Teacher Effectiveness in Trinidad and Tobago:
The Perceptions of the Major Stakeholders

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Research has shown that it matters who the teacher is. This study aims to contribute to the discussion on teacher effectiveness in Trinidad and Tobago, based on the perceptions of the major stakeholders. Findings show that strong pedagogy, commitment, caring, patience and good communication skills are traits valued in effective teachers. Teachers' behaviour, can impact students. Stakeholders want to see more ongoing professional development in schools; better teacher preparation; and the provision of adequate resources/facilities. The implications of this study are that the teacher preparation institutions need to prepare teachers differently and that teachers should be assessed for effectiveness.

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The education system in Trinidad and Tobago is a dual system where the government and the church are the major providers of education; this dual system evolved from the social structure of the colonial and pre-colonial society. Prior to the appearance of the Spaniards in Trinidad there was no type of formal education system as the Amerindian children were taught values and cultural norms by their parents and elders through the oral medium. (Campbell, 1992). Under the Spaniards, Trinidad was a deserted island until the late 18th century, the island was culturally isolated and economically stagnant. It was not attractive and unimportant to Spain due to its geographical location, at the peripheral south-eastern tail of the Antillean chain, it lacked precious metals and did not have a large population of sedentary Amerindians.
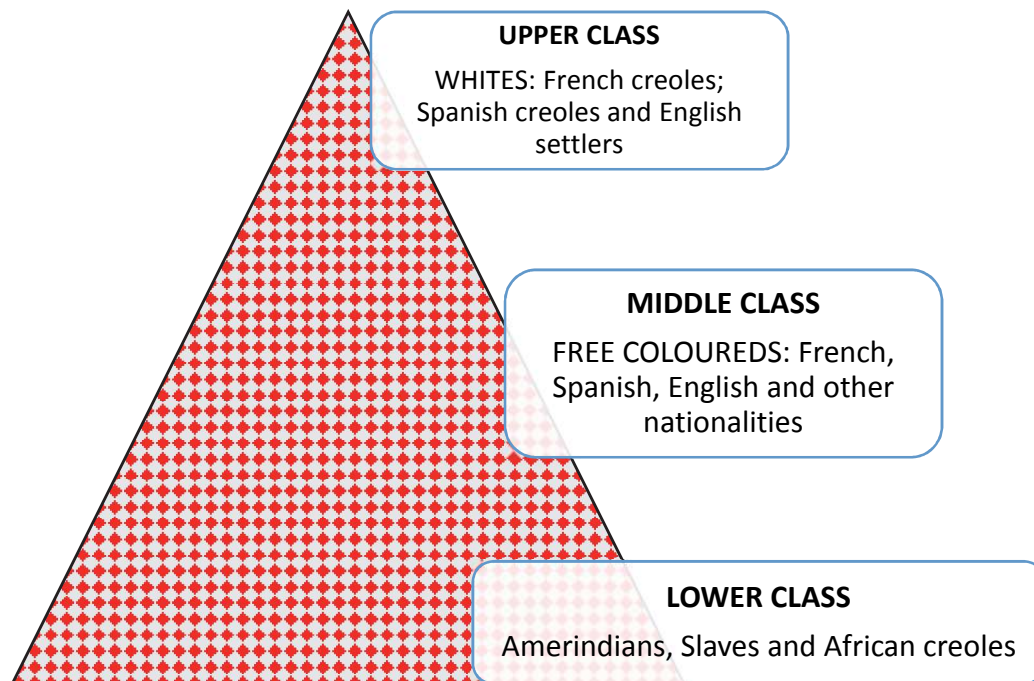
Apart from the Amerindians the chief residents were Spaniards, their Black or Coloured slaves and a few people of mixed racial ancestry, called mestizos or mullattoes. There existed from this time discrimination based on race and colour, and this kept the non-whites from sharing the rights and privileges of the Spaniards. Purity of blood and wealth were the most important criteria for social differentiation among the whites. Education was not a means of social differentiation because there was little need for education to carry out the essential economic and political activities in Trinidad. Most of the Spaniards in Trinidad were poor whites who had little or no formal education and many were illiterate, the slaves and mixed people were in a similar situation. (Campbell, 1992).

Trinidad did not have enough Spaniards of means to warrant advanced public education institutions for their children. The children of any wealthy Spaniards would be educated in Spain. The Spaniards in Trinidad thus began the enduring tradition of white residents sending their children to the metropole to be educated. But the absence of educational institutions did not mean that educated men never came to Trinidad. The Spanish priests, visiting bureaucrats and commanders might have been educated men.

The promulgation of the Cedular of Population in 1783 under the last Spanish governor, Jose Maria Chacon, opened Trinidad to new settlers and new enterprises. Thousands of new immigrants, mostly

Frenchmen or Free Coloureds of French extraction came and occupied the western and north western sectors of the island. The plantation system in Trinidad started late (1783) and developed under restrictions; by the time of emancipation in 1833 only fifty (50) years had elapsed. So economically the island was not on par with say Cuba or Jamaica, but the presence of the plantation system had the effect of heightening the social stratification of the island. The composition of Trinidad society at that time is illustrated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
STRATIFIED PLANTATION SOCIETY IN TRINIDAD (1783)

UPPER CLASS
WHITES: French creoles; Spanish creoles and English settlers

MIDDLE CLASS
FREE COLOUREDS: French, Spanish, English and other nationalities

LOWER CLASS
Amerindians, Slaves and African creoles

During the era of the fledging plantation system there were still no schools as colour, wealth and patronage determined the disposition of several jobs and thus rendered education in local schools highly dysfunctional. So, unqualified persons were given jobs which were unconnected to their degree of schooling. here was a great degree of illiteracy among the Whites and Free Coloured population. A few private schools emerged in and near the towns to facilitate those children who were not sent to the metropole for schooling. In 1832 a small slave school was started by the Church of England; it was not to promote literacy, but to develop values of obedience and subjection among the slaves. Moral and religious instruction without literacy was the lot of the slave population. (Campbell, 1992).

It is to be noted that education was very important to the Free Coloureds, as they wished to challenge the Whites for positions of social and political equality. But the Whites worked to prevent education from being a significant factor in the social relations of Whites and non-whites and they largely succeeded with this down to the eve of emancipation.

In 1846 the East Indians came to Trinidad as indentured labourers, and the Canadian Presbyterian Mission, founded by Reverend John Morton in 1865, dedicated itself to Christianizing and educating the East Indians. Within two generations the Presbyterian Mission produced thousands of literate and semi-

literate Indian workers. By this time, Trinidad was described as a racial conundrum as the society was so diverse. (Campbell, 1992).

The emancipation of the slaves in 1834 marked the beginning not only of popular education, but also of public education. Elementary schools were set up for the Blacks and Coloured lower class and East Indians. The schools at this time mirrored the society which created them – a race and colour conscious community. There were constant struggles and sporadic tension between the church and government and between one church and another about the right to have denominational schools.

Between 1836 and 1869 four (4) single sex secondary schools were funded in Port of Spain: St. Joseph Convent (1836) and St. Mary's College (1863) – these schools took boarders; St. George's College (1837); and the Queen's Collegiate School, now Queen's Royal College (1863). The Junior and Senior Cambridge examinations were introduced in 1863. The Boys' Model School (1852) and the Girls' Model School (1856) were two important elementary schools in the Woodbrook area in Port of Spain and were responsible for the training of teachers. Initially only male teachers were trained for the ward school which did not employ females. Denominational training schools emerged in the 1890s. The Roman Catholic church started two residential training schools in Port of Spain; and the Presbyterian Church started Naparima training college.

It is to be noted that Tobago was annexed to Trinidad in January 1889 with no pecuniary charge imposed on the revenues of Trinidad; however, there were many complaints by Tobago merchants and eventually in October 1898 an Order of Council constituted Tobago "a Ward of the Colony of Trinidad and Tobago". (Brereton, 1981, p.156). In 1925 Bishop's High School was founded. But Tobago did not have its own teacher training institution.

In 1932 the Marriot/Mayhew Report on Education, 1931-1932, declared the system of education in Trinidad and Tobago to be ahead of anything in the eastern Caribbean, except Barbados. The report recommended a new type of secondary school in which practical work would be done, e.g., domestic science and woodwork. This materialized under the government of Dr. Eric Williams. In addition, free education became a reality and by 1963 three (3) teacher training colleges were in existence in Trinidad and the government discouraged the building of denominational schools and colleges of all types.

