting from peer interaction (Fig. 4-3).

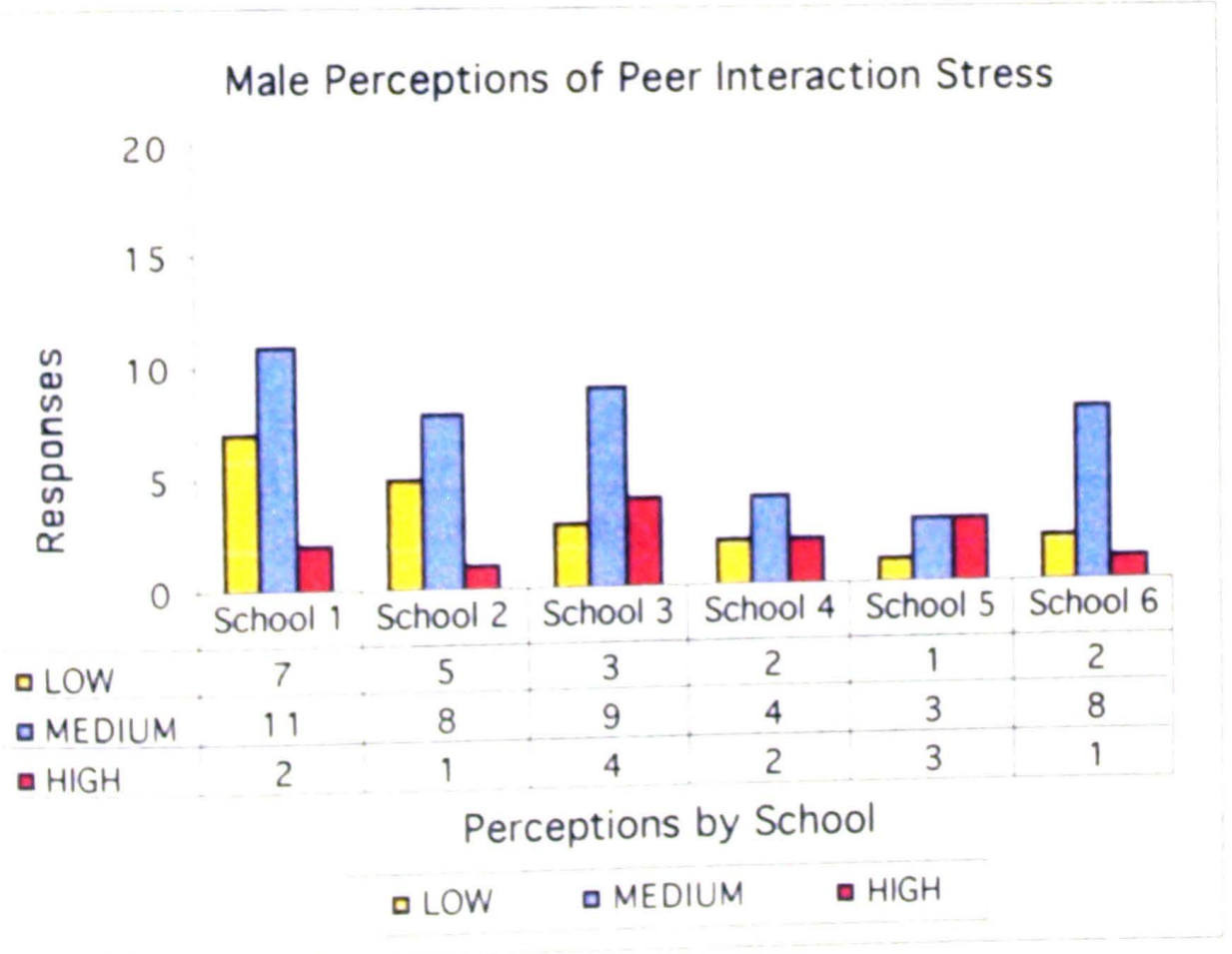


Figure 4-3. Male responses to survey items of perceived stress levels for peer interaction.

The number of females who responded to survey items indicating higher perceived levels of peer interaction stress is shown in figure 4-4. School 2 had a greater number of responses that were categorized in the higher levels of stress. However, this chart did not indicate that peer interaction is perceived as a highly school-related source of stress for sixth grade females in the sample group.

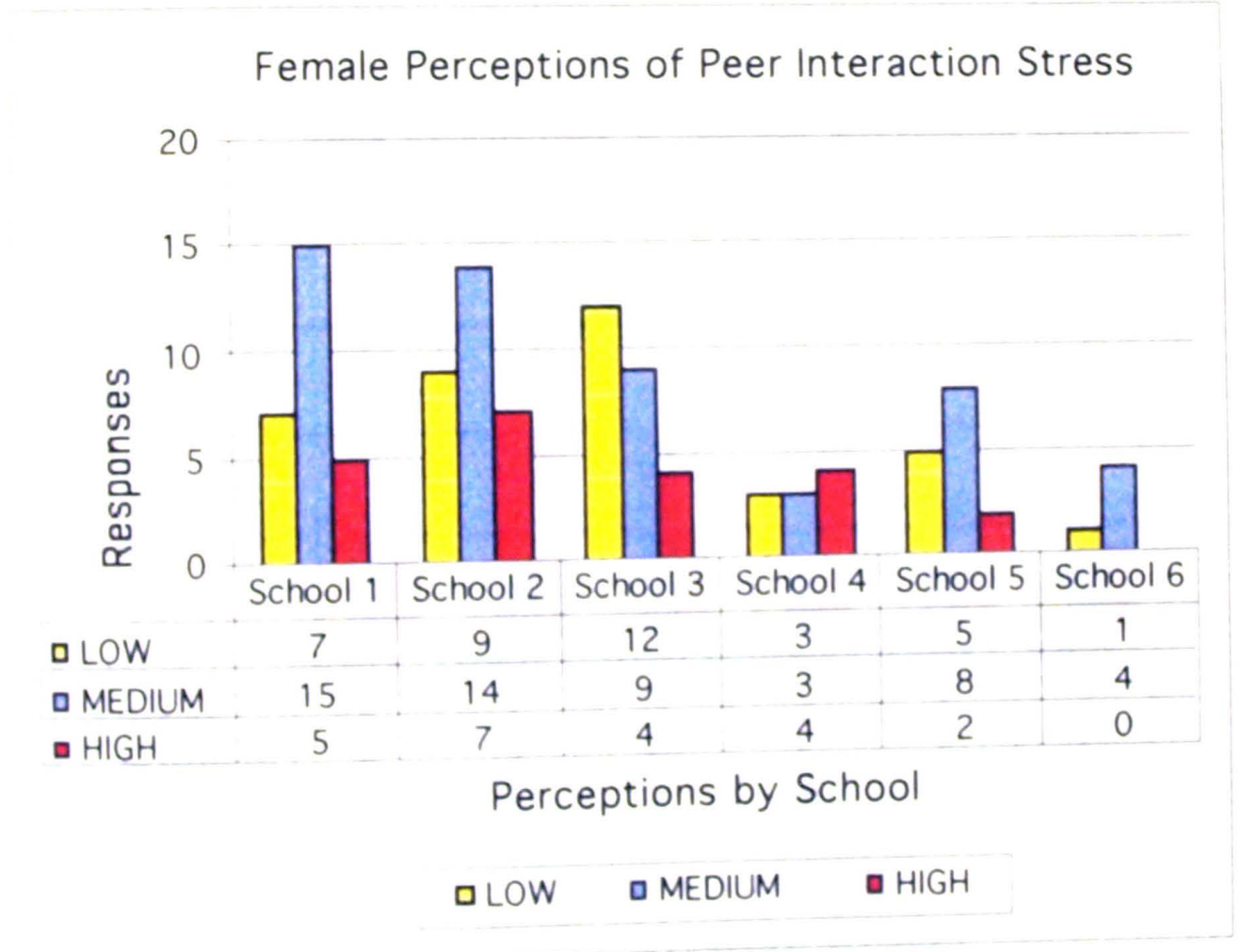


Figure 4-4 Female responses to survey items relating to peer interaction .

The teacher interaction stress is comprised of six items that assess the students' perceptions of their teachers' attitude toward them. "Students whose scores are high on this scale most likely have negative perceptions of their teachers' feelings toward them and may be experiencing stress as a result of their interactions with their teachers" (p.5). Males from School 1 and School 2 scored higher for this area indicating higher levels of stress based on the male students perceptions of their teachers' attitudes.

