

***School-related and Non-school Factors
that Impact Negatively on Form 1 Pupil
Performance at the Secondary Level***

Renovating Structures Content and
Methods of Secondary Education

Report

Antigua and Barbuda,
Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and
St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Una M Paul
Consultant with
UNESCO/CARNEID

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Mandate	Page 1
2.0	Terms of Reference	Page 1
2.1	<u>Expected Outcomes</u>	Page 1
3.0	Background	Page 2
4.0	Methodology and Procedure	Page 3
4.1	<u>The Sample</u>	Page 3
4.1.1	<i>Countries</i>	Page 3
4.1.2	<i>Schools</i>	Page 4
4.1.3	<i>Pupils</i>	Page 4
4.1.4	<i>Teachers</i>	Page 5
	4.1.4.1 <u>Sex</u>	Page 6
	4.1.4.2 <u>Age Grouping</u>	Page 6
	4.1.4.3 <u>Qualification</u>	Page 6
4.1.5	<i>Parents</i>	Page 7
4.2	<u>Instrumentation</u>	Page 7
4.2.1	<i>Teachers' Questionnaire</i>	Page 8
4.2.2	<i>Interview Schedules</i>	Page 10
5.0	Description and Analysis of Data	Page 10
5.1	<u>Teacher Questionnaire 1</u>	Page 10
5.1.1	<i>Instructional Planning and Implementation</i>	Page 10
5.1.2	<i>Working With Mixed Ability Pupils In Form 1</i>	Page 11
5.1.3	<i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	Page 12
5.1.4	<i>Teacher Expectation of Pupil Performance</i>	Page 13
5.1.5	<i>Parent Involvement in Their Children's School Work</i>	Page 14
5.1.6	<i>Homework Practices</i>	Page 15

5.2	<u>Responses to Questionnaire 11</u>	Page 16
5.2.1	<u>Factors that Impact Positively on Form 1 Pupils' Performance</u>	Page 16
	5.2.1.1 <u>School- Related</u>	Page 16
	5.2.1.2 <u>Negative Factors</u>	Page 17
	5.2.1.3 <u>Reasons for Low Performance/Repetition Among Some Form 1 Pupils</u>	Page 17
5.3	<u>Parent Profile</u>	Page 21
5.3.1	<i>Some Characteristics of Parents Interviewed</i>	Page 21
5.3.2	<i>Parent Involvement in School Activities</i>	Page 24
5.3.3	<i>Parent Involvement in Overseeing Child's Homework</i>	Page 25
5.3.4	<i>Parents' Perception of Pupil and Teacher Performance</i>	Page 27
5.4	<u>Form 1 Pupils' Perceptions About Their Poor Performance</u>	Page 29
5.4.1	<i>Pupils' Feelings About Repeating/ Low Performance</i>	Page 29
5.4.2	<i>Pupils' Reasons for Repeating/Low Performance</i>	Page 31
5.4.3	<i>Parent Supervision of Home Work Assignment</i>	Page 34
5.4.4	<i>Pupils' Perception of Teacher Performance</i>	Page 37
6.0	Issues Emanating from the Survey	Page 39
6.1	<u>Factors that Impact on School Performance</u>	Page 39
7.0	Recommendations	Page 45
8.0	Conclusion	Page 51
	REFERENCES	Page 52
	Appendices	Page 54

ACRONYMS

CEO	Chief Education Officer
CCE	Common Entrance Examination
CXC	Caribbean Examination Council
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PTA	Parent Teachers' Association
PS	Permanent Secretary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An exploratory study under UNESCO's Renovating Structures, Content and Methods of Secondary Education Programme, was commissioned to investigate school-related and non-school factors that impact negatively on pupil performance in Form 1 of Five Eastern Caribbean States - Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The population consisted of three target groups - teachers who taught Form 1, pupils who repeated or performed poorly at the end of year examination July 1996, and their parents.

Because of the concern expressed by education officials over the relatively high wastage rate at the Form 1 level, the original number of schools increased from ten (10) to fifteen (15) resulting in two hundred and seventy six pupils (Males 194; Females 82). The larger number of males is as a result of the inclusion of two all boys grammar schools. Pupils responded to a focussed interview aimed mainly at how they felt about their low performance, and the reasons for such performance.

One hundred and thirty one (Males 39; Females 92) Form 1 teachers participated in the survey. The focus was on their perception of good school practices, and what they believed were causal factors of pupil repetition and poor performance in Form 1.

Parents of all the pupils interviewed were invited to participate. Just about 57% attended the interview. The aim was to ascertain the type of non school factors that might impact negatively on their pupils' performance.

The results of the study suggest that most of the problems experienced by pupils who had repeated Form 1, and who performed poorly are attributed to, teacher incapability in the delivery of quality education, non existence of a national curriculum at the first three forms at the secondary level, pupil difficulties in the transition from primary to secondary, and parent non involvement in children's school work /incapability of giving guidance and direction in follow-through school work and homework.

Absenteeism and socio-economic factors did not play a major role among the pupils targeted.

The majority of pupils who repeated Form 1, felt ashamed, stupid, embarrassed, low, sad and dejected. Their feeling was worse when they were labelled by some teachers. On the other hand, in those countries where the policy was automatic promotion, those pupils who scored less than 50% and were promoted to Form 2 felt disappointed, but laid the blame on themselves for not studying too hard.

It was the general perception that parent involvement in their children's school activities was a positive impact on pupil performance. Teachers felt that the pupils suffered because of the lack of parental interest. This exploratory study brought out that about 90% of the parents was interested one way or another. The important point is that only 37% was able to give guidance

and facilitate follow-through school work at home. Encouragement alone or checking work was not enough.

The recommendations proposed for improving the structure, content and strategies for delivering education at the secondary level in the five countries speak to:

- ◆ Teachers' capability in the delivery of quality education to Form 1 pupils;
- ◆ Lack of national curriculum for the first three forms of secondary schools and grade level performance;
- ◆ Children's incapability to cope with the new learning environment;
- ◆ Parents' non involvement in their children's school work, and in the majority of cases their incapability to give direction and constructive guidance to their children in follow-up school work and homework. These are:
 1. Allocation of Qualified and Experienced Teachers to Form 1
 2. Introduction of a Task- Oriented, Home- Based Training Programmes in Teaching Methodology and Strategies which incorporates:
 - ▶ Orientation of new recruits to the teaching force;
 - ▶ Exposing all graduates to professional training, principles and education practices, methodology, classroom management and pertinent communication and interpersonal skills;
 - ▶ Mixed ability teaching skills;
 - ▶ Developing curriculum guides for Forms 1,11& 111 at the secondary level, and simultaneously developing performance norms for measuring pupil performance across country;
 - ▶ Exposing teachers to hands-on experience in test development and measurement
 - ▶ Reviewing the system of promotion from one Form to another. The apparent inflexibility of the present systems was reflected in pupils' statements about why they repeated.
 3. Effecting a Smooth Transition from Primary to Secondary;
 4. Enhancing Supervision of the Delivery of Education;

5. Summer Programmes for Repeaters with Potential for Achieving;
6. Study Hall Programmes for Facilitating Completion of Homework;
7. Pastoral Care for Both Pupils and Parents

The recommendations proposed are not definitive. If they are accepted, they can be a part of the countries' work programmes. The OECS Education Reform Strategy aims at improving the delivery of education. In addition some of these countries are also presently involved in the delivery of quality secondary education, funded with the help from donor agencies. They should therefore be able to review their present programme activities, in light of the deficiencies highlighted in this study.

The Study Hall, Low Achievers and Pastoral Care programmes can be facilitated through the collaboration and cooperation with Non Government Organisations and the community-at-large.

The paradigm shift in the perception of education as a determining factor in the success of a country's productivity and competitiveness and ultimately human development has caused new emphases to be placed on investing in knowledge. Pertinent to this success is a solid basic education foundation which forms the enabling environment for pupils to become self confident and self directed citizens, think critically, and develop creative and productive skills, for taking advantages of those relevant scientific and technological advances.

One of the implications within this context is the recent pronouncement Secondary Education FOR All By 2005 by the CARICOM Heads of Government (July.1997), which recognised the fact that Education and Science and Technology are inextricably linked to the creation of a productive and creative society.

The deficiencies highlighted in this study, though limited in its scope, imply that a group of young people if allowed to continue in the learning mode alluded to in this study, may become dysfunctional in the countries' capability to access continuous technological advances.

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October 1997

Renovating Structures, Content and Methods of Secondary Education

School-Related and Non School Factors that Impact Negatively on Form 1 Pupil Performance at the Secondary Level

*Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada,
St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines*

Report

1.0 Mandate

UNESCO commissioned an exploratory study of students repeating Form 1 in a selection of secondary schools in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, to ascertain school related and non school factors that tend to impact negatively on pupil performance. The question being, What are the school-related and non school factors that cause pupils to repeat Form 1?

2.0 Terms of Reference

In the conduct of the survey, the Consultant will

- i. liaise with education officials in the selection of schools and research assistants;
- ii. prepare interview/schedules and train research assistants from each country in the use of same;
- iii. administer the questionnaire, and organise the conduct of interviews;
- iv. submit a report of the survey which will include recommendations for improved student performance.

2.1 Expected Outcomes

It is expected that answers to the research question, will initiate the search for strategies that will enhance content, structure and teaching methods and so improve the internal efficiency of education at the secondary level.

3.0 Background

An analysis of education indicators of some English-speaking Caribbean countries (UNESCO July 1996), revealed a somewhat high degree of wastage at the transitional points of entry to successive levels of education. This is particular so at the transition from primary to secondary level, where there are relatively high repetition and dropout rates in Form 1. One consequence is that failure is experienced at the first port of call at secondary levels, which may result in dejection, loss of self concept, and alienation from school, leading ultimately to rejection of the school system, and eventually dropping out from the school programme.

Allocation to secondary education is based not only on pupils' performance at a secondary school entrance education at the end of the primary cycle, but also on the restricted number of secondary school places available in some countries. Children who are not allocated to secondary schools remain in the senior/all age primary schools for a further three years.

The disturbing factor is that the academic cream of the school population gains access to these schools, and within a year an undesirable proportion is repeating the grade as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

**Repetition Rates of Form 1 at the Secondary Level
Dominica and Grenada**

Year	Dominica Repetition Rate		Grenada Repetition Rate	
	Male/Female	Female	Male/Female	Female
1990/91	...	...	7.7	...
1992/93	...	...	10.5	...
1993/94	9.6	8.7	7.5	...

Source: Ministries of Education of the Respective Countries

Another way of looking at Form 1 pupil performance of these countries, is to examine the gross and net enrolments as shown in Table 2. A perusal of the data shows the vast difference between the gross and net enrolments, that suggests the extent of over-aged children enrolled in Form 1. The inference is the frequency of repetition that may be occurring.

TABLE 2

**Gross and Net Enrolments Grade 1 Secondary Education
Dominica, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines**

Country	Gross Enrolment				Net Enrolment			
	1990		1994		1990		1994	
	M/F	Fem	M/F	Fem	M/F	Fem	M/F	Fem
Dominica			119	114			56	66
St Lucia	54	63	62	70	35	40	39	34
St Vincent & the Grenadines			57.4	...	...	...	22.6	...

Source: Ministries of Education of the respective countries

The question is, Why are these children failing? One opinion is that because of the change of the teaching-learning environment and the vastly different classroom culture that exists on their entering the first grade at the secondary level, some pupils do not have the coping strategies to deal with these sudden changes. Noticeably is the frequency of reported illness, absences from schools and reluctance to go to school, especially during the first term of the school year.

4.0 Methodology and Procedure

The survey sets out to find out What are the school related and non school factors that impact negatively on pupil performance in First Forms of selected secondary schools of five Eastern Caribbean States.

4.1 The Sample

4.1.1 *Countries*

The UNESCO Basic Education Indicators of the English-Speaking Caribbean Countries completed in 1996 revealed the relative high wastage among pupils who moved from Primary to Secondary education. Five Eastern Caribbean Countries Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines were selected because they used similar mechanisms for transition to secondary education.

For these countries, access to secondary schooling is based not only on a pupil's performance at the Common Entrance Examination taken at the end of the primary cycle at grade 6, but also on the number of available secondary school places. The demand usually exceeds the supply, and as a result the academic cream gains places while the remainder would continue in Form 1 of the senior primary schools, participating in a diluted form of secondary education.

4.1.2 Schools

Within very recent years, two countries (Grenada and St Lucia) changed their policy regarding promotion. Automatic promotion is now being practised. In the circumstances, pupils who scored 50 % or below were selected by school principals as low achievers.

Schools selected were those with the highest repetition rate, or those which had a high proportion of children with low performance. The survey aimed at selecting two schools per country. Chief Education Officers and Education Officers however expressed much concern about the relatively high wastage at the Form I level, especially in the Grammar Schools to which the academic cream of Common Entrance Examination results go. Consequently the number of schools increased from ten (10) to fifteen (15).

4.1.3 Pupils

The expectation was that of a three (3) to four (4) parallel Form 1s, with a maximum of 120 pupils, the population would then comprise about 8 to 12 repeaters per school. The aim was to interview all repeaters.

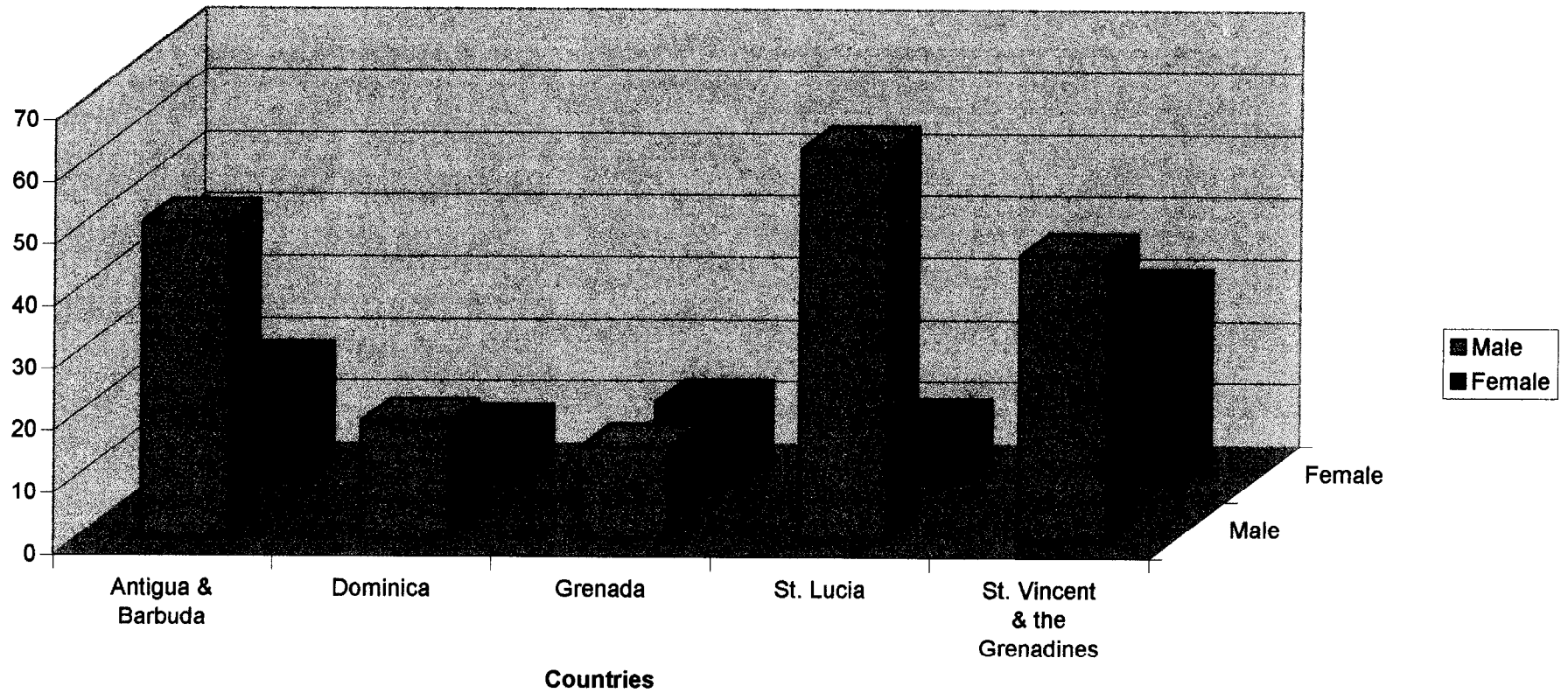
The magnitude of pupils repeating or doing poorly, is reflected in Table 3, and depicted in Chart 1, where all pupils who were present in school that day were interviewed.

