Excelsior Community College

Transforming Lives, Nurturing Global Citizens.

EXCELSIOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Founded 1974

THOMAS EDWARD DWYER (TED) O.D.
FOUNDING PRINCIPAL

The Excelsior Community College Academic Journal:

A Multidisciplinary Academic Journal for Jamaica and the Caribbean

Transforming Lives, Nurturing Global Citizens.

The Excelsior Community College Academic Journal (ECCAJ):

A Multi-Disciplinary Academic Journal for Jamaica and the Caribbean

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Research and Innovation Division (RID)
Excelsior Community College

Journal Cover designed by Garnet Malcolm
Email: garnet.malcolm@gmail.com
Tel: (876) 470-5930

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ECC Mission & Vision

ECC 2025 Vision Statement

Excelsior Community College is an innovative, learner-centric, community-focused Methodist institution catering to lifelong learning while achieving excellence in education and training.

ECC Mission Statement

Excelsior Community College contributes to National and Global Development by providing an enabling and research-driven environment that enhances Learners' lifelong development and provides solutions for the Public and Private sectors.

About ECC Academic Journal

ECCAJ Overview

The Excelsior Community College Academic Journal (ECCAJ) is a collection scholarly work done by students, lecturers and other contributors. The scholarly collection includes: research reports, conceptual papers literature reviews and book reviews. It is a multi-disciplinary journal that features work from various disciplines, such as: education, psychology, health and business. This first issue features eight (8) articles that address issues identified in Jamaica and the Caribbean.

The Editorial Committee

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Editor-in- Chief's Message

Excelsior Community College is pleased to present our inaugural issue of the ECC Academic Journal as the first journal of its kind from the Jamaican Community College system. Founded in 1974 by the Jamaican educational visionary Dr. Aston Wesley Powell, ECC was the first community college in Jamaica and thus has paved the way in several spheres: inclusive of academic programme development, international partnerships, and institutional research. Over the last ten years, ECC has taken a strategic approach towards the development of a research-driven environment which guides programme development, institutional strategic planning, and general decision-making.

Globally, academic research is increasingly important within the community college arena in terms of academic publications and applied research initiatives through academic-industry relationships. Though community college faculty are not mandated to publish, as is the case with our four-year University peers, there is much research being done by community college faculty and the ECCAJ offers such publication platform. Additionally, this journal will seek to highlight undergraduate and graduate research from the community college student population. Many of our bachelor's and postgraduate students conduct critical research explorations both independently and in collaboration with faculty. True to the nurturing environment which characterizes the community college system, this journal will serve as a catalyst for their academic publication journey. In fact, a unique aspect of the ECCAJ is the inclusion of promising research proposals which, upon completion, will be published in a future issue of the journal. It is hoped that this mechanism will seek to both 'whet the appetite' of readers and simultaneously encourage authors to take the paper from proposal to full publication.

As a multi-disciplinary publication, you will note that the articles within this issue cover a wide-range of topics pertaining to the education landscape. The listing below gives an overview of each author's contribution.

Gwyneth Jackson examines the effectiveness of a business governance model in higher education institutions, its implementation and possible implications. This is particularly relevant in an environment in which tertiary institutions are increasingly utilizing a business model to drive institutional operations and decision-making,

Georgetta Forrester Grant utilizes a phenomenological approach to investigate how principals of early childhood institutions in urban Jamaica perceive their role as instructional leaders in the implementation of the early

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childhood curriculum. This article is helpful in its recommendation of innovative support services and training programmes to assist principals at that level.

Tamecia Adams-Robinson tackles the issue of teacher appraisals as a credible measure of teacher's performance with a sample of teachers from two educational institutions. She conducts a detailed quantitative approach grounded in construct validity theory and explores the validity and reliability of the appraisal instrument used to assess teacher performance. The study offers an in-depth overview of validity and reliability and offers insights into the importance of these measures in developing instruments that will guide decision-making within the educational arena.

Cynanie Sawyers-Haylett provides a unique study on the issues of skin color in the Jamaican context. She examines the prevalent social issue of perceived ideal skin colour and the underpinning of participants' perception of the varied skin tones explored in the study. In exploring this important socio-cultural issue, the author also addresses colourism, social representations, social affirmation, social learning, psychosocial development and identity due to creolization and socialization.

Orville Beckford and Jordan Briscoe use the findings of the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions survey conducted by the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) in 2008. Briscoe and Beckford examine the relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases while exploring the role health insurance plays in reducing the burden of medication cost.

Bhuvaneswari Gudapati in her first article taps into an important gap in the literature by providing an overview of the history of Caribbean Community colleges and provides a background of their development and the challenges faced thus far.

Bhuvaneswari Gudapati in her second article provides a detailed overview of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) theory and presents it as an opportunity for Caribbean researchers, particularly community college faculty, to further boost their interest in research within their teaching and learning environments, whether blended or online. She further offers readers insight into how this theoretical perspective may provide educational researchers with a unique lense through which to assess the cognitive, social and teaching experiences of students, faculty and institutional stakeholders.

Kerry Ann Barrett utilizes a quantitative approach to add to existing literature on the correlation between attendance and academic performance

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of a cohort of both day and evening Introduction to Management students at a Jamaican community college. She further assesses the effect of diverse matriculation standards on student performance levels. Based on research findings, she proposes an amendment in the institutional approach to policy which incorporates students' involvement in the treatment of attendance given its impact on academic grades.

The highlighted studies offer a diverse perspective on contemporary issues across the tertiary landscape and readers will undoubtedly find insights that may spark their interest in further readings in these areas or generate their own research explorations. Ultimately the focus on the ECCAJ is to highlight the important research being undertaken within Caribbean Community Colleges and to continue the journey of adding to the body of knowledge produced by our tertiary institutions while contributing to policy development and decision-making at the national and regional levels.

Zaria T. Malcolm Walker (PhD.)
Vice Principal, Academic Affairs and Institutional Advancement

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Principal's Message

The inaugural publication of the Excelsior Community College Academic Journal (ECCAJ) solidifies the College's mission to continue its stellar record in innovation and contribution to national development. This peer reviewed journal seeks to foster a research driven environment which will contribute to the lifelong development of our graduates.

The production of this journal stems from the desire to develop a research driven tertiary institution. In fulfillment of this mission, the College's Research and Innovation Division (RID) was actualized following the formation of the Research and Corporate Development Division in 2008 by then Principal, Dr. Dahlia Repole. To congeal this Division, the Dean of Research and Innovation position was established in 2017. The RID has primary responsibility for the development and execution of institutional research to foster institutional effectiveness as well as the monitor and strengthen academic research through an Institutional Review Board (IRB).

In furtherance of this culture of research, an annual ECC Research Day was introduced. The ECC Research Day has demonstrated research findings presented by faculty, students, guests, and industry players in oral, poster and booth presentations. The activities, on Research Day, also include training seminars and workshops that illustrate the relevance of research to individual, organizational, community and national development.

The production of this noteworthy publication comes on the heels of being recipients of Candidacy for Institutional Accreditation from the University Council of Jamaica in March 2019. This considerable milestone, on our quest towards Institutional Accreditation, represents the ECC's commitment to transform lives and nurture global citizens.

I extend congratulations to the Editor-in-Chief, editors and the RID team, faculty, and students for taking up the gauntlet and making sure this step on our academic journey is fully realized. It is my desire that the ECCAJ will become an annual publication that serves as a conduit for groundbreaking research.

Philmore A. McCarthy
Principal, Excelsior Community College

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Excelsior Community College Research and Innovation Division (ECC RID)

RID Vision

The vision of the (RID) is to be the leading research unit in the Caribbean that contributes to the transformation of ECC through the design and execution of novel research inquires guided by ethical standards to inform institutional decision making, effectiveness and efficiency.

RID Mission

The Research and Innovation Division through a competent, motivated and ethical team will provide world class research consultancy services to internal and external stakeholders aimed at fostering personal and professional development for staff and students; reliable, valid and timely research reports; thus, building a healthy and rigorous research culture at Excelsior Community College.

The Research and Innovation Division enables informed decision-making anchored on research by providing accurate and timely empirical data to guide sound institutional teaching and Management.

ECC RID Team

Dr. Zaria Malcolm Walker	Vice Principal, Academic Affairs and Institutional Advancement
Mrs. Cynanie Sawyers-Haylett	Dean, Research and Innovation
Mrs. Tamecia Adams-Robinson	Research Officer
Mrs. Tamara Scott-McFarlane	Research Editor
Mrs. Vashti Campbell Morgan	Administrative Assistant

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MEET THE PRINCIPAL

PHILMORE McCARTHY
Principal

Principal Philmore McCarthy of the Excelsior Community College is a Higher Education leader, respected both nationally and internationally for his visionary outlook of Jamaica's educational landscape. He is a graduate of Barry University in Miami where he read for his Master's in Business Administration, and is currently working on his dissertation at Northern Caribbean University in Leadership and Public Policy.

Mr. Mac as he is known by most at Excelsior has worked to make the College an A listed institution on track to becoming a University College, and believes that anything is possible as long as everyone works towards a unified goal. His leadership style is firm but flexible, and he is willing to listen to those who work with him to offer solutions that benefit the College and all its stakeholder.

Mr. McCarthy, has been an educator for over 39 years. He has served the education sector in numerous capacities including: teacher and head of department for Mathematics at Vauxhall High School. He continued his sojourn in the educational landscape at Excelsior Community College since 1987. As a natural transformational leader, he integrated his wealth of experience from both educational and business perspectives to effect positive change as he moved through various positions at Excelsior and the communication technology industry.

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Currently, Mr. McCarthy is not only Principal at Excelsior, but also holds several key positions on various educational boards:

- Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (J-TEC) – Monitoring Committee
- Council of the University of Technology, Jamaica (UTech)
- University Council of Jamaica (UCJ)
- Joint Committee Tertiary Education(JCTE)
- Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI).
- Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ)
- Jamaica Teacher Association (JTA)
- Justice of Peace Candidate

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LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY
A commitment to servant leadership.
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EDUCATION

MBA:	Business Administration, Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida, USA
Graduate Certificate:	Information Technology and Advanced Management, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology Toronto Canada
B.Sc. (Hons)	Electronics, Mathematics and Computer Science, University of the West Indies (UWI)
Teacher Certification:	Mathematics & Integrated Science, Excelsior Community College\University of the West Indies Joint Board of Education

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Meet the RID Team

ZARIA MALCOLM WALKER
Editor-in-Chief, VP-AAIA

Dr. Malcolm Walker is a Fulbrighter who earned her PhD. in Higher Education Administration with minor in Qualitative Methodology from the University of Florida. She also holds a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of the West Indies, Mona. Currently, Dr. Malcolm Walker holds the position of Vice Principal of Academic Affairs & Institutional Advancement at the Excelsior Community College. As Vice Principal, she has responsibility for institutional partnerships, academic quality assurance, strategic planning, accreditation and institutional research and overall leadership of the institution's Academic Division. Her research agenda focuses on diversity relating to international education and qualitative methodology-based research. She is specifically interested in higher education issues affecting the Caribbean education system and stakeholders directly and indirectly associated with such.

Email: zaria.malcolm@ecc.edu.jm. Telephone: 876-928-5070 EXT: 3226

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CYNANIE SAWYERS-HAYLETT
Author, Editor & Chair, Dean - RID

Cynanie Sawyers-Haylett is the Dean of the Research and Innovation Division (RID) at the Excelsior Community College (ECC). As Dean, she has core responsibility for coordinating research initiatives aimed at influencing institutional decision making and policy development. Mrs. Sawyers-Haylett is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of the West Indies where she is pursuing her PhD in Organizational Behaviour. She is a 2015 SOL scholar –an academic scholarship awarded by SOL Petroleum Ltd and a participant in the Canada-CARICOM Faculty Leadership Programme in 2017. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Counseling and Consulting from International University of the Caribbean (IUC), a First Class Honors Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from University of the West Indies (UWI) and a Diploma in Secondary Visual Arts Education from The Mico Teachers' College. Mrs. Sawyers-Haylett has presented at the Qualitative Inquiry Conference (QIC) at the University of the West Indies in 2009 and the 2017 and 2019 Council of the Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ) Conferences. As a mixed- methodologist, her research interests include: Art Therapy, Skin Colour Perception in Jamaica, Skin Colour Modification Behaviours, Organizational Culture, Industry 4.0 Organizational Change and Training Motivation.

Email: cynanie.sawyers-haylett@ecc.edu.jm   Telephone: 876-928-5070

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TAMECIA ADAMS-ROBINSON
Author, Editor, Research Officer

Tamecia Adams-Robinson has been an Educator for over 15 years. She is presently the Research Officer and a Lecturer at Excelsior Community College. She holds a M.Ed in Education Measurement and a B.Sc. in Management Studies and from the University of the West Indies as well as a Diploma in Secondary Education from The Mico Teacher's College,. As an educator, she views her job as a ministry; therefore, not only seeks to convey knowledge to students but to facilitate their all-round development. Mrs. Adams-Robinson is an avid researcher who has presented her research findings at: Council of the Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ) Conference 2019 and the International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET) Conference 2016. Her research interests involve educational measurement and higher education institutional development. She believes that anything that one wants to achieve in life, all one needs to do is to make a start, and thus she lives by the quote "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step."

Email: tamecia.adams-robinson@ecc.edu.jm   Telephone: 876-928-5070

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TAMARA SCOTT-MCFARLANE
Senior Lecturer, Research Editor

Language Educator/Team Leader/Editor is a self-directed, action-oriented educator with demonstrated exceptional abilities in using problem solving, people management and motivational skills to establish cooperative professional relationships. She has exemplified superior communication skills, adept at editing documents for cohesion and structure while maintaining the voice of the writers and proven ability to achieve high standards of quality work with minimal supervision. Passionate about nurturing young minds of the society and assisting them in developing as productive individuals who are compassionate yet critical thinkers.

Mrs. Scott McFarlane has held various positions of responsibility at Excelsior Community College including Head/Deputy of the Schools of Engineering, Logistics and Built Environment, Education and Workforce Development and Liberal Arts. She holds a Master's of Education degree in Language Education and a Bachelor of Arts in Language Communication from the University of the West Indies. She is also a graduate from The Mico University College, where she earned her Diploma in Education, specializing in English and History.

Email: tamara.scott-mcfarlane@ecc.edu.jm

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VASHTI CAMPBELL-MORGAN
Research Administrative Assistant

Vashti Campbell-Morgan is a graduate of the Excelsior Community College (ECC) with an Associate Degree in Psychology. In 2017 she was the recipient of the Principal Award for outstanding academic performance. Currently, Mrs. Morgan is the Administrative Assistant for the Research and Innovation Division. She has a keen interest for research and has worked on several research projects as data collector and data analyst. She is also a graduate of the Caribbean Maritime University (CMU) where she achieved a Certificate in Marketing and Sales. In 2014, she was the valedictorian for the class of 2014. One of her career goals is to complete a Master's Degree in Psychology and to contribute to the development of psychological practice in Jamaica through research and publications. Her research interest includes: drinking behaviours among college students and adolescent psycho-social development.

Email: vashti.morgan@ecc.edu.jm

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HISTORY OF CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

Bhuvaneswari Gudapati
Excelsior Community College
bhuvaneswari.gudapati@ecc.edu.jm

Abstract – *Institutional research at any level of education is important in driving innovation and growth. This article provides an overview of the development of Caribbean community colleges as well as an exploration of the challenges faced so far by research including the significant gaps in Caribbean community college research.*

Keywords – *Caribbean community college, community college research, Institutional research*

RESEARCH AND THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE STORY

Caribbean Community Colleges have been playing a vital role in the advancement of affordable education designed to increase opportunities for anyone seeking a different pathway to success for the last four decades. The importance of these institutions, the role they play in society, and the social, economic and environmental impact they have had have not been explored as extensively as those of their more prominent University counterparts in the Caribbean. However, there are individual pockets of research conducted yearly by faculty and students in community colleges that are of great value and need a forum within which they can share this knowledge.

In advancing this mandate, the Excelsior Community College Academic Journal was conceptualized with a commitment to serve in a forum where researchers and practitioners can share scholarship of the highest standard surrounding concepts, studies and innovations in the field of Caribbean community college education. With this in mind, I share a brief overview of the development of the Community College system in the Caribbean and the impact on the tertiary education of these small but 'tallawah' educational institutions.

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DEVELOPMENT OF CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Higher education, in the Anglophone Caribbean, serves a vast population, with the larger islands of Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago taking the lead in providing higher education for the many of the regions' populace. The University of the West Indies (UWI), while not the oldest college in the region, is still considered the Ivy League of Universities in the Caribbean. First established in 1948 as a College of the University of London, the UWI, as it is popularly known, is a research university with four campuses throughout the region serving nearly fifteen thousand students. However, while the UWI and other universities serve the region well, the cost of a university education, and the need for more workforce-oriented programs led to the development of the community college system.

The increase in demand for tertiary education across the region, with many governments touting the importance of higher education, has placed a great demand on the educational system that had been a part of the British model. Additionally, this university system did not serve the Caribbean populous well as it was geared for the elite. The community college models were an alternative that were viewed as socially, economically and politically necessary for growth and development (Grant-Woodham & Morris, 2009) by the governments of the Caribbean. Therefore, a "bridge in the form of the community college, between the secondary level and university" (Grant-Woodham & Morris, 2009, p.300) was established in the late 1970s to fill this gap. Community colleges now exist in the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, Turks and Caicos and Trinidad and Tobago. However, based on the North American categorization of community colleges, only Barbados and Jamaica could be truly considered to fit the mould of multipurpose higher education institutions.

First established in 1974, the Jamaican community college system, with franchises in Anguilla, the Turks and Caicos and the Bahamas, was created to assist students pursuing sixth form (12-13 grade) studies. Of the community colleges in the Caribbean, Jamaica, which is the largest English-speaking island, has eight community colleges governed by the Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica (CCCJ), a statutory agency under the Ministry of Education (MOE). Now catering to a student population of 12,000 in any given year, Jamaica's community colleges have become a pivotal turning point in the tertiary landscape and they have "transformed into one of the most affordable, flexible and accessible means to tertiary education" (Hunter, 2017, n.p.). Adamson (2012), agreeing with Hunter (2017), states that enrolment in community colleges has grown over the past two years to about 18 percent and opines that community colleges offer high

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quality and affordable education that is aimed at improving lives and cementing the importance of community colleges in the Caribbean.

ROLE OF RESEARCH IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The aim of Caribbean community colleges was originally to provide an alternative to university and to offer courses in keeping with societal needs. This mandate has not changed much and community colleges afford students in the Caribbean opportunities to reach their goals of higher education, and provides students with educational programs offering training that leads to employability for new students, and career growth or change for those who are already working. They are the small, but important, educational alternative for many and as such need to be studied as they face contemporary issues and challenges facing Caribbean community colleges.

Research on community college education in the Caribbean is, as stated earlier, almost non-existent but is vital to understanding the nature of these institutions and their very vital role. Institutional research, driven by data, in areas such as student success, attrition, programme development and leadership are but a few of the core research areas that Caribbean community colleges need to engage in to help develop research in Caribbean community colleges. Research by Morest & Jenkins (2007) points to the importance of such evidence based research to not just use data in an administrative capacity for improving enrolments but to also use research to gain insights into improving 'student progress and success' (p. 13).

Research on areas of teaching and learning, technology usage, new teaching methods and assessments are areas which would not only benefit community colleges' in designing and delivering better programmes, but in understanding the ever-changing needs of students. Davis III, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & González Canché (2015), in synthesizing research on social media usage amongst higher educational and community college students, propose that 'research can provide substantive findings to better aid community college faculty, staff, and administrators in the construction of positive educational experiences and outcomes for their students' (para. 36). While this research was concentrated on the use of social media, it points to the very practical application of research by educational institutions to reach and serve students and achieve institutional strategic goals.

CONCLUSION

Caribbean community colleges are, in many ways, the heart of practical education and for many families the only opportunity for a higher education that might otherwise be beyond their reach. Evidencing the

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importance of these institutions, through research on the aforementioned areas, will help community college leaders to align their institutions' strategic goals to societal needs and to offer programs relevant to societal needs. Additionally, as Caribbean Governments rely on community colleges to support their agendas to train future workforce members for both current and emerging industries, Caribbean community colleges will need the research that supports the latest and best in educational teaching, skills and technology to ensure they are not just following the crowd but being the leaders in the educational arena.

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EARLY CHILDHOOD PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

Georgetta Forrester Grant
Excelsior Community College
georgetta.forrester-grant@ecc.edu.jm

Abstract – Recent demands for greater principal accountability have reintroduced the concept of instructional leadership in the educational landscape and have led to interest in that aspect of educational leadership. Principals are expected to perform their duties, as instructional leaders, based on the passage of government standards worldwide. The extent to which the principals understand their role, as instructional leaders, has great implications for the expected outcomes. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study is to investigate how principals of early childhood institutions, in urban Jamaica, perceive their role as instructional leaders in the implementation of the early childhood curriculum. This study will raise awareness of instructional leadership behaviours of principals at the early childhood level of education. The findings of this research will be useful in implementing innovative support services for principals, developing and conducting workshops and training programs to improve instructional leadership by developing or nurturing the skills associated with effective instructional leadership.

Keywords – curriculum, early childhood education, educational leadership, instructional leadership, leadership

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education, in Jamaica, is currently undergoing reform. In 2010 a new early childhood curriculum was implemented which has resulted in an expansion of the principals' roles. In addition to being managers, the principals will need to assume the role of instructional leaders. The educational reform has caused the role of the principal to evolve into a more complex and demanding skill set that is integral to the success of the curriculum (Lynch, 2012). This proposed study will be bounded within the context of educational leadership at the early childhood level in Jamaica. It will be further restricted to selected early childhood institutions in urban Jamaica. This is necessary given the geographical location of the researcher

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to practitioners in this region. This concept paper will explore the general issue(s) relating to early childhood principals' perception of their role as instructional leaders.

PROBLEM FORMULATION

The reform of early childhood education has brought changes to the roles of the principal (Stamapuolos, 2012, Yavuz & Bas, 2010; Brown & Gasko, 2012; Woodrow & Busch, 2008). Principals are now seen as instructional leaders and an understanding of their role is relevant to the outcome of curriculum implementation (Choi, Wa Ho, 2011; Yavuz & Bas, 2010; Jackson & McDermot, 2009; Lynch, 2012; Caliskan & Tabancali, 2009). This proposed phenomenological study aims to describe how the principals, in selected early childhood institutions in urban Jamaica, perceive their role as instructional leaders. The current study is based on recommendations for future research from a study conducted by Yavuz and Bas (2010). While Yavuz and Bas (2010) looked at the perception of the roles of the elementary school principals, as instructional leaders; this study will focus on the principals' perception of their role as instructional leaders in the implementation of the curriculum in selected early childhood institutions in urban Jamaica.

Caliskan and Tabancali (2009) reported that shifting from a curriculum based on behaviorism to one based on constructivism will require new skill sets by the principals. The study further reported that the successful implementation of the curriculum is dependent on the principals' ability to provide sound instructional leadership. Findings of a study by Yavuz and Bas' (2010) reported that the school principal should be responsible for the development of the school's goals and mission and should share these with all stakeholders. The principals are also responsible for providing mentorship in the implementation of the curriculum. They should also seek to develop and maintain an instructional environment that will facilitate successful implementation of the curriculum through the provision of resources as well as fostering of the psychological and professional growth of the teachers. This view is supported by Choi Wa Ho (2011) who outlined the findings of a study conducted to describe how early childhood principals in Hong Kong perceived their role as instructional leaders. The study revealed that the principals of early childhood institutions must act as mentors for curriculum and pedagogy. The findings further emphasized the need for principals to be significantly knowledgeable about the curriculum and principles involved in its effective implementation so that they can provide guidance in the planning and execution of activities associated with curriculum implementation.

