Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
PARENT - TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS AT A SECONDARY SCHOOL: PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR OWN AND EACH OTHER'S ROLE IN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE SCHOOL.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

Department of Education
Massey University

Nadas Narismaloo Naidoo
1991
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the following people:

Dr David Corson and Professor Don McAlpine for their assistance and guidance.
Owen Hoskin and The Board of Trustees for their support and permission to carry out this research.
Neil Pilkington for his generous assistance with the computer work and encouragement.
The teachers and parents of Massey High School for agreeing to be part of this study.
Julia Westera for her constructive criticism, generous assistance and encouragement.
Ken Havill for checking the language.
Mary Hammonds and Leata Tipi for helping with the distribution of the questionnaires.
Katy Ma'ilata for translating the questionnaire into the Samoan Language.
My wife Savathri for the typing and, together with my daughters Kamini and Shirvani for the sacrifice they have made over the years to enable me to complete this work.
And the many other people who contributed in some way to this project.
And above all, God who has given me the strength to bring this thesis to its final completion.
ABSTRACT

This study compares the perceptions of parents and teachers on parent-teacher relationships at a secondary school.

A random sample of 320 parents were drawn on the basis of their ethnic classification. All the teachers at the school participated in the study. The findings were analysed by comparing:

(1) The total parent responses with the teacher responses.
(2) Within the parent group according to ethnicity and
(3) within the parent group according to socio-economic status.

The results indicate that there was a general agreement between and within the groups but also some important differences concerning how they perceive their own and each others' role within the school. One of the most significant findings was that the teachers' willingness to participate in the specified school activities was lower than their actual involvement. The opposite result was obtained for the parents. The reason for this could be traced to the parents' and teachers' attitudes. A survey and analysis of their attitudes are also included.

It was generally concluded that although the school structures are efficient there needs to be an evaluation of their effectiveness in realising the objectives they were designed to achieve.
## CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### CHAPTER ONE

**INTRODUCTION**

Overview

Principles Governing Parent - Teacher Relationships

Objectives of this Research

Operational Definitions

Organisation of this Thesis

Response To A Felt Need

### CHAPTER TWO

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Trends Towards Greater Parent Involvement In The Schools

Importance Of Parent-Teacher Relationships

Parent Relationship with Teachers

Teacher Relationship with Parents

Parent Involvement in Secondary Schools

Contradictions in Parent-Teacher views on Education

Barriers to Parent-Teacher Relationships: 

Conflict Resolution in Parent-Teacher Relationships: Aspects to Consider

**SUMMARY**

28
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining the School's Community</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Selection</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Interview</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pilot Study</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Main Survey</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with Parents</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Data</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in School Activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Participation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' and Teachers' Declared Willingness to Participate in the School's Activities</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual versus Declared Willingness to Participate in the School's Activities</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes of Parents and Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Towards Report Evenings</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Towards Parent Support Group</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Towards Parent Involvement in the School</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Attitudes Regarding Parent-Teacher Relationships</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE

Barriers Preventing A Closer Parent-Teacher relationship 68
Other Barriers To Close Parent-Teacher Relationship 71
Role of Parents In The School 76
Methods of Improving Parent-Teacher Relationship 79

DISCUSSION

General Conclusions 81
Recommendations 85
Limitations of this Research 87
Suggestions for Further Research 87

APPENDICES

A. Tables 88
B. Figures 120
C. Questionnaires 123
   Interview Schedules 153
D. Parent Support Group: Objectives 155
   Massey High School Charter 158
E. Letters 168
F. Data Sheets 173

BIBLIOGRAPHY 242
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE

1. Ethnic Classification of Form 4 to 7 Students.

2. Target Population and Sample Selection:
   Parents of Students in Forms 4 to 7.

3. Parent Questionnaire Returns (according to Ethnic Classification).

4. Parent Questionnaire - Percentage of total returns by Socio-Economic Status (SES).

5. Actual Participation in the School's Activities:
   Parents and Teachers

6. Actual Participation in the School's Activities:
   According to Socio-Economic Status (SES)

7. Actual Participation in the School's Activities:
   According to Ethnic Classification (Parent Sample).

8. Rank Order of Actual Participation: Teachers,
   Parents and Parents According to Ethnic Classification.

9. Willingness to Participate in School's Activities: Parent Sample.

10. Willingness to Participate in School's Activities: Teacher Sample.

11. Parents' Declared Willingness to Participate in the School's Activities.

12. Teachers' Declared Willingness to Participate in the School's Activities.

13. Rank Order of Declared Willingness to Participate:
    According to Socio-Economic Status.

14. Rank Order of Willingness to Participate in the School's Activities:
    According to Socio-Economic Status.
15. Willingness to Participate in the School's Activities:
   According to Socio-Economic Status Classification (Parent sample).

16. Willingness to participate in the School's Activities:
   According to Ethnic Classification (Parent Sample).


19. Attitude towards Report Evenings: According to Ethnic Classification,


21. Attitude towards Parents Support Group Meetings:
   According to Socio-Economic Status.

22. Attitude towards Parent Support Group Meetings:
   According to Ethnic Classification.

23. Attitude towards Parent Involvement in the School:
   Parents and Teachers.

24. Attitude towards Parent Involvement in the School:
   Parents according to Socio-Economic Status.

25. Attitude towards Parent involvement in the School:
   According to Ethnic Classification (Parent Sample).

26. General attitudes regarding Parent-Teacher Relationships:
   Parents and Teachers.

27. General attitudes regarding Parent-Teacher Relationships:
   According to Socio-Economic Status.

29. Contact with Board of Trustees: Parent and Teacher Sample.

30. Contact with Teachers: Parent Sample.

31. Contact with Parents: Teacher Sample.

32. Relationship with Teachers: Parent Sample.

33. Teachers Awareness of Parent's concerns that affect children's learning. (Parent Sample).

34. Barriers to Parent Involvement in the School: Parent and Teacher Sample.

35. Barriers to Parent Involvement in the School: According to Ethnic Classification (Parent Sample).

36. Barriers to Parent Involvement in the School: According to Socio-Economic Status.

37. Level of Communication between Parents and Teachers: Parent and Teachers Sample.

38. Level of Communication between Parents and Teachers: According to Ethnic Classification (Parent Sample).

39. Level of Communication between Parents and Teachers: According to Socio-Economic Status (Parent Sample).

40. Initiating Communication between Parents and Teachers: Parent and Teacher Sample.

41. School Support for Links between Parents and Teachers: Support for this Principle: Teacher Sample.
42. School Support for Links between Teacher and Parent: Teacher Learning New Skills (Teacher Sample).

43. School Support for Links between Parents and Teachers: Changing Attitudes (Teacher Sample).

44. School Support for Links between Teacher and Parent: Courses to strengthen Relationship (Teacher Sample).

45. Length of Stay in New Zealand (Parent Sample).

46. Marital Status: Parent Sample.

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE

1. Actual Participation in the School's Activities: Parents and Teachers.

2. Actual verses Declared Willingness to Participate: Parent Sample.

3. Actual verses Declared Willingness to Participate: Teacher Sample.


5. Actual verses Declared Willingness to Participate: Middle SES Parents.

6. Actual verses Declared Willingness to Participate: Low SES Parents.

8. Actual verses Declared Willingness to Participate:
   Samoan Parent.

9. Actual verses Declared Willingness to Participate:
   Maori Parent.

10. Actual verses Declared Willingness to Participate:
    European-Maori Parent.

11. Actual verses Declared Willingness to Participate:
    "Other" Parent.