The Education Act of 1966 saw denominational schools coming under the inspection of government, who was the final authority for the transfer, appointment, promotion and dismissal of teachers; and controlled the admission policy of the denominational schools. It was still a dual system, but the government was in control. By 1967 the government built new junior secondary (a shift system school where students attended school only in the morning or in the afternoon) and senior secondary schools; a total of twenty-one (21) secondary schools were built. The years 1963-1972 saw the beginnings of educational planning and the development of the 15-year Education Plan, 1969-1983. The two-cycle secondary education system started with the Junior Secondary, 11-14 and the Senior Secondary 14-18 secondary schools. There was also a focus on trades training. In 1961 the St. Augustine branch of the University of the West Indies was established. By 1981 Trinidad and Tobago had the most impressive education structure in the Commonwealth Caribbean (Campbell, 1992).

In 2004 the junior secondary schools were deshifted and became whole day schools. This did not reduce the stigma attached to these schools and did not improve the academic performance of students who were "sentenced" to attend these schools. Today, 2016, the chickens have come home to roost.

The Concordat of 1960 defined the relationship between the State and the church in education with respect to the control and management of church schools. The denominational authorities are given the right to object to certain textbooks; object to teachers' appointments on moral or religious grounds; and to allocate twenty per cent (20%) of form 1 places as they see fit.

In February 2016, the government of Trinidad and Tobago hosted a national consultation on education which began on March 15, 2016, and the denominational board became very defensive about its position and published a full-page advertisement in the Guardian newspaper outlining their contribution to education in Trinidad and Tobago and defending their continued relevance. The government has had to give the assurance that it "*has no intention of trying to tell the denominational*

board how to run its schools". In the Daily Express newspaper of February 16, 2016, the Minister of Education stated:

> There is absolutely no intention to diminish or do away with the role of the church in education. The church has played a tremendous role in education and we applaud that. And I would like again to give the assurance to the denominational boards and the churches, that it is our intention to strengthen those ties, not to diminish those ties. (p. 16)

When such statements are made at the governmental level there is no real consultation because it means that certain elements of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago are untouchable and permanently entrenched, even if those elements are contributing to problems in the education system and need to be eliminated or restructured.

The Concordat has served to solidify in Trinidad and Tobago society the divisiveness on the basis on class, race and colour which emerged during the colonial era. There are "good" schools and "bad" schools in Trinidad and Tobago. All schools should be considered worthy and this researcher is of the view that the Concordat should be abandoned and a level playing field created so that all students have the opportunity to shine and attend "good" schools in their areas. Support for this is found in the sentiments expressed by the then president of the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association Mr. Devanand Sinanan, 2016:

> When we are talking (school) inclusion we have to look at all those entrenched structures, formal and informal, that help to perpetuate exclusion, including the Concordat. It is amazing that once you mention the word concordat, a large section of the society comes together and is ready to put up a wall as though you can't touch that. If we're talking about reform of education, if we are talking about charting an education system that is reflection of the needs of all in our society, and we are able to identify parts that divide and prevent us from doing that, then we have to be mature enough to say – listen, this model not working …

There can be no doubt that in granting the denominational boards the privileges mentioned … the government is sponsoring and perpetuating elitism and negative discrimination in the school system in the society. (James, 2016, p. 13).

What should be noted is that despite the expansion of education at all levels there were large failure rates in secondary schools. The fact that the system often assigned students to types of secondary schools which matched their social class origins was not an area of great public concern. (Campbell, 1992).

There have been deteriorating standards of performance in both primary and secondary schools as reported by various newspapers in Trinidad and Tobago. (Steinbach, 2012, p.75). There are increases in repetition rates, especially at the primary level; the low level of achievement of a significant number of children at the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) examination (formerly the Common Entrance and 11[+]); and consequently, a large cohort of children is entering secondary school totally unprepared. Other issues are the level of and the increase in school violence which continue to worry all citizens. This has raised questions about the commitment and competency of teachers and about their preparation. (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 42).

Albert Ramdin, the then Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), speaking about education in Trinidad and Tobago said:

We must re-examine our priorities and our subsequent investments in our people. We are interacting and competing with counterparts from around the world, and the question we must ask ourselves is, are we on equal footing to compete in this age of advancing technology? ((2013, p. 1).

Bernard (2015) supports the above concerns when he states the following with respect to education in Trinidad and Tobago:

Despite our annual commendation on the performance of our students at our high stakes tests – SEA, CSEC and CAPE, we are not getting value for money in education. With an annual budget of $10 billion representing about six per cent of GDP, there are too many schools under-performing, especially at the public secondary level.
There are dropouts unaccounted for at the primary and secondary levels and wastage of money on students who register for courses, courtesy GATE, but do not attend the classes or sit the exams. There is also a continuing reduction of functional literacy, even at the tertiary level and a prison population that is increasing exponentially. (p. 13).

The SEA (Secondary Entrance Assessment) examination is done by Standard five (5) students in primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago; this determines which secondary schools students are assigned to. The CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate) examination is written by students in Form 5 – equivalent to Ordinary levels in the British system. The CAPE (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination) is equivalent to the Advanced level examinations. CSEC and CAPE are administered by the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC). The GATE (Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses) programme was introduced in 2004 and provides financial funding for students pursuing GATE approved courses at tertiary institution in Trinidad and Tobago.

Matthews (2013) p. 5, writing for the World Bank found that despite the high level of investment, quality of education in the Caribbean remains low. Pass rates for standardized tests in core subjects like English and Mathematics are less than 50%; many students lack basic skills in information and communication technology and other disciplines deemed critical for success in the workplace. What is even more worrisome are the reports of poor student CSEC examination performance on test items that require critical thinking, analysis or communication. Despite eleven (11) years of formal education school leavers struggle to find employment. This situation begs the question, what is happening in classrooms in the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago?

The implication of this challenge for Trinidad and Tobago is that teachers, the backbone of the education system, need to be effective in the classroom and facilitate students' academic and life preparation.

Unfortunately, in Trinidad and Tobago the violence in society has infiltrated many schools. According to the United Nations and World Health Organization's Global Status Report (2014), Trinidad and Tobago is listed as number ten of the most homicidal countries in the world. In Trinidad and Tobago 77% of persons are killed by firearms and there are 35.3 murders per 100,000. The message that this may be sending to the youths is that life has no value and there is little purpose in working hard to achieve academically when you could be killed at any time.

Research has shown that effective teachers (also referred to as outstanding, excellent, exemplary, good, competent or highly skilled teachers and master teachers) are crucial to the improvement of the quality of education, school improvement and improving the chances for success for all students. (Darling-Hammond, 2009; McArdle, 2010; Arnove, 2010; and Christenburg, 2011). The teacher and the effectiveness of instruction are important variables which contribute to student success. Kelchlermans (2009) puts it this way: Teaching is an act done by someone and it matters who the teacher is. The teacher is held to be the centre of, not only the classroom, but also the educational process. (p. 258).

Wang, Gibson and Slate (2007) found that students can blossom or wither because of the effects, behaviours and methods of a teacher. A teacher can positively or negatively impact students both in and outside the classroom. How one teacher treats or teaches a child has rippling effects that permeate and continue throughout the individual's educational journey. There is no denying that it matters who the teacher is. (p. 293).

This researcher is not suggesting that teacher effectiveness is a one-shot event that can be achieved at a teacher preparation institution. Rather, a level of effectiveness can be achieved upon graduation and that a newly qualified teacher (NQT) can enter a classroom as an effective teacher. However, higher levels of effectiveness can be acquired as that NQT gains experience, works with mentor teachers, participates in professional development activities and/or even pursue further studies.

This researcher feels that it is necessary to explore the concept of teacher effectiveness from the perspective of the main stakeholders in education, i.e., the students at all levels, teachers, parents, school and business leaders. The rationale for this is that if qualified teachers, graduates of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Catholic Religious Education Development Institute (CREDI), the University of the Southern Caribbean (USC) and other teacher preparation institutions are in classrooms in Trinidad and Tobago, then effective teaching should become the norm. It is possible that the perceptions of teacher effectiveness as seen by the stakeholders are not in sync with what the teacher preparation institutions deem to be effective teachers. If this study yields relevant results, then the teacher preparation institutions can better align their programmes to accommodate the expectations of the stakeholders and produce effective teachers who can positively impact student learning in all spheres of the education system.

Pretorius (2012) contends that if teacher effectiveness in this complex era is the single most important school-based factor in student achievement, education reform movements should look anew at teacher effectiveness in all school phases and the factors contributing to effective teaching. The training that teachers receive is most surely one of the critical factors contributing to whether they would be effective or not. Teacher success is inevitably linked to good and effective teacher training. (p. 310).

Hunt (2009) admitted that there is relatively little in the current literature about students' views of teacher effectiveness. This study should fill this void and go a step further by soliciting the perceptions of other key stakeholders in education, apart from students, about teacher effectiveness in Trinidad and Tobago. This study looks at what an individual needs to do and to possess to become an effective teacher. The focus is not on teacher quality, but teacher effectiveness. (p. 7).

