

ZMATH 1998e.03142

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Students' attitudes towards mathematics in single-sex and coeducational schools.

Math. Educ. Res. J. 10, No. 1, 16-36 (1998).

This paper examines students' attitudes towards mathematics at the secondary school level. Using five of the Fennema-Sherman scales, the attitudes of boys and girls in Grades 8 to 12 in four schools were compared: a single-sex boys' and a single-sex girls' private school, and a state and a private coeducational school. Multivariate analysis of variance was used to guide an exploration of how students' attitudes varied according to grade, sex and educational setting. There were no differences between students in the two coeducational schools. In general, students' attitudes were found to be less positive in more senior grades; and overall, boys had more positive attitudes than girls. There were clear differences between boys and girls on the Mathematics as a Male Domain scale, with girls being less stereotyped in their perceptions than boys. Except for this scale, effects related to the sex of the student were small, and effects relating to grade level and school type on all variables were also small. Implications are drawn for future research in this area.

Classification: C23

doi:10.1007/BF03217120