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Perception of Social Studies Objectives

and

Student Achievement:

A Research Study



by

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A B S T R A C T

The present research has been a perceptual and cognitive study based on the teaching/learning objectives of social studies.

The purpose of the study was to examine the nature of students' perceptions of social studies objectives and achievement in social studies; and the correlation between students' perception of social studies objectives and their achievement in social studies.

In specific terms the objectives of the research were as follows:

- 1.00 To study the relative importance of the four domains; cognitive, affective, psychomotor and personality development, based on the student perception of objectives of social studies learning.
- 2.00 To study the rural and urban, girls and boys and across-districts differences in perceiving social studies learning objectives in the four domains.
- 3.00 To study the rural and urban, girls and boys and across-districts differences in achievement on social studies standardized achievement test.

4.00 To study the correlation between perception of social studies objectives and the student achievement as measured by the standardized achievement test as well as the teacher-made school achievement test.

The social studies students of the three districts in the Central province of Sri Lanka; namely, Kandy, Matale and Nuwara Eliya formed the basic population that came under the purview of this investigation. The sample was a total of 300 students randomly selected to include 100 students from each district; ^{and} _^ consisting of 150 rural students and 150 urban students. The sample also consisted of girls and boys in equal numbers, representing both rural and urban areas.

Perception scores and achievement scores were obtained, by means of a standardized perception test and a standardized achievement test. The perception test scores were analysed in the light of arithmetic means, standard deviations and frequency distributions; on ten categories, i.e. total perception scores and domainwise perception scores, under most important ten and most important five social studies objectives perceived by the students.

The achievement test scores were subjected to analysis on arithmetic means and standard deviations.

Correlation coefficients were computed between perception and achievement tests scores, with all ten variables stated.

Possible differences between and among, stated variables on perception, achievement and their correlations were examined computing Normal Distribution statistics, appropriately.

The study revealed that:

- 1:00 the students perceived the affective domain to be the most important and the cognitive psychomotor and personality development domains followed in that order of importance;
- 2:00 there exist significant differences in perceiving social studies objectives between rural and urban; and girls and boys; in all four domains. Across-districts differences too were found to occur between certain sample groups;
- 3:00 rural and urban; girls and boys; and across districts differences in achievement in social studies were also found to be significant;
- 4:00 very low correlations occurred between perception of social studies learning objectives and achievement in social studies in all the student groups sampled;

5:00 the urban students in general were found to be relatively higher in perception of social studies learning objectives and achievement in social studies.

This investigation also revealed, the importance of making the student, teacher and the parents aware of the general and specific instructional objectives of social studies, in order that higher achievement be facilitated.