The purpose of this study is to explore how principals of early childhood institutions, in urban Jamaica, perceive their role as leaders in the

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implementation of the early childhood curriculum. The study aims to describe how these principals extend their roles and philosophy in relation to the implementation of the curriculum at the early childhood level. The research will be guided by the following questions:

1. What are the principals' understanding of their roles as leaders/implementers of the early childhood curriculum?
2. How do the principals view their roles in the context of the educational setting?
3. What are the principals' perception of their professional status?
4. How do principals practice as instructional leaders?

METHODOLOGY

This study will take a qualitative phenomenological design. Phenomenological design is a qualitative method of investigation which aims to explore experience as perceived by an individual or individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Phenomenological approaches are founded on the model of knowledge and subjectivity.

Phenomenology highlights the importance of gaining an understanding of the perspectives or perceptions of the target population with regards to a phenomenon (Christensen, Johnson and Tanner, 2011). The data will be collected using face to face unstructured interviews as this will ensure that the phenomenon, under study, will be explored in breadth and depth (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Christensen, Johnson and Tanner (2011) explain that interviewing is a method used to collect data when conducting qualitative research. However, Leedy and Ormrod (2010) were more specific when they posited that interviews are the main method of data collection when carrying out phenomenological studies. This is an appropriate method of data collection since the problem to be studied involves an attempt to understand the perception and perspectives of the target population.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

Much of the literature available on instructional leadership is related to practices in more developed countries. The available literature discusses instructional leadership as it relates to the success of the curriculum and quality management of school processes and resources. The literature also strongly highlights instructional leadership as a concept that has grown, in prominence and practice, in the educational landscape in the last decade (Caliskan & Tabancali, 2009; Devos & Bouckenooghe, 2009; Lynch, 2010; Woodrow & Busch, 2008). Many studies that have been conducted focus on the principals' role as instructional leaders in the general context of education (Couse & Rosso, 2006; Devos & Bouckenooghe, 2009; Reardon, 2011) while

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very few focus on the principals' perception of their role in instructional leadership. Whereas previous studies have focused on the perception of the instructional leadership role of the principals, from the perspective of the elementary school teachers, this study will look at the principals' perception of their role as instructional leaders at the early childhood level of education.

This study will raise awareness of instructional leadership behavior of principals at the early childhood level. It will also provide insights on how the role of instructional leadership is perceived, by the principals of early childhood institutions, in Jamaica. The study will provide information that will be useful to policy makers and stakeholders in early childhood education in Jamaica, the rest of the Caribbean and the wider educational landscape. The findings of the research would also be useful in implementing innovative support services for principals, developing training programs and conducting workshops and seminars aimed at boosting the morale of the principals. Providers of support services will be able to use the findings of the research to influence the development of programs geared towards developing or nurturing the skills that are needed to be an effective instructional leader where necessary**.** Principals will be better equipped to provide the necessary support for the teachers to effectively implement the curriculum.

REVIEW OF LITURATURE

The concept of instructional leadership was first developed in the 1980s (Gulcan, 2012). Early research on instructional leadership reported that the role of instructional leadership should be the responsibility of the principal (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Hallinger; 2005). Early research suggested that instructional leadership is bounded within the scope of job satisfaction and efficient work environment for teachers (Greenfield, 1987 & Vinsons, 1997 as cited in Gulcan, 2012). These early researchers define instructional leadership as behaviors displayed by the principal or behaviors that the principal encourages others to display to improve student success (Elmore, 2000). Reardon (2012) describes instructional leadership as "the behaviors of principal as they engage in activities that directly affect the growth of the students".

According to Lynch (2012), an increase in accountability of student performance resulted in increased importance of the principals' role as instructional leaders. Lynch went on to explain that the recent educational climate is such that the role of the principal is no longer predominantly that of a disciplinarian and manager but rather one of instructional leader. Gulcan (2012) declares that instructional leadership has changed how school administration previously viewed the role of management as they must now strive to build an environment that is aligned to instruction. Chi Wa Ho (2011); Reardon (2012) and Woodrow & Busch (2008) report that the role of

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the principal, as instructional leader, is crucial to the success of the school and the performance of the students. This concept is further supported by Sahin (2011) in his report on a study conducted on instructional leadership in Turkey and the United States. Sahin (2011) reports that the principal's ability to display effective instructional leadership behavior results in the success of the delivery of the curriculum and student performance. Sahin, in reporting his findings, went on to explain that instructional leadership behavior is displayed through monitoring classroom practices, conducting teacher assessment with an aim to improve pedagogy, planning and executing in service training for teachers, where necessary, and providing the resources needed to facilitate successful delivery of the curriculum.

Yavuz and Bas (2010), in reporting their findings on the perception of the role of the principal as instructional leader from the perspective of elementary school teachers, highlighted that, as part of their role as instructional leader, it is the responsibility of the principals to create a positive teaching learning environment through the provision technological resources, improved physical infrastructure and the establishment of an effective communication process among staff. Their findings were corroborated by Caliskan and Tabancali (2009) who revealed that, as instructional leaders, school principals are expected to encourage and support staff in their development and supervise with the intent to improve teacher practice rather than to emphasize corrective attitude. Leadership is contextual in nature and, as such, leadership behaviors will be influenced by the culture in which it is practiced (Choi, Wa Ho, 2011; Sahin, 2011).

It is unknown whether the level of practice identified by research exists in all cultures. Although many studies have been conducted on instructional leadership, in a general sense in more developed countries, very little research has been done on instructional leadership in less developed or developing countries. More specifically little is known about instructional leadership as it relates to early childhood education in less developed countries. The aim is to ascertain whether the practices illuminated by previous research on instructional leadership are carried out by principals in developing countries and the extent to which the principals in these countries understand what is expected of them as instructional leaders.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE BUSINESS GOVERNANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Gwyneth Jackson
Excelsior Community College
gwyneth.jackson@ecc.edu.jm

Abstract – The role of effective business governance in higher education institutions is critical to their success. However, not all institutions operate by a business governance plan. Given the influx of international competition within the Jamaican higher education industry, effective business governance plans for all higher education institutions will be an effective tool for promoting better business standards, regulations, and transparency. The purpose of this paper is to engage readers in intellectual discourse on the importance of effective business governance in higher education institutions. The discussion starts with an overview of higher education, then there is an examination of the need for effective governance, as well as developing the dimensions of a comprehensive and effective governance program. There will also be focus on the global influence of the College and considerations for judicious resolutions and a suggested plan for implementation and evaluation of the governance program.

Keywords – business governance plan, corporate governance, educational institutions, executive leaders, accountability, higher education institutions, stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

Business governance is a comprehensive set of principles outlining the direction and administration of organizations, manages risk for and adds value to stakeholders (Letza, Kirkbride, Sun & Smallman, 2008). In general, business governance proposes rules, processes, or laws, which operate, regulate, and control business operations. The principles of business governance extend to stockholders, consumer groups, and government regulations. An organization with a structured business governance plan is attractive to all levels of stakeholders. These organizations are mandated to adhere to accepted ethical standards, uphold organizational values and best practices as well as abiding by the formal laws on the industry within which they operate.

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The root word of governance is to "govern" which means "to control" and is aligned to Business Governance. Weill and Ross (2004) presented that the fundamental tenets of corporate governance demand that company objectives should be met, and organizational processes should be executed effectively, not amended for the benefit of individuals. Colvin (2004) opined that, in a busines environment of high-level power and stress to meet bottom lines, top leaders sometimes abandon their ethics and turn to greed, selfishness, and corruption. Therefore, the major function of corporate governance is to look after an organization's business process and ensure that business leaders conduct themselves appropriately.

OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Governance, in higher education, is how institutions for higher education are formally organized, managed and operated, (Altbach, 2005). McMasters (2002) argued that governance of higher education institutions internationally varies from nation to nation. Each governance pattern reflects the unique history of the sector and the needs of those specific institutional types. McMaster further notes that the different cultures in higher education institutions reflect the governance which exists.

In the Jamaican context, for example, higher education institutions are governed by a Principal/President, and Vice Principals/Presidents who manage the institution as Chief Executive Officers. These individuals report to a Board of Management, appointed under the Ministry of Education. The concept of management boards has taken on greater importance in institutions of higher learning as the directors' role transcends social and economic issues. The complexities created by paradigm shifts within the higher educational systems are forcing colleges and universities to take a closer look at the extent to which their boards of directors have the skills, abilities, and structures in place to fulfill their responsibilities. This is critical as poor higher education governance decreases public trust.

BUSINESS GOVERNANCE PROGRAM

In this age of corporate accountability and scrutiny, higher education institutions are not excluded from the effects of corporate governance legislation. Many colleges and universities have adopted practices to distinguish themselves as leaders in higher education. Educational leadership must take corporate governance seriously as it has direct implications for their ability to mobilize the board, principals, and deans to get involved in a corporate governance business plan. Furthermore, effective business governance caters to stakeholders, Peterson and Albaum (2005) contend that students within a learning institution fall within the category of stakeholders and are the future leadership of corporations.

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Effective corporate governance is premised on a business plan. However, there is no single model of a business governance plan; therefore, an effective governance plan must be tailored to meet the specific industry and stakeholder needs. To this end, the major components of a business governance plan for a higher education institution should refer to the broad range of policies and practices that executive leaders and boards of directors use to: (1) manage themselves (2) fulfill their responsibilities to all stakeholders and (3) implement openness, integrity and accountability for all and at all levels. The business governance plan should encompass the organization's commitment to values, ethical business conduct to maximize shareholder value on a sustainable basis while ensuring fairness to all stakeholders.

Additionally, effective corporate governance is about ethical conduct and, as such, is concerned with the codes and ethical principles that enable educational institutions to make decisions in the best interest of all stakeholders. Donaldson (2003) expressed that sound business governance plans need gatekeepers and stewards to ensure that the plan adheres to cultural and ethical standards as well as the integrity of the organization. Board of directors play the most important role in promoting superior corporate governance within an organization. In support of this position, Davies (2006), posited that leadership for corporate governance must come from the board if it is to fulfill its statutory obligations.

NEED FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Over the past decade, corporate governance has been the subject of increasing stakeholder attention. Gomez−Mejia−Balkin (2002) reported that organizations do not perform operations in silos and all activities must be coordinated with changes in the environment. The authors further argued that management tasks in corporate governance are unique, ambiguous, and situation specific. Therefore, modern higher education institutions depend on competent leadership to coordinate their activities for survival in the context of their environment- international or local. Organizations conducting a business in today's modern society where consumers have a strong voice are pressured to defend themselves from legal liability and other risks, higher education institutions are no exception to this scrutiny. Gregory (2001) argued that corporate governance is important at the macro level to stimulate private sector capital investment and ensuring the efficient use of assets. Gregory further argued that public policy makers now view the way corporations are governed as of major importance to the company, internal and external stakeholders, local and international investors, their national economies and to society. Different studies, including that of the World Bank, indicate that the loss of trust of different investors in organizations was

directly linked to a lack of meaningful corporate performance and compliance. The restoration of investor confidence in these nations will require, among other things, corporate governance reform (Gregory, 2001).

Given the influx of international competition of higher education institutions in the Jamaican economy, effective corporate governance is important. Companies compete in industries where effective governance is imperative in relation to functional activities such as attracting and maintaining talented, qualified staff, shareholders, and by extension, customers. Effective business governance will be a successful tool for promoting better business standards, regulation, and transparency. Higher education institutions operate with functional departments or schools, and this is aligned to the strategy proposed by Gandossy and Sonnenfeld (2004) who purported that organizations need specialized functional departments to assist in the decision-making process. This will contribute significantly to the outcome of business governance when putting a plan in place. With the effects of international competition, higher education institutions actively market their products and services for a competitive advantage. Gordon (2007)   observed that effective business governance extends to linking marketing and shareholder value. Most importantly, educational institutions have very high-quality audit, accounting standards, and practice requirements. Beatty, Ewing and Tharp, (2003) related that governance programs encounter challenges to stay within the legal framework to function, reward positive behavior, and deter activities which will affect the reputation of the organization in a negative way.

Global Influence
The growth of advanced communications technologies has encouraged firms, especially higher education institutions, to cross borders into globalized business operations. The business activities and governance of these international organizations are used to support the competitive advantage against those of the local organizations. Business activities, within any type of organization which are not regulated, can raise questions regarding the legitimacy and integrity of the governance of leaders, managers Principals/Presidents, Vice Principals/Vice Presidents, and Board of Directors. This is more so with the influx of international higher education institutions in the Jamaican educational landscape.

In the corporate world, management is in a position of accountability to the board and the shareholders. According to Carver and Carver, (1996) board decisions are policy decisions. Effective business governance should ensure managerial accountability. The board can use the power, which is invested in them, to establish policies to resolve business issues that threaten the integrity of the organization.

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Mescher and Howieson, (2005) supported the recommendation to promote, within organizations, the making of ethical and responsible decisions. This will result in determining the level of integrity of an organization. Transparency of personal and company operations will assist in resolving issues of integrity. Baum (2004) posited that transparency is essential for organizations because it is important to be honest and open about business operations because this has long-term effects in creating internal and external shareholder value. Executives 'compensation plans should be designed to encourage the achievement of performance objective and create long-term shareholder value (Stout & Li, 2003). All established practices should be organized and practiced in ways which do not detract from the organization's integrity.

Gandossy and Sonnenfeld (2004) disclosed that, for the implementation of a business governance plan to be successful, the change must be embraced by all levels of the organization. If the transformation concept is not embraced, at all levels, deliberate roadblocks can impede the successful implementation. Cameron (1986) endorsed that it is almost impossible to arrive at a consensus for effectiveness; this is so because of the difference in individuals and organizational values. Resistance to the change process can impede successful implementation. If management fails to recognize the economic, social, and cultural implications of change, implementation will be unsuccessful.

Moral Underpinnings of the Business Governance

Corporate governance is about ethical conduct and, as such, is concerned with the codes and ethical principles that enable the management of higher education organization to make decisions in the best interest of all stakeholders. Zimmerli, Holzinger and Richter (2007) postulated that ethics is that part of philosophy which is concerned with living well, being a good person, doing the right thing, getting along with other persons and wanting the right things in life, which applies at all levels within higher education institutions. Zimmerli, Holzinger and Richter further argued that ethics is important to living and working within a society with its different traditions, practices, and institutions. The traditions and practices must be assessed according to ethical standards. Zimmerli, Holzinger and Richter (2007) presented that "moral is both the product of society and one of its constitutive features" (p. 12). We learn ethics in an incremental manner, which contributes to the complicated way we respond to ethical situations because, as living systems, our ethics is continually changing. This concept is particularly important in the governance of higher education institutions, especially when implementing policies and procedures, which will affect and influence the work and study environment of stakeholders.

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Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory articulated that organizations function to coordinate joint service to its stakeholders, as such, a strong balance among these services is required. Normative ethical stakeholder theory view is that the management of an organization should reflect the balance among the interests of all stakeholders. The moral foundation of these institutions should reflect this fair balance of all stakeholders. As suggested earlier, moral and ethical framework is contextual, therefore, there is need for a deontological approach to morality, based on the underlying assumption that everyone is morally obligated to act as a member of the community (Shepard, Shepard, Stephens & Winbush, 1999).

The common good approach is another fundamental moral precept which is important for higher education business governance. The author Richardson (2004) purported that, "In this approach, we focus on ensuring that the social policies, social systems, institutions, and environments on which we depend are beneficial to all" (p.3). Higher education institutions' major responsibility is to train future leaders and managers to manage different categories of organizations as such the principles of corporate governance should be evident within these learning institutions.

CONCLUSION

Business governance has become a topical issue due to the number of corporate failures within the last decade. Scandals associated with banks, mortgage lenders, failing stock markets, dubious accounting practices, legal and consulting firms have flooded the media with great cause for concern. Higher education institutions are highly scrutinized for different business practices and need to see the importance for effective business governance within their business processes. Byrne (2004) pointed out that, in the wake of international corporate scandals, executives are learning that faith, honesty, and impartiality are important ingredients for corporate governance, as such higher education organizations should invest in a business governance plan.

Gandossy and Sonnenfeld (2004) disclosed that, for the implementation of a business governance plan to be successful, the change must be embraced by all levels of the organization. If the transformation concept is not embraced at all levels deliberate roadblocks can impede the successful implementation. Cameron (1986) challenged that it is almost impossible to arrive at a consensus for effectiveness; this is so because of the difference in individuals and organizational values.

Summarily, with changing landscape within which higher education institutions operates, effective business governance is important for growth and will continue to serve as the guide for success. Effective business governance is used as a marketing strategy to attract faculty, staff, and

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students to the institution. Past business governance models have failed; hence it is crucial for practitioners to create new models for the future. Deane (2006) argued that market globalization has created a shift in corporate governance to global importance. This implies that effective corporate governance can allow a higher education institution to position itself as an institution of greater value to its stakeholders. In the last few years, internal and external stakeholders are pressuring higher education institutions to redefine and change their business governance styles and practices which may encourage greater trust in the people they serve. Higher education institutions are comparable to established private sector organizations and, as such, business governance best practices are interchangeable. The topic of corporate governance in higher education has gained much attention in the corporate and public sector, which should not be ignored. The writer looks forward to further discussion on this topic.

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COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK TO PROMOTE "EPISTEMIC ENGAGEMENT" IN EDUCATION RESEARCH FOR CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Bhuvaneswari Gudapati
Excelsior Community College
bhuvaneswari.gudapati@ecc.edu.jm

Abstract – Institutional research and innovation are important and necessary factors of the higher educational landscape and this is even more so in Caribbean community colleges. This article provides an overview of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework and proposes it be utilized in "epistemic engagement" of educational research. The theory, based in traditional teaching and learning theories, is well suited to understanding the educational experiences of students, faculty and institutional stakeholders from the social, cognitive and teaching perspectives and provides an opportunity for faculty to get back to the roots of research and innovation. This would fill significant research gaps in Caribbean community college research and points to the use of the Community of Inquiry framework as useful theory for future studies on both physical, blended learning and online learning.

Keywords – Caribbean higher education, community college, Community of Inquiry, Institutional research

INTRODUCTION

Higher education research, amongst Caribbean community colleges, lags far behind those of our counterparts in the developed nations like the United States (US). This deficiency may be due, in part, to a lack of motivation by those in community colleges who often do not have interests or incentives to pursue research. Added to this, in conversations with my colleagues over the years, there was a reluctance on the part of academics to invest their time and effort as they were often not provided time to pursue research like their counterparts at the university level. Many also do not see

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the importance of research as they feel it would not contribute to changes in the system(s). Lewis and Simmons (2010) support these ideas and contend that the research culture in the Caribbean is in need of change which can only happen if there is a "resolve to place inquiry at the core of the work-life of faculty, by adopting tenure as a basic value, by a collaborative ethic, by narrowing distinctions between research and teaching, and by being in the vanguard of innovation" (p. 343). I suggest that there is a need to get back to the roots of inquiry and discovery that leads to innovative ideas and theories which are inherently characteristic of the Caribbean higher educational system.

In this review, the Community of Inquiry framework is put forward as a theory well suited to injecting researchers with much needed boost to examine the experiences of students, faculty and institutional stakeholders from the social, cognitive and teaching perspectives, while providing an opportunity for faculty and staff to get back to the roots of research and innovation. This renewed focus would fill significant research gaps in Caribbean community college research and introduce a different theoretical perspective for Caribbean educational researchers on learning in a physical, blended or online platform.

COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY (CoI) FRAMEWORK

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, first advanced by Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000), is modelled based on inquiry that is not only useful but allows the researcher to construct logical links between ideas through critical thinking. Garrison et al. (2000) propose that learning takes place through three types of interactions: social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence. These interactions happen in a community of inquiry that is comprised of both students and teachers. This framework is one that was developed as the authors saw a need for new ways in which to study online behaviours and experiences. However, as the theory is based in traditional models of teaching and learning, it lends itself to studying pedagogy in traditional classrooms.

OVERVIEW OF THE CoI MODEL

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework was a theoretical framework developed by Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000) designed to examine both teaching and learning online. This is especially useful in "highlighting the importance of teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence in online teaching and learning" (Kumar, Dawson, Black, Cavanaugh, & Sessums, 2011, p.127). The framework utilizes a threefold approach to understanding how teaching and learning occur in the online setting, be it fully online or through blended courses with the core of the

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model highlighting the educational experience. Figure 1.1 below is an illustration of the Community of Inquiry model as presented on the official CoI blog of Garrison et al. (2017).
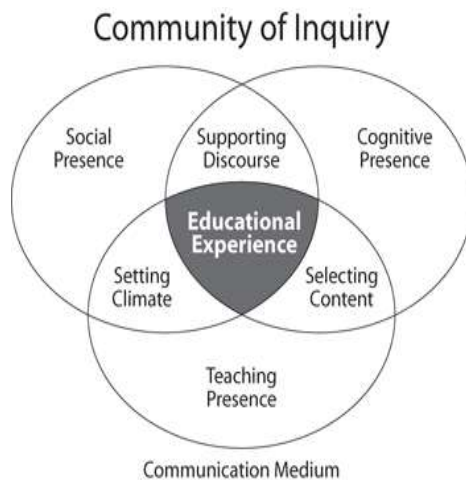
Figure 1-1. Community of Inquiry Model

THE COI PRESENCES

The three presences offered at the heart of the framework function together to create the educational experience with the student taking responsibility for their learning as education and learning are social activities as suggested by Dewey (1959). Each of the presences offers a different aspect of the learning experience that leads to the core educational experience.

Teaching presence. Teaching presence is described by Anderson, Rourke, Archer, and Garrison (2001) as the planning, facilitation and directing of intellectual and social activities that lead to realizing learning that is not only educational but personally significant and enriching. The authors describe this presence as comprising three functions: the design and organization of instruction, the facilitation of discussion, and guiding instruction. The first function, designing and organizing instruction, is mainly concerned with how a course is set up to allow students to learn and communicate. The second function, facilitating discussion, refers to the ways in which "students are engaged in interacting about and building upon the information provided in the course instructional materials" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007, p. 164). The last function of guiding or directing instruction is concerned with the teacher's role as a guide for the students in directing their learning.

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Social presence. Social presence is described as how the student identifies with members of their learning community and has an awareness of his/her classmates and lecturers' presence. Garrison (2009) states that students' (or participants') ability to identify with the community (e.g., course of study), interact intentionally and consciously in a trusted environment, and establish social relationships by way of sharing their individual selves (i.e. personalities) is how social presence is established.

Cognitive presence. Cognitive presence is described as the degree to which learners construct and build knowledge through active discussions or individual reflections. Eventually students are mentally stimulated and challenged when the intellectual elements are triggered. During this process, the lecturer acts as a facilitator and guide so that learners can succeed through meaningful learning experiences (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2001)

RESEARCH USING COI

Since its conception, research utilizing the CoI framework has been significant, and according to the official CoI website (2018) the "seminal paper, '*Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education*' (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000) has been cited more than 2,800 times" (para. 4) as of August 2015. It has provided the beginnings of "valuable empirical research in learning theory across multiple disciplines and in varied educational settings" (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000, para. 4). Much of the research employing the CoI framework has shown the strength of the theory and its applicability in both quantitative and qualitative research.

A breakdown of the research, offered by the official Community of Inquiry website (2018), shows that studies at times have concentrated on one or the other aspect of the three areas of the framework: cognitive, teaching, and social presence. Additionally, the website points to several studies on methodological variations of the CoI over the past fifteen years, as well as articles and papers critiquing the theory. However, notwithstanding the use of the CoI in research on blended environments, (Akyol & Garrison, & Ozden, 2009; Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, et al., 2010; Traver, Volchok, Bidjerano, & Shea, 2014;), a preponderance of CoI studies have focused primarily on varying concepts dealing with online, computer/technology mediated, or other distance delivery courses (Garrison et al., 2000; Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001; Garrison et al., 2010; Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 1999; Shea et. al., 2012; Shea & Bidjerano, 2010; Shea et. al., 2010).

