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Abstract

Motivational Responses of High School Students in Trinidad

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The study examines the relationship between three aspects of teacher classroom behaviour - structuring, involvement and autonomy-orientation - on the motivational responses of high school students in Trinidad. The subjects included one hundred and seventy one students and five teachers from five secondary schools. The students were followed from Form 1 to Form 3. The students completed surveys indicating their motivational patterns and a random sample (50) interviewed. Classroom observations provided further data on teacher behaviour in the classroom.

In contradiction to previous research, the motivational levels of the students showed an increase from Form 1 to Form 3, with a large percentage of the students exhibiting a high level of intrinsic motivation and a mastery - goal orientation. The autonomy - orientation of the teachers was the only factor which significantly affected the students' motivational responses. Further, there was little agreement between the students' perception and the teachers' self-perception of the teacher behaviour in the classroom. The results also showed the lack of a significant correlation between the motivational levels and the achievement of the students. The results led to the conclusion that it may be other factors, such as the learning strategies and the suitability of the curriculum that are affecting the academic performance of high school students. Implications of these findings include enhancing the social environment of the classroom and tailoring the curriculum to suit different ability levels of the students in order to improve the academic performance of high school students in Trinidad.