

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate the leadership role, and effectiveness of the Student Councils in three Secondary Schools in Jamaica.

The sample comprised of :

Twenty-eight respondents originally selected from the Student Council, and ninety from the Student Body of each school.

The schools were:

One single sex - All Girls-Extended Day

One single sex - All Boys -Whole Day

One Co-Educational - Vertical Shift

A questionnaire for the Student Council Representatives, one for those of the Student Body, as well as one Interview Schedule for the Student Council Representative on the Board, and one for the President of the Student Council, constituted the Instruments by which the data were collected.

Tables, Bar Graphs, and Raw Scores were used to display and present the data.

The major findings of this study are:

1. On the whole, the Student Councils are structured according to the Ministry of Education guidelines.

2. The majority of the students are unaware of the regulations concerning the structure of the Councils, and the responsibilities of the Councillors in their schools.
3. The Student Body is democratically represented on the Councils through the elected Form Representatives.
4. The Form Representatives are not prompt in reporting the decisions of the Councils to their peers, and there is a breakdown in the two way communication which should exist between the Student Body and the Council.
5. Fund Raising is the main activity organised by the Councils, with little or no emphasis being placed on the other activities recommended in the guidelines.
6. Contrary to the proposed democratic guidelines for the councillors, there is a tendency for those in the senior forms to make decisions on major issues without consulting the others.
7. Although some School Board members have difficulty in accepting the student representatives on the Board, there are occasions when the Student Councillors have succeeded in encouraging the Board to make decisions considered to be in the best interest of the Student Body.

8. The students who have had the opportunity to serve as councillors have benefitted by experiencing a sense of involvement, and a feeling of pride.
9. In spite of some of the councils' areas of weakness, the students need the Councils, and would be unhappy with their dissolution.

Among the recommendations are the following:

1. The election of the executive members of the Council, should be held towards the end of the Easter Term, so that the outgoing executive committee could work with the new committee for a short period, to ensure better understanding and some continuity in the Council's programme.
2. During the first term of each school year, orientation courses dealing with the organisation, role, and function of the Student Council should be planned for all new students.
3. In spite of the necessity for the Councils to act as fund raising agents, they should endeavour to organise at least two cultural and educational activities during the school year.