

ABSTRACT

Teacher attrition was identified as a problem facing secondary school education. The relationship of teacher attrition to student performance was of particular concern. A conceptual model was formulated to help in understanding the interrelationship of these two variables.

The study investigated the possible relationship in a sample of nine Jamaican high schools in four subject areas over a five year period, 1985-1989. The schools were taken from three different geographical locations: rural, urban and Kingston metropolitan. Three types of schools were used: girls, boys and coeducational. The schools were randomly selected from across the island.

Data on each teacher's personal, academic and professional history was collected. This included total years of teaching in the school, qualification, gender and subjects taught. Students examination results in both CXC and GCE where necessary were collected for the period.

The instruments used for data collection included teacher files, class lists and examination results. Analysis of data was done by calculating percentages, and using Pearson Product moment correlation. A lagged effect of teacher turnover on the students achievement was also sought.

The findings revealed:

1. A high teacher attrition rate in all subject areas.
2. Trained graduates were the most likely set of teaches to leave the classroom.
3. Teacher turnover could take place anytime in the teacher's career but was most likely to happen within the first two years.

4. Girls schools had the highest teacher attrition rates and co-educational schools the lowest.
5. Performance in the rural schools seems to be on par with the Kingston Metropolitan schools and above the urban.
6. The direction of the relationship between teacher turnover and student performance is uncertain, sometimes negative and at other times positive or mixed.