

ABSTRACT

This exploratory research investigated the possible effects of certain personality and related variables on academic achievement in a group of Sixth Form students attending Jamaican High Schools. The main objectives were to examine the effect of specific personality characteristics of the Sixth Formers on performance in the 1977 G.C.E. Examinations, and to establish relationships of additional cognitive and environmental variables with achievement at Sixth Form level.

The data obtained were subjected to Orthogonal Factor Analysis to determine whether the groupings of variables proposed were realistic, and to obtain information regarding the most dominant of these. The best predictors of "A" Level achievement were also ascertained by means of Stepwise Regression in which these dominant factors were employed.

The following common factors occurred for the Total, Male and Female sample. These were

- (1) A Teacher Factor*
- (2) A Social Status Factor*
- (3) A Personality Influences on Study Habits Factor*
- (4) A Sociability Factor (Anti-Social in the case of Male Ss)*

Personality variables featured prominently in the Total and Female samples especially, correlating with Achievement Stimulus and Study Habits.

The best predictors of "A" Level achievement were:-

- (1) Previous Examination Successes, Perception of Teachers and Study Habits (Total Sample).*
- (2) Previous Examination Successes, Early Educational Considerations, Sociability (—) (Male Sample)*
- (3) Previous Examination Successes, Academic Orientation (negatively) and Perception of Teachers. (Female Sample)*

In view of the prominence of personality variables in the above-mentioned multivariate analyses, Factor Analysis and Stepwise Multiple Regression using personality variables along with the criterion measure and the variable, Course Preference, were staged, with the sample dichotomised on an Arts/Science basis.

Several contrasting factor patterns occurred, with the criterion loading on an Achievement Drive Factor and Self Reliance Factor (Science-based), while for Arts-based Ss a Personality Inputs For Achievement Factor, as well as an Achievement Related Personality Traits Factor featured.

Ascendancy (Low), Course Preference and Authoritarianism (Low) emerged as the best predictors for the Science-based sample; and Perception of Teachers, Authoritarianism (Low) and Ascendancy for the Arts-based Ss.