

ABSTRACT

Coeducation and Academic Achievement in Barbados

a Case Study

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The effects of coeducation on academic achievement is a matter of increasing public interest. The results of previous research, although mixed, appear weighted in favour of academic achievement being higher in single-sex schools, and for boys to perform better than girls in coeducational schools.

This study sets out to examine, in the specific case of a secondary school in Barbados, the relationship which exists between the sex composition of the school, Common Entrance Score, socio economic status and sex, these being the independent variables, and academic achievement, the dependent variable. Views on the effects of coeducation on academic achievement and related issues were sought from teachers and students.

Data for this study were collected from school records dating from 1973-1990. Questionnaires and interviews were also used as data collecting instruments.

ANOVA and Multiple Regression Analysis were used in the statistical analysis. There was no significant difference in overall performance between the single-sex and coeducational stages in the life of the school under

examination. Where the difference in boys' performance over the single-sex stage and coeducational stages was not significant, girls' performance was found to be higher in the coeducational period than in the single-sex period. The average number of subjects passed by girls during the coeducational period was almost twice that of the boys. Between the single-sex and coeducational period, the stage variable, the coeducational period, was significantly correlated with academic achievement. The Common Entrance Examination score and socio economic status were not found to be significant. Within the coeducational period, sex contributed to the variance in performance while socio economic status and Common Entrance Examination score were not found to be significant.

Both teachers and students held negative views, but generally teachers held more negative views than students on the effects of coeducation on school related issues. Generally girls and boys shared similar views on the issues but identified different issues as being more negatively affected by coeducation. Where girls perceived coeducation as impacting more negatively on boys' participation and performance, boys saw coeducation as impacting more negatively on their being treated fairly.