This researcher contends that teacher effectiveness only becomes possible if at the individual level teachers positively impact their students in the classroom. It may be asked why the classroom alone; this is because it is sometimes difficult if not impossible for a teacher to be effective at the school level due to challenges, such as school culture and school climate. However, an individual teacher can shine within his/her small space in the institution – the classroom.

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

The research objectives of this study are to determine:

1. The perceptions and qualities of effective teachers
2. How effective teaching impacts students at all levels of the education system
3. Some activities that teachers engage in which cause them to be ineffective
4. Suggestions to ensure that teacher effectiveness in Trinidad and Tobago classrooms becomes a reality

Based on the findings the qualities and competencies that constitute teacher effectiveness in the Trinidad and Tobago context should be revealed. In addition, the teacher preparation institutions should be able to align their programmes with the competencies and qualities which are valued by the main stakeholders. Ultimately, the society should benefit as students will be taught by effective teachers who possess the competencies valued by the society and necessary to prepare students for 21st century living.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative descriptive research. Descriptive research is also referred to as survey research and it determines and describes the way things are. (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2006, p. 159). The researchers state that: Typically, descriptive studies are concerned with assessing attitudes, opinions, preferences, demographics, practices and procedures. Qualitative descriptive research focuses on the participants' views of a situation; whereas with quantitative, the researcher's view is presented. The data for this study were collected through a self-report survey approach which required participants to respond to a series of statements or questions about themselves. (Gay and ors., 2006, p. 161).

The population used in this study comprised business leaders and parents from the society; school leaders, teachers and students from ten primary and ten secondary schools in Trinidad and Tobago; and tertiary students from the University of Trinidad and Tobago, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine and the University of the Southern Caribbean. Both male and female participants were selected and they ranged from 10-50 plus in age.

While the ideal would have been to have a balance of male and female participants, this was not possible. For example, in coeducational schools this researcher had no control over the gender mix in the classroom. For the non-school participants, e.g., parents and business leaders, this researcher tried to strike some gender balance, but females were more inclined than males to complete the questionnaires. This was not seen as a major problem because this researcher is of the view that to plan in advance for gender equity is somewhat artificial; in real life, there is no gender equity in institutions or in societies. Overall female respondents (67%) completed the questionnaires and males (33%).

In this study, purposive sampling was used to determine who would be best able to provide the information required. In purposeful sampling researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. Gay and ors. (2006) observed that because many potential participants are unwilling to undergo the lengthy demands of participation, sampling in qualitative research is almost always purposive. This observation by the researchers was borne out in this research as a few students and some teachers started to complete the questionnaires but did not finish. This is because the questionnaire required time spent in providing thoughtful responses.

The sample comprised seven hundred and eighteen (718) participants (business leaders – 13; parents – 45; school leaders – 20; primary and secondary teachers – 200; and students (primary, secondary and tertiary – 440).

Prior to the data collection process, this researcher sought and received the necessary Ministry of Education approval for the study and the use of the schools which were selected.

Primary data collection was undertaken using seven (7) questionnaires comprising open-ended questions which were structured to suit the developmental ages of the participants. These questionnaires were used as the main data collection tool to give the participants the opportunity to respond in their own time. However, Fraenkel et al (2006) note that when questionnaires are used for data collection, unclear or seemingly ambiguous questions cannot be clarified and the researcher has no chance to expand or react verbally to a question of interest or importance. This was borne out by this researcher when the questionnaires were personally administered at one of the school. The students asked questions and the researcher was able to clarify. It is unfortunate that the students from the other schools surveyed did not have this opportunity.

Woods (2006) admits that questionnaires are not among the most prominent methods in qualitative research because they commonly require subjects to respond to a stimulus and thus they are not acting naturally. However, they have their uses, especially as a means of collecting information from a wider sample than can be reached by personal interview. The questionnaires used in this research presented the participants with limited stimulus as the responses required them to articulate their own words in response to the open-ended questions asked. There were no prompts and the items used in all of the questionnaires required thought on the part of the participants so that meaningful responses could be given.

The questionnaires used in this study were piloted during the months of November, 2013 and February 2014. After this process the questionnaires were modified and finalized for use during the data-

collection phase of the study with effect from May to July 2014. The return rate of the questionnaires overall was 57%.

This researcher distributed the questionnaires to all schools personally except for the Tobago schools; these questionnaires were sent by TT Post. This researcher also met with the principals, vice-principals, or dean of the schools in Trinidad. The researcher was in constant telephone contact with the principals of the schools in Tobago. Most of the principals recognized the value of the research being conducted by this researcher and the questionnaires were administered within the shortest space of time – at one primary school the questionnaires were administered immediately and were ready for collection in the afternoon. In other schools, the questionnaires were administered within one day, one week and at most two weeks.

The completed questionnaires were collected from the various schools as they became available and collection was arranged by this researcher to coincide with the distribution of some of the packages to the other schools. It is to be noted that this researcher in no way coerced the participants and the exercise was totally voluntary.

The questionnaires were administered by school personnel except in the case of one school where the Vice Principal invited this researcher to come in at a scheduled time to administer the instrument. School leaders and teachers completed the questionnaires on their own time. In order to facilitate data collection in the Tobago schools, this researcher hired a temporary research assistant who administered the questionnaires at one of the schools and collected the completed questionnaires from the other school and mailed them to this researcher.

This researcher wanted to reward the students who participate in this research and to this end packages were prepared for the school leader or teacher assigned to assist with the research; and for the students who participated. Items bearing the logo of the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) where the researcher works (items such as bags, note pads, pens, key rings) were given to the school leaders and the students were given folders, and UTT pencils purchased by this researcher. In one unsponsored primary school this researcher donated a set of reading books and reference books for the library. The appreciation packages for the Tobago schools were sent by TT Post courier mail.

Secondary data collection was done by the examination of archival documents and records where necessary; and an overview of the relevant literature.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Researchers are discovering what parents have always known, it matters who the teacher is. Haycock (1998) said that parents have always known that it matters a lot which teachers their children get. That is why those with the time and skills work so hard to assure that, by hook or by crook, their children are assigned the "best" teachers.

Witcher, Jiao, Onwegbuzie, Collins, James and Minor (2008) offered this definition of effective teachers: effective teachers are described as those who have strong cognitive skills, are subject specialists, and can vary their teaching strategies to meet the needs of their students. (p 281).

Acheson and Gall (2003) define the concept of effective teaching in this way:

> Effective teaching involves the ability to provide instruction that helps students to develop the knowledge, skills, and understandings intended by curriculum objectives, create an instructional climate that causes students to develop attitudes toward school and self, adjust instruction so that all students learn, irrespective of their ability, ethnicity, or other characteristics, manage the classroom so that students are engaged in learning all or most of the time, make sound decisions and plans that maximize students' opportunity to learn, and respond to initiatives for curriculum change so that the new curriculum's intents are fully realized. (p. 18).

Williams, Sullivan and Kohn (2012) admit that effectiveness is an elusive concept. The word seems to characterize a teacher's worth and ties directly with being successful in the classroom. Effective and successful are synonymous in that they indicate achieving desired results.

It is important at this juncture to point out that this researcher is not suggesting that teacher effectiveness is the only contributor to student academic and life achievement. Rather teacher effectiveness is the focus of this research but there are many other factors involved in this process.

Stumbo and McWalters (2011) explain that over the years there has been a shift in focus – there is now an emphasis on teacher "effectiveness" rather than on teacher "quality". Teacher quality largely refers to how well teachers know their content as measured by the post-secondary courses they have taken. The shift towards effectiveness focuses on how well teachers perform with students. Rather than measuring inputs (such as how many academic degrees the teacher has or how long he/she has been on the job), the outcomes of a teacher's work should be measured to see how effective the teacher is (the extent to which the educator has met crucial student needs, such as an increase in student achievement). Stumbo et al (2011) contend that this is analogous to the shift from paying attention to student inputs (how many courses a student has taken, or seat time) to looking at outcomes (how much the student knows and can do, or performance).

Kennedy (2008) defined teacher effectiveness but, like Stumbo et al (2011) placed it as a component of teacher quality. Teacher quality has different meanings depending on the context and the user. It can mean to some a teacher's test scores; a teacher's credentials; their classroom practice and student achievement; or teachers' beliefs and values. However, Kennedy (2008) suggested that the term should be "teacher qualities" and not "teacher quality" given that there are various dimensions of the concept teacher quality. The researcher therefore proposed three (3) broad groupings of teacher qualities:

- Personal resources (attitudes and personality traits)
- Performance (what teachers actually do daily)
- Effectiveness (how good teachers are at raising students' scores on achievement tests)

Kennedy (2008) p. 61 went on to explain that even if reliance were to be placed on a very narrow definition of effectiveness there are still to be found multiple qualities within the term. Teachers might be more effective in some subjects than in others, or they might be more effective with some types of students than with others. Darling-Hammond (2009) also recognizes that a high-quality teacher in one circumstance may not be a high-quality teacher for another. An example of this would be subject-specialists teachers who are only effective in their area of expertise.