Dominica's figures are less than anticipated. On those days of the interview, teachers were involved in industrial action. As a result there were many absentees.

The actual pupil survey population totalled 276 (Male 194; Female 82). The preponderance of males is as a result of the inclusion of two all-boys grammar secondary schools in Antigua and Barbuda and St Lucia. The

Chart1

Distribution of Repeaters & Low Performers by Country and Sex



counterpart All Girls Grammar School did not fall into the category of highest repetition rate and were therefore excluded from the survey.

Pupils in the 14 and 15 year group would have repeated classes more than once. This group in Form 1 would have increased the gross enrolment ratio, mentioned earlier.

TABLE 3

Distribution of Form 1 Repeaters & Low Performers by Country, Sex and Age 1996

Country	Sex								Total		
	Male				Female				M	F	Tot
	Age in Years				Age in Years						
	12	13	14	15	12	13	14	15			
Antigua & Barbuda	7	24	15	5	2	10	15	2	51	19	70
Dominica	3	6	9	1	-	5	4	-	19	9	28
Grenada	2	4	7	2	4	2	5	2	15	13	28
St Lucia	2	24	34	3	1	3	5	1	63	10	73
St Vincent & the Grenadines	1	20	24	1	2	9	15	5	46	31	77
Total	15	78	89	12	9	9	44	10	194	82	276

Source: Ministries of Education of the respective countries

4.1.4 Teachers

Teachers selected were those who taught Form 1. Table 4 gives a profile by country, age sex, and qualification.

4.1.4.1 Sex

One hundred and thirty one (131) teachers participated in the survey, Males 39; Females 92. Even in the two all male schools, the female teachers were far in the majority (St Lucia - Male, 2 Female 10; Antigua and Barbuda - Male 2, Female 7).

4.1.4.2 Age Grouping

The majority of teachers fell between the under 29 and 30 to 39 age groups, representing 77 % of the population.

4.1.4.3 Qualification

Highlighted in Chart 2, is Form 1 teacher qualification by Country. Of the total, just 20 % was graduate trained, while 35% reported that they had only CXC or London Advanced Level subjects. The trained teachers approximately 30% would have been primary trained, and not really subject specialist content-wise for the secondary level.

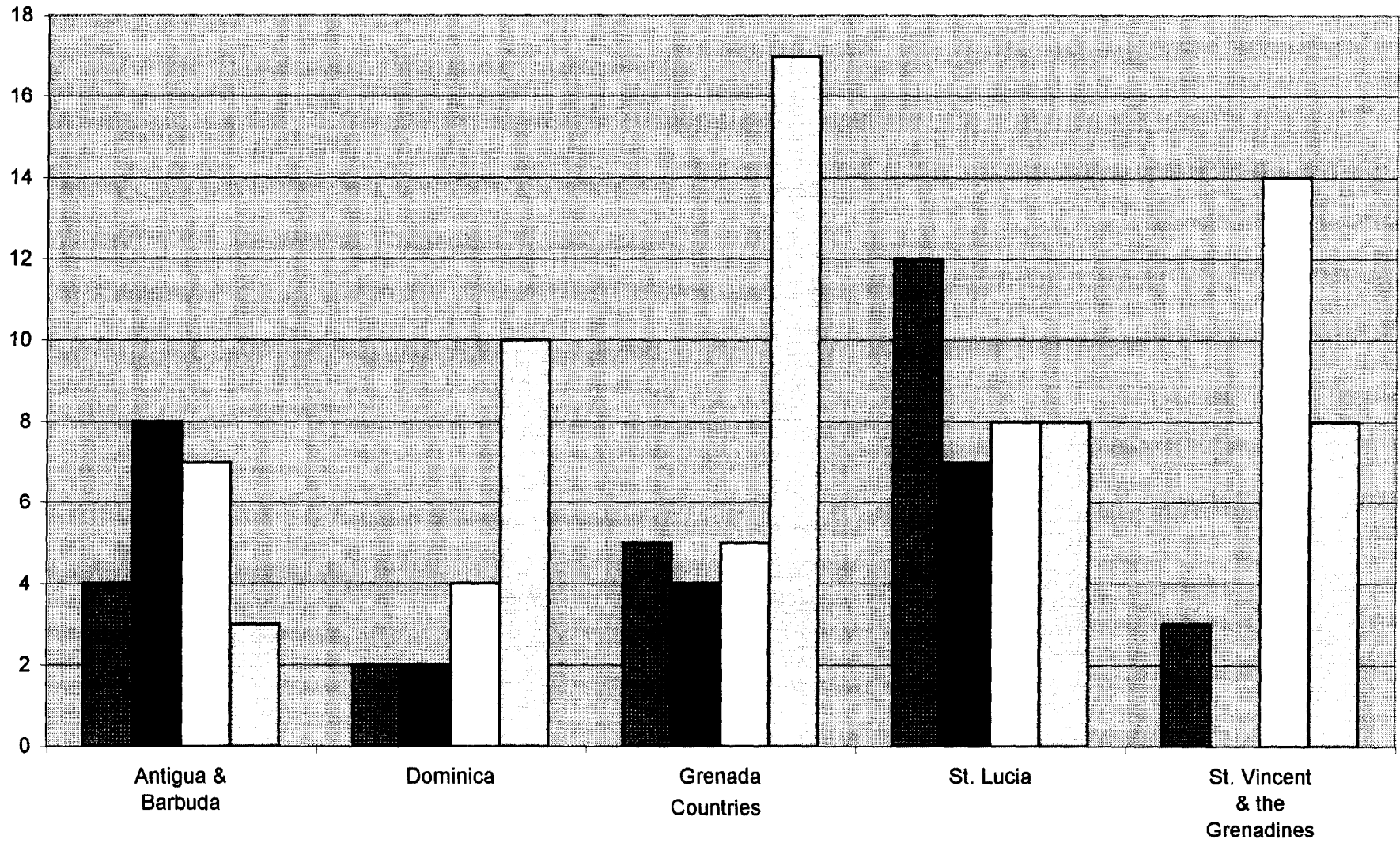
TABLE 4

**Profile of Form 1 Teachers by Country, Sex, Age and Qualifications
1996**

Country	Total	Sex		Age groups				Qualifications			
		Male	Fem	- 29	30 to 49	40 to 49	50 +	Trd Grad	Grad	Trained	Other
Antigua and Barbuda	22	5	17	9	7	6	-	4	8	7	3
Dominica	18	7	11	13	4	-	1	2	2	4	10
Grenada	31	10	21	17	8	4	2	5	4	5	17
St Lucia	35	7	28	10	16	7	2	12	7	8	8
St Vincent & the Grenadines	25	10	15	7	10	8	-	3	-	14	8
Total	131	39	92	56	45	25	5	26	21	38	46

Chart2

Profile of Form 1 Teachers by Qualification



4.1.5 Parents

All parent of pupils interviewed were invited to participate. One hundred and fifty seven (Male 53, Female 104) representing 57% of the expected total, participated in the survey. The figures presented in Table 5 show that about 50% was in the age group 30 to 39.

TABLE 5

Parent Population by Country and Sex

Country	Total Responses			Age -Grouping				
	M	F	Tot	-29	30 -39	40 - 49	50 -59	60 +
Antigua and Barbuda	16	26	42	1	23	14	2	2
Dominica	7	9	16	-	6	5	4	1
Grenada	7	18	25	-	12	5	3	5
St Lucia	10	28	38	-	18	11	8	1
St Vincent & the Grenadines	13	23	36	2	19	12	3	-
Total	53	104	157	3	78	47	20	9

4.2 Instrumentation

The Consultant with assistance from two senior education officers from each country administered the questionnaires to the teachers and interviewed both parents and pupils. To ensure that the field officers were at one in soliciting responses from the respondees, briefing sessions were held on the purpose of the survey, and how to obtain responses through pertinent questioning techniques.

4.2.1 Teachers' Questionnaires

Teachers responded to the two questionnaires in their own time. These were submitted to the consultant or field officers.

Questionnaire 1

Teachers were requested to respond to Questionnaire 1, a four- point Likert-type scale, which consisted of 19 items aimed at ascertaining their perception of the frequency with which selected good school practices occurred in the schools. One (1) represented very often and four (4) represented rarely (See Appendix 1).

The items selected were based on related research that reported on good school practices which are attributes of effective schooling. Based on the consultant's knowledge of the Caribbean English Speaking countries' education systems and in particular the five countries identified, and in consultation with senior education officials and significant others, items reflecting good practices were modified during the preparation stage of the study.

Items were grouped under seven headings:

i. Instructional Planning &Implementation

- ▶ Instructions are guided by preplanned curriculum;
- ▶ Lesson plans are not obligatory at the secondary level;
- ▶ Instructional practices are relevant to pupils' learning needs.

ii. Teaching Mixed Ability Students in Form 1

- ▶ Teachers do not have the capability to address different learning abilities;
- ▶ Time is set aside to work with slow learners;
- ▶ Extra learning is provided for pupils who need it.

iii. Student Welfare

- ▶ Attention is given to student welfare

iv. Monitoring and Assessing Student Performance

- ▶ Assessment of student performance matches learning objectives
- ▶ Routine assessment procedures are used to check student progress
- ▶ Test results are used to guide pupils' performance.

v. High Teacher Expectations of Pupil Performance

- ▶ Teachers expect a high standard of pupil performance
- ▶ Teachers show complacency about student achievement
- ▶ Teachers do not worry about pupil performance

vi. Parent Involvement in Pupils' School Work

- ▶ Parents keep track of their children's progress
- ▶ Parents play an active part in their children's progress
- ▶ Parents visit schools to discuss their children's work.
- ▶ Parent/school relationship revolves mainly among fund-raising activities.

vii Home Work Assignment

- ▶ All pupils complete homework assignments
- ▶ Teachers regularly assign homework to students

Teacher Questionnaire 11

Teacher Questionnaire 11 (Appendix 11), aimed at what teachers thought were causal factors of pupil repetition and poor performance in Form 1.

This questionnaire was used to explore further, teachers' perception of school practices and their impact on Form 1 pupils' performance, who gained entry to secondary schools through a highly competition system. They were requested first, to state the three most important factors that impact positively and negatively on pupil performance; and also to identify why some Form 1 pupils are performing poorly.

4.2.2 Interview Schedules

Pupil Interview Schedule

The Pupil Interview Schedule was aimed mainly at finding out how they felt about their low performance, and the reasons for such performance. The schedule comprised broad headings which included biodata, attendance, encouragement and support from parent and perception of teacher performance (See Appendix 111).

Parent Interview Schedule

Parent Interview Schedule was designed to look for non- school related factors associated with socio-economic circumstances, type & size of family, education attainment, monthly take home pay and involvement in their children's school work. (See Appendix IV).

5.0 Description and Analysis of Data

5.1 Teacher Questionnaire 1

Form 1 Teachers Perception of the Frequency With which Good Teaching Practices Occurred in the Selected Schools

Teachers responded by rating each practice according to the frequency observed, 1 represented Very Often, 2 Often, 3 Sometimes and 4 Rarely. A summation of all responses was made and the mean value calculated for each item. Responses are described under the seven headings:

5.1.1 *Instructional Planning and Implementation*

The objective was to find out the extent to which there was planning in the delivery of instruction. The responses shown in Table 6 indicate that overall, teachers are involved in planning for class instruction, but the level of involvement of each country varies as seen in the mean value of each item.

Instructional practices are relevant to pupils' learning needs more so in St Lucia 1.9, than in Dominica 2.3

Instruction is often guided by a preplanned curriculum. The mean value ranged from St Lucia, 1.4 to Antigua & Barbuda 2.6)

Preparation of lesson plans is seldom to rarely not obligatory at the secondary level. The mean value ranged from Dominica 3.1, to St Vincent and the Grenadines 3.8 with an overall mean rate of 3.4 for all countries.

Table 6

Instructional Planning and Implementation

Country	Instructional Planning and Implementation Mean Values		
	Instruction Relevant to Pupils' Learning Needs	Instruction Guided by Preplanned Curriculum	Lesson Plans are Not Obligatory
All Countries	2.1	1.8	3.4
Antigua & Barbuda	2.1	2.6	3.4
Dominica	2.3	1.7	3.1
Grenada	2.0	1.6	3.0
St Lucia	1.9	1.4	3.7
St Vincent & the Grenadines	2.4	1.7	3.8

5.1.2 Working With Mixed Ability Pupils In Form 1

The items in this category aimed at exploring teacher capability for coping with children of different learning ability, and opportunities given to slow learners for interacting with the teaching/ learning environment.

Capability to Manage Different Learning Abilities within a Classroom Setting

The mean rating of the responses given in Table 7 suggests that in four countries, the exception being Antigua and Barbuda with a mean (2.2), with the exception of Antigua (2.2), Form 1 teachers do have some capability to address different learning abilities. The mean value ranged from 2.7 in Grenada to 3.2 in Dominica.

Provision for Extra Learning Time for Slow Workers

The range of mean values 2.9 in Dominica to 3.7 in St Lucia indicates that teachers seldom set aside extra learning time for pupils who need it. The mean value given for St Vincent and the Grenadines implies that this practice is hardly ever observed. A similar pattern is seen for, Time is Set Aside to Work With Slow Students.

