

ABSTRACT

Correlates among some Jamaican CAPE students' demographic variables and their performance on genetics

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The study sought to find out (a) if the level of performance of selected Jamaican grade 12 students, on a genetics test was satisfactory or not; (b) what type of self-esteem they exhibited; (c) if there were any significant differences in the students' performance on genetics linked to their gender, self-esteem, cognitive ability in biology, school type and socio-economic background, and (d) if there were any significant relationships among their gender, self-esteem, cognitive ability, school type and socio-economic background and their performance on genetics.

The sample engaged in the study consisted of 360 Jamaican grade 12 students. There were 641 grade 12 students in Jamaica doing the Caribbean Advance Proficiency Examination CAPE biology in the academic year 2003 – 2004. The sample was drawn from 19 schools, and included two community colleges, 14 traditional high schools and three non-traditional high schools (formerly comprehensive high schools) drawn from 12 parishes in Jamaica. Two out of the three boys' schools offering CAPE were chosen (41 students), four out of the seven girls' schools (134 students) and 13 of the co-educational schools offering CAPE (185 students). Five structured questions on genetics and a self-esteem questionnaire were used to collect the data. The results

indicated that the students' performance on the genetics test was poor. There were statistically significant differences in the students' performance in genetics based on (a) their self-esteem in favour of students with high self-esteem, (b) cognitive ability in biology in favour of students with high cognitive ability in biology, and (c) school type in favour of students in the co-educational schools. On the other hand, there were no statistically significant gender and socio-economic background differences in their performance in the genetics test.

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