

Investigating School Performance in the Primary Sector of Trinidad and Tobago: An Embedded Case Study

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The University of the West Indies
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St. Augustine Campus

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The Trinidad and Tobago Initiative

COMMITMENT:

To adopt the Global initiative- 'Education for All'

(Budget statement, 2012)

ACTION:

- National EFA action plan established
- Minimum 6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocated to provide adequate resources for education. (EFA Action Plan, 2007)
 - Financial year 2012, over 8 million dollars - Education and Training.

(Budget statement, 2012)

TARGET:

- To improve the quality of education.
- To ensure recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by **all students**.
- To prepare students for excellence at all levels of schooling.
- To equip students to contribution to Trinidad and Tobago's sustainability.
- To render students successfully competitive in the global environment .

(Draft Quality Standards for Education, 2005)

The North Eastern Education District (NEED)

Primary

Demographically described as **rural**

- 42 primary schools – 29% Government schools
 - 71% Government assisted schools
- 1 School Supervisor II
- 3 School Supervisor I
- 480 Teachers
- 42 Principals

North Eastern Education District Performance

- The lowest school performance as measured by the mean SEA score (01-04) and the API (05-07)

(De Lisle, et al., 2010).

- Analysis of SEA performance data by gender (04-08)
 - The highest percentage of low-performing males.

(George, Quamina-Aiyejina, Cain and Mohammed, 2009)

API figures 2005 -2009

- Highest percentage of schools under “**Academic Watch**” (42.9%).
- Highest percentage of primary schools in **academic decline** (26.7%)
- 54.8% of primary schools classified as “**Mostly Effective,**” (the second lowest among all eight districts)

(DERE, 2011)

RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

- **NEED Performance Data indicate:**
 - Poor performance in numeracy and literacy areas.
- **Poor achievement at the primary school level:**
 - Increases the chances of a deficit in basic skills to enhance students' personal lives.
 - Signals lost opportunities for effective participation in and contribution to the society as an adult.

RATIONALE cont'd

- **Trinidad & Tobago's Endeavour:** Quality and equity in education

(Draft Quality Standards for Education, 2005)

- **Current situation:** Large school and district differentiation
- **The need exists:**
 - No investigation of the poor academic performance in the North Eastern Education District.

Research Aim:

- To gather evidence towards a case for improved educational opportunities for students of NEED.

Research Purpose :

- To explore the educational practices of the primary schools within the district to understand how these practices may be influencing the persistent poor academic performance that is exhibited in the national assessment data.

