

## A B S T R A C T

This research examined the effect of certain cognitive, motivational and attitudinal variables on the performance of Jamaican students in the CXC/GCE Spanish examinations. The sample included 162 Ss (59 boys and 103 girls) drawn from single sex and co-educational schools of the Corporate Area, so that the data could be examined in terms of these partitions, as well as for the entire group of Ss tested. The main results were as follows:

Overall: Significant relationships surfaced between the cognitive measures (Aptitude and Verbal Reasoning) and Achievement. Stepwise regression explained 9.3 percent variance in the criterion, with Verbal Reasoning, Academic Self Concept and Social Implications being the strongest predictors.

Sex: The "t" test pointed to boys' superior performance on Aptitude, Achievement and Drive/Persistence. Aptitude correlated significantly with Achievement for both sexes, as did Verbal Reasoning in the case of girls. Discriminant function analysis (employing the strongest predictors from the regression) significantly discriminated between the sexes, moreso for boys.

School Type: ANOVA results highlighted significant differences for Aptitude and Drive/Persistence only - both cases in favour of boys in single sex schools. Aptitude correlated significantly with the criterion for this sub-sample as well as those in the co-educational group, with Verbal Reasoning also surfacing for the latter group.

In view of these outcomes and their significance to education in Jamaica, a number of recommendations were made. These were mainly directed to the implementation of foreign languages in the schools (taking into account the Creole language background of the majority of students), as well as to the importance of fostering positive motivational/attitudinal patterns among pupils.

Special mention was also made of the need to eradicate the sex stereotypic view of foreign languages being "feminine" subjects, and to encourage greater participation among boys in this field.