PREFACE

This research aimed to complement current theorising associated with teachers’ conceptual understandings, expectations and outcome behaviours related to students with LD. The study is grounded in the theoretical construct of Weiner’s ‘attribution theory’ (1970, 1979, 1980, 1985, 1986, 1992, 1993, 1994). Over recent decades, attribution theory has become a dominant concept in the field of academic motivation and achievement.

Weiner’s attribution theory suggests that teachers apply attributions to their daily classroom experiences. As students work on class tasks each day, where some are successful and others are not, teachers feel emotions congruent with the outcomes, where happiness generally follows success and sadness generally follows failure. All teachers have an aspiration for their students to succeed to the greatest possible heights. However, often teachers find themselves asking questions as to why a student regularly fails/struggles, or why a student, who fails/struggles, succeed. These questions often emerge following two types of outcomes, negative outcomes and unexpected outcomes. Weiner believes that it is through these questions that teachers begin to apply attributions to their daily classroom activities.

The present study examines Weiner’s ‘attribution model’ by comparing teachers’ attributions towards students with and without LD in relation to their academic achievements. The study is divided into five chapters. The broad purpose of each is summarised below.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION AND RELATED STUDIES. This chapter introduces the research topic, provides a detailed account of the theoretical approach adopted, and reviews the literature, beginning with a discussion of current issues surrounding LD concerning definitional matters, etiology, epidemiology, prevalence, characteristics of children with LD, identification matters, impinging upon knowledge and understandings of students with LD. It then explores the theoretical underpinnings of attribution theory, and applies it to the context of LD. Attitudes towards students with LD and differentiation of the curriculum are then discussed.

Chapter 2. THE PRESENT RESEARCH. This chapter describes the present work, which is to study the teachers’ attributions towards students with and without LD. It
outlines the purpose of the study and delineated the parameters within which the study was conducted. It has also provided an insight into why the research is significant and an overview of the theoretical and practical contributions of the study. It also includes the hypotheses and objectives of the present research.

Chapter 3. METHOD. This section describes how the present research was actually carried out and is subdivided into several topics. It gives the details about the research design and development of the instruments utilised to gather the data. The population and sample used for the study are outlined in detail. Pilot study has also been described. Further, it vividly describes the procedure as to how the study was carried out. It ends with the description of precautions taken during the study.

Chapter 4. RESULTS. This chapter presents the results of the data collection beginning with descriptive statistics about the teachers’ responses, i.e., their feedback, anger, pity, and expectations of future failure towards students with LD and without LD. Statistical analyses such as analysis of variance, independent t-tests, t-tests for dependent samples have been described. Wherever required, results have been corroborated with tables and figures.

Chapter 5. DISCUSSION. This chapter integrates the results of the study reported in the preceding chapter, particularly with regard to the relationship of findings between the varied analyses carried out in the preceding chapter.

Chapter 6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH. As the title suggests this chapter gives a summary of the present work and the conclusion. Further, it outlines the implications of the findings, identifies the limitations of the study and then suggests implications for practice and further areas of research.