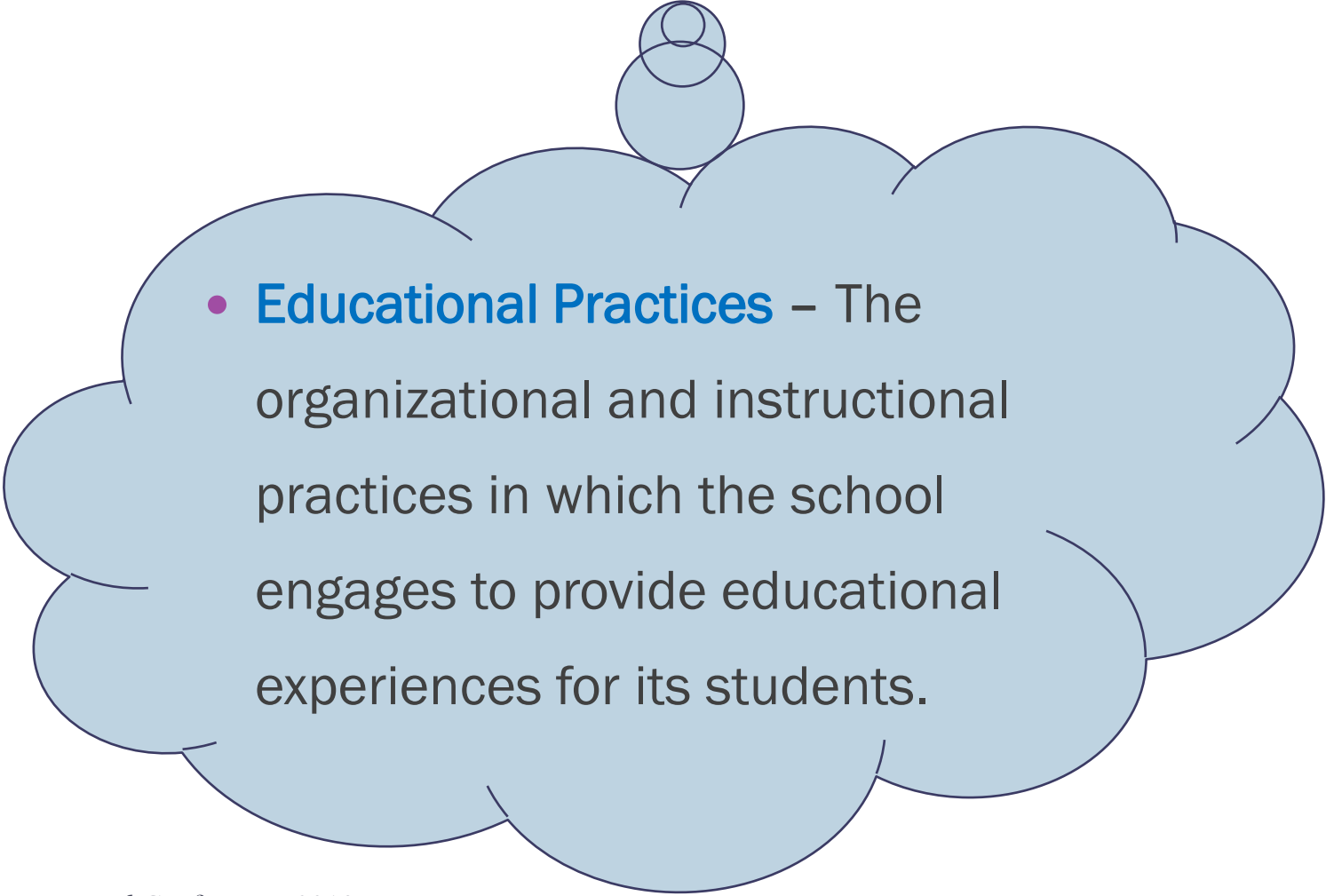
MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

- ❖ How do the educational practices in the primary schools influence the academic performance of schools in the North Eastern Education District?

RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS

- ❖ What are the educational practices at the primary schools in the North Eastern Education District?
- ❖ What associations can be established between the educational practices and the academic performance of the schools, as exhibited in the national assessment data?

DEFINITION

- 
- **Educational Practices** – The organizational and instructional practices in which the school engages to provide educational experiences for its students.

DEFINITION

An
Effective
School

An effective school is one that can demonstrate the **joint presence of quality** (acceptably high levels of achievement) **and equity** (no differences in the distribution of that achievement among the major subsets of the student population)

SIGNIFICANCE

The research will:

- Add to the scant literature in Trinidad and Tobago on the relationship between educational practices and student performance in this local context.
- Contribute to the wider body of literature on educational practices by giving the perspectives of how those practices impact on school performance in this local context.
- Provide an evidence-based approach to inquiry, into the relationship between the educational practices and school performance, which can be adapted by other education districts in Trinidad and Tobago.

DELIMITATIONS

- One education district in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Evidence is delimited to the perspectives of the educators of the district:
 - District supervisors
 - Principals
 - Teachers

REVIEW of LITERATURE

- Coleman Report (1966) - Only a small part of variation in achievement was due to school factors.
- A body of research (Brookover et al, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Rutter et al., 1979; Lezotte, 2001; Cotton, 2002; Marzano, 2003; Lezotte and Snyder, 2011) has **validated school factors as the dominant factor in variation of achievement.**
- Lezotte (2001) - In schools where students mastered the intended curriculum, a describable list of **instructional** and **organizational** variables existed that seemed to correlate with the schools' effectiveness

