

ABSTRACT

An Exploration of the Perceptions of Students' Challenging Behaviour Noticed by Teachers With More Than Five Years Teaching Experience in Five Secondary Schools in the St George East Education District of Trinidad and Tobago.

Makeda Cummings

Students' challenging behaviour is a critical issue that continues to affect the teaching-learning process in our secondary schools. This study investigated the perceptions of ten teachers, regarding students' challenging behaviour. Teachers were selected from five schools within the St. George East education district.

Teachers' perceptions were explored with regards to: the nature of students' challenging behaviour, the effects of these behaviours on the teaching-learning relationship and teachers' management of these behaviours. In an attempt to collect in-depth data, this study implemented a phenomenological approach. The data was amassed using semi-structured interviews and observations.

The respondents highlighted various contributing factors existing within students' families, peer groups, communities, schools, education policies and the society. They revealed that students' challenging behaviour not only affected their own psycho-social development, but that of other students as well. In an attempt to address students' challenging behaviour, many respondents preferred to implement supportive/collaborative techniques. Teachers require assistance from the wider public to alleviate students' manifestation of challenging behaviour. Thus families, peers, communities and the education sector need to collaborate and collectively generate practical solutions to address this concern.

Keywords: Makeda Cummings; students' challenging behaviour; secondary schools; teachers' perceptions; Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory; phenomenological study.