Research on "presence." Studies on cognitive presence using the CoI often concentrated on online discussions and student behaviors, perceptions and abilities to analyse, evaluate, and think critically (Breivik, 2016;

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Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2001; Kanuka, & Garrison, 2004; Kovanović, Joksimović, Waters, Gašević, Kitto, Hatala & Siemens et al., 2016; Meyer, 2003; Meyer, 2004; Morueta et. al, 2016; Sadaf & Olesovab, 2017; Shea & Bidjerano, 2010; Shea et al., 2012). Pool, Reitsma and van den Berg (2017), referencing studies on learner presence (Shea & Bidjerano, 2010; Shea et al., 2012), suggest that there has not been enough attention given to students in online learning environments in terms of their roles, participation, and experiences to understand students' self-regulation skills in online and blended modalities where students self-directed learning plays a crucial role.

Akyol and Garrison (2011) concluded, in their study on learning tasks of a higher order, using online and blended modalities, that it was essential that all three forms of "presence" be in attendance when using the blended modality. However, Armellini and de Stefani (2016) argued, based on identified patterns in their research, that there needs to be an adjustment to the CoI as social presence is greater than teaching and cognitive presence. They report that in the "digital age social aspects of the educational process have become an essential component in the educational experience, to the extent that learners themselves can at times become instructors" (p. 1205). This presents an interesting argument for studying how technology shifts are changing learner and learning patterns and warrants further investigation.

CRITICISM OF COI

Researchers (Annand, 2011; Jézégou, 2010; Rourke and Kanuka, 2009; Shea et al., 2012) of the CoI generally agree that it is a valuable theory in the study of e-Learning and other technology-mediated learning, but propose that it has several weaknesses that need to be addressed. Annand (2011) suggests that the weight of social presence within the COI framework has been exaggerated and might not truly mirror online educational practices. Annand further contends that there is a need for more regulated studies to differentiate between "learning outcomes from sustained, contiguous, two-way communication to other learning models" (p. 52). Therefore, sub-categories of teaching and social presence need to be overhauled, allowing researchers to modify their analysis considering the different activities that specifically support individual and group activities.

While acknowledging the potential and importance of the CoI framework in studying online learning, Shea et al. (2012) agree that while it "represents an ideal in which teachers and learners perform the same roles (expressed as teaching presence)," at the same time, "it ignores some of the real world dynamics that shape and constrain much of online learning in practice" (p. 93). The authors propose that the framework does not account for the fact that neither instructor nor learner engages in the same role, and

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therefore each participates in different ways to succeed, thus creating what the authors term a "learning presence" (p.93).

Continuing this idea of the potential of CoI to contribute to e-Learning research, Jézégou (2010), responded to an article by Rourke and Kanuka (2009) for greater research on the CoI construct. The researcher offered a critical analysis of the theory, stating that the CoI, which echoes and incorporates areas of research stemming from pragmatist and socio-constructivist viewpoints, can be seen as a refreshing exploration of e-Learning. However, she argues that Garrison and Anderson's explanation of the foundations of their framework is inadequate and difficult to understand and needs clarification of the major tenets of the theory. On a somewhat positive note, Jézégou (2010) notes that the work of other researchers helps in expanding the reach of the framework in the scientific community, based on the explanations of those who have appropriated it for their own studies, and this bodes well for expanding and furthering the theory.

Morueta et. al. (2016), referencing studies by Marton and Säljö (1976) and Marton (1988), suggest that the process of learning and the results that follow are closely linked; consequently, "given the relevance of the learning task in defining the learning process, it is necessary to conduct studies that consider it as a central element in the analysis of model performance" (p. 123). This they report is not as well-represented by studies utilizing the CoI, and where there is limited research that incorporates "the type of learning task analysis among the variables" (Morueta et. al., 2016, p. 123). Pool, Reitsma and van den Berg (2017) also support this idea of a "learner presence" and suggest that "learner self-regulation seems to serve as a basis for a new form of presence within the CoI model" (p. 154). Notwithstanding these criticisms, the overwhelming take-away is the potential of the CoI to inform practice and decision-making regarding learning experiences and for program development. An examination of the grounded background of the theory provides a better scope for understanding the potential in using it to research both online and physical modality research.

CoI Vs. Traditional Learning Theories

The CoI comes from a social constructivist viewpoint and, much like many traditional models of learning, it provides insight into approaches used in the study of student learning. This worldview focusses on looking at how the social, cognitive, and teaching aspects of learning affect student outcomes, the tools they use in learning, and even how they approach learning itself. However, the CoI takes this further to look at how students are learning in a new world where technology has become a new force for learning. While traditional models and theories of learning explain aspects of learning with several overlaps that can explain online learning, I believe the CoI is

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inherently suited to study both traditional and online learning. It incorporates the basic concepts of traditional learning theories to provide a model that works when examining e-learning modalities as well as traditional modalities. This duality is also what creates the best model to study blended learning in this or any research designed to expand understanding of this mode of learning. A brief examination of the foundations of the theory from the pioneers in education shows how their ideas have influenced the CoI framework.

Dewey. John Dewey is considered the pioneer of experiential learning and his work is the foundation upon which the CoI framework was built. He saw learning and education as a way for students to use their life experiences to connect with and create meaning from the world around them from their life experiences. The students could then decide how those experiences helped them connect to the curriculum. Therefore, simply put, their life experiences shape how they learn.

Dewey (1938) stated that "All genuine education comes about through experience" (p. 25). However, not "all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are miseducative" (Dewey, 1938, p. 25). Dewey believed that, to avoid these "miseducative" experiences and for learning to be effective, you need to have interaction and continuity. Learners should be helped by their teachers to learn from their experiences by providing the necessary resources and support to allow learning to occur. Dewey felt instructors should guide students through the learning process utilizing a student-centred approach that included reflection and analysis of how they (the students) learn and how they approach their own learning. The goal is to connect the student with subject matter in a community where students can take real world problems and use the curriculum to find solutions.

Kolb. David Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory is founded on Dewey's theory of experiential education. Kolb espoused new ideas driven by new experiences and felt that learning "is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). Kolb theorized that learning occurred in a cycle and happened in four stages. In Stage 1, known as a "concrete experience," the learner has a new experience or encounters a new situation. In Stage 2, known as "reflective observation," the learner reflects on this new experience. Stage 3 is where the learner begins to come up with new ideas or modifies existing ones and is known as "forming abstracts and generalizations." In Stage 4, the final stage, known as "testing hypothesis," the learner applies what has been learned and this leads to personal growth.

Bergsteiner, Avery, and Neumann (2010) summarize Kolb's learning theory as "a cognitive process involving constant adaptation to, and

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engagement with, one's environment" (p. 30). It is dominant among adult learning theories. Bergsteiner et al. (2010), add that Kolb's theory serves as a base for the design of learning experiences. The quality of learning is dependent, not on subject matter, but on the learner. By providing educational environments that support learning and collaborative experiences, the learner is fully involved and draws on their experiences.

Knowles. American scholar Malcolm S. Knowles popularized the term 'andragogy'. Knowles (1978), who presented six dimensions or characteristics that motivate adult learners, theorized that these assumptions were the foundation 'to designing programs for adults' (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 84). Knowles (1978) dimensions to learning included: self-directed learning where learners are not dependent on the teacher to learn but direct their own learning; experience where students use their own past experiences to draw from and share with others; social role is where learners understand the benefits of learning and do not need to be told what they need to learn; application is where learners link their learning with reality and problem or task focused learning; internal motivation is where learners are driven by personal goals or desires; and last reasons for learning, where learners need some justification for the time, money or effort put into learning. Knowles' concepts, while developed in consideration of the adult learner, is very useful in understanding the online or blended student demographic as it incorporates many of the concepts present in this theory, especially in terms of self-directed learning and motivations.

COI AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

In what ways, therefore, do these traditional theories relate to the CoI? In looking at these seminal works, we can see where each of these ideas is captured in one of the three presences. According to Garrison and Vaughan (2008), constructivist principles are the basis of nearly all frameworks in educational teaching and learning. As higher educational institutions embrace technology and move to offer programs online and in blended environments, a model is needed to understand the dynamics of these environments. Seeing this need, Garrison et al. (2000) developed the CoI framework built on concepts such as those of the constructivist approaches of Dewey, Kolb and Knowles, and incorporating the three elements of social, cognitive and teaching presence to help students attain greater levels of learning.

I believe that this framework provides the bridge between the many different variables highlighted in these traditional theories, including, but not limited to, socialization, communication, instructor facilitation, resource usage, individualization, content development, course organization and technology growth and deployment in the classroom. As suggested by Dewey and others, the CoI examines the nature of how students learn, and the

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sociological aspects of learning where students co-construct knowledge leading to a deeper and more satisfying learner experience. The framework reflects many of the ideas of these early pioneers and I propose that regardless of the mode of learning - traditional, online or blended - it lends itself well to the broader scope of the three presences, which are open to some amount of flexibility and interpretation within educational contexts.

SUMMARY COI

Over the past fifteen years, the CoI framework has proven to be invaluable in the study of online and blended learning (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, and Fung, 2010; Swan, 2009; Swan & Ice, 2010). It allows the researcher to appropriate the concepts behind the theory and expand the theory by examining the idea of presence among a range of other ideologies. Research presented demonstrates the varied and interesting aspects of the CoI in understanding students' perceptions and success in online and blended courses. Additionally, utilizing the theory from a qualitative perspective to better understand the "learner presence" as suggested by Shea et al. (2009) and Garrison et. al. (2010) could provide insight into how students approach their learning, and how different technology (e.g. social media) plays into the idea of "social presence," and whether that will, in any way, influence "cognitive presence" and "teacher presence."

Supporting these ideas, Kumar et. al. (2011) suggest that, the increase in students' social media usage, and their casual use of these virtual spaces, adds to their learning experiences and creates additional hurdles in evaluating the development of CoI. There is a need to study whether these ideas are supported equally in the learning experiences of students from less-developed countries such as those of the small island states of the Caribbean.

One caveat to be stressed is that scholarship just for the sake of scholarship is not an affordable practice, as it requires considerable time, and in some cases monetary investment. When research reveals information that points to further investigation, it is for institutions to encourage discourse and incentivize those with an inclination to go further. Caribbean scholars, like their first world counterparts, need funding and time to further valuable research that can benefit all stakeholders. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Youth, the CCCJ, and community colleges should find ways to incentivize their faculty and staff to carry out research that can be beneficial in advancing their institutions and placing Caribbean nations on a level playing field with the rest of the world.

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AN EXAMINATION OF INFORMED AND INCENTIVIZED ATTENDANCE: A RECOMMENDATION FOR POLICY CHANGES

Kerry-Ann Barrett

Excelsior Community College
Kerryann.barrett@yahoo.com

Abstract – Several studies posit a positive relationship between class attendance and student performance. Grades for students enrolled in Introduction to Management during the fall 2015 semester at a community college in Jamaica revealed that evening students, on average, scored a grade higher than students enrolled in the day sections. Lecturers noted that day students missed more classes than evening students but the relationship between attendance and performance was not known. The purpose of this correlational study was to determine the relationship between attendance and performance, measured by grades. Guided by Knowles's theory that adults are self-directed, this study was designed to explore the relationship between attendance and performance for first year day (n=99) and evening students (n=40). Pearson's Correlation was used to assess the correlation between students' attendance and performance, regardless of their attendance status. Additionally, independent t tests were used to compare the means of day and evening students' attendance and performance variables. Findings revealed that attendance and performance were significantly positively associated. Further, findings indicated that there were significant differences in the mean performance and mean attendance variables between day and evening students. Students with partial matriculation attended fewer classes and performed poorer than students with full matriculation. To address the results, a policy recommendation was developed to provide guidance on attendance in the local setting. The study contributes to social change by offering an approach to class attendance as strategy to improve students' grades.

Keywords – adult learning theory, adult learning and attendance, attendance policy, Jamaican community colleges, quantitative

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INTRODUCTION

Grade reports for students enrolled in Introduction to Management during the fall 2015 semester revealed that evening students on average scored a grade higher than students enrolled in the day sections. Students enrolled in the evening sections are working adults that have selected classes in this manner to accommodate their employment schedule. Day students are traditional students based on their age (16-21) and employment status. There were complaints from lecturers that day students were more likely to be absent from their classes. This contradicts the findings of Prentice, Lee and de Burca (2017), whose study found that non-attenders were more likely to be evening students. Research related to attendance indicates that it has a positive effect on performance (Andrietti 2014; Englander, Wang, & Betz, 2015; Mearman, Pacheco, Webber, Ivlevs, & Rahman, 2014; Stellmack 2013; Teixeira, 2016).

Studies that posit the positive effect of attendance on performance have advanced debates on a larger problem of attendance policy and academic freedom. Pinto and Lohrey (2016) focused on a similar discussion as the two business education professors outlined their viewpoints on attendance policy. Even though attendance has been proven to have a positive effect on grade or performance, administrators and educators must be mindful of the growing population of adult learners who are viewed as self-directed. Macfarlane (2013), viewed compulsory attendance policies as infantilizing adults rather than helping them to be more self-directed. Macfarlane's (2013) view could be supported by Malcolm Knowles' assumption of the adult learners being self-directing (Knowles, 1968).

Knowles saw the adult student as moving from a state of dependency to a self-concept that is self-directing (Knowles, 1968). According to Boucouvalas and Lawrence (2010), Malcom Knowles spoke to the adult learner's ability to understand him or herself and be internally directed even in situations that were other-directed, knowing when and how to learn and to take responsibility for his or her own learning. According to the Excelsior Community College 2015 Student Handbook, the attendance policy requires students to attend a minimum of 90% of their classes or face the prospect of being barred from examinations. Notwithstanding, this attendance policy, as outlined in the 2015 Student Handbook, has not been enforced.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Given the background, an explanatory correlation research design was used to examine the association between grades reported for students and percentage attendance. Pearson's correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the variables. Based on the results, the relationship

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between attendance and grades was found to be significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). A positive correlation resulted for all three grades when compared to attendance in the investigation (Course Work Grade: $r = .44$, $p<.001$; Final Exam Grade: $r = .27$, $p< .002$; Final Grade: $r = .38$, $p<.001$). Students with higher attendance tended to earn higher grades. The size of the correlation coefficients indicates that there is a moderately strong relationship between course work grade and attendance ($r = .44$, $p<.000$); and final grade and attendance ($r = .38$, $p<.000$). However, there was only a slight relationship between the final examination grade and attendance ($r = .27<$, $p< .002$). If attendance does not have a strong influence on examination performance, should it be used in determining if a student sits the examination? The current attendance policy requires students to attend 90% of classes taught in order to sit final examinations. Considering these findings, a review of this policy may be necessary.

Independent sample t tests were also used to compare attendance and grades based on prior achievement. Prior achievement takes into consideration matriculation into the Associate Degree in Business Studies program since Introduction to Management is completed as a first-year course offered in the first semester. Students are required to have passes in a minimum of five Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) subjects inclusive of Mathematics and English Language to matriculate into the Associate Degree in Business Studies program. Students who did not meet matriculation must do so by the end of year one to gain promotion to year two. One hundred and nine (109) students fully matriculated into the program whereas 30 students had subjects outstanding. Most students, with partial matriculation, had Mathematics outstanding. Results indicated that students with matriculation issues attended fewer classes ($M = 54.70\%$, $SD = 25.67\%$, $N = 30$) and scored lower in all three areas than students who met full matriculation (See table 2 for breakdown). The standard deviation of 25.6% attendance for students with matriculation issues is attributed to the data points being spread out over a large range of values. The average attendance of both day and evening students fell below the expected attendance policy of 90% as is detailed in the 2015 Student Handbook (Evening students, 86% and Day Students 71%). The 2015 Student Handbook also gave some amount of reprieve to students with medical conditions or to students who offered a letter explaining absences under special circumstances.

The findings indicate that the conceptual framework of attendance having a positive influence on grades holds true in this local setting. These findings also support lecturers' claim that day students attended fewer classes. Seeing that class attendance has a positive effect on grades, as was indicated in the findings, administrators and faculty would need to find creative means to encourage class attendance for all students while considering academic

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freedom (Macfarlane, 2013). According to Knowles (1968) the adult learner is self-directing and will reject pressures imposed on him by others. A mandatory policy may, therefore, raise fundamental issues for adult learners, as such a more flexible policy would be required.

Furthermore, class attendance significantly influences students' attainment of course work scores valued at 40% of their overall grade in most instances. In fact, the average coursework grade out of 100 for evening students was 75.60 as opposed to 68.18 for day students. The margin widens when the comparison was made based on matriculation. Students with full matriculation had an average coursework grade of 72.65 as opposed to 61.85 for students with partial matriculation. What was alarming about the group of students that partially matriculated was that their average attendance was 54.69% while fully matriculated students attended on average 80.92% of their classes. If these students came into the institution struggling and then not attend classes, this might have serious implications for completing the program and may affect the institution's completion rate. There was noted significance in the differences in attendance and grades for students who fully matriculated and those who did not. Mills et al. (2009) found matriculation to be the most influential factor on first year academic performance. The attendance policy should then make special provisions for this group of students.

MAJOR EVIDENCE FROM LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

Since it has been proven that there is a positive relationship between attendance and grades in the local setting, enforcing the current policy might be an option to increase class attendance and, by extension, grades since there is a positive relationship between the two variables. However, several studies reviewed cautioned against such an approach as it infringes on students' academic freedom, self-directedness and may serve as a counter-productive measure if adult learners choose not to honor such a policy. Green and Celkan's (2015) study posited that students generally felt that they were responsible for their own learning and that policy should reflect this stance.

Participants in this study consisted of 64 students in the United States and 44 in Turkey. Though students were in different cultures they held true to the assumption that they were responsible for their own learning. According to Boucouvalas and Lawrence (2010), Malcom Knowles spoke to the adult leaner's ability to understand him or herself and be internally directed even in situations that were other-directed, knowing when and how to learn and to take responsibility for his or her own learning. With this understanding of an adult learner, how effective would a compulsory or mandatory policy be if imposed on adult learners?

Lukorera and Nyatanga (2017) found that students may choose not to be engaged in learning even with stipulated attendance policies. This finding

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could be support for Knowles' assumption of self-directedness. Lin (2014) noted, as a policy implication, that, though a mandatory policy reviewed in a study by Marburger (2006) indicated that attendance was significantly improved even among those students who were reluctant to attend classes, this did not reflect in their performance. Students who went just because of the enforced policy, though they had perfect attendance, were not as engaged. Lin (2014) recommended a strategy of incentivizing attendance instead of promoting a mandatory policy. Broker, Milkman and Raj (2014) found that students may be more motivated to attend classes when they could earn bonus points or other tangible rewards towards their final grades. Carroll and Peter's (2017) experiments support the finding that students are more motivated to attend classes when they receive rewards. Carroll and Peter's (2017) found that students had increased attendance to classes when points were awarded for classroom activities.

Mohanan, Harichandran and Vijayan (2017), in a quantitative study, also found a positive correlation between attendance and performance; however, they also mentioned that, despite having a mandatory attendance policy, medical education continues to grapple with absenteeism. Talat, Abida and Fahad (2015) conducted a survey study with medical students in 2011 and 2012. The results indicated that there was a positive correlation between the perceived importance of attendance and levels of academic motivation. Talat, Abida and Fahad (2015) also found that 11.8% of the students were against a mandatory attendance policy because it reduced their motivation to attend classes. Hamdan, Tulbah, AlDuhayan and AlBedaiwi (2016) conducted a study that compared preferences of three hundred and forty-five (345) students in two universities in Saudi Arabia, one private the other public. Although both institutions have a mandatory policy that states that students must attend 25% of lectures or miss the final examination many of the students were not for a mandatory attendance policy (Hamdan et al., 2016). Students in the private institution had more interest in the mandatory policy and thought that class attendance was important. Students attending the public institution that did not pay tuition had less preference for a mandatory policy (Hamdan et al., 2016). This could have serious implications for state funded programs.

Snyder et al. (2014), posited that, even though studies showed that there is a relationship between attendance and student performance, research exploring this phenomenon, when the attendance policy is compulsory, or mandatory, have not been conclusive. Snyder et al. (2014) conducted a quasi-experimental study that reviewed students' attendance and performance based on being assigned a compulsory attendance policy that attributed a reward or penalty or a simple statement of policy which had no repercussions. The study found that high achievers were more responsive to the mandatory policy and that the relationship between attendance policy and class performance was

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based on students' prior academic achievement. The influence of prior achievement on performance was evident in the current study where matriculation data was used to represent prior achievement; students who had matriculation issues attended fewer classes ($M = 54.70\%$, $SD = 25.67\%$, $N = 30$) and performed poorer. Self's (2012) study also confirmed this finding. Self's (2012) study found that students who got better grades prior to the class investigated were less likely to miss classes.

With these findings, consideration must be given to the implications for weaker students if a compulsory or mandatory attendance policy is imposed as this may decrease retention and completion rates for students least likely to attend. In the current study, 30 of the 139 students had partial matriculation (21.58%). The mean attendance for this group was 54.70% of hours taught. If these students will not be as receptive of a mandatory policy as their higher achieving counterparts, this may cause increases in the drop-out rate if the policy is enforced. Cotton, Nash and Kneale (2017) suggested that policies and practices in different higher education institutions may affect retention rates. Similarly, Carr's (2014) qualitative study delineated the impact of attendance policy on adult learners and concluded that attendance policies can affect students' decision to persist in their studies. Attendance policy must then be considered seriously.

Macfarlane (2013) concluded that the strategy of imposing a compulsory attendance policy may serve as counterproductive to creating an atmosphere of having students become independent and critical learners. Macfarlane (2013) instead recommended that institutions consider all implications when instituting attendance policies. In a later study, Snyder and Frank (2016) found that absences were a good predictor of student grades and encouraged instructors and institutions to boost class attendance which would in turn increase student performance, retention and graduation rates. Snyder and Frank (2016) recommended further studies in effective methods that motivate students to attend classes, how they work relative to a compulsory policy and or in combination with other class attendance policies. Some institutions have moved to incentivize mandatory policies. The study conducted by Maskey (2012) promoted a mandatory attendance policy with incentives.

Teixeira (2016) recommended that teachers in the first lecture inform students of the relationship between attendance and performance suggesting having a flexible attendance policy, which is more in keeping with adult education; thereby, giving students adequate information to assist in their own decision-making. Mati, Gatumu and Chandi (2016) found that even in the high school setting that when students were thoroughly informed, it provided some amount of motivation, a sense of ownership causing them to be more inclined to follow the rules. Rijavec and Miljkovic (2015) investigated the reasons for college students missing classes. Rijavec and Miljkovic (2015) found "not being in the mood, personal issues, health issues,

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lecture issues and no negative consequences" (p.480) as reasons for missing classes. If students are willing to miss classes because there are no consequences this could indicate the need for enforcing a mandatory policy. In the current study reasons for missing classes were not ascertained. However, the handbook does account for explained absences which could include health or personal reasons. Latta and Lowenstein (2017) recommended that business students not miss any classes to prevent lost tuition and recommended a mandatory attendance policy for this reason. Notwithstanding, Verbeeren and Hoof (2007) questioned punishing students for a service they paid for but did not utilize.

SUMMARY

Based on the studies reviewed, throughout this paper, being present at class has several benefits. It is also noted that some students will not attend classes if they believe there are no consequences associated with absence. Notwithstanding, punishing adult learners for absenteeism has consequences not just for the learner, but also for the institution. Students who are forced to attend classes may not be as attentive to learning activities or may even be disruptive. Further mandatory attendance policies when enforced may have implications for retention rates. Such a policy may also demotivate students to attend as it goes against their self-directedness. In this sense, a mandatory attendance policy may be counterproductive. Administrators should also consider that students pay to study, if they take a decision to not attend classes they would have already lost. Penalizing students, by barring them from examinations because they missed classes, may be an additional charge to them. In this review of literature, several studies posited that students were more likely to attend classes when incentives are awarded (Braun & Sellers 2012; Carroll & Peter 2017; Lin 2014; Maskey 2012). In light of this, a policy that incentivizes attendance is recommended instead of enforcing the current policy.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

The first recommendation is to not bar students from examinations based on percentage of hours attended. This recommendation is based on the following reasons: Firstly, while the correlation study indicated that there was a positive relationship between attendance and final examination grade, there was only a slight relationship between these variables. Further, on average, students did not meet the 90% of hours taught as is stipulated by the current policy but still passed the course. If these students were all blocked from sitting final examinations, it could have negative implications for the graduation rate. Seeing that attendance has a positive effect on grades, as was indicated in the findings, administrators and faculty would need to find

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creative means to encourage class attendance for all students (Macfarlane, 2013). According to Knowles (1968) the adult learner is self-directing and will reject pressures imposed on him. A mandatory policy may, therefore, raise fundamental issues for adult learners, as such; a more flexible policy would be required. Based on the findings in the local study and scholarship, a policy that informs and rewards attendance is recommended.