Student Welfare

Attention was often paid to student welfare as indicated in their responses, more so in St Lucia (2.0), Dominica and Grenada (2.1) than in Antigua and Barbuda (2.7) and St Vincent and the Grenadines (2.8)

TABLE 7

Working With Mixed Ability Children In Form 1

Country	Working with Mixed Ability Students in Form 1 - Mean Values		
	No Capability to Address Different learning Abilities	Extra Learning Time Provided For Pupils Who Need It	Time is set aside to work with slow students
All Countries	2.9	3.4	2.9
Antigua & Barbuda	2.2	3.3	2.9
Dominica	3.2	2.9	2.6
Grenada	2.7	3.4	2.8
St Lucia	3.1	3.7	2.7
St Vincent & the Grenadines	3.0	3.4	3.5

5.1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

The data shown in Table 8 suggest that teachers often monitor and evaluate pupil performance and use the test results to guide their performance.

Table 8**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Country	Monitoring and Evaluating Student Performance		
	Assessment of Student Matches Learning Objectives	Routine Assessment Used to Check Pupils' Progress	Tests Results Used to Guide Pupils' Performance
All Countries	1.9	1.8	1.7
Antigua & Barbuda	1.9	2.0	2.0
Dominica	1.8	1.7	1.7
Grenada	1.8	1.7	1.5
St Lucia	1.8	1.7	1.5
St Vincent & the Grenadines	2.4	1.9	1.8

5.1.4 Teacher Expectation of Pupil Performance

The relatively low mean rating which ranges from 1.5 to 1.8, implies that the teachers more than often expect a high standard of performance from their students. This response is in concert with that they rarely show complacency about student achievement and worry very often about their performance, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9**Teacher Expectation of Student Performance**

Country	Teacher Expectation of Pupil Performance		
	High Standard of Student Performance Expected	Complacency Shown About Student Performance	No Worry shown About Student Performance
All Countries	1.7	3.4	3.7
Antigua & Barbuda	1.5	2.6	3.6
Dominica	1.8	3.4	3.9
Grenada	1.7	3.6	3.6
St Lucia	1.6	3.6	3.9
St Vincent & the Grenadines	1.8	3.4	3.4

5.1.5 Parent Involvement in Their Children's School Work

Teachers' responses presented in Table 10, and illustrated in Chart 3 imply that parents seldomly to rarely

- ▶ keep track of their childrens' progress;
- ▶ play an active part in their children's school work;
- ▶ visit school to discuss their children's work.

Yet the response to parent/school relationship as mainly fundraising, indicates that this is seldom so. The mean rating ranged from 2.6 in St Vincent and the Grenadines to 3.1 in Dominica.

Chart3

Parent Involvement in Their Children's School Work (Teachers' View)

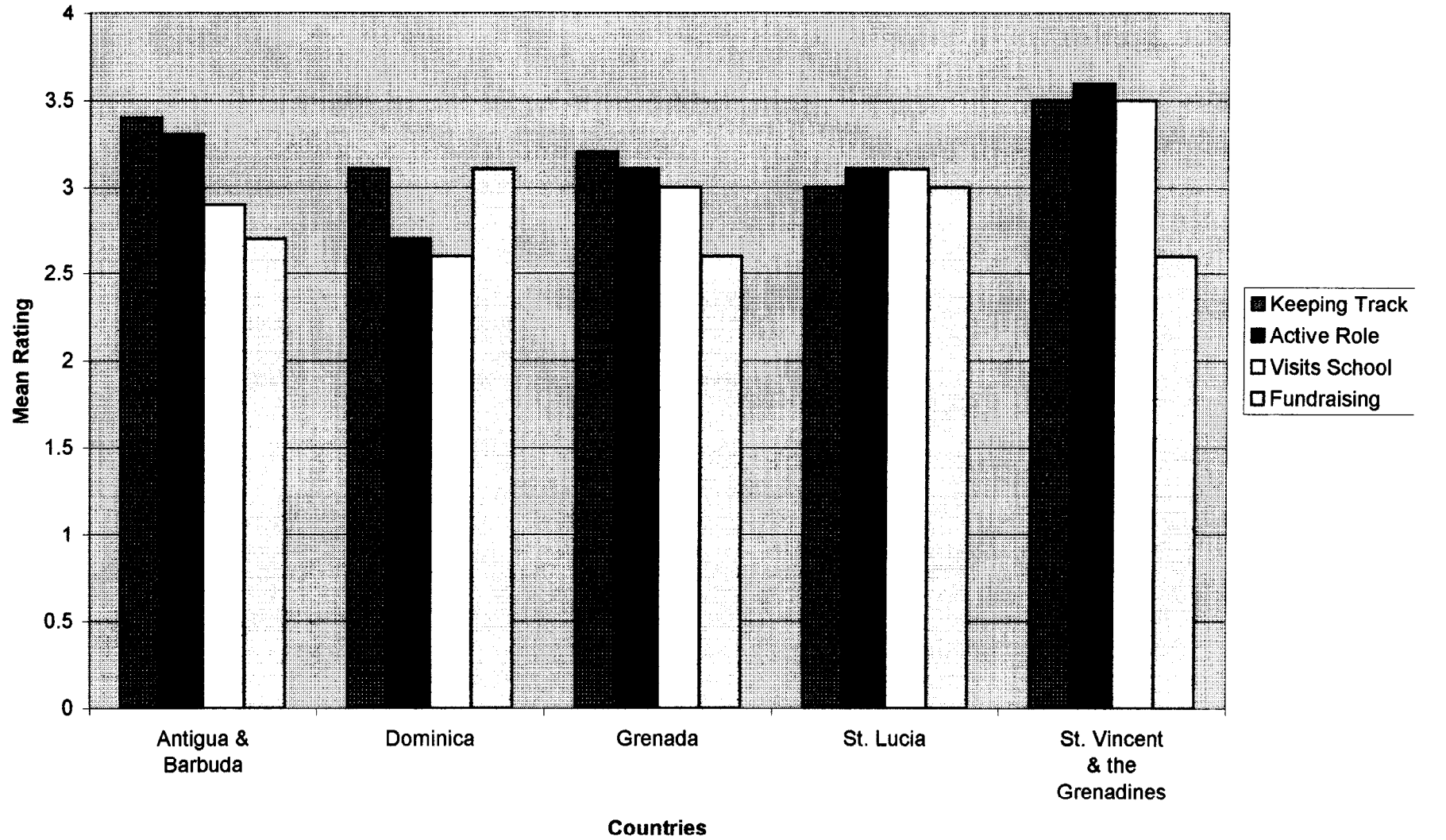


Table 10**Parent Involvement in Their Children's School Work**

Country	Parent Involvement in Their Children's School Work Mean Value			
	Keeping Track of Children's Progress	Playing Active Part in Children's Work	Visiting Schools to Discuss Work	Parent/school relationship Being mainly Fundraising
All Countries	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.8
Antigua & Barbuda	3.4	3.3	2.9	2.7
Dominica	3.1	2.7	2.6	3.1
Grenada	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.6
St Lucia	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.0
St Vincent & the Grenadines	3.5	3.6	3.5	2.6

5.1.6 Homework Practices

As presented in Table 11, teachers often assign homework to pupil; overall mean value is 1.7 but seldom do all the pupils complete homework assignments, an all countries' mean of 2.9 with St Vincent and the Grenadines showing a high mean of 3.5

Table 11**Homework Assignments**

Country	Homework Practices	
	All Students Complete Homework Assignments	Teachers Regularly Assign Homework to Students
All Countries	2.9	1.7
Antigua & Barbuda	2.9	2.4
Dominica	2.6	1.5
Grenada	2.8	1.6
St Lucia	2.8	1.7
St Vincent & the Grenadines	3.5	2.0

Chart 4

Positive School-Related Influences on Pupils' Performance

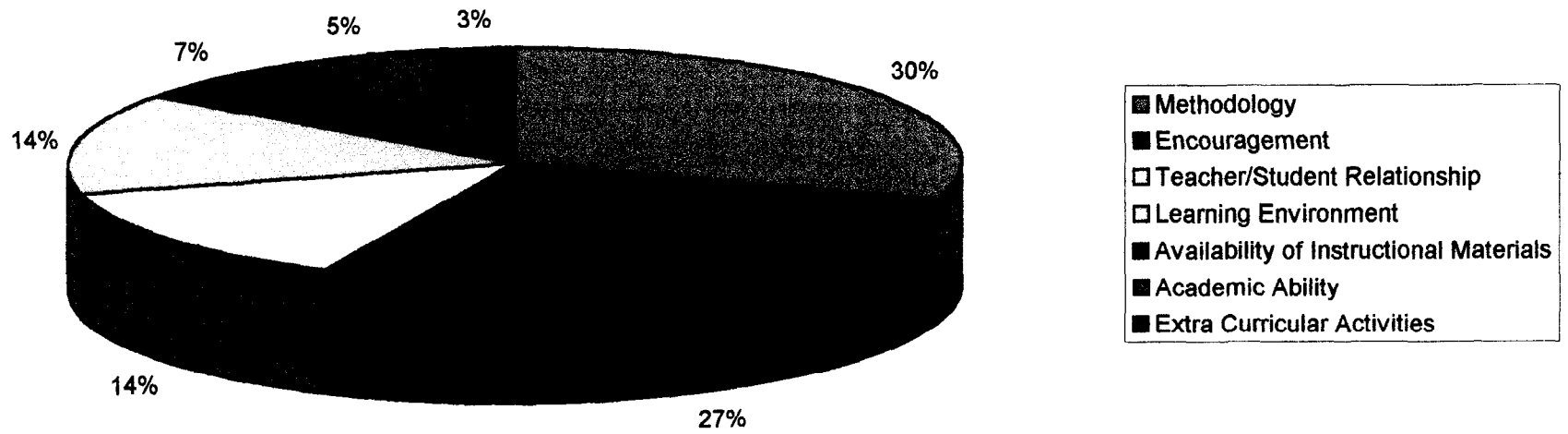
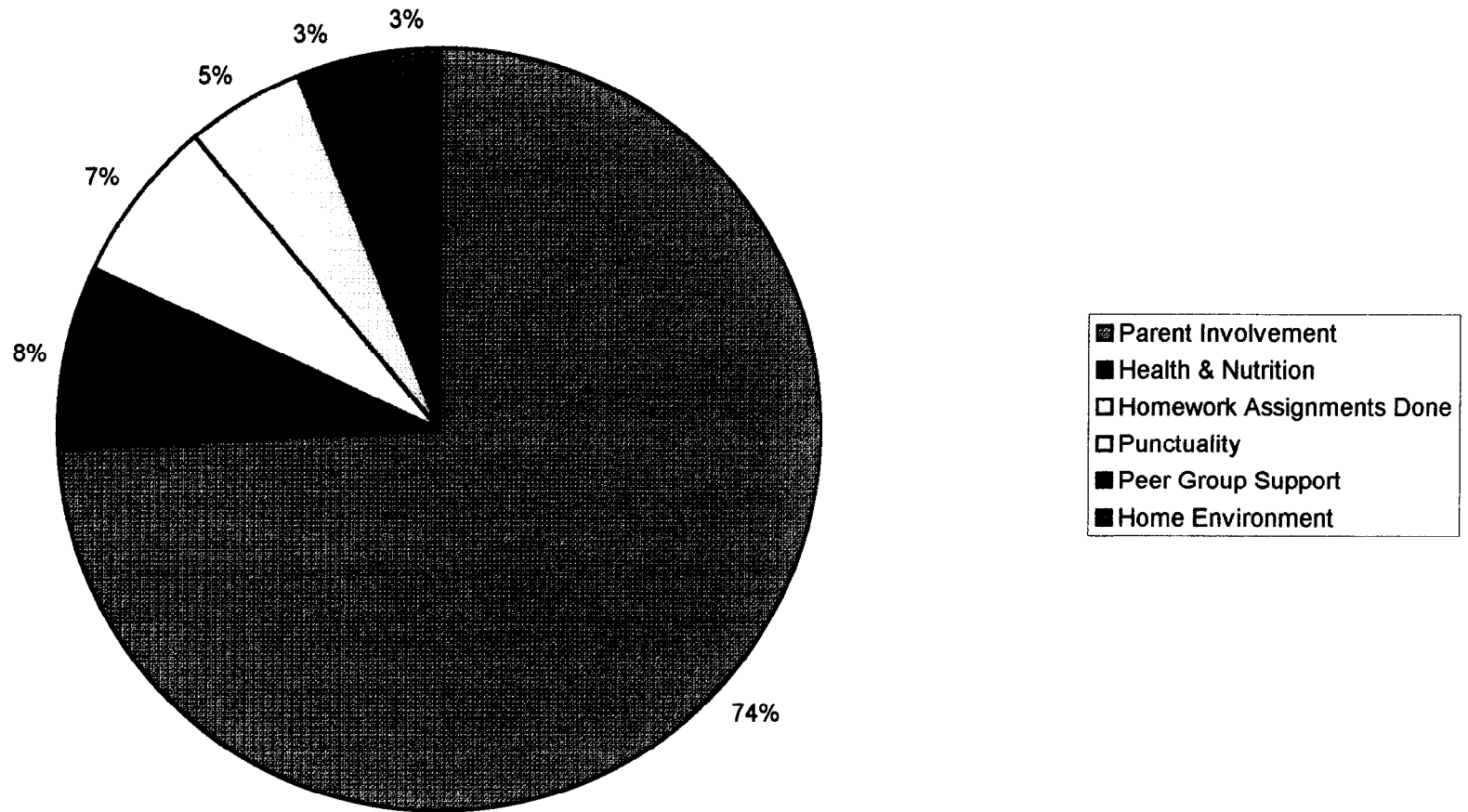


Chart 5

Non-School Positive Related Factors



5.2 Responses to Questionnaire 11

5.2.1 Factors that Impact Positively on Form 1 Pupils' Performance

5.2.1.1 School- Related

Table 12 presents those factors associated with positive impact on pupils' performance. They are rated in order of the frequency with which they were identified, and are shown as percentages in Charts 4 and 5.

Table 12

Factors that Impact positively on Pupil Performance

Factors that Impact Positively on Pupil Performance			
School Related Factors	Responses	Non School Related	Responses
Methodology	43	Parent involvement	86
Encouragement	38	Health and nutrition	9
Teacher/Pupil relationship	20	Homework assignments done	8
Learning environment	20	Punctuality	6
Availability of instructional material	10	Peer group support	4
Academic ability	7	Home environment	3
Extra curricular activities	4		
Total responses	142	Total responses	116

5.2.1.2 Negative Factors

Those negative factors identified were directed to Non-Supportive Parent Involvement in their children's school work and progress. Teachers believed that some children performed badly because their parents

- ▶ showed neglect, lack of interest and supervision, home support and encouragement;
- ▶ did not ensure that school work was done;
- ▶ did not practise family or parental participation;
- ▶ practised too much obscenities and physical abuse;
- ▶ had unstable home environments - economically, spiritually and intellectually.

These sentiments were common among teachers of all five countries.

5.2.1.3 Reasons for Low Performance/Repetition Among Some Form 1 Pupils

Teachers felt that a combination of factors contributed to pupils' weak performance. Their responses are grouped starting first with the highest responses.

