**An exploration of the impact of Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) on the attendance and academic performance of two groups of Corporate Area school boys**

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education

In the School of Education

University of Sheffield

Supervisor: Professor Pat Sikes

March, 2020

**Dedication**

I dedicate this study to my mother, Miriam Taylor who I see as my ‘earth angel’. The creator knew the struggles I would face with sickle cell disease; he placed this phenomenal woman in my life to fight this battle alongside me. All that I am today is because of the love and support that she has covered me with. Mother, words cannot begin to express the love and gratitude I feel for you. Thank you for always being there.

**Acknowledgement**

When I started this research, I had the preconceived notion that I would have finished within the earliest possible completion time-frame. My journey with this study has allowed me to appreciate and respect the Jamaican proverb ‘nothing happens before its time’. This research has accompanied me through six major surgeries and multiple episodes of illnesses and oftentimes has been a therapeutic escape from my heath challenges. Thus, the completion of this dissertation has left me with a bitter, sweet feeling. However, I must thank the almighty for blessing me with confidence and strength to endure the rigour of this research journey. I must therefore commend myself for completing this journey.

My support team throughout this research journey has been awesome. I am therefore extending my deepest gratitude to my family members, Miriam Taylor, Kadian Taylor, Venise Penny, Raheem Plummer, Antoinette Phillips, Tameka Sewell and Anthony Simpson, who have been cheering me on from the beginning of the research process. Your motivations have kept me determined and focused throughout the journey.

My heartfelt thanks and appreciation is extended to Professor Patricia Sikes, a remarkable supervisor whose words of wisdom and encouragement made me wiser. Professor, your gift of knowledge has not been limited to this dissertation; they have been serving me well within my professional and personal life. This study would not have been possible without your guidance. I salute you Professor Patricia Sikes!

Special thanks and appreciation is also extended to Maxim Vernon, Judith Hutchinson, Errol Hutchinson, Joan Barrett, Yanique Taylor, Raymond Forrester, Vance Gardener, Phillip Robinson and Margarete Chin.

**Acronyms**

ATM Automated Teller Machine

AUH Asignacion Universal Por Hijo

BDH Bono de Desarrolo Humano

CAPE Caribbean Advance Proficiency Examination

C.A.R.E The Mico University College Child Assessment Research in Education

CCT Conditional Cash Transfer

CDA Child Development Agency

CHIKV Chikungunya

CPU Central Processing Unit

CSEC Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate

CXC Caribbean Examination Counsel

FSS Female Secondary Stipend Programme

GNAT Grade Nine Achievement Test

GPS Global Positioning System

GSAT Grade Six Achievement TEST

IMF International Monetary Fund

JC Jamaican Creole

MDGs Millennium Development Goals

MOE Ministry of Education

MOEY Ministry of Education and Youth

MOEYI Ministry of Education Youth and Information

OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Opportunity- NYC Opportunity-New York City

4Ps Pantawid Pamliyang Pilipino Programme

PATH Programme of Advancement through Health and Education

RCT Randomized Controlled Trial

RDD Regression Discontinuity Design

RPS Red de Proteccion Social

SASPEN Southern African Social Protection Expert Network

SJC Standard Jamaican English

SPP Social Protection Project

The Kenya CT-OVC The Kenya Cash Transfer for Orphan and Vulnerable Children

UCT Unconditional Cash Transfer

UN United Nations

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO United Nations Educational Scientific and Culture Organization

UNICEF United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

USAID United States Agency for International Development

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms were used throughout the study.

**Barely Graduates** Students who have graduated with very low or marginal Grade Point Average.

**Capital** Socially valued resources (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014).

**Caribbean Secondary Education** Is used as a Caribbean exit examination. The

**Certificate (CSEC)** examination is offered in several subject areas. This examination provides students with the requirements to matriculate into tertiary level education. The examination also provides entry level requirement into the job market (MOE 2010).

**Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT)** A social assistance programme “which seeks to provide short term poverty alleviation” through the provision of financial assistance to beneficiaries based on their adherence to certain stipulated conditions such as regular school attendance and health centre visits (Bradshaw (2008).

**Cultural Capital** Morals, values and other marks of distinctive behaviour an individual displays (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014)**.**

**Economic Capital** Money or other resources that society values (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014).

**Field** An institution or organization or spaces where the wages of inequalities result from the power of the occupants’ capital e.g. school, church, workplaces (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014).

**Grade Six Achievement Test (GSAT)** An exit examination for grade six students. GSAT is the gateway to secondary education. It seeks to measure knowledge attainment from a transparent curriculum, to get that knowledge students must be able to read, comprehend and compute. GSAT assumes the literacy of the child (MOE 2010).

**Habitus** An individual’s lifestyle, disposition or experiences (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014).

**Informer** Persons who supply implicating information to others.

**Programme of Advancement Through** A Jamaican cash conditional programme

**Health and Education (PATH)** established to help the poor break the cycle of poverty through health and education (Ministry of Labour And Social Security 2003).

**Poor** In Jamaica, an individual is considered poor if he/she has a consumption expenditure that is below his/her purchasing power of basicfood and other essential items for living (Williams 2014; Samms – Vaughan 2006).

**Poverty** Having a short-fall in income and consumption, but also low educational achievement, poor health and nutritional outcomes, lack of access to basic services, and a hazardous living environment (World Bank 2018).

**Social Capital** The status that an individual occupies in society e.g. power and connections (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014).

**Streaming** A process through which students within their grade levels are grouped in classes according to their academic performance (Evans 2006; Evans 2001).

**The more, the merrier** A Jamaican proverb which means that the more resources an individual possesses, the greater opportunity he/she has to succeed.

**Traditional High School** Prestigious high schools that deliver quality education to high achieving students. Usually students with outstanding academic performance on their GSAT examination are awarded placements in these schools (Evans 2006).

**Valedictorian** A high achieving student choosen to deliver a speech on behalf of fellow graduants at a graduation ceremony.

**Unconditional Transfer Programme**  A Social assistance programme which provides cash transfers to poor families without any stipulated condition (Maholmes and King 2012).

**Upgraded High schools** Secondary high schools that has been upgraded to high school status. Students who usually attend these schools perform at a lower academic level than those at the traditional high school level (Evans, 2006).

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**Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of Jamaica’s Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) on the attendance and academic performances of two groups of corporate area school boys. The employment of constructivist and critical theoretical frameworks were ideal for this enquiry. As such, they allowed me to collect data from participants’ experiences with the programme.

To capture as full a picture as possible of participants’ experiences with PATH, a critical ethnographic methodology was employed. Structured observation, document analysis and in-depth interviews were the methods used to obtain the data.

The data came from the interpretations of the experiences of twenty-two (22) participants. These participants were the six purposively selected male PATH beneficiaries, their mothers, teachers, principals, guidance counsellors and the PATH social worker.

The data analysis showed that only one of the six boys complied with PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition whilst none maintained nor graduated with satisfactory grades in keeping with their schools’ academic criteria. The data also showed that PATH benefits were felt to be insufficient for the boys to have achieved desirable educational outcomes in their respective schools. The study has not only exposed the boys’ struggles in the government schools; it has also presented valuable information, that can help teachers and other stakeholders gain insight into the issue of poor boys’ underachievement in Jamaican schools.

**Chapter One: Introduction and Rationale**

**Introduction**

My research topic, ‘*An exploration of the impact of Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) on the attendance and academic performance of two groups of Corporate Area school boys (a primary and secondary school): Has PATH helped these boys’ attendance and academic performance in these institutions?*’ came about after attending graduation ceremonies and observing that the top awardees for the Grade Six Achievement Text (GSAT) and Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations were predominantly female students. In addition, I have seldom seen male students serving in the capacity of valedictorian (chosen based on top performance in internal and external examinations) at these ceremonies. I have never seen a PATH male student chosen as valedictorian. The very few male students who have served as valedictorians at the primary school where I have taught for eighteen years were mostly from privileged households with a strong family support system. Such support systems are often displayed in the cheers echoed from the family box towards those particular male graduates. Male students from less fortunate households, particularly, those who were beneficiaries of PATH often fall in the category of what I describe as ‘barely graduates’. These ‘barely graduates’ are those students who are a part of the graduating ceremony as a result of reaching the school leaving age and/or having attained marginal to average passes in the GSAT examination. My observation led me to believe that these boys often fall in this, ‘barely graduates’, category because they were lazy and uninterested in school. I believed that PATH students in particular have no excuse for not achieving academically in school, since the programme supports their schooling. Thus, these students should pay homage to PATH by attending school regularly, and achieving academically too.

As a researcher, I have come to realize that my observation is limited and as a result, my perception of PATH students is merely an opinion which needs to be explored through thorough research. Thus, this research project is a means of addressing my interest which has evolved into a passionate pursuit of answers. I was apprehensive to openly admit this until it eventually became clear that my interest and passion are quite appropriate for research. Anderson and Freeboy (2014) states that “Passion...is not the enemy of good research. It is one of the key drivers of research that seeks to make meaning in the context in which it takes place...What we mean by passion here is the energetic pursuit of meaning in the face of obstacle” (p. 18-19).

Since the focus of this investigation is on six PATH boys’ attendance and academic performance at the primary and secondary level of schooling, I feel it is necessary to begin my discussion within the scope of the ensuing topics: *The Impact of Poverty on Jamaican Youths; Fighting Poverty; General Reforms in Education; Reforms at the Primary Level of Education; Reforms at the Secondary Level of Education; Barriers Facing the New Educational Reform; The Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH); Boys Academic Performance in Jamaica, Parents’ Impacts on Boys’ Schooling; and Boys’ Future and PATH*. The pattern of arguments will, therefore, begin with ‘The Impact of Poverty on Jamaican youths’ and then progress in the order listed above. This format is necessary for helping readers to understand the journey into the school system to garner knowledge from the boys’ experiences. Figure 1 shows a summary of the main points of discussion relating to each topic.

**The Impact of Poverty on Jamaican Youths**

Poverty mitigates against healthy holistic development as victims of poverty are often unable to provide for their basic needs (food, clothing, shelter). Additionally, their dreams and aspirations, are, at times, left broken and unrealized. The World Bank (2018) states that “poverty encompasses a shortfall in income and consumption, but also low educational achievement, poor health and nutritional outcomes, lack of access to basic services, and a hazardous living environment.” In Jamaica, an individual is considered to be poor if he or she has a consumption expenditure that is below his or her purchasing power of basic food and other essential items for living (Williams 2014).

Jamaica has a higher child poverty rate than adult poverty rate because more children are born into low-income families. This reality has produced a rippling effect of an intergenerational cycle of poverty. Children from rural areas living in female-headed households are predominantly represented in the lowest quintile level of poverty (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund [UNICEF] 2018). Children, therefore, suffer the most in poverty-stricken households because they are most times unable to fend for themselves and thus dependent on their parents who often can barely fend for themselves as well (UNICEF 2018;Williams 2014; Samms-Vaughan 2006). UNICEF (2018) states that “A quarter of Jamaica’s children live in poverty and as a result are more likely to be ill, engaged in child labour, have reduced access to adequate water and sanitation facilities and to be exposed to violent discipline” (p. 9).

Poverty has more adverse effect on boys’ behaviour than that of girls (Kagitcibasi 2009; Miller 1991). Miller (1991) opines that:

Black men constitute part of the hard core of the growing underclass

that has emerged in depressed urban communities…ghettos or inner city

areas. As such they are feared and suspected persons, which can be a crime

in some societies. They are chief among the original homeless people in,

society. They are overrepresented among the insane on the streets. (p. 3).

If government intervention is not effective, the cycle of poverty and its inevitable hardships will have serious negative impact on our society.

**Fighting Poverty**

The practice of using education to combat poverty is one that is highly researched and recommended (Shamblin, Graham, Bianco 2016; Urwin 2013; Williams 2011). Williams (2011) purports that “…individuals with higher levels of educational performance are less vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion than other groups. For children in high risk environments, education is an even more potent agent of transformation” (Williams 2011, p. 64). Williams (2011) also states that “Even in an environment where other legitimate avenues out of poverty are clearly available (in Jamaica these are notably sports and entertainment), the least risky route remains that of an educational foundation” (p. 65). According to Evans (2006) schooling is meant to “offer the promise of opportunities, the benefits of knowledge and skills that undergird the modern state and provide certification for entry to occupations and a better life” (p. 19). The Ministry of Education [MOE] (2008) also states that “Future prosperity and quality of life in any country depends on the children being educated and trained. Worldwide, there is an increasing trend towards the promotion of education as an engine for personal and national development” (p. 1). Sommers (2015) asserts that the world has transformed to being a knowledge based economy, thus education becomes vital for survival and success. Undoubtedly, education is of paramount importance to the sustainable development of a nation and its people.

**General Reforms in Education**

In Jamaica, Education has been declared as a basic human right for over a decade. This is based on the premise that education is a critical agent for self-transformation and development. As such, education at the primary and secondary level is offered free of cost. (Trines 2019; The Ministry of Education 2008, p.1). To foster this declaration, some policies and educational reforms were implemented to grant access to students from all strata of the society at both the primary and the secondary levels of schooling (Trines 2019; MOE 2010). As a result, there have been improvements in areas such as “building out infrastructure, removing fees, providing nutrition and educational material, increasing the cohort of teachers, enacting legislation for truancy and compulsory attendance, and ensuring gender and ethnic equity, particularly for …minorities” (MOE 2010, p. 1). Leo-Rhynie, Bailey and Barrow (1997) state that “….there have been several educational reforms…These reforms have been attempts to reverse the historical reality of secondary education and to make it less elitist, less divisive more accessible to all social groups of the population and therefore, more uniformed and egalitarian” (p. 146). MOE (2010) states that:

The policy of the Government is that primary education is free and no child can be denied access for inability to pay any auxiliary fee imposed by the school for development, special services or goods. The policy is the same for secondary schools except that auxiliary fees are usually much higher than those at the primary level and that can be prohibitive to some parents, and there by exclusionary. (p. 2).

The policy of granting education access to all students at the primary and secondary level may seem to be simply targeting attendance. However, this is not so as access refers both to students’ attendance and academic performance (Trines 2019; MOE 2010). With respect to academic performance, it is expected that each student “completes general education up to Grade 11 is functionally literate and numerate by international standards and is able to engage in all those activities in which literacy and numeracy are required for effective performance in the Jamaican and world communities” (Davis 2004, p. 13). Students who have not met such standards are placed in remedial programmes in school (MOE 2010).

In relation to the school attendance policy students from age 6 to 18 are required to attend school for at least 85% of the established 190 school days (Trines 2019; MOE 2008). My experience within the school system allowed me to note that students with exceedingly low school attendance sometimes repeat grades if their age at the time allowed it. Others who have been attending school but have not met the attendance requirement, and are too old to repeat the grade, advance to the subsequent grade.

**Reforms at the Primary Level of Education**

While the above policies are general policies relating to both primary and secondary education, further policies specific to each level have also been implemented. I have, however, noticed that in these policies and interventions, great emphasis has been placed on literacy and numeracy development particularly at the early childhood and primary levels of education (MOE 2010). One such policy stipulates that, “The child completing primary school should be functionally literate and numerate, demonstrating a positive self-concept and a willingness to take responsibility for his…learning. He…should be culturally, aesthetically and spiritually aware, be guided by a commitment to social and moral principle” (MOE 1999, p. 7). A similar policy specific to the sixth grade states that these students “should achieved literacy and numeracy by global standards, competence in the prerequisite knowledge and skills required to gain access to secondary education…” (MOE 1991, p. 10.).

To test students’ literacy and numeracy levels, the two day annual national examination GSAT is given within the second semester period of the grade six academic school year (Bourne 2019; MOE 2010). Bourne (2019) postulates that “The GSAT is the main assessment tool used by the MOE … to evaluate the performance of students at the primary level who will transition into the secondary education system” (p. 8). MOE (2010) posits that “GSAT is the gateway to secondary education…It seeks to measure knowledge attainment from a transparent curriculum, to get that knowledge the student must be able to read, comprehend, and compute. [Participation in] GSAT assumes the literacy of the child” (p. 6).

My experience within the primary school system allowed me to observe that students who did not meet their school’s literacy standards were not only placed in remedial programmes at the school but sometimes had to repeat a grade or two if they were still in the age range for those particular grades. The other students who were unable to repeat because of their age still took the GSAT examination. Those students who performed very poorly on the GSAT were placed in Junior high schools where remedial programmes were offered. Thus, students who have learning difficulties are exposed to learning intervention programmes both at the primary and secondary level of education (Miller 2017; MOE 2010).

It should, therefore, be highlighted that since the GSAT measures the literacy and numeracy levels of primary school students, the GSAT results of the three PATH male participants from the primary school is paramount to my study as they will be used to provide an insight into their academic performance.

**Reforms at the Secondary Level of Education**

Major educational reforms have also been made at the secondary level in order to prepare students for tertiary level education, one of several objectives at the secondary education level. These objectives include “preparing students to become independent learners; enabling students to pursue knowledge and truth through developing their skills of analysis, critical thinking; providing opportunities for all students to experience and maintain a sense of self-worth; preparing students to become lifelong learners” (Caribbean Examination Counsel [CXC] (n.d), p. 16). In order to measure some of these objectives effectively, educational reforms have been made within the scope of the final school-leaving examinations.

Through the new reforms, the Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSC) were replaced by the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE). The SSC examinations were not only limited in subject base variety, but also limited students’ abilities to access tertiary level studies immediately after their tenure in high school (MOE 2017; Ministry of Education 2010; Evans 2001). Thus, the CSEC results are not only used to measure academic achievement at the secondary level of schooling; it also prepares students for both tertiary level education and the job market (Trines 2019; MOE 2017; MOE 2010; Evans 2001). Many high schools, especially traditional high, award students diplomas on the basis that they pass at least five CSEC subjects, including Mathematics and English (Trines 2019). Also high schools are ranked based on students’ performance on CSEC (Evans 2006; MOE 2017).

Thus, the CSEC examination results are of great importance to this study as they will be used to provide insight into the academic achievement of the three boys at the high school level.

**Barriers Facing the Educational Reforms**

Despite the government’s effort to improve the quality of the education system, low levels of literacy still plague both the primary and the secondary schools (Miller 2017; Thompson 2017; MOE 2010; The Planning Institute of Jamaica 2009). Illiteracy at the primary and the secondary levels of education is as a result of several weaknesses within the system such as lack of quality checks, the prevalence of severe learning disabilities and irregular school attendance (MOE 2010). If these low levels of literacy persist, it will undoubtedly translate into the continuation of chronic intergenerational poverty.

The government has shown great determination in improving the literacy levels in schools. The determined steps taken by the government include partnering with private sector businesses; ensuring stronger accountability and raising parents’ awareness of the importance of literacy (MOE 2010). According to the MOE (2010) “The private sector has…come on board…Digicel Foundation …building and equipping enrichment centres in schools to assist with literacy interventions. Sagicor Limited is assisting the literacy thrust by sponsoring material and professional development seminars for our literacy teachers” (p. 10-11). On the issue of accountability, the government expects principals to design programmes, mobilize parents and all other stakeholders towards improving literacy. It must, therefore, be acknowledged that the MOE has provided support to these teachers and principals in more ways than one (MOE 2010). In light of MOE’s support, the MOE (2010) states that:

Where there is genuine lack of skill in conducting literacy interventions on the

part of teachers, the Ministry stands ready to support and coach; where there is

a lack of knowledge of structuring and designing special intervention programmes the Ministry stands ready to assist. Where there is a lack of material, the Ministry stands ready to assist principals as they are doing now and should continue to mobilize parents and the community to assist. (p. 10).

Such work is of vital importance to this research project as one strand of my research question leads me to thoroughly examine the academic performance of six boys at the primary and secondary levels of schooling. Thus, both the GSAT and the CSEC results are the main assessment instruments that will be examined. These assessments will provide insight into whether the six PATH boys have been positively impacted by the government’s latest educational reform- to eradicate illiteracy and poverty.

**Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH)**

PATH is a conditional cash transfer programme designed to help improve the health and educational statuses of the poor. PATH is therefore the focus of this research project as this investigation seeks to discover whether the programme have been impacting the academic performance and attendance of six of its male beneficiaries.

It cannot be emphasized enough that education is a key agent for breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. In order to combat poverty in their country, “many governments have implemented conditional cash transfers (CCT) programmes with the goal of improving options for poor families through interventions in health, nutrition, and education” (Fernald, Gerther and Neufeld 2014, p. 828). Although conditional cash transfer programmes vary in design and policies across countries, an essential underlying premise of CCT programmes is to alter or to bring about a “desirable change in behaviour” (Adato 2008, p. 2). Bradshaw (2008) states that “behaviour change is the key to recent World Bank backed Conditional Cash Transfer programmes, which seek to provide a short-term poverty alleviation that brings about investment in human capital and allow economic growth and gains” (p. 201).

PATH is one such cash transfer programme implemented by the Government of Jamaica. PATH is mainly managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and is supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information as well as the Ministry of Health. This programme “delivers social assistance in the form of money and other benefits to the most needy and vulnerable persons in society” contingent on certain desired behaviour- which is ultimately aimed at “advancing …families and to developing Jamaica” (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 2). In achieving this, The Ministry of Labour and Social Security has implemented four main objectives which PATH seeks to fulfil:

1. Increase educational attainment and improve health outcomes of the poor by breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty.
2. Alleviate poverty by increasing the value of transfer to the poor.
3. Reduce child labour by requiring children to have a minimum attendance in school.
4. Serve as a safety net by preventing families from falling further into poverty in the event of adverse shock. (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2020).

Since this research concerns PATH’s impact on six male beneficiaries’ school attendance and academic performance, the PATH’s educational benefits that support their schooling must be examined.

PATH gives “needy” (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 2) school age girls and boys the same educational benefits. PATH contends that it offers “100% school fee assistance for students attending Government secondary schools; free access to the government’s book rental scheme and free meals at schools” (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 11). Additionally, PATH currently distributes a monthly allowance or “grant” to eligible boys and girls from grades “1-6” within the government primary schools in the sum of “JA$3200.00” every two months. Boys and girls from grades “7-9” within the government secondary schools receive “JA$4,100.00 bi-monthly.” Older boys and girls in the upper grades, “10-13”, receive “JA$4,800.00 bi- monthly”, under the condition that they all maintain an “85%attendance” every term or not miss school for “more than three days” every “month” (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2020, p.1). The government has also taken on the responsibility of paying for PATH beneficiaries’ CSEC examinations. PATH students are qualify for this subsidy on the condition that they have been meeting the schools’ academic criteria in the subjects being pursued over the course of grades ten (10) and eleven (11) academic school year (MOE 2018).

Recent data indicates that “350, 000” Jamaicans are beneficiaries of PATH (UNICEF 2018, p. 50). Ministry of Labour and Social Security (2003 posits that “the programme has significantly improved the quality of life for its clients” (p. 2). It has been asserted that improvement has been made in the target population of PATH (UNICEF 2018; Levy and Ohls 2010). In addition to these successes PATH also contends that as a result of these benefits, “children on PATH are among the top achievers in GSAT examinations and among those with the best attendance record at their schools” (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 2). These pronouncements not only give the impression that the programme has significantly increased the educational attainment of students on PATH, but they also give the impression that PATH recipients are top achievers in schools. This impression not only contradicts my initial observation at the primary school where I worked for almost two (2) decades; it also contradicts the popular belief and much of the research findings in Jamaica that boys from the lower socioeconomic group are underachieving (Unicef 2018; Thompson 2017; Leo-Rhynie, 2010; Reddock, 2007; Parry, 2000; Miller, 1991). The questions that immediately come to mind concerning the PATH achievements are; ‘Are these top achievers in the GSAT examinations predominantly girls or are they predominantly boys or do these top GSAT achievers consist of an equitable representation of boys and girls?’ PATH advocates would argue that these questions should not be lingering in one’s mind as it does not matter which gender is among the top achievers as long as PATH is responsible for achievements. I however, believe that it does matter a great deal as both genders are recipients of PATH benefits and especially since PATH widely advocates “breaking the poverty cycle through education…” (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 1). It is therefore important for me to find out whether the six PATH male in this study have been achieving academically.

**Boys’ Academic Performance in Jamaica**

Since the academic achievement of the six PATH male participants is one of the concerns my research seeks to investigate, it is necessary to discuss poor boys’ educational status in Jamaica.

Academic underperformance among male students is a highly contentious issue in Jamaica as it has been a heavily debated issue among Jamaican scholars. Although not all Jamaican boys are underachievers, there appears to be marked underachievement in the lower socio- economic group, and this underachievement is identified with maleness in Jamaica (Unicef 2018; Miller 2017; Parry 2000; Reddock, 2007). Figueroa (2007) opines that “the tendency towards male academic underperformance appears to cut across classes but it seems to be particularly marked in the inner-city areas, where the issues of instability and harshness of life are most evident” (p. 156). Not only is the problem of boys’ underperformance evident in Jamaica, but it also exits in other common wealth countries within the lower socio-economic strata (Jha, Menon and Chalterjee 2017).

Jamaica has been grappling with male academic underperformance for “over the last two and a half decades” (Thompson 2017, p. 60). The issue of male underachievement is evident in all national areas of testing. Thompson (2017) posits that girls outperformed their male counterpart in the GSAT and CSEC examinations. He further states that over the course of the 2011 to 2016 period, boys’ performance on the CSEC examination has been consistently weak when compared to that of girls (p. 70). Leo-Rhynie 2010 opines that “…for all national major testing points in the Jamaican school system –Grade 1 readiness; GSAT; CXC; CSEC; and the Jamaican Adult Literary Test-female students outperform their male counterparts” (p. 39). Miller (2005) also states that “the pattern in Jamaica …is that on average boys start their schooling later, attend school more irregular, repeat more grades, drop out earlier, have lower completion rates and achieve less than girls” (p. 76). Recent data reveals that boys’ academic underperformance has extended even into areas which were once considered male dominated areas of achievement (Jha et.al 2017; Thompson 2017). As a result of underperformance in education, many boys are left with their dreams, aspirations and potentials unexplored and/or unrealized (Thompson 2017; Miller 2005).

Over the years PATH has proven to be an expensive venture for Jamaica. In 2008, the Government borrowed millions of dollars from the World Bank to fund PATH. In light of this loan, International Monetary Fund [IMF] (2010) posits that “The Jamaica Social Protection Project (SPP) was approved in May 2008 for US $ 40 million. The Jamaica Social Protection Project will further improve the effectiveness of PATH in order to foster investment by poor families in human capital accumulation…” (p. 5). The Gleaner (2012, May, 12) also states that “The government is looking to increase funding to beneficiaries under PATH by JA$4 billion this fiscal year” as this “additional fund will go towards the provision of payments for … beneficiaries” (p. A2). In the year 2011, PATH’s budget was at a total of JA$15 billion dollars (Williams 2014). Since children, as a group, are highly affected by poverty (UNICEF 2018) it is hoped that this enormous PATH budget is effective in breaking the cycle of poverty. Thus, my research is necessary as it will reveal whether this is so in relation to the six boys in the study.

**Parents’ Impact on Boys’ Schooling**

According to The Ministry of Education and Youth [MOEY] (2006) “Responsibility and commitment of parents are key factors in ensuring academic and personal success of our children” (p. 66). Epstein contends that one of the most crucial roles played by parents is their impact on educational achievement (as cited in Williams 2011, p. 65). The Mico University College Child Assessment and Research in Education (C.A.R.E) Centre (2010) also states that “there is no doubt that one of the greatest obstacles to reaching high academic achievement is the lack of parental involvement and interest in a child’s life” (11). Jha et.al (2017) posit that “a supportive, engaging, enabling and accepting environment within and outside schools seems to improve boys’ and girls’ performance within schools” (p. 40). Although such commitment affects the attendance and academic performance of both genders, in Jamaica, research has shown that it affects poor boys’ attendance and academic performance in school to a greater extent than their female counter parts. It is important, in the context of this research, to first discuss the extent to which boys’ school attendance is affected more than girls’ school attendance from poor households.

Miller (2002) in his study entitled ‘Retaining Boys in School: Developing a model of intervention,’ found that “socio-economic necessity is one of the main factors which is held responsible for poor participation and dropout of boys in two formal youth development programmes in Kingston” (p. 45). In this same study, Miller (2002) found that the data received from his participants identified “socioeconomic” hardship for boys “dropping out” of the school system (p. 38). UNICEF (2018) asserts that boys are more susceptible to academic failures in poverty stricken households. Evans (1999) further states that “Females from low socio-economic groups were more likely to perform well and cope with schooling than males in similar groups. It appeared that on average, female students regardless of socio-economic group, achieved” (p. 5).

