

ABSTRACT

The Relationship Between Students' Sex, Ability, and Self-Concept And Their Causal Attribution Of Success And Failure In Trinidad And Tobago.

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In the light of the high failure rate at the CXC examination, this study drew upon the Causal Attribution Theory and two Self-Concept measures to explore how the senior comprehensive school students felt about themselves as they operated in a situation of persistent failure.

A stratified sample of 379 fifth form students was asked to respond to the Causal Attribution Questionnaire and the Self-Concept measures - the Adjective Check-List and Piers Harris Self-concept Scale.

The data obtained, was analysed to determine the students' causal attribution pattern and their level of self-concept when compared to the variables - gender, school stream and school. The ANOVA and the Pearson

Correlation Coefficient were the statistical tools used. $P < 0.05$ was the accepted probability level.

The results showed that all the causal factors, especially task difficulty and ability were significantly related to their success/failure. Their causal attribution patterns were not however totally ego-defensive, as they had partially accepted the responsibility for their failure.

Whilst Mathematics and English were their most difficult subjects, Social Studies was quite unique. Self-concept levels were impaired and significantly related to their CXC passes and the Adjective Check-list and the Piers Harris Self-concept Scales at $F(3,221) = 3.113$ $P = 0.028$ and $F(3,221) = 2.841$ $P = 0.039$ respectively. However, their levels of self-concept were impaired in an inverse order to their academic attainment levels. Those who failed all their subjects had the highest levels of self-concept. Additionally no global gender distinctions occurred, except in the cluster of anxiety. The differences in their academic outcomes and the school streams were insignificant but many significant relationships were identified with their schools.