- i. Parent - Related Factors;
- ii. Teacher Attitude, Methodology and Capability;
- iii. Pupil Low Self esteem , Motivation and lack of Interest in Education;
- iv. Coping with the New Environment;
- v. Poor Primary Foundation;
- vi. Low Academic Ability;
- vii. Behavioural Problems;
- viii. No Follow-up on Lessons done in School.

Parent- Related Factors

Stated earlier in this section, was the teachers' belief that parent non involvement in their children's education has a tremendous negative impact on pupil performance. This perception is consistent with examples of parent related factors that impact negatively on their progress at school:

- ▶ Failure by some parents to monitor pupils' work;
- ▶ Parents too often neglect their children's welfare;

- ▶ Students are left to their own devices;
- ▶ Some parents do not show the necessary interest in their children's school life;
- ▶ Unstable home environment;
- ▶ Parents lose interest in their children when they enter secondary school;
- ▶ Poor economic constraints at home, no lunch and no books.

Teacher Attitude, Methodology and Capability

From the statements highlighted, teachers were very critical of themselves and the availability of pre-planned curriculum. That even though there was evidence of the practice of planning the delivery of instruction as shown in Table 6, they felt that there was room for improvement as implied in the following reasons attributed to pupil poor performance. These include:

- ▶ Teachers' lack of confidence in themselves;
- ▶ Lack of practical teaching materials and teaching tools which lead to poor teaching practices;
- ▶ Incapability of staff to teach mixed ability classes;
- ▶ Absence of preplanned curriculum or course outlines for teachers to consult;
- ▶ Poor classroom management;
- ▶ Unsuitable curriculum to meet the needs of slower learners.

Student Low Self Esteem, Motivation, and Lack of Interest in School Work

Pupils' low self esteem was also thought to be a contributory factor to low performance. Examples of such statements are:

- ▶ Negative attitude to various subjects and teachers, thus producing poor performance;
- ▶ Low self esteem of some pupils, which hinder overall performance;
- ▶ Students who do not pay attention and do not have proper work attitude;
- ▶ They lack initiative, self esteem and general interest in school work;
- ▶ Rejection of the notion that education is related to advancement.

Coping With the New Learning Environment

Teachers felt that some pupils on entering secondary schools for the first time experienced many problems coping with the secondary learning environment which is vastly different from whence they came. Statements include:

- ▶ Transition from primary to secondary is difficult for many ... new environment and many more subjects, where at least eight different teachers are seen per day;
- ▶ Sometimes they take too long to adjust. They do not realise that high school is a different ball game;
- ▶ ...inability to assimilate subject range;
- ▶ ...too young to handle level of work required.

Poor Primary Foundation and Low Academic Ability

Implied in the Teachers' statements is that the competitive nature of the Common Entrance Examination, impels some primary teachers to neglect the completion of the primary curriculum in favour of concentrating solely on drilling of examination content areas and tests. As a result, teachers felt that some students on entering the secondary programme lack basic concepts. They often have poor comprehension skills which make it difficult for them to transfer knowledge acquired or do personal research. Some comments include:

"The primary school virtually spoon feeds them thus making it difficult for them to do personal research; they have no proper preparation at the elementary level;"

"Pupils are drilled in Junior 5, so when they enter Form 1 they are burnt out";

"They have poor comprehension of instruction";

"They have too many mental gaps in various subject areas";

"Students do not know how they can use the information that has been taught to them";

Student Complacency

Teachers had also perceived that because of the heavy concentration on working toward passing the Common Entrance Examination, pupils relaxed on entering secondary schools. There was the feeling among some that:

“passing the CEE is the end of hard work and commitment”

Behavioural Problems/Discipline

Many instances of disruptive behaviours were reported as hindering factors. These include:

- ▶ Pupils not paying attention;
- ▶ Disciplinary problems which stem from lack of parental supervision;
- ▶ Peer groups that do not have a serious attitude to work;
- ▶ Rebellious-don't-care attitude at school.

No Follow-up on School Work Done

Reinforcement of lessons learnt gives pupil an opportunity to practise new concepts learnt. This practice was not very evident among the low performing pupils: According to the teachers, they:

- ▶ Lacked the discipline to take time out to do extra work in subject areas;
- ▶ Made insufficient effort at studying and doing homework;
- ▶ Failed to do homework and revise what was taught at school;
- ▶ Did not read widely, they were restricted to text books.

5.3 Parent Profile

5.3.1 Some Characteristics of Parents Interviewed

Tables 14 and 15 give data on some characteristics of parents interviewed.

Type of Families

Not much difference in the type of families was observed. One-parent families comprised 53% of those interviewed. In cases where student lived with grandparents, or aunt or uncles they were recorded as either one or two parent family, since the parents were living abroad. Chart 6 shows type of families by country.

Size of Families

Small was regarded as 1 & 2, medium as 3 & 4, and large as 5 or more children in the family. The majority of children came from medium (34%) to large (36%) families.

Gender

More females (66%), than male (34%) parents were interviewed. Chart 7 highlights the differences by country.

Age - Grouping

The parents interviewed were relatively young. Half of the parents was in 30 - 39 age group, followed by 30% in the 40 - 49 age group. Note too that 18% fell in the 50+ age group, which consisted mostly of grandparents. .

Highest Education Attainment

An overwhelming proportion of parents attained primary education only (71%). Just 18% went as far as secondary, 8% post secondary and 3% tertiary. Chart 8 gives composition by country.

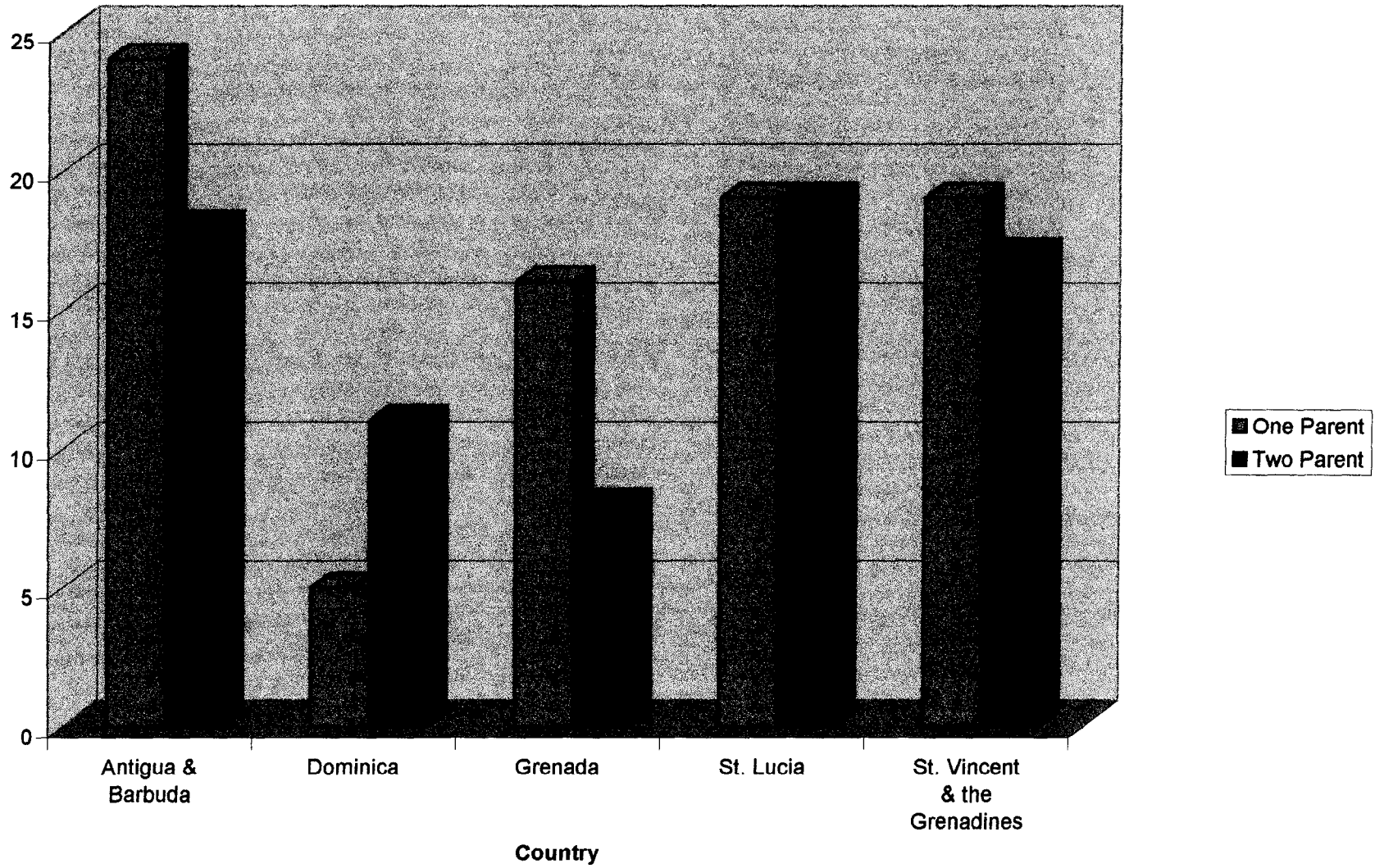
Type of Occupation

Occupation was divided into four main groups as follows:

- i. Unskilled, where no formal training is required; labourer, farmhand, huckster; maid; babysitter;

Chart 6

Parent Profile - Type of Family



5.3.1 Type of Family

- ii. Skilled, where less than a year's training is required e.g. plumber; taxi driver, typist clerks;
- iii. Service which required at least 2 - 3 years training e.g. teacher, nurse, policeman, fireman, legal clerk;
- iv. Supervisory those which required postgraduate training or who supervise a group of employees e.g University lecturer; Chief Accountant, store manager, Restaurant Owner supervising over 15 workers.

The majority of parents occupied either unskilled (52%) or skilled (19%) positions, while 20% was in jobs that required between 2 to 3 years' training after completing secondary education.

Monthly Take-Home Pay

As recorded about 54% took home less than EC \$999 per month , while just about 13% took home more than EC \$3 000 per month.

Chart 7

Parent Profile - Gender of Interviewee

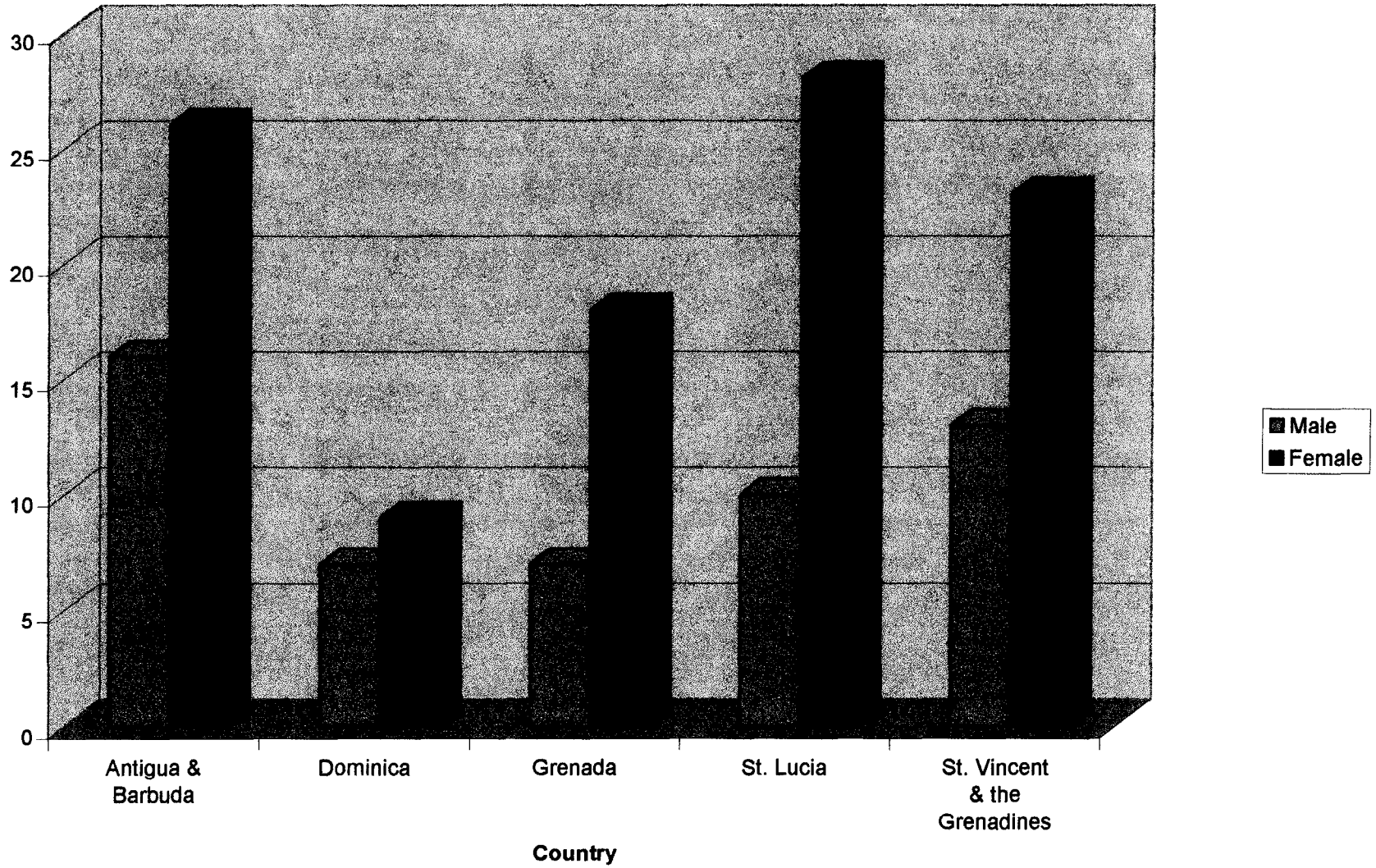


Table 13

Parent Profile -Type & Size of Family, and Gender of Parent Interviewed Age

Country	Parent Profile Type and Size of Family, Gender and Age of Interviewee											
	Response	Type of Family		Size of Family			Gender		Age			
		One parent	Two Parent	Small	Med	Large	Male	Female	- 29	30-39	40-49	50+
Antigua & Barbuda	42	24	18	15	12	15	16	26	1	23	14	4
Dominica	16	5	11	3	4	9	7	9	-	6	5	5
Grenada	25	16	9	7	9	9	7	18	-	12	5	8
St Lucia	38	19	19	11	13	14	10	28	-	18	11	9
St Vincent & the Grenadines	36	19	17	7	16	13	13	23	2	19	12	3
Total	157	83	74	43	54	60	53	104	3	78	47	29