Inform. Students should be adequately notified of the relationship between attendance and performance. Information dissemination could be achieved through lecturers communicating these implications at the beginning of each semester as well as to include this information on each course outline. Arming students with this information is critical in promoting self-directed learners. As was indicated by Mati, Gatumu and Chandi (2016), students are more inclined to follow an institution's rules and policies when they have been adequately informed. The policy should not only inform the student, but lecturers would also report to academic advisors when students have missed two consecutive classes for follow-up to take place.

Reward. Given that there is a current policy that has not been enforced, continuing this policy or creating a new policy that requires similar enforcement might meet the same fate. The study did not ascertain lecturers' position on enforcing the current policy. However, lecturers maybe more open to rewarding attendance as opposed to punishing absence (Braun & Sellers 2012; Lin 2014). As such, it is recommended, that students be rewarded to attend classes through increasing the opportunity cost of missing classes. Increasing the opportunity cost of missing classes can be done by using questions from reviews and in class exercises on the midterm examination. Points should also be awarded for other in class activities, like discussions. Awarding points for classroom activities will have real implications for students' coursework grade that was most affected by absenteeism. An attendance bonus can also be considered. If an attendance bonus is considered, it should be explicitly stated so that both student and lecturers are clear on requirements for award of this bonus.

A potential barrier to the proposed policy may be the lack of participation of lecturers in informing students of the relationship between attendance and performance and the reporting absences. However, if prior to implementation of policy they are adequately informed and they are given the opportunity to contribute to the discussion, their support should be confirmed. Implementation of the proposed policy is proposed for the 2021-2022 academic year. Implementing the policy in the 2019-2020 academic year would give adequate time for familiarization and acceptance from the various stakeholders. In addition, it would allow for policy update in the student handbook. It is also recommended that a series of town hall type meetings be held with faculty and the student body to further disseminate information concerning the recommended policy.

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POLICY EVALUATION PLAN

The overall goal of this project is to propose policy initiatives that will encourage class attendance while taking into consideration current findings and research. The policy recommendation will be evaluated based on outcome and in a formative way. Outcome based evaluation is used to determine the effectiveness of the initiatives. The outcome will be evaluated through comparing future average attendance and performance scores of day and evening students with previous ones. The evaluation will be completed through the institution's Office of Research and would be outcome based. Keen attention will be given to students with matriculation issues to identify how effective this initiative is in improving student attendance and grades. A survey of students, and faculty would be used to gain their perception on the effectiveness of the strategies used to encourage attendance yearly. The survey used should also afford participants the opportunity of proposing other means of encouraging attendance. The survey of students, and faculty will be developed and executed by the Office of Research. Through use of this evaluation measure, administrators and faculty will be able to determine the effectiveness of proposed policy and adjust where required. Evaluation after implementing the proposed policy will facilitate efficient use of the institution's resources. The results from the evaluations can be discussed at the academic staff meeting prior to the beginning of each academic year.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Through acknowledging the self-directedness of adult learners, the findings in this study, scholarship of others and the proposed policy, could have the following possible social change implications: the focus of the policy may cause students to attend more classes which has been proven to positively correlate with grades. Improved attendance could have positive effects for the culture of the institution in terms of retention and completion. Higher grades could lead to higher retention and graduation rates. Jones (2015) posited that institutions should focus more on student completion rather than a culture of enrollment. Retention can be further improved through special monitoring and mentoring of students (Cotton et al., 2017). Administrators and faculty could, through executing this policy, ensure that students have the requisite information concerning attendance to make decisions that are in their best interest, thereby reinforcing self-directedness (Dee, 2015). In addition, because there are incentives for attending classes through the reward component of the policy, there can be significant improvement in coursework grades, which will have an impact on the overall grade students receive.

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FURTHER POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The problem as stated in the beginning can be identified in other local institutions. If the recommended policy is adopted and is successful after implementation, the recommended policy could aid other institutions in revisiting their policies. In addition, by continuing data collection through the evaluation plan, additional scholarship could be added to the plethora of available studies. Finally, the promotion of a policy that informs would help students in being critical thinkers that contribute positively to their communities.

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VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE APPRAISAL INSTRUMENT USED TO EVALUATE TEACHER PERFORMANCE

Tamecia Adams-Robinson
University of the West Indies, Excelsior Community College
tamecia28@yahoo.com; tamecia.adams-robinson@ecc.edu.jm

Abstract – Since the implementation of the teacher performance evaluation programme in Jamaica, teachers have often complained about the subjectivity of the evaluation instrument used. There are several inferences and decisions that are made about teachers from the data gathered from the use of this instrument. The focus of the programme was to create an objective basis on which teacher performance was evaluated which would alleviate the concerns of teachers that their appraisal reflected preferences and discrimination (Jamaica Information Service (JIS), 2004). Chan (2014), purports that, since the information gathered is not inconsequential, then the instrument that is used should be reliable and valid. The Ministry of Education, in realizing the invalidity of this instrument, has developed a new instrument which some schools have decided to implement in September 2016. In using the construct validity theory (1995), the focus of this research is to ascertain information on the reliability and validity of the new instrument. A study was carried out using 50 teachers from Mayberry High School (pseudonym) and teachers at the School of Education at the University of the West Indies. The research addresses the question, 'Is the appraisal instrument that is used to evaluate teachers valid and reliable?' The data shows that there are concerns with the validity and reliability of the instrument. To ensure the accuracy of the decisions that are made to foster teachers' growth and development, the Ministry of Education should ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument used. This study will inspire further research in this area within the context of the Caribbean.

Keywords – teachers, appraisal instrument, validity, reliability, evaluation, teacher performance

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INTRODUCTION

Prior to 2004, there was no standardized system for evaluating the performance of teachers in Jamaica. In some schools, principals would create their own system of evaluation while others would use aspects of programmes adopted from textbooks that were written in the United States or United Kingdom (Campbell, 2014). As a result of lack of standardization, there were teachers who thought the evaluation results lacked objectivity, as they reflected preferences or discrimination. Studies carried out on teachers' perception of the evaluation process found that many teachers level of satisfaction was based on how they were scored. Forty-eight percent were satisfied with the process while others felt that their evaluation was subjective (Campbell, 2006; Donaldson, 2012). The Ministry of Education, in trying to resolve this, decided to implement a standardized teacher evaluation programme. The focus of the programme was to create an objective basis on which teacher performance was evaluated, empower principals and boards in their management of teachers, use the results to make informed decisions about teachers and develop strategies to remedy deficient performance (Jamaica Information Service (JIS), 2004 & Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, Teacher Performance Evaluation Policy and Procedure Handbook, 2004). However, the introduction of the standardized programme was met with disapproval by many teachers. One of the reasons was the perceived higher level of scrutiny. The then Minister of Education, Maxine Henry- Wilson, clarified that the evaluation programme was intended to determine what improvements and professional developments were needed as well as the best practices that could be adopted (Jamaica Information Service (JIS), 2004). Teachers are essential in the development of any society, therefore the need for an evaluation programme so that their strengths and weaknesses can be identified. This will result in the implementation of measures to provide support and assistance for these teachers with the view of improving the performance of the students.

The area of teacher performance evaluation is underexplored within Jamaica and the region. The limited studies done focus on teachers' perception of the evaluation process but not on the reliability and validity of the instrument used. This study is very important because it will add to the body of literature and may inspire further research on the topic.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to test the construct validity theory which relates the validity and reliability of the teacher appraisal instrument to teacher performance. The independent variable validity is defined as construct validity since this would incorporate the other types of validities.

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Reliability, as an independent variable, is the internal consistency reliability while the dependent variable teacher performance is considered the knowledge of subject content, pedagogy, commitment to students, interaction with parents and wider community and professionalism. In order to ascertain information on the validity and reliability of the appraisal instrument used to evaluate teacher performance, the research focused on the following research questions:

1. How valid is the appraisal instrument that is used in the evaluation of teacher performance?
   (a) Do the results from the new appraisal instrument yield a pattern of factors similar to the factor analysis results from the previous instrument?
2. How reliable is the appraisal instrument that is used in the evaluation of teacher performance?
   (a) Is the new instrument a significant predictor of internal consistency as the old instrument?
3. How different is the new appraisal instrument from the previous appraisal instrument?
   (a) Does the paired sample t-test show a difference between the new appraisal instrument and the previous appraisal instrument?

$H_{1O:}$ There is no difference between the old appraisal instrument and the new appraisal instrument used to evaluate teachers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In exploring this topic, it was found that limited research has been done on teacher evaluation and the instrument used in such a process. Since teacher evaluation is crucial for accountability, growth and development (Nolan & Hoover, 2011), more research is needed in this area within the Caribbean. Additionally, the Ministry of Education will have vested interest in the findings as they are currently in the process of implementing the new instrument. It is hoped that the findings may inspire further research before the instrument is implemented in schools.

Furthermore, the research can be a source of knowledge for individuals conducting a similar research as there is insufficient information on the topic. Finally, the information can provide knowledge for teachers on the reliability and validity of the instrument and support them in challenging the inferences and decisions that are made as these decisions have grave consequences (Chan, 2014).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for the study is centred on the construct validity theory. From the beginning of the 20th century it was found, in the

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development of modern scientific clinical psychology, that there was a challenge in developing valid measures (Strauss & Smith, 2009). As time progressed, test validity was viewed in terms of criterion validity (Strauss & Smith, 2009). Overtime, other areas of validity were developed such as content validity. By the 1950s, the idea of construct validity was introduced as conventional methods of validation were inappropriate for the specific types of research required in the developing of tests (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). Construct validity is "a measure of an attribute or quality that accounts for variance in a test instrument" (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2006, p.43). The instrument should include all the facets or dimensions that adequately represent the construct of interest. This will facilitate an acceptable and adequate definition of what is to be measured. The comprehension of validity has evolved over the years and has resulted in a unified definition of the concept which is construct validity. The traditional conception of validity was divided into three separate and substitutable types (Messick, 1995). These three types were content, criterion and construct validities. This fragmented view of the concept has been disregarded and the framework that has been developed is construct validity. This alludes to the fact that validity is not fragmented but all these three areas are aspects of the comprehensive theory of construct validity (Messick, 1995). According to Messick (1995), this will allow for the addressing of the meaning of scores and the interpretation and consequences of these interpretations. As a result of this, there is a broader understanding of validity from just an instrument or test measuring what it purports to measure, to the understanding that what needs to be valid is the interpretation of the scores and the implications of these scores (Cronbach as cited in Messick, 1995).

This theoretical framework was chosen as it allows for the integration of different types of validities - content validity, criterion and construct validities are all interwoven. Also, this framework provides a deeper and broader understanding of validity which facilitates a better understanding about the empirical testing of hypotheses about test scores and the theoretical relevant relationships (Messick, 1995). The framework, not only allows for an explanation of the independent variable of the validity of the instrument in predicting teacher performance, but also that of the reliability of the instrument. Messick, Tenopyr, Guion, Embretson and Anastasi (as cited in Kane, 2001) stated that "the construct-validity model came to be seen, not as one kind of validity evidence, but as a general approach to validity that includes all evidence for validity, including content and criterion evidence, reliability, and the wide range of methods associated with theory testing"(p. 324). The theory includes the examination of both reliability and validity and result in the use of different types of evidence in validation.

According to Brenan (2006), reliability is the accuracy or precision of a measurement procedure. It indicates the consistency of the scores and the

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extent to which these scores can be reproduced. Brenan (2006), views reliability as a precondition for validity. The scores from a test should at least be moderately reliable before they can have any validity. The use of this framework offers a broadened scope that incorporates the theoretical perspectives on validity and reliability. Furthermore, the construct validity theory provides a foundation for the selecting of the methodology and methods that are plausible in obtaining information on the reliability and validity of the appraisal instrument.

The evolution of the construct validity theory purports that all validities are unified to be construct validity (Kane, 2001). There is concern with this notion as it can then be interpreted that all interpretations should be validated in the same way in terms of theoretical constructs (Loevinger & Messick as cited in Kane, 2001). This is only possible if the assumption is made that all validations are to follow the same pattern of inferences and evidence. For this research paper this would create a challenge as the focus will be on different aspects of validity. Therefore, the need for a criterion as to what should be included in each validation (Kane, 2001).

In using this theory there is also the challenge in the clarity of the research questions that are proposed. According to Kane (2001), "the elimination of the traditional taxonomy of the types of validity without providing a new structure can make the choice of research questions less clear than it was under the Trinitarian Model" (Kane, 2001 p. 332). The Trinitarian Model distinguished between content, criterion and construct validities which would make it easier to choose research questions and associate them to the specific type of validity. The uniform understanding of validity makes it more onerous. Although these challenges exist, this is the most appropriate framework as it takes into consideration different types of validities and also includes reliability.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research used a quantitative approach with a survey research design. The information was collected from teachers at Mayberry High School in St. Andrew and teachers studying at the School of Education at the University of the West Indies. The sample for the research consisted of fifty (50) teachers. A convenience sampling technique was used to select the teachers who participated in the research.

Instrumentation

The information for the study was collected using the current evaluation instrument and the drafted new appraisal instrument which will soon be implemented by the Ministry of Education. The current instrument consists

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of 58 Likert scale questions (See Appendix A). The instrument measures the following constructs:

- Planning for student learning
- Teaching for student learning
- Creating a classroom environment for student learning
- Personal characteristics, professional development.
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership and management.

The new instrument consists of 42 items with varying rating scales (See Appendix B) and is organized around the following guiding principles:

- Teacher knows the subject content which he or she teaches.
- Teacher knows how to teach the subject(s) for which he/she is responsible,
- Teacher is committed to the children in his or her care, managing the learning process with due consideration to diversity and character development.
- Teacher hones his or her professional skills.
- Teacher interacts with parent and community.
- Teacher conducts himself /herself in a manner that uplifts the profession.

Both instruments were developed by the Ministry of Education in Jamaica.

Data Collection Procedures

Permission was acquired from the University of the West Indies, through the School of Education, to conduct the research in fulfillment of the requirements for the Education and Measurement Master Programme. The data for the research was collected from March 23, 2016-April 26, 2016. Twenty- five of the current instrument were administered to the teachers at Mayberry High School on March 23, 2016. Copies of the existing instrument were handed to teachers in the morning and they were returned throughout the course of the day. The remaining copies were administered from April 5, 2016 -April 26, 2016. Copies of the new instrument were handed out during this time period as well. They were administered to teachers at Mayberry High School and the School of Education at the University of the West Indies. The participants were able to return the current appraisal instrument within a day, but it took some of the participants at Mayberry an average of two weeks to complete the new instrument. The participants at the School of Education completed both instruments during class and returned them at the end of class.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration is the evaluation whether any type of harm could occur as part of the research and the need to ensure that the mechanisms are

instituted to remove the potential harm (Ethical Considerations, 2002). There are several ethical considerations that were maintained throughout the study. Permission to conduct the research was granted by the University of the West Indies through the School of Education. All participants consented to participating in the study and were informed about the study and its purpose. The information obtained was only used for this paper. All information gathered was confidential and anonymous.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses in a study and are out of the researcher's control (Simon, 2011). There are several limitations that were encountered in the conduct of the research. The evaluation instrument was completed by the teachers themselves. Usually, the head of department completes the evaluation instrument and then discusses the information with the teacher. At times the teacher will be asked to fill out the instrument while the head of department fills out a separate instrument then information from both copies are compared and discrepancies resolved. Teachers doing self-reporting have impacted the accuracy of the scores from the instruments.

Also, the reliability and the validity of the first instrument was not obtained; therefore, a comparison could not be made to the present findings from the research. Furthermore, one of the subscales from the first instrument was left out of the research. This subscale addresses leadership and management. Most of the participants were not senior teachers or held any management position in their schools; hence, most of them were unable to complete this section of the instrument.

In running the factor analysis, the KMO (Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin) and the Bartlett's sphericity test results were not generated. This was because the correlation matrix was non-positive definite. This occurred as some of the eigenvalues of the component matrix were negative numbers (International Business Machines (IBM), n.d). In order to acquire the KMO and the Bartlett's test the sample size would have to be increased. Therefore, this signifies that one of the limitations of the research is that the sample size is too small.

Data Analysis Procedures

All the data collected was first extracted into an Excel spreadsheet. The data was then imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 for analysis. Several statistical computations were done to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument and any differences between the two instruments.

To obtain the face and content validities of the instruments, they were given to an expert researcher at the University of the West Indies at the School of Education. In addition, the informal conversations with the participants

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proved vital in obtaining information on the content validity of the instruments. To determine the construct validity of the instruments a principal component analysis was used with a varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the subscales of the instruments and the entire instruments. To obtain the difference between the instruments a paired sample-t test was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fifty-five copies of both evaluation instruments were distributed, and the return rate was 99%. Research question one focused on how valid the appraisal instrument is when used in the evaluation of teacher performance. The sub-question focused on whether the results from the new appraisal instrument yielded a pattern of factors like the factor analysis results from the previous instrument. From this the following results were obtained:

Validity

Face and Content Validities. Based on informal conversations with some of the participants, the data suggested that it was easier to complete the first evaluation instrument as it had a 4-point Likert scale, the items were not lengthy and were unequivocally stated. The new instrument was too long, some of the terms used were not clearly understood such as QEC and there was no rubric outlining the meaning of the different scores that were acquired. There was only one rating for each item with no explanation of the meaning of the rating scale and both instruments lacked face validity. The new instrument was too long and wordy and some of the terms were ambiguous which would support the information gathered informally from some participants.

Construct Validity. The results from the principal component analysis yielded 13 factors for the first instrument. According to Factor Analysis-SPSS (n.d), factors that have a value of eigenvalues ≥ 1 should be accepted. These 13 factors accounted for 85.8 % of the variance. The factors chosen were based on a -+5 threshold as Matsunaga (2010) outlined that factor loadings of .5-6 should be retained. The data shows that factors 9, 11 and 12 only loaded one item each while factors 7,8,10 and 13 loaded only two items each. For the other factors it is seen where there is a clustering of items based on subscales. From this clustering it shows that the current appraisal instrument is dominated by five core factors: Teaching for Student Learning (TSL), Personal Development (PD), Interpersonal Skills (IS), and Planning for Student Learning (PSL).

The principal component analysis yielded 11 factors for the new appraisal instrument with a variance of 84%. Factor 11 loaded only one item while factors 6-10 loaded 2 items each. There was the clustering of several items

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from subscales. Although there is a clustering of items for factor five the items were coming from different subscales. The differences between the items made it difficult to name the factor. Based on the clustering of the items, the new instrument is dominated by 4 core factors: Commitment to Child Care (CCC), Knowledge and Application of Pedagogy (KAP) and Professional Conduct (PCD) and Knowledge of Subject Content (KSC).

The second research question focused on how reliable the appraisal instrument in the evaluation of teacher performance was. The sub-question focussed on whether the new instrument was a significant predictor of internal consistency as the old instrument. From this the following results were obtained.

Reliability

Internal Consistency. The first appraisal instrument consisted of seven subscales but only six were used for this research. To obtain the internal consistency of the instrument Cronbach alpha was used. The subscales for the first appraisal instrument had values ranging from 0.684- 0.897 and the overall Cronbach alpha was 0.942. The reliability for the subscales was very good with most of them being over 0.8. According to Gliem & Gliem (2003), Cronbach alpha range from 0-1 and the nearer the value is to 1, the better. Values of 0.7 and above are deemed acceptable. For this instrument the Cronbach alpha for the subscale personal characteristics (0.684) is unacceptable.

The new appraisal instrument had sub-scales ranging from 0.562- 0.777. The overall Cronbach alpha for the instrument is 0.738. Three of the subscales for this instrument are unacceptable. Demonstrated Continuous Professional Development (CPD) had a Cronbach alpha of 0.562, Demonstrated High Level of Professional Conduct (PCD) 0.685 and Engagement of Parents to Advance Students Learning Outcomes (EPCM) was 0 .544.

Difference between the instruments. The third research question focused on how different the new appraisal instrument was from the previous appraisal instrument. The sub-question focussed on whether the paired sample t-test showed a difference between the new appraisal instrument and the previous appraisal instrument. The findings from the study found that there is a difference between the old and new appraisal instruments where (t = 8.944, df =49, p= 0.00). The null hypothesis indicates that there is no difference between the old appraisal instrument and new appraisal instrument was rejected.

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DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings showed that both instruments are lacking in face validity. Although this type of validity is subjective, thus the weakest type of validity, it is important that an examining the instruments that they appear to measure what they purport to measure (Laerd Dissertation, n.d). Also, there was the issue of content validity. The findings suggested that there are several of the teachers that had a challenge understanding the new instrument. There were terms that they were unaware of and they found it to be exhausting and difficult to complete. The use of an instrument where terms are unclear and is tiresome to complete will result in inaccurate information being obtained. Since the interpretations of these results are used to make decisions about the teachers, then one must ensure that the instrument is designed that information can be obtained accurately (Messick, 1995). The teachers found it easier to understand the content of the old instrument and the fact that it used a four point Likert scale made it easier to score in comparison to the new instrument that had rating scale with no instructions on the meanings of the scores. The fact that the old instrument has been in use since 2004 and teachers were familiar with the instrument would have contributed to it being easier for them to understand and complete.

The instruments did not yield the same pattern of factors. The old instrument yielded thirteen factors while the new instrument yielded eleven factors. On closer examination it was found that the old instrument was dominated by five core factors: Teaching for Student Learning (TSL), Personal Development (PD), Interpersonal Skills (IS), and Planning for Student Learning (PSL). Factor five had items loading from TSL; however, the factor was named Differentiated Learning for Students. These factors were in line with the five subscales of the instrument. The new instrument was dominated by four factors: Commitment to Child Care (CCC), Knowledge and Application of Pedagogy (KAP) and Professional Conduct (PCD) and Knowledge of Subject Content (KSC). Although factor 5 had a clustering of three items they were from different subscales. The items looked at student behaviour, attending professional development and relating national and curriculum goals. Based on the differences in what the items addressed it was difficult to name this factor which affects construct validity. This would further impact other types of validities as they are interwoven into construct validity (Messick, 1995). Using a larger sample may bring clarity in defining this factor.

Both instruments were found to be reliable. However, the subscale Professional Skills must be revisited or taken out of the old instrument as the Cronbach alpha for this subscale was below 0.7. Additionally, the subscales

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Development of High Level of Professional Conduct and Engagement of Parents and Community Members to Advance Student Outcomes have to be revisited to improve the reliability of these three subscales as they too are below the Cronbach alpha of 0.7(Gliem & Gliem,2003). The adjusting or removal of these subscales will increase the overall reliability of the instrument. It was seen where both instruments were reliable despite there are concerns of validity; hence, an instrument can be reliable though it lacks validity (Brenan, 2006).

Besides, there is a difference between the new and the old instrument. This difference can be seen in the pattern of factors that were yielded by both instruments. The new instrument yielded a different pattern of factors than the old instrument. Although both instruments were valid, to some extent, it was seen where the old instrument was more valid as the terms were clearer and it was easier to complete because of the use of the four-point Likert scale. Furthermore, though both instruments are reliable the old instrument had a higher reliability (0.9 42) than the new instrument (0.738).