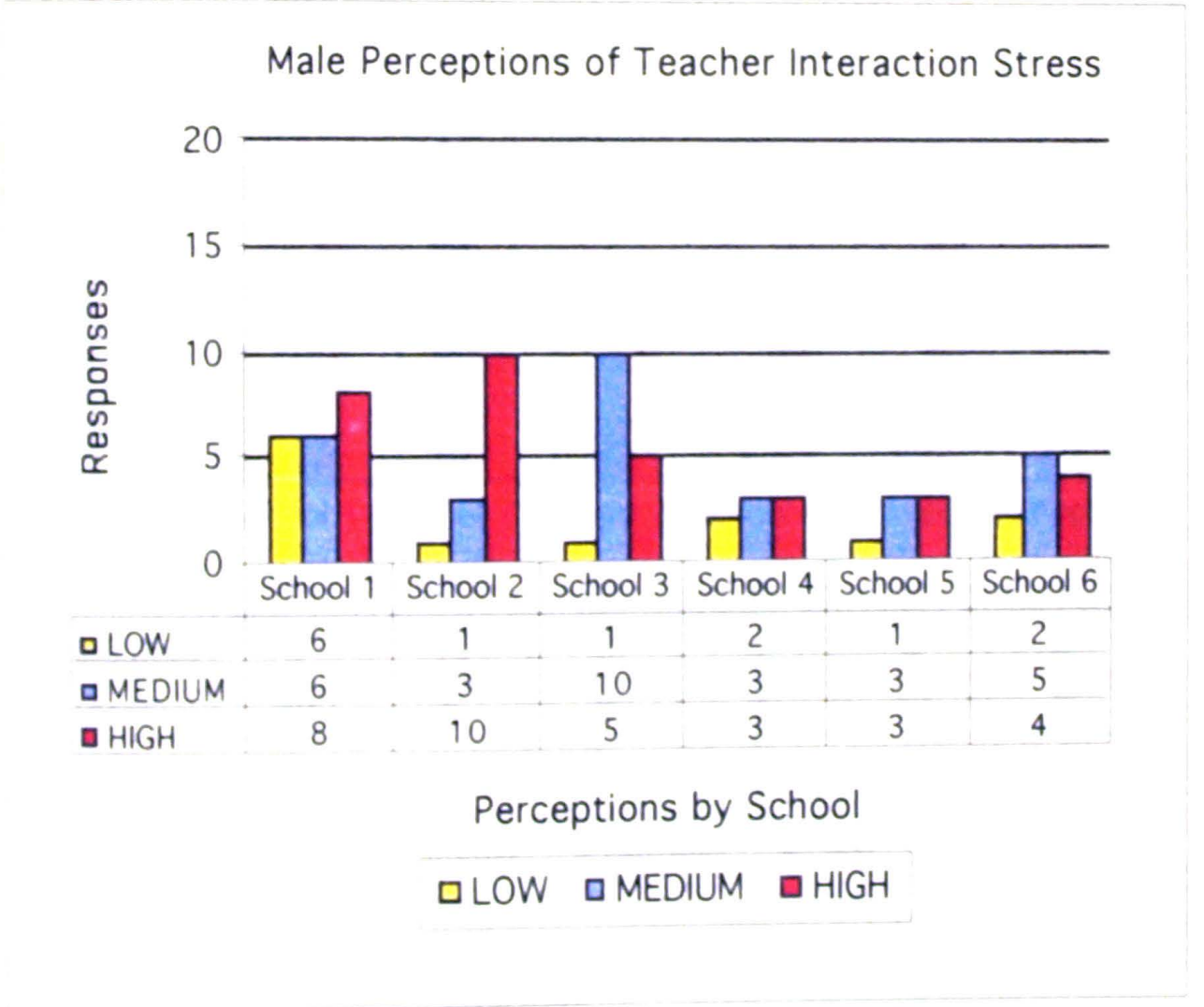


Figure 4-5 Males perceptions of teacher interaction as a source of school-related stress.

Teacher interaction stress level responses for females indicated School 1 females and School 5 females perceived their interactions with their teachers were a source of higher level stress. School 4 females also had more responses in the higher level, than the medium or low level.

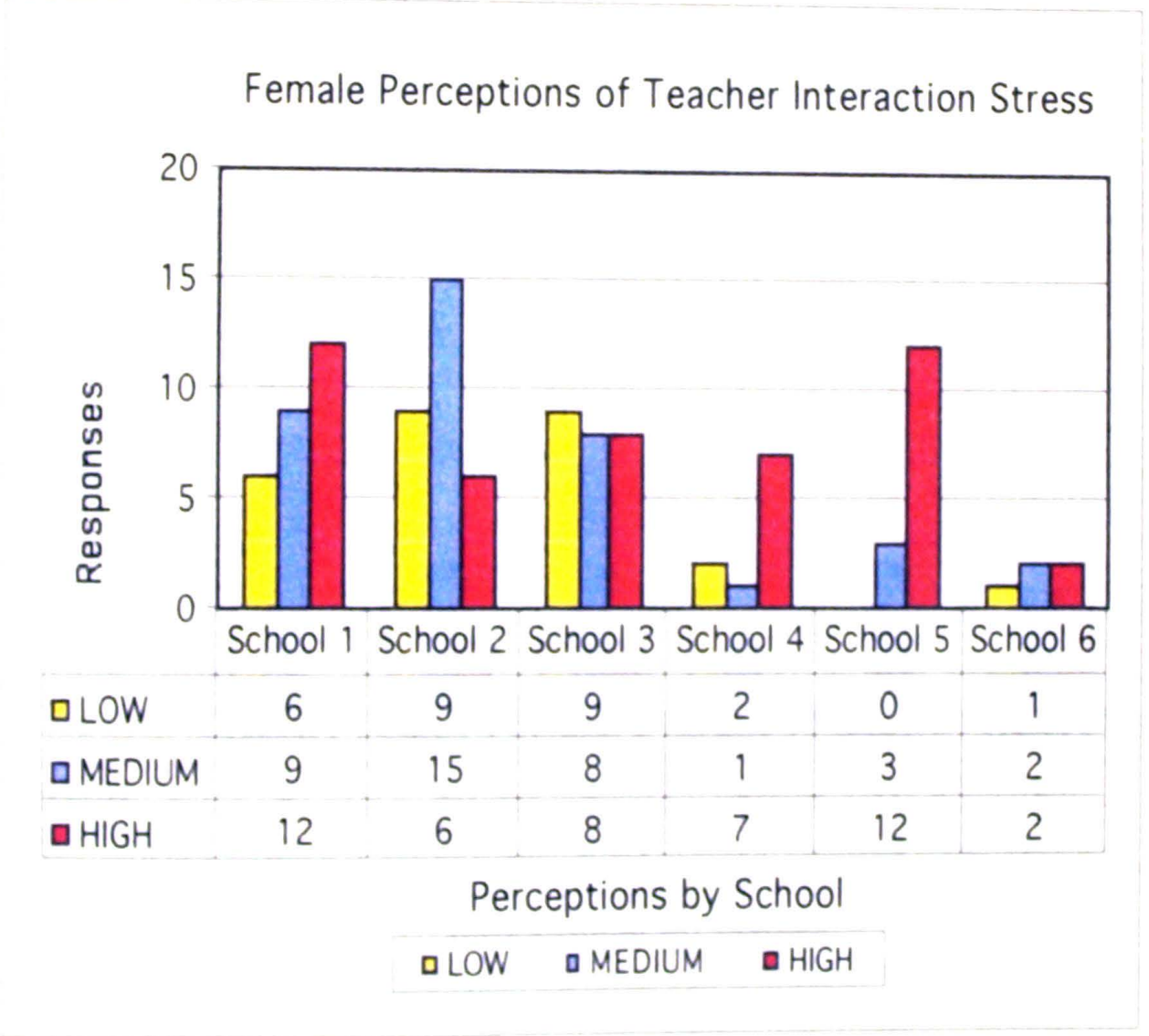


Figure 4-6 Female responses to items assessing students' perceptions of their teachers' feelings toward them.

Academic stress had three items associated with anxiety about academic performance. Students that scored high in this area may be experiencing stress related to "their grades, taking tests, or to general academic performance" (Helms & Gable, 1989 p5). Academic stress scores for males were concentrated within the medium range. School 6 had the largest number of responses in the high level stress scale (Figure 4-7).

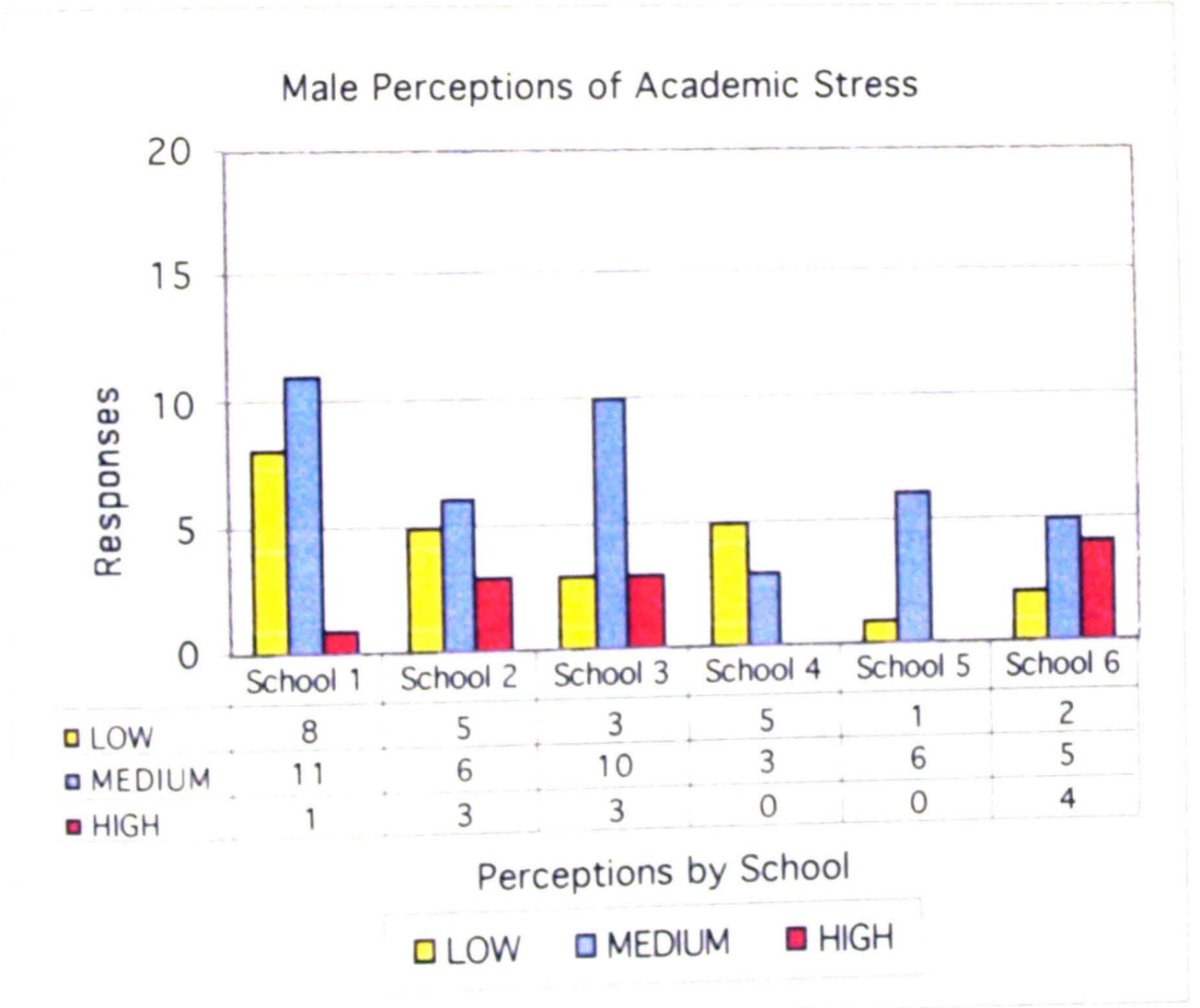


Figure 4-7 Male responses to items concerning school-related sources of academic stress.