LITERATURE REVIEW CONT'D

- Lezotte (2001) - In schools where students mastered the intended curriculum, a describable list of **instructional** and **organizational** variables existed that seemed to correlate with the schools' effectiveness
- Cotton (2000) - The general database of effective educational practices identifies what appears to be the core **contextual** and **instructional** schooling attributes that enable virtually all students to learn successfully

LITERATURE REVIEW CONT'D

CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

- **Instructional leadership** – A strong relationship with:
 - the classroom practices of teachers (Brookover et al., 1978; Brookover and Lezotte, 1979)
 - the organization of the curriculum and instruction (Bossert et al., 1982; Cohen and Miller, 1980; Eberts & Stone, 1988).
- Schools differ enormously in how much **time students are engaged** in appropriately challenging learning activities. (Honzay, 1987)

LITERATURE REVIEW CONT'D

- **A clear mission that focuses on student learning** drives the culture of the school.

(Jenkins, Louis, Walberg and Keefe, 1994;
Muijs, Harris, Chapman, Stolland Russ, 2004)

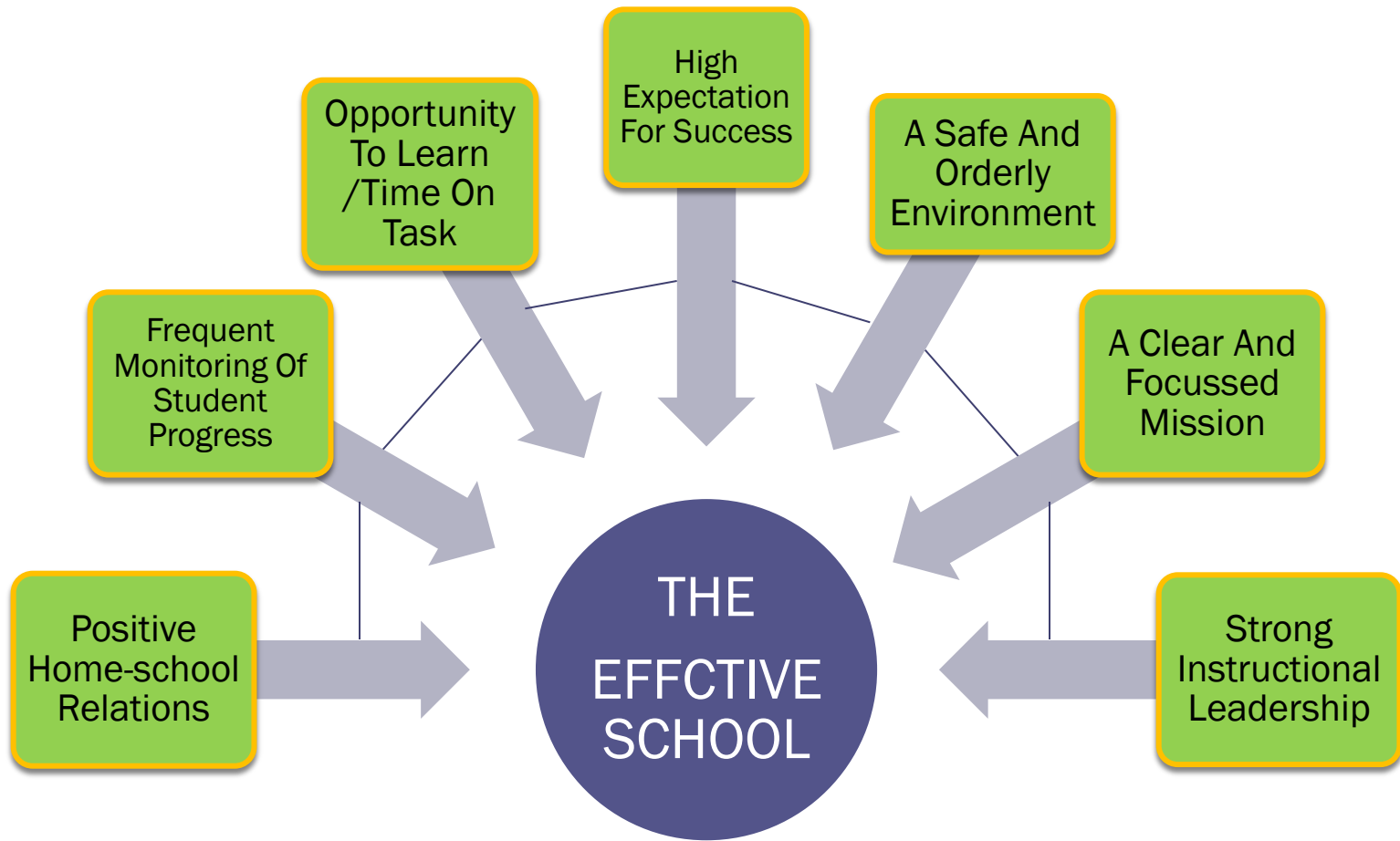
- **Classroom assessments** that provide ongoing evidence of students mastery of classroom instruction provides a better picture of student performance and will be more motivating to students.

