

ABSTRACT

The CXC Examinations: An Assessment of the Adoption Behaviour of Students and Teachers and the Effect of Selected Variables on the Criterion Measure

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The Adoption Behaviour (ADOPBE) of students (N = 329) and Teachers (N = 48) towards the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations, sponsored by the Caribbean Examinations Council, was assessed. Perception of three of Rogers and Shoemaker's (1971) innovation attributes, viz., Relative Advantage (RELAD), Complexity (COMPLX) and Compatibility (COMPAT) were measured and used as an index of the criterion measure. Factor analyses were employed to establish the unidimensionality of the three constructs comprising the criterion measure for both samples. Both students and teachers perceived the innovation as being of some relative advantage and as not being too complex to implement. Students and teachers differed in their perceptions with respect to the compatibility attribute. Students displayed negative perceptions while that of the teachers was positive.

Through an application of correlational and regression analyses, for the total teacher sample as well as for the student sample overall and its sub-groups partitioned according to Sex, School Location (SCHLOC) and School Type (SCHTYP), those variables related to, and predictive of, the three separate dependent variables and the composite

measure, were identified. Pupil's Perception of Teacher (PUPERTEA) was highly correlated with and was the strongest predictor variable for the total student sample as well as for all the sub-groups with the exception of the Traditional High school group where Examination Level (EXLEV) exerted the strongest influence. Overall the best predictor variables for the student sample were PUPERTEA, EVLEV and Communication Behaviour (COMBE). Perception of Student Benefit (PERSB), COMBE and Job Satisfaction (JOBSAT) were most highly correlated with and most predictive of the criterion measures for the teacher sample.

Two-Way Factorial analyses of variance (ANOVA) were mounted to ascertain if there were any significant differences in the SEX, SCHLOC and SCHTYP main effects on the criterion measure, ADOPBE. A highly significant difference was observed when the SCHLOC and SCHTYP variables were considered independently with the Rural and New Secondary subsamples displaying the more positive ADOPBE. There was no significant difference on the SEX main effect.

There were also significant interactive effects between SEX and SCHTYP and SCHLOC and SCHTYP. Girls from the Traditional High schools displayed more positive ADOPBE than boys whereas boys from the Technical High and New Secondary schools were more positive in their response. In the second case, New Secondary students, in both urban and rural locations, held the most favourable opinions. In the urban schools students from the Technical High schools showed more positive ADOPBE than those from the Traditional High schools,

whereas in the rural schools, students from the Traditional High schools were more positive than those from the Technical High schools.

'F' and 't' coefficients were calculated to determine significant differences on any of the teacher variables on the bases of SCHLOC and SCHTYP categorisations. The only observed significant difference was on the Years of Service (YRSER) variable when the sample was partitioned by SCHTYP, with the Technical High subsample scoring significantly lower than the New Secondary subsample. The Traditional High subsample did not differ significantly from either of the other two groups.

The weak response of the students and teachers to the innovation, in terms of the three attributes measured, imply some degree of Innovation Dissonance on their part. In order to reduce this dissonance, it was recommended that the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) establish direct lines of communication with all the sub-systems in the Adoption Unit and set up a Department, within its administrative structure, to carry out the functions of a Change Agent.