

Dorota Turska,
Ryszarda Ewa Bernacka
Poland

Maths Lessons – Are They Gender Neutral in the Polish Perspective? Report on the Third Stage of Research

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to determine the behaviour of male and female teachers of mathematics in the perception of Polish secondary school male and female students. The results obtained suggest that female students, compared to male students, assess four elements of the Teacher Conduct Scale in a less favourable manner in the behavior of the teacher of mathematics. Referring to the question posed in the title of this article, it seems justified to contend that lessons of mathematics conducted in Poland are by no means gender neutral. Both teacher and student genders are significant modifiers of the perception of such lessons.

Key words: *gender stereotypes, maths achievement, Rosenthal's Four-Factor Theory (Climate, Feedback, Input, Output), Golem effect, the teacher's behaviour.*

Introduction

It is a popular stereotype that mathematics is a domain for males (Gavin, Reis, 2003, pp. 32–44; Leder, Forgasz, Solar, 1996, pp. 932–961), and this stereotype is common knowledge to all participants of the educational process: teachers, students, and their parents alike. This stereotype determines the perception of children's competence by their parents attributing success to daughters' efforts and to sons' mathematical abilities (Eccles, 1993, pp. 145–218) and, by extension, shaping more favourable perception of their competence by average male students than female students. More importantly though, this stereotype has an effect on