

ABSTRACT

Relationships between Primary Teachers' and Students' Attitudes towards Science; and Students' Attitudes and Achievement of Science Process Skills.

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This investigation was prompted by the paucity of attitude-to-science research at the primary level in Trinidad and Tobago. It explored the relationships between primary teachers' and students' attitudes to science; teachers' attitudes to science and seven dichotomous variables (sex, professional training, science workshop attendance, the number of workshops attended, possession of an O'level science subject certificate, use of SAPATT teacher guides, and student science workbooks) as well as the relationship between students' attitudes to science and their sex, and achievement on a test of science process skills.

Three aspects of attitude to science were explored, a general aspect defined as attitude to science in and out of school, attitude to science outside of the school environment, and attitude to teaching/learning science in the classroom. Attitude instruments were two researcher designed Likert-type questionnaires, in which the items on the teacher

questionnaire and those on the student questionnaire were matched.

Five relationships were found to be significant ($p < 0.05$). Two of these relationships were between teachers' attitude to science generally, their attitude to teaching science, and their attainment of a science subject at O'level. Additionally all three categories of students' attitudes to science, were significantly correlated with their achievement on the process skill test. In all cases the correlations between attitudes to teaching science and learning science were stronger than for attitude to science outside of the school environment, or attitude to science generally. It was suggested that these results support Fishbein and Ajzen's theory which postulated that attitude scores are more likely to predict behaviour, if the attitude object is defined as the specific behaviour of interest.

The results suggest pertinent questions with respect to the variables which influence primary teachers' and their students' attitudes to science, as well as the need for more intensive research including longitudinal and qualitative investigations in this area.