Pretorius (2013) asserts that the term "teacher quality" subsumes teacher effectiveness, qualifications, professional capacity, performance, et cetera. The definition is brought down to specifics by delineating teachers' contributions to student outcomes as final criteria.

Darling-Hammond (2009) believes that standards have been rising for teachers. The average teacher today is in the top half of his/her college class. Some states are choosing from the top third. This researcher takes issue with this type of view on the selection of teachers. A high academic achiever may not be a "good" or "effective" teacher. Even with the best of preparation the passion and enthusiasm may not be present, and that person may not be effective in the classroom. Teacher selection should not be based solely on academic scores. Credence for the above view is found in Goldhaber (2007) who observed that despite the testing, many teachers whom we might wish were not in the teacher workforce based on their contribution toward student achievement are nevertheless eligible because they score well on their licensure test. Conversely, many individuals who would be effective teachers are ineligible due to their poor test performance.

Added to the above, Goodwin (2011) warns that being credentialed, being experienced or holding an advanced degree is no guarantee of effectiveness. Rather, leaders must look more deeply, in other words, they should look below the surface at the intangibles. Support for this approach is found in Wong and Wong (2009) who agree that a "highly qualified teacher" may not be an effective teacher. Effective

teachers are the ones who produce student learning and achievement, not highly qualified teachers. Therefore, you hire for qualification then train for effectiveness.

It is this researcher's position that it is important for all students to be exposed to high quality education and effective teaching. Clifford (2010) agrees and referred to the UNICEF (2002) statement that access to education of a poor quality is tantamount to no access at all; the quality of education children receive is critical to genuine learning and human development; and quality is influenced by what goes on in the classroom and beyond.

Goodwin (2011) p. 79-80 said that while good teachers possess a few quantifiable attributes (such as verbal and cognitive ability; adequate knowledge of their content area and of how to teach their subject areas). Great teachers also possess many intangible attitudes which are sometimes overlooked. Some of these intangibles are: the belief that all students can learn, belief in their own abilities/sense of efficacy and an ability to connect with students. A study by Cornelius-White (2007) found that teachers' warmth, empathy and non-directivity (student initiated and student regulated activities), strongly correlated to higher levels of student participation, motivation and achievement. Therefore, the softer or intangible qualities of teachers do matter and should be addressed in teacher preparation programmes.

O'Brien (2010) advises educators to let students know that they care about them. The idea is not new, but still teachers have a problem with how to care and show that they care. The researcher states: they (students) would not care to learn until they learn that you (the teacher) care.

Lumpkin (2007) believes that:

> Caring teachers nurture relationships with students through affirming students' efforts and talents. These teachers realize that learning is much more likely to occur when positive, reinforcing comments outnumber critical comments. While teachers will, at times, provide constructive critiques of the performance of students, caring teachers persistently reward the efforts of students, their learning from mistakes, and their not giving up even though they sometimes struggle to learn. Caring teachers' expectations contribute to students' feeling that their efforts will be rewarded as learning outcomes become more meaningful. (p. 159).

Dozier (2009) stated that when students see that teachers care about them personally and are willing to spend time helping them succeed, teachers build trust between themselves and their students; and the students are willing to work harder to succeed, if for no other reason than to please the teacher who wants them to succeed. Believing in students' abilities to achieve is the theory of the Pygmalion effect or self-fulfilling prophecy and when applied to education posits that if teachers continuously show that they believe in students' abilities, almost all students will respond with greater effort.

Noddings (2005) explains that it is not universally true that "all teachers care". She continues: we have all known teachers who are cruel and uncaring, and these people should not be in teaching at all. But even for the majority who do "care" in the virtue sense, i.e. they profess to care and work hard at their teaching – there are many who do not adopt the relational sense of caring.

The relational sense of caring forces us to look at the relation. It is not enough to hear the teacher's claim to care. Does the student recognize that he or she is cared for? Is the teacher thought by the student to be a caring teacher? When the relational sense of caring is adopted one cannot only look at the teacher. Rather teachers, students and situations must be examined. Sometimes the conditions of schooling are so bad that teachers who want to care and students who want to be cared for cannot form the kind of relations that can properly be labelled as caring. In a caring relation or encounter, the cared-for recognizes the caring and responds in some detectable manner.

The caring teacher strives first to establish and maintain caring relations, and these relations exhibit an integrity that provides a foundation for everything the teacher and student do together. What Noddings

(2005) is saying is that a caring teacher has to be cognizant of the needs of his/her students if a caring relationship is to develop and to benefit the student.

A study by Ribie-Davies (2007) compared the classroom practices of teachers categorized as having high expectations with teachers categorized as having low expectations. It was reported that the teachers with high expectations spent more time providing a framework for their pupils' learning, provided their pupils with more feedback, questioned their pupils using a larger number of higher-order questions, and managed their pupils' behavior more positively. In effect, it appears that teachers with high expectations are purposively more committed through their teaching to creating a classroom climate within which pupils must make greater progress.

Hayes (2006) recognized that effective teaching is not a paper and pencil exercise or a vehicle for governments to flaunt policy achievements. It profoundly affects the lives and welfare of teachers, assistants and pupils. He says:

> The role of teacher encompasses more than the act of teaching (significant though it is). It also involves relating to and influencing many people, particularly the children and young people with whom teachers have daily contact. Every word spoken, decision taken and action witnessed makes a difference to their lives and welfare. Over succeeding years, when much of school life is forgotten, men and women will not only continue to benefit from the good teaching they receive, but also from the moral and ethical example they received from teachers. (p. 47).

It is to be noted that students are well able to determine if their teachers are effective or not. They know when the teacher is trying to teach well, whether the teacher has planned for instruction and whether they care. When students are given "busy work" they recognize that their time is being wasted and can lose the zeal to learn. Therefore, many students in Trinidad and Tobago are placed in private lesson classes and that culture of private lessons, a costly venture for parents, has become endemic in the education system in Trinidad and Tobago.

Goa (2014) has stated: Children naturally love to learn, but might not like to be taught in certain ways. Teachers' improper ways of teaching might make a child shut down his or her willingness to learn, which is called not-learning. Not-learning does not refer to an incapability to learn, but is rather a choice a child intentionally or unintentionally makes to resist learning. (p. 104).

Clifford (2010) p. 70 recognized that the views of teachers and students are essential in making decisions pertaining to education. The reality is that not only students and teachers' views of effective teaching are needed, but the perceptions of all major stakeholders; and it is this deficiency which this study hopes to address, and therefore profile an effective teacher in the Trinidad and Tobago context.

Delaney (2008) has observed that traditionally high school students have not been given many opportunities to offer their insights and comments on education and schooling. In fact, there appears to be a dearth of information regarding high school students' perceptions of effective teachers. Delaney (2008) describes these views or perceptions as "authentic sources" as students personally experiences classrooms firsthand. Soo Hoo (1993) is of this view also and states that:

> Somehow educators have forgotten the important connection between teachers and students. We listen to outside experts to inform us, and consequently, we overlook the treasure in our own backyards: our students. Students' perceptions are valuable to our practice because they are authentic sources; they personally experience our classroom firsthand. (p. 388).

Chetty, Friedman and Rockoff (2013) revealed that a good teacher not only improves a child's test scores in the classroom but also enhances his/her chances to attend college, earn more money, live in a better neighborhood, avoid teenage pregnancy and save more for retirement. Furthermore, effective teaching tended to be effective with all types of students from all types of backgrounds; likewise, ineffective teaching tended to be ineffective with all types on students from all types of backgrounds.

Schacter and Thum (2004) have observed that in the last decade a series of studies have confirmed that access to an effective teacher is the single most important school-related factor responsible for increased learning. The quality of the teacher, then, is the most important school-related factor and can be more powerful than many out-of-school factors. Phillips (2011) lends support to this when she says that great teachers are the most important school-based ingredient for student success.