The strong belief in the Jamaican culture that “girls need education so that they will not be taken advantage of by men” has spurred many academic opportunities for girls as well as preferential treatment. One such example of this is that in many low-income households where parents have to choose which child should advance to secondary or tertiary level institutions, the girls are highly favoured (Jha and Kelleher 2006; Reddock 2007; Chevannes 2002; Evans 1999). Some parents also believe that sending the girls to school guarantees a better chance at success than with the boys. Consequently, this belief led families to be more committed and dedicated to the task of helping their daughters to achieve in school (Leo-Rhynie, 2010; Reddock 2007; Jha and Kelleher 2006; Chevannes 2002; World Bank 2001). In Jamaica, the level of commitment is even demonstrated in the care that is rendered to boys as opposed to girls by parents. In consideration of this, Chevannes (2001) noted that “…the girls receive better care from parents, more lunch money and attend school more regularly, than the boys” (p. 159). This differential commitment by parents towards their sons is not only displayed in their lack of care; but parents also demonstrated it in other areas such as their level of encouragement, support, responsibility, invested time as well as the quality of schooling provided. The literature further supports the preceeding discussion. According to the World Bank (2001) “Parents demand for girls’ education appears to be more sensitive than their demand for boy’s education in terms of the quality of schooling, the extent of learning, and the teachers’ attitudes” (p. 171). Gurian and Stevens (2010) state that “as parents, as family members, as grandparents, as neighbours, as family friends we’ve spent little time in our work or retirement day thinking about our responsibilities for our boys’ education” (p. 31). Superville contends that, although parents strongly pressure the boys to achieve, they did not always provide the needed encouragement and support (cited in Leo-Rhynie, 2010 p. 47). Chevannes (2001) has painted a vivid picture of the pressures that Jamaican boys faced in very poor households, as opposed to girls, when he stated that:

As parents when faced with too little money for school send their daughters but keep back their sons. Girls thus have a greater association with school than do boys; have less pressure to prove anything; and usually manage to graduate unless they get pregnant. Boys, on the other hand, are subject to pressure of having to contribute to the household …; of proving their manhood and heterosexual orientation; of knowing how to withstand hunger and deprivation; of learning from early how to be tough; of being able to win at all costs. (p. 158).

Since PATH has taken on the responsibility of financing poor children’s education at the secondary and primary levels of schooling, which includes bi-monthly cash grants to parents on the condition that these students maintain 85% school attendance (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2016, p. 2-3); then my research project will also explore and investigate the extent to which the parents of the six male participants are meeting this PATH requirement/condition. If the PATH programme is to claim success, then one would expect to see improvement in both attendance and academic performance among its beneficiaries. According to Evans (1999) “research in Jamaica …has pointed to a higher level of absenteeism among boys as one explanation of the gender difference in academic achievement. Absence from school means that students have fewer opportunities to learn and, as a consequence, learn less” (p. 34). In addition, if parents are complying with PATH’s condition of allowing their children to maintain an 85% school attendance rate, it may be inferred that PATH has been contributing to the eradication of such ‘biased parental decision and practice’ thus repairing the imbalance and establishing equal access for both genders.

**Statement of the Problem**

Evans and Miller argue that unless priority is given to combating male academic underachievement, the ...millennium will herald a bleak future for hundreds of thousands of young men. They will be unable to secure employment as they will lack qualifications and the confidence and application needed to take advantage of post- secondary school training and educational opportunities (as cited in Byron 2002, p. 27). What Evans and Miller predicted for the millennium is now Jamaica’s reality as males are lagging far behind females at all levels of the educational arena including those disciplines formerly dominated by males (Reddock 2007). The performance gap between males and females is, therefore, so pronounced that underperformance is seen as an indicator of maleness in the Jamaican culture (Thompson 2017; Reddock, 2007; Parry 2000). Gone are the days in Jamaica and most parts of the world where males could enjoy a good life despite not knowing how to read and write because they are males. In today’s technologically advanced world, education is essential and is as crucial as the need for food, clothing and shelter (Thompson 2017; Gurian and Stevens 2010; Leo-Rynie, Institute of Development and Labour Laws and University of Cape Town 1999). Consequently “if males are in crisis and are unable to obtain jobs, then the resulting mass unemployment will destroy the institutions which enforce social behaviour-small firms, clubs and above all, the family” (Superville 1999, p. 28). Thompson (2017) asserts that males’ academic underperformance “is a potential threat to society” as they are becoming less competent to function effectively (p. 60). Thompson (2017) further posits that “the issue of male underperformance has several implications, the most important of which is the risk of declining male participation in organized, formal society” (p. 59).

One might ask what impact PATH has on the matter of male underachievement and consequently, their future. I strongly feel that this has a lot to do with PATH, since PATH’s motto states that “PATH is the way to advance your family and to develop Jamaica” and one of PATH’s aims is to “improve education…among Jamaicans who are considered to be poor” (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 2). I am therefore seeking to explore the degree to which these claims are realized in the lives of the six poor school boys in this project.

The purpose of social welfare programmes “is to prevent, alleviate and to contribute to the solution of recognized social problems so as to directly improve the well-being of individuals, groups, families, organizations and communities” (Zastrow 2010, p. 36).

If PATH, “Jamaica’s main social assistance programme” (Planning Institute of Jamaica and The Statistical Institute of Jamaica 2006, p. 17), is an effective programme, then this “bleak future for hundreds of thousands of Jamaican young men” that Evans and Miller predicted may not be so “bleak” after all (Byron 2002, p. 27). In addition, “Vision 2030 Jamaica recognizes the need for every Jamaican child to have access to education to the level that enables him\her to access further education, training and/or decent work” (Planning Institute of Jamaica, 2009a, p. 57). With this in mind, I expect that PATH is contributing to Jamaica’s 2030 vision, as PATH’s educational benefits are meant to provide the financial assistance for poor children to not only attend school but to also achieve in school so that they can be successful in life.

**Significance of the Study**

My perusal of most of the research done on CCT programmes used experimental design, quantitative meta-analysis, randomized controlled trial, comparative analysis and regression discontinuity design. On this premise, it can be established that this critical ethnographic research is warranted as its focus is on beneficiaries’ interpretation of their experiences with PATH. I believe that the information gathered from beneficiaries’ experiences will provide a deeper and a richer understanding as to the programme’s impact on boys’ education.

Since the government has invested a huge portion of its budget to PATH, it is hoped that the information garnered from participants’ experiences will help to improve the effectiveness of the programme. This research is necessary as it is aimed at capturing critical and insightful information to further help address the irregular attendance as well as the academic underperformance of poorer class boys in Jamaican government schools. The information from the boys’ experiences may serve as a valuable tool to help teachers better understand and connect with their male students in order for them to advance in school. Valuable information regarding whether poor boys are in jeopardy of failing to meet the requirements of Jamaica’s 2030 vision should also be gleaned through the study

**Research Rationale/Aim**

Good research methods and procedures seek to move beyond what is observed on the surface to thoroughly examining “the structures of domination in institutions and society that place constraints on individual lives, in order to expose power relation and inequality” (Evans, 2006, p. 16). As such, this research is aimed at investigating if PATH is truly encouraging and sustaining the educational development and achievement of six boys from low socio-economic backgrounds in a government primary and high school.

**Research Objectives**

As stated earlier, the main purpose of this research is to find out if PATH is impacting six poor boys’ school attendance and academic achievement in the particular primary and secondary school being investigated. As a result, the objectives paramount to this investigation are:

* To fully examine the PATH benefits offered to boys and the conditions under which Ministry of Labour and Social Security (government body responsible for PATH) qualify these boys for such benefits.
* To examine how PATH benefits are administered to male students within each school community. This will also include an examination of records as to the distribution of these PATH benefits to the students involved.
* To explore participants’ (male students, parents, principals, teachers, guidance counsellors and social worker) role in PATH.
* To explore parents’ and male students’ perception of PATH in their lives.
* To explore participants’ (principals, teachers, guidance counsellors and social worker) perception of PATH and its operation towards male students within each school community.
* To examine the attendance and academic performance of the six male students understudy.

**Research Questions**

This critical ethnographic research employed a subjective epistemology, along with both the constructivist and critical theoretical frameworks. This research was further guided by the following research questions:

* Are the boys complying with PATH’s 85% termly school attendance condition?
* Are the boys maintaining and graduating with satisfactory grades in keeping with their schools’ academic criteria?

**Summary**

*Figure 1*: Visual Summary of Introduction and Rationale

The diagram below displays a visual summary of the main arguments gathered from the discussion in this chapter. My research topic is therefore the hub of the diagram, whilst the main arguments are located within each surrounding circle in numerical order.

ii

**Figure 1**

**Chapter Two: Literature Review**

**Introduction**

Since PATH is a Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme, the ensuing literature review, mainly reports on the impact of CCT programmes across the world. I believe that such information is pertinent as it examines and highlight critical issues relating to the focus of this investigation.

**The Spread of Cash Conditional Programmes**

CCT programmes have been replacing traditional unconditional cash transfer (UCT) programmes at rapid rates especially in developing countries with high poverty rates (Romano 2016; Radelet 2015). Notwithstanding the successful impact of UCT programmes in areas such as teenage pregnancy, malnutrition, mental illness and sexually transmitted diseases among the poor (Bashir, Lockhead, Ninan and Tan 2018; Baird, McIntosh and Ozler 2015), CCT programmes seemed to be more effective in helping the poor reach developmental targets in health and education (Romano 2016; Yeung 2013). In their experimental design study, Baird et al (2015) compared the impact of both types of programmes among girls, ages 13 to 22 in Malawi. The findings revealed that the CCT programme garnered a more significant impact on the girls’ school enrolment, attendance and academic performance than the UCT programme. The CCT programme also contributed to lower drop-out rates among the girls (Baird et al., 2015). Other comparative studies between UCT and CCT programmes found the conditional feature of CCT programme models to be the generator of more significant outcomes than the UCT programme models (Bashir et al., 2018; Akresh, de Walque and Kazianga 2013; Garcia and Moore 2012; Schady and Araujo, 2008). The conditional component of CCT is also lauded for raising the “credibility” of social assistance programmes (Adato and Bassett 2012, p. 67). As such, the results sparked interest in the programme’s feature of using cash to incentivize household investment in education to combat the ills caused by poverty (Fiszbein, Schady, Fereira, Grosh, Keleher, Olinto & Skoufias 2009; Yeung and Yap 2013). CCT programmes are features of many government policies across the world. Developing countries have not only adopted them; CCT programmes have also spread to developed countries such as China, Turkey and the USA (Chung 2016; Radelet 2015).

**Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes and the Millennium Development Goals**

CCT programmes are seen as a means of helping countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Aspinall, Mietzner and Tomsa 2015; Fiszbein et al., 2009; Nwonwu 2008). Under the umbrella of the United Nations (UN) more than one hundred and eighty (180) world leaders committed their nations to achieve eight (8) systematic MDGs in the field of health, education and environment (Ballantine and Spade 2015; Nwonwu 2008). In the field of education, the MDGs are as follows:

* By 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.
* To eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015 (Williams 2014; OECD/ International Labour Organization 2011; Nwonwu 2008).

Although the attainment target for these goals already passed, some countries are still struggling to achieve them (Andrews, Khalema and Assie-Lumumba 2015; United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund [UNESCO] 2015; UNESCO 2012a; UNESCO 2012b; Nwonwu 2008). Eliminating gender disparity remains a significant challenge for many countries (UNESCO 2015; UNESCO 2012a; UNESCO 2012b). UNESCO (2015) projected that only eighty-four (84) countries would have met the gender parity MDG by 2015 (p. 80). While Jamaica has achieved universal access to primary education, the country has still not achieved gender equality in education as there remains an extreme disengagement of poor boys from education, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels (Williams, 2014). The challenge to eliminate gender disparity in education is not only limited to third world countries but also industrialized counties. This is in fact a global issue. In light of this, Organization for Economic Co-orperation [OECD] (2012) states that “despite efforts by governments to provide high quality education, significant disparities in educational outcomes continue to exist in OECD countries” (p. 14). Walker (2016) revealed that in the United Kingdom 94,000 more girls than their male counterpart applied for tertiary level education in 2016. In the United States the situation is similar as girls’ enrolment in tertiary education supersedes their male counterpart. Sommers (2015) asserts that females in the United States achieved 62% of the associate degrees, 57% of the bachelor’s degrees and 60% of the master’s degree. Boys’ under representation and/or under performance in education has also attracted the attention of Thompson (2017) who states that “if this trend continues male participation in education and formal organizations in the public and private sector could fail to unimaginable low levels” ( p. 61).

Despite the implementation of CCT programmes to help countries achieve the MDGs, there have been several challenges that impede the achievement of some of these goals. The challenges faced by CCT programmes in some of these countries are tied to political agendas as well as the quality and the availability of institutions to serve beneficiaries (Davis 2004; Adato and Hoddinott 2010).

**Political Agendas**

In order for CCT programmes to work, the services (education, health) which beneficiaries must participate should be of high quality. According to Adato and Hoddinott (2010) “CCT programmes are largely designed around the assumption that there is a demand constraint that is; families need incentives to participate in services. However, the services need to be available…and of sufficient quality for the programme to work as intended” (p. 354). CCT programmes, therefore, come with great responsibilities on the government to provide and to upgrade public services to meet the needs of beneficiaries.

Because CCT programmes rely on governments to provide access to services in which beneficiaries must participate; governments’ investments in physical infrastructure and access to services were caught between the crossfire of clientele politics and combative political actions, especially in low and middle-income countries (Sarwar 2018; Romano 2016; Hickey 2008).

Nonetheless, in some developing countries, a new political trend has emerged, resulting in the phasing out of traditional political agendas that undermined, discredited and even cut funding for programmes implemented or developed by previous government administrations (Sarwar 2018; Roberts 2014). Unlike the traditional politics, this new trend placed politicians in positions where ‘poor voters’ judged their performances based on the improvements they made to CCT programmes and the impact the programme had on the lives of beneficiaries (Midgley, Piachaud and Elgar 2013; Adato and Basset 2012). This resulted in politicians capitalizing on CCT programmes to strengthen their voters’ base (Sarwar 2018; Roberts 2014).

In Brazil, Pakistan and the Philippines Sarwar (2018) found that president elects have placed “themselves in the position of having to not only keep cash transfer programmes but to increase their ownership of it, expand it and promise improvements in the framework” to continue to win the popular votes of the poor- which is often a very large portion of the population (p. 26). Fiszbein et al. (2009) found that governments have often undertaken actions to improve the supply of those services that beneficiaries are expected to use; to name a few “supply-side intervention have taken place in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Jamaica” (p. 187-190).

Improvements in PATH by new government administrations have certainly been ongoing. To improve boys’ participation in education, in 2008, the government had changed PATH’s policy from giving equal cash transfers to both genders to giving boys more cash than girls, (Fiszbein et al., 2009; The World Bank 2008). In light of this, The World Bank (2008) stated that “In Jamaica, a 2007 evaluation revealed that the increase in secondary school enrollment promoted by the PATH Condition Transfer initiative was disappointing and the government that took office shortly thereafter decided to raise pertinent benefits and differentiate them by grade and gender” (p. 183). In 2014, Jamaican Government suspended the gender differentiated monetary benefits. This was based on national data which revealed that despite receiving higher monetary benefits than girls, boys were still having challenges meeting PATH’s attendance condition. Nonetheless, the increased monetary benefits by grade level remained in PATH’s policy (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2020).

Increases in the PATH budget have been ongoing over the years. The government PATH’s budget for beneficiaries’ coverage was “four (4) billion Jamaican dollars” in the year “2006”, this has increased to “over fifteen (15) billion dollars” in the year 2011 (Williams 2014). In the “2019 -2020 fiscal year”, the government further increased PATH’s budget to “20 billion” (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2020).

The government also implemented a “database system” to not only determine applicants’ eligibility for PATH but to also monitor payments made to beneficiaries’ based on their compliance level (Levy and Ohls 2010). The government has also implemented the compulsory education policy of granting access to all students from ages 6-18 at the primary and secondary level of schooling across the island (MOE 2010). Similar to PATH’s 85% attendance conditionality, the policy also stipulated that all students from ages “6-18” should “attend school at least 85 % of the 190 designated school days” in each academic school year (MOE 2010).

Political motivations also contributed to the American government terminating their first CCT programme- Opportunity New York City (Opportunity-NYC). The government was discouraged from investing in CCT programmes by liberals and conservatives (voters) in America (Sommer and Parker 2013; Seefeldt, Graham, Abner, Bolinger and Xu, 2013). Sommer and Parker (2013) state “Opportunity was critized by conservatives for bribing poor people to do what they should do anyway. Liberals also critized it for attempting to correct individuals’ poor values in a culture of poverty without adequately addressing larger structural inequalities” (p. 249). Such belief was not surprising, as an earlier World Value Survey (2005) revealed that “62.1%” of the United States population held the view that the poor remains poor because of “laziness or lack of will power”. Additionally, beneficiaries’ performance in the Opportunity-NYC programme did not discourage this belief as the programme led to improved outcome among high school students only; it had no impact on students’ outcome at the elementary level (Ciccttetti, 2016; Kahan, Gielen, Fagan and Green 2014). In the end, the harsh negative criticisms by liberals and conservatives led to the premature termination of Opportunity-NYC after three years of implementation (Sommer and Parker 2013; Seefeldt et al., 2013). (See table 1 below, the impact of CCT programmes on attendance as well as table 4 which CCT impact on academic performance).

Political influences have certainly been a factor that determined the sustainability of CCT programmes, as the preceding literature showed that the fate of CCT programmes hung in the balance of voters’ values and beliefs about such programmes.

**CCT Programmes and their Impact on Attendance**

Most CCT programmes around the world led to an increase in attendances. However some had more impact on attendance than others (See the impact on CCT programmes on Attendance in Table 1 below).

*Table 1*: The Impact of CCT Programmes on Attendance

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Name of CCT Programmes** | **Beneficiaries.** | **Attendance Impact** | **Source** |
| Jamaica | PATH | School age children of ages 6-17 years. | An approximated 3% crease in yearly school attendance. | Levy and  Ohls (2010). |
| Mexico | Oportunidades/ Progresa. | Children over the age of 7 years and under the age of 18 years. | Increased secondary school attendance by 8.4%. | Di Gropello (2006). |
| Nicaragua | Red de Proteccion Social (RPS) | Primary school age children only. | 20% increase in attendance. | Maluccio and Flores (2005). |
| Colombia | Familias en Accion | Primary and secondary school age children ages 7-17 years. | 5.5 % increase at the primary level. 3% increase a t thesecondary level.  12% increase at the secondary level | Perry, Arias;Lopez, Maloney and Serven (2007).  UNESCO 2007 |
| Argentina | Universal Child Allowance (AUH) /Asignacion Universal por Hijo | All children under 18 years old | 3.9% increase in attendance among male beneficiaries, 15-17 years old. | Edo, Marchioni and Garganta (2017). |
| Brazil | Bolsa Familia | Implemented for 6-15 age group at the primary and secondary levels. | 3% increase in attendance among boys. | Cardoso and Souza (2004); De Janvry (2006). |
| Cambodia | Cambodia’s Scholarship for Girls Programme. | Implemented for only girls in Secondary schools | Increased attendance by 43%. | Filmer and Schady (2008). |
| Pakiston | Punjab Female School Stepend Programme. | Implemented for grade 6-8 girls in middle school. | Increased attendance by 19%. | Chaudhury and Parajuli (2012)**.** |
| Philippines | Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme (4Ps). | Implemented only at the elementary level. | The programme had little impact on school attendance. | Manasan (2009). |
| South Africa | No Name given. | School age children. | Increased school attendance. | Edmonds (2006). |
| Malawi | Malawi cash transfer programme. | Implemented for teenage girls only. | The programme increased school attendance. | World Health Organization (2013). |
| Kenya | The Kenya Cash Transfer for Orphan and Vulnerable Children (The Kenya CT-OVC). | Orphan school age children. | No significant effect on attendance. | Monchuk 2014; The Kenya CT-OVC evaluation team (2012). |
| Northern Nigeria | No name given. | School age children. | Led to significant effect on attendance. | MonchuK (2014). |
| Ethiopia | Ethiopia’s Productivity Safety Net Programme. | School age children. | Increased school attendance. | Hoddinnot, Gilligan and Taffessa (2011). |
| Burundi, Africa. | Piloted cash transfer programme. | School age children. | Led to 3.6% increase across 15 African countries across Burundi. | UNDP (2005) |
| Turkey | The Turkish Social Solidarity Fund | School age children | Primary school attendance for girls increased by 1.3%.  Secondary school attendance for girls by 5.4%. | Adato and Bassett (2012). |
| New York City | Opportunity-NYC | School age children. | Attendance did not improve for elementary and middle school students. High school students had better attendance than their counterparts not in the programme. | Ciccttetti (2016); Seefeldt et al. (2013). |

Factors that contribute to significant changes, in the attendance patterns of CCT beneficiaries are presented in the ensuing literature.

**PATH’s Attendance Impact and its Challenges**

Researchers Levy and Ohls (2010) seem to have conducted the only study that has to date presented a measurable impact on Jamaican PATH’s attendance level. Thus, where PATH’s impact on beneficiaries’ attendance is concerned, their research is popularly quoted locally and internationally (Schipke, Cebotari and Thacker 2013; Adato and Bassett 2012; Fiszbein et. al 2009; Holzmann 2009; Levy and Ohls 2010). The findings suggested that PATH increased school attendance for children ages 6 to 17 by an average of 0.5 days per month. This 0.5 days result per month equates to an average of approximately 3% increase in yearly school attendance under PATH (See table 3 above for PATH’s impact on attendance). A 3% increase, however, is not surprising as Jamaica’s long-standing problem of poor boys’ disengagement from education would impede a more substantial attendance impact.

Jamaica has been facing the challenge where poor boys have been struggling to comply with PATH’s 85% attendance condition for over a decade. The subsequent literature outlines the history of PATH’s challenges with boys’ attendance. Epstein and Lutjens (2008) found that:

Enrollment at the primary level is nearly universal at approximately 96% of the

children in the six to eleven years of age cohort… Inspite of the high enrolment rate

at the primary level, the actual national attendance rate is much lower remaining

over the years within the 70% range. Efforts to institute and enforce compulsory

attendance in eight parishes in Jamaica did not result in any improvement in

attendance rate. (p. 211 ).

The Planning Institute of Jamaica (2009) stated that “with the programme’s (PATH) objective being to support school [attendance] for boys and girls, there was some evidence of improved compliance with attendance requirements for both boys and girls over the period. However, this remains a challenge particularly at the secondary level” (p. 16). MOE (2010) has also reported that “at the primary level....attendance, particularly in rural areas, has always been a challenge as the 2008/2009 school year showed an 83% attendance rate...;at the secondary level ...attendance is also a challenge...as well...” (p. 2). This 83% attendance rate documented in the 2008/2009 school year still did not meet PATH’s targeted goal of an 85% attendance rate.

Recent PATH data, 2010 to 2019, revealed that female beneficiaries attend school more frequently than their male counterparts as their attendance rate remained in the eighties percentile range. Male beneficiaries’ attendance rate mostly remained in the seventies percentile range (Table 2 shows PATH beneficiaries’ attendance compliance rate). As such, it can be deduced from the recent data that female beneficiaries remained closer to PATH’s 85% attendance condition than their male counterparts (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2020).

*Table 2*: PATH Beneficiaries’ Attendance Compliance Rate (2010-2019).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| YEAR | MALE  ENROLLMENT | FEMALE ENROLLMENT | TOTAL ENROLLMENT | MALE  ATTENDANCE RATE | FEMALE ATTENDANCE RATE |
| 2010 | 76657 | 75830 | 152487 | 78 | 84 |
| 2011 | 78053 | 77133 | 155186 | 85 | 89 |
| 2012 | 76675 | 74950 | 151625 | 79 | 84 |
| 2013 | 76150 | 73952 | 150102 | 80 | 85 |
| 2014 | 79684 | 76118 | 155802 | 79 | 84 |
| 2015 | 79960 | 76514 | 156474 | 78 | 83 |
| 2016 | 77369 | 73762 | 151131 | 78 | 83 |
| 2017 | 76779 | 73425 | 150204 | 78 | 84 |
| 2018 | 71508 | 67608 | 139116 | 77 | 83 |
| 2019 | 62681 | 58862 | 121543 | 78 | 84 |

The literature points to criminal activities as a major contributor to poor boys’ low school attendance in Jamaica (UNESCO 2012a; UNESCO 2012b; United Nations Development Programmes [UNDP] 2012). The dancehall culture is also a significant contributor to older boys’ disengagement from education in Jamaica as the wealth, popularity and power that accompany the industry serve as the major attractions for escaping poverty (Hope 2010). PATH boys’ low school attendance rate may be as a result of the foregoing.

**The Impact of Government Investment in CCTs**

The literature also showed that it is typical of some CCT programmes to continuously produced undesired school outcomes in spite of governments’ investment in them (Garcia and Saavedra 2017; Romano 2016). Garcia’s and Saavedra (2017) study used a meta-analysis method to explore the impact and cost-effectiveness of 47 conditional cash transfer programmes in developing countries across the world. They found no statistical correlation where greater transfers to beneficiaries yielded greater educational effect for all schooling outcomes- enrolment, attendance, dropout and school completion (p. 6). Romano (2016) examined the effect of CCT on poverty, inequality and school enrolment in Mexico and Latin America. The study revealed that CCT programmes existing for almost twenty years are less likely to yield desired sustainable effects despite consistent growth in the programme’s budget (p. 9). These findings align with Jamaica’s situation of having the most expensive education budget in the caribbean, however, the expensive interventions have yet to solve the decade-long problems of low attendance outcomes, particularly among poor male students (William 2014). On this premise Williams (2014) further stated that “Despite much and significant expenditure, [Jamaica’s] education outcomes remain less than satisfactory” (p. 82).

**The Impact of CCT Programmes on Boys and Girls**

Programmes to help disadvantaged girls received more attention and stronger support from sponsors and government to boost girls’ participation in education compared to their disadvantaged male counterparts (UNESCO 2015). Programmes such as The Cambodia’s Scholarship for Girls Programme, The Punjab Female School Stepend and the Turkish Social Solidarity Fund, were mainly designed to suit the educational needs of disadvantaged girls in their respective countries (UNESCO 2015; Adato and Bassett 2012). As such, these programmes led to improvements in girls’ attendances (UNESCO 2015; Adato and Bassett 2012) (See attendance impact in table 3 above).

With the employment of the regression model (a type of statistical analysis), Asadullah and Chaudhury (2009) found that the Female Secondary Stipend Programme (FSS) in Bangladesh led to a reverse gender gap where, higher school outcomes (particularly enrolment and school completion) were demonstrated among girls than boys in secondary schools. The girls’ enrolment increased from 35% to 50% in a short period after the programme was implemented. The boys on the other hand were not positively impacted by the programme as they were more involved in child labour (Asadullah and Chaudhury 2009). In light of the adverse effect, Asadullah and Chaudhury (2009) further recommended that while using CCTs to addressed girls’ underperformance in education, countries should simultaneously monitor these programmes to prevent “unintended negative” outcomes amongst boys (p. 1373).

CCT programmes are likely to produce a less favourable impact on educational outcomes in countries where boys are at a disadvantage. According to UNESCO (2012a) “evaluations of cash transfer programmes show that boys do not always stand to benefit more in countries where they are at greater disadvantage” (p. 119). Programmes such as the Bolsa Familia in Brazil and Opportunidades in Mexico reflected this. In fact, 64% of the Latin American and Caribbean countries as well as 57% of countries in East Asia and the Pacific grappled with low enrolment of boys in school despite their effort in improving the programmes to make them more attractive for males (UNESCO 2015; UNESCO 2012a; UNESCO 2012b). Since Jamaica has been grappling with a similar situation where poor boys are concerned, the government has realized the dire need to implement an alternative official strategic solution- one which requires a more attractive education system for poorer boys (Williams 2014; Kimmell 2010). Thompson (2017) also sees the dire need for educators and educational policy makers to implement innovative ways to engage boys. Additionally, he states that “attention needs to be paid to the emotional and interpersonal needs of boys” (p. 59).

**Inadequate Targeting Compromised CCT’s Impact**

The literature also revealed that CCT programmes with large, well-targeted population coverage yielded significant impact on attendance (UNICEF 2018; Romano 2016). Thus, most Latin American CCT programmes yielded significant impact on attendance due to well-targeted programmes with a substantial coverage population of 135 million beneficiaries (Franko 2019; Asian Development Bank 2014; Bowan and Arocena 2014; OECD 2013; Stampini and Tornarolli 2012; Fiszbein and Schady 2009). Where boys’ attendances are concerned, Edo, Marchionni and Garganta (2017) recent study found that the well-targeted, as well as one of the largest programmes in Latin America, AUH in Argentina, led to 3.9% increase in attendance among eligible male beneficiaries in the age range of 15 to 17 years old (p. 1-10).

