

ABSTRACT

An investigation into the performance of Jamaican students in selected schools in the CXC Mathematics examination and factors contributing to this performance.

Winsome Crooks

This study assessed factors which could contribute to differences in students' performances with respect to the Caribbean Examination Council's (CXC) Mathematics examination at the secondary level. The main focus was on factors related to the teacher, since the teacher influences to a large extent, much of what takes place in the classroom.

One aspect of the study examined how teachers' and students' perceive the CXC Mathematics examination in terms of four of its attributes, namely:

- i) its Relative Advantage;**
- ii) its Compatibility with existing needs and values;**
- iii) its Complexity; and**
- iv) its Observability.**

Other factors which could have an impact on the teachers' attitude to their mathematics teaching and some teacher related variables which could influence students' mathematical performances were also examined. One aspect of this study examined the relationship between the secondary schools and teacher training institutions. The teachers' college secondary school mathematics programme as well as the CXC Mathematics syllabus were analysed. Teachers' perception of the value of their teachers' college preparation was also examined.

The investigation was pursued through a research for answers to eight questions and data gathered from questionnaires and informal interviews. The sample was drawn from New Secondary, Traditional and Technical High Schools in both urban and rural geographical locations.

The main findings highlighted significant links between the dependent variable, student performance and some of the independent variables. The findings show that most of the content of the college secondary mathematics curriculum parallels that of the CXC syllabus. Teachers affirmed that they were adequately prepared to teach Grades 7 - 9 and the Basic Proficiency level but not all the concepts required for CXC General Level.