

PERCEPTIONS OF THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT IN RELATION TO THE
EDUCATION ACT OF 1980: AN ANALYSIS

A Research Project

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of The Duties And Responsibilities
of Heads of Department In Relation to The
Education Act of 1980: An Analysis

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Heads of department play an important role in the secondary education system of Jamaica. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers, heads of departments and principals regarding whether heads of department were fulfilling their duties and responsibilities outlined in the Education Act of 1980; if they have the capabilities necessary to fulfill the duties and responsibilities associated with the job; whether the duties and responsibilities they perform are relevant to the school and what are the criteria used in the promotion of teachers to the heads of department position.

One hundred and forty-nine teachers, department heads and principals were conveniently sampled from seven high schools in St. Andrew and St. Thomas. Questionnaires were used as the instruments for data collection. Data are presented on tables and analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. The main findings showed that:

1. the majority of respondents perceived that heads of department are executing the requisite duties and responsibilities assigned by the Education Act;
2. principals believed that expertise in the subject area is the most important criterion for promotion to the position of department head; the duties and responsibilities performed by

HODs were believed to be relevant to the; achievement of the schools goals.

3. teachers and heads of departments believed that the potential to leader is an important criterion in decisions for the promotion of teachers to the department head position;
4. Some effort is made to train teachers and department heads but more needs to be done;
5. the duties and responsibilities of heads of department are essential to the schools effectiveness;
6. heads of department sway no significant power in the execution of their roles;
7. the HOD's role is fraught with challenges.

Recommendations

Heads of department have a critical position in the school therefore prudent consideration must be given to decisions about those individuals who are selected for the role. Furthermore, efforts must be made to adequately develop and train them; and to reduce the constraints which inhibit their work in any way.