Conversely, Jamaica’s PATH programme has yielded a lower attendance rate than Latin American programmes because it is a much smaller programme with a coverage population of only “350, 000” beneficiaries. Also, there are many deficiencies where targeting is concerned as most of the “350,000” beneficiaries are from the “upper income quintiles” which means that a large population of the most vulnerable poor are not benefiting from the programme (UNICEF 2018). Furthermore, 15% of the 350,000 beneficiaries are from the nation’s wealthiest population while only 20 % are beneficiaries who are considered to be poor, but not necessarily impoverish (UNICEF 2018, p. 50). This inadequate targeting is as a result of beneficiaries providing false information about their financial status to the PATH office, this leads to the failure of PATH to identify the truly impoverished people who are in need of the programme (Levy and Ohls 2010). These deficiencies point to need for a reformation of PATH.

If PATH was a well-targeted programme, especially among the most vulnerable poor, it would likely have yielded a much more significant impact in attendance amongst its beneficiaries. Regarding impact, UNICEF (2018) made this pronouncement “ The impact of the social protection system on poor children in Jamaica is compromised by inadequate targeting of the nation’s poor and the lukewarm impact that PATH has had on Jamaica’s capital development” (p. 50).

**Poor Educational Services Contributed to Low Attendance Results**

The purpose of CCTs has been defeated in some countries as they have been grappling with poor services and/or limited service infrastructure, particularly in rural areas where extreme poverty is dominant (Southern African Social Protection Expert Network [SASPEN] 2016; Chun 2016). Unfortunately, some African programmes are marked for such deficiencies. SASPEN (2016) states “The poor conditions of public schools…centres in many rural communities where CCTs [are] implemented in Africa illustrate the dire situation of education… infrastructure on the continent. The lack of adequate education…workers makes achieving the objectives of CCTs difficult” (p. 2). It is therefore apparent that programmes that led to lower impact in attendance grappled severely with the aforementioned limitations (SASPEN 2016). (See their impact on attendance in table 3 above).

This challenge is also a part of Jamaica’s reality, as children in urban areas produced better educational outcomes than those in rural areas (Chun 2016, p. 48-50). Although Jamaica has improved the availability of educational services to PATH beneficiaries, deficiencies are still prevalent, particularly in the rural areas where educational services are of a lower quality than urban areas (Chung 2016; Williams 2014; Ministry of education 2010). On this premise, the immediate question that emerged was, ‘*who would want to attend a school with high levels of discomfort and low quality education?’* Since it is typical of CCT’s beneficiaries to exhibit higher impact on school enrolment and attendance as a result of access to quality educational services (Cecchini 2014; Fiszbein et al, 2009); I firmly believe that PATH could yield a more significant impact on attendance, among its beneficiaries, if all (beneficiaries from rural and urban areas) had equal access to better quality education.

**The Ultimate Goal of the Conditionality in CCTs**

Some writers posit the view that CCT programmes are solely designed to improve enrolment. Ferreira, Messina, Rigolini, Lopez-Calva, Lugo and Vakis (2013) stated “To be clear, CCTs are not designed to improve children’s performance at school but rather to increase enrolment” (p. 78). Other literature does not seem to support this idea as they view academic performance to be the programme’s intent. De Brauw, Gilligan, Hoddinott and Roy (2015) stated “…countries use CCT programmes to promote childhood education by including a requirement, or conditionality, that children enrol in and attend school…The justification for CCT programme also depends ultimately on their impact on education attainment, or in short school progression” (p. 1). Adato and Hoddinott (2010) also state that CCT programmes were not explicitly designed to improve academic achievement, clearly spending more time in school should be associated with more learning” (p. 206).

My teaching experiences result in an awareness that students in school often learn more than those who do not attend school regularly. Regular attendance is often associated with greater opportunities for learning which ultimately lead to higher levels of achievement. Regular school attendance is therefore beneficial to the individual and the society in more ways than one. Sasaki, Diaz and Brazal (2019) posited that “attendance is a key factor in students’ success and affects his/her academic performance” (p. 46). Hiss, Horner, Pressler and Swanepoel (2009) gave a more vivid description of the benefits of regular school attendance by stating that “[it] not only contributes to higher educational level of individuals…, but also lessens poverty and decreases the crime rate in society. Children who do not regularly attend school often drop out and contribute to the ills in society” (p. 12). Therefore, where CCT programmes attain the goal of improved attendance, the obvious spin-off should be improved academic performance.

**Mixed Impact of CCTs on Academic Performance**

Although most CCT programmes led to an improvement in school attendance (Sanchez, Melendez and Behrman 2016; Adato and Hoddinot 2010; Fiszbein and Schady 2009), the spin-off is certainly not the same for educational attainment as CCT’s impact on academic achievement is mixed (table 3 below shows a mixed impact of CCT programme on academic development). In fact, most literature suggests that CCT’s impact on educational attainment among its beneficiaries is mixed (Stampini, Cordova, Moreno and Harris 2016; Ferreira et. al 2013; Bradshaw 2008). Others described the impact of CCTs on academic performance as being “doubtful” (Lomeli 2008, p. 481) and “not encouraging” (The World Bank 2011, p. 481).

*Table 3*: CCT Programmes and their Impact on Academic Performance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Programme Name** | **Academic Impact** | **Sources** |
| Jamaica | PATH | No impact on learning outcome nor on grade advancement  Urban male beneficiaries performed better in GSAT by 31 points more than non-beneficiaries. Boys are paced in better secondary school by 8.1% higher than non-beneficiaries. | Levy and Ohls (2010).  Stampini et al. (2016). |
| Mexico | Progresa/Oportunidades | Resulted in higher school attainment among indigenous people.  No measurable impact on achievement test scores of children in beneficiary localities.  Effects not promising on learning. | IMF (2005).  Skoufias (2005).  Lomeli (2008). |
| Nicaragua | RPS | 7.3% of grades 1-4 students advanced by two grades.  Impacted on completed education and language and maths achievement among 9 to 11 year old male participants who had grown up to become young men. | Maluccio and Flores (2005).  Barham et al. (2013). |
| Brazil | Bolsa Escola | Increased grade promotion rates by 0.9% points for grades 1-4 children.  Raised grade promotion rates among grade 5-8 children by 0.3% points.  Girls learn more than boys. Girls Promotion rate is smaller than it is for boys. | Glewwe and Kassouf (2012). |
| Columbia | Familias en Accion | Led to school completion by 4 to 8% points.  Had no long term impact on test scores. | Baez and Camacho (2011). |
| Ecuador | The Bono de Desarrollo Humano (BDH) | Had no significant Impact on test scores nor does it impact on children’s learning | Dixon (2013). |
| Pakistan | Pakistan’s Female School Stipend Programme | Girls are more likely to graduate middle school by 3-6% points.  Girls are more likely to transition to high school by 4-6% points. | Sperling, Wintrop and Kwauk (2016). |
| Bangladesh | Bangladesh Girls Only Stipend Programme | Improved test scores by 0.25 standard deviation.  Had no impact on learning | Dundar , Beteille, Ribound and Deolalikar (2014). |
| Malawi | Malawi CCT Programme | Increased girls’ performance on English test scores by 0.14 standard deviation.  Increased girls’ performance on Maths by 0.12 standard deviation. | Baired et al. (2011) |
| Turkey | Turkish Social Solidarity Fund Programm | Led to improved test scores but no impact on school progression. | Adato and Bassett (2012) |
| New York | Opportunity –NYC | Higher rates of grade advancement and better test scores among prepared high school students in the programme.  No academic impact on elementary and middle school students. | Kahan et al. (2014); Seefeldt et al.(2013); The World Bank 2012. |

**PATH’s Impact on Academic Performance**

Recent data from Ministry of Education, Youth and Information reflects that PATH has an impact on beneficiaries’ performance in the GSAT examination (Table 4 below shows PATH students GSAT results). The data reveals that more girls on PATH not only received higher scores on the GSAT examination, such scores afforded them placements in traditional high schools more so than boys on PATH (Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, 2020). This result is not surprising, as girls superseding their male counterparts in academics, is a frequent occurrence in major examinations across Jamaica.

*TABLE 4*: PATH Students’ GSAT Results (2009 - 2018).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Total Students** | | **Average GSAT Scores Obtained for Traditional High School Placements** | | **Average GSAT Scores Obtained for Non-Traditional High School Placements** | | **Total Number of Traditional High School Placements** | | **Total Number of Non-Traditional High School Placements** | | |
| **Year** | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** | **Male** | **Female** |
| 2009 | 3947 | 3947 | 76 | 78 | 43 | 53 | 314 | 441 | 3633 | 3506 |
| 2010 | 3947 | 3947 | 80 | 81 | 46 | 57 | 313 | 523 | 3634 | 3424 |
| 2011 | 3947 | 3947 | 76 | 79 | 50 | 57 | 484 | 625 | 3463 | 3322 |
| 2012 | 253 | 346 | 73 | 81 | 52 | 54 | 52 | 94 | 201 | 252 |
| 2013 | 1178 | 1339 | 74 | 77 | 52 | 58 | 227 | 279 | 951 | 1060 |
| 2014 | 3947 | 3947 | 78 | 80 | 55 | 60 | 544 | 711 | 3403 | 3236 |
| 2015 | 3947 | 3947 | 81 | 82 | 55 | 61 | 597 | 717 | 3350 | 3230 |
| 2016 | 3947 | 3947 | 78 | 80 | 52 | 59 | 506 | 742 | 3441 | 3205 |
| 2017 | 3947 | 3947 | 77 | 80 | 54 | 61 | 582 | 663 | 3365 | 3284 |
| 2018 | 3947 | 3947 | 79 | 83 | 55 | 62 | 512 | 646 | 3435 | 3301 |

Contrary to the above data, Levy and Ohls (2010) study found that PATH had no impact on learning outcomes nor on grade advancement. However, Stampini, Cordova, Moreno and Harris (2016) more recent study found that urban male PATH beneficiaries who sat the GSAT between the years 2010 and 2014, had 2.6% higher aspirations to enter better secondary schools than similar non- beneficiary urban males. These urban male beneficiaries performed better in GSAT by 31 points more than non-beneficiaries (p. 3). Such academic achievement was only found among the sample of urban male beneficiaries of PATH, as the programme had no academic impact on male beneficiaries from the rural areas. Among the rural area boys, non-compliance was very high. In comparison with their urban female counterparts in the sample, the impact on academics was insignificant (Stampini et al., 2016 p. 13-18).

The achievements of PATH’s urban male beneficiaries was not surprising as the foregoing literature indicate that students in the urban parts of Jamaica, not only have better educational facilities, but also better access to a higher quality education than children in rural parts of the island. As such, poor children from urban areas not only have a better chance to succeed academically than children in rural areas, but they also have the opportunity to compete academically alongside more privileged students in the government school system (UNICEF 2018; Chung 2016; Williams 2014). Stampini et al. (2016) acknowledged this in their study as they stated that “children living in rural areas may have more limited access to higher quality secondary schools, which may be far from their homes and may require moving to an urban area” (p. 18).

The insignificant impact among urban girls in the study was unexpected since they are known for being the more successful sex in education in Jamaica (Leo-Rhynie 2010). Nonetheless, a possible justifiable reason for this impact was that contrary to the male beneficiaries of PATH; girls started with a very high enrolment rate and high academic performance from the inception of the programme in 2002 (Policy Analysis & Research Unit, Planning and Development Division and MOE 2008). This, in turn, resulted in a very limited scope within they could show further improvement in the programme. In light of this Attannassio, Skoufias, Maluccio and Flores contend that in countries where school enrolment rates were above 90%, CCTs had little if any effect. Relatively little impact was demonstrated on school attendance rate, on school achievement, or in attracting dropouts to school. CCTs showed greater effects in countries where school enrolment rates were between 60 and 80% (as cited in Yeung and Yap 2013, p. 203). Similarly Glewwe (2014) also states that “a general finding is that impacts at schooling levels where enrolments are lower tend to be greater (note this can reflect both variation between countries or variations within a country by schooling level at which transfers are provided)” (p. 141).

There were differences noted in the design of both studies. Levy and Ohls (2010) used a mixed-method approach that includes a quasi-experimental regression discontinuity design. However, Stampini et al. (2016) employed the statistical base Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) methodology. Nonetheless, both studies used the RDD which allows them to estimate their hypothesis from a strata information system.

The time frame in which the studies were done accounted for the differences in the findings (Adato and Hoddinot 2010, p. 207). Levy and Ohls’ findings were derived from early PATH data accumulated near the inception of the programme. Stampini et al (2016) study employed more recent data between 2010 and 2014 in which their participants were recipients of PATH benefits for several years. The difference in the results of the studies is therefore congruent with the finding that educational achievements among CCT programme beneficiaries are more transparent in a few years after the programme’s implementation (Romano 2016; Stapini and Tornarolli 2012). Barham, Macours and Maluccio (2013) investigated the long-term effects of a CCT programme in Nicaragua after ten years among the boys who were 9 to 11 year old. They found a strong impact on academic achievements among the boys ten years after their exposure to the programme (p. 21-22). Behrman, Parker and Todd (2005) found that Opportunidades’s beneficiaries in the rural areas advanced academically after five years, whilst still involved in the programme.

Hence, it is realized from the literature that CCT programmes are more likely to have an instantaneous effect or short-term impact on school enrolment and attendance (Glewwe and Muralidharan 2015; Murnane and Ganimian 2016; Fiszbein and Schady 2009). However, its effect on academic achievement is long –term as its impact is often seen among beneficiaries in later years, during or after their exposure to the programme (Romano 2016; Stapini and Tornarolli, 2012).

**Added CCTs Conditions and its Impact on Educational Achievement**

Since academic achievement amongst CCTs is mixed, I had developed the strong assumption that imposed conditions for academic performance would lead to increased academic achievements across CCTs. However, it is apparent from the literature that this was tried, tested and proven that the programme does not always work in favour of such condition. Garcia and Saavedra (2017) in their quantitative meta-analysis study, found that imposed academic conditions such as grade promotion or test scores standards led to increased educational impact among programme beneficiaries (p. 6). However, Sasaki, Diaz, Brazal, Li, Song, Yi, Wei, Zhang, Shi, Chu, Johnson, Loyalka and Rozelle found opposite results in their studies. Li, Song, Yi, Wei, Zhang, Shi, Chu, Johnson, Loyalka and Rozelle (2015), employed a large scale randomized controlled trial (RCT) to measure “The impact of Conditional Cash Transfers on the Matriculation of Junior High School Students into Rural China’s High School”. Although the programme was accompanied by the imposed condition that beneficiaries were to matriculate into regular academic high school or vocational high school after the end of their junior high school experiences to continue receiving benefits thereafter; beneficiaries failed to matriculate. More specifically, the matriculation impact among beneficiaries was insignificant to the extent where the effect could not be measured (Li et al., 2015, p. 16). Since these students had the opportunity to earn “2900 yuan” monthly as unskilled workers, the insignificant matriculation impact resulted from the study was not surprizing. Thus, the 1500 yuan” paid out to them annually is less likely to encourage their compliance with the programmes’ condition (Li et al., 2015, p. 16-17).

Sasaki, Diaz and Brazal (2019) Philippine-based study, measured the impact of the 4Ps’ by comparing students’ academic performance and completion rate with their average attendance level in a particular high school. There were several imposed conditions in this programme. However the consumption of “deworming” tablets twice per year as well as committed “parental involvement in family development” seminars were the particular imposed conditions applied to the high school beneficiaries in the programme (Sasaki et al., 2019, p. 44). Even though 4p’s led to grade promotion amongst high school beneficiaries, its impact on academics was disappointing. In fact, the researchers specifically found that “4Ps recipients’ academic performances decreased as they were promoted to higher grades affecting its Promotional Rates” (Sasaki et al., 2019, p. 49). Hence, it is realized from the foregoing literature that additional imposed conditions in CCT programmes do not guarantee an increase in academic impact amongst beneficiaries. Furthermore CCTs with additional imposed conditions seldom led to academic achievements amongst its beneficiaries.

**The Design of the Reviewed Studies**

It is apparent from the review of literature that most of the research done on CCT programmes used more of what I observed as impersonal research methodologies such as experimental research design, quantitative meta-analysis, RCT, comparative analysis and RDD. As such, my critical ethnographic research might be the only study which simultaneously investigates the attendance and academic impact of a CCT programme (PATH) from the perspective of the subjective interpretations of my participants’ experiences.

**The Main Findings from the Literature Review**

Many governments across the globe have been signatories to the MDGs, in which they pledged to eradicate extreme poverty in their countries. The CCT programme model is therefore seen as the means to accomplish that goal. CCT programmes are aimed at improving the lives of the poor, by providing cash transfers based on conditions such as regular school attendance and regular visits to health centres. Although CCT programmes have popularly replaced traditional UCT programmes in many countries, helping beneficiaries through the programme has been a trying task.

Even though the ultimate goal of CCT is to break intergenerational poverty through academic achievements, the current status of the literature shows that academic achievement among beneficiaries has been less than promising. Most CCT programmes led to improvement in attendance; however, the result is far less for academic achievement.

Factors such as the target population, politics, gender, the length of the programme, baseline school enrolment rate, government investment in the programmes as well as the quality and availability of services in which beneficiaries must participate- influenced the programme’s impact on school outcomes. Also, CCT programmes are more likely to have an instantaneous effect or short-term impact on school enrolment and attendance. However, its effect on academic achievement seemed long-term, as its impact is often seen among beneficiaries in later years during and after their involvement in the programme.

In the particular case of Jamaica’s PATH, the literature shows that, in spite of government’s investment, boys’ attendance levels mostly fall within the seventies percentile range, this is below PATH’s 85% termly attendance standard. This outcome has been an on-going problem for over a decade. The literature also showed that researchers Levy and Ohls (2010) study was not only the most popularly quoted, but the only study to have presented a measurable impact of 3% on PATH’s attendance level. The study did not find any impact on academic achievement. However, Stampini, Cordova, Moreno and Harris (2016) study found that PATH had an impact on academic achievement among male beneficiaries who sat the GSAT examination during the period of 2010-2014. Similarly, recent data from Ministry of Education, Youth and Information (2020) also revealed that PATH had an impact on beneficiaries’ performance in the GSAT examination.

I have yet to see from the review of literature a research similar to this. As a result, I believe that this critical ethnographic research might be the only study that used a subjective epistemology to simultaneously investigate the attendance and academic impact of a CCT programme from participants’ personal experiences.

**Chapter Three: Theoretical Foundations**

**Introduction**

I strongly believe that the nature of reality is subjective; as such this enquiry is subjective. My endorsement of subjectivity drives all arguments in the ensuing philosophical assumptions underpinning this project.

*Ontological Assumption:*

O’ Grady (2014) states that ontology has to do with the portrayal of the “nature of reality” (p. 53). My prior acknowledgement that the nature of reality is subjective leads to me taking an interpretative, subjective, socially constructed ontological position in this enquiry. The data in this research is therefore obtained from the subjective interpretations of participants’ unique experiences with PATH (*Table 5 below shows a summary of the ontological assumption below*).

*Epistemological Assumption:*

Collis and Hussey (2014) state that, “the epistemological assumption is concerned with what we accept as valid knowledge” (p. 47). I believe that valid knowledge is found in people’s life experiences as we learn and make important decisions from our own experiences as well as other people’s experiences. Based on this premise, I believe that answers to the research questions in this study lie within the boys’ experiences with PATH at their respective schools. Creswell (2018) states that “knowledge is known- through the subjective experiences of people. It becomes important to conduct studies in field, where people live and work-these are important contexts for understanding what the participants are saying” (p. 20). The boys’ experiences with PATH are valuable in the sense that it is critical to the development of this enquiry. If there are no experiences from which to garner meaningful information and no social issues to examine and address, then there are no developments in the enquiry (*Table 5 below shows a summary of epistemological assumption*).

*Axiological Assumption:*

Axiological Assumptions are concerned with the role of values in the research process (Creswell 2018). Since it has been established that this research project is subjective in nature, the decision to conduct this particular type of enquiry, is undoubtedly influenced by my values. Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) “All research is interpretive: guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (p. 13). Even though all research, whether quantitative or qualitative, is value-laden, I believe that it is paramount for researchers to acknowledge the role of values in their enquiries. Creswell (2018) posits that a characteristic of a good qualitative enquiry is that the researcher explicitly declares his or her position. I am, therefore declaring my values throughout this research process. This declaration allows readers to understand the underlying beliefs and values which have inevitably influenced my framing of the research topic, philosophical assumptions, the conduct of the research, as well as my decisions around reporting the study (*Table 5 below shows a summary of Axiological Assumption*).

*Rhetorical Assumption:*

According to Tsang, Lui and Hong (2019) “The rhetorical assumption concerns with the form of language that is used to present the research data” (p. 141).As an observer of research, I sometimes wonder why some researchers express themselves in a particular discourse mode, but I was unable to see a clear and direct explanation in the studies reviewed. Even though rhetorical assumption is less apparent in the research reviewed, I believe that it is vital for researchers to state this so that the audience understands the reason the research project was written in a particular way.

As the researcher of this project, my style of writing is in the first person. I believe that writing in the first person not only shows ownership of my work, but it also declares my position throughout the research process *(Table 5 below shows a summary of my rhetorical Assumption*).

In relation to the audience, I try to write clearly and coherently to engage them. My writing style is very descriptive and is influenced by my goal for audience to be captivated by participants’ stories as if they had experienced it themselves.

*Methodological Assumption:*

I view methodology as a global positioning system (GPS) that informs the researcher where and how to collect relevant data for a particular investigation. Thus, there is an agreement with Jonker and Pennink (2014) who stated, “The essence of methodology is structuring one’s actions according to the nature of the research question at hand…” (p. 21).

Critical ethnography methodology is appropriate for this research since my interest is to investigate the effectiveness of PATH as it relates to the attendance and academic performances of six male beneficiaries. This research was done within the social context of their respective schools. “Critical ethnography can be defined as a research methodology through which social, cultural, political, and economic issues can be interpreted and represented to illustrate the processes of oppression and engage people in addressing them” (Given, 2008 p. 148). The critical ethnography methodology required me to spend extensive periods in the schools collecting and recording data gleaned from interviews, observations and school records (*See more about methodology in chapter 4; also see summary of methodology in table 5 below).*

**Theoretical Framework**

The constructivist and critical theoretical frameworks were chosen for this research project because the conceptual structures of both are in accord with the subjective nature of the project. Hence, these frameworks embraced the concept that knowledge is a social phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln 2018; Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018; Prasad 2015). A theoretical framework is a “system of ideas or conceptual structures that help us to see the social world, understand it and explain it… It guides our thinking, research and action” (Parpart, Connelly, Barriteau 2014, p. 53). The logic behind both frameworks is, therefore, in harmony with the principles of the critical ethnography methodology anchoring this investigation. A researcher’s choice of methods must be consistent with the underpinning methodology in a research project. As such, I ensured that my choice of methods (observation, documentation, interviews) used to collect data from participant were aligned with both the methodological assumption and the perspectives of the constructivist and critical frameworks.

It was necessary for me to employ both the constructivist and critical theoretical frameworks in this one research project, as together they provided the autonomy to construct, in a balanced way, the underlying data that this investigation seeks. On this premise, I agree with Tracey and Morrow (2017) who state, “Authors who believe in the importance of multiple lenses argue that each theory makes a unique and valuable contribution to understanding the phenomena under examination” (p. 13). Thus, the use of both theoretical framework lenses appropriately positions me close to my participants, enabling the capturing and understanding of their varying experiences with PATH.

*The Constructivist Theoretical Framework:*

The underlining principle behind the constructivist theoretical framework paradigm is that knowledge is socially constructed; thus, researchers employing the lens of this framework seek to understand participants’ accounts of their experiences (Creswell 2018). The information from this investigation is therefore generated from my interpretation of the six male participants’ varying accounts of their experiences as PATH beneficiaries in government-operated primary and secondary schools. Since participants’ experiences are important sources of information to this enquiry, I am confident that the employment of the constructivist theoretical framework was ideal (*See summary of constructivist theoretical framework in table 5*).

*Critical Theoretical Framework:*

According to Tobin and Kincheloe (2006) “a critical theoretical framework allows for an examination of the power factors that evolve from self, school and society, which all join together to exacerbate the conditions that cause…underachievement or the achievement gap” (p. 78). The critical theoretical framework matches my objective of wanting to find out if PATH is influencing poor boys’ attendance and academic performance as claimed. I am not seeking to show case or reiterate the picture that PATH has been presenting of itself to society over the years. Instead, this research seeks to thoroughly examine the full dynamics of PATH and its impact on the attendance and academic performance of six of its male beneficiaries in a particular primary school and a secondary school. To analyse the structure of PATH and its operations, the data is not only coming from the lived experiences of the six male participants and their parents, but also from persons (teachers, principals, guidance counsellors and PATH social worker) involved in the administration of the programme within the school systems. Such examination is important, as these participants’ experiences with PATH may very well be the data that will positively impact the lives of other boys who will come to experience PATH *(See summary of critical theoretical framework in table 5 below*).

**Theoretical Orientation**

I decided that, rather than opting solely for one theoretical framework I would to adopt a bricolage approach and to allow me to more fully explain and account for what I found in my study. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) state “The multiple perspectives delivered by the concept of difference provide bricoleurs with many benefits. Confrontation with difference helps us to see anew, to move towards the light of epiphany” (p. 169). Bikner-Ahsbahs, Knipping and Presmeg (2015) assert that “…different theories can help researchers in entering more deeply into their research questions” (p. 226). This approach thus, solidifies and enriches enquiries. I therefore chose to employ Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory, Yosso’s community cultural wealth theory as well as Richard Ryan and Edward Deci’s self-determination theory.

*Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory:*

Pierre Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory is employed in this study since I believe that the basis of my enquiry resonates with the logic of his work. Bourdieu was a prominent French social theorist of the twentieth century who developed a multidisciplinary theoretical stance drawing on the works of Max Weber, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014).

Bourdieu’s theoretical orientation is, therefore, a contextual framework that explains the structure of inequality (class, sexuality, gender or religion) in society (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014). Since this research is specifically about six participants who were purposely selected because they are poor male students receiving PATH benefits, the nature of my enquiry is not only subjective, it is also a critical, class and gender-based enquiry, all of which are congruent to the concept of Bourdieu’s theoretical orientation. Based on this information I, therefore, deemed the ideas of Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts to be suitable to describe, explain and understand the results of my enquiry.

More specifically, Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory painted a vivid picture of the role social fields (school, organizations, even cash conditional programmes such as PATH) play in the creation of inequalities in society (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014). Bourdieu (2008) describes this field as:

…a field of forces whose necessity is imposed on agents who are engaged in it and a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure. (p. 32)

Thus, the organization and structure of schools lead to differentiation and classism among students based on their ‘symbolic capital’. Bourdieu sees ‘symbolic capital’ as an important socially valued resource that occurs in three categorizations: *Economic Capital,* which is associated with monetary and/or other valuable material possessions; *Cultural Capital* which is associated with morals and values and other marks of distinctive behaviours; and *Social Capital* which is associated with family status, status of friends and connections in society (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014). The strength and enormity of ‘symbolic capital’influence the status that an individual occupies in society. Symbolic capital also shapes the individual’s ‘*habitus’-* the individual’s disposition, behaviour, life experiences and lifestyles in society. According to Bourdieu (2010):

The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure: the principle of division into logical classes which organizes the perception of the social world is itself the product of internalization of the division into social classes. (p. 170).

Bourdieu’s theory, therefore, illustrates the Jamaican proverb, ‘*di more di merrier’*. This saying means that more ‘symbolic capital’ or resources increase the individual’s chances of success, opportunity, and ascribed power in society, as well as their overall quality of life and vice versa. PATH is described as Jamaica’s main safety net programme that supports poor children’s schooling by providing free meals at their schools, 100% school fee assistance and a monthly allowance to their families to send them to school (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 11). As such, I am curious to find out if the ‘symbolic capital’ or benefits provided by PATH to the six male participants, resulted in the boys adhering to the 85% termly school attendance requirements, as well as achieving satisfactory academic performance based on their respective school standards. I am therefore confident that Bourdieu’s theory of cultural reproduction is of great relevance to this enquiry *(See summary of the relevance of Bourdieu’s theoretical orientation to this enquiry in table 5 below*).

*Tara J. Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Theory:*

As established in the foregoing, the nature of this enquiry is not only subjective, it is also a critical, class and gender-based enquiry. Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Theory is therefore relevant to this enquiry as its concepts are congruent to the nature of the study. I feel that Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Theory is critical to this investigation as not only does it builds on the work of Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory, it will provide additional explanations on the coping skills or capitals utilized by these poor boys during their time in school.

Yosso’ (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Theory derived from her work with black students in the United States of America who have endured a highly oppressive college school system designed for white students. Yosso (2005) described six types of capitals (aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance) that supported black students’ survival in such school system. Aspirational capital speaks to students maintaining hopes and dreams in spite of their adversities. Linguistic capital refers to a unique form of communication skills developed among students with similar backgrounds and/or experiences. Familial capital refers to the human resources obtained from family members and community network. Yosso (2005) sees social capital as “peers and other social contacts” utilized by students in these institutions (p. 70). Navigational capital speaks to the students’ ability to survive or persevere through disobliging socialistic atmospheres. Resistance capital refers to students’ use of knowledge and skills to acquire equal rights. Students therefore utilized their knowledge, skills as well as the aforementioned capitals to fight against social injustice.

