

ABSTRACT

An Investigation into the Concept of Teacher Empowerment Among Educators in Barbados

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This study was designed to investigate the concept of teacher empowerment, which has been advanced as central to the success of school reform. Consequently, the feelings of educators were solicited to ascertain their understanding of teacher empowerment, its current state in Barbados, its facilitating and inhibiting factors and how best it can be achieved.

Qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined in this study which used an author-designed, semi-structured interview schedule and a questionnaire to collect data.

Twenty-seven individuals were interviewed and 128 persons completed the questionnaire.

For the interview, the responses to questions were presented and analyzed sequentially and for the questionnaire data, descriptive statistics were used. The

independent t-Test was used to test the equality of the means of the variables.

The results of this study revealed that the degree of empowerment is insufficient to positively impact upon the system. Factors operating against empowerment, according to the findings of this study are decision-making policies (where it was revealed that teachers do not play a major role in decisions); professional growth as it relates to personal development, status, and autonomy. For Self-efficacy and Impact the differences between the means for the male and female were significant. Generally, there were no significant differences between responses from Primary and Secondary schools but what was striking was that in the primary schools, not even the principals have say in the selection of staff. The only area of significance between administrators and teachers as revealed in this study, related to the area of decision-making where it was shown that the administrators are the ones who, for the most part, make the decisions.

The findings of this study are significant in that they would serve to inform relevant authorities in education of some critical issues which need to be addressed if the proposed reform is to be successful.