FINDINGS

Perceptions of an effective teacher

The main stakeholders in education gave their perceptions of an effective teacher (Figure 2). Male (63%) and female (72%) stakeholders perceive an effective teacher as one who possesses strong pedagogical skills. This encompasses the following:

- Engaging in advanced planning
- Make learning fun and enjoyable
- the ability to explain content clearly
- Being able to complete the syllabus
- Using a variety of instructional strategies
- Using relevant teaching and learning aids during one's lesson

FIGURE 2
**STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER**
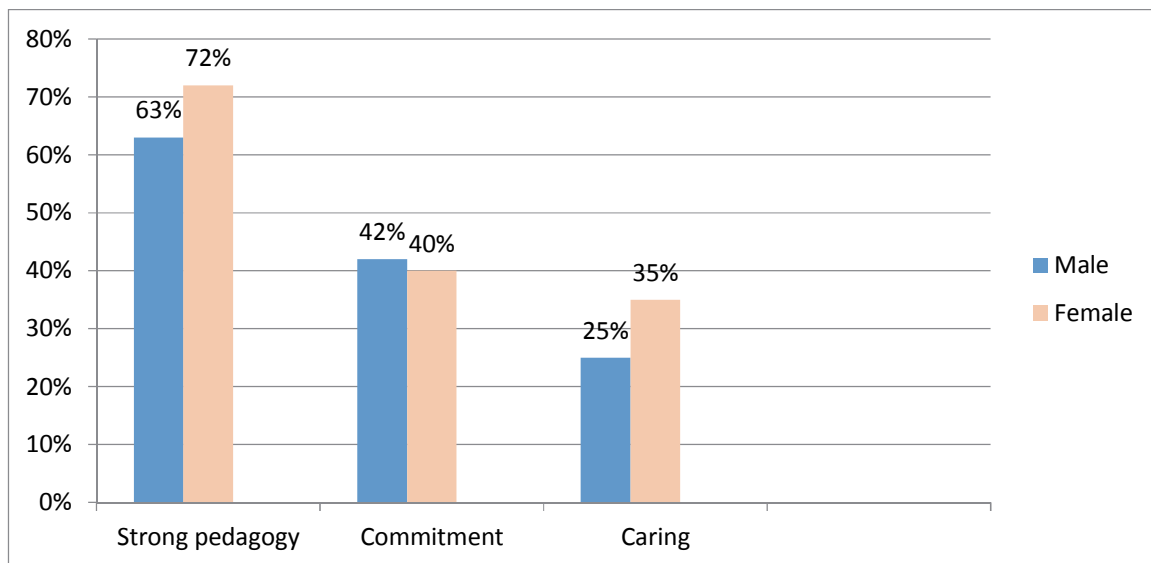
Another perception of male (42%) and female (40%) stakeholders is that effective teachers should be committed or dedicated to the profession and be willing to go the extra mile in the exercise of his/her duties. It was felt that teachers should be willing to help children after school at no charge.

Male (25%) and female (35%) stakeholders perceive an effective teacher as one who cares about his/her students and who can develop the student holistically. In addition, it was felt that caring teachers should be able to reach their students emotionally and touch students' hearts.

Qualities of effective teachers

Stakeholders went on to identify qualities which they perceive an effective teacher should possess. (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3
STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER
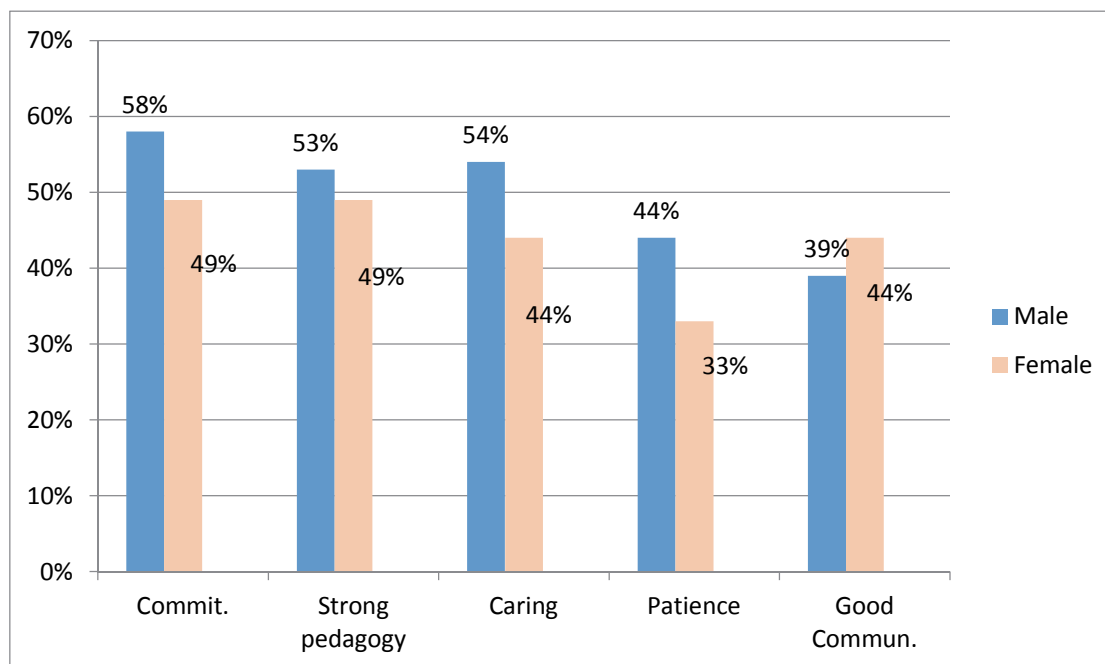
Male and female stakeholders (58% and 49%) believe that teachers should be committed to the profession; possess strong pedagogical skills (53% and 49%); be caring (54% and 44%); have patience (44% and 33%); and possess good communication skills (39% and 44%).

How students benefit when they are taught by effective teachers

Stakeholders next examined how students benefit by being taught by effective (Figure 4). Stakeholders (male, 69% and female, 71%) recognized that children taught by effective teachers develop a love for learning, experience improved academic performance, learn taught material and achieve excellence. They understand the material which is taught, their general academic performance would improve and they will go on to get good grades and have examination success.

Male (55%) and female (48%) were of the view that students' behavior would improve considerably if they were to be taught by effective teachers. There would be less indiscipline in schools and in society.

Male (40%) and female (41%) of stakeholders feel that children exposed to effective teachers are motivated and would want to come to school thereby reducing the dropout rate, thereby improving their life chances. Students would develop into well-rounded citizens who would be productive in the work force and become law-abiding, patriotic citizens.

FIGURE 4
**STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOW STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM
BEING TAUGHTBY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**
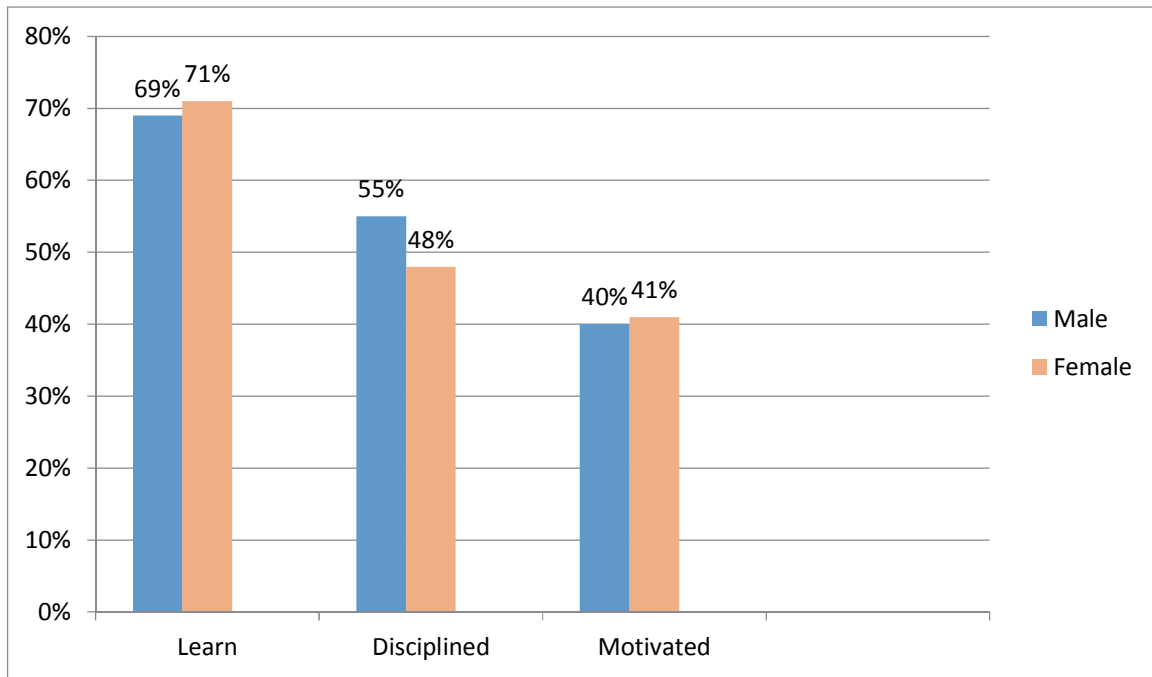
## Activities that cause teachers to be ineffective

Stakeholders acknowledged that some teachers engage in activities which cause them to be ineffective (Figure 5).