The Ministry of Education plans on removing the old appraisal instrument and replacing it with the new instrument. However, it is seen where the old instrument is more valid and reliable than the new instrument. Therefore, it brings to consideration that adjustments must be made to the new instrument to improve reliability and validity.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RESEARCH

To ensure that teachers are accountable and are of the best quality a valid and reliable evaluation system must be put in place by the Ministry of Education. The findings show that there are concerns with the reliability and validity of the new appraisal instrument; consequently, the Ministry should look back at the instrument and the items to ensure that there is face validity, content validity and above all construct validity (Messick, 1995). If construct validity is obtained, then the instrument will have all the types of validities; therefore, will be reliable. Furthermore, the findings give teachers the opportunity to challenge the decisions that are made about them if the instrument is used as is. They can challenge the validity and reliability of the interpretations made from the data gathered and any decisions that are made. The information must valid for the inferences and decisions that are made to be valid (Messick, 1995).

Subsequently, the Ministry needs to explore redesigning the paper to ensure that it has face validity. In addition, a Likert scale is recommended for use instead of the present rating scale to make it easier to score. Instructions or guidelines should be included to explain the meanings of the scores.

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Furthermore, the subscales that are unacceptable must be revisited to improve them or remove them from the instrument to improve the reliability. The instrument also should be shortened to reduce the frustration in its completion.

Finally, teachers should be educated about the instrument and unfamiliar terms be explained. Also, the senior teachers who will be using the instrument to evaluate the teachers should be trained appropriately

Despite the limitations in the sample size for this research, information gathered has provided insight into the need for a more advance research to be undertaken by the Ministry of Education.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of teachers is very important in facilitating accountability, improving students' performance and facilitating teacher growth and development. However, it is imperative that the instrument used to evaluate teachers be valid and, in so doing, it will also be reliable. The current instrument used in teacher evaluation, as well as the new instrument, that will be brought on stream have issues of validity and reliability. However, since the current instrument will be replaced by the new instrument the issues of reliability and validity must be addressed before its implementation. The findings of this study propel the need for further research in this area.

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EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDICATION EXPENDITURE AND CHRONIC DISEASES IN JAMAICA

Orville Beckford
Jordan Briscoe

University of the West Indies, Excelsior Community College

orville_beckford@yahoo.com[1], jordanbriscoe127@yahoo.com[2]

Abstract – *As inflation rocks the 21st century, the amount spent to maintain health status rises. High medication costs affect persons worldwide as not all can afford the constant increase in expenditure. This study examines the relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases while exploring the role health insurance plays in reducing the burden of medication cost. A quantitative cross-sectional method of research study was utilized to observe the relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. The study utilized data from the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (2008) which comprised of a sample of 22,294 females 11411 (51.2%) while males accounted for 10883 (48.8%). The population of Jamaica in 2008 was 2.782 million. An independent sample T-test at 95% level of significance was used to compare the two means of the amount spent on medication at a private source and the average number of persons covered by insurance. With the T value being 0.39 and the P value being .969 we accept null hypothesis as the P value is greater than the level of significance being tested (see figure 9 pp 26). Therefore, we can conclude that there is insufficient evidence to support our research proposal that there is a relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. However, the null hypothesis is accepted that there is no diversity in the population sample while accepting the variables assumed equally (see figure 7 in the list of tables). The study showed that there is no relationship between the amounts spent on medication affecting the health of someone living with a chronic disease but having insurance can significantly reduce the out of pocket cost for the individual.*

Keywords – *Medication expenditure, chronic diseases, out-of- pocket expenditure, Disability, Health Insurance.*

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INTRODUCTION

Medication expenditure or pharmaceutical cost is "spending on prescription medicine and over-the-count drugs" (OECD Data, 2016). It is a major healthcare problem throughout the world; affecting persons with chronic diseases, their financial status (especially low-income earners) and family relationships. This health care problem can impact negatively on people's health outcome. In fact, Kulp, Greiner & Schulenburg (2003, p21) explained that, in Germany, "medication expenditure is the third largest item after in-patient and out-patient costs, accounting for approximately 16% of total expenditure on health costs by the health insurance funds and companies''. This is of concern to persons with chronic diseases, who are at a significant disadvantage, as they might find it difficult to afford the remaining balance (co-pay) not covered by health insurance or government aids.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to highlight the health implications of constantly raising costs of medication and how these costs affect persons with chronic illnesses. The study will also highlight the associated soci-economic problems faced by patients with chronic illnesses. The rationale for the study is to highlight the relationship between the high cost of medication and its impact on the health of individuals with chronic illness in Jamaica. This relationship will be explored despite existing government funded institutions that aid in the acquisition of medications for persons with chronic illnesses. This area of research is needed since medication expenditure is a major problem affecting person with chronic diseases, financial income, and family and health outcome.

Furthermore, there is still a gap in understanding the effects of not being able to afford medications due to out-of-pocket expenditure and its health implications. This research will explore the relationship between medication expenditure and the degree of efficacy of treatment for chronic diseases at selected hospitals in Jamaica.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Patients with menial income face major hurdles when accessing prescribed medications to deal with chronic illnesses. This research paper will explore the different types of chronic illnesses, in selected Jamaican hospitals, and people's ability to afford the prescribed medication. Hence, having knowledge of medication expenditure will help to alleviate the problem caused by out-of-pocket expense and amounts covered by insurance companies when government health expenditure is analyzed. Negative health outcome caused by non-adherence to medication regime and disabilities caused by chronic

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diseases will affect government's budget and the country's overall development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A desk review of reports in academic publications and news media was used to gather and analyse information for the study. This review process was also critical in establishing gaps in existing research and establish cause and effect which can be further studied to create better understanding of the topic.

The review of the literature on medication expenditure and chronic diseases was executed by observing, comparing the findings from different researchers as well as examining the limitation, gaps and considerations for further research. According to Islam, Yen, Valderas, & McRae (2014, p125) "chronic conditions are long-term and require continuous care. Patients with healthcare coverage still incur a substantial and increasing out-of-pocket-expenditure (OOPE) for health services and medication." In Jamaica, for example, insurances may cover up to 80% of medication and health services cost for those who have coverage. It is even more devastating for people who are not insured to pay the total cost of the prescribed medication as there are many companies, in Jamaica, that do not offer health insurance to their workers. These patients are usually from the lower socioeconomic strata of society.

An additional burden for people living with chronic illnesses is the non-medical expenses. In fact, Islam, Yen, Valderas & McRae (2014) supports this view when they observed that "outside of medical expenses, non-medical expenses (transportation, home maintenance, personal care, respire care if needed, meals shopping) are of importance to healthcare and these are factors to consider when moving forward". Here it is expounded that OOPE does not only entail costs not paid by the health insurance, but it also highlights a number of factors which should be taken into consideration moving forward such as, how the respondents access government funding, revenue from employment, if applicable, and means of income.

According to Piette, Heister & Wagner (2004) "approximately one-third of chronically ill adult's medication underuse is contributed to cost and this is not discussed with clinicians". They have suggested that clinicians should be more proactive in identifying and assisting the patient with these problems, but the health care professional cannot treat or help in a situation where he/she is at a state of deficient knowledge about his/her client.

On the other hand, Reed (2017) reported that "increases in patient OOP costs are a clear barrier to the use of and adherence to medications, especially for high-risk patient groups". Here Reed, (2017) made a clear correlation between increased OOP and adherence to medication regimen. Admittedly, the Government has collaborated with non-profit organizations to share the

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cost of purchasing the medication for high-risk patient. While this is good, steps should be taken to emphasize primary care and education to lessen chronic diseases.

Likewise, Brink et al., (2015) questioned the methodology of calculating medication cost of the initial source by claiming:

> To date, there is no consensus on the most appropriate acuity metric to use when monitoring medication expenses over time. One potential adjustment metric is a case-mix index (CMI), a nationally standardized measure of overall hospital resource consumption that has become an indicator for disease severity among patients at an institution (p. 2159).

This statement makes it clear that there is yet to be a unified method of assessing out of pocket expenses. This limitation does not truly capture the real medication expenditure which then could be used to make a comparison between hospitalization and out-patient medication expenditure. Therefore, a standardized unit of assessment would give a better understanding of the problem and more insight on how to improve the services provided.

Similarly, Kulp, Greiner & Schulenburg (2003) showed that, in Germany, "medication expenditure is the third largest item after in-patient and out-patient costs, accounting for approximately 16% of total expenditure on health costs by the health insurance funds and companies". The reason for the growth of expenditure is primarily because of the structured component - the shift towards prescribing more expensive medication. Here the reason behind the increase becomes evident, and as the medication prices increase, it demands more out of the pockets of members of the public. Sun et al (2016) also added that, although having been partially improved, inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics and injectables was still prevalent. Here there is justification of Kulp, Greiner & Schulenburg's (2003) claim of an increase in total expenditure as it is not only happening in Germany, but also in China. Cost reduction implementations were utilized but were deemed futile due to the inappropriate prescribing of medication which affects the patient both financially and emotionally. The incorrect medications could be even more expensive than the ones needed which affect medication adherence.

While in Bangladesh, Rahman et al (2013) stated, "that the fundamental role of the healthcare systems is not only to improve health but to protect the household from financial catastrophe associated with illness". They also reported that "OOP for healthcare can cause households to incur catastrophic expenditures, pushing them into poverty. Globally, approximately 44 million households face catastrophic health expenditure annually, and about 25 million households are pushed into poverty by their health expenses". A different approach was proposed by the above source to prevent mounting medical expenses, not just persons living with chronic illnesses but, their

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families as well. They called for better systems to be in place so that the individual would not take the brunt of the expenditure. Poverty would only cause more problems with illnesses so this issue should be rectified with extreme urgency.

Certain chronic diseases bear more financial burden as well as an influence on medication expenditure; for example, cancer and diabetes. Langa et al (2004) reported that, "Total cancer-related costs in the United States may approach $100 billion per year". However, the limitation of the study is that, while it "examined the direct medical cost", it did not identify OOP cost to patients and families. How individuals and their families interpret and cope with their disease is also a critical aspect of literature that must be reviewed. With ineffective coping, there can be a reduction in medication adherence and total compliance with the medical regimen, which was enforced by Piette, Heister &Wagner (2004). In a study done, in Jamaica, to show coping strategies used by clients seeking health care services Henry-Lee, Bailey & Gordon-Strachan (2010) reported that "if drugs are unavailable at rural health centres, the only outlet available is the private sector pharmacy, all of which are located in the towns". They continued by adding that, "patients may borrow or use their savings to meet the cost of acute illnesses" Clients with a chronic condition were more likely to use avoidant coping strategies such as postponed/missed appointments and purchase only a part of their medication.

Self-rated health (SRH) is a global measure of how individuals perceive their own health. According to Cott, Gignac & Badley (1999) the high prevalence of chronic conditions and disability in Canada make understanding the predictors of self-rated health in this group an important issue. Long-term disability is reported by 10-15% of the Canadian adult population with the major reported causes of long-term disability including arthritis and rheumatism, back disorders, heart disease and respiratory disorders. Here we see a need for further research into predictors of self-related health variables; more research needs to be done to investigate the health-seeking behaviours of persons living with chronic diseases.

Additionally, Galenkamp, Braam, Huisman & Deeg (2013) noted that "the association between poor SRH and chronic diseases became weaker, whereas the association between poor SRH and severe disability became stronger over time. Most unfavourable trends were observed in the older and the lower educated". How individuals perceive their health pays a major impact on their health status, health determinates as it relates to lifestyle also contribute to the overall perception of an individual's health. Again, the research shows that how individuals perceive their health is a major concern. The above source focused on the older adults who are in the developmental stage of integrity vs. despair of their life cycle which encompasses if they have self-actualized or are hindered in life. Illness negatively impacts the older adults'

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perception of themselves which lays a burden on their health. In this regard, an aging population spells more trouble on the horizon for governments of developing nations. The cost of medication deficiency would be more pronounced in the older population most of whom would have been in the retirement stage of their work life.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A quantitative research study was done to analyse the relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. The goal of the research was to evaluate the relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. The study also investigated other variables which include the effects of out-of-pocket expenditure on health outcome. The research also explored the role health insurance plays in reducing medication expenditure. Lastly, the research examined the correlation between disability and chronic diseases to see if there is a relationship to medication expenditure.

This quantitative study will utilize hypothesis testing to assess the plausibility of the research hypotheses by using sample data about patients with chronic diseases from selected hospitals in Jamaica.

Research Questions

Research questions that form the basis of this research hypotheses are:

    a) Is there a relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases?

    b) Is there a relationship between medication expenditure and social problems in the family?

    c) What is the relationship between the rising cost of medication and medication non-compliance?

    d) Is there is a relationship between disability (mental and physical) and medication accessibility?

    e) Is there a negative relationship between Self-rated health (SRH) and medication expenditure?

Hypothesis

H_o - There is no relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases in Jamaica

H_a - There is a relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases in Jamaica

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A quantitative study was utilized while using the cross-sectional method of research to observe the relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. The cross-sectional method was used to investigate

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relationships and associations between medication expenditure and chronic disease in Jamaica at a point in time. A problem was identified, and five research questions were developed to establish the relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. A hypothesis of "There is a relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases in Jamaica" was developed to test throughout the study. A review of literature was done to gather supporting literature on the topic to strengthen the credibility of the research paper. A questionnaire adapted from the Jamaica Survey of Living Condition (2008) was used to evaluate living conditions of a stratified random population of twenty-two thousand, two hundred and ninety-four (22,294) participants in Jamaica.

Data Collection

The data collection mode was face-to-face interviews with structured questionnaires that were distributed to persons randomly across the island in the study. The study was instituted with data already gathered, sort and entered in the statistical analysis tool SPSS.

Data Analysis

Statistical Program for the Social Sciences SPSS (version 20) was used to do statistical analysis from the questionnaire data. An independent sample two tail test was done to examine the relationship between two variables being tested in the hypothesis at 95% level of significance. Measures of central tendencies were used to display the mean and standard deviation in the population along with frequency tests to sum the different variables in the study. The analysis was displayed in a graph comparing all variables. Word processor and Microsoft Excel were used to represent the data in graphic and tabular formats.

Ethical Principles

All legal and ethical principles of research, stipulated by the Ethics Committee of the University of the West Indies Mona, were upheld in the development of the research study. The information for at risk individuals will be protected from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage by using encrypted data codes, removing the option for any personal data.

Limitations

Limitations noted in the study included the inappropriate questionnaire tool being used to assess the living conditions of the sample, which resulted in the questions being asked vaguely and sometimes leaving a lot of meaning to perception.

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DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study of the Jamaica Survey of Living Conditions (2008) comprised of 22,294 participants noted that majority of the sample comprised of females 11411 (51.2%). Males accounted for covered 10883 (48.8%) of the sample (Table 1).

Sex of Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	10883	48.8	48.8	48.8
Valid	Female	11411	51.2	51.2	100.0
	Total	22294	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 showing the population of the different sexes.

The objectives of the study were to understand the association between medication expenditure and chronic illness. The hypothesis predicted and an association noting that expenditure will affect the health of persons with chronic diseases health. This hypothesis was tested and decision made as whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis. The outline of the analysis will follow a systematic approach; the first objective being tested is to investigate if health insurance reduces the burden of medication expenditure. Then from the results it will be used to strengthen or reject the second objective which seeks to identify the effects of out-of-pocket expenditure on persons living with a chronic disease. In the final objective the relationship between chronic diseases and disability will be tested while trying to make the connection between the first two objectives.

Health Insurance and Medication Expenditure

It was shown that of the population 22,294 approximates 17,835 (80%) persons were not covered by any insurance. Private insurance coverage accounted for approximately 2675 (12%) persons (Table 2). This is a troubling concern as medication expenditure can be significantly reduced with health insurance. This leaves individuals, without insurance at risk for paying for the full cost of their medication.

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Participant with Health Insurance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes, Private insurance	2540	11.4	12.0
	Yes, NI Gold	766	3.4	3.6
	Yes,Public insurance	704	3.2	3.3
	NONE AT ALL	16915	75.9	80.2
	97	153	.7	.7
	98	2	.0	.0
	99	11	.0	.1
	Total	21091	94.6	100.0
Missing	System	1203	5.4	
Total		22294	100.0	

Table 2, Showing the frequency of health insurance coverage

It was shown that the maximum spent in a private health institution was $30,000 with an average of $1836.68 per visit to a public institution (Table 3). The standard deviation for the amount spent was $2581.34; here the standard deviation deviating from the mean, this means that there is a 0.65% of the sample that visited the private health facility might spend above the mean of $1836.68 (see figure 3).

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How much spent at private source?	1270	.00	30000.00	1836.6791	2581.33980
Valid N (listwise)	1270				

Table 3, Showing Upper- & lower-class boundaries of amount spent with and without insurance

Research also showed that males spent, on average per visit, $1840.46; while, females spent $1834.19 even though females outnumbered the men (Table 4).

Medication Expenditure – Gender Comparison

Sex of individual	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	1840.4555	504	2722.64117
Female	1834.1944	766	2485.80525
Total	1836.6791	1270	2581.33980

Table 4 depicting the average amount at a private source

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Association between Medication Expenditure and Chronic Illness

An independent sample T-test at 95% level of significance was used to compare the two means of the amount spent on medication at a private source and the average number of persons covered by insurance. Given the validity of the data report, it can be concluded that the data is of equal variance; meaning that they are from the same sample because the T value from the data, which is 0.384, is greater than 0.05. The P value is a measurement used to tell how much the observed data disagrees with null hypothesis (Table 6). With the T value being 0.39 and the P value being .969 we accept null hypothesis as the P value is greater than the level of significance being tested (Table 6). Therefore, we can conclude that there is insufficient evidence to support our research proposal that there is a relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. To strengthen the stance on accepting the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases, the values of the standard error of difference will also be analysed. Standard error of difference (n.d.) the standard error of difference is there to show the probability that there is a difference between the statistical means of the two samples greater than 0. For the assumed equal variance, the value was 286.65497 while the equal variance not assumed is 286.90806. Here, it is observed that both variables only differ by 0.25309, indicating that there is not much difference between both variables in the population (Table 6).

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Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.759	.384	.039	1251	.969	11.07361	286.65497	-551.30391	573.45114
Equal variances not assumed			.039	100.568	.969	11.07361	286.90806	-558.10444	580.25166

Table 6: How much spent at private source?

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Relationship between Disability and Chronic Diseases

The final objective is to determine if there is a relationship between disability and chronic diseases. Of the 22,294 persons that participated in the Survey of Living Conditions, 6526 (29.27%) persons reported to have both a chronic disease and disability. Hypertension was the highest chronic disease which had a disability with a shocking 2047 (31.36) persons in the sample which had a chronic disease. There is a weak positive relationship between chronic diseases and disability; as correlation produces r= 0.34 indicating that there is a correlation but not strong enough to assume a definite relationship (Table 7).

Insurance Coverage

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.034ᵃ	.001	.000	5.353

Table 7. Showing the Dependent Variable: Are you covered by any Health Insurance?

Health Insurance and Medication Expenditure

Table 8 showed the average expenditure spent within private institutions. The result showed that public insurance covered the highest amount of $2118.38, while the external insurance covered the least with $1611.9 and the overall average cost spent in a private source is $1836.67. Of the 1270, data for 4 participants was not accepted and was labelled '97', what should be noted from the result is that the number of participants who does not have insurance at all which accounted for the majority of the populous Reed, (2017) agreed with the finding of the research as he noted without the aid of insure or government aid the out of pocket costs is poses a significant risk to health of patients. It is to be highlighted that the standard deviation showed that difference between the private and no insurance differed per person $307.70, this is the amount that is saved per person if private insurance was used.

Health Insurance and Medication Expenditure

Are you covered by any Health Insurance?	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Yes, Private insurance	1782.8246	171	3099.21631
Yes, NI Gold	1611.9672	61	1770.57036
Yes,Public insurance	2118.3764	91	2761.50413
NONE AT ALL	1840.9599	943	2508.15278
97	148.0000	4	296.00000
Total	1836.6791	1270	2581.33980

Table 8 showing mean amount spent with the different health insurances

Medication Expenditure and Chronic Diseases

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Relationship between Chronic Illnesses and Medication Expenditure

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) can be used to test the significance of 3 or more populations are statistically different from each other, also when the sample numbers are high as in this case. The ANOVA test was done to show the significance between the expenditure spent in private as opposed to elsewhere. The results showed the level of significance to be .224 which is out of the degrees of variance being tested (0.05) which makes the findings not statistically significant and neither of the variables have a significant influence upon the other. This mean that the results accepts the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases.

ANOVA[a]

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	42.402	1	42.402	1.480	.224[b]
1	Residual	36328.924	1268	28.651		
	Total	36371.326	1269			

Table 9 showing the predictors: (constant), How much spent at private source?

DISCUSSION

a) **Is there a relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases?**

The research intention was to understand the role of medication expenditure and its impact on persons living with chronic illnesses. The empirical evidence shown in the research highlighted that there was not a relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. An independent T test was done which to show the relationship between medication expenditure and chronic illnesses. The results were noted to be .384 which was greater than the level of confidence and variance which was 0.05 which supported the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between both variables. The out-of-pocket expenditure which was one of the major factors highlighted in the study, there was not enough evidence to independently to impact participants' health. It was noted that there can be social implications in the family when medication expenditure increases such as non-compliance and further deterioration of health which directly affects the family structure. Reed (2017) had a similar finding in the article when he

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noted that the out-of-pocket expenditure could lead to non- adherence to medication regime but not enough evidence to prove that it leads to chronic diseases.

b) Is there a relationship between medication expenditure and social problems in the family?

Illnesses affects the family in many ways, it places strain on the dynamics and structure of the family. The bread winner of the family might not be able to meet the needs of the family which can cause nutritional deficiencies which can lead to further illness. The results noted 51% of the sample set being female and 48.8% being male, males spent an average of $1840.46 on extra on a medication while females spent $1836.68. If both parents of the family have a chronic illness it would create tremendous strain on how the family is able to afford medication, especially if the family does not have insurance or from a lower income class. The health care system in Jamaica does not have the resources to take on such a massive threshold of patients. Jamaica utilizes health promotion and health protect to try to reduce the health morbidities within the island. Rahman et al (2013) agreed with the above results noted that it is the responsibility of the healthcare system to protect volatile families from these social predicaments, but Jamaica simply does not have the resources, infrastructure, or legislation to grant such a request. This is matter which can be researched further.

c) Is there is a relationship between disability (mental and physical) and medication accessibility?

There was not enough evidence to support a relationship between medication accessibility and disability as the regression and correlation test gave an R rate of .34 which signify no relationship. This suggests there is no cause and effect of not having access to your medication and developing a disability. The deviation in the results between the results differed by only 0.79 which showed that the results did not differ between genders. The Annova results showed a value of .224 which makes the findings not statistically significant because disability and medication accessibility does not influence each other. This mean that the results accept the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between medication expenditure and chronic diseases. This finding is congruent with Cott, Gignac and Badley (1999) study which reported the rise of disability in persons with chronic diseases but similarly could not exactly explain the ethology behind its prevalence. Cott et. al (1999) highlighted at risk groups such as the elderly and the uneducated; thus creating the need for further investigations.

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d) What is the relationship between the rising cost of medication and medication non-compliance?

