

ABSTRACT

Are Jamaican Secondary School Principals Dependent on Education Officers because of Perceived Supervisory Overlaps? A Model with Defined Roles.

Esmilda Medora McKenzie

The Task Force on Educational Reform, Jamaica, identified overlaps in the roles of principals and Education Officers (EOs) in secondary schools. Using a sequential explanatory mixed method approach, this study examined the types of supervision practiced by principals and education officers to verify this overlap in supervisory functions. Eighty-nine secondary school principals' and 16 EOs from Jamaica's six education regions participated in the study. Quantitative data was collected using a survey method. Qualitative data was obtained from semi-structured interviews to examine the perception of Jamaican secondary school principals' dependence on education officers because of perceived supervisory overlaps. The results showed that although 4 types of supervision were practiced by both groups, principals practiced each type more intensely than EOs. School principals did not perceive they depended on EOs to conduct their supervisory roles and so perceived no supervisory overlaps. There were no significant differences in principals' perceived dependency based on gender and location although principals with less than 5 years' experience were more dependent on EOs. The qualitative data supported an unstructured approach to team building and supervisory management, with one or both of the groups disconnected from several processes. Based on the findings, the degree of overlap identified did not justify dependence on EOs, although the research supported the need for clearly defined roles between the two groups to enhance student learning.

Keywords: Esmilda Medora McKenzie; Education Officers; Principals; Supervision; School Administration; Academic Achievement; Jamaica.