The major activities identified were teacher indiscipline (male 53% and female 66%); tardiness (male 58% and female 55%); and poor pedagogy (male 23% and female 27%). Teacher indiscipline includes the following activities/behaviors:

♣ Showing favoritism
♣ Teacher absenteeism
♣ Being abusive to students
♣ Engaging in time wasting activities
♣ Using students to run their personal errands
♣ Frequent quarreling with students and embarrassing them

Teacher absenteeism was identified as the most serious form of indiscipline which teachers engage in. The students explained that while some of the teachers do not come to school or to class, others are present at school but do not show up for their classes as timetabled. In addition, if some of the teachers come to class, albeit late, there is an absence of instruction, so it is better if they are not there.

FIGURE 5
STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACTIVITIES THAT CAUSE
TEACHER INEFFECTIVENESS
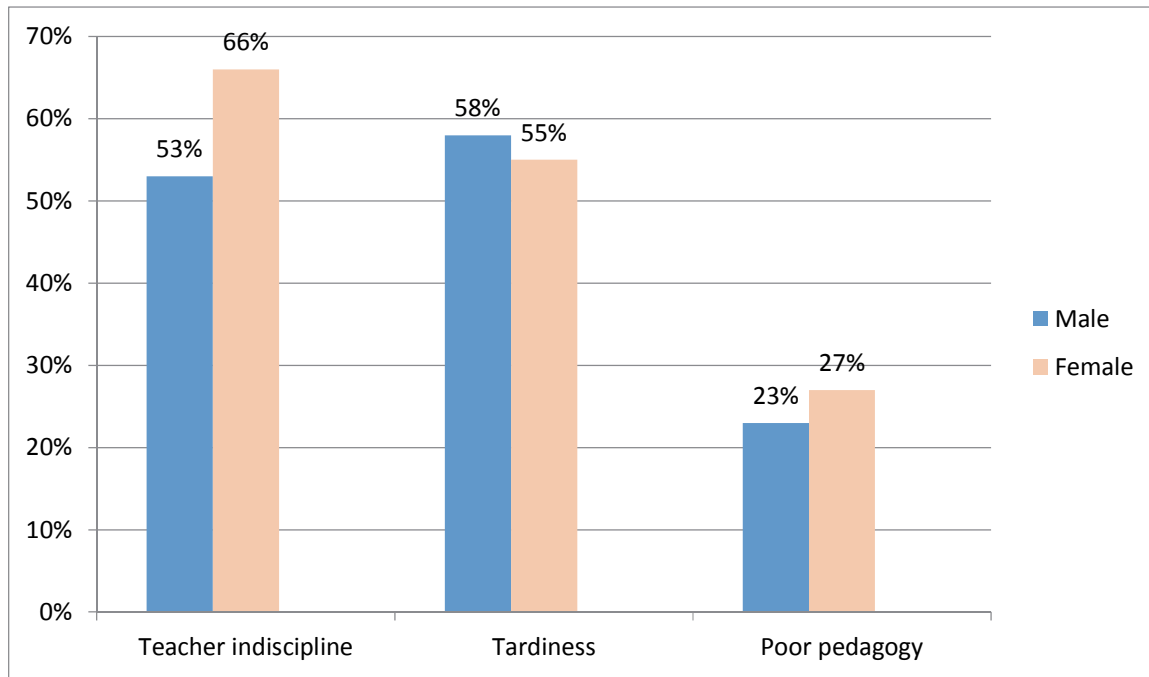
Stakeholders recognized that teachers tend to engage in tardiness (male 58% and female 55%). Teachers come to work late, and go to their classes late; they are late marking and returning scripts, and they do not meet deadlines for the submission of marks. The students said that some teachers are too lazy to come to class and even to school; they are tardy coming to class and they much prefer to "lime" (socialize) in the staffroom.

Stakeholders identified poor pedagogy (male 23% and female 27%) as an activity which causes teachers to be ineffective.   The reality is that some teachers just do not teach for understanding/comprehension they just do not have the skills to break down material and explain properly. Teachers are accused of spending whole periods calling out notes from textbooks in a monotonous tone; they do nothing to make lessons fun; they rush through the syllabus and move on without ensuring that all students understand the concepts being taught.

Students revealed that teachers gloat that even if they do not work they still get paid. They assign students busy work and retreat to the staffroom, thus leaving students unsupervised. Some teachers have been accused of teaching the wrong information.

Instead of teaching when they go to their respective classes some teachers engage in several time-wasting activities some of which are:

♣ Reading books in class
♣ On social media in class
♣ Eating during class time
♣ Playing games on phones
♣ Talking about their life experiences
♣ Answering cell phones and texting during class

When some teachers come to class they sit and do nothing and at times engage in small talk with students and this causes non-productivity and some of the talk is "vicey" talk, which is inappropriate to

have with students. When some teachers go to their classes they appear to be under the influence of alcohol.

How students are affected when taught by ineffective teachers

It was recognized by stakeholders that when students are exposed to ineffective teachers they are impacted negatively. (Figure 6).

Male and female stakeholders identified several negative consequences for students: delinquency (43% and 38%); academic failure 50% and 55%); illiteracy (56% and 64%); students are demotivated (38% and 49%)' and some students may become dropouts (32% and 38%).

FIGURE 6
HOW TEACHER INEFFECTIVENESS IMPACTS STUDENTS
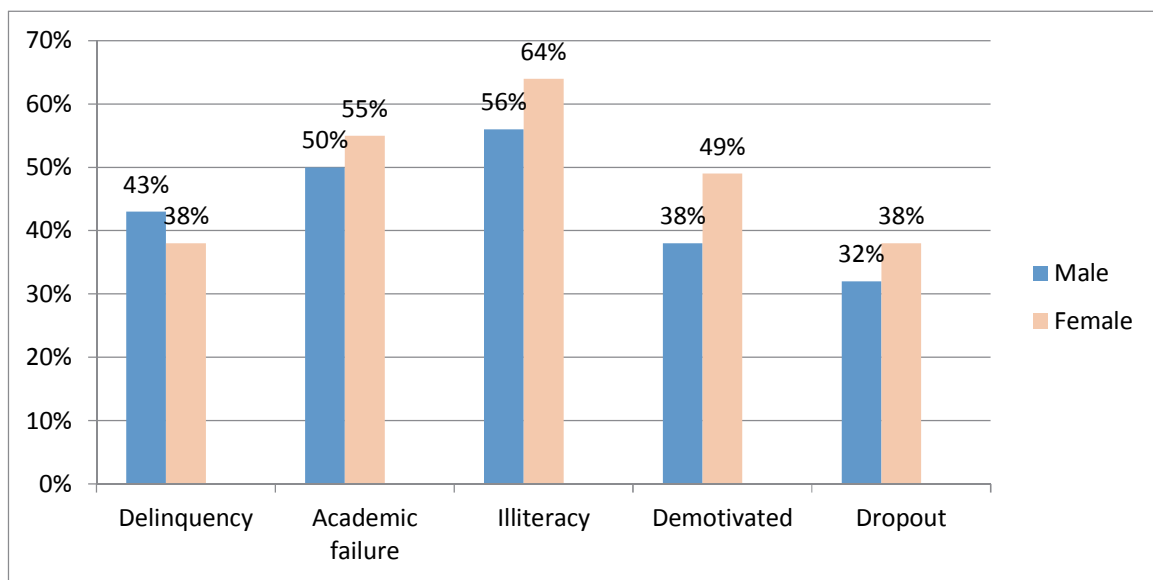
**Suggestions to ensure that most teachers are effective**

Stakeholders next expressed their perceptions of what can be done to ensure that most teachers are effective (Figure 7).

Retraining (male 46% and female 45%); provide teachers with the necessary resources (male 41% and female 20%) monitor constantly (male 34% and female 30%) and change the recruitment system (male 42% and female 33%).

It was felt that all teachers in the system should participate in mandatory in-service training which could be held as part of professional development activities. It was suggested that the initial training process for teachers should be properly done and that adequate resources be provided for teachers and facilities improved.

Another suggestion was that the recruitment system should be changed and all teachers entering the system needed to have a teaching qualification such as the Diploma in Education (Dip. Ed.) which is offered by the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, School of Education.