*Edward Deci and Richard Ryan’s self-determination theory:*

Motivational theory has been developed from the work of a long list of theorists dating back to 1914. To name a few, theorists such as Sigmund Freud, Elton Moyo, John Bowlby, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, Kevin Rathunde, Edward Deci, Richard Ryan, Abraham Maslow, Clayton Alderfer, Eileen Zurbriggen and Ted Sturman have contributed to the understanding of human behaviours (Karami and Ismail 2012; Ryan and Deci 2017).

According to Ryan and Deci (2017) “motivation, etymologically, concerns what moves people to action. Theories of motivation more specifically focus on both what energizes and gives direction to behaviour” (p. 13). Since motivation concerns the forces that propel behaviours, it must be acknowledged that CCTs are rooted in motivational theory as the cash incentive in the programme is used as a motivational tool to encourage regular school attendance among poor children. Handayani and Barkley (2010) purport that “CCT programmes are targeted to encourage poor households to invest in their children’s development…A condition is attached to the cash transfer, such as meeting school attendance targets and compliance with health requirements.” Deci and Ryan’s (2017) Self-determination theory is therefore relevant to this study as I believe that their ideas are best suited to thoroughly explain the six male PATH beneficiaries’ behavioural patterns in relation to school attendance and academic performances.

Ryan and Deci’s (2017) Self-determination theory rejects motivation as a “unitary phenomenon” and thus purports that “sources of motivations differ, as do the effects of being energized by these motives” (p. 14). As such they place motivation in three categories: “autonomous motivation, controlled motivation and amotivation” (p. 14). Ryan and Deci (2017) state that:

Behaviours are autonomously motivated to the extent that the person experiences volition- to the extent that he or she asserts to, concurs with, and is wholly willing to engage in the behaviours. When autonomous, behaviours are experienced as emanating from, and an expression of, one’s self. (p. 14).

Autonomous motivation is simply ‘intrinsic motivation’ in which behaviours are driven by innate satisfaction or pleasure.

Controlled motivation is defined by Ryan and Deci (2017) as:

Those in which a person feels externally or internally pressured or compelled to act. For example, a person is controlled when his or her motivations to act are based in feeling coerced by external persons or forces, to act in ways that are incongruent or alien with respect to the person’s sense of self. (p. 14).

Controlled motivation speaks to ‘extrinsic motivation’ in which behaviours are driven by external forces or rewards.

Even though controlled motivation is different from autonomous motivation, controlled motivation can produce autonomously related behaviours. In light of this, Ryan and Deci (2017) assert that “one can also be extrinsically motivated insofar as the behaviour yields outcomes that are personally valued or important, in which case the behaviour is likely to be experienced as relatively autonomous” (p. 14).

Ryan and Deci’s (2017) notion of amotivation “describe peoples lack of intentionality and motivation- that is, to describe the extent to which they are passive, ineffective, or without purpose with respect to any given set of action” (p. 16). In simpler term, Ryan and Deci’s amotivation concept explains that external forces nor internal forces have no impact on behaviours, thus behaviours are displayed without care or any forms of motives behind them.

Hence, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci’s self-determination theory will bring further clarity to the PATH boys’ behaviours in their respective school settings *(See summary of the relevance of Deci and Richard Ryan’s self-determination theory to this enquiry in table 5 below*).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING THE RESEARCH**  *Table 5*: Summary of Theoretical Foundations | | | | | **Theoretical Framework** | **Theoretical Orientation** |
| **Ontology** | **Epistemology** | **Axiology** | **Rhetorical** | **Methodology** |
| 1. I have taken an interpretative, socially constructed ontological position because I believe that the nature of reality is subjective. Thus, the data in this enquiry is obtained from the participants’ accounts of their experiences with PATH. | 1.Valid knowledge lies within participants’ experiences with PATH**.** | 1. I am declaring my values throughout this research process as research is value-laden in nature. | 1. I wrote in the first person to show ownership of my work.  2. I employed a descriptive, clear and coherent writing style to engage my audience. | 1. Critical Ethnography methodology permits me to spend extensive periods in the schools collecting data gleaned from interviews, observations and school records. | 1. Both constructivist and critical theoretical frameworks were employed as this provided the autonomy to capture the underlining data the investigation seeks.  2. Since the constructivist framework sees knowledge as a social construct, this supports the data garnered from the participants’ interpretations of their experiences during the investigation  3. The critical framework is applicable in this investigation because it permits me to examine PATH’s impact on the attendance and academic performance of the six boys understudy. | 1. I have taken a bricolage theoretical approach as the three theoretical perspectives (Bourdieu’s Cultural Reproduction, Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Theory and Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory) employed will together provide a rich analysis of the results.    2. Bourdieu’s Cultural Reproduction theory was chosen for this enquiry because the nature of my enquiry is not only subjective it is also a critical, class and gender- based enquiry, all of which are congruent to the concept of Bourdieu’s work.  3. I feel that Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Theory is critical to this investigation as it not only builds on the work of Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory, it will provide additional explanations on the coping skills or capitals utilized by the boys during their tenure in our government school system.  4. Deci and Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory is also paramount to this enquiry as their ideas will provide thorough explanations for the six male PATH beneficiaries’ behavioural patterns in relation to school attendance and academic performances. |

**Chapter Four: Methodology**

**Introduction**

Although the entire research process involves garnering information about a particular phenomenon, I see the methodology and its methods as the ‘central processing unit (CPU)’ of the research project, as this is where the actual gathering of information from both the participants and research site begins. This chapter gives a detailed description of: the methodological and ethical approach taken; the methods used to collect and analyse the data; the methods used to access both the participants and the research site; as well as techniques employed to achieve a credible and trustworthy project.

**Critical Ethnography**

The methodology that underpins this research process is *Critical Ethnography*. This methodology is not separate and apart from conventional ethnography. *Critical Ethnography* emerged from conventional ethnography and as a result, shares many common conceptual approaches in its data collection methods and analysis strategies (Creswell 2018). While there may be some commonality in both types of ethnography, the unique feature of critical ethnography is that the overarching belief system is embedded in the traditional works of “Marxism, Neo-Marxism and the Frankfurt school of critical theory” (Hornberger and Corson 1997, p. 198). Critical ethnography, therefore, calls into question the “social and cultural conditioning of human activity and the prevailing socio-political structures”- this is seen as a necessary beginning in “restructuring the social system” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018, p. 172).

Thus, the task of critical ethnography is to move both the researcher and audience from the typical well-polished front-stage view to the unpolished, rough, raw back-stage view where the natural diversity of human social life experiences are revealed (Hammersley 2016; Ferrell and Hamm 1998). It may appear that moving from front- stage to back-stage is a backward movement, however, in the tradition of critical ethnography, it is really a progressive movement to try and gain a holistic understanding of the entire operation so as to emancipate the marginalized or the restrained with the power of knowledge garnered from their experiences (Madison 2012; Tarr 2011). The emancipatory stand point of critical ethnography is of importance, a viewpoint supported by Madison and Tarr. Madison (2012) states that “the critical ethnographer contributes to emancipatory knowledge and discourses of social justice. The oft quoted phrase: ‘knowledge is power’ reflects how narrow perception, limited modes of understanding, and uncritical thinking diminish the capacity to envision alternative life possibilities” (p. 6). Similarly, Tarr (2011) states that “critical theory stands up positively for emancipation for man’s coming of age, for a free society of autonomous individuals, for a rationale society for a good life”.

The tradition of the critical ethnography methodology is, therefore, in accord with the overarching research purpose to investigate if PATH is truly impacting the attendance and academic achievement of the six purposely selected school-age boys in the study. Critical ethnography is appropriately in tandem with my acknowledged critical and social constructivist theoretical frameworks (see chapter three). Thus, critical ethnography supports my commitment not only to critically examine PATH’s impact on the six boys’ attendance and academic performance, but also to generate knowledge from the participants’ interpretations of their experiences with the programme. Thus, as a critical ethnographer, my aim for this research is to gather valuable information that can make a positive or an emancipatory change for other boys who will come to experience PATH.

**Research Methods**

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2012) “in a research, good methods are consistent with the logic embodied in the methodology” (p. 31). The “anthropological tradition” of ethnography (Marshall and Rossman 2011, p. 146) therefore supports the decision to spend an extensive period (five months)in both the primary and the high school settings using the methods of observation- particularly, structured observation; document analysis; and in-depth interviews, to magnify the “politics of truth” (Madison 2012, p.6) which comes from participants’ experiences with PATH. These methods were ideal as the resulting data gathered supported emerging themes pertinent to answering the research questions. Although the research journal that I kept served a personal purpose, it is worth mentioning as it was very much a part of the research process. Each of the three afore mentioned data collection techniques, as well as the purpose of the research journal, are thoroughly discussed below.

**Structured Observation**

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011) “observation is used to discover complex interaction in natural social settings” (p. 140). I must register my agreement with Marshall and Rossman, as the method of observation allowed me to capture the direct and indirect messages conveyed within the two completely different ‘shift’ school settings (a primary school and a high school).

Readers may wonder how I went about observing two school settings for this research. Since both schools operate on a two-shift system, I was able to conduct my observations at the primary school in the mornings from 8 am to 12 noon, and at the high school in the afternoons between 12:30 pm to 5 pm. Since both schools are close to each other (approximately five minutes apart), it was quite convenient for me to carry out my observations consistently. The proximity of the schools was beneficial as it also helped me maintain focus in both settings to capture all the important details paramount to the investigation.

Prior to the observational method, I was concerned that my presence in each school environment would have caused discomfort and uneasiness for my participants as they knew that my role within the fields was as a researcher and not as a teacher. To my surprise, it seemed as if all my participants were comfortable with my researcher’s role as they openly shared their thoughts and experiences with me. I felt that my familiarity with students and staff, as a result of my eighteen years of working at the primary school, contributed to participants’ comfort and willingness to share their experiences. Thus, I suspected that participants, particularly the students, were not intimidated by my presence as their behaviours and interactions seemed natural and un- disturbed by my presence in both fields. Since I did not interfere with participants’ behaviours and kept an opened mind during my five month’s tenure in the field, this helped in the reduction of biases. This was beneficial as I was able to capture rich data relevant to the study.

A structured observation method was mainly employed in this enquiry. A strong advantage of structured observation is that it “… makes explicit to the observer(s) exactly what behaviours they are looking out for, and are articulated in carefully designed observation schedules” (Ohara, Carter, Dewis, Kay and Wainwright 2011, p. 158). Such observation schedules contain predetermined categories that directly impact the behavioural variable under investigation; thus specifying the types of behaviours that should be recorded in each category (Ohara et al. 2011). It was not a part of the plan to use structured observation at the outset; it was in the field while attempting the observation process that I decided to use this method in order to achieve coherence and focus throughout the research. While in the field for the first week (February 22-29, 2016), it was noticed that when utilizing the free flow, unstructured observational method, much time got wasted. This was as a result of the uncertainty surrounding what behaviours to observe. Notwithstanding, the free flow unstructured observational method was instrumental in discovering behaviours that were relevant to this research project. The free flow unstructured observation method was therefore the piloting method that set the precedence for the structured observational methods employed in the study.

In order to discover relevant behaviours, initially, both school environments were explored (through the free-flow unstructured observational method) to determine where the rich contextual data related to PATH was mostly generated. It seemed to me that the relevant behaviours mainly occurred in the school canteen where PATH lunches were shared and distributed; the classrooms where PATH boys interacted with teachers and fellow students; the guidance counsellors’ office where PATH business was supervised and administered; and also along the classroom corridors where the boys played and interacted with their peers.

Structured observations, during the five months, were therefore developed around four categories. These categories emerged from the focus of the study (the boys’ attendance and academic performance) as well as from the messages gleaned from each school’s culture during the utilization of the free flow unstructured observational method. These categories allowed me to focus on not only the boys’ attendance and academic performance but also the operational aspect of the PATH programme. These categories are:

1. *Lunch Time* – In this category, the distribution, presentation and quantity of the PATH lunches within each school environment were observed and recorded. The boys’ reactions toward the taste, presentation and quantity of PATH lunches were also recorded.
2. *The Treatment of Boys on PATH –* In this category, the staff’s treatment of PATH boys within each school setting was observed and recorded. Different treatments were observed between PATH students and non-PATH students in the schools.
3. *The Academic Performance of Boys on PATH***-** In this category, PATH boys’ interactions with their teachers and peers in the classroom setting as well as their attitudes toward their school work were observed and recorded. Teachers’ reactions toward the boys’ academic performance in the classroom were also observed and recorded. The boys’ work books, as well as their test scores, were recorded from teachers’ mark books and progress reports.
4. *School Attendance –* Teachers’ attendance registers and PATH attendance verification forms were scrutinized to see whether the boys were adhering to PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition, or the condition of not being “absent for more than three days per month” (The Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 14).

According to Crowther and Lancaster (2012) “…structured observation can be restrictive and lead to important details being missed… (p. 111). However, no restrictions in collecting data using the structured observation method were experienced while in the field. In fact, there was an overwhelming amount of relevant data collected through the use of this method. However, I noticed that during the five months in the field, some aspects of the behaviour displayed and the conversations held by the participants became repetitive and predictive. Nonetheless, observing the behaviours under the categories mentioned above made me realize that my role as a researcher allowed me to garner more knowledge and insight on the research topic than in my role as a teacher for eighteen years.

In the end, I found that the preliminary observational experience was beneficial as it confirmed my choice to use the structured observation method. Thus, the structured observation method was ideal for this investigation as it did not restrict or minimize the quality of data collected. Instead, it allowed me to capture important details at the right time and place within the context of my research questions.

**Document and Records**

Myers (2013) contends that documents are invaluable for providing relevant details of events. Documents make things visible and traceable (p. 161). Documents such as attendance verification record forms for PATH, students’ progress reports and teachers’ mark books and registers played a major role in this study. These records reflect and track students’ attendance patterns and academic performance during the school year.

Since the attendance registers are marked at the beginning and at the end of each school day (MOE 2001), this was instrumental in allowing me to see whether the six PATH boys’ attendance aligned with PATH’s 85% attendance condition. The ‘*PATH’s attendance verification record form*’ was also used to verify whether the boys’ attendance aligned with the 85% attendance requirement. This form was also instrumental for guidance counsellors who used it to record all PATH students’ attendances in each school community. This form is sent to the PATH office, where the attendance information is used to determine the total disbursement of monetary benefits to parents on a bimonthly basis.

The mark books, as well as students’ termly progress reports, are also of paramount importance to this research project. These documents reveal the test scores and the overall mean scores students receive during in- class tests and mock examinations (MOE 2001).These scores proved helpful in discovering whether the boys understudy maintained and graduated with satisfactory grades as required by the schools’ academic criteria.

Participants’ GSAT and CSEC examination results were examined as these also revealed their academic performance (See a detailed explanation of both examinations and their relevance to this research project in chapter one). I assiduously sought to obtain participants’ attendance and academic records prior to joining PATH as well as PATH boys’ and girls’ CSEC results for the last decade from Ministry of Labour and National Security and Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, but was unsuccessful. I experienced the same fate in trying to attain policy documents concerning PATH and its position within the Jamaican educational landscape. Personnel from both government bodies said that their respective ministries did not have the information requested.

**The Interview**

The goal of interviewing is to encourage participants to disclose feelings, thoughts, emotions, opinions and experiences. The interview allows the researcher to garner greater meaning and understanding of participants’ accounts of their experiences. At the same time, the interactions between both parties are continually developing (Fortune, Ried and Miller 2013). In consideration of this, it becomes clear that the richness of the data gathered from the participants rest heavily on the quality of the interview questions formulated by the researcher (See all interviews in appendix F). In formulating the interview questions for this research project, targeted questions were used that would capture critical information to address the purpose of this research.

I ensured this by first hosting a piloting session for all my interview questions with my mother, a principal lecturer who teaches social work and communication skills at the tertiary level for over forty (40) years as well as my neighbour who is a communication’s teacher at a high school for thirty-eight (38) years. This piloting session was helpful as I was able to refine the interview questions so that they capture relevant information to the study. This strategy proved to be of great benefit as the information collected from the interviews was also aligned with the objectives of the study. Thus, the interview questions were carefully coined to extrapolate information for each of the two research questions.

Another important factor that guided the construction of my interview questions was the need to encourage the participants to openly share their stories in the context of a relaxed conversation. This openness was mainly achieved by using open-ended questioning. Hamilton (2014) states that “open-ended questions can be effective because they tend to relax most interviewees who find the questions easy to answer and nonthreatening. These questions reveal what the interviewee thinks is important and…uncover information or attitudes that may need further probing” (p. 212).

Being aware that “a well-prepared list of interview questions includes closed, open and follow-up questions” (Grieshaber 1997 p. 104), the interview questions not only comprised of open-ended questions, but also contained *closed-ended*, *range response* and *follow-up questions*. These types of questions proved to be necessary as they allowed the gathering of background information and as well as participants’ perceptions. *Closed- ended, range response* and *follow-up questions* are described by Shelly and Rosenblatt (2012) as follows, “You use closed-ended questions when you want information that is more specific or when you need to verify facts” (p. 160). Shelley and Rosenblatt (2012) also stated that “Range of response questions are closed-ended questions that ask the person to evaluate something by providing limited answers to specific responses or on a numeric scale. This method makes it easier to tabulate the answers and interpret results” (p. 160). “Interviewers use follow-up questions to help participants to fill out their stories or to expand on the subject matter” (Magnusson and Marecek 2015, p. 54). Based on the participants’ responses, I am confident that the intended objectives of using the different methods of questioning in the interview sessions were achieved.

*The Sentence Structure and Organization of Interview Questions:*

The need for clarity and appropriate diction were important considerations in formulating the interview questions. Considering that the participants include students, parents, teachers, guidance counsellors, principals and social worker, it was important to ensure that the interview questions were clearly phrased and relevant. It was therefore paramount for me to structure the interview questions to meet the level of understanding of each group of respondents. Thus, much time was spent coining the interview questions with an emphasis on the use of simple language to ensure clarity and also to prevent misinterpretations. Fortune, Ried and Miller (2013) opined that:

ask clear questions using terms and language with which the participants is most familiar…When creating questions, one must also keep in mind the status of the participants. For example, when interviewing children their age and cognitive abilities must be taken into consideration when creating question. When interviewing ‘elites’ or those who have authority or power…questions and the interview process may need to be adapted” (p. 258).

I also found it important to organise questions in a particular sequence. This organisation was done to set the tone of the interview and to allow information to flow in a particular order-from simple to more complex. As such, simple or closed-ended questions were asked at the beginning of each interview to elicit background and demographic information from each participant, as well as put the interviewees at ease. As the interviews progressed, open-ended, range-response and follow-up questions were used to elicit participants’ knowledge, feelings and perceptions of PATH. The method used to sequence the interview questions was guided by the perspectives of Fortune, Reid and Miller (2013) who state that “Starting with non-controversial or present experiences, behaviours, or activities allows the participant time to adjust to the interview and divulge personal information, next, the researcher should follow-up with questions that focus on interpretations, opinions, feeling and knowledge” (p. 258). Along with Fortune, Reid and Miller’s guidance, I also had to rely on my assessment skills in organizing the interview questions, as there were similarities in the techniques employed to formulate tests for students over the years. Sequencing test items, or in this case, interview questions from simple to complex and ensuring that questions are written to avoid confusion, were some of the similar techniques employed.

*The Number of Interview Questions:*

My interviews consisted of no more than twenty (20) questions, all of which were pertinent in capturing the full scope of the research topic. In establishing the number of questions, the timeframe of five months in the field was determined to be sufficient. This timeframe would afford the flexibility to conduct interviews based on participants’ availability in at least two sessions.

*The Ideal Interview:*

Semi-structured interview methods are well known for the advantage of promoting flexibility, responsiveness, spontaneity, discovery and facilitating further probing (Rubin and Babbie 2017; Yang 2010). I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews for this research project because I felt it would help in facilitating and establishing comfort and openness for the participants. This method also allowed for further probing further into the stories shared by participants. Such advantages helped to facilitate ideal interview sessions that sufficiently accommodated the needs of the research project and those of the participants.

*Preparing to Conduct the Interview:*

Participants received the option to be interviewed based on their availability, and within a space they deemed comfortable at each school setting. Before all interviews began participants were briefed on to the purpose of the interview, confidentiality issues and participants’ rights -all of which were clearly stated on their participant information sheets (See appendix C for participants’ information sheet). Greener (2011) opines that “at the beginning of… interview, researcher should explain the purpose of the interview, answering any questions that the participants may have before going on…The better- briefed participants are before the interview …. the less chance there is of any problems emerging….” (p. 87). Before the interviews, participants were informed that there were no right or wrong answers to the interview questions. It was recommended for them to express their true feelings and opinions within the contexts of the interview questions.

*Recording the Interview:*

The original plan for the interviews was to record the participants’ responses. However, this was not possible as the participants did not want to be audio recorded. As a Jamaican, this discomfort was understandable and thus accepted. In the Jamaican culture, it is a widely held view that being audio recorded is closely aligned to one being considered and confirmed as an ‘informer’. Even though participants knew that I was not a police officer trying to solve a crime, and that their responses to the interview questions would not implicate or bring any harm to them, the concept of not being an informer remained dominant. Nalla and Newman (2010) state that “Jamaica has a cultural idea of *informer fi dead*, which means that any person known to give information to the authorities with respect to a crime should die” (208).

Since, the goal of ensuring that the participants felt comfortable during the interviews was of paramount importance, all participants’ responses were instead recorded only in hand-written note form. All the participants agreed to the note-taking method during the interview process. On the matter of not being able to audio record participants’ responses in interviews, Pole and Lampard (2013) state that, “although we must admit to some disappointment when permission to tape-record is refused, the detail and quality of data which can be collected by note taking should not be underestimated” (145). Since I had no other choice but to write down participants’ responses, I had to rely on speed writing skills. Thus, my years of professional development and training in active listening strategies coupled with the art of speed writing, allowed me to capture the most important pieces of information with a high degree of accuracy.

*Techniques Employed in Conducting the Interview:*

At the beginning of interview, the strategy of using small talk was effective in establishing rapport, which smoothly eased participants into the interview process. Bogdan and Biklen (2012) state that “most interviews begin with small talk. Topics can range from baseball to cooking. The purpose this chit-chat serves is to develop rapport: You search for common ground, for a topic that you have in common, for a place to begin building a relationship” (p. 95).

Non-verbal communication or body language plays an integral role in Jamaican culture. This concept was therefore used as an advantage during the interview process to help participants feel comfortable and to gain a fuller understanding of their experiences with PATH. As the interview process progressed, I ensure that I maintained a pleasant facial expression, responsive body language such as nods and smiles, consistent eye contact and a keen and focused sense of listening. These techniques were paramount in helping to reassure participants that their stories were of great importance and value. Also, participants’ body language, facial expression and tone of voice during the interviews provided information about their feelings. Palaiologou, Needham and Male (2016) state that “In face-to face interview your physical presence should allow you to observe the more subtle nuances with regard to both the verbal and body language that an interviewee uses, giving you greater insight into their perceptions and beliefs” (p. 139).

Although all interview questions were already prepared for each participant, there were a few moments during the interviews where it became necessary to ask add-on questions to further probe and get a better understanding of the participants’ experiences. The add-on questions proved to be important as they provided not only additional information but also new ideas to further enrich the research project. These new questions were later added to the original pre-prepared interview questions.

*Verifying Participants’ Interview Responses:*

It was imperative to verify participants’ responses to ensure they were recorded based on what participants said and meant. This process also helped to ensure there were no misinterpretations or misrepresentation of participants’ responses. According to Pop 2008 “This procedure allowed participants to clarify or edit their interview responses. Member checks is a common procedure in which subjects’ feedback on interview data is solicited in order to eliminate the possibility of misinterpretations of any meaning during the interview” (p. 46). George (2017) states that “member checking is aimed to bring accuracy in research as participants can correct errors and present new facts or perceptions which they might have missed…” (p. 130). I have read that participants can “verify and confirm their responses through a draft report” (Ratrasingam 2003, p. 81) or “after the interviews were transcribed” (Pop 2008, p. 46). However, this method of verification was not used since the teachers, principals, and guidance counselors were not as readily available as needed for this process. Since the possibility existed that the other participants may not have any additional time as well, it was decided to verify all participants’ responses within the interview sessions. Thus, all the participants’ responses were verified by re-reading their responses mostly toward the end of their interview sessions. There were times when this was also done between interview questions, especially for the young male participants whom I believe were not likely to remember what they said at the beginning of the interview. The following quotes reflect that there are no hard or fast rules to verify participants’responses.Lincoln and Guba contend that member-checking which can occur throughout the enquiry, can be both formal and informal (as cited in Onwuegburzie, Jiao and Bostick 2004, p. 221). During the verification process, participants provided similar responses to some questions posed; they also strongly agreed with their responses to questions and even added more information to some responses.

It should be acknowledged that in Jamaica, both Jamaican Creole (JC) and Standard Jamaican English (SJE) are spoken. During the interviews, the primary school boys responded using mainly JC, while the other participants (parents, teachers, guidance counselors, principals, PATH high school boys and PATH social worker), responded mainly in the SJE. JC responses were transcribed in SJE during the verification process. This adjustment was made so that other English-speaking persons can read and understand the research project.

*Ending the Interviews:*

Most of the interviews were less thanninety minutes; interviews with the adult participants lasted between forty-five minutes and sixty minutes. Only two interviews with the primary level boys lasted for a full ninety minutes, as during the interviews they requested bathroom and water breaks.

Some participants, especially parents and the male high school boys, wanted to talk further on other school matters outside the topic of PATH. While I listened to their concerns, I did remind them that I was just a researcher investigating ‘the impact of Path on boys’ attendance and academic performance.’

Near the end of the interview sessions, participants were informed that the session would be wrapping up. At this time, participants were allowed to expound or add to any issues discussed in the interviews.

The interview sessions ended with me thanking all the participants. They were also reassured that complete confidentiality would be maintained. Hence, all interview sessions ended smoothly.

**Researcher’s Journal**

Conducting a research requires careful consideration and sound decision making, which can be overwhelming for the researcher. I kept a journal by my side to help me maintain focus on the targets throughout the research process. The journal served both as an audit trail and my personal research companion as it facilitated my daily entries of new ideas for the research, strategic planning, time management, project development, self-reflection and effective problem-solving while in the field. One such solution formulated as a result of the journaling process was my employment of the structured observation method instead of the free-flow unstructured observational method. This change resulted in a better focus and organization while in the field collecting data. Every thought relevant to the research process, new probing questions, interview schedules and observations were also recorded. The research journal was of great benefit in guiding, organizing and keeping track of all the relevant information during this enquiry. Hence, words through the journal, I was able to minimize my biases by maintaining my focus on the research purpose.

**Rigour**

It is important to do what we can to ensure, and to demonstrate, that our work is as rigorous as we can make it. Emdem and Sandelowski (1999) however, assert that “no one set of criteria can be expected to ‘fit the bill’ for every research study” (p. 6). Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that “naturalistic studies simply cannot be warranted in the same way as are conventional studies” (p. 329). I agree with this and whilst believing that the measurement-based statistical constructs of reliability and validity are ideal for validating quality in the positivist paradigm, quality and rigour of work within the interpretative paradigm is more appropriately considered in terms of credibility and trustworthiness.

Achieving rigour is therefore critical to the success of this project as it ensures accurate representation of participants’ experiences with PATH. Cypress (2017) purports that rigour in qualitative research is “simply defined as… the quality of being thorough and accurate”. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) further posit that qualitative rigour “establishes trust or confidence in the findings or results of a research study” (p. 151). Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson and Spiers (2008) also state that “without rigor, research is worth-less, becomes fiction and loses its utility” (p. 2). Achieving rigor was not only a focus and a commitment; it became a part of my core value system which shaped this entire research process.

To achieve and demonstrate rigour in this study, I have adhered to the four criteria of *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Since credibility speaks to the accuracy of the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), the technique of *member checking* was employed to achieve this. Through the technique of *member checking*, I was able to fully represent participants’ account of their experiences. Using this technique,theparticipants were allowed the opportunity to review and verify, as well as supply new information to previous responses given and correct any misconceptions from the interview sessions (see more on member checking under the ‘Verifying Participants Response’ above).

“Transferability refers to the probability that the study findings have meaning to others in similar situations” (Streubert and Carpenter 2011, p. 49). In an effort to ensure transferability, I have spent an extensive five- month period in the primary and high school settings observing and capturing rich, thick, detailed descriptions from the six boys’ interactions as PATH beneficiaries. Rich, thick, detailed descriptions of the boys’ experiences are critical to achieving transferability as this has the advantage of allowing individuals in similar positions to relate to the experiences captured and reported in the study. My prolonged engagement in both locations helped to establish close, trusting relationship and good rapport with the participants. This closeness also provided more confidence that the information garnered was *credible*, as the participants seemed to be comfortable sharing their perceptions and experiences with PATH.

