

## Abstract

### **Strategic Educational Management and Leadership Challenges in the Caribbean**

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My research identifies and evaluates the forces that impact the efficiency and efficacy of higher education system management within the Caribbean's small developing states, with the goal of contributing to the reform of education policy formulation, choice and implementation, applying a strategic management and leadership perspective. I apply a 'most similar systems' research design, leading to the selection of four Caribbean countries for comparative study: Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. My basic research questions follow:

- What policies impact higher education in the Caribbean?
- How do the issues, problems and dilemmas common to small developing states affect the reform of higher education in the region?
- What is the relationship between higher education policies, as developed and implemented by Caribbean Ministries of Education, and school capacity, relative to demand, as well as school effectiveness, measured by student outcomes assessment?
- What new approaches to higher education leadership and management in the Caribbean might be most effective?
- How can the recommendations which flow from this research begin to be implemented, given the policy environment?

This study builds upon theories of comparative strategic management and leadership, organizational development, culture and change, by selecting for analysis a limited set of key education system dimensions that are critical to stakeholders, and susceptible to sustained quality improvement, using a relational systems approach. The findings of the study include the critical importance of effective leadership, capable of using flexible frames of reference; the centrality of change management competences; and the ability of regional leaders and senior managers, within national education sectors, as well as within the University of the West Indies, in association with other recognized tertiary learning institutions, and within the CARICOM Secretariat, to facilitate changes at the levels of both system and process, that respond proactively to the evolving global, regional and national environments for higher education, as well as the agreed regional higher education goals of significantly enhanced access, relevance and equity.

**Keywords:** higher education; education policy formulation; policy choice and implementation; strategic management; strategic leadership; organizational development; culture; change; access; relevance; quality; equity.