

ABSTRACT

An Input-Output Analysis of the Achievement Levels of the Secondary Schools in Dominica

Kay Polydore

The main aims of the investigation were to

- identify the inputs related to, and which best predict attainment in the secondary school system in Dominica;
- establish the variables which discriminate between a high- and low-achieving institution;
- determine whether there are significant differences among students attributable to sex, school, school location and school type;
- investigate whether there is a significant relationship between performance in English language and verbal ability, on the one hand, and performance in English and the other areas studied; and
- test whether students' perception of teacher behaviour is significantly associated with their attainment in individual subjects.

To this end, data were collected for a sample of 289 students from 8 Dominican secondary schools on one dependent and 13 independent variables. The data were subjected to "t" tests, ANOVA followed by Scheffe's

post hoc test, factor analysis, discriminant function and multiple regression analyses. Some descriptive information was collected to elucidate the quantitative data.

The main findings were:

- The variables significantly associated with achievement were parental education, family background characteristics, locus of control, academic self-concept, mental ability and perception of school resources.
- The main predictors of achievement for the total sample were mental ability, common entrance score, academic self-concept, perception of school resources and stability; for the male sub-sample, common entrance score and mental ability; and for the female sub-sample, mental ability, common entrance score and academic self-concept.
- Boys, overall, demonstrated a significantly higher level of achievement than girls, overall.
- There was no significant differences among students attributable to school type or school location.
- Students at certain schools performed significantly better than others.
- Performance in English language was significantly related to verbal ability and to the other areas studied.

- There was a low but significant relationship between students' perception of teacher behaviour and their performance in individual subjects.
- The variables - mental ability, common entrance score and academic self-concept - best discriminated between the high- and low-achieving schools.