FIGURE 7
STAKEHOLDERS' SUGGESTIONS TO ENSURE THAT
MOST TEACHERS ARE EFFECTIVE
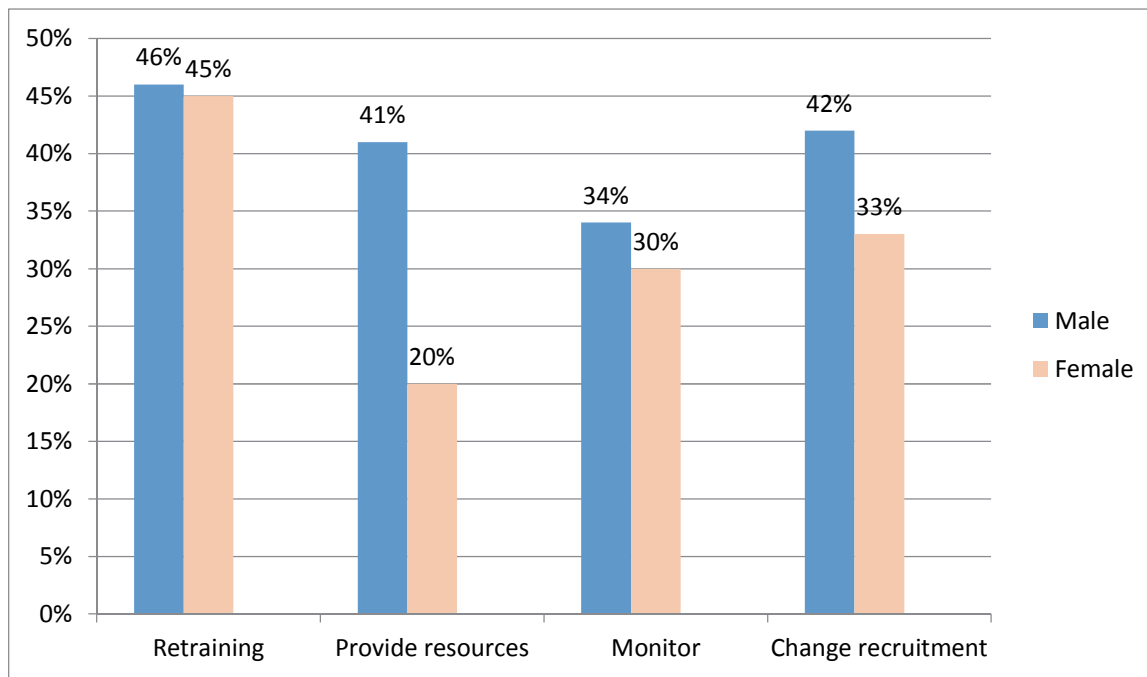
Discussion and Conclusion

The essence of this study is to identify, from the perspective of the major stakeholders, what an effective teacher looks like in the Trinidad and Tobago context.

The capacity to engage in good pedagogical practice was the most frequently identified expectation associated with an effective teacher. The teacher who stands in front of the class must be someone who knows how to teach, explain content properly and help children to learn. One can question the purpose of a teacher being in the classroom if no learning is taking place.

Therefore, an effective teacher is someone who can really teach. A study of seventeen (17) schools in four states in the United States of America examined the effects of longer school days giving teachers more time in class as not being as effective as the improvement of the quality of instruction. Ferguson (2015) from the Centre on Education Policy said: any effort to expand learning time should go hand in hand with a plan for improving the quality of instruction.

The importance of good teaching is supported by Ferriter (2011) who said that even with the presence of various digital tools that can be used in the classroom, they are useless without teachers who are armed with good instructional skills. Good teaching trumps good tools every time.

Ferriter (2011) cited Nussbaum-Beach (no year given) who said that students sitting in high-tech classrooms armed with interactive white boards, iPods, and handheld video cameras, but staffed by teachers who can't craft lessons that integrate the skills needed for success aren't any better off than their counterparts in unplugged classrooms.

Good pedagogical practice involves knowing how to teach one's subject area, how to teach for understanding, how to prepare one's lessons to meet the needs of the various learners in one's class and how to assess the different learners in one's class. It is not only about instructional practice. It also needs to be stressed that the possession of higher qualifications in a subject does not necessarily transfer into a person's capacity to teach that subject for understanding.

The stakeholders identified several qualities that effective teachers should possess. The most frequently cited qualities were: commitment, strong pedagogical skills, caring, patience and good communication skills. Commitment refers to the level of dedication which one has towards one's job or according to the stakeholders, one's willingness to go the extra mile. Too many teachers in the school system in Trinidad and Tobago view teaching only as a job or a pay cheque and they lack passion for the job. Given this mindset, these teachers do not care about their charges and do not care if their students learn.

Johnson (2011) believes that student commitment depends on teacher commitment the researcher suggests that:

> When the teacher says, I am the one that makes learning possible in the classroom and I am committed to make it happen. And the student says, I will do everything that I can to learn. I am ready to learn. That is when the magic of learning really happens. (p 1).

Sclafani (2008) explains that teacher and administrator commitment to student success creates the culture of high performance in Singapore. This commitment is a requirement for all prospective teachers as they go through their preparation program. In addition to meeting various criteria used to assess applicants, prospective teachers must display a passion to teach and truly believe they can make a difference.

Sclafani (2008) cited Voogt and Kasurinen (2005) who pointed out that cooperation, trust and commitment are the hall marks of the Finnish education system at every stage. Teacher commitment cannot be over-emphasized.

An important quality identified by stakeholders is a teacher's capacity to care. Caring will ensure that a teacher exercises patience, and that teacher will display integrity by being fair to his/her students. A caring teacher is committed to the welfare of his/her students, will want them to learn and therefore will exercise good pedagogical skills. In addition, caring, will permit the teacher to be able to exercise good communication skills, in speaking and listening, to his/her students. A caring teacher will generally have a student-centred orientation.

A teacher who does not care about his/her students will not have the patience to teach them well and this spells a lack of commitment. This researcher views an uncaring attitude being linked to a lack of integrity. A teacher's main responsibility is to ensure that their students learn and even if the job as a teacher is to be used as a stepping stone to other things, then at least that job should be done well. This is not happening in many schools in Trinidad and Tobago.

Lumpkin (2007) explains this about caring:

> Teacher-learner relationships are founded on the fundamental human need of knowing that another person genuinely cares. Students know when they are recognized, understood, and respected for their unique abilities and interests by their teachers. Teachers are effective when they deeply care about the learning of each student. (p 2).

Lumpkin (2007) elaborates by saying that when teachers care they believe in their students' abilities and teachers demonstrate that they care by placing the learners at the centre of the educational process. Thus, teachers can engage students actively in the learning process and learning becomes fun, meaningful and enduring for the students.

Teachers need to have good communication skills so that they can positively interact with their students, the students' parents, colleagues and management. In addition, having good communication skills would indicate to the students that this teacher is approachable and is one who can listen. Students should know that they can go to their teacher for clarification or advice, and that they (the students are welcomed by the teacher).

The stakeholders recognized that when students are taught by effective teachers they benefit in several ways:

♣ Learning occurs
♣ Students are motivated to achieve
♣ Students cultivate a love for learning
♣ Students tend not to engage in delinquent behavior
♣ The country benefits as students turn out to be good citizens

It was recognized that when teachers are ineffective students are disadvantaged in many ways. Students experience academic failure; they become disaffected with school and eventually drop out; and they tend to engage in delinquent behavior. What is really happening is that the educational institution is not achieving its goal, as student learning is not taking place. This researcher sees this as a failed system.

Stakeholders identified several activities which teachers engage in that cause them to be ineffective, e.g., teacher indiscipline (e.g., absenteeism, showing favouritism, being abusive to students, engaging in time wasting activities).

Teacher absenteeism simply means that the provider of education in an institution of learning is not around to do his or her job. This is a serious problem and the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2015) says that: teacher absenteeism takes a toll on student learning by reducing the number of hours that children are actually taught. (p 205).

In Trinidad and Tobago teacher absenteeism is not only about a teacher taking legitimate leave available to him/her under the terms and conditions of service, e.g., sick leave, casual/business days. Rather, it extends to teachers being present in the school but absent from classes. Some teachers simply stay in the staff room and do not go to their classes. This researcher would like to extend teacher absenteeism to the practice where teachers may be forced to go to class but they do not teach. There is an absence of instruction as teachers engage in a lot of time-wasting activities, as identified by the students in this study. The teachers are busy on social media, communicating on their cell phones, marking assignments or are outside of the class chit-chatting. This means that there is an absence of supervision and an absence of teaching. This practice is not unique to Trinidad and Tobago but is a problem being faced in many developing countries such as Ecuador, Kenya, India, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Zambia and South Asia (World Bank, 2004).