Transferability in this research was also met through the use of Laurel Richardson’s crystallisation concept (Richardson 2000; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). Crystallisation is suitable for this subjective interpretative study as it rejects the idea that there is only one fixed reality and welcomes participants’ varying accounts of their realities. Thus, crystallisation allowed me to garner a deeper and richer understanding of PATH’s impact as I was able to capture participants’ stories from all the different angles (Richardson 2000; Richardson and St. Pierre 2005). Crystallisation also provides the opportunity for observers of the study to relate to participants’ varying experiences.

Dependability is the degree to which the results are trustworthy (Brown and Rodge 2002, p. 242). I have gone through great lengths to ensure that the results garnered from this study are trustworthy. The foregoing highlighted that I used trustworthy strategies such as member checking and prolonged engagement in the fields. I have further engaged in reflexivity as well as developing an audit trail to ensure accurate representation of participants’ account of their experiences with PATH. The proceedings explained such rigor.

Thorpe and Holt (2008) posit that “reflexivity involves a high degree of self-consciousness on the part of the researcher, especially in terms of how his *(sic)* identity affects the design and process of his [or her] work” (p. 184). In being reflexive, I minimized my biases by constantly checking that I was keeping an open mind while in the field gathering data. Keeping an open mind allowed participants the autonomy to freely express themselves without judgement or interference from my researcher’s role as well as the teacher in me. Thus, the data gathered in the fields independently spoke for itself as it was primarily obtained from participants’ interactions and perceptions with PATH.

As mentioned earlier, my journal was used as an audit trail in this research. The audit trail was instrumental in helping to gather credible and trustworthy data. It allowed me to stay focused on the phenomenon understudy and collect all the relevant data while in the fields (see more on ‘researcher’s journal’ above).

According to Thomas and Magilvy (2011) dependability in qualitative studies “occurs when another can follow the decision trail used by the researcher” (p. 153). Since my supervisor was able to clearly follow and understand this research process from its inception, and thus agreed with my research decisions, this provided me with the confidence that my research is indeed dependable.

According to Oblakor, Bakken and Rotatori (2010) “Confirmability means that the researcher has determined the accuracy or credibility of the findings through specific strategies” (p. 28). It cannot be over emphasized that all strategies -member checking, prolonged engagement in the fields, persistent observations, rich detailed descriptions, crystallisation, reflexivity, as well as an audit trail (Creswell and Miller 2000; Lincoln and Guba 1985) were employed to assure the credibility of the results in this critical ethnographic enquiry. Hence, the criterion of confirmability has certainly been achieved through the applications of these strategies in this enquiry.

My five-month experience in the field allowed me to garner deeper understanding that helped me to trust and believe participants’ accounts of their experiences; their stories consistently corroborated what I observed, recorded and interpreted from the data. As such, I am confident that the results from the study came out of a rigorous and transparent process.

**Method of Analysing Data**

To choose the most suitable methods of analysis, I reflected on the entire research process thus far- the project’s qualitative social research paradigm; the critical and social constructivist frameworks; the critical ethnography methodology; and the three data collection methods employed (observation, semi-structured interviewing and document perusal). The research questions were also- considered, as the method of analysis had to match the goals and features of the research project (Braun and Clarke 2008). I chose to employ the technique of the thematic analysis as its methods ideally embrace the interpretive nature of this investigation. Braun and Clarke (2008) posit that “thematic analysis is a flexible and useful approach that can be used across a range of epistemologies in qualitative research” (p. 28). Gibson and Brown (2009) postulate that “the term thematic analysis refers to the process of analyzing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across a data set. The word *thematic* relates to the aim of searching for aggregated themes within a data” (p. 127).

The thematic analysis expanded my understanding of the information gathered. It provided the flexibility and knowledge base to thoroughly examine a wide array of data and arrive at a fuller understanding of the participants’ interpretations of their lived experiences with PATH. In analysing the data, I ensured that the information gathered via the three methods was compared, cross-examined, conceptualized, decoded and broken down into appropriate categories of emerging themes (Best 2013). I also ensured that these emerging themes related to each of the two research questions and provided answers to these questions. The research questions are as follows:

1. Are the boys complying with PATH’s 85% termly condition?
2. Are the boys maintaining and graduating with satisfactory grades in keeping with the schools’ academic criteria?

While analyzing the data, I found that other themes emerged which were pivotal in helping to bring to the surface unforeseen, but pertinent information, garnered from the participants’ experiences in both school settings (figure 2 below shows all the themes emerged from the data). In analyzing the data, it was realized that the themes emerged from both school settings were similar; only few themes were different. My interaction with the data also made me realized that the data collected from the different methods simultaneously and independently provided answers to the research questions. This provided strong support to the findings. (See further information on data analyses in chapter 5).

*Figure 2*: Themes Emerged

The diagram below shows the themes that emerged to answer each of the two research questions. There were other themes that emerged which provided further information about the boys’ experiences within their respective school setting.

High School

Primary School

**Question 1 Themes**

Meeting PATH’s condition

Streaming in relation to school attendance

Reason for absence

Breaches in PATH’s Condition

Receiving full benefits

Awareness of PATH’s condition

Improvement in attendance

**Question 2 Themes**

The school’s pass mark

Academic performances

High school diploma

CSEC examination

PATH’s impact on academic performance

**Question 2 Themes**

**Question 1 Themes**

The school’s pass mark

Reading level

Academic performance

GSAT placement

Graduation

PATH’s impact on academic performance

Meeting PATH’s condition

Streaming in relation to school attendance

Awareness of PATH’s condition

Reason for absence

Attitude towards Fridays

Improvement in Attendance

**Other Themes**

(The following themes emerged from both settings)

Comparing both school boys’ attendances

Stigmatization at the primary school level

Stigmatization at the high school level

**Figure 2**

**The Research Site**

One primary school and one high school were the targeted fields for this investigation. The schools are co-educational government-owned institutions that mostly enrol students from the surrounding communities. Both schools also operate on a double shift system, where students attend school only half days, some in the morning and others in the afternoon. These two particular schools also have a special relationship where the primary school serves as the ‘feeder’ school for the high school -as both are in very close proximity (less than five minutes) to each other. Completing the field work within the five months’ time frame was possible due to both schools’ shift-schedule and location. The research was conducted at the primary school during the morning shift and at the high school during the evening shift.

The primary school is a large facility consisting of several buildings, including a state- of- the art smart room and other resource rooms. The school provides a well –balanced and diverse curriculum to a population of approximately two thousand (2,000) students of which nine hundred and eighty (980) students are boys. The school provides primary education for students ranging from the age of 6 to12 and employs a staff of eighty-nine (89) persons including one (1) principal, two (2) vice-principals and two (2) guidance counsellors.

The classes range from grade one (1) to grade six (6) and each grade consists of four classes where students are mostly grouped and placed according to their academic level. The levels are determined through a diagnostic test administered at the beginning of each school year. This analysis usually results in four levels ranging from above grade level to below grade level. This is done from grade one to six.

The high school houses a population of 1,323 students and 72 trained teachers (including the principal, two (2) vice-principals and two (2) guidance counsellors).The school delivers a high school curriculum as established by the Ministry of Education Youth and Information (MOEYI), to students ranging in age from 12 to 17. Students are admitted primarily based on examination scores achieved through the GSAT and the Grade Nine Achievement Test (GNAT). Students can also be certified in technical vocational areas after showing competence in a particular field. The classes range from grade seven (7) to eleven (11) and each grade consists of seven classes where students are mostly grouped and placed according to their academic level. Students’ performance in GSAT determines their class placement at grade seven (7). They continue in that cluster up to grade nine (9). At the end of grade nine (9) a proficiency test is given. Their performance on that test along with their career choice is use to determine their placement for grade ten (10) to eleven (11).

*Researcher’s Positionality:*

According to Johstone (2018) “an important question for the researcher to ask of themselves is how they are positioned in relation to their research subjects, and how this positionality may affect the collection, interpretation and representation of knowledge they are seeking to undertake” (p. 36). I see myself as a credible inside researcher as I have been teaching at the primary school for the past eighteen (18) years. Also, I am familiar with the principal, teachers and some of the students from the high school since that school is the chief secondary school at which our students are placed after they complete grade six. Hence, I am declaring my position as an inside researcher in this critical ethnographic enquiry.

An inside researcher is one who has prior knowledge of a particular culture through being a part of that culture and being familiar with the subjects and setting be researched (Johstone 2018; Voloder and Kirpitchenko 2014;White and Corbett 2014). My decision to investigate this topic in the first place was as a result of my experiences as a teacher in the primary school system (see the first paragraph in chapter one).

There are benefits and challenges to being an inside researcher. Easy access to the fields, the participants and the boys’ school records (register of attendance, progress reports, and academic records) were the benefits experienced in both settings. However, my position as an inside researcher was also conflicting. I experienced difficulty in separating my mind-set as a regular teacher from my new role as a researcher, particularly in the primary school setting. It took great strength and discipline to be receptive and not share my personal views during conversations about PATH with my colleagues whom I have close relationships with. The research journal was the only outlet that helped to express my personal views on the operation of PATH within each school community. At times it was difficult to record certain unethical behaviours displayed by my colleagues towards the boys. Throughout the research process, I often had to remind myself that I am a researcher conducting a serious investigation which was my priority in both fields.

*Gaining Access into the Fields:*

Gaining access in the field to garner information from participants is paramount to the development of this critical ethnographic study. Because the school plays a pivotal role in the administration of PATH benefits to students, the school is, therefore, the construction site for the data this investigation seeks. Hence, if access is not granted to the schools, this investigation is stunted. Bryman (2016) asserts that “… gaining access to social settings is a crucial first step in ethnographic research, in that, without access, your research plans falter” (p. 429).

As established earlier, gaining access to the primary and high schools was not difficult, as school officials at both schools were welcoming and receptive to the proposed study. I suspect that such hospitality was extended as a result of being well-known by school officials and most staff members at both schools. I, however, did not take my familiarity for granted and sought permission to conduct the research through the appropriate channels.

Having been a teacher for eighteen years, I learnt specific protocol that outsiders must follow in conducting research or implementing programmes in our schools. Using such knowledge, I sought to gain access to both schools by first approaching the principals, as they are the primary ‘gatekeepers’ who can allow or deny entry to their institutions. On January 19, 2016, the principals for both schools were first contacted by telephone about the research project. This initial contact was followed by a copy of my ethical clearance letter from The Sheffield University (See appendix A) as well as a letter addressed to each principal (see appendix B) and delivered on January 20, 2016. The letter communicated my intention of conducting a research project in their schools as discussed on the phone. The letter was then followed by pre-scheduled visits, on February, 2, 2016, to both schools, during which principals, teachers and guidance counsellors were further informed about the project. In these meetings, elements of what the research entailed, recruitment of the participants, duration of the study, the research methods, participants’ roles and responsibilities, consent, risks, confidentiality issues etc. were all presented in detail. Documents, such as the ethics approval letter from The University of Sheffield and the study information letters to principals mentioned earlier as well as participants’ information sheets (See Appendix C) and consent forms (See appendix D), were provided to principals and staff to support the information communicated at both meetings.

I was pleased with the meeting, especially since, the principals and their staff volunteered to be available at any time throughout this research process. The meeting also provided the opportunity for me to establish further trust and rapport with the guidance counsellors, class teachers/ form teachers and principals- all of whom were not only my first recruited group of participants but also consented to their roles of gate-keepers in this project. The teachers fulfilled their gatekeepers’ role by allowing access to their classrooms and helping to select the ideal male students and their parents (See paragraph below on the selection criteria for participants) who were willing to participate in this investigation. The guidance counsellors were deemed gatekeepers, as they were very instrumental in helping to coordinate access to the PATH social worker.

Permission was unanimously granted to conduct the research for five months, that is from March to July 2016 (See Appendix E for the time-line plan of all the activities done to gain access to sites and participants), by principals and staff at both schools. All the staff members relevant to the research project insisted on signing and submitting their consent forms immediately during the meeting, despite having approximately three weeks to decide to participate. This was done in the month of February, 2016.

I met with the six recruited/selected PATH recipients and their parents on February 8, 2016 to further brief them about the study. By the end of February, I had collected the signed consent forms from each of these participants. It must be acknowledged that although the social worker received the information sheet and consent form in February 2016, the signed consent form was not returned until the end of March 2016, when I was already conducting interviews.

Since, I experienced no reluctance from participants, I conclude that gaining access to both school sites and the participants was successful.

*Leaving the Field:*

My five-month field study ended on July 31, 2016 (See time-line plan in appendix E). During this period, it was the closing of the 2015-2016 school year, which meant that most teachers, students and administrative staff were now leaving for the summer holidays. Despite this, I did not make an abrupt exit from the field. In the first week of July 2016, I informed school officials, as well as the participants, that I would be leaving by the end of July 2016. My leaving the field was both expected and gradual, so it did not create any psychological problems for participants, or me. Participants seemed to not really care about my exit from the field as they were more focused on, and excited about, the upcoming summer break.

**The Participants**

According to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019) “[In purposive sampling] units are selected by virtue of their relevance to the research questions, and the sample is gradually added to as the investigation evolves” (p. 391). For this study, the purposive sampling technique was employed to select the primary participants who were six (6) male student beneficiaries of PATH in a primary and a high school setting. At the primary school level, three (3) of the six participants were predetermined based on being twelve (12) years old and due to sit the GSAT examination in March 2016, in the sixth grade. At the high school level, the remaining three participants were predetermined based on being seventeen (17) years old and due to sit their CSEC examination in June 2016.

It was also hoped that both groups of boys came from a high level performing class, a middle level performing class and a low level performing class in their respective schools. The performance groupings are referred to as ‘streams’. “Streaming is…a common practice in Jamaican schools” (Evans 2001, p. 91). Streaming is “where students are placed in different groups or classes at the same grade level according to their academic performance” (Evans 1999, p. 48). Thus, students in top streams normally perform very well academically, students in middle streams typically perform at an average level academically, while some students in the bottom streams are faced with learning or behavioural challenges (Evans 1999: Evans 2001).

The criterion of selecting one boy from each stream (high, average and low) was fulfilled in the primary school only. At the high school, a male student from the top stream was not included in the study, as it was communicated that not many male students on PATH were in that stream and that top stream students usually are very busy with their studies. I was only given one male student from the middle stream, while the other two male students were from the bottom stream in the same class. Admittedly, this was disappointing at first, but I realized that this would not impede the focus of the investigation which was to represent participants’ unique stories of their experiences with PATH. Once I determined that this modification would not impede the purpose of my research, all preparations were finalized to proceed as planned.

*The Sample Size:*

Apart from the six (6) primary male PATH participants, there are sixteen (16) other participants involved as a result of their relationship with the boys and PATH. Overall, the research project consisted of a total of twenty-two (22) bold, outspoken and forthright, participants- all of whom provided valuable information sought by this investigation. A breakdown of the total participants at the primary school includes, three male students on PATH; three classroom teachers; three parents; one principal and one guidance counselor. At the high school, the breakdown includes, three male students on PATH; two form-room teachers; three parents; one principal and one guidance counselor. The one social worker from the PATH office serves both schools and is also included in the total group of participants. Some may think that this sample size is too large for a qualitative research project. However, I believe this sample size worked optimally to satisfactorily capture the full story of PATH’s impact on the six male beneficiaries under study (see the breakdown of total participants in figure 3 below). I was further assured that my sample size was satisfactory after reading the work of Patton, who contends that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the enquiry, what’s at stake, what will be useful and what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources (as cited in Jensen and Laurie, 2016).

*Figure 3*: (The below diagram), shows a breakdown of the participants who participated in the study.

**THE PARTICIPANTS**

(The study involves a total of 22 participants)

**THE HIGH SCHOOL**

* 3 PATH grade eleven boys
* 2 form-room teachers
* 3 parents
* 1 principal
* 1 guidance counsellor

**THE PRIMARY *SCHOOL***

* 3 PATH grade six boys
* 3 grade six teachers
* 3 parents
* 1 principal
* 1 guidance counsellor

**THE PATH OFFICE**

* 1 PATH social worker serves both school communities.

**Figure 2**

*Pseudonym Names for Participants:*

In order to protect participants’ identities as well as to honour the ethical commitment of confidentiality, I referred to each participant using assigned pseudonyms throughout this research project. Pseudonyms were also used to refer to the five classes involved in the study. Since the PATH social worker worked with both schools, I decided to name her Mrs. Peters. The schools involved were referred to as the primary school and the high school.

In the primary setting, the high-stream class is named 6A; the middle-stream class is referred to as 6B; while the low-stream class is named 6C. In order to identify the participants easily, teachers, parents and students were given pseudonyms that begin with the letter of each of their assigned streamed classes. The principal and the guidance counselors were given different pseudonyms beginning with the letter ‘D’. The names of the participants from the primary school and their respective streamed classes are written in table 6 below.

*Table 6*: Primary School PATH Participants and Classes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **THE PRIMARY SCHOOL**  **PRINCIPAL: Miss Dale**  **GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR: Mrs. Dolcie** | | | |
| Streamed Classes | Names of the PATH boys | Names of Teachers | Names of Parents |
| 6A | Adam | Miss Abe | Miss. Ali |
| 6B | Bogle | Mr. Ben | Miss. Black |
| 6C | Carl | Miss. Craig | Miss. Carson |

*Table 6 above identifies each participant from the primary school and their assigned class.*

In the high school setting, the three male PATH participants came from two classes- one boy was from the grade eleven middle stream class and two boys from the lowest streamed grade eleven class. The middle-streamed class is referred to as 11T while the low stream class is referred to as 11 F. In order to identify the participants easily, teachers, parents and students were given pseudonyms that begin with the initial letter of each of their assigned streamed classes. The principal and the guidance counselor were given different pseudonyms that begin with the letter ‘G’. The names of the participants from the high school and their respective streamed classes are outlined in table 7 below.

*Table 7*: High School PATH Participants and Classes

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **THE HIGH SCHOOL**  **PRINCIPAL: Mr. Green**  **GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR: Mr. Greg** | | | |
| Streamed Classes | Names of the PATH boys | Names of Teachers | Names of Parents |
| 11 T | Tom | Mr. Taylor | Miss. Thomas |
| 11 F | Felix  Frank | Mr. Fowler | Miss. Francis  Miss Faurkner |

*Table above identifies each participant from the high school and their assigned class.*

**Ethical Consideration**

One of the goals of this project is to conduct sound, ethical and professional research. As such, I have given much thought and consideration to selecting an ethical approach that is best suited for this particular study.

Where ethical principles are concerned, I must register my agreement with St. Pierre and Bryson. St. Pierre (2013) states that “Ethics is no longer transcendental and clearly defined in advance for everyone in every situation. Rather, ethics explodes anew in every circumstance, demands a specific re-inscription, and hounds praxis unmercifully” (p. 176). Bryson (2014) also states that “It is only by taking a bricolage approach that the ethical complexity of situations, contexts and relations can be adequately addressed” (p. 164).

Sikes (2010) advocates the use of a bricolage approach to ethics in social science research. I employed the bricolage ethical approach in this enquiry as I believe that it best addresses the ethical demands of this particular research study. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) note “Ideologically grounded, the bricolage reflects an evolving criticality in research…The bricolage can be described as the process of getting down to the nuts and bolts of multidisciplinary research” (p. 167-168). Denzin and Lincoln (2018) also state that “The bricolage is dedicated to a form of rigor that is conversant with numerous modes of meaning making and knowledge production” (p. 169). Bricolage is, therefore, very effective in unravelling the knowledge contained in the complexity of the human experiences shared in my research. Thus, I am confident that the bricolage ethical approach employed is ideal for addressing cultural and subjective matters of human relations in research endeavors such as this.

The ethical approach I take in this research is therefore a combination of elements from the*Katian deontological ethics, consequentialist ethics*, *Aristolelian virtue ethics*, *situational and contextual ethics* as well as *Buberian rational ethics*(Bryson 2014; Wiles 2013; Sikes 2010). Each ‘type’ of ethics has special features which work well together in producing a sound professional research. This I sought to ensure the following:

* Consideration of participants’ rights in the research process by being honest and non-deceptive about the research intent as well as allowing them the autonomy to withdraw from the research process if they desired. Informed consent outlined all information concerning research intent and participants’ rights. Thus, participants were given time to read and sign informed consent before confirming involvement in the study.
* Protection of participants’ identity and the research settings through the use of pseudonyms.
* Accommodation of participants’ freedom of expression at their own convenience without interference and/or judgement from my role as a researcher. As far as was possible, this helped in minimising any abuse of my power as researcher and as teacher.
* Provisions for the unique needs and considerations for each participant involved in the study. Special situations participants faced during the enquiry (e.g. not wanting to be recorded on tape was quickly changed to the preferred method of hand-written recordings) were quickly rectified.
* Accuracy of information through verification (member checking and Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) method of achieving rigour: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability). The information gathered through the three data medium (structured observation, document analysis and in-depth interviews) is credible and trustworthy.
* A trusting relationship with participants through an assurance of confidentiality.

*Respecting participants’ rights and eliminating deceit:*

The element of the *Kantian deontogical ethics* employed in this study concerns participants being aware of their rights in the research process and my respecting their rights (Kant 2010; Sikes 2010). On the premise of respecting such rights, I remained honest to participants about their rights and the research intent.

The objectives of the study, the standards set by the university’s ethics policy document (The University of Sheffield’s Ethics Policy Government Research Involving Human Participants, Personal Data and Human Tissue: Version 6), as well as the reason for my presence in both research settings, were communicated verbally and in writing to all participants. Participants were informed that all names, including the names of both schools, would be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. To further respect the rights of the participants, it was communicated that they were not compelled to participate in the study and that they could refuse to participate at any given time. In addition, participants had three weeks to read all information sheets and sign consent forms to confirm their involvement in the study. Participants were also informed of their rights to view the results of the study provided at both schools (primary and high) after completion.

The foregoing rigour of my respecting participants’ rights in this research process assisted with minimising any sense of deception and misunderstandings. Thus, deceit or dishonesty played no part in this research.

According to Wiles (2013) “Consequentialist approaches argue that ethical decisions should be based on the consequences of specific actions so that an action is morally right if it will produce a good outcome for an individual or for wider society” (p. 14). Concerning Aristotelian virtue ethics, Irwin (2002) states that “[it] is firmly teleological; it is concerned with the common good of a community; which is the goal that justifies the requirements of special justice” (p. 431). From the above quotations, it is understood that when researchers embark on a research project, the outcome should serve to impact the populace positively through the particular discipline of the research. Through the lenses of consequentialist ethics and the Aristotelian virtue ethics, my effort in doing this research is undoubtedly aimed at the betterment of poor children who will come to experience PATH. It is therefore critical for researchers to do what they can to ensure that the knowledge produced to bring about this betterment is credible.

In an effort to accurately represent participants’ experiences, I ensured that they verify their interpretations through member checking. I also ensured accurate representation of participants’ experiences with PATH through the application of Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) methods (*credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability*) of achieving rigour in qualitative research such as this (*see more on rigour above*).

The knowledge garnered from the experiences of the participants will be used to highlight the need for improvement in the programme, particularly as it relates to irregular school attendance and the academic underperformance of boys. This information is important in sustaining poor boys’ education, as in our society, educational advancement yields financial independence, prosperity and better quality of life.

*Situational ethics (Joseph Fletcher 1966) and contextual ethics (Paul Lehmann 1967)* create the “awareness that different situations and cultural settings generate their own research related ethical questions and issues that demand unique and contextual answers and treatment...” (Sikes 2010, p. 11-24). I can relate to this point as I realized that the culture within each school influenced the way participants provided information during the data collection process. While all participants were willing to share their experiences, at the primary school, they were more explicit and readily available to have conversations about PATH compared to the high school participants. This situation was managed by making arrangements to have conversations with participants at their convenience. Participants had the autonomy to choose the time and place to be interviewed within their respective school setting. Thus, I did what I could to ensure participants’ comfort throughout this research process.

The culture of being an ‘*informer’* is negatively perceived in the Jamaican context (read more about this above under the heading- “Recording the Interview”). To avoid this perception, I made two adjustments. The term *‘participants*’ was used verbally and in writing instead of ‘*informants*’ throughout the entire research process. I also had to eliminate my original plan of wanting to record all interviews via audio recorder as participants viewed this as an ‘*informer*’ medium. Since participants’ rights and comfort are of high priority, all interviews were instead recorded in hand-written note form, a preferred medium by all my participants.

When having conversations with the boys, I was also mindful not to use the word ‘*poor*’ to refer to their financial standing. The boys’ behaviour of holding down their heads and not making eye-contact when labelled as poor by some staff members and peers, indicated that they were embarrassed by this label. Out of respect, care and consideration, I used the phrase ‘*being on PATH’* or *‘receiving PATH benefits’* to refer to their financial position instead of the word ‘*poor’*. I felt that these considerations were paramount in making the participants feel valued, appreciated and comfortable throughout the research process.

*Maintaining good interpersonal relationships with participants:*

*Martin Buber’s relational ethics* stresses the importance of a good, caring, trusting interpersonal relationship between the researcher and the participants (Friedman, Boni, Baron, Cain, Shabatay and Stewart 2012; Sikes 2010). I understand that the richness of the data gathered is dependent on the interpersonal relationships established with participants in the field. Having spent eighteen years at the primary school, included in this study, I developed good relationships with many students, parents and other teachers. Since the primary school is a feeder school for the high school, I knew most participants in this setting (See above topic on the inside researcher). Nevertheless, conducting the research at the high school for the five months also allowed the opportunity to closely interact and develop good relationships with all the participants in this setting. The pre-established relationships with the participants proved helpful in gaining their trust and confidence.

In maintaining healthy and respectful interpersonal relationships throughout the research process, I did not abuse my familiarity as I followed all protocols and rules established by both schools (see more information under the foregone heading ‘*gaining access into the field’*). I also tried not to compromise my integrity and participants’ trust by disclosing any confidences shared. Throughout the research project, an open mind and non-condemnatory attitude were maintained toward any private information the participants divulged about themselves and PATH.

*Addressing power relationships:*

Since, the focus of this research is about the boys’ interpretations of their experiences with PATH, these boys therefore possessed the power as they have the information which this investigation seeks. In getting the boys to share their stories, I established a close trusting, respectful relationship with them while in the field. To offset any unease the participants may experience, soft, interactive and engaging interview methods were used. These methods are viewed as child friendly techniques or child-centred techniques with the potential to allow students to express themselves freely without fear or intimidation (O’Reilly and Dogra 2016). Additionally, the interviews conducted with the six male students were in areas of the school where they felt most comfortable in expressing themselves candidly and confidently. In reflecting on the interpersonal relationship between myself and the participants, there was no instance of any abuse of power as participants knew of their rights and seemed willing and comfortable sharing their experiences.

As a researcher, I am confident that great value was placed on ensuring that ethical principles were employed and maintained throughout the research process.

**Summary**

The research methodology that underpins this research project is Critical Ethnography Methodology. The data came from a total of twenty-two (22) purposively selected participants. To capture as full a picture as possible of participants’ experiences with PATH, structured observation, document analysis, and in-depth interviewing were the methods employed. A research journal was also used in this enquiry. The journal served the purpose of auditing the data gathered in the fields as well as assessing and informing my actions and decisions throughout the research process.

Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four standards of rigour were adopted to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the study: 1. credibility, 2. transferability, 3. dependability, 4. Transferability. Member checking, a prolonged engagement period of five months in the primary and high school settings, rich thick descriptions of participants experiences in both fields crystallisation, reflexivity as well as an audit trail were the techniques employed to guarantee rigour and transparency. Furthermore, the thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data as it ideally suits the goals and features of the study.

I employed the Bricolage ethical approach in this enquiry. The Bricolage ethics is an eclectic approach that is a combination of principles from Katian deontological ethics, consequentialist ethics, Aristolelian virtue ethics, situational and contextual ethics as well as Buberian relational ethics. All these ethics worked well together in addressing the moral demands of this enquiry.

**Chapter Five: Data Analysis**

**Introduction**

Information was analysed within and across each of the three data gathering methods (observation, interviews and document analysis) to seek answers to the following research questions:

* Are the boys complying with PATH’s 85% termly school attendance condition?
* Are the boys maintaining and graduating with satisfactory grades in keeping with their schools’ academic criteria?

All the themes emerged from the data are underlined in the chapter.

**The Primary Boys’ Attendance**

Meeting PATH’s Condition:

Although PATH beneficiaries should maintain an 85% school attendance level for each of the three school terms, the data (teachers’ attendance records, PATH’s attendance verification record forms as well as the boys’ progress report cards) showed that none of the three primary school boys met this condition. Further examination of the data revealed that one boy (Carl) from the primary school did not meet this attendance condition in any of the three school terms. In term one, Carl’s attendance was 47.3%; in term two it was 66.0%; and in term three it was 62.2%. Each of the other two boys (Adam and Bogle) only met PATH’s 85% attendance condition in one of the three terms. Bogle was, however, closer to meeting the condition than Adam, as in term one Bogle’s attendance was 84.0%; in term two it was 88.8% and in term three it was 83.4%. Adam’s attendance in term one was 82.7%; in term two it was 83.1%; and in term three it was 88.5%.

