

Abstract

The study is an attempt to compare teachers' and students' opinions about the effects of the shift system in three Portland primary schools. The study examines the major effects the school encounters on the shift system. The opinions of students and teachers are examined as they relate to the shift system.

The major areas covered by the literature include:

- Structure and function of the Jamaican Education System
- Problems affecting the school system
- Improvement of the school system
- Special Education for students in the age group 4-18 years
- 'Holding area', among others.

The sample consisted of 504 respondents, 100 grade 5 and 6 teachers and 404 grade 5 and 6 students. Percentages and Frequencies were used to analyse the data which were presented on tables and figures.

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. Lack of adequate time to cover the content area and for effective planning, implementation and supervision.
2. Lack of adequate time for meaningful interaction for the Teaching and Administrative Staff as well as interaction between morning and afternoon students.
3. Deterioration of student discipline.
4. There were no significant differences in students' performance in Mathematics and English Language irrespective of the shift on which they were placed.

Major recommendations include:

- The implementation of a school breakfast programme to compensate for the loss of nutritious meals.
- That a 'holding area' be provided for all shift schools to cater to a more productive and organized school system.
- Additional funds to be provided to shift schools for a more effective maintenance of the school plant, buildings and sanitation.

The shift system is perceived by teachers and students as a system that has affected the involvement of teachers and students in extra-curricular activities, punctuality of students on the morning shift, teaching hours, space to accommodate afternoon students who arrive too early for their shift('holding area'), students' discipline among others.

The researcher concludes, therefore, that the shift system is affecting the smooth operation of the school. By smooth operation, the researcher meant the ability to execute organized programmes. For example, the need for both shifts to participate in extra-curricular activities becomes difficult because of the limited time allotted. Although there are no immediate plans to phase out this system the administration of the schools will have to organize and implement programmes which will help to alleviate some of the above mentioned problems being experienced in the school.