Female students from School 1 recorded more responses at higher levels of perceived stress to survey items that addressed academic concerns. Females at School 1 (Figure 4-8) exhibited a higher level of anxiety in the area of academic stress than female or male students from any of the other previous elementary school groups.

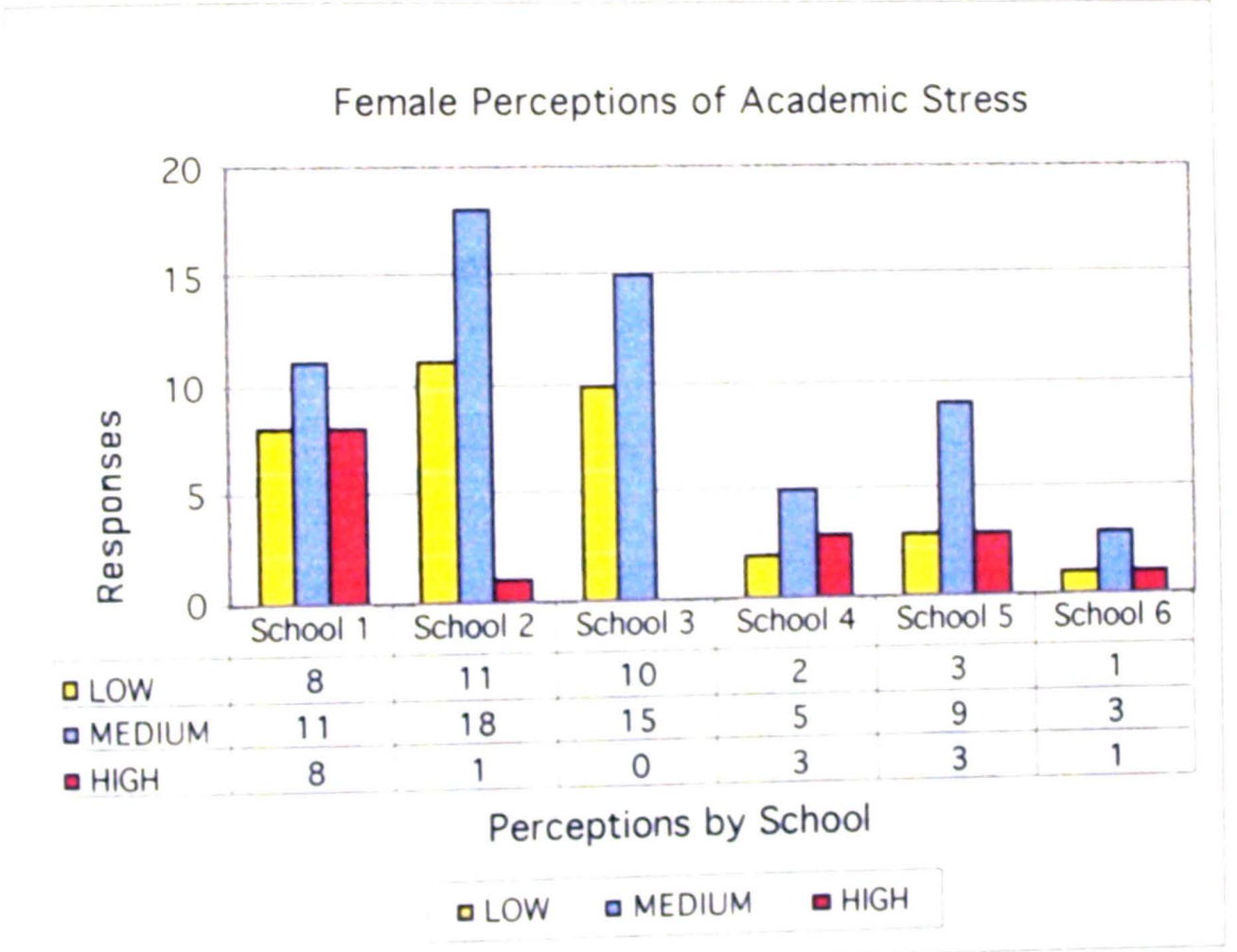
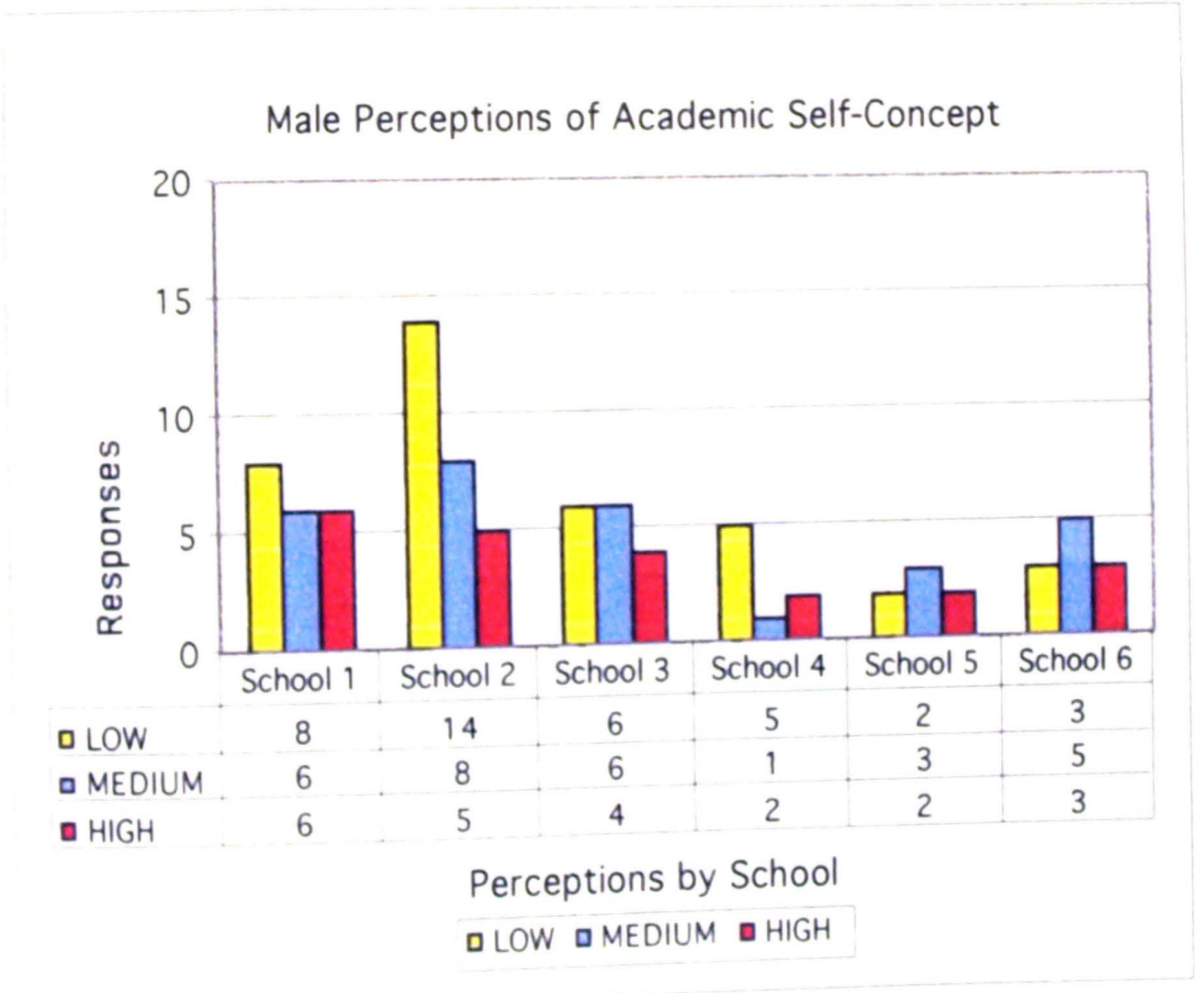


Figure 4-8 Female responses to items surveying student perceived academic stress.

Academic self-concept is the final source of stress on the "School Situation Survey". This scale has four items that deal with students' perceptions of their academic standing. This scale is reverse scored, so students who score in the low range have a greater level of stress which would indicate a poor academic self-concept. School 2 males showed greater responses in the low category which would indicate a lower perception of their academic self-concept.



	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6
LOW	8	14	6	5	2	3
MEDIUM	6	8	6	1	3	5
HIGH	6	5	4	2	2	3

Figure 4-9. Male responses to academic self-concept, their perception of their success.

The academic self-concept presented statements that asked the students how they felt they performed in school. A sample statement was "I do good work in school" (p.6). The female students' perception of their academic self-concept showed similar results to the males. Schools 1, 2, 3 and 5 respondents showed the highest levels of stress in the low scale, this item is reverse scored, which means female students from schools 1, 2, 3 and 5 have a more negative view of their academic abilities than females from schools 4 and 6.