Streaming in relation to school attendance:

Further examination in the boys’ attendance records revealed that Carl still did not attain an 85% average school attendance by the end of the academic school year; He achieved a 57.4% average end-of-year school attendance rate. Adam and Bogle’s end-of- year attendance averages attendance were very close to each other. Adam’s attendance was 84.6% and Bogle’s attendance was 85.2%. Since Adam (6A) and Bogle (6B) came from the grade six upper-streamed classes and Carl (6C) came from the grade six low-streamed class, it is apparent from this sample that boys in higher-streamed classes attended school more regularly than boys in lower-streamed classes.

Awareness of PATH’s Condition:

I found it rather contradicting that although PATH provided financial and lunch benefits for the boys, none met PATH’s 85% school attendance condition. It could be assumed that they were not aware of PATH’s terms and conditions, however, this was not the case as all the boys and their parents were not only aware but were regularly reminded by the school’s guidance counsellor. Following are some of the responses extracted from participants’ interviews in relation to their awareness of PATH’s terms and conditions.

“*I know that I am supposed to come to school every day”* ***(Adam’s response).***

*“I must come to school every day or I will loose my PATH benefits. I am also to get my PATH lunch when am at school”* ***(Bogle’s response).***

*“I know that PATH pays for me to go to school every day. I know that they will stop my mother from getting PATH money if I don’t come to school every day. I also know that I should get PATH lunch every day at school”* ***(Carl’s response).***

*“I explained to him and I tell him that it is important for him to come to school. The money helps a lot even though it is small so I have to send him to school in order for us to get the money. I use the PATH money on my children. I don’t use it for my own benefit as some parents do. Some parents use the money to adorn themselves. I only have two sons on PATH. I try to ensure that my son follows the PATH rules” (****Miss Ali, Adam’s mother).***

*. “I told my son about the full extent of PATH. He understands the whole concept of PATH. As a result of him being on PATH for so many years he understands PATH’s requirements. He knows that he must attend school every day or else dog will eat all our suppers” (****Miss Black, Bogle’s mother)****.*

*“He knows that lunch is provided for him every day at school because he is on PATH. He knows that his parents get money from PATH to send him to school. He also knows that he must be in school every day” (****Miss Carson, Carl’s mother)****.*

*“Parents are informed at Parents Teachers Meeting (P.T.A) that children who are on PATH should attend school every day. In this meeting parents are told to produce sick leave if the child is absent from school because of illness. For those students who are just transitioning from basic schools to primary school they are informed to go to the PATH office to update their information as to which school they are attending or if there is any change of address. For new students who are desirous of getting PATH benefits they are sent to the PATH office for further enquiry. Students are informed of PATH’s terms and condition at general devotions every Mondays and Thursdays”* ***(Dr. Dolcie, primary school guidance counsellor).***

Reason for absence:

I felt the need to take a more thorough look at the data to explore reasons behind the three primary school boys’ regular absenteeism. The reasons came from two interview questions: Give a numerical response for the number of days they attended school within a week? Identify the day(s) and give reasons why they were absent on the particular day(s). All three boys and their parents stated that a lack of funds was the reason for their attendance patterns to school. However, only Adam, Bogle and their parents identified Fridays as the day when they were mostly absent. Adam stated:

*I go to school sometimes four (4) and sometimes five (5) times out of the week. Most times I go five times out of the week. Sometimes on Fridays I stop from school to go to my father’s house for lunch money because the PATH money finishes quickly. My father gets paid on Fridays so I have to collect my school money on that day before he finishes his pay in the bar.*

Miss Ali(Adam’s mother) stated:

*Before PATH and after PATH he is always in school as that is my responsibility…if PATH wasn’t in the picture I would have to find another alternative of sending him to school. Although the money is small, PATH money really helped me to send him to school regularly. When the PATH money finishes he goes to his father for money. On Fridays his father gets paid, so he has to go to his father’s house on Fridays for school money. Friday is not so serious at his school anyways.*

Bogle stated:

*I come to school five (5) days out of the week most times. I sometimes miss school on Fridays when I am extremely tired or when my mother has no money. My mother lets me to stay home when she doesn’t have any money.*

Miss Black (Bogle’s mother) stated:

*PATH helps me out with his schooling. Sometimes he is absent from school because I honestly don’t have the money to send him every single day. Bus fare alone is very costly, and PATH money is small. Bogle does not stop from school regularly and he does not stop from school on the important days. He would stop on Fridays when nothing much is going on in school.*

Carl’s school attendance records reflect a different picture from what was outlined by him and his mother. His records showed that his attendance improved when he started living with his mother in January 2016, however, he still did not attend school every day while living with her as claimed. Carl stated:

*I did not attend school regularly when I was living with my father because he had no money to send me to school. Since I started living with my mother in January, I have been coming to school every day. I attended school badly when I lived with my father. When I lived with my father I had to take the bus to get to school, sometimes he had no money for me to take the bus. I now walk to school from my mother’s house.*

Carl’s Mother Miss Carson stated that:

*For the first term in grade six his attendance was very poor because he was living with his father who carelessly, could not afford to send him to school regularly. Since he started living with me in January 2016, he has been attending school almost every day. He only stopped from school a few times when I was dead broke. I am**not financially stable; however the Path money helped me send him to school from time to time.*

Carl’s attendance did not improve by chance; his persistent absence raised alarm at the school. As such, a meeting was held where his parents were given the ultimatum to send him to school regularly or Child Development Agency (CDA) would become involved.

*In a conversation with his teacher, I became aware that as a consequence of his irregular attendance, Carl’s parents were summoned to a meeting at the school by the guidance counselor and his teacher. The decision made was that they should ensure that Carl attends school regularly or child services would be sent to their homes for educational neglect. Miss Craig said that his parents were selfish people who don’t care much about their son (taken from observation transcript).*

Attitude towards Fridays:

The class teachers’ attendance registers and PATH’s attendance verification record form showed Friday as the day when the boys were mostly absent from school. For the entire grade six academic school year, Adam was absent for twenty-one (21) Fridays; Bogle was absent for nineteen (19) Fridays and Carl was absent for seventy-one (71) Fridays. The frequent absenteeism on Fridays was seen as a normal occurrence among boys on PATH within the primary school. In reference to this, Miss Dale, the primary school principal stated, “*it is the norm for boys on PATH to stay away from school especially on Fridays. More girls attend school on Fridays”.* Further examination of the data showed that the boys’ parents seemed unperturbed about their sons’ frequent absenteeism on Fridays, as they considered it to be the least important day of the week at school when not much teaching and learning occurred.

*“Friday is not so serious at his school anyways”* (Miss Ali, Adam’s mother)*.*

*“He would stop on Fridays when nothing much is going on in school”* (Miss Black, Bogle’s mother).

The information gathered through my observations in the field, contradicted the popular belief that Fridays were the least important day of the week at the school. In fact, this popular belief is far from the reality in grade six, as Fridays were just as academically focused as the other days of the week, especially since the boys were due to sit their GSAT examinations.

*Grade six students adhered to the half hour’s lunch break given, although the time only allowed them to eat quickly and use the bathroom. Teachers had expressed that “the grade six curricula was intense and that GSAT is just around the corner so they had no time to waste.” At the end of lunch time, the bell is rings; students say their prayer of thanksgiving and go back to the rudiments of the grade six lessons. I also noticed that adhering to the lunch bell schedule and eating lunch on time in order to get back to the lesson was still practiced after GSAT examination. From my observation, grade six was the most disciplined grade in the school.*

Breaches in PATH’s Attendance Condition:

All the boys breached PATH’s 85% attendance condition several times in the grade six academic school year, as they were absent from school for more than three days in a month without valid reasons (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003). A perusal of the teachers’ registers of attendance showed that Adam was in breach of the condition in December 2015, February 2016 and March 2016. Bogle was in breach of the condition in December 2015 and April 2016. Of the three boys, Carl had the most breaches; he had breaches in attendance in all ten months for the academic school year except in March 2016.

PATH’s penalty for breaches or non-compliance of the attendance condition, can result in a reduction in PATH’s monetary benefits as well as temporary or permanent stoppage of all benefits to beneficiaries. In light of this, PATH’s social worker, Miss Peters stated:

*Sometimes parents get $ 800 instead of the full $2090.00 because of non-compliance. If this continues, the computer programme moves these students from active to inactive. Inactive means that the child is no longer registered on the system as a PATH beneficiary. This means that the parents will no longer get monetary benefits and the child will no longer get lunch benefits at the school. The child’s name will no longer be on the PATH list nor will it be on the school list for PATH benefits. To stop this penalty, parents can come to the PATH office and explain with valid proof (e.g. Doctors’ Certificates etc.) their reason for non-compliance. If parents give a strong believable reason for their children’s non-compliance, then a letter is sent from the PATH office to the school stating that the child was reinstated into the system. Reinstated status means that the child will start receiving their full monetary and lunch benefits from PATH as long as they are complying again (See Miss Peters’ response to question # 9 in interview transcript).*

Since all the parents received full monetary benefits for their sons throughout the grade six academic year, no penalties were applied by PATH’s governing body for breaches committed.

Miss Ali, Adam’s mother states “*I have not gotten PATH benefit only one time in 2014 because he had Chikungunya (chik V) and could not get out of bed for about three weeks. He was out of school for so long because the sickness nearly killed him. I am glad him alright now. To God be the glory. When he went back to school he continued to receive his PATH lunch . When I went to the PATH office they gave me the money”*

Miss Black, Bogle’s mother also states “*I have not stopped receiving PATH benefits however the money had decreased to $ 800.00 once when he was in grade two. I did not query the reason as I didn’t give PATH any money to put down. I have been getting all his benefits from grade three to present”.*

Miss Carson,Carl’s mother states, “*I have never stopped receiving PATH benefit…*”

Like PATH’s governing body, the primary school administration also did not apply any penalty for non-compliance. Beneficiaries continued to receive their PATH lunches at school, as the principal believed that implementing a penalty was not the school’s responsibility.

*When there is consistent absenteeism parents are called in and warned sternly. I try to understand their situation first. If I was regimental most of the boys would have lost their PATH benefits as they are the ones who are mostly non-compliant. I give them chances to maintain their PATH benefits. After being warned I check to see if there is any improvement in their attendances. If there is no improvement in their attendances after much warning then I allow them to lose their PATH benefits (****Dr. Dolcie, primary school guidance counsellor)****.*

*I try not to look at the**matter of non-compliance as I believe that this responsibility lies with the PATH office. We give the children the lunch and that is our responsibility. We however threaten the children that they will not get any more PATH lunches if they don’t come to school regularly. The guidance counsellors sometimes make home visits to investigate causes of the persistent absence. We call in the parents to talk to them but that’s it. At the end of the day the decision to stop their PATH benefits lies with the PATH office* ***(Miss Dale’s, primary school principal)****.*

*The change I would make is to put in more accountability measures for those who have not been complying with the attendance rule of PATH. There are children that are not complying with the attendance rule of PATH and they are still on the programme. The penalty of the PATH condition is not being enforced**(****Mr Ben, Bogle’s Teacher)****.*

Improvement in Attendance:

All the boys believed that PATH helped improved their school attendances. According to Adam “*If I was not on PATH I would come to school three or four days out of the week. My mother is not working so she uses the PATH money to send me to school”.* Similarly, Bogle stated *“If I was not getting PATH, I would attend school less frequent. Although my mother works sometimes she can’t afford to send me to school every day”.* Carl also responded:

*If I didn’t have my PATH benefit it would affect my schooling badly. My father never has money to send me to school because he doesn’t care. When my father gives me bus fare to come to school I am happy that I still get PATH lunch. The PATH lunch helps me not to be hungry so bad. Sometimes when I go home my father still does not give me anything to eat because he has no money. When my mother doesn’t have any money I can go to school because I get lunch at school.*

In the samebreath*,* the boys’ mothers, as well as staff members from the primary school, maintained that PATH helped to improve school attendance.

Miss Ali (Adam’s mother) stated *“…PATH money really helped me to send him to school regularly…”*

Miss Black (Bogle’s mother) stated“*PATH helps me out with his schooling*…”

Miss Carson (Carl’s mother) stated“*…Path money helped me to send him to school from time to time*…”

Miss Abe, (Adam’s teacher) stated *“PATH**has impacted attendance somewhat. When the school was giving PATH lunches for only three days, boys would attend school for three days only. For the remaining two days they were absent. Now that the school is giving PATH lunch for five days you would see them for most of the days in the week. PATH benefits certainly helped with attendance a lot”*

Dr. Dolcie, primary school guidance counsellor stated *“PATH benefits have definitely helped in improving the attendance for our boys here at the school”*

Mrs. Peters, PATH’s social worker stated *“PATH helps to improve attendance but the attendance may not be within the full stipulation of the PATH condition of not missing school for more than three (3) days per month –especially among the boys”*

Despite the fact that all three boys did not comply with PATH’s attendance condition of maintaining at least 85% attendance for each of the three school terms, there was a popular belief that PATH led to improvement in attendance. Improvements in the boys’ attendance patterns were identified during the period under study. Adam had a clear improvement in his attendance across the three terms. Adam’s attendance was 82.7% in term one; 83.1% in term two; and 88.5% in term three. Bogle’s attendance fluctuated across the three terms. However, his highest attendance was in term two which showed improvement from his term one attendance. His attendance was 84.0% in the first term; 88.8% in the second term; and 83.4% in the third term. Carl’s attendance also varied across the three terms. His attendance in term one was 47.3%; in term two it was 66.0% and in term three it was 62.2%. Carl’s attendance in terms two and three showed a vast improvement over his attendance in term one.

**The High School Boys’ Attendance**

Meeting PATH’s condition:

Among all six boys studied, Tom, from the high school, was the only boy that met PATH’s 85% attendance condition in all three school terms. Tom not only met the condition but surpassed it in each term. In term one, Tom’s attendance was 100%; in term two it was 96.7%; and in term three it was 100%. The other two high school boys (Felix and Frank) did not meet PATH’s attendance condition. Frank’s attendance was closer to the requirement, in all three terms, than Felix’s attendance. In fact, Frank met PATH’s 85% attendance in two of the three school terms, whilst Felix met PATH’s 85% attendance in only one of the three terms. Felix’s attendance was 81.2% in term one; in term two it was 78.4%; and in term three it was 100%. Frank’s attendance was 90.7% in term one; 65.4% in term two; and 93.3% in term three (*taken from teachers’ attendance records and the boys’ progress report cards*).

Streaming in relation to school attendance:

The investigation also revealed that at the end of their eleventh grade academic school year, only two of the three boys (Tom and Felix) attained over 85% average school attendance. The third boy (Frank), attained 83.1% average end-of-year attendance *(taken from teachers’ attendance records and the boys’ progress report cards).* Of the three high school participants, Tom’s end-of-year attendance rate was the highest at 99.0%. Felix achieved the second highest rate at 86.0%. Frank’s end-of-year attendance rate of 83.1% was the lowest. Also, it seemed that higher-streamed classes correlated with higher school attendance rates among the three high school boys. Tom who was in a higher-streamed grade eleven class attended school more regularly than Felix and Frank who were from the lower-streamed grade eleven class.

Reasons for absence:

The boys’ pattern of attendance were influenced by two factors; their attitudes towards school and the level of parental/financial support they received. Economic hardship was the dominant reason given for absences at the high school level, mainly for two of the three boys, Felix and Frank. Tom, who seldom missed school (99.0% end-of-year averaged attendance), stated “*I try not to stop from school because I love school. I don’t like to stay at home. Home is boring. School is much more fun for me. I enjoy school. I only stop when I am extremely ill”*. Felix, whose end of academic year’s attendance was 86.0%, said “*I come to school every day. I only stopped when there is no money in the household to send us to school*”. Frank, with an end of academic year’s attendance of 83.1%, stated “*I usually attend school for the whole five days of every week. But there are times when my parents can’t find the bus fare for me to travel school. This only happened once in a while”*

The parents’ responses supported the boys’ reasons given for their attendance patterns. Tom’s mother, Miss Thomas, said “*My son only stops from school when he is sick. He loves school and so I try my hardest to make sure he is always in school”.* Miss Francis, Felix’s mother, stated, “*Whenever he is absent from school I really have no money at all to send him to school as I am a single parent. I don’t stop him from school for any other reasons”****.*** Miss. Faurkner, Frank’s mother also stated“*My children usually attend school every day but sometimes I struggle to find bus fare... to send them to school daily. I try my hardest for them to attend school regularly”.*

Breaches in PATH’s condition:

The teachers’ register of attendance showed Fridays as the day when Felix and Frank were frequently absent from school. Felix was absent for twenty-one (21) Fridays. Frank was absent for twenty-nine (29) Fridays. In fact, Felix and Frank were the only two high school boys that breached PATH’s attendance condition by missing school for more than three days in a month. Felix was absent for more than three days in the months of September, January and February; while Frank breached the requirement in September, January, February and April. Tom was the only high school boy that never breached the PATH attendance condition, as he was absent for only two days, a Thursday and a Friday throughout the year.

Receiving Full Benefits:

There was no penalty applied by the PATH office or the school administration to the two boys (Felix and Frank) for breaching the PATH’s attendance condition, as their parents got full monetary benefits throughout the grade eleven academic year. Miss Francis, Felix mother stated:

*Only once, when he was smaller. I had to go to the PATH office and explain to them*

*that it’s because of sickness why he didn’t go to school. This only happened one time*

*as I can’t afford for them to loose their PATH benefits. We depend on that money. I*

*am not working so PATH help my kids.*

Miss. Faurkner, Frank’s mother stated:

“*I have never stopped receiving PATH benefits because my children attend school every day. I received my PATH benefits from the ATH machine because sometimes when you join the line to collect the money at the office, some people get into fights and I don’t tolerate that”*

The boys also got their lunch benefits at school on a daily basis. Felix stated “*I get my PATH lunch whenever I come to school. Once I get my lunch ticket I normally get my PATH lunch”*. Similarly, Frank stated “*I get lunch every day when I am at school*”. The school administration did not penalize any of the students for breaches, as they believed that the meals prepared for PATH students may be the only cooked meal they ate each day. Mr Greg (high school guidance counselor) stated:

*We give students a verbal warning. We also talk to the parents to let them know about PATH terms and condition. We don’t take them off the PATH programme in a blink of an eye as we know that some of them really need the benefits. Students get their lunches regardless of compliance because the PATH meal is the only cook meal some of them get for the day.*

Similarly, Mr. Gayle Green (The high school principal) stated:

*We don’t look at that aspect. We only feed our PATH students here. A hungry child is a hungry child and it’s hard to tell a hungry child that he should not eat because he was non-compliant. Once the students are at school they are entitled to their PATH lunches and that’s what I instructed my staff to do.*

Awareness of PATH’s Condition:

Since Felix and Frank breached PATH’s attendance condition several times within their eleven grade year, it would appear that they were unaware of the requirement. However, this was not the case. My conversations with the high school boys confirmed that they understood the terms and conditions of PATH.

Tom stated “*I know about it from school. The guidance counsellors explain the programme to us. They told us that we are required to come to school every day”*

Felix stated *“My mother has not explained in depth, but she said that it sometimes help her to send us to school. It also helps with transportation. I understand that I am required to come to so every day so I can continue to get these benefits”*

Frank stated “*My mother encourages me to come to school every day and ensure that my name is marked in the register to ensure that we get the PATH money and the PATH lunch at school. I go to my form teacher to get my name mark daily”*

Nevertheless, Felix and Frank felt comfortable with their attendance patterns. The matter of being absent or breaching the PATH’s attendance condition, did not spark concern in our conversations nor did I observed this in their facial expressions. In light of this, Felix mentioned that, “*he receives PATH benefit regardless of his absence”.* Frank also states “*I have never been denied lunch from my school*”

Improvement in attendance:

All the high school boys established that PATH led to an improvement in their school attendance. Tom stated “*If I didn’t get PATH benefits it would definitely affect my attendance as I would not get any bus fare to come to school”*. Similarly, Felix stated, “*PATH helps, but I would still come to school without it. I would probably come to school three times per week instead of five times per week. So yes PATH helps.*” Frank also stated “*PATH benefits help my school attendance. Although I get lunch money from my mother most times there are times when she doesn’t have money to give us. I am able to come to school because lunch is provided for me at school. This saves my mother the trouble to find both lunch money and bus fare. PATH improves my school attendance.”* Such beliefs were not only voiced by the high school boys. This belief echoed in the interviews with the form teachers, principal, guidance counsellor, as well as the boys’ mothers.

*“Tom attends school every day. He is always at school so I guess PATH helped his school attendance”* ***(Mr. Taylor, Tom’s Form Teacher).***

*“My form is a low streamed class so they don’t put out enough effort to come to school on a daily basis. But I can definitely tell you that PATH increases students’ attendance. The lunch really helped their turn out to school. Even when school is near to the holiday period, the attendance is strong for PATH boys because the free PATH lunch is available to them”* ***(Mr. Fowler, Felix and Frank’s Form Teacher)***

*“There are some male students that comply very well with the attendance condition so PATH boosts school attendance. But some students have challenges with finding the money for transportation to come to school and this is one of the issues that interfered with compliance”* ***(Mr. Gayle Green, High School Principal).***

*“The PATH lunch help males to come to school more often. When students are supposed to be on study leave at home, they still come to school for their PATH lunch. Sometimes these boys ask for extra tickets for more lunch. Most of the boys try to come to school regularly because the PATH benefit is important to them. But most times the issue of transportation cost interferes with school attendance for male students. There are a number of male PATH students who want to come to school more often but transportation is very expensive. There are times when some simply can’t leave their homes because of the violence that plaque the community in which they live”* ***(Mr. Greg, high School Guidance Counsellor).***

*“Before PATH I tried to send him to school but sometimes life is rough. Sometimes I just don’t have the money to send him to school every day. Since PATH the attendance is much better. The money that PATH sends me and the lunch that he gets at school really boosted his attendance. Only when he is badly ill he is out of school” (****Ms. Thomas, Tom’s mother).***

*“The attendance is better since he is on PATH. The PATH money helped my children to come to school. I still give my children a little lunch money although they get PATH lunch. I have to give them money because anything can happen while at school and they need money to spend” (****Ms. Francis, Felix’s mother).***

*“My son goes to school most times before PATH, since getting PATH benefits, his attendance has definitely increased. To be honest, PATH helps me to send him to school a little better”* ***(Ms. Faurkner, Frank’s mother).***

In spite of Felix and Frank not meeting PATH’s 85% attendance condition, improvements in all three high school boys’ attendance patterns occurred. Tom started with a 100% attendance rate in term one, which fell to a 96.7% in term two, and returned to 100% in term three. Felix’s attendance was highest in term three, at 100%. This was a vast improvement from his term one attendance at a rate of 81.2%, as well as from his term two attendance rate which was 78.4%. Like Felix, Frank’s highest attendance was in term three. His term three attendance rate was 93.3%, a slight improvement over his term one attendance rate of 90.7%. However, there was a wider improvement gap between Frank’s term three attendance rate of 93.3% and his attendance rate in term two of 65.4% (*Taken from teachers’ attendance record as well as the boys’ progress report cards)*.

Comparing both school boys’ attendances:

A comparison between the two groups of boys revealed that the high school boys attended school more regularly than the primary school boys. The three primary school boys’ attendance rates for the year were: Adam 84’6 %; Bogle 85.3% and Carl 57.4%. Collectively, they achieved an average attendance rate of 75.7%. The high school boys’ attendance rates were: Tom 99.0%; Felix 86.0% and Frank 83.9%. Their collective rates resulted in an average attendance rate of 89.6%. PATH benefits, therefore, had a greater impact on attendance at the high school level than at the primary school level.

**Academic Performances at the Primary Level**

The School’s Pass Mark:

At the primary school, the pass mark for all testing was set at 80%. This pass mark was set because it was believed that students who maintain a minimum score of 80% in internal examinations are more likely to perform well in the external GSAT examination, thus getting placements in traditional high schools. Also, students who maintained scores of 80% and above, are rewarded with certificates and trophies at a formal prize-giving ceremony in front of an audience of mostly teachers and families.

*The pass mark for GSAT is 80%. Students who maintained an average of 80% and above are rewarded at prize given ceremonies here at the school. In the GSAT examination students who get this 80% pass mark are rewarded by going to a traditional high school of their choice. Students’ parents are notified who are performing below the 80% average. Teachers make recommendations as to the intervention to help the low performing students* ***(Miss Abe, Adam’s teacher).***

*We set our academic standards at 80% because this is the grade that represents outstanding performance on the GSAT examination. Our grade six programme is very intense as we are preparing students to do well on their GSAT examinations and in the high school where they will be going. Students who perform well within the academic standards are recognized at our prizes giving ceremonies where families and friends share the moment. Those students who are underperforming parents are called to the school in order to discuss possible solutions to their underperformance (****Miss Dale, Primary School Principal)****.*

At the school, teaching was focused on preparing students to perform well on the GSAT examinations. Thus, the lessons concentrated more on language arts, communication tasks, mathematics, science and social studies, as these were the main areas of testing on the GSAT examination. Religious education, physical education, guidance, Spanish and music were taught at a lesser extent in the classes.

*In grade six, mock examinations and in-class tests were given regularly (mostly on a monthly basis) in six subject areas. Most of these mock examinations and in class test scores were recorded in the teachers’ mark-books. The teachers had expressed that regular testing was essential preparation and practice for the GSAT examinations. Although the GSAT examinations were given in five subject areas (mathematics, language arts, communication tasks, social studies and science), the schools’ tests and mock examinations were given in six subject areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, religious education and communication tasks) A reading test was only administered by the teachers towards the end of each term. The school’s pass mark for grade six students was eighty per cent (80%). The school’s expected mean/ average score for students should also be in the 80 percentile range (taken from observation transcript).*

*The schools’ preparation for GSAT examination seemed to be rigid and intense, as students were seldom seen out-side. Grade six students were only allowed to exit their classroom for lunch time and bathroom breaks. Of all the grades (1-6), grade six students and teachers were the last set of persons to leave the school’s compound. Most grade six (6) students also attended school on Saturdays for extra classes. The teachers teach mostly by drilling students on GSAT content. Such rudiment started in September and continued until students sat the GSAT Examinations, for two days in mid-March (taken from observation transcript).*

The Boys’ Academic Performance:

Teachers’ academic records as well as the progress report cards showed that none of the three primary school boys met the 80% academic criteria in mock examinations or in-class tests. Adam, from the top streamed grade six class, achieved test scores over the academic year that ranged from 42% to 75%. Bogle, from the second-streamed grade six class, earned test scores for the same period that ranged from 33% to 63%. Carl, from the lowest-streamed grade six class, achieved test scores that ranged from 33% to 52%.

Reading Level:

Reading was another academic area in which the boys were weak. Thus, none of the boys read at the grade six level. In terms one and two, Adam was reading at the grade 4 level. His reading level improved to grade five in term three. Bogle and Carl read at the same levels throughout their grade six academic year. In term one they were reading at the grade 4 level. In terms two and three they were reading at the grade five level (*taken from teachers’ academic records as well as the boy’s* *progress report cards*).

Academic performance:

Adam and Bogle seemed unconcerned that they were scoring below the school’s 80% academic standard. Their interview responses were more reflective of satisfaction, rather than dissatisfaction, with their academic performance. Adam stated “*I get good grades on by tests so I am not doing badly. I use to get an average of 50’s and 60’s from September to December. I start to improve in February and I am now getting in my 70’s.”* Similarly, Bogle stated that *“I think I am doing alright academically. I am getting 60’s and 70’s in my class.*” Teachers’ reports on their academic performances were contrary to their beliefs.Miss Abe, Adam’s teacher, stated that*“He is lazy. He has the potential but he does not work hard enough. His average thus far is in the fifties (50’s) and this isn’t enough for him to go the traditional high school of his choice”* Mr. Ben, Bogle’s teacher, also stated “*His performance fluctuates. His performance is not satisfactory”*

Carl was the only boy from the sample who seemed perturbed by his academic performance during the interview. He stated *“I am doing badly in school because I am slow and this is because I did not go to school much when I was living with my father”.* His acknowledgement of his poor (bad) academic performance is similar to his teachers’ report. Miss Craig, Carl’s teacher, stated“*The boy is very weak academically. Most times he has incomplete work and his average scores are in the twenties (20’s) and thirties (30’s) percentile range”.*

GSAT Placements:

At the school, high academic performance, strong parental involvement as well as extra lesson classes, increased the chance of students’ success on GSAT examination. The three PATH participants studied have not met these requirements.

The parents’ direct participation in their son’s educational experiences was minimal. They seldom visited the school to have dialogue with teachers. They were even absent on consultation days where parents were given information on their children’s progress along with measures that could be taken to improve their sons’ performance.

