

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF  
LEADERSHIP IN A POSTMODERN ERA: A STUDY  
ACROSS FOUR HIGH SCHOOLS IN JAMAICA**

A Thesis

Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

of

The University of The West Indies

by

Canute Sylvester Thompson

2008

Department of Educational Studies  
Faculty of Humanities and Education  
Mona Campus

## ABSTRACT

### STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN A POSTMODERN ERA: A STUDY ACROSS FOUR HIGH SCHOOLS IN JAMAICA

Canute Sylvester Thompson

This dissertation examines the perceptions and expectations of high school students in relation to the leadership provided by their principals and teachers. This examination is undertaken against the background of the probable influences that postmodernism is having on the socio-political and cultural developments in societies, resulting in major changes in the landscape of leadership practice and philosophy. The contention of the study is that the secondary school system calls for modifications in its operations and that these modifications ought to be informed by the changes in the leadership landscape, in much the same way that these changes have had a significant impact on many businesses and on tertiary institutions.

The study found that the expectations that students at the high school level have of their leaders and their apparent perceptions of what constitutes 'good' leadership are similar to those of students in tertiary institutions and workers in industry. The study identified three main expectations of students, namely *modeling, respect and motivation*. These three expectations were the top three factors derived from a Rotated Component Matrix which among them contributed in excess of 61% of the variation in the responses of students to a questionnaire. These factors which describe the expectations and perceptions of students of what constitutes good leadership are presented in this study as *Proposition MRM*. *Proposition MRM* is deemed to represent the basis of an emergent theory of educational leadership in a postmodern era.

Keywords: Canute Sylvester Thompson, Postmodernism, Leadership, Total Quality Management, Modeling, Respect, Motivation, Employee Involvement.