Table 14

Parent Profile - Education , Occupation, Monthly Take Home Pay

Country	Parent Profile Education Occupation Monthly Take Home Pay of Interviewee													
	Responses	Highest Education Attainment				Type of Occupation				Monthly Take Home Pay				
		Primary	Secondary	Post Sec	Tertiary	Unskilled	Skilled	Service	Super/ Mang	- 999	-1500	- 2000	-3000	3000+
Antigua & Barbuda	42	20	15	5	2	9	13	13	7	13	11	8	2	8
Dominica	16	11	2	2	1	8	4	3	1	6	4	2	-	4
Grenada	25	22	2	1	-	17	3	5	-	20	4	1	-	-
St. Lucia	38	27	4	4	3	19	5	8	6	15	5	7	3	8
St Vincent & the Grenadines	36	31	5	-	-	28	5	3	-	26	9	1	-	-
Total	157	111	28	12	6	81	30	32	14	80	33	19	5	20

Chart 8

Parent Profile - Highest Education Attainment

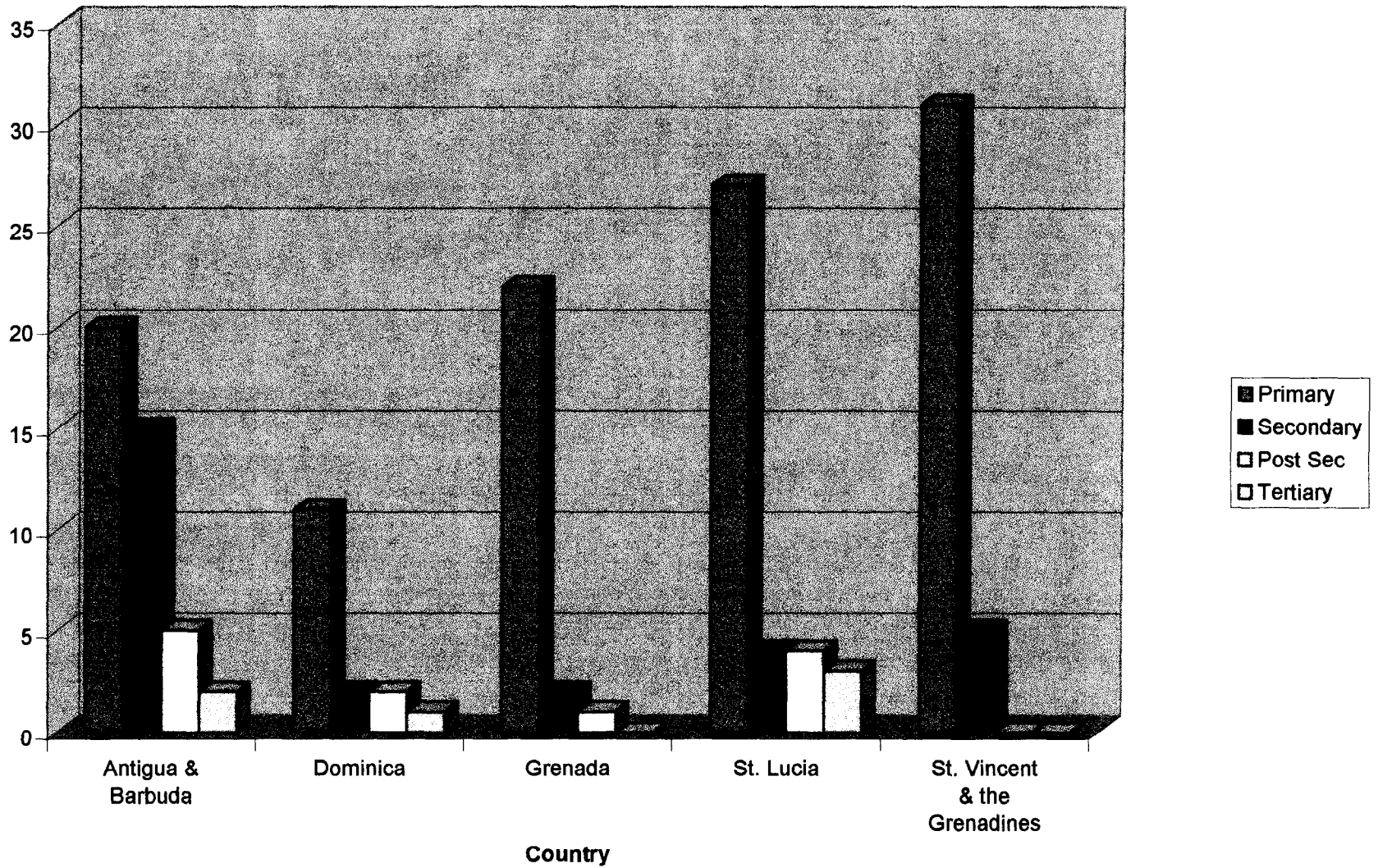
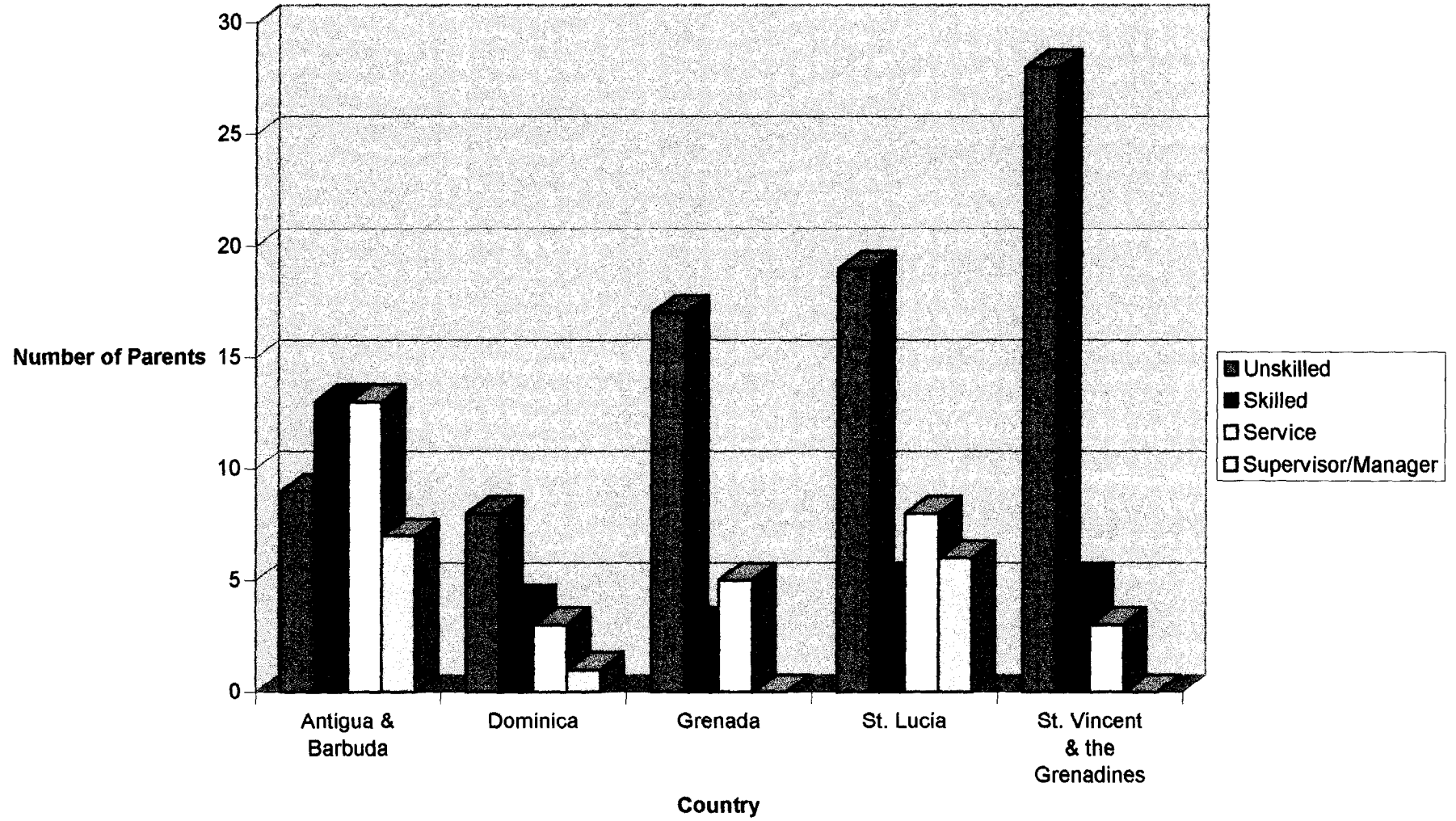


Chart 9

Parent Profile - Type of Occupation



5.3.1 Type of Occupation

5.3.2 Parent Involvement in School Activities

An examination of the responses recorded in Table 15, shows that 75% of the parents had been involved in at least attendance at PTA meetings. The proportion ranged from 62% in Antigua and Barbuda to 88 % in Grenada. These responses reiterate those of teachers shown at Table 10 which implied that parent/school relationship was more than merely fund raising

From their comments some parents attended all activities to which they were invited; they were mostly fund raising activities and open days.

One reported that she ‘always attends meetings, visits schools and always go to the teacher’.

Another attended meetings but were not active, “I never have discussions with the teacher about my child’s work”.

For another coming to this interview “ was the first time I came to school”.

Others were not involved because,

- ▶ they could not afford to pay fare to attend meetings;
- ▶ of work pressure;
- ▶ they left home early am and returned 10.00 pm;
- ▶ their work schedule did not permit.

TABLE 15

Parent Involvement in School Activities

Country	Parent Involvement In School Activities			
	All Activities	PTA Only	None	Total
Antigua & Barbuda	11	10	13	34
Dominica	5	9	2	16
Grenada	13	8	4	25
St Lucia	13	15	10	38
St Vincent & The Grenadines	13	15	8	36
All Countries	55	57	37	149

5.3.3 *Parent Involvement in Overseeing Child's Homework*

The responses provided in Table 16, suggest that just about 15% of the parents was not involved in any way in overseeing their children's home work. Their comments fell into two main categories:

Incapability of helping because:

- i. they do not have the ability;
- ii. of working hours.

They do not have the ability

Statements include that they:

- ▶ Don't know the school work;
- ▶ Cannot help now child is in secondary school;
- ▶ Find work difficult and strange to give needed help;
- ▶ Do not understand what is being taught, and so cannot help;

Incapability - Working Hours

They:

- ▶ are unable to supervise, being a taxi driver;
- ▶ cannot oversee homework because they return from work every evening; at 10;
- ▶ have to work;
- ▶ didn't think that they had to help them.

Encouragement Only

For those who gave encouragement only, it was either verbal or something material. In some cases the encouragement was negative rather than positive. Some typical examples are:

- ▶ Talks about the need for a career and the importance of education;
- ▶ Encourages child to do homework, but sometimes she does nothing;
- ▶ Try your best you worked hard at Common Entrance Examination.

Examples of negative encouragement include:

- ▶ If you don't work hard teacher will throw you out;
- ▶ I have to slave behind child to work, sometimes I belt him;
- ▶ Give rewards and punishment accordingly, for homework.

Overseeing and Giving Guidance

For some parents who oversaw and gave help, they experienced an attitudinal problem typically from the Grammar School Student such as

- ▶ Son has ego of knowing everything;
- ▶ Helps with homework but encounters an 'I know' attitude;
- ▶ Helps but not sure about quantum of homework assignments.

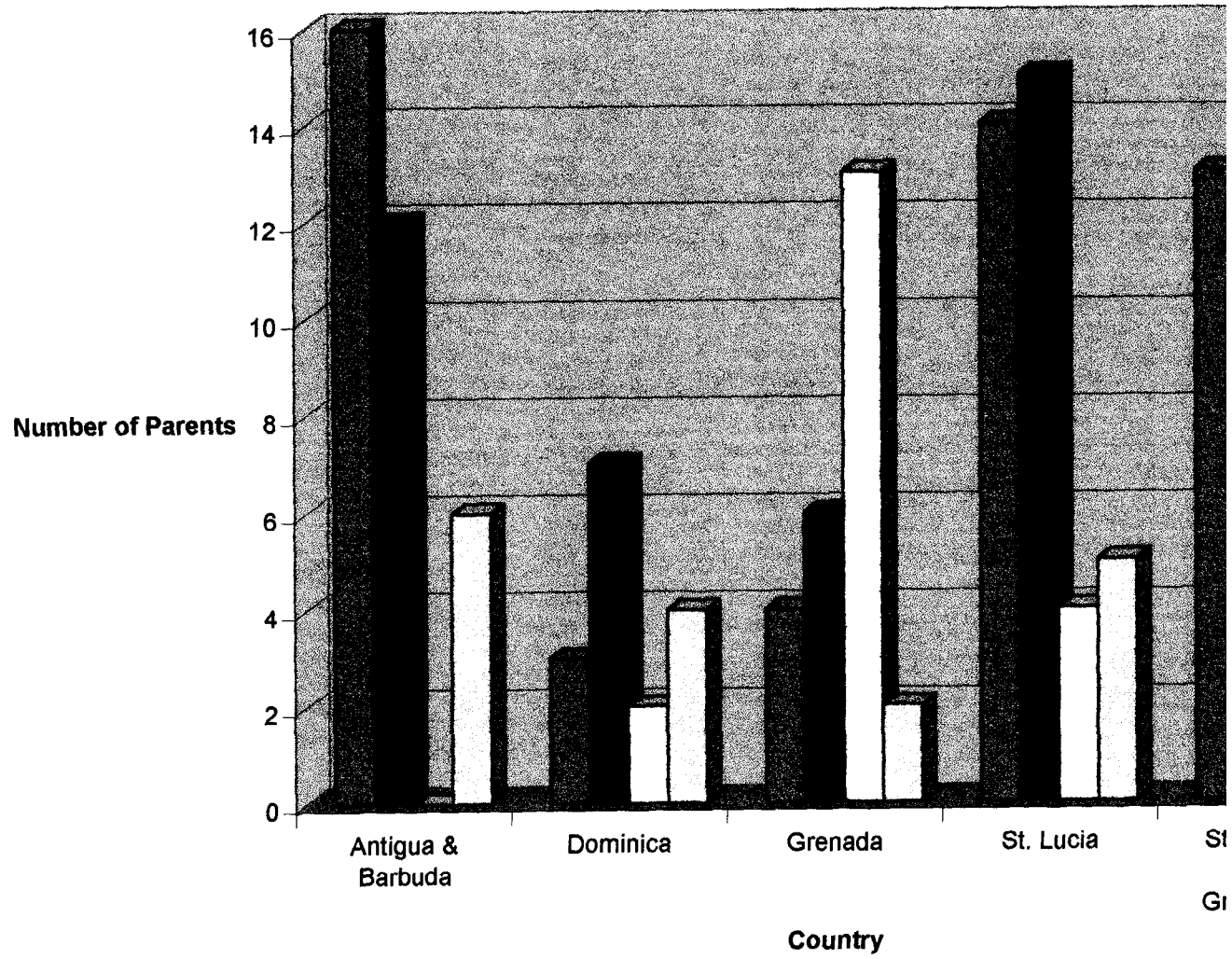
TABLE 16

Parent Involvement in Child's Homework

Country		Parent Involvement in Child's Home Work			
Name	Responses	Oversees & Helps, etc	Checks	Encourages only	None
Antigua & Barbuda	34	16	12	0	6
Dominica	16	3	7	2	4
Grenada	25	4	6	13	2
St Lucia	38	14	15	4	5
St Vincent & the Grenadines	36	13	9	9	5
All Countries	149	50	48	28	22

Chart 10

Parent Involvement in Child's Homework [Parents' View]



5.3.4 *Parents' Perception of Pupil and Teacher Performance*

Parents' comments about pupil performance, and Form 1 teachers are grouped as follows:

- i. Pupil Capability
- ii. Teacher Capability
- iii. Unmarked books
- iv. Labelling by Teachers
- v. Discipline
- vi. Slow learners
- vii. Teacher/parent Communication
- viii. Homework assignments

Capability

Parents felt that some children had problems coping with the new environment while others thought that pupils had difficulties coping with many subjects. Some also found that their children's behaviour deteriorated when they entered secondary schools:

- ▶ Child needs to bridge the gap between primary and secondary;
- ▶ Child had no problem with school work until he started secondary school;
- ▶ Child was loving at primary, now troublesome at secondary;
- ▶ Child was not comfortable at first with so many subject teachers;
- ▶ Didn't think that the work was such a problem, but was more getting adjusted to the new environment;
- ▶ Child moved to a different phase and probably did not adjust.

