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Gender, goals and attributions:
A study of form two and form five students

A thesis submitted to
the Education Department
Massey University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Judith Loveridge

1986

For my parents,

Barbara and Spencer Loveridge

Abstract

Gender differences for causal attributions were investigated in an interview, employing a methodology which allowed for the subjective construction of the situation by the student. The questions addressed students' own school work in science and reading. The interviews were conducted with 51 form two students (28 females and 23 males) and 57 form two students (28 females and 29 males).

Predictions regarding differences between males and females were made in terms of goals in learning, causal attributions, and the relationship between goals of learning and attributions. Other variables addressed included students' self-perceptions for performance, views on the function of schools and why people go to school, and their perceptions of the gender-specificity of science and reading, as school subjects.

Overall, there were no consistent significant differences in the responses given by males and females. Form two and form five students differed in the frequency with which they described particular activities as successes and failures.

The discussion of the findings addressed their implications for findings from previous studies that have used rating scales, the proposed role of attributions in mediating gender differences and the implications for future research in the area.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my supervisors Dr. James Chapman and Dr. Alison St. George for their stimulating and supportive assistance. They both contributed a great deal to my enjoyment of this research experience.

Thanks are also due to other friends and colleagues in the Education Department of Massey, for their continuing encouragement.

I would like to thank teachers and school principals for their assistance, and general contributions to the various stages of the research. Without their support on this research would not have been possible.

I am also very grateful to Anneke Visser for her excellent work typing the tables, and to Duncan Ridler for so willingly proof-reading the manuscript.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to Keith Ridler for his insightful observations and unconditional support.

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