

ABSTRACT

The Impact of the Results of Standardized Tests (National Tests and Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA)) on Pedagogy and Morale in a Rural Low Performing School

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This study sought to investigate teachers' perceptions of the ranking of a rural primary school in a low socio-economic area in Trinidad and Tobago based on the results of standardized tests (National Test and Secondary Entrance Assessment), and how this ranking impacted on pedagogy and morale. Data were collected through interviews held with, and a questionnaire administered to, five teachers at a school in the St. Patrick Educational District in Trinidad. The findings indicated that: 1) performance can be interpreted in different ways; 2) national tests to rank schools lead to a improper comparison of schools; 3) when comparisons are viewed as unfair, it negatively impacts on teacher morale, performance, and delivery of the curriculum; 4) national assessment focuses on high scores and, in so doing, negatively influences the implementation of the curriculum; 5) school performance should take into account all activities that are mandated and encouraged by the Ministry of Education.

Keywords: National tests; Secondary Entrance Assessment examination; Rural schools; Primary school teachers; Teacher attitudes; School effectiveness; Academic achievement; School performance; Disadvantaged schools; Trinidad and Tobago