Teacher Capability

Parents thought that Form I teachers were generally young, inexperienced and untrained, and suggested pedagogical training for them:

- ▶ Not sure that teachers can cope with the different abilities in one Form nor that there is such a facility;

- ▶ Young teachers should do a course in child psychology; they cannot handle the children, they do not listen to their problems;
- ▶ Children cannot handle the mannerisms of many teachers;
- ▶ ...Fairly young inexperienced teachers

Class Management

Managing the class was perceived to be a grave problem for the young teachers:

- ▶ Some classes are too large for individual attention;
- ▶ There are too many class detentions;
- ▶ Present class is dreading in the school;
- ▶ Some teachers cannot control noise level;
- ▶ Poor rapport between teachers and students;
- ▶ Some teachers should be more approachable and polite to children;
- ▶ Discipline is not always fair - Demerit System;
- ▶ Some teachers beat the children.

Labelling

The practice of labelling among some teachers could have contributed to the poor self concept and esteem observed earlier. Parents reported:

- ▶ Negative teachers' remarks to pupils who are not doing so well
- ▶ Teachers roughing child up and taunting him

Unmarked Work

The dissatisfaction expressed about unmarked work is reflected in the following statements:

- ▶ Not satisfied with the way the work is marked;
- ▶ Don't understand how the teacher performs with the child, because the books are not marked;
- ▶ Sometimes books are not marked and some teachers do not go over work to know how much children learn.

Homework Assignments

- ▶ Teachers give plenty homework;

- ▶ There is no homework system in place.

Teacher/ Parent Communication

- ▶ Not enough communication between school and parent and child; teacher calls parent only when child is bad;
- ▶ Child cannot see very well on Blackboard but is afraid to let the teacher know.

5.4 Form 1 Pupils' Perceptions About Their Poor Performance

5.4.1 *Pupils' Feelings About Repeating/ Low Performance*

The data in Table 17 suggest that the majority of pupils (95%) felt bad/ashamed/disappointed/ unhappy/embarrassed/stupid/low and sad about remaining in the same class for another year.

Typical reasons given exclusive of St Lucia were:

- "New students from old schools came and meet me";*
- "I had to remain with young children";*
- "Most of my friends pass they boast on me and I feel funny";*
- "Brother and sister never repeated";*
- "Wanted my mother to be proud of me";*
- "I usually passed exercises so I was surprised when I failed".*

St Lucian pupils' responses were typically, *"I didn't do enough work"*.

Table 17

Pupils' Feelings About Repeating/Low Performance by Country

Country	No of Responses	Feelings About Repeating/Low Performance		
		Bad/Ashamed	Nothing	Not So Bad
Antigua & Barbuda	70	63	1	6
Dominica	28	26	2	-
Grenada	28	26	-	2
St Lucia	73	73	-	-
St Vincent & the Grenadines	77	73	-	4
Total	276	261	3	12

Those who felt nothing (1%), repeated more than once. One student reported:

"I felt bad after the first year because it was my fault. I used to fool around; this time I didn't feel anything".

Twelve pupils (4%) did not feel so bad.

Nine pupils wanted to repeat because they felt that they did not cover the year's programme:

*"I got a second chance to learn what I did not do last year";
"I felt repeating would help me to learn more".*

One pupil broke his arm during the examination and couldn't finish the examination.

Another stated:

“I didn’t feel so bad because some of my friends also failed”

And another said that he had a feeling that he was going to fail because he was always late for school; and so for most of the time he was sent out in the corridor until the lessons ended.

5.4.2 Pupils’ Reasons for Repeating/Low Performance

Table 18

Form 1 Pupils’ Reasons for Poor School Performance

Country	Students’ Reasons For Poor School Performance				
	Responses	Did Not Study; played too Much	Parent/Poverty/ Domestic Problems	Difficulty Level Coping Problems	Absenteeism
Antigua & Barbuda	70	46	4	16	4
Dominica	28	21	-	7	-
Grenada	28	20	1	1	6
St Lucia	73	39	5	22	7
St Vincent & the Grenadines	77	52	4	13	8
Total	276	178	14	59	25

The data presented in Table 18 and shown in Chart 11 indicate that the responses fall into four broad categories, the majority of which fell under Did not Study, Played too Much (64%), followed by Difficulty Level and Coping Problems(21%)

In every country the sentiments expressed were more or less the same.

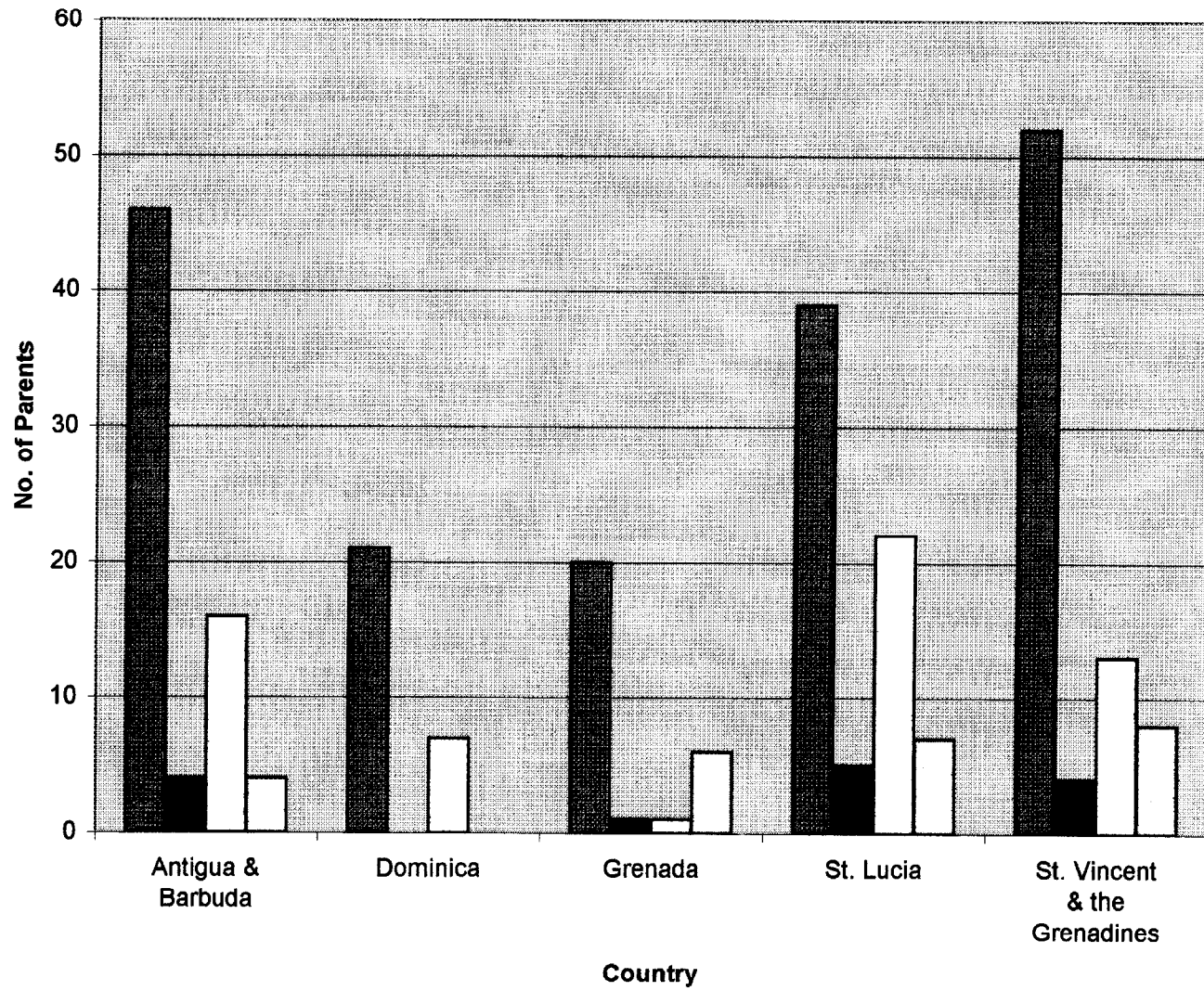
Did Not Study/Played Too Much

Mentioned earlier by both teachers and parents was the tendency for some pupils to relax on entering secondary schools. Pupils’ statements reiterated this perception.

“To tell you the truth I didn’t put myself out to work; I just cruised along after passing CEE”;

Chart 11

Pupils' Reasons for Poor School Performance



“Football took up most of my time I was too tired after practice and hardly did home work”;

“I did not take my work seriously, and I did not always do home work. I was talkative in class and gave too much trouble”;

“I did not study I thought that I could have passed without studying”;

“I will just sit in class and play around with other children; I talked a lot in class, and never listened to the teacher”;

“Never used to study; in the afternoon I used to go to the beach”.

Difficulty Level of School Work & Coping Problems

Some children experienced difficulties with the subject content, and in some cases were afraid to tell the teacher that they did not understand what was taught. Implied in some of the statements were the practices of attention seeking behaviours.

Reasons for low performance include:

“I didn’t work so well because work was kind of hard; I had 13 detentions for laughing and talking in class”;

“I did not do the work because I did not understand most of it ... and was afraid to ask teacher;”

“I studied for tests but did not remember anything during the test;”

“I did not like the teacher and did not understand the work, and was sleeping in class”;

“I did not really study because I did not understand; whenever I asked the teachers

to explain, they would say that they have already explained and would not repeat”.

Some pupils found it difficult to cope with the new environment:

“I couldn’t come to grips with all the subjects. I thought secondary school was just like primary school I was not accustomed to different teachers”;

“I never settled down. I wanted to go back to primary where I was more comfortable. With so many teachers in secondary school, all giving home work, it was difficult to do home work in every subject”.

For one student who attended a private primary school, it was a traumatic experience. He said:

“It was a dramatic change having come from a private school with eight in a class and being a Grade A pupil to meet with different types of students who are very competitive and having to cope with so many subjects all at one time”.

Absenteeism

Just about 9% of the pupils reported absenteeism as a causal factor for low performance. Most were absent from taking the tests/examinations

“I didn’t get to do one of the tests”.

“My hand was broken during examinations and was therefore unable to finish tests”.

“Didn’t take final tests”.

“I was always out of class for home work therefore I missed many classes”.

A few missed out because of illness.

Others were absent because there was no money. One pupil said

"I had no shoes".

Domestic/Home Problems

Domestic and home problems were not perceived as major factors impacting negatively on pupil performance (5%).

"I sometimes study but they [parents] call me to do something";

"I study but parents quarrelled a lot";

"I worry about my mother who is dying";

"Mum was away for nine months, I missed her very much";

"I did not study hard; I had to help in the shop sometimes";

"I did not have enough money to buy all the material to do the test".

5.4.3 Parent Supervision of Home Work Assignment

The figures presented in Table 19 imply that the majority of parents (90%), had been supportive in one way or another in their children's school work.

Thirty seven per cent checked and gave guidance 14% encouraged and checked homework, while 40 % gave encouragement only.

Typical statements are highlighted for each practice.

Checking and Giving Guidance

"They make me study and give me questions, mother will go to teacher to discuss my work";

"I often have to bring bag and books for checking and they will help, they also bought encyclopedia";

“Mother helps with home work, she examines work done during the day; and insists that work not done properly must be corrected and shown to the teacher the next day”.

“Father checks home work and he explains how it is done; he puts me to sit down and says if you do not study, you will not get a proper job”.

“When I do not understand Mother shows me; she looks over exercises and home work and helps me study for examination by asking questions. She also prepared timetable for me to work at home”.

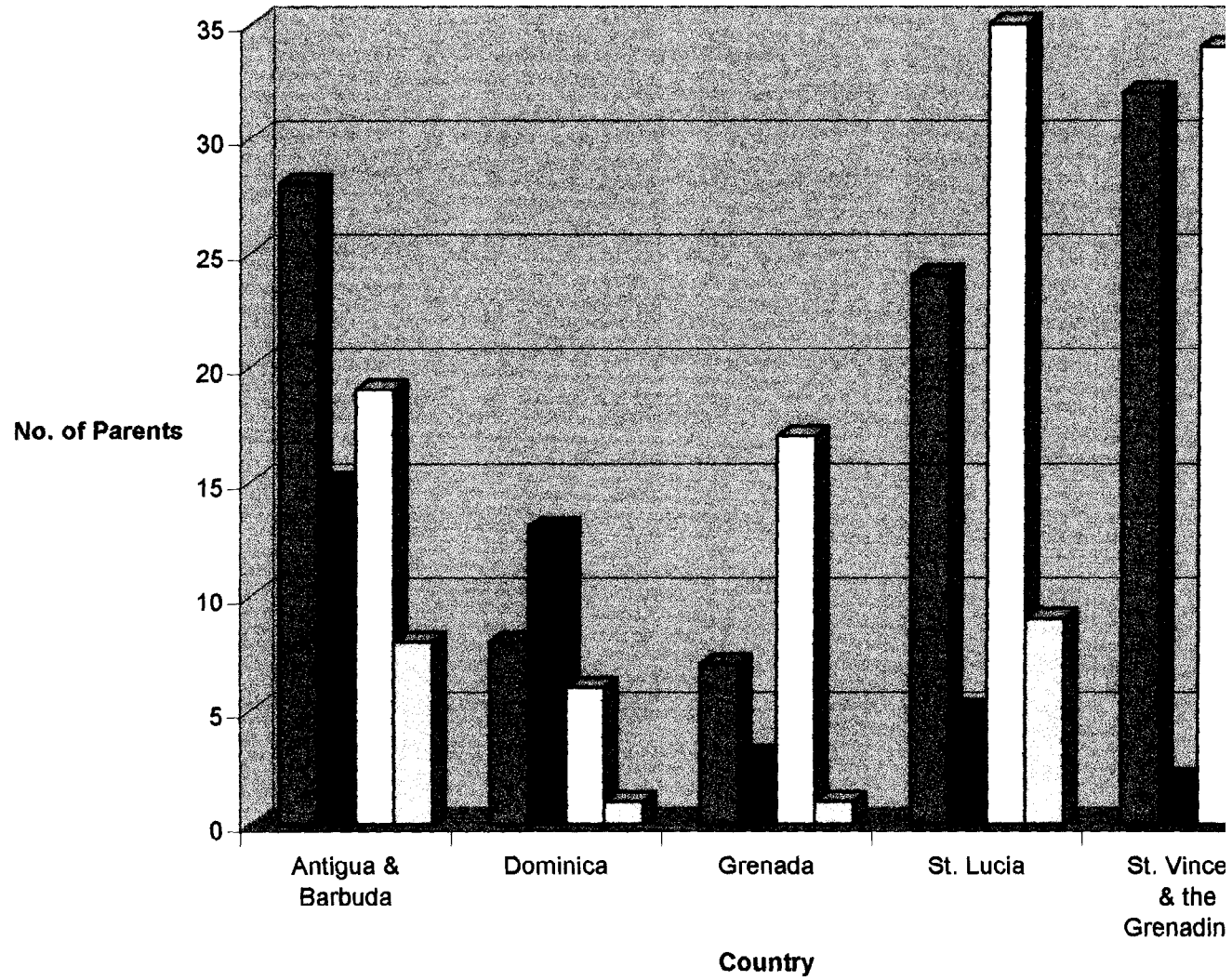
Table 19

Pupils’ Responses to Parent Support/Encouragement

Country	Responses re Parent Involvement				
	Total	Check & Guidance	Encouragement & Check	Encouragement Only	No Involvement
Antigua & Barbuda	70	28	15	19	8
Dominica	28	8	13	6	1
Grenada	28	7	3	17	1
St Lucia	73	24	5	35	9
St Vincent & the Grenadines	77	32	2	34	9
Total	276	99	36	111	28

Chart 12

Parent Support/Encouragement [Pupils' View]



Encouragement and Check

“Mother checks books but does not help”.