(Stiggins, 2004)

LITERATURE REVIEW CONT'D

- The **atmosphere** of effective schools is **orderly** without being rigid, quiet without being oppressive, and generally conducive to the instructional business at hand. (Edmonds, 1979)
- High performing schools intentionally make **family involvement** part of their school improvement plan and develop collaborative relationships among teachers, parents and the community. (Shannon, 2007)

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



METHODOLOGY AT A GLANCE

	STRAND 1	STRAND 2	STRAND 3
Level	District	School	Classroom
Approach	Qualitative	Quantitative	Qualitative
Sample	School Supervisors	Principals, Teachers	Teachers
Data Collection	Survey	Survey	Interviews
Instrument	Open-ended Questionnaire	Closed-ended Questionnaires	Semi-structured protocol
Analysis	Thematic	Descriptive Statistics	Thematic

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Respect for Persons

- **Informed consent**
 - Full disclosure of research intent and purposes
 - Voluntary participation
 - Absence of deception
- **Freedom and autonomy** -Right to end involvement in the research

Privacy and confidentiality

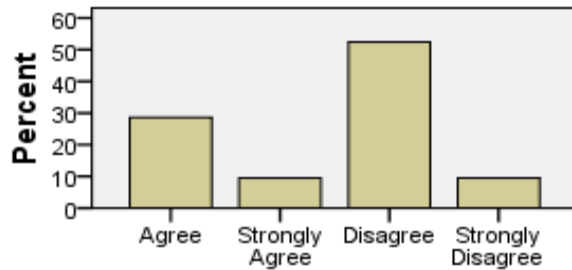
- **Protection of personal identity** –Anonymity
- **Protection of site and data**

Christians (2005)

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

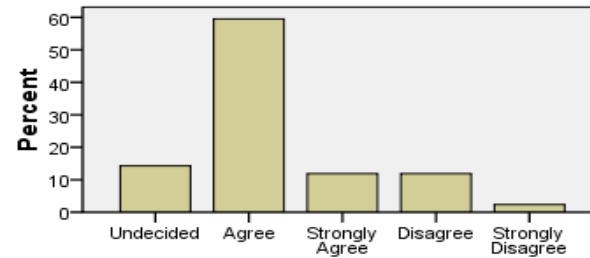
Principals' Survey

There are sufficient instructional material



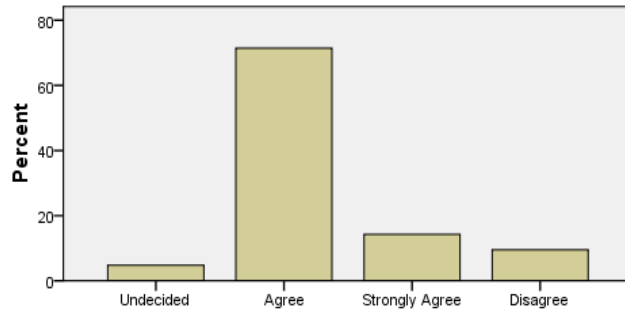
There are sufficient

Learning time protected from disruption



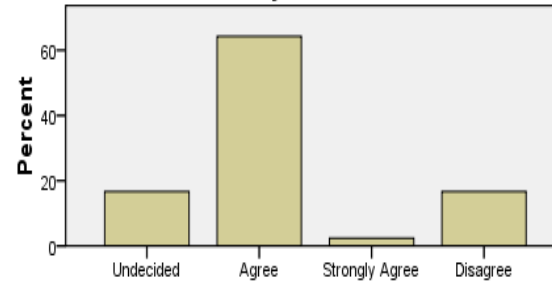
Learning time protected from disruption

Priority to securing resources and promoting instructional improvement



Priority to securing resources and promoting instructional improvement

Teacher employ strategies effective for diverse learning styles

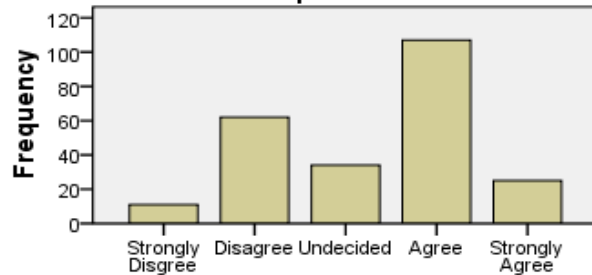


Teacher employ strategies effective for diverse learning styles

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

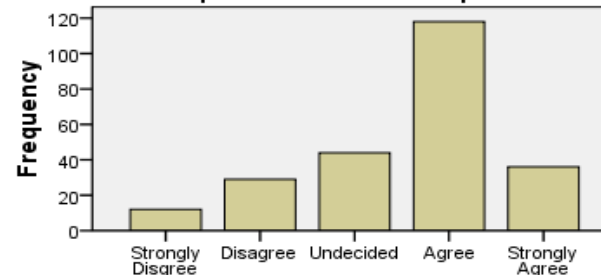
Teachers' Survey

49- Instructional time is protected from interruptions



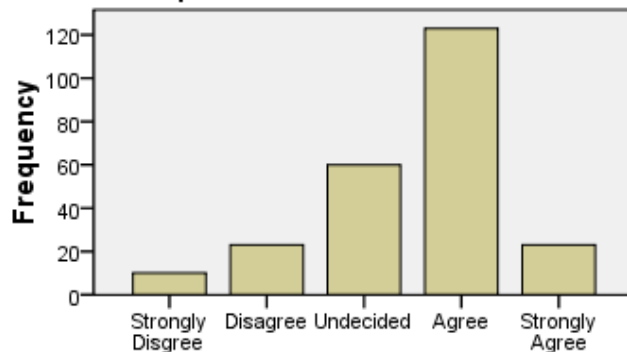
49- Instructional time is protected ...

25- Internal staff expertise recognized and utilized in professional development



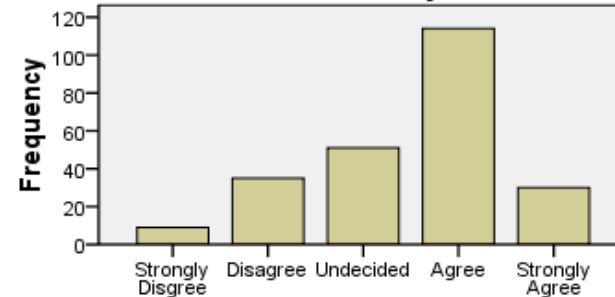
25- Internal staff expertise recognized...

19- Principal supervises lessons and provides feedback



19- Principal supervises lessons an...

5- Minimum interruptions of teaching time valued and enforced by staff



5- Minimum interruptions of teachin...

Preliminary Findings cont'd

Incongruence Between Principal & Teachers Accounts Of Educational Practices

Some areas identified for further exploration

- Teachers meet regularly to plan for instruction
Affirmed by: 83% Principals, 23% Teachers
- Principals undertake measures to resolve staff conflicts speedily
Affirmed by: 100% Principals, 50% Teachers
- Principal maintains open communication with staff
Affirmed by: 100% Principals , 68% Teachers

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THANK YOU