

ABSTRACT

The relationship of religious/spiritual behaviour with attributional style and academic achievement, according to gender of Grade Twelve students in Kingston, Jamaica

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This study investigates differences between male and female Grade Twelve students on measures of religious/spiritual behaviour, moral values, academic achievement and attributional style or Locus of Control; and examines the relationships between these variables according to gender. Theories of faith, moral development and motivation underlie this study.

The descriptive design utilizes 't' tests for independent samples for the comparisons, and Pearson product Moment correlations. The results, from the sample (70 male and 72 female), show that there are significant differences between the genders in stated participation in religious/spiritual activities as measured by a Religious/Spiritual (R/S) scale developed by the researcher, $p < 0.05$ (sig.1 tailed), and in academic achievement, $p < 0.05$ (sig.2 tailed), according to passes at the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) Examinations Grades 1-3 and at Grade 1 only, with the female students having

the advantage. However, there was no measured difference in attributional style or Locus of Control between the genders.

Secondly, for the total sample (N=142), there were significant positive correlations (sig. 2 tailed) between Religious/Spiritual participation and Religious/Spiritual attitudes, and with moral values; and between moral values and the highest level of academic achievement for the total sample, and separately, for the female sample (N=72) at the 0.01 level of significance. For the female sample a less significant relationship (at the 0.5 level of significance) was shown between R/S attitude and academic achievement (Grade 1). There were significant negative correlations between the sub-categories on the R/S scale and an external Locus of Control.

The conclusion is that male and female Grade Twelve students in sampled urban schools seem to have similar attitudes to religion/spirituality, and similar moral values generally, which characteristics seem to relate positively to academic achievement. Moreover, most of these students apparently try to collaborate with or be in harmony with a loving, omnipotent Supreme Being and their parents, especially mothers, in their efforts to live successfully.

Keywords: Verna Althea Carter-Gaskin; religious/spiritual behaviour, academic achievement, attributional style, Locus of Control, correlations and gender comparisons; motivation theory.