“Mother and Father look at books and ask me how I am getting along in school;. Mother checks what I do, but cannot help me so she sends me to lessons”.

Encouragement

“Mother encourages me. I never ask for help because I feel that I can do it on my own”;

“I wouldn't get anything to eat until I take up my books”;

“Mother and friend dropped out of school they say without education people boss you around”;

“Mother encourages me to study but does not know how to help me”;

“Father cannot help me with school work but encourages me to study and promises to give me a guitar and walkman if I pass”.

Non Involvement in Children's Home work

“No body helped me with home work I got no encouragement, no help”;

“Mother comes home from work around 6.00 to 7.00 pm so I have to take care of my little sister; she doesn't check homework because I tell her there is no homework”;

“Nobody has time to check homework; Mother is a janitor, and Dad is a bus driver”.

5.4.4 *Pupils' Perception of Teacher Performance*

Pupils responses as shown in Table 20 reveal a wide variety of teaching practices that impacts on their performance both positively and negatively.

One pointingly response that summed up the different shades of a nice teacher is stated as follows:

“Miss S is the best teacher. She explains well, gives students a hug; is friendly, is like a big sister is open to students is kind hearted and loving. Mr B can pass”.

On the other hand, some pupils stated that because of the aggressiveness of some teachers they were afraid:

“To ask some teachers if I do not understand. because they talk rough”.

Table 20

Pupils Perception of Teacher Performance

Positive Teaching Behaviours		Negative Teaching Behaviours
<p>They Make Studying Fun e.g. They put us at ease by joking with us at the beginning of the lesson; They give us star when work is correct They give you quiz.</p>	<p>They are Understanding e.g. Some are attentive when pupils complain; They are kind and understanding They treat you with respect; Even though you are a repeater you are not mocked</p>	<p>Some are Boring e.g. Kind of boring when teacher is teaching, not exciting; Teachers can put more excitement in their work; Some put work on blackboard and expects it to be done.</p>
<p>They show patience and give extra encouragement e.g. They show you how to do it and will go over and over until you understand. They give many examples when teaching a new topic.</p>	<p>They are approachable e.g. They can be approached to find out more of what was taught; They respond to questions in a pleasant way.</p>	<p>Some Show Impatience and do not Explain e.g. They get vex if you don't understand; Some embarrass you and shame you during class Some give notes all the time and do not explain</p>
<p>Books are Marked e.g. Some mark books and explain test results, they show you where you did wrong.</p>	<p>Some are fair e.g. They smile a lot, are strict and fair in settling problems. Nobody misbehaves in the classroom when they are teaching</p>	<p>Books are Unmarked e.g. Some do not mark homework nor do they explain too much.</p>

6.0 Issues Emanating from the Survey

6.1 Factors that Impact on School Performance

The survey an exploratory study set out to find out causal factors that impact on school performance at the Form 1 level of selected schools from five Eastern Caribbean States. By a frequency count of the responses, followed by a calculation of the mean, there is an indication how each target population rated the force of the factors.

An analysis of the responses implies the difficulty experienced in completely isolating school-related factors from out-of-school ones as the sole contributory factors impinging on pupil performance. The analysis shows a combination of factors. For convenience sake, the presentation will address school-related and out- of- school factors separately.

School Related Factors

The analysis of the data shows that school related factors are linked to teacher instructional behaviour, monitoring and evaluation of pupil performance, teacher attitude, pupil teacher relationship, classroom management capability, pupil coping problems with the new learning environment, and home work assignment.

Outstanding among the school-related variable is teacher instructional behaviour characterised by instructional planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of pupil performance, pupil/teacher relationship, teacher attitude, classroom management teacher capability.

There is consensus among the three targeted population that teacher instructional behaviour has impacted on pupil performance. Teachers across the five countries agreed that good practices related to Instructional Planning and Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluating Student Performance, High Expectation of Pupil Performance were often observed during interaction with Form 1 pupils.

Teachers' perception was reiterated in their responses to Questionnaire 11. They reported that teacher methodology and encouragement , learning environment and teacher pupil relationship had a positive impact on pupil performance. Out of a total of 142 responses these variables together amounted to 85%, with teacher methodology alone occupying 30%. The remaining variables - availability of instructional materials, pupil academic ability and extracurricular activities - amounted to the remaining 15%.

These teachers identified 'instructional planning and implementation' as a good teaching practice operating in their respective schools, they identified as negative impact:

- ▶ Absence of preplanned curriculum or course outlines for teachers to consult;
- ▶ Poor teacher preparation;
- ▶ Ineffective lesson plans;
- ▶ Ill prepared teachers;
- ▶ Poor structure of curriculum and timetable.

which might suggest that some teachers were ill prepared for instructional delivery.

As a consequence, the pupils perceived some teachers as boring, note givers and did not have the patience to explain when requests were made; nor did they have the capability to cope with varying ability grouping in one class. As a result the slower pupils were neglected. This usually led to disruptive behaviour in the class succinctly put by some students:

“Was talkative in class and gave too much trouble”;
“Talked too much in class, mathematics teacher was not explaining. I had 13 detentions for laughing in class”;
“I did not understand the work I was sleeping in class”.

An examination of the bio data of Form 1 teachers indicates that they tended to be young and untrained for teaching at the secondary level. The profile as observed in Table 4 shows that 43% was under age 29. In fact the majority had just graduated from secondary/college with at least two General Certificate Advanced Level subjects, and accounted for the 35% identified under ‘Other’. In addition the complement of teachers included 30% primary trained teachers who were generalists and therefore did not major in any specific subject area. Hence the following comment of a parent was well grounded.

- ▶ Teachers were too young and inexperienced and would like to see more pedagogical training for teachers.

Observed among the Form 1 school population were pupils of varying ability groupings, even among the grammar schools which normally capture the cream of the academic oriented children. The zoning policy of some countries, the self inflicting zoning by parents because of socio economic circumstances, and the increase in access to secondary schooling without the necessary physical provisions, had resulted in mixed ability children in one form.

The implication is that the Form 1 teachers were not trained for coping with differing ability children. Consequently the tendency was to target their lessons at a particular group which probably would be the average or above average pupils.

This perception was reinforced. Observed was the relatively low frequency with which the teaching practices related to Working with Mixed Ability Pupils in Form 1 occurred in the targeted schools.

With the exception of Antigua and Barbuda, teachers seldom had the capability to address different learning abilities. The overall mean rate was 2.9. Significant is the plight of the slower learners who were not given any extra attention and time in the teaching learning process. Consequently there was an unbearable noise level in the classroom, where attention seeking behaviour was practised. Such pupils spent most of their time outside of the classroom during lessons, received demerits or remained in detentions. These practices did not improve the situation, and there was further deterioration of these pupils' performance because of dislike for the teachers, eventually leading to repetition and low performance.

In this regard, observations made by parents were apt:

- ▶ Unavailability of staff to teach mixed ability classes;
- ▶ Not sure that teachers can cope with different abilities in one Form nor that there is such a facility;
- ▶ No opportunity is given for make-up classes for pupils who are absent through illness or for helping slow learners;

Teachers spoke of pupils' low self concept and esteem as contributory factors to repetition and low performance. On the other hand, pupils working in an aggressive and unsupportive teaching learning environment, where some teachers were rough, and labelled them as dunces and without brains, might very well be conditioned to developing low self concept and esteem.

Note also the pupils' remarks about those teachers they regarded as not good teachers:

- ▶ Some speak too aggressively, and yell at class;
- ▶ Teacher insults me as a repeater;
- ▶ Some say we are lazy and stupid.

As a result some pupils said, "If we do not understand what is being taught we are afraid to ask some teachers".

In the same vein, highlighted are some parents comments about some teachers

- ▶ Some teachers should be more approachable and polite to children;
- ▶ Children cannot handle the mannerisms of many teachers.

Pupil Coping With the New Learning Environment

The transitional points of each level of education seem to be during the first term of the school year a difficult period for some pupils, who are particularly susceptible to stress and when faced with anxiety provoking situations they can become disruptive. As one Mother stated her son was:

- ▶ “Loving at primary, now he is troublesome at secondary”.

Another parent felt that:

- ▶ “the work was not such a problem, it was more getting adjusted to the new environment”.

The many instances of disruptive behaviours and noisy classes reported by teachers, pupils and parents in this survey seem to support the fact that problems of adjustment led to disruptive classroom behaviour. Noisy classrooms caused pupils not to hear what the teachers are saying. They the teachers are reported to skip classes or walk out of the classroom, or they used the Peter pay for Paul principle for punishing pupils.

Pupils felt that teachers were not fair in giving demerits and detentions “they are rough and not fair in settling problems”.

The pupils themselves felt that the new environment was strange. They experienced coping with so many subjects which ranged from eight in one school to fourteen in another. As stated by Taylor 1994, in his study of a Midlands Comprehensive School “... reactions unfavourable to larger and more impersonal environment to cope with a range of differing standards and expectations”. Observed also by Galton & Wilcocks 1983, “these pupils tended to lose ground and motivation, and enjoyed school less”.

In this survey, some teachers stated that low performance was as a result of low self concept; but an analysis of the pupils’ responses infers that the negative reinforcement that some pupils were subjected to, might have caused them to lose whatever self esteem and confidence they had on entering secondary schools. These pupils were the ones who won places at the secondary schools as a result of their performance on the Common Entrance Examination and the limited secondary places available.

Aggravating the pupils’ adjustment to the new environment was their use of the first year as a form of relaxation after the pressure of Common Entrance Examination.

The feeling was that because of the competitive nature of the examination, all efforts were focused on drills, mastering the content of the examination to the neglect of mastering the primary curriculum. Consequently some children had not been exposed to higher levels of thinking and therefore experienced difficulties in the application of knowledge and researching for information.

Another concern is the pupils' perception that they have 'arrived' when they gained the goal of entering secondary school and both they and their parents relaxed. They lost interest in their children when they entered secondary schoolwork. They had made it.

On the other hand some pupils took time off to catch up on extra curricular activities they missed when they had to study for CEE. A typical example given by one boy for low performance was that he:

- ▶ Played a lot; used to go up the road and watch boys play dominoes; sometimes I played lawn tennis watched TV, then woke up in the morning and rushed through homework.

Studied but Forgot What was Learnt

Several pupils also complained that they studied for tests but couldn't remember what they learnt when faced with the examination. Two factors could have contributed to this dilemma, the methodology used by the secondary teachers which reinforced rote learning, and/or the pupils did not understand what was being taught, and so prepared for tests by memorising the notes given by teachers.

Out-of-School Factors Affecting Pupil Performance

Research studies and Literature, too many to name, have emphasised the important role of the home in nurturing the total development of the child beginning with the socialisation process in the young child's formative years to the type of supportive home environment and parent encouragement that enable the child's continuing educational progress.

The majority of teachers in this survey (74%) identified parent involvement as having a positive impact on their children's performance.

The inference however from the frequency with which the practices related to parent involvement were observed, was that parents seldom kept track of their children's progress, nor played an active part in their children's work, nor visited school to discuss their work. This perception is further supported by parent-related causal factors that contributed to low performance. Teachers reported that some parents failed to monitor their children's work and neglected their welfare.

On the other hand some parents reported that there was not enough communication between school and parent and parent and child. The teacher called parent only when pupil misbehaved.

Extracted from the parents' responses to Involvement in School Activities, it seems that the majority attended school meetings etc when invited to do so. 75% of responses across the five countries attended at least PTA meetings; but not all initiated discussions with the teachers about their children's progress. From follow-up discussions with teachers and parents it was learnt that school activities involving parents were limited to open days where parents collect children's report cards and fund raising activities. Those who were not involved stated economic constraints or late working hours for non attendance.

Homework Assignment

To reinforce the teaching-learning process, the teacher would normally give practice sessions in the classroom and to extend learning time, homework assignments are given (Effective Schooling Practices: A Research Synthesis 1990 Update). The expectations are that parents will oversee the completion of these exercises and give guidance where necessary. It is apparent however that many of the pupils in the survey did not always complete their homework assignments. Observed by the teachers in their responses to Questionnaire 1, the frequency with which this practice happened showed an across country mean of 2.9 with St Vincent and the Grenadines showing a mean rate of 3.5.

Teachers also felt that no follow-up work done, contributed also to low performance. They stated that pupils:

- ▶ Lack the discipline to take time out to do extra work in subject areas;
- ▶ Fail to do home work and revise what was taught at school;
- ▶ Insufficient effort at studying and doing homework.

In other words the implication is that parents did not ensure that school work got done. An examination of the parents' responses to their involvement in children's homework indicates that most parents in this sample were interested in their children's schooling. Just about 15 % was not involved as shown in Table 16. Their main reasons being that they did not have the capability to do so. An examination of the highest education attained by parents shows that the majority (71%) had reached primary education only. If one looks again at the Table 15, of the 149 responses to parent involvement in homework, 34% signalled their overseeing and giving guidance. The pupils' responses show a similar pattern they, stated that 37% checked and gave guidance.

On the other hand, there were some parents who had secondary education or higher, but experienced some problems when they attempted to oversee their children's work. The children seemed to know everything. Others were not sure how much homework was given as there was no home work policy at the school.

