Summary: This study explored the domain specificity of students’ beliefs about academic knowledge in three related studies. Using a four-factor model as an initial framework, a series of domain-specific items about mathematics and history was developed. In study I, these items were administered to 182 undergraduates, and the psychometric properties and underlying factor structure were examined via exploratory factor analysis. In study II, the modified instrument, the domain-specific beliefs questionnaire (DSBQ), was administered to 633 students and a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. A subsample of participants’ responses on the DSBQ was also compared to responses on Schommer’s epistemological questionnaire. Study III involved a second confirmatory factor analysis using data from a new sample (n = 523). Those data were examined for potential gender differences. Overall, the results of this investigation suggested that students possess certain domain-specific beliefs about knowledge in mathematics and history. Further, a significant moderate relationship between the DSBQ and Schommer’s questionnaire provided some evidence of domain-generality in undergraduates’ epistemological beliefs.

Classification: C25

Keywords: beliefs; academic knowledge; domain specificity; domain generality