*Progress report cards reflecting each child’s academic performance and behavior in school were given to parents twice for the school year. The first progress report card shows a student’s academic performance and behavior for the first term (September to December) and is issued to parents in the month of February. The second report card shows the student’s academic performance and behaviour for the second and third terms and is issued to parents in June. Parents received these reports cards during a one-day forum called ‘Consultation Day’. On this day, teachers and parents discussed the child’s strengths and weaknesses as well as measures for intervention to rectify identified problems. Parents were also given the opportunity to consult with their children’s teachers in relation to academic performance and conduct on Thursdays of every week. Not many parents of PATH students made themselves available, either for Consultation Day or on Thursdays. The teachers expressed concerns that they are not seeing the parents of the children, who displayed behavioural problems and /or not performing academically, at these events. They mentioned that they often times see parents of children who are high achievers in school. None of the boys’ parents were present for the ‘Consultation Day’ held in February and June. Also, none of the boys’ parents came out on Thursdays to enquire about their son’s academic performances. Adam and Carl mentioned that their mothers had no money to come to school. Bogle told his teacher that his mother had to go to work. One teacher expressed in anger that, “these are the mentality of poor parents. If it was a party or a dance, they would show up. If parents don’t care about children’s education what must we teachers do?” (taken from observation transcript).*

It was found that the boys did not participate in extra lesson classes as a result of lack of funds.

*Most GSAT students attended extra lesson classes during the week after school dismissed. They also attended school on Saturdays for extra classes. The three PATH boys did not attend extra classes during the week or on Saturdays to further prepare for the GSAT examination. They communicated to their teachers that their parents could not afford to pay for the extra classes. Even though their teachers gave them the opportunity to come to the classes free of cost, they did not show up. Teachers expressed that the boys had no ambition and they just don’t care. Teachers explained that extra classes are important in helping the children eliminate weaknesses in some content areas, master content areas and to build their confidence. In these extra classes, I observed that the lessons were based primarily on drilling students to perform well on GSAT. Students were given more personalized attention as well as more GSAT pass papers to practice during these extra classes. I found out through conversations with the boys, that their mothers had no lunch money to give them if they attended the extra lesson classes on Saturdays. From my observation, the boys seemed uninterested in these extra classes as they were unable to give a valid reason for not staying at the extra classes during the week (taken from observation transcript).*

Since none of the boys got an 80% average score in their GSAT examination, they were not awarded placements at the traditional high school (see explanation of traditional high school in chapter one) of their first choice. Hence, they were all placed at high schools that accepted students with lower GSAT scores. Adam from 6A, the first- streamed grade six class, was placed in an up-graded high school; this was his third choice. His GSAT average score was 60%. Bogle from 6B, the second-streamed grade six class, earned a 57% GSAT average score. He was also placed in an upgraded high school (see explanation of upgraded high school in chapter one) that was also his third choice. With a 29% GSAT average score, Carl from the third-streamed grade six class, did not get a placement at any of his seven choices. He was placed, by the Ministry of Education, in a primary and junior high school programme for slow learners. None of the boys were happy with their GSAT placements (*taken from GSAT result score sheet, teachers’ academic records as well as the boys’ progress reports cards*)

*At the school, only parents or guardian were allowed to collect the GSAT results. Neither the boys nor their parents were happy with the high school placements because they did not get placements in traditional high schools. At this time, parents initiated a meeting with teachers to talk about the boys’ academic performances and getting them transferred to better schools. After parents left the school compound, the comments from some of the teachers were “These parents really take us for fools, is now they coming to talk about their children’s performances, they must be bat shit mad”, “What them and their children worked for is where they are going”, “They don’t even send their sons to extra classes”, “I am not even entertaining those careless parents”. In the end, the boys attended the schools they assigned to as it was extremely difficult, with their low GSAT grades, to get transfers to traditional high schools (taken from observation transcript).*

Graduation:

The boys received their primary school certificates at the school’s graduation ceremony. None of the boys were given awards for either academics or attendance. Mr. Ben, Bogle’s teacher states “*It is mandatory for all grade six students to graduate with school leaving certificates regardless of their academic performance…”.* Miss Craig, Carl’s teacher also states that:

*Eighty per cent (80%) is the pass mark for grade six (6) students. Although a child from the lower stream class may not perform at the targeted 80% level, they are given incentives for their performance if they have made a tremendous improvement example from 30% to 70%. The lower stream classes have more PATH students and more boys so this is a way of motivating them to do better academically (taken from transcript).*

Nonetheless, the boys seemed to have enjoyed themselves at the graduation ceremony, as they smiled and took pictures with their teachers, family members and friends.

*The graduation ceremony was held in the school’s auditorium. Students and teachers practiced for two months to get the graduation marches organized and synchronized. The valedictorian chosen for this graduation was a girl in Adam’s class who was not a beneficiary of PATH. She received perfect GSAT scores and received numerous awards for outstanding academic performance throughout the school year. At the ceremony, Adam, Bogle and Carl received graduation certificates from their teachers on the podium. Parents took myriads of pictures to commemorate the moment. The smiles and poses were by no means limited as they changed with every snap of the camera (taken from observation transcript).*

PATH’s impact on academic performance:

Throughout the grade six academic year, none of the primary school boys met the school’s 80% pass mark in any of their tests. As such, none of the boys graduated with satisfactory grades in keeping with the school’s academic criteria. In this respect, PATH seemed to not have an impact on their academic performance. This finding is supported by feedback from the primary school staff, as all held the view that PATH benefits had no impact on academic achievement.

*Path has not been helping academic performances; PATH only feed the children… Most Children who are on PATH doesn’t perform well academically. They don’t care. I remember that there was one prize last year when a particular entrepreneur wanted to give a scholarship to a grade six boy at graduation who was on PATH and had an 85% average; it was so embarrassing, as we could not find anyone within the entire grade six across both shifts to give this scholarship. The PATH office gives scholarships every year for high performance and most times these scholarships goes to the girls. I have been at this school for fifteen years now and I have never seen any PATH boys received this scholarship. The boys simply don’t care. The school should take a stance where only those students who do well academically should be allowed to graduate* ***(Miss Abe, Adam’s Teacher)***

*Boys on PATH do not care for academics much. PATH benefit does not help their academic performance* ***(Mr. Ben, Bogle’s Teacher)***

*PATH does not play any role in raising academic performance. PATH does not look at the students’ academic performances. Even if students come to school every day, there is no correlation with PATH’s students’ attendances and their academic performances. Government has not set any standard with respect to academics for students who are getting PATH benefits. Academically, there are no expectations from students or parents. PATH is just welfare without any academic attachments and this mentality is passed down to beneficiaries. PATH sparks a free mentality as there is no academic expectation from the government…* ***(Miss Craig, Carl’s Teacher).***

*I must admit that children who are on PATH in this school are those with the lowest academic performance. A lot of children who are on PATH have from minor to major learning disabilities. Very few children who are achieving academically are on PATH and these are mostly girls. The lower stream classes are packed with more male PATH students than the upper stream classes* ***(Dr. Dolcie, Guidance Counsellor*) (***taken from interview transcript****)***

**Academic Performance at the High School level**

The School’s Pass Mark:

The high school’s pass mark for all testing was 50%. Grade eleven students must pass a minimum of five subjects in the school’s end-of-academic-year internal examinations, inclusive of mathematics and English Language, to be awarded a high school diploma and to graduate from the school. In light of this, Mr. Taylor, Tom’s form teacher stated:

*Grade eleven students need to pass five subjects in the end of year examinations including Mathematics and English Language to be able to get a high school diploma as well as to graduate. The pass mark is 50%. So if students are unsuccessful in passing five internal examinations they can’t graduate. Although passing CSEC examination is a great achievement, it is not a prerequisite for eleven graders to graduate. Our students usually pass their CSEC examinations. If students simply can’t pass the five internal examinations they do not graduate nor do they get a high school diploma. These students are practically young adults so they have the power in their hands to do well. When students are not performing up to the academic standard of the school their parents are called in to discuss the matter.*

Similarly, Mr. Fowler, Felix and Frank’s form teacher stated:

*CSEC is not a requirement for graduating at this school. Students, who cannot afford to pay for the CSEC examinations, can get all their CSEC examinations paid for by the government if they maintained a 50% pass mark for those particular subjects right through grade 10 and grade eleven. I am not saying that CSEC Examinations aren’t important; it is important as most of our students get good passing grades in this examination. Students therefore need to pass five internal examinations to be awarded a high school diploma at our school. English and Maths must be a part of the five internal examinations. The pass mark is 50% as well. If 11 grade students fail to meet this criterion they can’t graduate and they will only be awarded a school leaving certificate. I always motivate my students to do well. Most of my boys have been failing miserably and they don’t even care. Teachers have been motivating them throughout their high school lives and some still practice delinquent behaviours and non-performance in class. If they fail they have to deal with the consequences of coming to high school for five years and not achieving. We have been talking to them repeatedly and if failure is the road they take we can’t do anything more to help them.*

Academic Performances:

Even though the boys believed that they have been performing well academically, teachers reports, as well as their academic records, contradicted this belief. In light of the boys beliefs Tom stated that *“I am doing well. Most of my subjects I score over 50%. 50% is the pass mark for the school tests.* Felix states that *“My grades are like 65%; 80% and 70%. The subject that I am not good at I get 65% and under which I believe isn’t bad because I pass them”.* Frank also states that *“I am a high achiever. I pass most of my test”.* The teachers’ beliefs were certainly different from the boys’ beliefs as they candidly outlined that the boys need to do better academically*.* Mr. Taylor, Tom’s teacher stated that *“He tries but he is not a high achiever. He needs improvement. He is very polite and mannerly. I have not heard any teachers say anything negative about him. They all seemed to agree that he is a hardworking student.* Similarly, Mr. Fowler, Felix and Frank’s Form Teacher states,*“Felix wastes a lot of time. He has the potential to do better but he is very disrespectful and he only does his work when he feels like it and this is not good enough. Frank is a little bit better than Felix in terms of behaviour and academic performance. Frank tries but he needs to improve on his academic performance”.*

None of the high school boys maintained the 50% pass mark score in any of the subject areas. Hence, throughout the eleventh grade academic school year, all three boys only passed some of their in-class monthly tests and some of their other examinations. Importantly, none of the boys have succeeded in passing five subjects in the school’s final eleventh grade internal examinations. For the six subjects pursued in the schools’ internal examinations, Tom’s final grades reflect passes in only three subject areas. Felix sat seven subjects in the final internal examinations and passed only four. Frank pursued six subjects in the final internal examinations but was only successful in three. All the academic scores from their teachers’ academic records as well as their progress reports are shown below.

|  |
| --- |
| *Tom’s Academic Performance:* |
| *Tom pursued six subjects in fifth form. These were social studies; food and beverage; electrical installation; electronic documentation preparation; human and social biology and mathematics. He was not recommended to pursue English Language as he did not attend classes.*  *Tom’s first progress report card revealed all his test scores in the first term. On September’s tests, Tom surpassed the school’s 50% passing grade in just two subject areas- receiving 60% in electronics documentation Preparation and 80% in human and social biology. He failed two subjects- he got 44% in mathematics and 0% in electrical installation theory. In the month of October, his lowest test scores were 50% in two subjects- social studies and electronic documentation preparation. His highest score was 100% which he received in human and social biology. Hence, he did not fail any test in October. In the Month of November, Tom only failed social studies in which he scored 44%. In the month of December, he failed four subjects- 44% in social studies, 0% in electrical installation practical, 38% in electrical installation theory and 38% in mathematics.*  *On the second/final progress report card, Tom’s student average was 60.50 %. Tom received more than 50% average score in all but two subject areas only- he got 46% average score in social studies and 49% average score in mathematics.*  *Tom passed three subjects in the schools’ examinations. He scored 62% in both the electrical installation practical and theory; 55% in human and social biology; 65% in food and beverage theory and 95% in food and beverage practical. He failed three subjects. He got 43% in social studies; 7% in electronic document preparation and 42% in mathematics.* |
| *Felix’s Academic Performance:* |
| *Felix pursued seven subjects in eleven grade. These subjects were social studies; plumbing; metal work; creative craft; human and social biology; English Language; and mathematics.*  *Felix’s first-term’s progress report card revealed that in the month of September he surpassed the pass mark of 50% in all his subject areas except for plumbing theory and creative craft, where he received 0% in both subjects. In the month of October, Felix only failed creative craft in which he scored a 45%. In the month of November, Felix received a failing grade in two subjects only. He received 0% in both plumbing theory and metal work theory. In the month of December, Felix passed all his subjects. His passing scores ranged from 53% to 70%. The 53% he received in metal work theory and plumbing theory. He received the 70% in Mathematics.*  *On the second/final report card, Felix’s average was 47.22%. Felix received below 50% in four of his subject areas. He received 38% in social studies; 30 % in plumbing practical; 15 % in plumbing theory; and a 41% in Creative Craft. Felix also received over 50% in five subjects namely metal work practical, metal work theory, English Language, mathematics and human and social biology.*  *Felix’s Final examination grades reflected failure in the following areas: 47% in social studies; 30% in plumbing practical and 8% in plumbing theory; 42% in creative craft. Even though Felix received a 67% for the metal work practical and 27% in metal work theory, he failed the subject as his final average score was 47%. He has, however, superseded the 50 % pass mark in metal work practical where he received a 67%; English Language where he received a 66%; mathematics where he received a 69%; and human and social biology where he received 69% score. Felix was only successful in four subject areas.* |
| *Frank’s Academic Performance:* |
| *Frank pursued six subjects in grade eleven. These were visual arts; social studies; plumbing; English Language; human and social biology and mathematics.*  *On his September tests, Frank passed three subjects in which he scored 75% for visual arts; 90% for English Language; and 53% for human and social biology. He failed social studies with a 20% score; He also failed plumbing in which he got 0%; He failed Mathematics in which he also received 0%. On his October tests, Frank also failed and passed the same subjects as in the month of September. Specifically, he received 80% in both visual arts and English Language. He also received 78% in human and social Biology. On his November’s tests, Frank scored a 72% in visual arts; a 73% in English Language; and a 63% in mathematics. He failed the remaining subjects. In December’s tests, Frank only passed visual arts with a 72%; English Language with 74%; and mathematics with 61%.*  *On the second/final report card, Frank’s student average was 33.14 %. Frank scored over 50% in only two subject areas. He received 82% in visual arts and 65% in English Language.*    *In relation to his final grades, Frank supersedes the 50% passing mark in visual arts, English Language and mathematics. He scored 86% in visual arts; He scored 65% in English Language; and in mathematics he scored 51%. He had failed social studies, plumbing and human and social biology. His final score in social studies was 10%; for plumbing practical and theory, it was 0% and in human and social biology it was 20%. Thus, Frank passed three subjects only.* |

High School Diploma:

It is apparent form the foregoing data that none of the three eleventh grade boys met the school’s 50% academic criteria to pass five subjects (including Mathematics and English Language) in the final internal end-of-year examinations. This resulted in none of the boys qualifying for high school diplomas or the opportunity to participate in the school’s graduation ceremony. The boys only received school leaving certificates, which merely acknowledged that they had spent five years at the school*.*

CSEC Examination:

According to Mr. Gayle Green, the high school principal:

*To graduate, my students need to pass a minimum of five internal examinations. Mathematics and English Language must be inclusive of the five subjects. PATH students and non-PATH students are given many opportunities to succeed here. PATH students in particular get a cooked meal from our canteen every day. They are also able to get all expenses paid on their CSEC examinations if they have been maintaining the 50% passing grade in the subjects throughout the tenth and eleventh grade. We don’t use CSEC passes as pre-requisite for earning our high school diploma. Most of our students perform well in their CSEC examinations because we have hard working teachers who are willing to work with them. We try not to make CSEC examination the main focus for the students as we also allow them to develop a skill so that they can survive, in wider society. We also try as much as possible to in still the right values in them*.

As a result of not maintaining the 50% passing grade in the subjects pursued at the CSEC level, none of the boys qualified for the grant of getting all expenses paid to sit their subjects. Nonetheless, Felix and Frank’s parents financed the three CSEC subjects they were recommended to do by their teachers. Tom was recommended to sit four subjects in the CSEC examinations, but was unable to do so. His mother could not afford to pay his CSEC fees. Further examination of the data revealed that none of the three high school boys passed subjects in the CSEC examinations.

*Tom was recommended to sit Electrical Installation, Food and Nutrition, Mathematics and Social Studies in the CSEC examinations. Although Tom was recommended to sit these subjects, he did not do any, due to financial challenges. His mother could not afford to pay for his subjects. He was also unqualified to have his CSEC subjects fully financed by the government. Tom left high school without passing any subject in CSEC examination. He only received a school leaving certificate for attending the high school for five years. In our conversation he mentioned that he was disappointed. He was hopeful that he was going to get a work and do these subjects at evening classes.*

*Felix was also unqualified for the government CSEC grant. Nonetheless, he was recommended to sit metal work, English Language and mathematics in the CSEC Examinations, which his parents financed. He was unsuccessful in all three. He got a grade four failing grade in all three subjects. Felix was not qualified for a high school diploma nor to participate in the school’s graduation ceremony. He had only received a school leaving certificate. In our conversations Felix mentioned that he was going to further is Metal work skill at the HEART Trust National Training Agency as money is in the metal business.*

*Frank’s parents paid for his three CSEC subjects- visual arts, English and mathematics, as he too was not qualified for the governments’ CSEC grant. He did not pass any of these three subjects as he received a grade four in Visual Arts and Mathematics. He also got a grade five in English Language. In the end he received a school leaving certificate. In our conversations he mentioned that he just don’t know what happened why he failed his CSEC examinations as he always does well. He also mentioned that his uncle was going to pay for him to do five subjects as he is hoping to join the Police Force (taken from teachers’ academic records, progress report card, CSEC results, as well as observation transcript).*

All the mothers were disappointed in their sons’ performance. Such disappointments were expressed at the consultation meetings.

*On both consultation days, parents were given a time slot of fifteen minutes to talk to each subject teacher about their children’s academic performance and behaviour. Only parents, students, teachers and guidance counselors were allowed in this meeting. Regular classes were not in session as a result of the meetings. Students were instructed to come to school with parents to collect their progress report cards, sign the class register, talk to their subject teachers, and go home. All three of the boys’ parents showed up for both consultations days. In a brief conversation about the consultations, Tom’s mother expressed “dissatisfaction in her son’s performance in some subjects.” She also blamed herself for not being able to help him better because of her financial standing. Felix mother expressed “disappointment and disgust in his performance and behaviour.” Felix, however seemed not perturbed by his mother’s concerns. Frank’s mother “expressed not being pleased with both his performance and his behaviour and that he can do much better” (taken from observation transcript)*

Further examination of subject teachers’ comments on the boys’ progress report cards not only revealed that the boys did not perform satisfactorily, but they also provide an understanding as to the parents’ disappointments in their sons’ academic performances. The teachers’ comments are as follows:

*Tom shows interest; he has the potential; greater effort needed; hard-working and capable student; fails to work harder*.

*Felix is* *disruptive student; shows interest; has the potential but fails to work hard; hardworking and capable student; needs to be consistent in his work; minimum effort shown; tries but needs to put more effort in his work.*

*Frank has the potential but fail to work hard; needs to read more widely; stop attending; talks consistently during classes; A hard working and capable student; Shows no interest in the subject; May do better if he focuses and participates in class.*

PATH’s Impact on academic Performance:

The boys’ grades did not meet the school’s academic criteria to qualify them for a high school diploma. In this respect, PATH seemed to not impact on their academic performance/ academic achievement. This analysis aligned with teachers’, guidance counsellor, as well as the PATH social worker’s beliefs that PATH had no impact on academic performance.

*...**Boys on PATH do not care for academics much. PATH benefit does not help their academic performance* …(**Mr. Taylor, Tom’s teacher**).

*The boys waste a lot of time. They have no interest based on what I have seen. They are not intrinsically motivated… Some are only at school because it is safe haven for them from violence in their communities. In terms of coming to school for academic they are not motivated* **(Mr. Fowler, Felix and Frank’s Teacher)**

*There isn’t a wide range of PATH students achieving academically. Most of them do a sitting of only two CSEC examinations in grade eleven. The academic level of these students is low. The teachers put out their energies to move students from low academic level to high academic level but if students don’t care about their performance we simply cannot force them to learn. PATH puts no demand on academic achievement so students just come to school and eat. Only very few boys on PATH in the upper stream do well academically. The majority do not perform***(Mr. Ghion Greg, Guidance Counsellor***).*

*Boys could do better academically but they don’t care much. They are less focused. I don’t think that boys are motivated to achieve. Although PATH came on stream to help children from poverty-I have seen that the benefits that children receive from PATH certainly do not help them to achieve academically. They just want the money and I feel that this attitude comes from the attitude of the parents as some parents are not concerned with education***(Mrs Peters PATH’s Social Worker).**

**Treatment of PATH Male Students in School**

Stigmatization at the primary level:

Stigmatization of PATH boys was a dominant factor that surfaced from the data gathered. This was observed in both school settings; however, it was more dominant in the primary school than the high school. At the primary school, it was particularly dominant in the classroom setting as well as the canteen setting where PATH lunch is prepared and served.

Within the classroom, my first observation in grade six was that lower-streamed grade six classes had more male PATH students than the higher-streamed classes. These observations were also verified by the class teachers’ attendance registers. In class 6A, Miss Abe (Adam’s teacher) had a class of thirty-three (33) students. Of these thirty-three (33) students, seven (7) boys and four (4) girls were beneficiaries of PATH. Mr. Ben’s (Bogle’s teacher) 6B class had a total of thirty-six (36) students. Thirteen (13) boys and five (5) girls in the class were PATH’s beneficiaries. Miss Craig (Carl’s teacher) 6C class comprised of thirty-five (35) students. Seventeen (17) boys and six (6) girls were PATH beneficiaries. Thus, the ratio of male PATH male students to non-PATH students was significantly greater in the lowest streamed class. Also, a greater number of male PATH students could be found sitting at the back of the classrooms. All three participants had their reasons for sitting at the back of the classroom.

*In each of the three grades six classes observed, more PATH students, particularly boys, are in the lower-streamed classes than girls. Also in each class, students are placed in small groups of five to six students according to their academic performance. PATH boys are not only prevalent in the slower groups, but most sat at the back of the class. From the conversation with the teachers they said that it is by choice that the PATH boys sit at the back of the class. Adam and Carl said it helps in preventing their teachers from calling on him so much. Bogle prefers to sit at the back because that’s where his friends sat.*

In the primary school, PATH boys are insulted more than their female counterparts. The most popular insults hurled by the grade six teachers is that PATH boys only come to school to eat PATH lunches. The teachers candidly stated this in their interviews. Similar sentiments were expressed by the boys in their interviews.

*Miss Abe, Adam’s teacher stated, “…The PATH boys just come here to eat the food”.*

*Miss Abe also states,**“Boys who are not on PATH want to go on PATH for the free food; it harbours the concept of a free mentality. Those boys who are on PATH sometimes believe that they should not pay for anything at all. Some of them expect to get everything free”.*

*Mr. Ben, Bogle’s Teacher stated “I think that the boys on PATH are more here for the food than anything else…*

*Miss Craig, Carl’s Teacher**“…The boys are here for the food, that’s what I think and I make no apologies in saying that”*

*My teacher said that some of us just came here for the government’s free food and nothing else. I feel bad when she says this because I am on PATH. I do not come for the free food I come to learn. Some students in my class come for the free food but not me. I come to learn and to pass my GSAT (Adam).*

*Sometimes when we fail a test my teacher tells us that we come to school to only eat the PATH lunches (Bogle).*

*When I**tell my teacher that I don’t understand some of the work, she told me that all I come to school for is to warm the government benches and eat the PATH lunch. This is a lie. If all of us in class come to eat the PATH lunch, we all would not do any class work. We would only come for the food and wait until we finish eating then we would go home. I do not come for the PATH lunch because when you eat it you are still hungry (Carl).*

My observation supports the expressed experiences of the boys in the classrooms as shared above.

*Teachers often told PATH students that they were only at school for the PATH lunch and to warm the government’s benches when they perform poorly on tests. Such insults were frequently hurled towards PATH male students in each class. The girls on PATH are seldom insulted by teachers, as most got satisfactory scores on their tests.*

*In 6C (the low-streamed class), it was observed that there were more boys in the class than girls and most of these boys are on PATH. These students are often called ‘time- wasters; ‘careless; ‘lazy’; and ‘greedy’ by Miss Craig. They were also told that the government was wasting tax payers’ money on them. In each of the three classes observed, it was a common punishment to prevent students from eating their lunches if they did not finish the class activities on time. More PATH students, especially the boys were punished by this method than those students who were not on PATH. PATH male students tried to finish their class activities even if it is not done correctly, so they could be allowed to have lunch. Carl tried to finish his work quickly so he can eat lunch but he seldom gets the activities correct.*

At lunch time, teachers frequently assigned PATH boys the strenuous tasks of collecting and delivering the heavy lunch trays from the canteen and/or the snack shop to their classrooms.

*When the bell rings for lunch break and students have said their grace, two boys from each grade six class are sent to collect all the lunches ordered in their respective class. It is usually PATH boys that collect the lunches. The lunches for each class are usually packed together on a large tray that is identified by the class written on the side of each tray. These lunch trays are heavy as the boys often struggled to take them up the stairs to their classrooms. I have never seen girls taking lunch trays up-stairs to the classes. Girls are only given the responsibility of collecting lunch orders and payments for these orders. Miss Abe (6A teacher and also the grade coordinator) explained to me that she believed that boys had to do the most strenuous work as it teaches them to develop the strength and character of being a man and a good husband which is lacking in our society.*

PATH students are treated like second class-citizens by the canteen staff as discrimination against them presented itself in the preparation and serving of PATH lunches. There were distinct differences between PATH lunches and regular lunches at the primary school, as PATH meals were of a smaller portion size, less attractive and poorly served.

*Some students on PATH were not only insulted by their teachers but also by the canteen staff members who shouted at them daily. I was told by the canteen’s concessionaire that PATH students complained and gave the most trouble at lunch time. There were occasions when few PATH students returned to the canteen to exchange lunches which were incorrect and/or poorly presented but they were chased away by the canteen workers who did not take the time to address their concerns. The utterances of the workers were that the canteen does not exchange lunches and they should eat what they got as all PATH lunches were the same. Few of these students returned to their classes to try and eat the lunch given; some cried and did not eat at all. I observed one student who left his lunch on the canteen counter, hissed his teeth and walked away. This particular child was instructed by the vice-principal to pay for the lunch. The vice- principal then let it be known to the boy that, “this was his punishment for wasting tax payer’s money as well as for hissing his teeth at the canteen worker who has devoted her time and effort to serve them” ( taken from observation transcript).*

*Fried chicken or curried chicken with white rice or rice and peas were served daily. On Wednesdays, stewed turkey neck is added to the daily menu. On Thursdays, hot dog is added and on Fridays, Soup is also added. Whenever canteen staff share these special dishes (stewed turkey neck, hotdogs or soups), students who have purchased their lunches were served first, then PATH students. Whenever these special dishes were insufficient, PATH students were the ones denied those options and consequently were given the regular daily dish of curry chicken or fried chicken with rice for lunch. Students on PATH were given low-grade pieces of chicken or the less favoured parts of the chicken, such as, chicken backs, chicken wings or some other chicken part with little meat. The bony chicken back is, however the meat that was usually provided for PATH students. Only students who purchased their lunches were given bigger cuts of chicken such as the leg, the breast or the thigh. Vegetables were seldom served with these meals, however, if vegetables were prepared it was most times served in the purchased lunches. PATH lunches were served with vegetables only when it was in surplus (taken from observation transcript).*

This treatment was also identified in Miss Craig’s (Carl’s teacher) interview response below:

*Students on PATH feel like they are inferior to the other students who are not on PATH. Sometimes the canteen staffs serve PATH students a different menu from what they ordered. When this happens and students go to exchange the lunches, the canteen staff bark (shout) at them and run them away. They love to tell them that they must take what they get because they are not paying for their lunch. PATH students also complained that the PATH lunch looks unattractive compared to the paid lunches. I have seen PATH students cry as a result of poor presentation of lunches as well as getting a different menu from what they had ordered originally. As a teacher, I have complained about these issues to the principal and vice-principal but nothing is done. They don’t care as I believe that receiving the PATH’s lunch money in the schools’ account is of more importance to them than the complaints of the students. The quality of the PATH lunch is poor as the students are given chicken back instead of lean meat and this is an everyday occurrence. As a result, of this I got into a big argument with the head of the canteen staff. We don’t talk much. I don’t order canteen lunch because the lunch is of poor quality.**The canteen needs to do better. I currently order heavy snacks such as patty, meat loaf, donuts for my children. My students have the choice of ordering whatever they want at the snack shop for lunch and I make no apologies for this.*

Stigmatization at the high school level:

Similar to the primary school, there were more PATH students in the lower-streamed classes than the higher-streamed classes. Mr. Taylor (Tom’s teacher) third streamed eleven grade class had a total of thirty-seven (37) students. Twelve (12) boys and five (5) girls were PATH beneficiaries. Mr Fowler (Felix and Frank’s teacher), from the lowest streamed eleven grade class, had a total of thirty-one (31) students. PATH students from this class comprised of nineteen (19) boys and six (6) girls (taken from the interview transcript, teachers attendance registers as well as my observation transcript).