7.0 Recommendations

There has been a combination of both school-related and non school causative factors that affect Form 1 pupil performance in those selected schools identified for the survey. The most impactful causative factors emanating from the study are:

- i. Teachers' capability in the delivery of instructional programme
- ii. Lack of a national curriculum for the first three forms of secondary education, and grade level performance norms;
- iii. Childrens' inability to cope with the new learning environment;
- iv. Parents' non involvement in their children's school work and in the majority of cases their non capability to give direction and constructive guidance to their children in follow-up school work and homework.

It is within this context that recommendations are made for improving the structure, content and strategies for delivering education at the secondary level.

1. Allocate Qualified and Experienced Teachers to Form 1

There is the tendency to place less qualified teachers to Form 1, in some cases, students who had graduated from the Sixth Forms might be waiting to enter undergraduate programmes or better paying jobs. Coupled with this practice was that a majority of graduate teachers was not professionally trained and therefore might not have the pedagogical requirements for teaching at this level. The failure of teachers in Form 1 to be prepared for instructional delivery had resulted in pupils' alienation from school

2. Orchestrate Orientation Classes and a Structured In-service Programme in Pedagogy

For new recruits to the teaching force, organise orientation and in- service programmes in education principles, methodology and developmental psychology. This should eliminate 'chalk and talk' teaching, and encourage a more positive approach to teaching. It would alleviate some of

the inappropriate behaviours in the classroom referred to by all the three target groups.

3. Enhancing Teaching Methodology and Strategies

Mentioned earlier is the tendency to place inexperienced teachers in Form 1. On the other hand there are graduate teachers in place without professional qualifications since the acquisition of the latter is not compulsory. The implication is that they may tend to teach in the same manner in which they were taught - the lecture method - which is not appropriate for First Formers.

During discussions with Form 1 teachers and significant others, it was observed that there was not a comprehensive national curriculum in place. Schools may have syllabuses, but in some cases there is no coordination between grades. Each teacher therefore has to complete the year's programme. By extrapolation lessons are targeted to that group of 'bright' pupils leaving the slower ones behind, with none or minimal extra time given for catch-up lessons. This practice could also have attributed to the observations made by most teachers, pupils and parents that not much attention is given to slow learners.

The high repetition rate attributed to failure especially at Form 1 represents a serious waste of both human and scarce educational resources. There seems to be little awareness from the schools' perspectives of the personal and social costs of repetition and the financial cost to the Ministry of Education. Termly and yearly evaluation of pupil performance are based mostly on subjective teacher made tests and in some instances the principal can arbitrarily raise the criteria for passing the test.

In the light of the above, enhancing teaching methodology and strategies should include:

- ▶ Exposing all graduates to professional training, principle and education practices, methodology, classroom management and pertinent communication and interpersonal skills. Specific attention should be given to the acquisition of multi-ability teaching skills;
- ▶ Developing curriculum guides for Forms 1, 11 & 111 at the secondary level. Simultaneously performance norms should be developed for measuring pupil performance across country, and teachers exposed to hands-on experience in test development. The outcomes of such an exercise will

be a teaching tool for pupil remediation/acceleration programmes;

- ▶ Reviewing the system of promotion from one Form to another. The apparent inflexibility of the present systems was reflected in pupils' statements about why they repeated.

4. Effect a Smooth Transition from Primary to Secondary Level

Reported earlier is the outstandingly high repetition rate found among Form 1 pupils in the schools identified. This wastage occurring at the point of entry to secondary levels reflects the non or minimal preparation of parents, teachers and the pupils for coping with new environments that are totally different from the ones left at the previous level.

Effecting a smooth transition through a combination of programmes aimed at teachers from both levels, parents, and children, continuity of curriculum, a gradual move from informal to formal instructional method, and pupils' visit to new schools, etc., should help to minimise the traumatic experiences of some pupils on entering a new domain.

It is worthwhile looking at the large numbers of subjects (a range of 9 to 14) the pupils face on entering secondary schools. Comments as

- ▶ .. inability to assimilate subject range;
- ▶ .. not comfortable at first with so many subject teachers;
- ▶ ..with so many teachers in secondary school, all giving home work it was difficult to do homework in every subject.

suggest a system where subjects could be introduced gradually to Form 1 pupils.

5. Enhanced Supervision of the Delivery of Education

Not stated overtly in the outcomes of the survey, but threads through covertly throughout the school-related causative factors of repetition age is poor management and supervision of the Teaching Act in the delivery of instruction.

Noisy classes, teachers not turning up to teach, and the number of detentions and demerits spoken about might indicate a minimal level of teacher supervision at the form level.

School principals and their senior teachers should be more vigilant in their effort to be supportive to their teachers in the form of clinical supervision and post conferencing.

For some schools it would be worthwhile to strengthen the managerial capability of secondary schools by studying the impact of introducing Heads of Departments starting first with the core subject areas, as is done in other Caribbean countries.

6. Summer Programmes for Repeaters with Potential for Achieving

There are many hazards entailed in repeating. Using the same techniques and sometimes the same teacher can be very detrimental to the child's self esteem especially when he is cajoled both by his classmates and the teacher as observed in the body of the report.

An examination of the responses of repeaters, and those with low performance shows, an important difference in the way they felt. The repeaters felt ashamed, embarrassed, stupid and sad about remaining in the same class for another year. Those who were automatically promoted were embarrassed because they didn't do enough work/ didn't study hard enough.

Besides the hidden costs of repeating, there is another pertinent problem concerning the so-called benefits that are derived by remaining in the same Form for another year, when repeaters are exposed to the same curriculum and a similar pattern of instruction as they were exposed to in the previous year. The effects of these assumptions interacting with the psychological effects of being conscious of failure, reinforced by both peer and sometimes teachers' derogatory remarks often lead to feelings of frustration. These are often expressed in rebellious acts or acts of indiscipline as described earlier.

Recommended therefore are summer programmes aimed at repeaters with potential for achieving, where opportunities are given for helping the pupil to develop a more positive attitude toward themselves in the reality of a teaching learning dynamism that offers opportunities for success.

The main characteristics of this programme are specially structured activities which give students opportunities for success, working in small

groups that focus on individual attention, creating a supportive environment that would equip them to function more effectively both cognitively and affectively.

7. Study Hall Programme

Research studies have pinpointed the importance of positive use of homework in its contribution to academic achievement. Reported in this study was the dislike for homework at the secondary level and the incapability of many parents in helping the pupils.

The outcomes of this survey indicated that in those cases where the parents' highest education attainment was at the primary level, they were unable to help their children.

In some cases there were some parents who went beyond secondary education and were also having problems helping their children because they did not understand the new methods of teaching, or their children adopted an 'I know it all attitude'.

Recommended is a Study Hall Programme, a strategy which is being used by the Bahamas for helping in the supervision of homework, after school hours. The programme is a joint enterprise among the Church, parents especially fathers and teachers. It provides a supportive environment where homework is overseen, supervised and monitored. This successful programme is expanding to the Family Islands. Some spill offs of this programme are, acquisition of study habits, youth are kept off the streets, and fathers have become more involved in their children's education.

Such a programme can be implemented on a pilot basis in each country with joint community, NGOs, Church and Ministry of Education efforts. It can also serve as another strategy for keeping youth off the streets in the evening, and helping parents to be more responsive and comfortable in overseeing their children's homework.

8. Pastoral Care

At the secondary level there is need for the strengthening of pastoral care including guidance and counselling, the establishment of which could give direction to pupils' future development academically, socially and emotionally. In a few cases also some children were going through psychological stress. For example, one pupil worried about his mother who was dying, while another missed his, because she was away for nine

months. In many instances, parents were working abroad and the children were left with relatives and grandparents.

Pastoral care is also needed in the form of parenting for parents of school children especially those who are experiencing domestic and socio-economic problems that impact negatively on their children's attitude and school performance. It was noticeable in some cases that some parents tended to give verbal support to their children without any kind of follow-up action taken, or they issued threats. The assumption being taken they might not have known what to do.

In concluding, mention must be made about the apparent ill preparedness of some students who entered secondary schools as a result of the high competitive nature of the Common Entrance Examination combined with the limited secondary school places.

With emphasis being placed within recent times on universal secondary education within the next ten years as purported by the CARICOM Heads of Governments (July, 1997) many countries are in the process of taking steps to eliminate the Common Entrance Examination, while at the same time provide adequate secondary places and ensure that there is parity of esteem among schools. Working toward the achievement of this target, should at least eliminate some of the concerns expressed by secondary teachers regarding the academic capability of pupils on entering the secondary level.

8.0 Conclusion

The paradigm shift in the perception of education as a determining factor in the success of a country's productivity and competitiveness, and ultimately human development has resulted in new emphases being placed in knowledge. Sustained economic growth is therefore associated with the rate of accumulation of new knowledge and the alacrity with which workers can apply enquiry skills to take advantages of technological advances. An enabling basic education environment is therefore crucial to lay the foundation for pupils to develop self confidence and self direction, think critically, become problem solvers and be flexible to adapt to situations, and develop an open mind for learning new skills and knowledge.

In the light of the above, the outcomes of this exploratory survey though limited in scope, do not augur well for a section of the future working force. By a combination of school and non school related factors, this group of pupils, the majority of whom are being considered the academic cream of their age group, are repeaters and weak pupils as compared with their peers.

As a result of the frontal- approach delivery of instruction, by some secondary teachers, pupils learnt by rote. They regurgitated the content at examinations without understanding what was taught. The teaching learning process was also influenced by the custom of placing young unqualified teachers in Form1, this situation was exacerbated by the unpreparedness of some, and the pupil coping ability with the new environment. Opportunities were not provided to enable the pupils to develop higher order thinking, that will help them to acquire the ability to solve problems, apply knowledge learnt in functional situations and be divergent thinkers. Matters were worsened when interactive parent involvement was missing.

The recommendations given are not definitive, but they point to the way where solutions are possible without a great outlay of capital input. For those countries which are presently involved in basic education reform programmes, they should be able to review their programmes in light of the deficiencies highlighted in this study.

Such interventions as the Study Hall and Low Achievers Programmes and Pastoral Care, especially the component on parents, can be facilitated through collaboration and cooperation with non-governmental organisations and the community at large.

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**Identifying In-school and Out-of-school Factors
that Impact on the Teaching-Learning Process**

Questionnaire 1

This questionnaire is designed to find out your perception of the frequency with which selected school practices occur in Form 1 of your school. It is divided into two (2) main sections:

- A Background Information;
- B A Likert-Type four-point scale highlighting selected school practices.

A Background Information

Name of School _____ Country: _____

Form/Specialist Teacher (Please Specify) _____ Sex: M ___ F ___

Age Last Birthday
Please Tick (/)
 -29 30-39 40-49 50 +

Teacher Qualification:
Please Tick (/)
 Trained Graduate Trained Other (Please Specify)
 Graduate

B Selected School Practices

The following statements highlight selected school practices that impact on the teaching-learning process.

Please respond to ALL the statements by rating each in terms of the **frequency** with which you observe the practices occurring in day-to-day Form 1 school activities. **1 represents very frequently, and 4 represents rarely.**

There are no **right or wrong answers**. The **best** response is the one that reflects What you observe.

Your response is crucial to the development and implementation of strategies and practices that will enhance school effectiveness.

Statements**RATING****Very Often Often Sometimes Rarely**

1	Parents keep track of their children's progress.	1	2	3	4
2	Classroom assessment of student performance matches learning objectives.	1	2	3	4
3	Time is set aside to work with students who are not keeping up with the class.	1	2	3	4
4	Homework assignments are completed on time.	1	2	3	4
5	Routine assessment procedures are used to check student progress.	1	2	3	4
6	Teachers regularly assign homework to students.	1	2	3	4
7	Teachers showing complacency about student achievement.	1	2	3	4
8	Teachers expect a high standard of pupil performance.	1	2	3	4
9	Teachers do not have the time to address different learning styles.	1	2	3	4
10	Parents play an active part in their children's school work	1	2	3	4
11	Instructional practices are relevant to pupils' needs.	1	2	3	4
12	Teachers use test results to guide pupils' performance.	1	2	3	4
13	Instruction is guided by a preplanned curriculum.	1	2	3	4
14	Parents visit schools to discuss children's work.	1	2	3	4
15	Attention is given to general welfare of students.	1	2	3	4
16	Teachers do not worry about pupil performance.	1	2	3	4
17	Parent/school relationship revolves mainly among fund-raising activities.				
18	Extra learning time is provided for pupils who need it.				
19	Lesson plans are not obligatory at the secondary level.				

**Identifying In-school and Out-of-school Factors
that Impact on Form 1 Pupil Performance**

Questionnaire 11

Please state the three most important factors that impact on pupil school performance

Positively

1

2

3

Negatively

1

2

3

Identify the three most important/prevalent reasons why you think pupils of your school are repeating Form 1

1

2

3

In what ways can this situation be remedied?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Identifying In-school & Out-of-school Factors
that Impact on Pupil Performance

Background Information

School: _____

Country: _____

No of times Repeated Form 1: _____

Age: Yrs. _____ Mths _____

Sex: M _____ F: _____

Broad Areas For Interviews

1. Pupil's Attendance Record
 - a. Total No of Sessions for School Year-----; No of Sessions Absent---- ; No of Sessions Late:----
 - b. Reasons Given for Absence.
 - c. Reasons Given for Lateness.
2. Pupil's Feelings About Remaining in the Same Form For Another Year.
3. Pupil's Reasons For His/Her Repeating.
4. Pupil's Perception of Teachers' Performance.
5. Two things pupil likes Most about School.
6. Two things pupil likes Least about School.
7. Kinds of Support/Encouragement for pupil school effort by
 - a. Parents
 - b. Teachers
8. Any Other Observations

Name of Interviewer:

Date:

PARENT PROFILE

In School and Out-of-School Factors that Impact on Pupil Performance

School: _____ Country _____

Main Characteristics

- 1 Type of Family: Nuclear (One/Two Parent) _____ Extended _____
- 2 Size of Family: Children - 4 yrs M__F__T__; Children 5 - 14 yrs M__F__T__;
Youth :15-18 M__F__T__ Grand Total M__F__T__.
- 3 Data re Head of Household:
 - a. Sex: M__F__ ; Age : - 29__ 30-39__ 40-49__ 50-59__ 60+__
(Tick/where applicable)
 - b. Highest Education Attainment: (Tick / where Applicable)

Never Attended School:__ Pre-School__ Infant__ Primary__
Secondary__ Technical Institute__ Teachers' College__ University__
 - c. Occupation (Please be Specific): _____
 - d. Take Home Monthly Income: -\$ 999 __ \$1000 -1500__ \$1500 -2000__ ; \$2000-3000 __; \$ 3000+ __.
6. Distance from Home to Secondary School
7. Parent Involvement (If any), in
 - a. School activities
 - b. Community activities
8. Two things parent likes Most about School.
9. Two things parent likes Least about School.
10. Parent involvement in overseeing pupil homework.
11. Any other Observations

Name of Interviewer:

Date: