

ABSTRACT

Aspirational Levels of Grade 11 Jamaican Students

Velma A. Parchment

This research examined the effect of certain environmental, personal orientation and cognitive variables on the aspirational levels of grade eleven students in the high, technical and secondary schools in Jamaica. The initial sample consisted of 452 students (198 males and 254 females). The data are examined in terms of school type and sex of students. In addition, the high school sub-sample was investigated separately using achievement as an additional variable. The main results are as follows.

Overall

- * Three independent variables have surfaced as showing relationships with the three levels of aspiration for the sample overall. These are PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT, ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION and SCHOOL INFLUENCE.
- * The interrelationships between the independent variables themselves are chiefly among the personal orientation and environmental variables.

Both Sexes

- * ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION and SCHOOL INFLUENCE emerge from the multiple regression analysis as common predictors for EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION, VOCATIONAL ASPIRATION and STATUS for both sexes.

- ∴ There is a definite correlaion between VOCATIONAL ASPIRATION and SCHOOL INFLUENCE for both sexes. PARENTAL ENCOURAGEMENT has also emerged as being important for both sexes for STATUS and EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION, but does not associate nor correlate with VOCATIONAL ASPIRATION for the female group.
- ∴ Females score significantly higher on EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION, VOCATIONAL ASPIRATION and VOCATIONAL ATTITUDE, ASSERTIVENESS and SCHOOL INFLUENCE. The latter exhibited highest mean difference for this group.
- ∴ LIFESTYLE does not feature in any of the correlational analyses for males.

School Types

- ∴ ANOVA results revealed that high school students score higher than technical and secondary school students on VOCATIONAL ASPIRATION. Technical school students have also been found to be more responsible. Secondary school students score higher on STATUS and are more influenced by the environment (ENVINF).

The High School Sub-Sample

- ∴ Four variables correlate with ACHIEVEMENT for the high school group. These are ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE, VOCATIONAL ATTITUDE, LIFESTYLE and STATUS.
- ∴ Two-way ANOVA results reveal that five variables are significant for the single-sex versus the coed sub-category. These are INDEPENDENCE TRAINING, ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE, VOCATIONAL ATTITUDE, STATUS and ACHIEVEMENT. SCHOOL INFLUENCE, ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION, EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATION and VOCATIONAL ASPIRATION are significant variables for SEX, with girls scoring higher on these variables. Two interaction effects surface. These are on SCHOOL INFLUENCE and RESPONSIBILITY.

* Overall, girls in single-sex schools score highest on ACHIEVEMENT.

In view of these findings and their significance for career education in Jamaica, a number of recommendations are made. These are mainly directed to the importance of fostering the right attitudes by parents towards their children's decision-making. In school, teachers are expected to foster good attitudes also, and to create equal opportunities for learning for both sexes. It is further suggested that more single-sex schools be established with a view to improving achievement.