As the cost of mediation of medication rises it poses significant difficulty for at risk patient to seek treatment. The results indicated that more than half of the 1247 respondents in the study (943) was noted to not have any insurance at all. This is serious area of concern for Jamaica the at-risk population is growing. Only 18.26% of the respondents had some form of insurance, the results highlighted that the average cost difference between the private and no insurance differed per person $307.70, this is the amount that is saved per person if insurance was used. The persons with no insurance at all will pay significantly more per prescription and the standard cost of living increases it will make the acquisition of medication even harder which can lead to medication non-compliance as individuals would prioritize basic essential needs before a chronic illness which they have been living with. In Jamaica the rate of inflation is on the rise and will require the more money to maintain the minimal standard of living, if families cannot afford the medication needed to maintain their health then it will affect their compliance to take the medication as well their overall health which can eventually lead to family member being not able to work. Piette, Heister &Wagner (2004) supports this result as he noted interventions families who can afford the medication therapy will underuse or stretch the medication management to reduce costs and Kulp, Greiner & Schulenburg (2003) noted that medication expenditure accounted for 16% of Germany's expenditure in 2003. The results showed that the minority of the respondents had either private or external insurance and it still had to pay some amount of out-of-pocket expenditure.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings from the analysis of the data indicate that medication expenditure has no relationship with chronic diseases. Furthermore, the out of pocket expenditure cannot be used independently to depict alterations in health and there is not enough evidence to support the relationship between chronic illnesses and disability as the analysis showed weak relationship. It is therefore recommended that more research be done into the socio-economic classes and factors which disable individuals to access the care as per needed. Finally, health protection can be utilized, by the researcher, to try to understand correspondent's thought process on their health and wellness.

The results of the research article highlighted that although there was no relationship between chronic diseases and medication expenditure; there is

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still space for improve. Although the National Health Fund (NHF) helps and reaches a significant amount of Jamaica's population, it is recommended that more resources be deployed to the NHF so as to adequate increase its reach to every citizen of Jamaica. This would improve and promote persons to have health seeking behaviours which can positively affect their health. Health promotion on an island-wide scale is recommended to enlighten persons at risk individuals who might need access to government funding or facilities and having public insurance can significantly increase their chances to have their needs met. More research should be done to consider factors excluding the out-of-pocket expenditure such as living situation, accessibility to medication and health care as well individual knowledge towards chronic diseases to effect approach this issue objectively. The ability to be able to afford medication based on your illness must be considered individually.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

MEDICATION EXPENDITURE ON CHRONIC DISEASES

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to join a research study to look at medication expenses. Please take whatever time you need to discuss the study with your family and friends, or anyone else you wish to. The decision to join, or not to join, is up to you. In this research study, we are investigating how medication cost affect people with chronic diseases.

WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

If you decide to participate you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire which consists of basic information about your age, sex (male or female) chronic condition(s) you have, whether or not you have insurance, amount of money paid medication monthly from private sources (e.g. doctor or pharmacy), health in general, any disability and type(s), if you smoke. We think this will take you approximated twenty (20) minutes to complete.

RISKS

This study involves the following risks: *damage to financial standing, employability, or reputation, social, psychological, or economic harm*.

BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY

It is reasonable to expect the following benefits from this research: that this research can appeal to government and policy makers to implement more co-payment for persons with challenges; for more pharmacies to participate in the pharmacy drugs program. However, we can't guarantee that you will personally experience benefits from participating in this study. Others may benefit in the future from the information we find in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We will take the following steps to keep information about you confidential, and to protect it from unauthorized disclosure, tampering, or damage by using encrypted data codes, removing the option for any person data, limiting the amount of persons viewing the raw data and using proper disposal techniques; example burning and shredding.

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INCENTIVES

There is no monetary compensation or gift for participating in this study.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right not to participate at all or to leave the study at any time. Deciding not to participate or choosing to leave the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, and it will not harm your relationship with the researchers.

STATEMENT OF DECLARATION

I have read this form and its contents have been explained to me. I have been given time to consider my participation in this study. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and I have been given a copy of this consent form for my reference. My signature means that I have consented to participate in the research.

☐   I voluntarily agree to participate in this study

Name of Respondent _____

Signature of Respondent _____

Date _____

Name of Researcher _____

Date _____

Signature of Independent witness _____

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APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF ETHICS

A questionnaire was adapted from the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) Survey of Living Conditions (2008). The researchers employed all legal and ethical obligations in protecting the rights of individuals especially persons with chronic disease and disabilities. Consent form was obtained prior to the administering of questionnaires. Persons under the age of 18 years, permission were sort from their parents and questionnaire given to them before administering it to the child. Questionnaires were placed in a sealed envelope and store in locked filing cabinets. Information would then be destroyed via incineration not exceeding a period of 3 years.

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AN EXPLORATION OF SKIN COLOUR PERCEPTION IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA

Cynanie Sawyers-Haylett

Excelsior Community College
University of the West Indies, Mona

cynanie.sawyers-haylett@ecc.edu.jm, sawyers.haylett@gmail.com

Abstract – Beauty is an abstract concept and subject to internalised norms of an individual's society. Beauty is therefore conceived based on one's social and cultural norms. This study explores skin colour as a fundamental element of beauty, especially in the Western Hemisphere. The study also establishes perceived ideal skin colour, and the factors that influence persons' perceptions of various skin tones. An eclectic theoretical approach is proposed as an explanatory frame where the idealization of and adjustment to mid-ranged skin complexions might be related to colourism, social representations, social affirmation, social learning, psychosocial development and identity due to creolization and socialization. A semi-structured interview was used to ascertain twenty-four (24) participants' perceptions about various skin tones. The findings indicated that participants predominantly idealize mid-toned skin colours, which was justified by various media influences. Factors such as social learning, social support/influence, colourism, social identity and social representations explained the main findings. The findings were discussed in light of pertinent literature and have implications for identity formation and psychological well-being of Jamaican adults.

Keywords – skin colour, Afrocentrism, colourism, creolization, skin bleaching, tanning, Caucasian, Afro-descended.

INTRODUCTION

Humans are generally dissatisfied with their body image and physical appearance (Sebastian, 2002). Consequently, humans relentlessly aspire to satisfy the demands of their societal and cultural norms to be deemed beautiful or desirable. Perceived attractiveness is often associated with wealth and health factors that impact self-worth such as intelligence, honesty and child-bearing potential (Sebastian, 2002). The problem of defining beauty

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and attractiveness of men and women has been a challenge to several cultures for decades. It is observed that physical ideals of the Caribbean society may be correlated with the emergence and prevalence of a plural society (Nettleford, 1978, 1998). In a plural society, such as Jamaica, several races integrate and usually intermix resulting in variations in their offspring. These variations subsequently modify the physical ideals of individuals in that society. The perception of beauty ideals consequently impacts the worth they attribute to self. This perception may influence individuals to engage in body modification behaviours to gain a sense of acceptance within their circle of society; to be attractive to the opposite sex and to access better career opportunities or simply to identify with an elite group in their society (McFadden, 2011).

Women, as well as men, seem to be increasingly skin colour conscious. Consequently, there has been a deliberate effort to modify the skin colour. Skin colour modification has been observed where persons of a lighter complexion desire that rich darker skin tone and opt for tanning; conversely, individuals with dark-brown skin colour aspire for lighter mid ranged skin tones. The problem that is identified, by the researcher, is that persons in Jamaica undertake extreme skin colour modification measures to lighten their skin colour (Campbell-Chambers, 2012) or tan their skin colour (O'Neil, 2004) in pursuit of an ideal skin colour. The extreme actions have had negative implications for persons' health – a phenomenon that is being investigated by health practitioners (McFadden 2011). Increasingly, Jamaicans are engaging in extreme measures, sometimes even unhealthy measures, to lighten their skin colour in instances of dark-skinned persons (McFadden 2011) or to tan the light skin in the case of Caucasians on the island (O'Niel, 2004).

In Jamaica, the issue prevails among men and women alike as they engage in extreme skin lightening measures. Some of these skin lightening measures include covering their bodies in white cream and bundling up in a track suit to avoid the fierce sun that is inevitable in Jamaica (O'Neil, 2011). Furthermore, doctors report that the skin lightening phenomenon has soared to dangerous concentrations (O'Neil, 2011). For example, Neil Persadsingh, a leading Jamaican dermatologist, noted that he has had several clients with skin issues, caused by bleaching, even in the case of infants whose parents have started bleaching their skins from early (O'Neil, 2011). The skin lightening phenomena, in Jamaica, is directly linked to one's interpretation of what is physically ideal (Charles, 2011). The researcher is interested in finding out the psychological associations with the phenomenon of skin modification. This understanding could aid the Ministry of Health and Wellness in promoting health education programs to combat the malignant behaviour.

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The problem of skin modification is not limited to individuals with darker hues. The problem transcends dark skinned persons using chemicals to lighten their skin and reaches to lighter skinned persons resorting to using tanning salons, dyes or spend extensively long hours in sun to tan their skin. While tanning salons are used in some first world countries, Jamaicans predominantly just expose themselves to the direct sunlight for long hours or visit a spa where they can access air-brush spray-on tan to have a glowing bronzed skin tone (O'Neil, 2004). Unfortunately, persons with very light skin tones sometimes acquire sunburns and heat rashes that are uncomfortable and unsightly.

The measures individuals use for colour modification is of growing concern for both health practitioners and mental health workers. The current research seeks to unveil the underlying reasons for persons of various skin tones seeking to modify their skin colour. Studies investigating skin colour modification, in Jamaica, predominantly focused on skin bleaching and the psychological factors that motivate such behaviours (Charles, 2003, 2009a, 2009b & Hope, 2010). However, there has been no study that explores the phenomenon of skin colour modification among afro-descended and Caucasoid Jamaicans. Additionally, there is very little empirical evidence that explores gender differences and skin colour perception and modification. This study aspires to understand the psychology behind the extreme efforts taken by some Jamaicans to lighten their skin colour or to attain a darker tone

Additionally, this study sought to establish the perceived ideal skin colour of males and females. The aim is to establish the extent to which participants perceive ideal skin colour which may differ from their actual skin colour and to explore the cognitive and emotive concepts that are pivotal to such perceptions. By understanding the perceptions of skin colour, one will develop a deepened understanding of skin modification behaviours such as bleaching and tanning. Additionally, the findings of this study will be assessed considering cultural socializations advocated through the media and social support.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to unearth gender and racial differences that exists in the perceptions that people hold about skin. The study aims to specifically describe the: ideal skin colour, the thoughts and attitudes towards various skin colours and the factors that influences such perceptions. A qualitative research approach was adopted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the perceived ideal skin colour for Jamaican males and females?

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2. What are males' and females' perceptions about the various skin colours in Jamaica?
3. What are the factors that influence thoughts about skin colour in Jamaica?
4. What are the factors that influence skin colour modification behaviours?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Skin colour perception has undergirded humans' sense of self and identity for centuries, throughout various cultures. This study aims to explore the skin colour perceptions held by both males and females of various skin tones. This qualitative inquiry will seek to understand the factors that influence individuals' attitudes and behaviours towards their own skin colour that of others.

Importance of Skin Colour

Human skin colour is the hue or pigmentation of the skin, which ranges from the lightest hues to the darkest hues of brown; which is a result of genetics or evolution (Jablonski, 2012; Muehlenbein, 2010). Beauty is an abstract concept characterised through physical features such as skin colour. Consequently, research has found that skin colour is significant to how females perceive themselves as beautiful (Miller, 1966 as cited by Reddock & Barrow, 2001, p.177). Therefore, skin colour is a fundamental element of beauty perception and is associated with a myriad of social issues. Walker, (as cited in Boyd-Franklyn, 1989, p. 222) reported that colour affects our thoughts, attitudes and perceptions about beauty and intelligence, about self-worth and self-esteem; a phenomenon argued to have significant psychological and social implications, including how individuals are evaluated by themselves and others.

This importance of skin colour, as the epitome of beauty, is manifested through relentless attempts to modify skin colours of extreme tones to meet perceived social ideals (i.e. bleaching to be lighter and tanning to be darker). Historically, fair skin has been associated with power and beauty throughout the world; a practice dating back to China where the Geishas bleached or used white powder for a translucent skin colour (Van Den Berghe & Frost, 1986). Skin colour modification is by no means limited to China, but it is a concern across the world. Mbayu (2012) asserts that, in regions of Africa, a lighter skin tone is associated with a higher level of beauty, increased chances of obtaining work and overall power, and higher status. He further explained that an increasing number of Africans continue to engage in skin bleaching

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because it is what they see their peers practicing, the products are available, and the possibility of becoming more attractive and powerful is highly favourable. The study further highlighted that the practice is popular because of the colonial mentality that is still entrenched in the minds of young African adults. This causes these young adults to believe their appearance is inferior to that of their former colonizers, and the closer they get to European skin tones, the closer they are to superiority (Mbayu, 2012).

In societies within the West, particularly those that have experienced colonization, the definition of beauty is based on the prototype of those who are in power. Herring, Keith and Horton (2006) postulated that Fraizier (1957), in his seminal work, 'The Black Bourgeosie', argued that lighter skinned Afro-descendants (i.e., Mulattoes) enjoyed privileged status that was far beyond the reach of their darker skinned counterparts. He explored extensively the experiences of light and dark-skinned Afro-descendants and illustrated how skin tone permitted access to some privileges. One such privilege was, during slavery, these fair-skinned people were preferred and as such earned preferential treatment that may even include being emancipated by their Caucasian fathers.

The ideal of beauty has changed with history (Sebastian, 2002). For example: a hundred years ago the model of a beautiful woman in an Indian society was one who had a darker complexion and round physical features. The present-day model of a beautiful Indian woman is one who is fair skinned, and slimly built. Even within Western culture, a hundred years ago the characteristics of an ideally beautiful woman would be a fair or light-skinned, slimly built, long haired female with Anglo-Saxon facial features (Sebastian, 2002). Today, a variety of sociological and psychological factors converge to give skin colour the meaning it has. For example, skin tone influences the attractiveness ratings assigned to Afro-descended women by males; a phenomenon that has been influenced by the pervasiveness of Eurocentric standards of beauty. The dynamic perceptions and responses to skin colour makes it difficult to possibly determine which factors may be influencing the perceiver's notions of beauty. The preference of a light skin colour may arise from, among other things, racist ideology, class-based assumptions, and the symbolism of the skin colours: "white and black", or from a combination of these things (Herring, Keith & Horton 2004; Jablonski, 2012).

Psychology of Colourism: Factors Undergirding Skin Bleaching

The phenomenon of skin bleaching could be argued as being hinged on individuals' perception of their skin colour and the symbolic significance of varying skin tones in society. Such perceptions of skin colour may be

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categorised as one's feelings, thoughts and behaviours towards their skin, in other words the psychology of colourism. Skin bleaching is a chemical process of lightening the pigmentation of the skin; a common practice for people of colour all over the world, dating as far back as the 1600s (Robinson, 2011). Indigenous women, in India, used painful processes to bleach their skins, in order to attract the Caucasiod colonizers (Menke, 2002 as cited by Robinson 2011, p. 56). The desire to be perceived as beautiful and desirous motivates skin colour modifications in diverse cultures across the world.

Globally, skin colour has been an area of interest for researchers. Historically, skin colour has played an influential role in the lives of African American human relations and has been a central problem in the American society (Jablonski, 2012). At the social-psychological level, studies find that skin colour is related to feelings of self-worth and attractiveness, self-control, satisfaction and quality of life (Bond & Cash 1992) as well as social power and identity (Hope, 2011). This reinforces the 'what is beautiful is good' stereotype that creates a 'halo' effect for light-skinned persons particularly females. "Colourism" or "shadism" refers to the discriminatory treatment of individuals falling within the same "racial" group on the basis of skin colour and usually embodies the preference for light skin, hair, eye colour and specific facial features (Hesse-Biber, Howling, Leavy & Lovejoy 2004). The concept operates both intra-racially and interracially. Intra-racial colourism occurs when members of a racial group make distinctions based upon the skin colour between members of their own race (Hesse-Biber, Howling, Leavy, P. & Lovejoy, 2004). So even within "racial groups" skin colour matters. Persons who are of the same race are judged by the hue and shade of their skin (Herring, Keith and Horton, 2004). Interracial colourism occurs when members of one racial group make distinctions based upon the skin colour between members of another racial group. Most of the recent research on colourism has focused primarily on patterns of the African American community. Colourism incorporates preference for light skin which acts as a function in shaping opportunities, norms regarding attractiveness, self-concept and overall body image (Thompson & Keith, 2001).

In support of this notion, a study conducted by Bond & Cash (2006), examined the role of skin colour in perception of self and found that, despite participants' general satisfaction with their skin tone, the idealization of lightness was predominant. Participants who desired a different skin tone favoured being lighter than having a darker hue. Unlike light- and dark-skinned Afro-descended females, medium-toned Afro-descended females held personal ideals that were significantly lighter than their self-perceived colour (Bond & Cash, 2006). Skin colour satisfaction was positively related to satisfaction with overall appearance, particularly with the face. These findings indicated individuals generally favoured lighter skin tones, irrespective of their ethnic background.

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Additional support is found in the report by Hope (2011, p. 171) who postulated that, in Jamaica,

"The socio-cultural value systems encode and transmit this notion of the value of lighter skin over darker skin and lighter skin as a positive ideal, and this is correlated with other phenotypical factors, including length and texture of hair for women, the shape of the nose and a generally close approximation to Eurocentric standards of beauty. A Jamaican woman with long, smooth, flowing hair and a 'straight' or pointy nose is closer to the model of feminine beauty that is idealized, than one who sports natural, kinky or unprocessed hair and who may have a flat, pug nose (Miller, 2001). As such, the elevation of the "Brown" or mulatto woman as the ideal category of feminine beauty (Mohammed, 2000)."

Miller (2001 as cited by Hope, 2001, p. 172) argues that colourism is a discursive process through which the brown or mulatto class gained hegemonic ascendancy in Jamaica and other societies. The primary inheritors of the plantation legacies of their European grandparents and forefathers, the "brown" Jamaican's inheritance meant real social and economic power and the image of a "brown man" or "brown woman", for many post-independent, working class Jamaicans was less about skin colour and more about social status. "brown" was a prestigious birth right, a class identity associated with high levels of cultural, social and economic capital that included social background, high levels of social and economic prestige and political and economic power (Jablonski, 2006). Thus, the "brown woman" or "browning" emerged as the ideal standard of feminine beauty in a country that had once been dominated by a Caucasoid value system that gave dominance to whitened images as ideal notions of self. As a result, the term "Browning" defined a light-skinned female with African physicality who acts as a Eurocentric substitute and a social ideal for all ethnic groups in Jamaica (Jablonski, 2012). The ideals of beauty vary as the images idealized through the media change (Brown 2000, as cited in Sebastian, 2002). The idealization of mid-ranged skin complexions 'brown skin' might be related to creolisation, social power and identity as well as the high esteem placed on 'creole complexions' in the international media over the past decade. The persistence of colourism may influence skin bleaching behaviours and as such can be perceived as factors influencing the practice of lightening ones' skin colour.

The Psychology of Bleaching Phenomenon

Charles (2009, b) explored skin bleachers' conceptualizations and representations of skin colour and the reasons that inform their representations. Empirical evidence suggests that participants bleached their skin to remove facial blemishes, to make their faces "cool" (Charles, 2009). Furthermore, findings from Robinson, (2011) revealed that persons engage

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in skin bleaching as a result of peer influence, to lighten their complexion, to appear more beautiful and sexually attractive. Other reasons identified for skin bleaching was to conform to the popular fad and to enjoy the positive affective responses of the visual stimulus of the bleached skin because it makes them feel good (Robinson, 2011). It is the perception, within the Jamaican society, that the negative representations of dark skin indicate that dark skin is devalued, unlike light skin that is perceived to be highly valued (Hope, 2011). Charles, (2009 b) explained that the hegemonic representations and conceptualizations that elevate light skin over dark skin and guide the behaviour of Afro-descended who engage in skin bleaching have its roots in the socializing institutions of the larger cultural environment. The delicate, yet meticulous, interactions of various social institutions such as the government, church, education system, media, formal culture, and popular culture, from the inception of colonialism to the present post-independence, perpetuate messages that light skin superiority to dark skin subordination.

Notwithstanding, the perpetuation of skin bleaching among the creole populous does not denote self-hate or a rejection of Afrocentric features. This is evidenced by Charles (2011, p.6) who reported that there is a move to embrace "blackness" in various artistic expressions such as music, fashion, and language internationally. According to Charles (2011, p.6) "this new and positive image of Blackness that challenges colourism also reveals a phenomenon called "ghetto feminism" in which some lower class Afro-descended women in defiance of the neo-colonial myths about the "Ugly Black" body confidently wear skimpy clothing, buttressed by the sexually explicit lyrics of the eroticized female dancehall DJs" (Cooper 2004a, 2004b; Thomas 2002, 2005). The concept of "Modern Blackness emerged from the cultural innovations and social interactions of the people on the margins of the urban milieu and the conception of modern Blackness challenges the status, privileges, and prestige associated with people of light skin colour in Jamaica" (Charles 2011, p. 7); thus empowering members of the Afro-descended population with strong racial regard and an affirmed sense of self.

This is undoubtedly a different world view from the previous rhetoric regarding the impact of colonialism. This line of argument also suggests that using chicken pills to enhance the buttocks and hips would be contrary to this ideology of achieving "Whiteness" and that these behaviours that seek attractiveness are more complex than originally thought (Charles, 2011). It is the hope that this research study will be enlightening in this regard and help to isolate the factors that truly impact decision to bleach and the concept of skin colour ideal in general.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

The purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of skin colour in Jamaica from a gendered perspective. This study will adopt a qualitative method to explore the research questions as outlined previously.

Participants

Participants were purposively selected from two main categories: 1. Males and females who engage in skin colour modification and 2. Males and females who do not engage in skin colour modification. This approach will provide insight to the motivating factors influencing participants' attitudes and behaviours towards their skin and their perception of others. There was a purposive sample of 24 participants, divided equally by gender, who were recruited to participate in the in-depth interviews. Of the 12 males six engaged in skin colour modification (four in bleaching and two in skin tanning). The remaining six males did not engage in skin colour modification techniques. The same process for the females where there were 12 females who engaged in skin colour modification (SCM) where four engaged in skin bleaching, two in tanning and the remaining six participants did not engage in skin colour modification (SCM). Participants were all adults aged 18-40 and they were of two main racial group Caucasians and Afro-descended people living in or visiting Jamaica.

Instrument/Measures

Qualitative Instrument: Skin Colour Attitudes

The instrument used in the collection of the data was comprised of qualitative questions. The interview instrument consisted of twenty (20) open-ended questions that solicited the feelings that males and females have of their skin colour and that of others, and reasons they engage in skin colour modification. There were also demographic questions which included items related to: age, gender, income, racial /ethnic background, geographic location of residence, education, profession and relationship status.

Photographic Chart: Perceived Ideal Skin Colour (PISC).

Two skin colour photographic charts of a range of skin colours were used to facilitate participants' responses by recording/identifying their perceived ideal skin colour (PISC). One chart identified tones of females while the other focused on skin tones of males. There were a few elements that were critical to the photographs that were used; these were dominance, contrast, repetition, variety and feelings/mood. The female photographic chart that was used in the data collection contained pictures of three models obtained from the internet. These pictures were modified using the photo shop software to generate a variety of skin colours and tones. The skin colours generated were light, tan, caramel, olive, topaz, hazelnut, ebony-brown and black-walnut.

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The colours were mixed and matched with the palette of skin colours and foundation published by Black Opal on their web site. The images of the models were modified by cutting away parts of the face only leaving the forehead down through to the tip of the nose (See appendix A). This was done to limit the response bias that may be generated from participants choosing the image based on other physical features other than skin colour. Some of the images were repeated where applicable to attain similarity across the images. Each image was symmetrically separated, with each half representing a tone of the same skin colour – a dark and a light tone for the female colour chart (Appendix A).

The male colour photographic chart was created by collecting images of the male upper body from the neck to waist and edited the images edited to attain the similar range of skin tone variations. The upper body was selected, and the facial image omitted as males in Jamaica to find it aversive to assess the facial image of a males (Appendix B).

Procedure

Data collection was executed by research assistants of two skin colours to aid in limiting response bias from the respondents that is one with dark skin tone and the other with light skin tone. Data was collected throughout the city of Kingston Metropolitan Region particularly targeting individuals in the Papine, New Kingston, Cross Roads, Down Town and Half-Way-Tree. The Kingston Metropolitan Region was selected because it is that area of Jamaica where persons from across the island converge to live, work, do business and engage in leisure activities. Informed consent was attained after participants were identified.

