

## Abstract

### Correlates of Alienation From School Veronica Rose Murray

This study was inspired by the high rate of behaviours being expressed by adolescents indicative of their alienation from school.

The heuristic nature of the investigation necessitated the construction and validation of new scales. Powerlessness, Normlessness and Social Isolation were used as the measures of alienation and the secondary cycle of the education system was used as the referent.

From the extant literature some variables relevant in alienation research were selected and these were classified as Personal, Ecological and School Based/Institutional.

The investigation was carried out in 1984 on a sample of 398 Grade 11 students in the secondary cycle of the education system. The statistical methods employed were One Way ANOVA, Scheffe's Post Hoc Procedure, Multiple Regression Analysis and computation of correlation coefficients.

The findings reveal that for this sample

- 1 The negative relationship between SES and alienation suggested by the literature is not supported.

- 2 There is an inverse relationship between personal identity and alienation from school.
- 3 Alienation from school correlates significantly with perception of curriculum relevance, perception of the teacher/student relationship, and perception of the opportunities for meaningful involvement in the administrative and decision making processes of the school.
- 4 No significant differences exist between SES groups and alienation from school.
- 5 Private High school students can be distinguished from other students in the secondary cycle on the basis of their perception of punishment, rules, curriculum relevance to the future and teacher/student relationship. The former have a more positive perception of all the variables mentioned. The two classes of schools, however, are not differentiated on the alienation measure.
- 6 The alienated attitude does not distinguish between the sexes but boys have a more negative perception of rules and of the relevance of curriculum to their present lives.
- 7 The New Secondary schools have students with the lowest sense of identity and the highest alienation scores in the system. Here too are found students with the most negative perception of rules, curriculum relevance to

their future lives, teacher/student relationships and punishment.

- 8 The three variables which make the major contributions to Normlessness are perception of rules (PerRules), perception of punishment (PerPun) and personal identity (Identity). The three variables which make the major contributions to Social Isolation are perception of teacher/student relationship (Testurel), personal identity, (Identity) and perception of curriculum relevance to the present (Currelp). The three variables which make the greatest contribution to Powerlessness are perception of teacher/student relationship (Testurel), perception of curriculum relevance to the present (Currelp) and personal identity (Identity).

The findings are discussed in detail. Some implications for education are noted and recommendations are offered.