

ABSTRACT

The Relationship between Principal-Teacher Interaction and
Primary School Climate in the St. George East Education Division.

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The study investigated the relationship between teacher and principal behaviour and the openness of school climate in selected primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. The study was confined to the school climate profiles developed by Halpin and Croft (1963) and now revised into a four-fold typology of school climate by Hoy and Clover (1986). School profiles were based on teacher-teacher and principal-teacher interaction. Teachers' characteristics were described as collegial, intimate and disengaged. Principals' characteristics were described as supportive, directive and restrictive. A set of hypotheses and research questions were generated in order to investigate teacher and principal behaviours in open, engaged, disengaged, and closed climate schools. Other demographic variables pertinent to the study were also examined.

A descriptive questionnaire was administered to a sample of twenty nine primary schools. The stratified disproportionate random sampling technique was used for the selection of schools so

that each subgroup of schools had an equal and independent chance of selection. All responses to the three hundred and five questionnaires were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS-SPG2). Standardized school mean subtest and Openness Index scores were used to test hypotheses and answer research questions using the revised instrument.

The results of the research question that dealt with the 'fit' of primary schools to the conceptual OCDQ-RE continuum indicated that the majority of the schools could not be arranged along the pure model as proposed by Hoy. The hypothesis which tested for significant differences in the mean scores representing the Openness Indices for principal and teacher behaviour was partially supported. The hypotheses which tested for significant differences between the mean scores representing teacher and principal behaviour in open and closed schools were supported. However, no significant differences were found in the mean scores representing teacher and principal behaviour when open and closed schools were compared with the engaged and disengaged school types. Finally, no statistically significant differences were found between the mean scores representing both principal and teacher behaviour in those schools based on variables such as Government, Government Assisted, 'Prestige' and 'Non-prestige' schools and principals of different genders.