Within the targeted geographic locations, the researcher looked for individuals whose skin colour was exhibited signs of bleaching or tanning (in the case of Caucasians). The Caucasian individuals who were a part of the study were identified primarily in the hotels or attraction sites such as Devon House or the Bob Marley Museum. The general principle of the purposive sampling is to think of the person, place or situation that has the largest potential for advancing the researcher's understanding of the phenomena of skin colour modification (Stemler, 2001). Criterion sampling was the specific purposive sampling technique used in collecting the enriched stories. In the criterion sampling, the researcher sought individuals who met the age range and criteria of engaging in skin colour modification. The in-depth interview was done predominantly during low peak hours where the researcher could engage participants in a meaningful conversation about their skin colour perceptions. The interviews were conducted in a relatively quiet environment and, in the case of the public location, individuals were approached during off peak hours, so they were not distracted by the commerce or other activities. Data was analysed using thematic coding. The coding was done

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manually by the researcher. The credibility of the results from the analysis was reviewed by a peer researcher to identify and limit potential researcher bias.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Informed Consent

The second stage of the data collection process was to allow prospective participants to read the informed consent letter which outlined the ethics of the research. If the participants were still interested in participating in the research, they were instructed to sign the consent form before the interview; however, to ensure confidentiality the researcher will refer to them using the pseudonym assigned. The informed consent also facilitated the granting of permission for audio recording of the interview. Informed consents were separated from the actual notes taken during the interviews and stored separately to ensure anonymity. All ethical guidelines were explained, and the study received ethical approval from the ethics committee of the International University of the Caribbean.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study are organised and presented by the specific research questions that is being addressed in each section. Similarities and differences were highlighted and summarised for both males and females.

Perceived Ideal Skin Colour

1. **What is the perceived ideal skin colour for males and females in society?**

The perceived ideal skin colours (PISC) identified by participants were middle tones which included skin colours: tan, caramel and olive in females and caramel, olive and topaz in males. It was observed that, while middle toned skin colours were predominantly perceived as ideal skin colours in the Jamaican society; there were females who believed that slightly darker tones were ideal for males but not necessarily for females. All respondents agreed that in society there are a myriad of skin tones and that what is ideal is based on individual preferences and feedback that they received from others.

Of the twelve (12) females who responded two (16.7 %) indicated preference for light skin tones, seven (58.3%) believed that mid skin tones were ideal while the remaining three participants (25%) believed that darkest tones were considered to be ideal for females. When asked if the same skin tone ideal prevailed for males some participants disagreed, stating that darker tones are acceptable for males, but they should not be too 'black'/dark skinned. Only one (8.4) participant indicated that light skin is ideal for males

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while the majority of seven participants (58.3%) indicated darker shade of mid-tones as ideal for males and the remaining four participants (33.3%) expressed belief that dark tones are ideal for males (See Table I). The males' responses were similar to that of the females with majority of the males indicating that mid tones were most ideal for females and males. Of the twelve (12) male participants three (25%) indicated that light tones are ideal, six (50%) specified mid tones while the remaining three (25%) indicated darker tones. In their analysis of ideal skin colour for females, two (16.7%) specified that light tones are most ideal, seven (58.3%) indicated mid tones, while the remaining (25%) identified darker tones as being ideal.

Table (I) below represents the interactional matrices that illustrate the average ratings that participants of a specific skin tone gave each of the skin tones on the skin colour charts. The rates that were assigned by participants were grouped and rated where 1-4 was considered low, 5-7 moderate and 8-10 high. Generally, the ratings for the skin tones that were at the extreme of the skin tone continuum that is light and dark skin tones were rated low to moderate by participants of all skin colours, while the mid tone skin colours were rated highly. Participants with light skin tones rated light tones moderately but assigned an average high score of 9.8 to mid-tone skin colours. Participants who were of mid tone skin colours all gave mid tone skin colours 10 while moderately rating the other skin tones; while the participants of dark skin tones rated dark skin tones the highest average score of 7.2. The total average score from the participants revealed that mid tone skin colours are considered ideal, followed by dark tone skin colour then light tone skin colour with scores of 9.8, 6.2 and 5.5 respectively. Both males and females thought mid-skin tones were more ideal compared to the lighter and darker skin tones.

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Table 1. Interactional Matrices of Participants Rating of Different Skin Tones

Participants with Skin Colours of	Average Ratings of Skin Colour on a Scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest (Ideal) and 1 the lowest		
	Light Tones	Mid Tones	Dark Tones
Light Skin Tones (Caucasoid)	**6.6**	**9.8**	**6.3**
Male	6.3	9.9	6.8
Female	6.9	9.6	5.8
Mid Skin Tones	**5.4**	**10**	**5.2**
Male	5.1	10	5.3
Female	5.7	10	5.1
Dark Skin Tones (afro-descended)	**4.5**	**9.5**	**7.2**
Male	4	9.2	7
Female	4.9	9.8	7.4
Average Score for the Skin Tones	5.5	9.8	6.2

Skin Colour Perception: Gender Comparison

2. **What are males' and females' perception about the various skin colours?**

Participants were varied in their feelings towards various skin tones. The predominant thoughts that participants expressed emerged in a number of open codes. Participants' perception about skin colour influenced their conceptions of beauty, sexual attractiveness, perceived or actual possession of money/financial stability, social prestige, command attention, mate selection, access to opportunities, self-acceptance, identity to race, social affirmation, loyalty to personal values, positive racial regard, negative racial thoughts/associations, style and fashion, group identity-celebrity influence including recording artists, and access to opportunities/opening-up of opportunities.

The feelings communicated by participants were that of confidence – which impacts on self-concept, deportment and demonstration of skills-, happiness, feeling big, happiness/feeling good, feeling of acceptance by peers, feelings of acceptance by family, feelings of acceptance by society, pride/feeling proud, feelings of oppression, peer pressure/influence,

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resentment to oppression (feelings towards slavery), accepting the effects of slavery (feelings towards slavery), and feelings of rejection.

Perceptions of Various Skin Colours

Media influence: Afro-descended females.

Of the 24 participants, 20 (83%) indicated the media influences their perceptions of various skin colour. One participant indicated that she preferred the caramel skin colour as ideal because she sees that skin colour mostly on beauty contests on television. A number of participants referred to beauty as "not white but certainly are not black".

Media influence: Afro-descended males.

Males believed influences from recording artistes shape their skin colour perception. One male explained that he desires to be with 'hype' and popular fad. Another male reasoned that social and economic power is emphasized and emulated in the media prevalently in advertisements as the lighter skin persons in society are always portrayed as wealthy, attractive and prosperous; but the inverse for the Black, except when featuring Jamaican icons.

Media influence- Caucasion females.

Media influence has critically influenced the perceptions formed by some participants. A female explained "Well people in the media are very attractive and usually have a nice rich tan colour, which is attractive. It makes on-lookers desire to have the same flawless and beautiful physical appearance."

Popularity and familiarity perpetuated through media - Caucasion male

The Caucasiod males expressed that "the media provides an avenue through which ideals in society are communicated to the public and based on individuals' personal values and socialization may adopt such communicated ideals".

Economic and social power: Afro-descended female perception

It was observed that 19 of the 24 participants (79%) indicated fair skin colour as being ideal because of the economic and social advantage. Females particularly indicated fairer skin coloured females may be more likely to achieve generally because of having greater access to resources and opportunities. It was argued that "social discrimination from blacks against the extremely black people has hindered their progress."

Economic advantage: Afro-descended male perception.

Males believed that the lighter skin males will be observed in a better light than the darker ones as females always think they are more financially stable; therefore, the lighter toned male will always have an advantage. The males argued that "some woman love the light skin man because she think *(sic)* them have more money to spend."

Economic advantage: Caucasian female perception.

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Economic advantage was perceived to be aligned to skin tones, particularly the lighter skin tones. The Caucasian female participant expressed that wealth is associated with colour because "back in my country the wealthiest people are the whites who have inherited money from their forefathers and over generations they seem to be able to keep the wealth locked within the family". Another participant specified that "wealth does amount to some social power and associated prestige and so whether white or black once they possess wealth then they may have social influence".

Economic and social power: Caucasian male perception.
It explained that economic and social power is not limited to whites however, there is definitely a universal thought that "a vast amount of the wealth in certain countries is controlled by whites thus there tend to be a lot of social power attributed to whites."

Social identity social support and social affirmation: Afro-descended female.
Of the 12 afro-descended females eight (67%) make reference to social support and social identity as factors that influence their perception of a particular skin colour. There were individuals who reported that they were unable to identify with persons of a particular skin colour directly, consequently they did not rate the colour as ideal. Approximately 50% of the participants of dark skin colours reported that they do not personally know any light coloured females so they could not rate the skin colour as being ideal; but found the tan skin tones as very attractive.

Experience and perception of social prejudice: Afro-descended males.
A number of the males who participated in the study identified instance of prejudicial behaviour from members of the society. Of the 12 males five (42%) identified or recalled personal experiences of prejudice that they believe were primarily due to skin colour. One male stated "Yuh colour and the address you come from affect how people see you and whether or not you get a chance to show them that he can work equally as good as another 'brown' man."

Perception of social influence: Caucasian female.
One female believed that "white skin colour is considered ideal particularly back home because that is what I have been thought. The most powerful and influential individuals in my country are white and they possess all the social power influencing the decisions made on behalf of the country."

Prejudicial behaviour & experiences - Caucasian male.
One light male specified that "I have experienced prejudices of being mocked and jeered because a white dominant school and so I was teased in a bad way. Locally in Jamaica I have not experienced any prejudices or favours because I have a lighter skin colour." Another male specified that he had experienced preferential treatment locally as individuals/merchants think he

Skin Colour Perception: A Gender Comparison

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is likely to spend more money." It is a matter of perceived economic advantage than just a preference for light skin colour.

Afrocentrism: Afro-descended males and females.

Afrocentrism was another main reason for persons affirming darker complexions. Of the 16 afro-descended participants who participated in the research 10 (62%) expressed traits of Afrocentrism as they explained why a dark skin colour may be considered attractive or preferred socially in Jamaica. Females reported that they preferred darker complexions as it reminded them of the strength and resilience of a strong Black African woman. Some participants referred to the pride they have in their mother land Africa and they would always identify with the Black African beauty. These comments indicate the fact that persons were affirming middle tones, and, to a lesser extent, darker tones as lighter hues of very dark skin were perceived as more attractive than the darkest tone at the end of the skin tone chart.

Feelings towards Slavery: Afro-descended male and female.

Feelings about slavery have impacted on responses of some of the participants. There were participants who refused to rate the whites or rated them low as they still blame them for the brutality of slavery. Only afro-descended participant made comments that were representative of negative feelings towards slavery. Of the 16 Afro- descended persons who participated in the research eight (50%) made an association between their thoughts about skin colour and their innate feelings about slavery.

There was one unusual participant who explicated that he resented "blacks because they remind me of slavery, hypocrites who bought into the deception of the whites, selling out their own people. The whites were only able to exploit blacks because they are weak psychologically and morally. The black skin colour just represents the folly, doom, despair and struggles of an entire race. The middle-toned skin colours represent emancipation, and these lighter tones are accepted by society". The participant maintained that "white skin tone" for him represents "hope, life and prosperity; a race that is progressive in every way".

Racial identity/regard: Afro-descended males and females.

Racial identity is another reason that has been presented, by respondents, for rejecting or accepting a skin colour. Of the 24 participants 12 (50%) referred to their perception of being identified with a race and feeling proud of that identity thus rejecting anything that does not validate such identity. Persons reported that they were unable to identify with a skin colour as it is indicative of another race, particularly whites. Participant stated, "the white people don't belong to our race, I can't relate to whites." Light and tan complexions are too intimidating. Me afraid ah them people yah. I have to rate my colour higher; I am comfortable because I am black, and I am proud *(sic)*."

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Racial identity: Afro-descended male.

The male respondents expressed strong allegiance to their "black identity", refuting any thought of dark skinned being subordinate or unattractive. One male participant specified "Black is best all the time, mi born black so mi caah sell out mi black fi nuttin else."

Racial identity: Caucasian females.

The responses given by Caucasians made no distinctive reference to racial identity that portrayed a rejection of Afro-descended people. However, there were instances where the responses given referred to being comfortable with self and being "white", thus rating light skin tones highly.

Perception of health.

Health issues were a dominant factor that emerged as the reason why respondents were affirming and rejecting of one skin colour or the other. Ten of the 24 participants (42%) indicated health factors as reasons for finding a skin colour attractive or not. Persons believed that light and tan skin colours are more susceptible to illness particularly in the tropical zone of the Caribbean.

Factors Influencing Perceptions of Skin Colour

3. **What are the factors that influence the individuals' thoughts of skin colour?**

The factors that influence the individuals thoughts of skin colour were open coded into open codes that included: parental influence, personal experience, observation, religious commitment, age - personal maturity/identity formation, style and fashion, group identity (in-group/out-group perception), racial identity and regard, Afrocentrism, media influences, ethnic pluralism, post colonialism, psychosocial development, perceived social influence/acceptance/affirmation, perceived economic and social power/influence.

Tables II a - II c illustrate the themes that emerged for participants' preference of different skin tones. Key to note is that higher percentages of the participants from all three skin tones indicated a preference for mid tone skin colours. Majority of the sample indicated 'Attractiveness and Sexual Appeal' as well as 'Style and Fashion' as the main reasons for that choice. The data also revealed that Afro-descended participants demonstrated higher levels of racial regard that their Caucasian peers (Tables II a. & II c.); while, participants who were mid-ranged in their skin tone made no reference to racial identity or racial regard (Table II b).

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Table 2 a. Participants' Perceptions of Different Skin Colours

Reasons for Skin Tone Preferences			
Skin Tones	**Light Tones**	**Mid Tones**	**Dark Tones**
Participants with Light Skin Tones	Style & Fashion 75%	**Attractiveness & Sex Appeal 100%**	Familiarity 13%
	Racial Identity 25%	Style & Fashion 88%	Attractiveness 38%
	Attractiveness 38%	Media Influences 88%	Popularity 13%
	Social Power 75%	Popularity 75%	
		Familiarity 50%	

Table 2 b. Participants' Perceptions of Different Skin Colours

Reasons for Skin Tone Preferences			
Skin Tones	**Light Tones**	**Mid Tones**	**Dark Tones**
Participants with Mid-Ranged Skin Tones	Wealth – Socio - Economic Status SES 75%	**Style & Fashion 100%**	Afrocentricism 38%
	Social Power 75%	Media Influences 88%	Racial - Regard/Identity 50%
	Access to Opportunity 50%	**Attractiveness Sex Appeal 100%**	Attractiveness 45%
		Socialization 75%	
		Access to Opportunity 75%	

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Table 2 c. Participants' Perceptions of Different Skin Colours

Reasons for Skin Tone Preferences			
Skin Tones	**Light Tones**	**Mid Tones**	**Dark Tones**
Participants with Dark Skin Tones	Wealth – SES 75%	**Style and Fashion 100%**	Afrocentricisim 88%
	Feelings toward Slavery 75%	Popularity 50%	**Racial Identity/Racial Regard 100%**
	Lack of Familiarity 88%	**Attractiveness & Sex Appeal 100%**	Attractiveness 50%
	Health 25%	Media Influences 75%	Feelings towards slavery 38%
	Opportunity100%		

Factors Influencing Skin Colour Modification

What are the factors that influence skin colour modification behaviours?

Participants who engaged in SCM expressed that there were several reasons why they engage in various skin colour modification techniques. The reasons expressed were categorised in codes such as style/fashion, beauty, mate selection, access to opportunities, Physical attractiveness, media influences/fashion trends, self-confidence commanding attention and social acceptance.

Table (III) reflects the reasons why individuals choose to engage in skin colour modification behaviours. The participants who had light toned skin colours were likely to engage in SCM behaviours to acquire a tan because the skin tone was a personal ideal, perceived beauty and attractiveness, congruence with fashion trends as communicated through the media and lastly because they may associate more with darker tones. The participants of mid tone skin colours engaged in SCM because they desire either a tan or light skin tone. The main reasons included style and fashion and in-group association as communicated through the media, perceived beauty and attractiveness, ability to attract a mate and feelings of confidence in one's appearance. Individuals who were of darker skin complexions had similar reason but believed that socioeconomic gain was also a factor in the reason why they bleach their skin. Key to note is that the table illustrates the key factors that contribute to SCM by all participants of all skin colour, which

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were primarily the influence of popular fashion trends and the desire to matriculate to the perceived beauty ideals communicated/perpetuated through the media consciously or unconsciously.

Table 3. Reasons for Skin Colour Modification (SCM)

Participants with Actual Skin Colour of	Ideal Skin Colour of Participant	Reason for Skin Colour Modification Behaviour
Light Tones (Caucasoid features)	Tan	Personal ideal Identification with darker tones Beauty & Attractiveness Style and Fashion Media Influences
Mid Tones	Tan / Caucasoid	Style & Fashion Beauty & Attractiveness In-group association Ability to attract Mate Build confidence
Dark Tones	Tan / Caramel	Beauty/attractiveness To attract a mate Socioeconomic gain Style and Fashion Build confidence

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Skin Colour Ideals

An integrative approach proves useful in understanding and advancing explanations for the idealization of middle-toned skin complexions [usually tan] and establishing reasons individuals make adjustments to satisfy these ideals. Creolisation facilitates the basis of idealization of and need to have a tan skin complexion. The drive for social power and identification qualifies the relentless efforts of many individuals to adjust their skin colour to meet the ideal. The mass media act as a mirror that issues and reinforces these ideals and demonstrates the ability to measure individuals' achievements, in meeting the standard or requirement, of beauty, specifically as manifested through skin complexion. Also, the media is fluid and can effectively depict and set requirements that are aligned to the particular time period or era in question (Beckford, 1972).

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The study revealed that there was generally a greater rejection of the skin colours that were at the extreme ends of the skin colour chart/continuum and a strong appreciation and adoration for mid to light skin tones. The least adored skin tones were the light 'white' and black-walnut skin colours, while the tan and caramel skin tones were perceived to be ideal by majority of the participants. This general trend may be explained through the theory of creolization. The females of the dark complexion generally preferred the lighter tones, as this was how they were socialized through the various social institutions. There was little preference for the light skin tone though darker skin tone was rejected. This phenomenon may be explained by the 'melting pot' phenomena through which the major skin tones emerging from the advent of slavery where Caucasians and Afro-descended individuals reproduced, producing offspring of middle toned complexions 'the brownings' who are formally known as the mulattoes (Herskovits, 1990). Due to the intensity of the intermixing of races in the Caribbean, the dominant skin tones particularly become tan, caramel and olive complexions. This phenomenon has somewhat influenced the perception of individuals living in the Caribbean. The results indicate that, in modern Jamaica, skin colour was still a sensitive topic especially among those persons who declare preference for 'brownins'.

The skin colour preference reflects the lingering prejudices of slavery, the early post emancipation era and even in post independent Jamaica where the average Afro-descended female was insecure about her physical appearance (Nettleford, 1998). Though light skin tones may have been dubbed ideal during the period of colonialism, it has been observed through numerous research that the perceived ideal skin tones have gradually been reduced to that of a middle tone between that of light and darker skin tones. Previous studies have evidently explored the rejection of the darker skin tones but not many have acknowledged that for many including individuals of light skin tones do not perceive a light skin tone to be ideally attractive.

Factors Influencing the Rejection of Light Skin Tones

What then explains the rejection of the light skin tones – Caucasoid features- by the general respondents? According to the responses of the participants of the influence of media mirrors have played an important role in establishing the ideal skin colour that is perceived as attractive by both males and females. Simply put, participants' impressions of the various skin colours were dependent on the information they received and internalised from the print and audio-visual communications. Consequently, there would not be such rigid associations with what is or is not considered ideal and beautiful in relation to skin colour generally. In spite of the influence and background of "white" supremacy throughout the world, the media increasingly promotes that tan, caramel and olive-tan complexions were more

Skin Colour Perception: A Gender Comparison

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socially desirable (Gillespie, 1995). This is a result of the mixed features that the middle-toned persons possess along with the engrained belief that such individuals enjoy a social and cultural prestige, a notion that can be justified by the colourism thesis. It is observed that the media has influenced and consequently persuaded by the prevalence of creolisation, though not fully endorsing the physical appearances of the Afro-descended majority in Jamaica (Charles, 2011; Hope, 2011).

Factors Influencing the Preference for Mid Skin Tones

The findings of the research suggest olive and tan skin tones were the most preferred complexion of the respondents. The explanation for this might be related to Creolisation as posited by Nettleford, (1998) and the focus placed on 'creole complexions' in the international media over the past decades that has resulted in increased or re-enforced preference for the middle tone colour in Jamaica. The media also portrays middle toned complexions as ideally beautiful, hence, influencing the 'Afro-descended' to bleach and the 'white' to tan. This reinforces the cultural norm of accepting middle toned complexion over those of the extreme. This new social norm of the ideal female complexion has encouraged persons of extreme skin tones to take drastic measures to achieve desirability socially and a peace of mind psychologically about ones' physical appearance.

Racial animosity and awkwardness were also found between the individuals of the two extreme colour groups: Afro-descended and Caucasoid persons. These two groups also express the least liking for their own complexion and could be therefore as the most likely to be uncomfortable with self in a region characterized by phenotypical mixture, the heritage of the plantation society. The reasons explained by participants made constant association to internalised messages from the media influences and popular fashion trends.

These main factors have motivated the practice of skin colour modification in both light- skinned and dark-skinned individuals who would even use potentially dangerous methods to become tanned or brown-skinned so as to make them more desirable to their mates, and to satisfy their personal beauty or attractiveness ideals. This finding aligns with the physical ideals described by Miller, (2001, as cited by Hope, 2011, p. 188) where there has been the increased ascension of the individuals with mulatto features as the epitome of physical beauty and attractiveness. This, Hope (2011) argues, is connected to the influence of colourism which undergirds the discursive process by which the light-coloured individual has been demoted from the prestigious ideal position and reinstated by the Jamaican "Browning" (Charles, 2011).

Participants explained that the pale light skin tones were unattractive while the Jamaican "Browning", having inherited the legacies of their

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European forefathers, has emerged to represent economic power and social prestige. Hope (2011) postulates that "Brown" was a prestigious birth right, a class identity associated with high levels of cultural, social and economic capital that included social background, high levels of social and economic prestige and political and economic power. Thus, "the "Brown woman" or "Browning" emerged as the ideal standard of feminine beauty in a country that had once been dominated by a Caucasoid value system that gave dominance to whitened images as ideal notions of self" (p. 168). This explains the predominant preference of respondents for mid toned skin colours as an ideal.

The preference for mid toned skin colours was supported by a study done on skin colour preference by Robinson and Ward (1995) after exploring skin colour in the lives of African American adolescents and its relationship with self-esteem and dating relations. He reported that a relationship existed between satisfaction with skin colour and self-esteem and that participants self-reported as "lighter" or "darker" had lower levels of satisfaction with their skin colour than did students whose skin colour was classified as "somewhere in between" or middle-toned. This was so as individuals who perceived their skin tones to be "in between" the extremes of the skin tone continuum had greater levels of satisfaction with skin colour in comparison to their lighter-toned and darker-toned counterparts. Lighter participants were most likely to express a desire to be darker relative to those who perceived themselves as middle toned. Similarly, the darker participants expressed a desire to be lighter.

Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Own Skin Tones

Robinson and Ward (1995) posited that persons who perceive that they were either extremes of the continuum may be more vulnerable to dissatisfaction with their skin colour than those who are mid-toned. Persons who were mid-toned are accepted as beautiful and attractive by society. This finding was consistent with Neal and Wilson (1989). It was theorised that colourism in the African American community is a double edged sword affecting those who are "too Black" and those who may not be seen as "not Black enough"; consequently, having a negative psychological implication for persons who are perceived as being different from the popularised ideal of their society (Robinson & Ward, 1995).

Coard, Breland and Raskin (2001) examine the role of skin colour (i.e., lightness–darkness), as it pertains to racial identity and self-esteem among African Americans of various skin colours found that a medium-tone skin colour was preferred among participants; rather than exhibiting self-preference for either lighter or darker skin tones. They found that there was also a significant relationship between one's perceptions of and preferences

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for his or her skin colour and the skin tones idealized by others (e.g., opposite gender, family). Consequently, individuals may prefer a lighter than average skin colour that is perceived as ideal; hence skin colour particularly of the face plays an important role in assessment of attractiveness. This may motivate skin colour modification behaviours in individuals to acquire high attractiveness ratings ascribed to others of a specific colour.

Males' and Females' Thoughts and Feelings about the Various Skin Colours

The predominant thoughts expressed by the participants were either positive or negative and were particularly related to personal experiences that perpetuated feelings that were both negative and positive in nature. The emotive responses that participants experience paved the way for the observed behaviours. This ripple effect of thought, feeling and behaviour explains the cognitive behavioural theory (CBT) that appears to be deep rooted in the conscious and unconscious experiences of the individuals. Theories of social learning, social identity and social representations all contribute to understanding the myriad of thoughts that fuel feelings which perpetuate specific behaviours that emerged from participants. It was clear from the results that negative thoughts and experiences triggered negative feelings which impacted on the behavioural responses of the participants; a phenomenon that held true for positive or neutral thoughts.

Factors Influencing Skin Colour Perception
Media influences.

Participants' preference for a mid-toned skin colour was predominantly connected to media and celebrity influences, particularly that of the music industry. In Jamaica popular culture strongly endorses the dancehall music and idealises the lifestyles of the popular dancehall artists. Dancehall music has played a pivotal role in shaping the mind set of individuals "particularly the underclasses" Hope, (2011 p. 168). The perceptions of various skin tones are viewed as a reservoir of Jamaica's post-colonial culture. This particularly influential media outlet –dancehall music- has evolved beyond the notion of Afro-descended people embracing Eurocentrism to one of a progressive shift towards contemporary manifestations of fashion trends which undergirds the "ungendered rites of beauty" over those of Afrocentrism (Hope, 2011 p. 165). It must be noted however, that the ideals of Eurocentrism does not mean a total acceptance of a Caucasoid culture not self-hate to the extent of desiring to be Caucasian, but rather idolising the 'browning' skin tone whether natural or pharmaceutical. The term "Browning" defined a light-skinned female with African physicality who acts as a Eurocentric substitute and a social ideal for all ethnic groups in Jamaica (Miller, 2001 as cited by Hope, 2011).

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The main tenets of the ideal olive and tan complexions were attributed to the theories of creolisation, internalized oppression and media ideals of beauty. It can be argued however that these emerging tenets are obstinately encapsulated within the frame of socialization from the various social institutions with society.

Socio-economic advantage and social power.

Socio-economic advantage and social power emerged as a major rationale that guided individuals' thoughts and feelings about various skin colour. In the minds of many participants, the perception remains that society is still comprised of the poor 'black', a middle class and privileged brown man and a rich or wealthy Caucasian man. This is the traditional colour/ class correlation colonialism (Boyd-Franklyn, 1989). The participants were uncomfortable with their complexion and will continue to make every effort to meet the ideal of society with the hope of breaking through the latent social and cultural barriers. This aligns with Boyd-Franklyn, (1989) who stated that the sexual exploitation of Afro-descended people by Caucasian slave masters resulted in many "mulatto" or light skinned children who were raised in the master's house and became house slaves. The individuals were given many privileges within the plantation system. This has led to the emergence of a preference for the lighter skinned person (Morgan & O'Garo, 2010). Throughout generations it was easier for light skinned Afro-descended people to get an education or a job; consequently, a system stratified by colour and class was created in Afro-descended communities (Boyd-Franklyn, 1989 and Ramkisson, McFarlane & Branche, 2007 and Hope, 2011). This cultural footprint is evident in the perceptions of individuals in the country and has contributed significantly to the emotional experiences and consequently the behaviours they chose to engage in relative to their skin colour.

Afrocentrism and racial/ethnic regard.

Afrocentrism was evident in the thoughts and feelings that some Afro-descended participants verbalised. Some participants of darker skin tones reported that they preferred the dark skin tones because the tone reflects a prized African heritage. This aligns with Kardiner and Ovesssey, (1951, as cited by Boyd-Franklyn 1989; Hesse-Biber, Howling, Leavy & Lovejoy, 2004) who stated that colour has many different levels of symbolism for dark-skinned Afro Americans. Many Afro-descended people view their colour proudly, as a badge of pride and honour. Afrocentricism encapsulated positive feelings towards 'black' African ethnicity and traits also acknowledged as racial identity and positive racial regard. Modern Blackness coined by (Charles, 2011) also endorses the Afrocentricisim theory. 'Modern Black' emerged from the cultural innovations and social interactions of the people on the margins of the urban milieu and the conception of "modern Blackness" challenges the status, privileges, and prestige associated with people of light skin colour in Jamaica (Charles 2011). This notion empowered

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members of the Afro-descended population with strong racial regard and an affirmed sense of self. This explains the resilient positive thoughts and feelings towards dark skin tones, which is also affirmed by Buju Banton's song "Love Black Woman". This song was inspired as a response to his original song "Love Me Browning" that sparked mass controversy among his fans and social critics who lashed out at his apparent preference for "browning" and gave rise to the "ghetto feminism" phenomena where Afro-descended girls confidently parade skimpy clothing (Charles 2011). This social response reflects the 'Modern Blackness' of a group of people who influenced the song writer and DJ to create a song affirming their "blackness".

This racial regard aligns with Harris, (1995, as cited by Akbar, Chambers Jr, & Sanders Thompson, 2001) who suggested that maintaining one's racial or ethnic identity is a major challenge in some societies and as one identity erodes then it could continually devalues the race or ethnicity in focus. Afro-descended people must be able to affirm their distinctive identity (racial or ethnic identity) to distinguish themselves and to sustain a positive definition of themselves, as demonstrated by some respondents (Harris, 1995, as cited by Akbar, Chambers Jr, & Sanders Thompson, 2001). The results indicated that some participants demonstrate resilience to the efforts of the colonial era to erode the identity of the ancestors of the Afro-descended African Slaves; consequently, there still remains a strong sense of Afro-descended identity even among Afro-descended who engage in skin colour modification.

Racial identity and racial regard were also evident in the experiences and responses of the Caucasian participants who engaged in the study. The Caucasians explained that they had to rate the lighter skin positively because it was their race and they are fine with being Caucasians, though majority preferred the tan skin colour (Hesse-Biber, Howling, Leavy, P. & Lovejoy, 2004). The Caucasian participants have not lost their sense of identity, demonstration resilience, strengths and goal directed selves; though there is evidence of ambiguity, contradictions and weakness in their conceptualisation of self as characterised by one participant's belief that she was meant to be Afro-descended (Hesse-Biber, Howling, Leavy, P. & Lovejoy, 2004). This highlights the concept of complex personhood that seeks to explain the multidimensional perspectives of self-relative to one's cultures and personal experiences that would encourage or buffer against the actions of modifying one's Caucasoid physicality (Hesse-Biber & Howling, 2004).

Gender Differences/Similarities in Skin Colour Perception
Similarities.
Both males and females believed that middle skin tones are perceived as ideal and most attractive. There were several themes that influenced the

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perceptions that males and females had about skin colour. The most dominant themes were perceived attractiveness, racial identity and regard, psychosocial development, social affirmation, health, perceived social and economic stability, media influences and fashion trends. All these factors have been discussed considering female skin colour perception; however, this current study has found that similar rationale exists in males' perception of self and others.

Differences.

Males had less experience with social support/affirmation and received little to no comments from significant others such as parents or spouse about their skin colour than females. Males however reported experiencing more prejudicial behaviours socially from persons such as merchants and members of the constabulary force; unlike females who reported no such experiences. This could be attributed to the fact that, within our Jamaican homes, there is a lot of attention that is directed to feminine socialization that is inherently associated with beauty attractiveness and physical appearance that is closely aligned with skin colour perception; however, the masculine socialisation is one where the male is treated harshly with little to no feedback about his physical appearance. The stereotypic and prejudicial behaviour towards males from the wider society is a concept that is somewhat embedded in the Jamaican culture where males are perceived as aggressors and more likely to be the ones instigating violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that social practitioners and policy makers embark on a re-education exercise as they seek to explore practical ways to incorporate critical media literacy and critiques of popular culture in every learning opportunity. This could potentially provide the society with astonishing revelations about the media's influence on their thoughts, feelings and behaviour –influencing their entire psyche, self-perception and perception of others.

The current study has numerous implications for policy' specifically as it relates to the matter of national education' to create positive perceptions of self. Policy makers could design interventions targeting the larger cultural environment creating consistent and persistent positive images of modern contemporary Jamaica in the various social institutions. This intervention by the government, the church, the education system, the media, formal culture and popular culture will evoke positive change through social learning; consequently, mitigating the notions of colourism, strengthening 'black' pride and a sense of self.
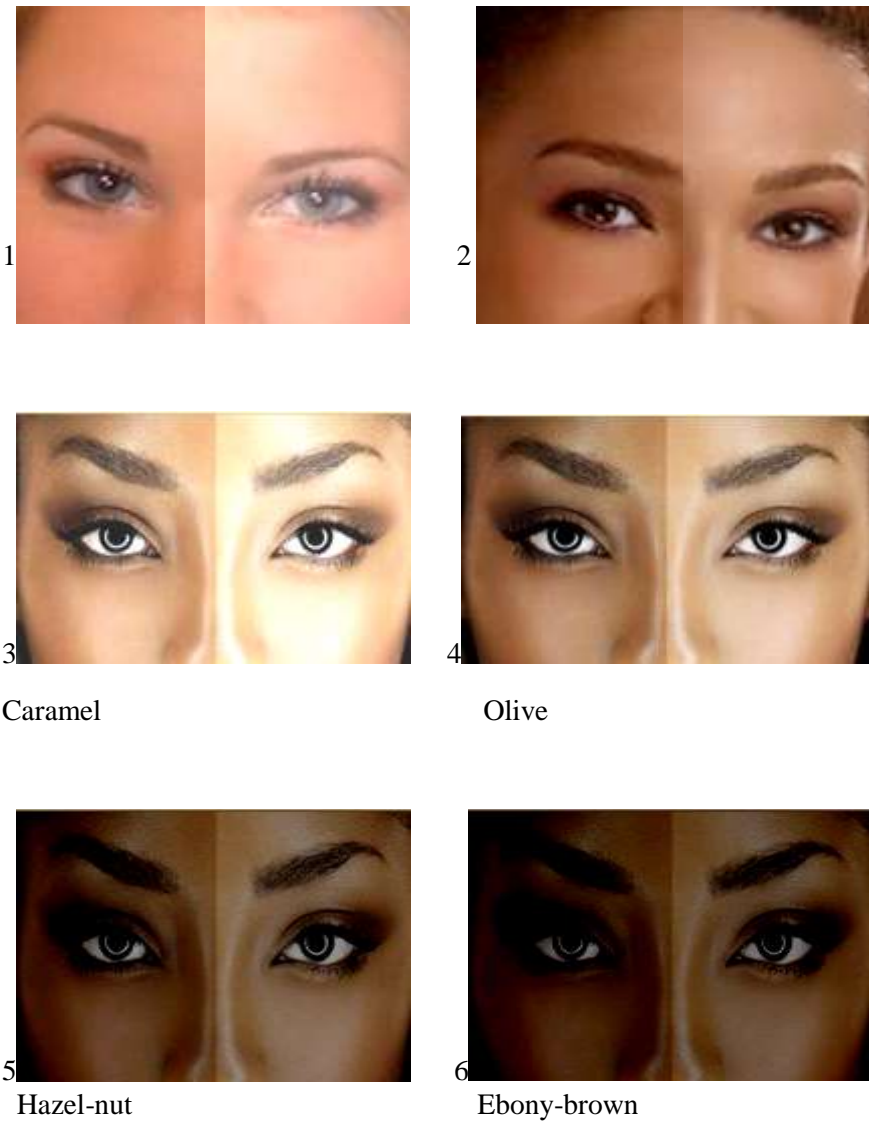
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SUMMARY

There were several theories that were integrated to explain the major finding of this section. Paramount to note is that participants' preference for mid toned skin complexions is not a result of self-hate, but rather an integration of theories such as colourism, social representations, creolization, Afrocentrism, psychosocial development, complex personhood all of which are influenced by various social institutions in Jamaica. Majority of the skin colour perceptions are latently engrained in our history as a colony of the motherland; however, there is still a significant number of the sample population who have liberated themselves from Eurocentric ideals. The was the discussion of natural and sexual selection that has influenced the myriad of skin tones leading to the preference of mid toned skin colours. The face and skin tone help to from people's perception of beauty and attractiveness; therefore, participants did explain the significance of skin colour in perceived mate attractiveness and selection.

The historical evidence outlined previously in this article highlights the beauty and sex appeal of light complexion as communicated by the culture in Jamaica; consequently, some skin bleachers alter their aesthetic physicality to acquire these qualities among others. Mohammed (2000, as cited by Charles, 2011) highlights the fact that light skin complexion is pivotal in male–female relationships in Jamaica. Mulattoes, the product of miscegenation between Afro-descended and Whites in the colonial period, are called ''browning'' in the contemporary culture which is the undergirded by the tenets of colourism. In this emerged culture any brown skinned person is called a "browning"; subsequently, Brown-skinned women and now men are still perceived as the objects of sexual desire and attention for some Jamaicans (Charles, 2011).

Finally, the findings of this research is a catalyst for future research exploring the effect of colour on the different types of self-perception and levels of attractiveness and sexual desirability. An experiment may even be conducted to measure the extent to which skin colour perception influence one's self esteem and or body esteem.

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Appendix A- Skin Colour Chart for Females

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3

Caramel

4

Olive

5

Hazel-nut

6

Ebony-brown

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Appendix B. Skin Colour Chart for Males

1. White   Tan   Caramel   Olive   Topaz Hazelnut   Ebony Black-Walnut

2. White   Tan   Caramel   Olive   Topaz Hazelnut   Ebony Black-Walnut

3. White   Tan   Caramel   Olive   Topaz Hazelnut   Ebony Black-Walnut

4. White   Tan   Caramel   Olive   Topaz Hazelnut   Ebony Black-Walnut

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MEET THE AUTHORS

GEORGETTA FORRESTER GRANT
Author, Dean - CDTL

Dr. Georgetta Forrester Grant has been an Educator for over 20 years. She has served as teacher at Excelsior Primary, Lecturer at the Mico University College, Head of School for the School of Library Technical Education and Dean of Curriculum Development Teaching and Learning respectively at the Excelsior Community College. Dr. Forrester Grant completed her earlier studies at the Mico Teacher's College and the University of the West Indies, and later at the University of Phoenix in Phoenix, Arizona. Her doctoral work is in the area of Educational Leadership with concentration on Curriculum and Instruction.

Dr. Forrester Grant is passionate about education and more specifically about the quality of curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation. It is her intention to contribute significantly to the continued improvement of these areas in Jamaica and the region through research. She believes that information is a very important tool in decision making and in the path to success and as such, she is guided by her belief that "information is power".

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BHUVANESWARI GUDAPATI
Author, Editor, Director - ODEC

Dr. Bhuvaneswari Gudapati is a graduate of Missouri State University where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in History and Spanish, a Master of Arts in Communications and later a Master of Science in Hospitality Management. She recently earned her doctorate from the University of Florida in Higher Education Leadership Administration. Currently Dr. Gudapati is, not only a lecturer at ECC, but also the *Director of Online and Distance Education Centre* (ODEC) where she passionately believes in reaching beyond the traditional teaching boundaries by utilizing the latest technology to offer learning opportunities to students, colleagues and community members through online modalities. She has a keen interest in research in online and blended learning and has presented at several conferences locally.

Dr. Gudapati, fondly called "Dr. B", is first and always a lifelong learner pursuing her passion for learning, teaching, and writing. A wanderer and lover of travel, starting when her parents moved from India to Jamaica, she has incorporated her love of travel, teaching and learning into a career in Jamaica's hospitality and tourism and, for the past 11 years as an educator at Excelsior Community College in the School of Tourism, Hospitality, and Entertainment Management. Her years of traveling and working in the hospitality and tourism industry have given her the 'greatest tools' to help her students understand the very interesting and dynamic industry she now prepares them for.

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Teaching Philosophy

Her teaching philosophy is simply to empower students to achieve the best that life has to offer by guiding them through a seamless college experience while giving them the information and tools to face the challenges that come their way and providing every opportunity to reach for their dreams and help to develop future leaders of society.

Dr. B has a great love for teaching and believes that "a good teacher is one who invests time not only in their teaching but also in their students and is constantly learning and developing new skills and materials relevant to students lives; integrating what they are learning with their lives makes learning more meaningful to most learners".

Education
Ed.D , Higher Education Leadership Administration, University of Florida
Graduate Certificate, Online Teaching, Kaplan Online University
M.Sc., Hospitality Management, Revans University, /IMCA U.K
M.A., Communications, Southwest Missouri State University
B.A., Spanish & History (double major), Southwest Missouri State

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ORVILLE W. BECKFORD
Author, Lecturer

Dr. Beckford is a lecturer at the University of the West Indies (UWI), Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work. He has published 8 articles and 3 book chapters. His area of academic interest includes: Work and Industry, Sociology of the Inner City and Institutional Research. As an educator Dr. Beckford taught several courses including: Introduction to Sociology, Industrial Sociology, Caribbean Culture, International Trade and Labour Standards, Caribbean Civilization, Political Sociology, Law, Economy, Governance and Society. He also teaches: CAPE Sociology, CAPE Caribbean Studies, CAPE MOB.

Dr. Beckford has served on a number of committee, namely: Chairman of the Council of Community Colleges (CCCJ); Member - Board of Eltham High School and Deputy Chairman - National Organization of Deported Migrants (NODM).

Orville W. Beckford, PhD (high commendation), MBA (distinction), B.Sc (hons)

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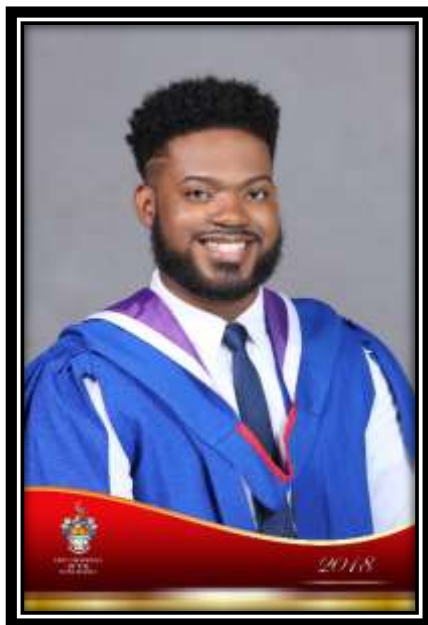
JORDAN BRISCOE
Author, Mental Health Nurse

Jordan Briscoe is a nurse practitioner who is currently the Nursing Manager at Chelston Gardens Dementia Care Facility. His area of academic interest includes Work and Industry, Health and Social care, Education and Leadership, and Management. Mr. Briscoe attended Excelsior 2014-2018 and served as the former President of the Nursing Student Association- 2017. He was the recipient of the Outstanding Student Researcher Award in 2018 at Excelsior Community College.

Jordan Briscoe, MBA (pending), RGN, PgDip, BScN (Hons)

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GWYNETH ELAINE JACKSON
Author, Acting Dean - Office of Graduate Studies (OGS)

Gwyneth Jackson is a transformational leader with excellent communication and interpersonal skills. She is results oriented and self-motivated. Gwyneth possesses strong team building and problem-solving techniques. She is an experience Marketing Manager and the Former Head of the School of Business & Entrepreneurial Studies. She is currently the Acting Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies at Excelsior Community College.

Gwyneth Jackson is Jamaican born in Kingston the capital of Jamaica. She is from a family of teachers as her mother, and two of her sisters are teachers. She is the proud mother of three daughters and a son.

Credentials

- Doctor of Organizational Leadership (Pending Oral Défense)– University of Phoenix
- Certificate in Project Management – University of New Orleans
- Certificate in Sales and Marketing - University of New Orleans
- Post-Graduate Diploma in Marketing Management – Mona School of Business
- MSc Marketing – University of Leicester – UK
- BSc. Economics and Management – U. W. I – Mona
- Certificate in Teacher Education – Excelsior Community College

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She currently works at the Excelsior Community College in the capacity of Acting Dean of the Office of Graduate Studies. Gwyneth Jackson is a successful and organized leadership executive having operational knowledge and experiences in disciplines of Marketing Management, Marketing Research, Strategic Management, Human Resources Management, and Curriculum Development.

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KERRY-ANN BARRETT
Author, Quality Manager, Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority Training Institute
Former Registrar, Excelsior Community College

Dr. Barrett is an educator and administrator with an EdD, in College Teaching and Learning. She has demonstrated history of working in higher education and the aviation training industry. At present she serves at the Quality Manager at the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority Training Institute. Sold on the continuous improvement process, she believes training can always be improved, and that research is instrumental in accomplishing this. Her research interest includes quality assurance issues in training, training needs assessment and post training evaluation. She has published articles related to her research interest and is currently working on a study focused on transitioning competency-based training from face-to-face to virtual modalities.

Kerry-Ann Barrett, EdD, MBA, BBA

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GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING TO THE ECCAJ

<u>Excelsior Community College Academic Journal (ECCAJ)</u>

Authors of academic research have an opportunity to submit a fully-developed manuscript for peer review and possible publication in the Excelsior Community College Academic Journal. Authors are encouraged to submit original research, theoretical frameworks, literature reviews, case studies and conceptual papers related to any discipline of academia.

 All submitted papers must be clearly written in English and contain original works that have not been previously published and are not currently under review by any other journal.

ARTICLE CONTENT

The Excelsior Community College Academic Journal (ECCAJ) provides a forum for academic discussion of various disciplines related to and addresses issues of interest in the Caribbean region. Contributors are invited to submit literature and conceptual reviews, empirical research papers, brief research reports, book reviews and letters that contribute to the knowledge base of academia.

Submitted articles will be peer reviewed and selected for publication in the ECCAJ based on scholarly merit and relevance to the academia in Jamaica and by extension the Caribbean region. The editors assume that submitted manuscripts have not been previously published and are not currently under review by another journal.

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

Manuscripts should be prepared according to the latest edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. The text is single-spaced; uses Times New Roman font style and 11-point font; and all illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end. Email us at <u>research.innovation@ecc.edu.jm</u> or visit the Research and Innovation website <u>eccrid.com</u> for the ECCAJ formatting template, ECCAJ Author Submission Form and Authors

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Guidelines for submission of different types of papers.

All manuscripts except book reviews should include an abstract (maximum 250 words on a separate page) and up to five key words. Manuscripts should be submitted as a Microsoft Word file, in English (British). Delete all identifying information from the manuscript to ensure a blind review process. Article submission must be accompanied by the completed ECCAJ Author Submission Form.

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Prepare a separate title page with author identification (name, institutional affiliation, and contact email and telephone; identify corresponding author). Author name or names should be masked wherever they appear in the manuscript. Insert the abstract on a separate page, after the title page, and before the introduction.

LENGTH

Full text articles should not exceed 10,000 words including references, tables and diagrams.

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As part of the submission process, authors may check off their submission's compliance with all of the following criteria. Failure to adhere to the stated guidelines will result in submissions being returned to authors.
1. The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration.
2. The submission file is in Microsoft Word.
3. Completed ECCAJ Author Submission Form.
4. When available, the URLs to access references online are provided, including those for open access versions of the reference. The URLs are ready to click (e.g., https://www.jstor.org/).

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5. The text is single-spaced; uses a 12-point font; and all illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.
6. The text adheres to the APA stylistic and reference requirements outlined in the Author Guidelines.
7. Guidelines for blind review have been followed.
8. The research was approved by an appropriate ethics committee.

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