SINGLE SEX VS. CO-EDUCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS: PERFORMANCE OF CARIBBEAN STUDENTS ACROSS SCHOOL TYPES IN MATHEMATICS ON THE CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE

Joan Spencer-Ernandez* & Lois George
The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus

Abstract: Gender-based performance on the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) mathematics examination across single-sex and co-educational secondary schools in Barbados, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago was analyzed to determine which group of students is achieving the highest pass rate and the best quality passes in mathematics. Five years (2013-2017) of CSEC data were examined and the findings indicate that girls in single-sex schools in Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago consistently had a higher pass rate than girls in co-ed schools and boys in both single-sex and co-ed schools. Additionally, they had the highest percentage of distinctions over any other group. Girls in Barbados’ co-ed traditional grammar schools, formerly single-sex schools, also achieved both a higher pass rate and a greater number of distinctions. Given the consistency of the findings, we conclude that further studies should be conducted to determine the variables which may be contributing to the success or failure of students in the different school types; such as prior performance, teacher qualification, teaching styles, classroom context and motivation. The existing gap in the pass rate and quality of pass between girls and boys in the different school types must be narrowed and eliminated if national targets for mathematics are to be met.

Keywords: school type, mathematics achievement, coeducational schools, single-sex schools, gender-based performance

* Corresponding Author (joan.spencer@uwimona.edu.jm)

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Performance of Caribbean Students in Mathematics