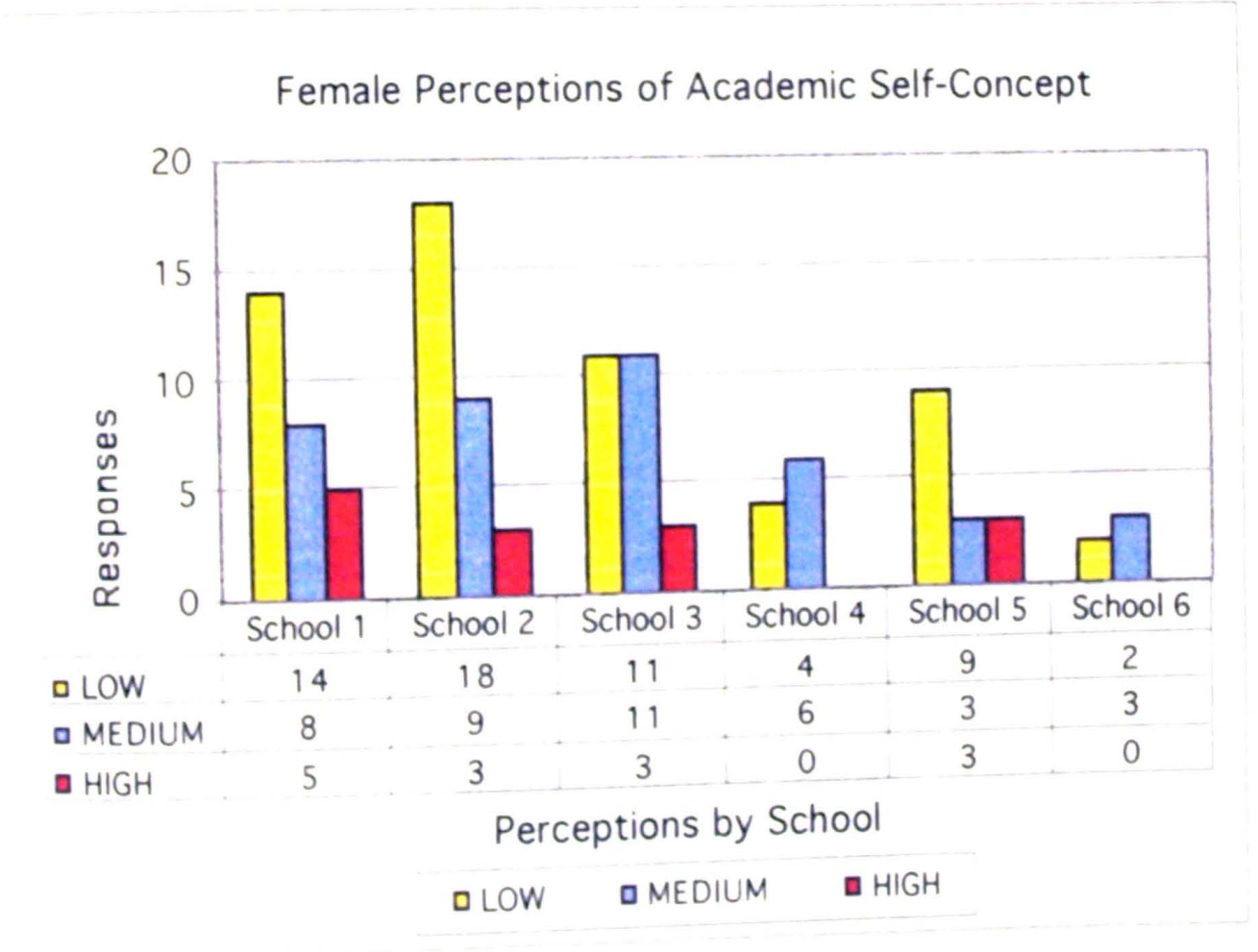


Figure 4-10. Female responses to items about their perceptions of academic self-concept as a source of school-related stress.

The interpretation of the manifestations of school-related stress in the school environment identifies three areas of expressions of stress. The behavioral scale contains six items that identify stress-related behaviors in school. Students who scored high on this scale may be inclined to exhibit behavior problems in the school setting. School 2 had the largest number of responses in the high level for behavioral manifestations of school-related stress. Behavioral responses are provided in Figure 4-11 for males.

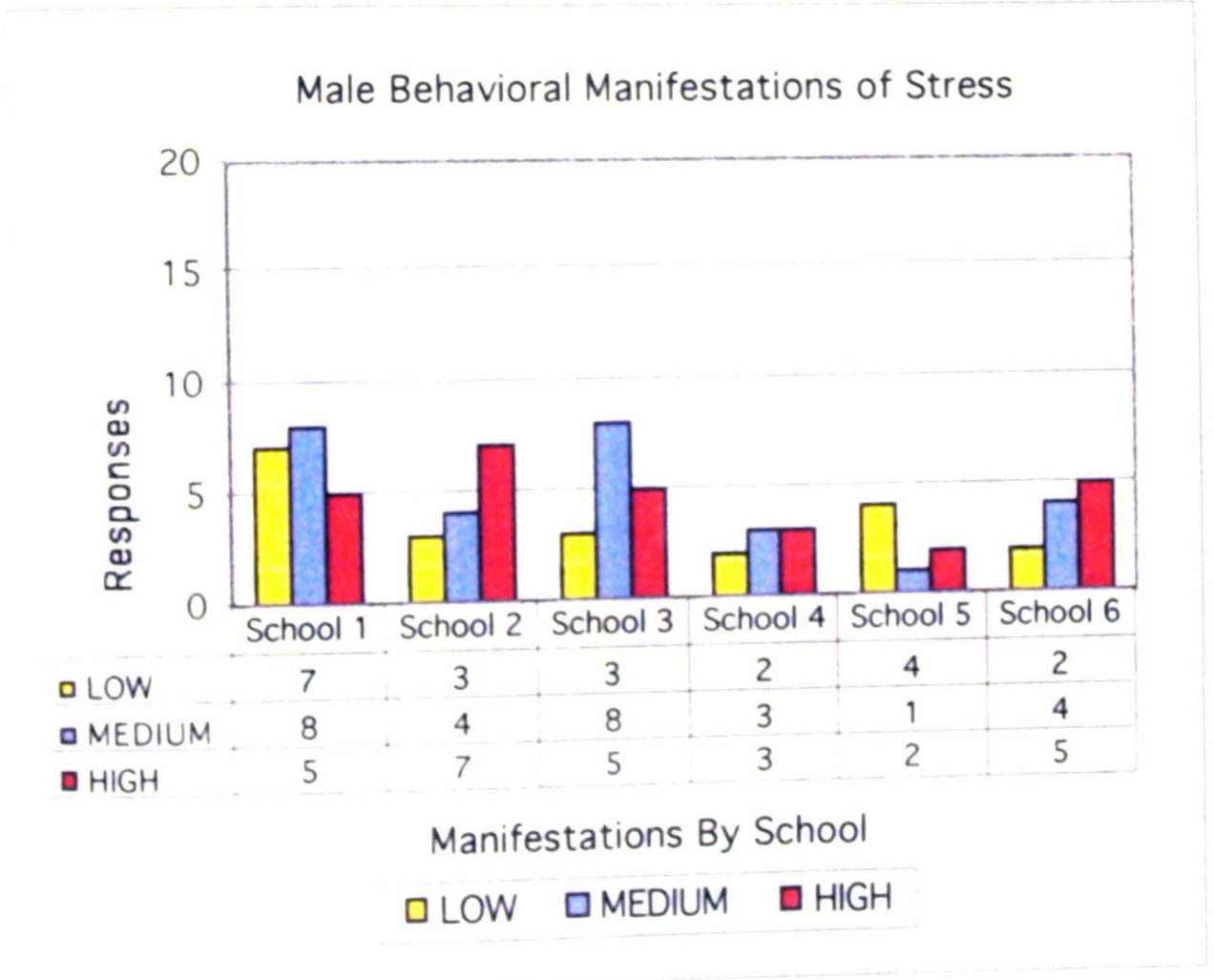


Figure 4-11 Males behavioral manifestations of school-related stress.

Students responding to the survey rated statements such as "I talk back to my teachers" (p. 6) in the high scale from three of the six previous elementary school females. Female behavioral manifestations were very high at School 5, with twice as many respondents scoring in the high category as opposed to the medium or low scale. School 1 and School 2 scored more female respondents in the high scale for behavioral displays of school-related stress than the medium or low scales. Figure 4-12 shows the visual comparison of these high stress level scale responses in addition to the other scores.

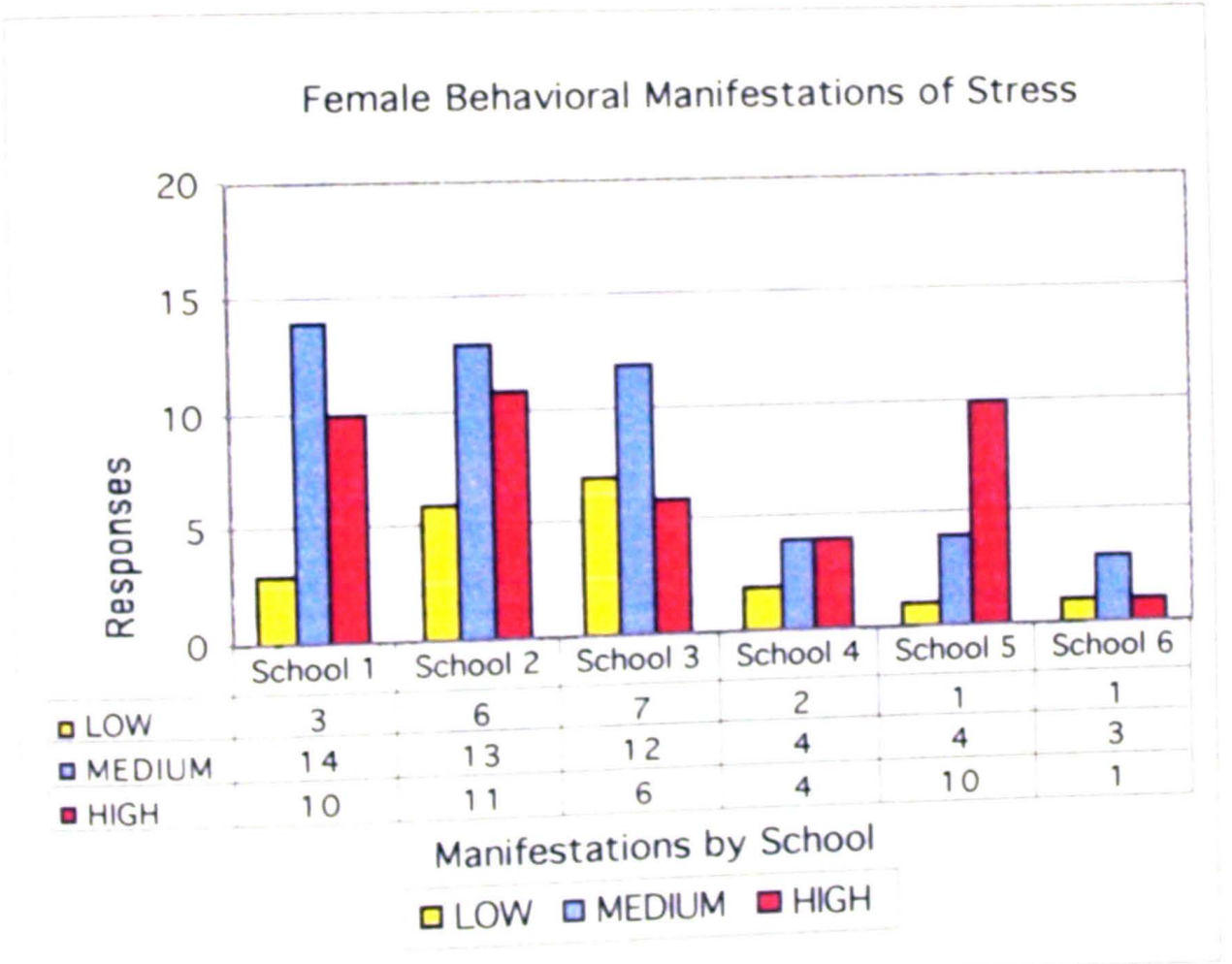


Figure 4-12. Female behavioral manifestations of school-related stress.