Because of poor administrative planning some teachers are absent as they have to attend to official duties, e.g., workshops, seminars and meetings. However, one questions the rationale for scheduling meetings and workshops during the term and during class hours. Workshops should be conducted during the school vacation periods and meetings can be held after school is dismissed. Given the school culture in Trinidad and Tobago having meetings after school would be a problem as many teachers leave the school compound when the students are dismissed or at the end of their last teaching period for the day. However, there should be specific hours of work for teachers; and it should be specified that they need to stay on the compound.

In terms of the vacation periods: Easter, August and Christmas, teachers tend to forget that they are on paid vacation and should be attending to school business. Rather, many of them view these vacation periods as sacrosanct and their own by right, and the teachers' union tends to facilitate this belief. The Ministry of Education in Trinidad and Tobago should take the lead in amending the Education Act to explicitly state that teachers are on duty during the vacation periods and if they do not wish to be they should apply for vacation leave. Teachers' vacation leave days need to be clarified just as their sick leave and casual days are, and in the way in which vacation leave for public servants is specified. Based on a teacher's years of service he/she may be entitled to 21 days (1-10 years' service); 28 working days (10+ years of service) or 35 working days based on one's salary range. These vacation days should not be approved during term time, except in emergencies.

If the above method were to be utilized, then the authorities would be better able to monitor their teachers and get replacements or substitute teachers.

Students are the biggest losers when their teachers choose to be indisciplined. Children need to be supervised at school; and when teachers are tardy going to class or are frequently absent, children are idle and they get themselves involved in many deviant acts of mischief, which can graduate into outright indiscipline and even violence. Added to the fact that students have become indisciplined, they are also not engaging in formal learning, they are doing badly in tests and examinations and they may be illiterate. This causes them to have a feeling of a sense of failure; in addition, they feel less worthy because their teachers are not coming to class; then their self-esteem and sense of motivation will be diminished. These students may eventually become angry and lash out at society; in the school, they can become bullies, disruptive in class and eventually drop out voluntarily or forced out through frequent suspensions. Without an education and lack of training in any skill some of these dropouts may become menaces to the society as they turn to a life of crime. Those who can secure employment can expect only minimum wage and many will not be productive workers as the one thing they would have learnt from their teachers is an unhealthy work ethic.

Shaw, Conti and Shaw (2013) explain that the students who become disaffected with school and drop out become at-risk because of various societal factors, such as chemical dependency, teenage pregnancy and poverty.

Kassam (1989) p. 531 explains that literacy empowers and to be illiterate is to be disempowered and marginalized. Pedriana (2010) supports this and listed several factors which he calls the "inestimable costs of illiteracy". These include: the inability to attain higher levels of education; the risk of imprisonment; the cost to a country when it cannot produce a workforce capable of addressing the increased demands of a society that must compete globally. In addition, people with low or marginal literacy are more likely to be unemployed and therefore less likely to be covered by health insurance, thus becoming a burden on the State and taxpayers.

Illiteracy even impacts the effective functioning of democratic principles as an illiterate electorate cannot sort through printed material and make judgments based on deep knowledge. Even the act of voting itself requires the ability to read and follow procedures necessary to make a vote count; so there may be many "spoil votes" in various polling stations. Illiteracy causes its victims to follow a path of violence and aggression as they engage in high-risk behaviours that often land them on the wrong side of the criminal justice system. It can be seen that lack of a proper education and illiteracy have crippling, lifelong effects.

It is important for teachers to undertake mandatory professional development activities during the vacation periods; and for principals to monitor their teachers closely in terms of their performance in their classrooms, and their punctuality and regularity. Principals can assume the role of instructional coaches and help their teachers to improve their pedagogical skills by visiting them in their classrooms, unannounced, and assess their pedagogical skills.

Professional development activities can be linked to a teacher's appraisal or assessment. A system needs to be devised which would assess teachers for effectiveness, based on the criteria which are valued by the stakeholders in education in the society.

Tan (2012) suggests that evaluation should be formative, not critical and summative. A more holistic and complete approach is to adopt an evaluation model that develops teachers' competencies over the long run. This researcher will attempt to develop such a model which can be used to evaluate teachers in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, Tan (2012) says evaluation should not be seen as an end in itself but as a key component in the life cycle of teacher development.

The provision of resources and improvement of physical facilities are imperatives and cannot be over-emphasized. For example, it is interesting that secondary students were given laptops, but class teachers are not; a laptop for every department is not adequate. If teachers want to guide students on the proper use of laptops for learning they too must have access to laptops at the school. Granted, there may be a teachers'/staff's computer lab in schools, there may not be sufficient computers for every teacher? This researcher feels that all teachers should be given laptops/tablets for use in the school, they should not be taken home. With this arrangement if a substitute teacher comes to work on any given day, that person will have access to the laptop/tablet and material relevant to the lesson including student assessment

records. Also, there would need to be Internet access in all classrooms so that the use of laptops can be integrated into lessons.

In terms of other resources all classes should have a proper chalk board, notice board for displaying students' work and a white board; chalk and markers should be readily available. Teachers should have access to all of the various materials which they would need to make teaching and learning aids. In many instances this is not happening and some teachers have to purchase their own materials.

In some schools teaches have no access to educational journals. The school library is equipped to cater for the needs of the students, but the school is a learning community and academic staff should be able to access online journals, research data bases and other materials. Additionally, as a learning community teachers should be encouraged to collaborate and engage in action research at the classroom and school levels. These findings should be used to improve the teaching-learning process and should be published so that other teachers can benefit.

Stakeholders were of the view that principals and other Ministry of Education officials should monitor and discipline delinquent teachers. No more should teachers be tardy in regularity and punctuality, not attend their classes, fail to mark scripts and meet deadlines. Yet, these same teachers successfully obtain part-time employment to mark national and regional examinations. Principals need to identify delinquent teachers and help them to reform their practice and attitudes and recommit to the profession, or recommend disciplinary action and/or dismissal if necessary. The lives of children are at stake.

Stakeholders want to see a change in the recruitment system used for teachers. It was suggested that all teachers should enter the profession armed with a Diploma in Education as offered by the University of the West Indies. No longer should teachers be sent to schools without having formal teacher training, with emphasis on strong pedagogical skills.

What would be useful is if the teacher preparation institutions can adjust the programmes to focus more on pedagogy (practical instruction) than on theory. Trainee teachers need more practice in pedagogy in a real-world situation and not simulated. Less attention needs to be placed on reflective practices and more on developing the softer skills in teachers, caring, good communication, patience and empathy; and on introspection along with reflection.

Trainee teachers should have maximum exposure to hands-on teaching and be given the opportunity to apply their theoretical learning in real world/authentic situations. Trainee teachers should be sent to schools from the first year of their training. In year one they should go to private/independent schools in Trinidad and Tobago and observe how that system is structured. This can be for a period of one month. In years 2 and 3 they should be sent to government schools for a full term; and in year 4 for two terms.

CONCLUSION

This research has attempted to profile an effective teacher based on the perceptions of the major stakeholders. It was expected that an effective teacher should possess strong pedagogical skills, which would include the teacher having strong content knowledge, being able to explain work for clarity, be willing to reteach if students do not understand and have the capacity to engage in relevant assessment methods. However, commitment and dedication overshadowed good pedagogy as a necessary quality. In addition, an effective teacher should be kind, caring, possess good communication skills and be able to motivate students to learn, develop a love for learning, have high expectations for his/her students and possess good pedagogical skills. Added to this the teacher should not engage in indiscipline and must be punctual and regular for work.

Teacher preparation programmes tend to focus on the theory of teaching and trainees are not given sufficient hands-on exposure in the classroom. Yes, they do have classroom encounters, but not enough and they seem to lack the capacity to transfer the theory taught into practice. While there is focus on producing a reflective practitioner, trainee teachers need to be guided in the art of introspection. Teachers should look at their attitude to their jobs, contribution to student learning and their attitude to their

students. If as a teacher your students are not learning and are dissatisfied with your performance, then there is definitely a problem and that teacher should rethink his/her continued presence in that classroom.

A teacher must model to students positive practices such as efficiency, integrity, diligence and passion for one's job or subject area and a positive work ethic. Students should want to come to class. No action on a teacher's part should cause students to become so demotivated that they want to drop out of school.

A teacher needs to always remember that he/she is preparing the next generation and that teacher would be living in that world. Children should be given a fair chance to achieve their fullest potential and not be stymied by a negative academic experience. Some children are facing many challenges at home due to socio-economic and other factors, school is their escape and they should not be subjected to negative experiences there also. To ensure that this happens principals need to accept the challenge and become genuine guardians of students by ensuring that teachers attend their classes and teach the students properly so that learning can occur.

It is hoped that the perceptions of the stakeholders in education have provided an opening as to what is valued in teachers and the creation of an effective teacher in Trinidad and Tobago.

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