The emotional manifestation scale measures feelings of stress or emotional discomfort with six items that ask the student to rate statements about how they feel. Students who scored in the high scale are experiencing frequent feelings of stress or emotional discomfort.

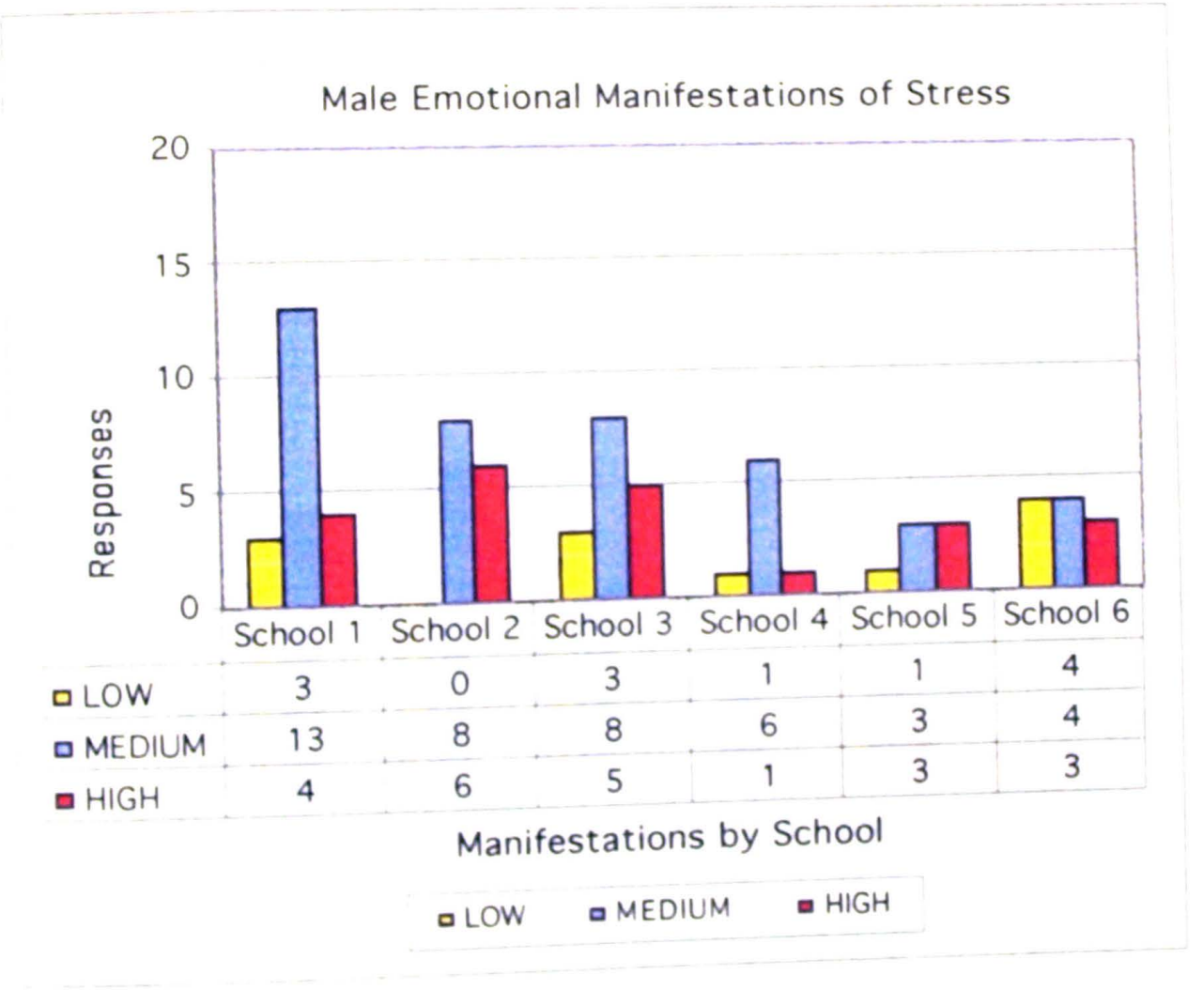


Figure 4-13 Male responses to items that show high emotional manifestation of stress.

Females emotional manifestation scores were more moderate than the male scores at all schools, except School 5. Female responses were more frequent in the low to medium level of emotional expressions of school-related stress. Survey items that measured emotional manifestation asked students to rate statements such as, "I feel upset". School 3 females present the highest level of emotional manifestation of stress. Figure 4-14 shows the number of female responses in the medium to low scales were more numerous.

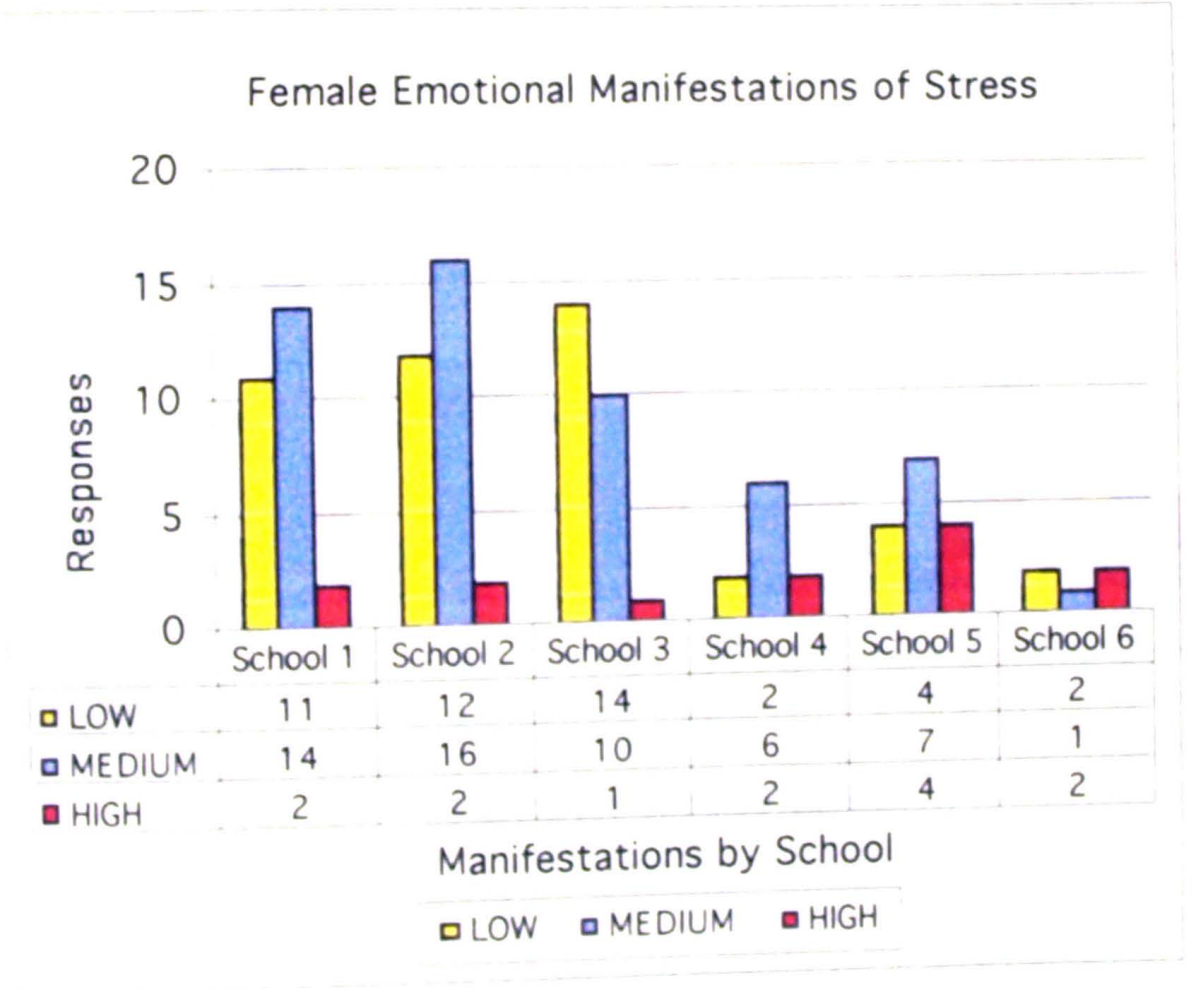


Figure 4-14 Female responses to emotional manifestations to stress.

The final scale on the School Situation Survey is the physiological scale. This manifestation is defined by three items. Students who rated "I feel sick to my stomach" (p.6) with a high score may be experiencing physical illness due to school-related stress. Figure 4-15 shows the male responses to the way school-related stress may be manifested physiologically.

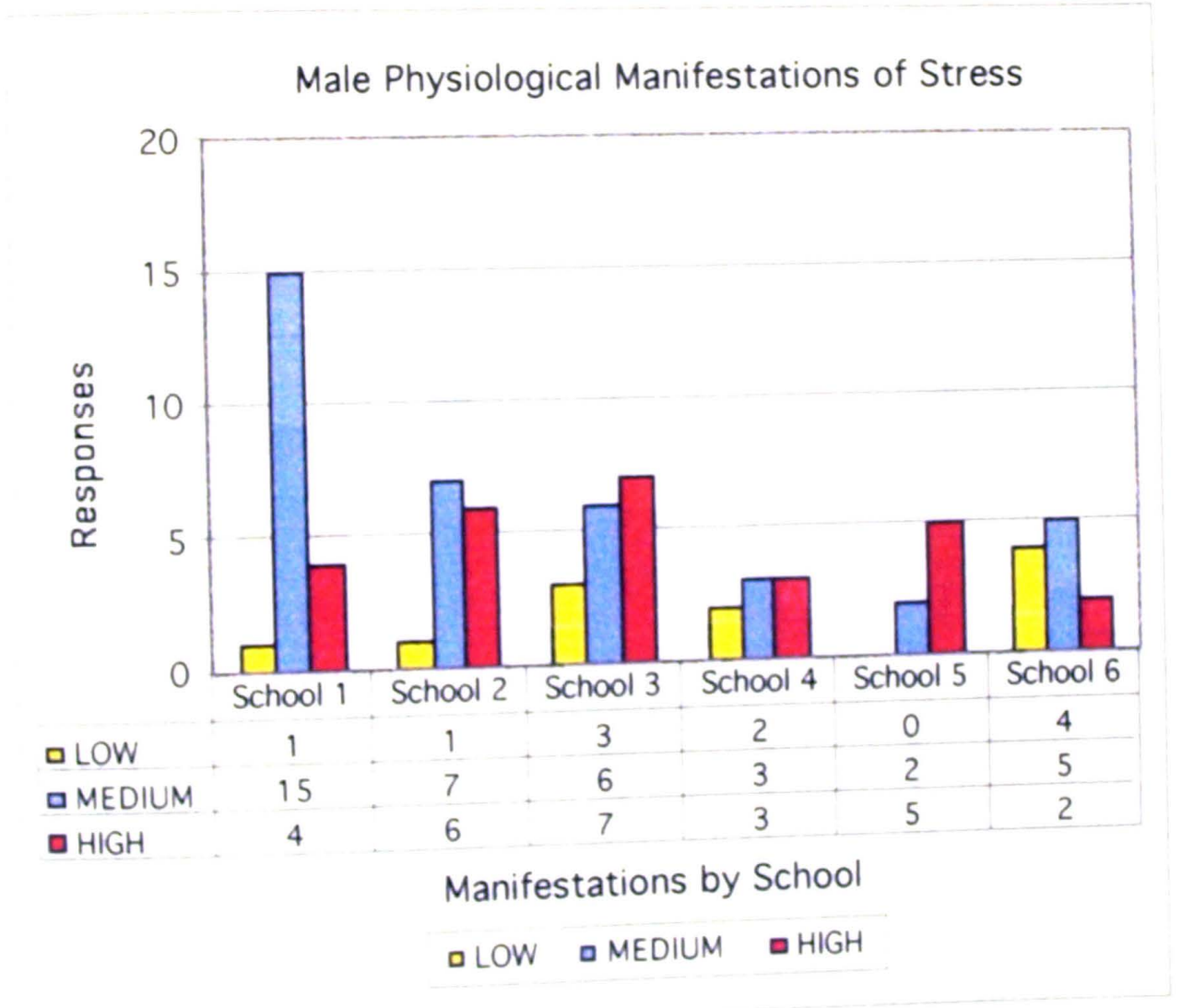


Figure 4-15 Male responses to physiological manifestations of school-related stress.

Female responses to the physiological manifestations of school-related stress indicate a high level of responses to statements concerning headaches or stomachaches from School 5. High scores on these items denote the student is "likely to be experiencing frequent physiological symptoms of stress" (p.6). Figure 4-16 demonstrates the responses of sixth grade female students to physiological manifestations of school-related stress.

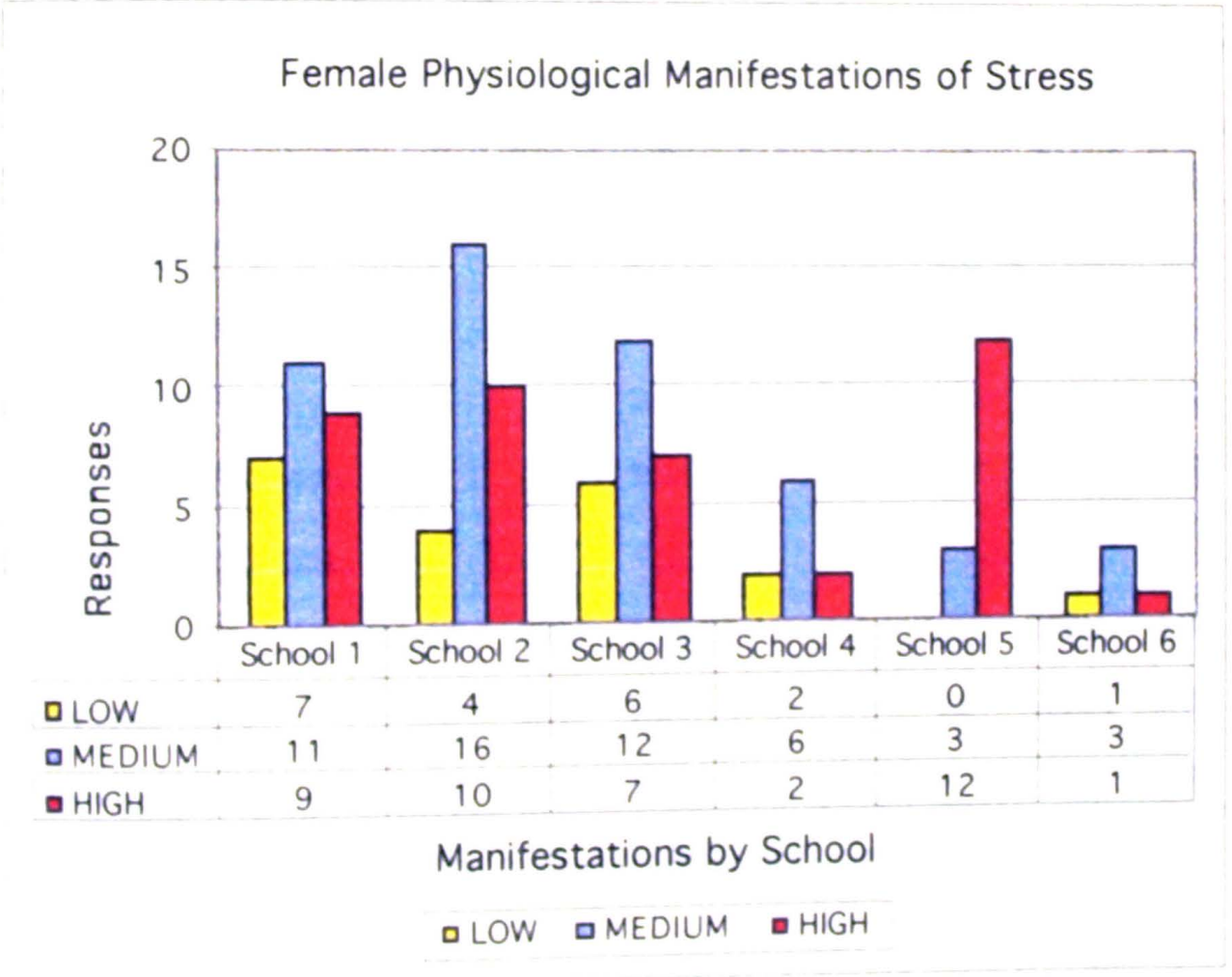


Figure 4-16. Female responses to physiological manifestations of stress.

School Scores

The students raw scores were used to determine a group mean by gender, of the seven S.S.S. dimensions for each school. The standard deviation was calculated to determine the amount of variability present in the scores. The table below is divided for greater understanding of the students scores.

Table 4-2 School 1 SSS Mean and Standard Deviation Scores.

School 1	Male Students			Female Students		
Sources of Stress	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD
Peer Interaction	M	11.05	3.19	M	10.93	4.21
Teacher Interaction	M	15.50	6.67	H*	16.59	7.14
Academic Stress	M	8.10	2.64	M	10.60	3.52
Academic Self-Concept	M	9.65	3.66	L*	8.48	3.68
Manifestations of Stress						
Behavioral	M	13.15	5.42	M	11.8	4.96
Emotional	M	12.45	3.68	M	12.81	4.42
Physiological	M	7.0	1.92	M	7.7	2.87

Note *This item represents an area the student perceives as a source of high stress.

Table 4-3 School 2 SSS Mean and Standard Deviation Scores.

School 2	Male Students			Female Students		
Sources of stress	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD
Peer Interaction	M	10.8	2.70	M	10.6	3.40
Teacher Interaction	H*	19.9	6.34	M	12.9	5.98
Academic Stress	M	8.8	3.91	M	8.8	2.19
Academic Self-Concept	M	10.6	3.83	L*	8.4	3.57
Manifestations of Stress						
Behavioral	M	14.4	4.56	M	13.0	5.90
Emotional	M	15.7	4.9	M	12.81	5.44
Physiological	M	8.1	6.46	M	8.1	2.99

*This item represents an area the student perceives as a source of high stress.

Table 4-4 School 3 SSS Mean and Standard Deviation Scores.

School 3	Male Students			Female Students		
Sources of Stress	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD
Peer Interaction	M	12.4	4.00	M	9.8	3.40
Teacher Interaction	M	15.8	5.21	M	13.8	6.17
Academic Stress	M	9.3	3.12	M	9.1	2.47
Academic Self-Concept	M	9.6	3.82	M	9.3	3.20
Manifestations of Stress						
Behavioral	M	13.6	4.53	M	12.0	5.62
Emotional	M	14.2	1.83	M	1.7	3.06
Physiological	M	7.7	2.62	M	7.4	3.15

Table 4-5 School 4 SSS Mean and Standard Deviation Scores.

School 4	Male Students			Female Students		
Sources of Stress	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD
Peer Interaction	M	11.75	4.4	M	12.8	5.08
Teacher Interaction	M	14.4	5.9	M	15.7	5.68
Academic Stress	L	7.1	2.2	M	11.1	3.18
Academic Self-Concept	M	9.0	3.7	M	9.1	3.18
Manifestations of Stress						
Behavioral	M	14.0	6.9	M	10.5	3.67
Emotional	M	13.3	3.3	M	14.3	3.69
Physiological	M	7.1	2.4	M	7.8	1.70

Table 4-6 School 5 SSS Mean and Standard Deviation Scores.

School 5	Male Students			Female Students		
Sources of Stress	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD
Peer Interaction	M	14.0	4.28	M	10.6	2.63
Teacher Interaction	H*	19.1	7.06	H*	21.4	5.33
Academic Stress	M	8.9	2.53	M	10.8	3.04
Academic Self-Concept	M	11.2	4.40	M	8.8	4.02
Manifestations of Stress						
Behavioral	M	13.4	8.03	H*	14.8	3.94
Emotional	M	14.2	3.49	M	15.5	5.41
Physiological	H*	9.1	2.47	H*	10.3	2.70

*These items represent areas the students perceive as sources of high stress.

Table 4-7 School 6 SSS Mean and Standard Deviations.

School 6	Male Students			Female Students		
Sources of stress	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD
Peer Interaction	M	11.5	2.19	M	10.0	2.45
Teacher Interaction	M	17.27	5.99	M	13.0	4.15
Academic Stress	M	11.0	3.81	M	11.6	2.24
Academic Self-Concept	M	10.8	3.69	M	9.0	1.41
Manifestations of Stress						
Behavioral	M	14.8	5.59	M	10.6	2.58
Emotional	M	12.9	5.43	M	15.8	5.19
Physiological	M	6.3	3.05	M	7.4	2.94

Note: "School 6" is the group that did not attend fifth grade at an elementary school in this middle school zone. *There were no areas indicated by school 6 students they perceived as highly stressful.

The last data group that was analyzed from the School Situation Survey, combined all girls scores and all boys scores to compare the differences between gender. The mean score for both groups was determined for each of the stress scales, and the scales to measure the different manifestations of stress in the middle school environment. The standard deviation was also calculated to show the variability in the scores to assist in the interpretation of the data.

Table 4-8 All Students Scores on the SSS, Mean and Standard Deviations.

All Students	Male Students			Female Students		
Sources of stress	Rank	Mean	SD	Rank	Mean	SD
Peer Interaction	M	11.92	1.06	M	10.79	.97
Teacher Interaction	M	17.0	1.97	M	15.57	2.94
Academic Stress	M	8.87	1.19	M	10.63	.76
Academic Self-Concept	M	10.14	.77	M	8.85	.30
Manifestations of Stress						
Behavioral	M	13.66	.42	M	12.58	1.35
Emotional	M	13.80	1.07	M	13.82	1.50
Physiological	M	8.02	.85	M	8.05	1.02

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was conducted to learn more about the sources of school-related stress sixth grade students experience during their transitional year to middle school. The School Situation Survey (Helms & Gable, 1989) was chosen to administer to sixth grade students to gather information. This survey was not intended to diagnose stress in adolescents, but to indicate broad categories relative to students' perceived stress levels and feelings about school. This survey provided the opportunity to collect information from the students' perceptions about gender differences and stress, and the difference in the sources of stress and the ways in which stress is manifested in the school environment. Information about the socioeconomic levels of the elementary school area were analyzed based on the April 2000 State Report from the nutritional staff at the school system administrative office. These numbers were compared with the students' perceived stress levels to determine if the stress levels reported by the students was higher at schools with a larger percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch benefits.

Conclusions

Research Question One

This question was posed to identify the different sources of school-related stress that sixth grade students feel during their first year in middle school. The students completing the School Situation Survey indicated perceptions of stress from all areas measured; peer interaction stress, teacher interaction stress, academic stress, and academic self-concept. This was supported by the high degree of "medium" responses

on the scale averages to measure each school-related stressor. The School Situation Survey data indicated there were no differences between the responses of males or females, and the different types of stress students perceive in the school environment. This was deduced from the high number of responses teacher interaction stress both males and females at School 2 perceived.

Research Question Two

Question two collected information based on the way male and female students convey their feelings of stress in the school environment to determine the existence of any gender differences. The way in which stress is conveyed within the school environment contradicts the stereotypical expectations of girls and boys behavior. Data collected from the survey indicated female responses from School 5, had a high scale average for behavioral manifestations of school-related stress. Mean scores for males' emotional reactions to school-related stress from all six schools, were in the medium range. School 5 students, both male and female, rated their perceptions of physiological expressions of school-related stress in the high scale. There were no other high ratings from the other schools in the high scale. Therefore, it can be concluded, based on the data, that both males and females communicate their perceptions of stress in similar ways with no clear difference between the genders.

Research Question Three

The last question posed by this study centered around the possible effects of the socioeconomic influences of the elementary school the students attended for fifth grade. Based on the information about the free and reduced lunches reported, it can be concluded that School 3, and 5 are in a lower socioeconomic location. Male and female student

responses from School 5 showed a higher number of responses more for the source of teacher interaction stress within the school environment. School 2, indicated similar results, yet has a smaller percentage of the students population receiving lunch assistance. Behavioral manifestations from School 5, and School 2 responses are similarly rated in the high scale category. Based on these results, socioeconomic influences do not appear to influence the sources or manifestations of school-related stress in sixth grade students.

The hypothesis investigated for this study stated: The sources of stress perceived by students within the school environment and the ways in which the sources of stress are manifested within the school environment are not related to gender differences, or the socioeconomic differences of the elementary schools they previously attended. The hypothesis is accepted, analysis of the data collected from the sixth grade students about school-related stress supports the theory.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed as a result of the data that has been collected from this study

1. It is recommended that activities be included in the next "Jump-Start" transition program for sixth graders to lower students' perceived stress levels related to teacher interaction.
2. It is recommended this survey be administered several months earlier in the school year, to gather information about sixth grade students' perceptions of school-related stress.
3. It is recommended that this survey be administered to a larger sample group.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The School Situation Survey

SCHOOL SITUATION SURVEY

Barbara J. Helms and Robert K. Gable

CONSULTING PSYCHOLOGISTS PRESS, INC.

SSS
● NOT-PREPAID PROFILE

RO	#	CODE

DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA

Fill in the bubble next to your choice to complete the information section.

The elementary school where you attended fifth grade.

- O Barksdale Elementary School
- O East Montgomery Elementary School
- O Moore Elementary School
- O Sango Elementary School
- O Smith Elementary School
- O my elementary school is not listed here

Choose one:

- O Male
- O Female

Age you are today:

- O 10 years old
- O 11 years old
- O 12 years old
- O 13 years old
- O 14 years old

Today's Date:

- O January
- O February
- O March
- O April
- O May
- O June
- O July
- O August
- O September
- O October
- O November
- O December

Day: _____

Year: _____

TO THE TEACHER:
FILL OUT YOUR INSTITUTIONAL ADDRESS IN WHITE AREA

NAME

INSTITUTION

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

(PLEASE DO NOT USE ADDRESS STICKER)

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Use a soft (No. 2) black lead pencil
- Make dark, heavy marks that fill the bubble
- Mark ONLY the bubble areas
- Make no stray marks
- Erase completely any answer you wish to change
- Do not fold or staple answer sheet

EXAMPLES — Proper Mark: ● — Improper Marks: ✓ X ○

DO NOT MARK IN SHADED AREAS

Consulting Psychologists Press
577 College Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94306

DIRECTIONS:

A number of statements that students can use to describe themselves are listed. Please read each statement and decide how often it seems to describe you. For each statement, darken the appropriate circle to indicate your answer, using the following choices:

1 = Never
2 = Rarely
3 = Sometimes
4 = Often
5 = Always

There are no right or wrong answers. Remember, choose the response that best describes you.

DO NOT MARK IN SHADED AREAS

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	
1.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I enjoy doing things with my classmates.
2.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel that some of my teachers don't like me very well.
3.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I get into fights.
4.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel upset.
5.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I worry about not doing well in school.
6.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I get headaches.
7.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I do well in school and get good grades.
8.	①	②	③	④	⑤	Other students make fun of me.
9.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel that some of my teachers expect too much of me.
10.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I talk in class when I should be quiet.
11.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel mixed up.
12.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I get along well with my classmates.
13.	①	②	③	④	⑤	Some of my teachers call on me when they know I am not prepared just to embarrass me.
14.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I pick on other students.
15.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel frustrated.
16.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I am afraid of getting poor grades.
17.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel sick to my stomach.
18.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel that I learn things easily.
19.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I am among the last to be chosen for teams.
20.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel that some of my teachers don't really care about what I think or how I feel.
21.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I yell at my classmates.
22.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel like crying.
23.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I enjoy talking to my classmates.
24.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel that my teachers treat me fairly.
25.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I talk back to my teachers.
26.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel nervous.
27.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I worry about taking tests.
28.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I get stomachaches.
29.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I do good work in school.
30.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I have many friends.
31.	①	②	③	④	⑤	Some of my teachers yell at me for no reason.
32.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I try to get attention by acting silly in class.
33.	①	②	③	④	⑤	I feel angry at school.
34.	①	②	③	④	⑤	School work is easy for me.

	RS	L	M	H
PI				
TI				
B				
E				
AS				
PH				
GC				

DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA

APPENDIX B

Letters of Permission

School Situtation Survey Permissions Manual, Test Booklet, Scoring Key

Barbara J. Helms, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research
Institute for Human Resource Development

Robert K. Gable, Ed.D.
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University of Connecticut

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Clarksville Montgomery County SCHOOL SYSTEM

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931-920-7813 Fax: 931-920-9812 or 905-2243 email: frank.hodgson@cmcss.net

January 29, 2001

Mrs. Stacey L. Denney
516 Pond Apple Road
Clarksville, TN 37043

Dear Mrs. Denney,

Your research, survey and or research project titled **Sixth Grade Students' Perceptions of School Related Stress**, has been approved by the research committee. The date of approval was **January 29, 2001.**

Now that you have approval from the research committee, you may contact the following principal for approval.

Joseph E. Williams, Richview Middle School

According to Board Policy File IFA, the principal has the final authority and responsibility for approving or disapproving research conducted in his/her building.

Please read the **Research Policy and Procedures Handbook** for all information concerning research in the Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools.

If you have questions, please call my office at (931) 920-7812.

Sincerely,

Frank M. Hodgson

Attachment (Research Hand Book)

cc: Joseph Williams
Research File

Dear Parents,

I am currently working on a research project at Austin Peay State University to complete my degree as an Educational Specialist. I am working on a study that will identify the types of stress sixth grade students feel as they make the transition from elementary to middle school. Teachers and staff can help students deal with stress by informing them of possible stressful situations before they occur. I would like permission for your child to fill out a short survey, the School Situation Survey, to help me identify areas that may cause students to feel anxious about school. The survey asks them to rate 34 statements on a scale from 1-5, (1= never, 5=always). It will take them about 15 minutes to complete during their advisory class. Students who do not participate will stay in advisory class.

The results of the survey will be published with the project, and we will use the results at school as we begin to prepare for our Jump-Start program for next year's sixth grade students. The students answers will be kept confidential, and they may rate only the statements they wish to rate. They may stop participating at any time during the survey. Please take a moment to read the consent form on the next page, check the appropriate blank, and sign. Both parent signatures are needed, due to the age of your child. Your child will receive a small reward (a pencil) for bringing back a form with parent signatures. They will receive their free pencil whether you check yes or no. You may contact me at school or home, with any questions or concerns about the survey or how the results will be used.

Thank you,

Stacey Denney

Sixth Grade Reading Teacher, Crusin' Team
Richview Middle School Ph. 648-5620
Austin Peay State University Student Researcher
Hm.Ph. 645-5522 Email: slpdenney@aol.com

Austin Peay State University Faculty Supervisor:
Dr. Harris, Education Department, Office Phone : 221-7757 Email: Harrisa@apsu01.apsu.edu
Austin Peay State University, College of Education P O. Box 4545 Clarksville, TN. 37044

Sample survey statements:

I enjoy doing things with my classmates.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I worry about not doing well in school.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I have many friends.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I get into fights	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I feel that my teachers expect too much of me.	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

APPENDIX C

Research Involving Human Subjects

AUSTIN PEAY STATE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (APIRB)
APPLICATION FOR PROJECT APPROVAL

1. TITLE OF PROJECT:

Sixth Grade Perceptions of School-Related Stress

2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION:

Name: Stacey Patton Denney
Faculty___ Staff ____ Graduate Student __X__ Undergraduate Student ___
Department: Education
Mailing Address : 516 Pond Apple Rd. Clarksville,Tennessee 37043
Phone #: 645-5522 Email Address: SLPDenney@aol.com

3. FACULTY SUPERVISOR:

Name: Dr. Harris Education Department
Office Phone #: (931) 221-7757 FAX# (931)221-5991
Email Address: Harrisa@apsu01.apsu.edu

Campus Mailing Address:
Austin Peay State University
College of Education
Box 4545
Clarksville,TN. 37044

4. SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT:

financed by the principal investigator

5. PURPOSE OF THE INVESTIGATION:

Identify sources of school related stress and how these feelings of stress are demonstrated in the sixth grade environment. To determine if girls and boys express their feelings concerning school-related stress in the same ways. Incorporate activities to help future sixth grade students cope with these areas before they enter middle school.

6. A. THIS RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED TO FULFILL REQUIREMENTS FOR A GRADUATE DEGREE. YES _X__ NO___
B.THIS RESEARCH IS BEING CONDUCTED TO FULFILL REQUIREMENTS FOR A COURSE. YES __X___NO_____; If YES: DEPT: EDUC COURSE # 6050 INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Harris

7. DESCRIBE WHO PARTICIPANTS WILL BE, HOW PARTICIPANT(S) WILL BE RECRUITED, THE NUMBER AND AGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND ANY PROPOSED COMPENSATION.

A parental consent letter will be sent home with approximately 345 sixth grade students, between the ages of ten and twelve, who attend a local middle school to request permission for the students to complete the School Situation Survey. The letter will describe the study and the survey of student perceptions of school-related stress. Sample questions will be included for parents to read. Students returning the form with the

parents signature will receive a reward (a pencil). The reward will be given to each student returning the form, regardless of the parents' decision to allow their child to complete the survey. Parents will be informed of the results of the survey. These results will be used in the future to enhance the existing program designed to help fifth grade students make the transition from elementary to middle school.

8. DESCRIBE THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES IN NON-TECHNICAL LANGUAGE:

This instrument was designed to identify stress as it is perceived by the student. It is not intended for diagnostic purposes. Students will spend approximately 15 minutes or less completing a 34 item, 5 point Likert-type survey to rate their feelings about possible sources of school-related stress. This is a published and copyright protected survey from Consulting Psychologists Press (1989).

Permission to reproduce the survey for one year, up to 200 copies, has already been obtained by the principal investigator, this can be increased to meet the number needed for student assent to complete the survey. It is recommended that the survey be administered by classroom teachers because they have already established a rapport with their students, which is the primary qualification needed for administration. The survey will be administered by the principal investigator. The students will complete the survey during their advisory (homeroom) class. This class meets each morning (7:20-7:45) for announcements and other activities before the first class, this is not an instructional class period. Advisory teachers will collect the parental consent letters and give each student returning the signed letter a reward pencil. Advisory teachers will return all consent letters to the principal investigator. A copy of the parental consent form will be given to the student for them to take home to their parents. The principal investigator will keep a list of students who will be participating and students who will not be participating in the survey. Students not participating in the survey will stay in advisory class. Plain white envelopes will be provided for the students to put their surveys in, to protect the confidentiality of their answers. The principal investigator will collect the surveys from a box that will be provided for the students to drop their envelope into after they have finished.

9. POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND ANTICIPATED RISK:

Potential benefits will include a better understanding of the perceptions of sixth grade students and the areas they feel create school-related stress. These areas will be incorporated into the existing transition program for future sixth graders. There are no more than minimal risks to the students.

10. DESCRIBE THE INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS. INCLUDE A COPY OF THE INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

A parental consent letter will be sent to request permission for the students to complete the School Situation Survey. The letter will describe the study and the survey of student perceptions of school-related stress. Sample questions will be included for parents to

read. Students returning the form with the parents signatures will receive a reward (a pencil). The reward will be given to each student returning the form, regardless of the parents' decision to allow their child to complete the survey. Parents will be informed of the results of the survey in a letter after the study has been completed. Data collected from the survey will be used to enhance the current program designed to help fifth grade students make the transition from elementary to middle school.

This is to certify that the only involvement of human participants in this research study will be as described above.

_____

Principal Investigator's Signature (Stacey Patton Denney)

_____

Faculty Supervisor's Signature (Dr. Harris)

Austin Peay State University
Institutional Review Board

November 20, 2000

Stacey Denney
c/o Dr. Ann Harris
Education Department, APSU

RE: Your application dated November 14, 2000 regarding study number 01-032: Sixth Grade Perceptions of School-Related Stress, their Manifestation in Middle School and Gender Differences

Dear Ms. Denney:

Thank you for your recent submission. We appreciate your cooperation with the human research review process. Your request for approval of the new study listed above was reviewed at the November 17, 2000, meeting of the Austin Peay State University IRB. Please read the following information carefully. If you have any questions at all do not hesitate to contact Linda Freed (221-7881; fax 221-7304; email: freedl@apsu.edu) or any member of the APIRB.

This is to confirm that your application may be approved when the following conditions are met:

1) The student assent statement/instructions needs to emphasize the voluntary nature of the activity. They need to explicitly state that "you don't have to fill this out if you don't want to do it."

2) Please provide a description of what will be done with those children who do not have parental consent or who do not themselves assent to participate, while the survey is being administered. Explain how the investigator will ensure that the survey is given only to students who have parental consent.

3) To better protect students' privacy, the APIRB asks that you block out the spaces for names on the scannable forms, and that you provide envelopes that students can use to turn in their responses so that the collector does not see an individual student's results.

4) The APIRB is concerned about the potential for perceived coercion if the classroom teachers administer the surveys. You are asked to consider whether it would be possible for the investigator to do the administration.

5) The letter to parents accompanying the permission form needs to include more samples of the kinds of questions that will be on the survey, including some of the items

addressing more sensitive issues.

6) On the parental consent form, the wording needs to be changed from first person to third person, so that it reads, "your child will be asked to...."

7) The signature statements on the parental consent form need to be very explicit and parallel. For example, "Yes, I give my permission for my child to participate; No, I do not give my permission...."

8) Correct the prefix on Dr. Harris's telephone number to 221.

9) This study cannot receive final approval until a copy of the approval from Clarksville/Montgomery County Schools is on file in the APIRB office.

Please submit your revised protocol to the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs. It is important that you not begin your study until you have responded to the conditions and they are approved. Again, if you have questions or need assistance contact any member of the APIRB. We will be more than happy to help you successfully complete the human research review process.

Sincerely,

Parris R Watts by Sarah Lindsey Smith

Dr. Parris R. Watts
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in a Research Study Austin Peay State University
Your child will be asked to participate in a research study. This form is intended to provide you with information about this study. You may ask the researcher listed below about this study or you may call the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, Box 4517, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN. 37044, (931) 221-7881 with questions about the rights of research participants.

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY :
Sixth Grade Perceptions of School-Related Stress

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:
Stacey Denney, Austin Peay State University, Student Researcher, Hm.Ph. 645-5522
Austin Peay State University Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Anne Harris, Education Dept. Office Phone: 221-7757

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:
Identify possible sources of stress related to school, to develop ways to help sixth graders feel more comfortable about the transition to middle school.
Please indicate that you have read the above and understand what the study is about, why it is being done, and any benefits or risks involved. Your child does not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to allow your child to participate will involve no penalty or loss of rights. If you agree to participate in this study, understand that by agreeing to participate you have not given up any of your human rights. You have the right to withdraw your consent and your child may stop participating at any time during the study and all data collected will be destroyed. If you or your child choose to withdraw, that choice will be respected and your child will not be penalized or coerced to continue. You will receive a copy of this form. If you have questions about this study you may call Stacey Denney (graduate student, Reading teacher) at 645-5522 or Dr.Anne Harris (supervisor, Austin Peay State University, Education Department) at 221-7757.
Remember: Your child will receive a small reward (a pencil) for bringing back a form with parent signatures. They will receive their free pencil whether you check yes or no.

_____YES, I give my permission for my child to participate in the survey.

_____NO, I do not give my permission for my child to participate in the survey.

Parent Signature_____ Date_____

Parent Signature_____Date_____

Researcher Signature_____Date_____

VITA

Stacey was born in Nuremberg, Germany in 1963 while her father was assigned there during his military career. She graduated from Ft.Campbell High School in 1981, and attended Austin Peay State University where she received her undergraduate and graduate degrees in Education. She received her Educational Specialist degree in Administration and Supervision from Austin Peay State University in 2001. She has taught elementary and middle school for nine years.