There was less evidence of stigmatization in the high school setting in relation to the treatment of PATH beneficiaries. In fact, the high school boys were treated respectfully by the canteen staff. There was no discrimination evident in the presentation or preparation of PATH lunches in comparison to regular lunches. Lunch time at the high school was more organized as a ticketing system was implemented, particularly for PATH students to collect lunches in an orderly fashion *(See observation transcript below)*.

*In the high school, lunch-time for the evening shift began at 3:00 p.m. and ended at 3:30 p.m. for all students. In relation to the PATH students, a ticketing system was in place for them to receive lunch. On a daily basis, at 1:00 pm, PATH students had to go to the guidance counsellor to collect their tickets for lunch. The colour of the tickets changed on a daily basis to ensure that each student got one lunch per day and only when they attended school.*

*At the school, a cycle menu was used which varied daily. Curried goat, stewed pork, stewed peas, curried chicken, fried chicken, baked chicken and stewed chicken were the main protein dishes presented on this cycle menu. Rice and peas and vegetables were the daily side dishes served with each meal. The PATH lunches contained approximately one portion size of vegetables, two cups of rice and a serving of meat. Each of these lunches was packed in a medium-sized food box and looked similar to the $ 200 boxed lunches sold at the canteen. There was no differentiation between the PATH lunch and the purchased lunch in relation to preparation, presentation and portion size. Spot checks were done by canteen concessionaire on a weekly basis to ensure that all lunches were properly prepared and served, weather they were PATH or not. Teachers and students who purchased their lunch at the canteen mentioned that they enjoyed the food. Their facial expressions while eating gave the impression that the meal was delicious. I also bought lunches there on several occasions and I enjoyed it every time.*

*During lunch time, two lines were formed by students -one for the PATH ticking system and the other for those purchasing lunches. Although the PATH line was the shorter of the two lines, all students, staff and visitors purchased and/or collect their lunches in an orderly fashion.*

*In the canteen, PATH students were served lunches like other regular customers. Thus, the canteen staff treated all students like valued customers, whether they were on PATH or not.*

However, stigmatization was observed in the guidance counsellor’s interaction with the high school PATH students. His statements towards the students were of a harsh nature. In light of this Tom stated in the interview:

*Most of the students don’t like to have dealings with the guidance counsellor. He often shouts at us and ridicules us. Although he was not talking to me specifically, he told us that they only come to school for the PATH food and that most of us are just here to milk the system. I think these words should not be spoken by a guidance counsellor. The guidance counsellor is here to help us solve our emotional, mental and family problems so that we can feel good about ourselves. Most PATH student doesn’t like him because he feels as if he is better than us (taken from interview transcript).*

The observation information below describes the guidance counsellor’s behaviour towards the students.

*With the exception of the guidance counsellor’s harsh utterances/ insults toward some PATH students, I have not seen this behaviour displayed towards PATH students by teachers and any other staff members. The teachers taught their subjects without showing any form of discrimination against PATH students. Whenever the guidance counselor in in a hurry to leave the compound or when students were late to collect their lunch tickets, the guidance counselor would utter statements such as ‘‘poor people have no sense of time’ and “all you guys do is to milk the system.”*

Stigmatization Among Peers:

From the data gathered, it was also identified that the boys were ridiculed by their peers for being beneficiaries of PATH in both school settings.

*Often, teachers’ insults directed at the PATH boys, echoed through the thin partition walls of other grade six classrooms. Sometimes after teachers exit the classrooms, their insults are repeated by both PATH students and regular students to provoke and tease each other (observation from the primary school setting).*

*Felix, Frank and their friends, stood at the classroom door just after lunch time, expressing their disappointment that their school dropped out of the football championship games. One of the friend’s views of the school losing the championship was that the team was hungry because they were only fed PATH lunches. Felix’s response was that if that were the case, all the children getting lunch from the school canteen, including the teachers, would die from hunger and that he should shut up. Felix continued by saying” if I did not share my PATH lunch with you then you would have died from hunger too. A hearty laughter ensued among the boys after the playful verbal exchange (Observation from the high school setting).*

Five of the boys (Bogle, Carl, Tom, Felix and Frank) also expressed in their interviews that they were teased by their peers because they were beneficiaries of PATH.

*Sometimes my friends teased me by saying PATH is poor people’s food but I ignore them as they beg me this same ‘poor people’s lunch’ sometimes (Bogle).*

*My classmates laugh and tease me sometimes when my teacher calls us dunce (illiterate) and that we are there to warm the government’s benches (Carl).*

*My friends and I joke around about those who came to school just for the free food, but it’s not serious. We were just joking (Tom).*

*Sometimes my friends play and tease me by saying that PATH is breast feeding me. I don’t believe that I am dependent on PATH as PATH cannot help me to come to school every day. PATH money finishes in quick time. PATH benefits don’t serve much time so I don’t understand what my friends are saying about PATH breast feeding me. They are just stupid (Felix).*

*We tease each other about who will die if they are not on PATH. But my friends know that I take lunch money to school most days. Some of these students who are not on PATH are hungrier than those who are on PATH. Sometimes these students beg us our PATH food so I don’t know what they are talking about (Frank).*

**Summary of the Results from the Data Analysis**

*Figure 4*: Results of the Data Analysis.

The diagram below shows the main results from analysing the data.

**Figure 4**

*Attendance Results:*

Over the course of the academic year, Tom was the only boy absent for two days due to illness. Lack of adequate financial support was the dominant reason for absenteeism among the remaining five boys (Adam, Bogle, Carl, Felix and Frank) who failed to meet PATH’s attendance condition. Among these boys, Friday was the day they were most frequently absent from school. In spite of the absenteeism, the attendance data showed some pattern of improvement in all six boys’ attendance over the course of the academic school year.

A comparison between both groups of primary and high school boys, revealed that the high school boys attended school more regularly than the primary school boys. Nonetheless, there were patterns for both groups of boys from higher-streamed classes that showed they attended school more regularly than the boys from lower-streamed classes (*see figure 4 above for main summary of attendance results*).

*Academic Results:*

The academic records showed that none of the six PATH beneficiaries maintained or graduated with satisfactory grades in keeping with their schools’ academic criteria.

The three primary school participants’ (Adam, Bogle and Carl) GSAT scores were too low (below the 80 percentile range) for them to be awarded placements in their first choice traditional high schools. Nevertheless, two of the three boys’ (Adam from 6A and Bogle from 6B) GSAT average scores earned them placements in upgraded high schools that were their third choice of schools. The remaining boy (Carl from 6C) was not awarded placement at any of the seven schools he chose. He was subsequently placed at a junior high school in a remedial programme formulated by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. Even though the boys’ grades were below the primary schools’ 80% academic standards, all three boys graduated and received school-leaving certificates.

At the high school, none of the three boys (Tom, Felix nor Frank) fulfilled the school’s basic requirement of passing five internal examinations (inclusive of Mathematics and English Language) to qualify for a high school diploma. Neither did any of these boys passed subjects in the CSEC examinations. Felix and Frank each sat three subjects in the CSEC examinations and failed all three. Tom was recommended to do four subjects in the CSEC examinations but was unable to sit for any of them because his mother could not afford to pay the required fee (*see figure 4 above for main summary of academic results)*.

*Other Results:*

Other interesting results pertaining to parental support, stigmatization and non-compliance with PATH’s conditions were retrieved from the data. Parental support was an issue identified at the primary level, as parents’ direct participation in their sons’ academic educational experiences was minimal. Parents were more involved in their son’s education at the high school level than the primary level. The boys faced stigmatization both at the primary school level and the high school level; however, there were more occurrences of stigmatization towards the boys at the primary school than at the high school.

Five of the boys (Adam, Bogle, Carl, Felix and Frank) in the study, repeatedly breached PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition by missing school for more than three days in a month. There was no penalty (reduction in monetary benefits and/or complete stoppage in lunch and monetary benefits) applied to any of the five boys, by either PATH’s governing body or the school’s administration, for non-compliance with the attendance condition. Thus, these boys continued to receive PATH’s full benefits (lunch and monetary benefits) throughout the academic school year despite their repeated non-compliance (*see figure 4 above for main summary of other results*).

**Chapter Six: Discussion of the Findings**

**Introduction**

In this chapter**,** Bourdieu’s Cultural Reproduction Theory, Reay (2004) Institutional Habitus, Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Theory and Deci and Ryan’s Self-determination Theory along with literature from previous chapters, are used to explain the findings. This is important in helping readers to understand PATH’s impact on attendance and academic performance from the perspective of participants’ experiences. The limitations to the study are also presented in the chapter.

*The Institutional Habitus of the Jamaican School System:*

In order to fully understand the inter-relatedness between Bourdieu’s reproduction theory and the research results, it is important to describe the institutional habitus of the Jamaican school system and its impact on academic performance. Institutional habitus is an extension of Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction legacy developed by Diane Reay (Ozgun 2019; Reay 2004; Reay, David and Ball 2001). Reay et al. (2001) define institutional habitus as “the impact of a cultural group or social class on an individual’s behaviours as it is mediated through organization” (p. 127). Hattie and Anderman (2013) note “the institutional habitus of the school reflects the social mix of the student body as well as historical factors and is reflected in teacher expectations and the kind of guidance provided to students” (p. 32). Thomas (2002) asserts that “institutional habitus should be understood as more than the culture of the educational institution, it refers to relational issues and priorities which are deeply embedded and subconsciously informing practice” (p. 431). In other words, the ethos, status quo, values, practices, students’ backgrounds and outcomes, the interpersonal relationships and other internals reflect the institutional habitus of a particular school system. The institutional habitus of an institution is therefore a critical determinant in school outcomes. In light of this Hattie et al. (2013) posit “the concept of institutional habitus has increasingly been used to indicate the way in which schools can shape the educational pathways of their students” (p. 32).

The Jamaican education system was built upon the foundation of pre-colonialism where much of its contents and structure derived from the British Empire (Trines 2019; Curry 2014). This historical foundation to date, has led to a hierarchical education system wherein aspects of the class structure such as economic status, family background and position in the society strongly influence students’ attendance, conformity, retention as well as academic achievement in schools (Trines 2019;Evans 2006; Austin-Broos 2001). Thus, students’ success in this system is directly related to their access to these socially valued resources. Trines (2019) asserts “over the years, the government significantly expanded the school system…However education access continued to be heavily skewed towards higher income households…”. In her study entitled, Inside Jamaican schools, Evans (2001) notes:

Schooling holds out promises for all its students, but enables their achievement for only some. While I do not agree that the school and the states do this intentionally…, there mechanisms within the school and in the educational system itself that contribute to these differential outcomes. These mechanisms relate to aspects of structure and the processes in the school. (p. 143-144).

In addition to the aforementioned socially valued resources, Evans (2001) found gender, streaming, parental support and the quality of student-teacher relationships, as major contributors to students’ differential outcomes in our school system. Hence, students’ performance in the Jamaican school system is not only influenced by class but also by gender. Thayer-Bacon, Stone and Sprecher (2013) contend that “both class and gender relations constitute hierarchies in which material and symbolic powers are based. Inside these hierarchies, the dialectics of class and gender struggles are waged” (p. 20). The ensuing results derived from the experiences of the six PATH male beneficiaries will further support the institutional habitus and their relationship to the learning achievement described in our school system.

*Pierre Bourdieu’s Cultural Reproduction Theory and the Results:*

Although I have explained extensively the scope of Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory in chapter three (The Theoretical Framework), I feel it is also necessary to give a brief overview of his theory at this point since the arguments in this particular chapter are mainly concerned with justifying the results of the investigation.

Bourdieu’s theory spoke on the nature of highly differentiated social systems or ‘fields’ (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014) such as the ones operating in Jamaica.

The logic of Bourdieu’s theory spoke to ‘capital’ as the determinant to succeed or fail in an institution or organization which he termed as a ‘field’ (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014). Bourdieu therefore sees these fields as hierarchical organizations, institutions or spaces where the wages of inequalities vary according to the strength of the individual’s capital in such social systems (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014). Bourdieu placed this ‘capital’ in three categories- economic, cultural and social and further purports that capital is unevenly distributed among individuals, groups and even families (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014). Thus, capital consists of socially valued resources such as wealth, morals, values, family ties, background, friendships and network - all of which shape an individual’s ‘habitus’- lifestyle, disposition, behaviour, mannerisms and life experiences in society (Bourdieu 2014; Bourdieu 2013; Bourdieu 2010; Bourdieu 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron 2014).

*Pierre Bourdieu’s Cultural Reproduction Theory and the Attendance Results:*

Before applying Bourdieu’s theory to the boys’ attendance results as it relates to research question number one, it is important to first highlight and discuss the details of the attendance results found in the investigation. Even though the data predominantly showed that only one of the six boys met PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition, it also showed improvement patterns in all six boys’ attendances while on the programme. In relation to the latter, the review of literature showed that it is typical of most CCT programmes to improve beneficiaries’ school attendance.

More specifically, the attendance results revealed that only one of the three high school boys (Tom) satisfied PATH’s attendance condition; none of the three primary school boys met the condition. The data further revealed that the high school boys attended school more often than the primary school boys. This result goes against the status quo in Jamaica where poorer class boys at the primary level usually attend school more regularly than the poorer class high school boys who are usually faced with the challenge of irregular school attendance (Jha et.al 2017; The Ministry of Education 2010; Epstein and Lutjens 2008; Davis 2004; Evans 1999; Miller 1997). I too had the expectation that the high school boys would have attended school less often than the primary school boys as they had more autonomy to absent themselves from school. The primary school boys are more dependent on their parents who would usually ensure that they attended school. The data also revealed that parents were more involved in their sons’ school experience at the high school level than the primary school level. Even though this result was specific to the six boys and their parents, I was nonetheless surprised. I had expected more parental involvement at the primary level, simply because primary school students are younger and more likely to dependent on their parents for support than high school students.

The attendance results of the six boys studied can be understood in light of Bourdieu’s theoretical perspective. Tom was the only boy to have met PATH’s school attendance condition because he had the cultural capital to have done so. This particular cultural capital that Bourdieu spoke of in his theory is similar in meaning to Tom’s innate love and commitment towards attending school. In the interview, Tom stated, “*I come to school almost every day. I try not to stop from school because I love school. I don’t like to stay at home. Home is boring. School is much more fun for me. I enjoy school. I only stop when I am extremely ill.*” In the same breath, Tom’s mother, Miss Thomas, stated, “*My son only stops from school when he is sick. He loves school and so I try my hardest to make sure he is always in school”* Hence, Tom’s strong cultural capital (love and commitment) and familial support led to him not only meeting PATH’s 85% termly attendance standards; it has further contributed to him surpassing such condition to achieving an almost perfect attendance record (approximately 100%).

The very reason the six boys were beneficiaries of PATH in the first place was because they were very poor. In light of their economic status, Mrs Peters, a PATH social worker, stated that, “*To qualify for PATH, clients must not have any toilets; their houses must not be built with concrete structure. They should be unable to feed themselves on a daily basis or they must not be able to afford food to eat.*” In spite of the boys being beneficiaries of PATH, the data revealed that PATH’s monetary benefit was insufficient for five of the six boys (Adam, Bogle, Carl, Felix and Frank) to have met PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition. In fact, all five boys mentioned in their interviews that their parents sometimes did not have the money to send them to school every day. Also, in response to the final interview questions which focused on the changes or modifications participants would suggest for the PATH - all the parents, including Tom’s mother, recommended an increase in PATH’s monetary benefits. Similarly, two boys (Adam from the primary school and Tom from the high school) also made mention of increasing PATH’s monetary benefit in their interviews.

Even though, the five boys’ absences resulted in several breaches in PATH’s attendance compliance, the boys continued to receive PATH’s full benefits (lunch and monetary benefits) over the course of the entire academic school year. As such, the data showed that the penalty to discontinue full benefits or portions of the benefits for beneficiary’s non-compliance (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2003, p. 14) without valid reason (doctor’s certificate, emergencies) was not enforced upon the five boys and their parents by the PATH’s governing body nor school administrators . In light of this, Mr. Gayle Green (The high school principal) stated:

*We don’t look at that aspect. We only feed our PATH students here. A hungry child is a hungry child and it’s hard to tell a hungry child that he should not eat because he was non-compliant. The PATH lunch is the only cooked meal some of these students consumed in a given day. Once, the students are at school they are entitled to their PATH lunch and that’s what I instructed my staff who work with PATH to do.*

Miss Dale (The primary school principal) also states:

*I try not to look at the**matter of non-compliance as I believe that this responsibility lies with the PATH office. We give the children the lunch and that is our responsibility. We however threaten the children that they will not get any more PATH lunches if they don’t come to school regularly. The guidance counsellors sometimes make home visits to investigate causes of the persistent absence. We call in the parents to talk to them but that’s it. At the end of the day the decision to stop their PATH benefits lies with the PATH office.*

Nonetheless, the data showed that PATH’s full benefits were still insufficient in supporting the five boys’ 85% termly school attendance. The application of Bourdieu’s theory to this results, translates to the five boys not meeting PATH’s 85% termly school attendance condition because they lacked the economic capital to have done so.

The thought may arise that these five boys had no excuse for not meeting PATH’s 85% termly school attendance condition, as Tom who was also a beneficiary of PATH not only met PATH’s 85% condition, but also superseded this condition with almost perfect attendance. Bourdieu’s theory has also been instrumental in clarifying the logic behind such conflicting results. Yes, Tom was as poor as the other five boys, in spite of Tom’s financial challenges, the strong cultural capital (his innate love for school/intrinsic motivation) he possessed made him committed and determined to attend school regularly.

Unlike Tom, the other five boys did not meet PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition because their poor economical capital (income) strongly influenced their unsatisfactory school attendance patterns. These five boys seemed to lack the cultural capital that Tom passionately professed in the interview. None of the five boys expressed or acknowledged a love for school in their interviews nor was it evident from other data sources. Hence, such results support Bourdieu’s theoretical perspective which purports that poor or insufficient capital yields low or undesirable outcomes; whilst, rich capital yields optimal or desirable outcomes.

*The Boys’ Academic Performance Results:*

None of the six boys in the study graduated with satisfactory grades in keeping with their school’s academic criteria. At the primary level, the data specifically revealed that none of the three grade six boys’ GSAT examination scores qualified them for placements in traditional high schools. Also, at the high school level, none of the three grade eleven boys left the school with CSEC subjects or high school diplomas. Since there seemed to be no significant academic achievement amongst the six boys in the study, PATH seemed to not have had an impact on their academic performance. This result is similar to the findings of Levy and Ohls (2010) earlier study on PATH, in which it was found that the programme had no impact on learning outcomes.

*Academic Results at the Primary Level:*

At the primary level, the data further showed that students’ performances on their GSAT examinations did not affect their graduation status as all grade six students were allowed to graduate at this particular school. However, the level of performance on the GSAT examination not only determined the quality of the high school these primary students were placed in; it was also used to reflect their literacy level at the end of the school year as well as to determine the type of academic recognition and awards students received at the school’s graduation ceremony. These results further affirms the foregone findings in chapter one that GSAT is not only the “gateway to secondary education” but it also “determines the child’s literacy level” (Ministry of Education 2010, p.6).

To prepare students for the GSAT examination, the school’s pass mark for all testing (in-class tests, mock examination) is set at 80% as this score forecast placement in the prestigious traditional high schools –the schools that are often the first choice for students, teachers, school administrators and parents and all other stakeholders involved.

The primary school boys’ GSAT scores were below this 80% pass mark standard. Adam, from the first streamed six grade class, got an average score of 60%; Bogle, from the second streamed grade six class, got an average score of 57%; and Carl, from the last streamed grade six class, got an average score of 29%. Adam and Bogle’s GSAT scores awarded them placements in upgraded high schools- their third school choice; whilst Carl’s GSAT score was too low for him to be awarded placements at any of his seven selected high schools. Consequently, he was placed at a junior high school in a remedial programme by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. Thus, none of the boys’ average GSAT scores qualified them for placement in traditional high schools, thus they were all placed in schools of a lower level. In fact, in all subject areas of testing throughout the grade six academic year – none of the boys met the 80% academic school standard. As a result, these boys have not graduated with satisfactory grades in keeping with the school’s academic criteria.

Where the graduation ceremony is concerned, it was recognized from the data that amongst the two-hundred and thirty (230) primary school graduates, none of the three boys received awards or recognition for academic performance. In light of this, Bogle’s Teacher, Mr. Ben stated:

*It is mandatory for all grade six students to graduate with school leaving certificates regardless of their academic performance. However, the school’s pass mark is 80% as this is the GSAT average that gets them into traditional high schools. Students who maintained an average of 80 % and over are rewarded at prize giving ceremonies as well as the graduation ceremony held at the school.*

Hence, the three primary school participants only received their school leaving certificates and final progress report cards at the end of the grade six academic year.

It was observed that there was some relationship between the primary school boys’ attendance and their academic performance. Adam and Bogle, who were in higher streamed grade six classes than Carl, attended school more often than Carl did, and also attained higher academic scores than Carl. These results resonated with the data from the review of literature that regular school attendance correlated with higher levels of academic performance (Hiss, Horner, Pressler and Swanepoel 2009; Mellor and Corrigan 2004).

*Pierre Bourdieu’s Cultural Reproduction Theory and the Academic Results:*

Bourdieu’s theory is certainly applicable to the three primary school boys’ academic results as they all lacked the financial capital to graduate with satisfactory grades in keeping with the school’s criteria. High academic performance in Jamaican schools strongly correlates with not only financial stability but with regular school attendance, strong parental support and positive teacher attitude towards students in school (Gottfriend 2010; Evans 2006). The data revealed that in spite of the three primary boys (Adam, Bogle and Carl) receiving PATH benefits on the condition of maintaining an 85% termly school attendance, the benefit was not enough for them to have met this requirement as they were sometimes absent from school because of limited finances. While the boys’ mothers tried to send their son’s to school, the data also revealed that parents seldom participated in their sons’ academic educational experiences. Stigmatization was also a dominant theme that emerged from the data analysis especially at the primary school. It was observed that the boys were teased, ridiculed and insulted by fellow students, teachers and canteen staff because they were beneficiaries of PATH. In this school setting stigmatization / discrimination presented itself in the presentation, preparation, quality and quantity of the PATH lunches. Regular school lunches had larger portions of meat, more rice and more vegetables than PATH lunches.

Hence, the boys’ economic position (poverty) contributed significantly to their challenges as well as their academic underachievement. This correlation again resonates with Bourdieu’s theoretical concept that low capital or lack thereof, produces undesirable results and/or predicament for an individual in a field or social system.

*Academic Results at the Secondary Level:*

All three high school boys did not graduate with satisfactory grades in keeping with the school’s academic criteria. In order to qualify for a high school diploma and graduate from this particular high school, it is required that all grade eleven students pass five internal end-of-year examinations inclusive of Mathematics and English Language. CSEC examination passes had no impact on qualifying the boys for high school diplomas. Students who were not qualified for high school diplomas only received school leaving certificates in recognition of spending five years at the high school. Thus, of the three high school boys (Tom, Felix and Frank), none graduated, none received high school diplomas and none passed CSEC subjects.

Even though the boys were recommended by their teachers to sit a few CSEC subjects, further perusal of the data revealed that they were inconsistent in maintaining the school’s 50% pass mark in all their subject areas. In light of this inconsistency, their progress report card reflected the following subject teachers’ comments:

*Tom shows interest; he has the potential; greater effort needed; hard-working and capable student; fails to work harder*.

*Felix is* *disruptive student; shows interest; has the potential but fails to work hard; hardworking and capable student; needs to be consistent in his work; minimum effort shown; tries but needs to put more effort in his work.*

*Frank has the potential but fail to work hard; needs to read more widely; stop attending; talks consistently during classes; A hard working and capable student; Shows no interest in the subject; May do better if he focuses and participates in class.*

As a result of their inconsistent effort, the boys did not qualify for the government’s grant which would have fully financed all their expenses to do their CSEC examinations if they had maintained passing grades in grade ten (10).Since all three boys did not meet the schools’ academic criteria and got no CSEC subjects, this means that they have not only underperformed but they also failed the eleventh grade and were also unable to matriculate into more advanced studies at the tertiary level of schooling (Ministry of Education 2010; Evans 2001).

Low income was a major contributing factor that led to the academic underperformance of the three high school boys. Tom from the third streamed grade eleven class (two streams above the lowest streamed grade eleven class) who almost had perfect school attendance and loved school, did not sit the four CSEC examinations recommended as his mother could not afford to pay for them. However, Frank and Felix from the lowest streamed eleven grade class, who had unsatisfactory school attendances in relation to PATH’s 85% attendance condition and low finances/no money, sat three subjects in the CSEC examinations but was unsuccessful in all three pursued. This data also revealed that Frank and Felix’s status of poverty were the cause of them not being in school enough for them to have passed their CSEC examinations.

In chapter one, it was revealed that poor boys in Jamaica, grapples mostly with underachievement in our school system, particularly, those in the inner city areas, where the harshness of life is predominant (Parry 2000; Reddock, 2007). Even though Tom, Frank and Felix were beneficiaries of PATH, such social assistance capital was insufficient to have encouraged or supported their optimal academic performances in the eleventh grade as the harshness and the challenges of their poverty status was too great for them to overcome. The application of Bourdieu’s theory to this result, simply translate to low capital yielding low or undesirable performance.

*Tara J. Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Theory:*

A brief overview of the Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Theory at this point will provide readers with a clearer understanding during the application of her theoretical perspective to the results.

Yosso’s (2005) work with black students in the USA allowed her to acknowledge six capitals (aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance) which led to their survival and/or perseverance in a highly oppressed school system favourable to white students. Yosso’s (2005) Community Cultural Wealth Theory is therefore an extension of Bourdieu’s Cultural Reproduction Theory. Notwithstanding the results obtained from the application of Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theoretical framework, however the data revealed certain capitals that are applicable to Yosso’s (2005) community cultural wealth theory.

Yosso’s aspirational, familial and navigational capitals were identified in the collected data. Aspirational capital speaks to students possessing hopes and dreams for the future in the face of adversities. Familial capital refers to the human resources obtained from family and community members. Navigational capital concerns students’ ability to survive or persevere through disobliging socialistic atmospheres (See definitions of all the capitals in chapter three).

Aspirational capital was only identified in the data obtained at the high school level. In spite of the boys’ adversities- failure to achieve according to their school’s academic standards due to their poverty status and/or limited resources as highlighted in Bourdieu’s theoretical application, they were nevertheless hopeful about plans for the future. This is shown in the proceeding data taken from the observation transcript.

*Tom left high school without passing any subject in CSEC examination. He only received a school leaving certificate for attending the high school for five years. In our conversation he mentioned that he was disappointed. He was hopeful that he was going to get a work and do these subjects at evening classes.*

*Felix was not qualified for a high school diploma nor to participate in the school’s graduation ceremony. He had only received a school leaving certificate. In our conversations Felix mentioned that he was going to further his Metal work skill at the HEART Trust National Training Agency as money is in the metal business.*

*[Frank] also mentioned that his uncle was going to pay for him to do five subjects as he is hoping to join the Police Force.*

Even though Tom was the only one of the six boys who met PATH’s 85% attendance condition, all the boys had familial capital which helped their school attendance. The boys’ mothers were therefore the familial capital or the parental support behind their school attendance. The proceeding data from the interviews revealed this.

*Before PATH and after PATH he is always in school as that is my responsibility…*(Miss Ali, Adam’s mother).

*PATH helps me out with his schooling…*(Miss Black, Bogle’s mother).

*For the first term in grade six his attendance was very poor because he was living with his father who carelessly, could not afford to send him to school regularly. Since he started living with me in January 2016, he has been attending school almost every day…*(Miss Carson, Carl’s Mother).

*My son only stops from school when he is sick. He loves school and so I try my hardest to make sure he is always in school…*(Tom’s mother, Miss Thomas).

*Whenever he is absent from school I really have no money at all to send him to school as I am a single parent. I don’t stop him from school for any other reasons…*(Miss Francis, Felix’s mother).

*I try my hardest for them to attend school regularly…*(Miss. Faurkner, Frank’s mother)*.*

Although none of the boys maintained nor graduated with satisfactory grades in keeping with their school’s academic criteria, they navigated through their respective school levels (primary and secondary) in spite of the challenges faced. The following data highlight challenges such as stigmatization and verbal abuse against the boys in the school system.

*Miss Abe, Adam’s teacher stated, “…The PATH boys just come here to eat the food”.*

*She also states,**“Boys who are not on PATH want to go on PATH for the free food; it harbours the concept of a free mentality. Those boys who are on PATH sometimes believe that they should not pay for anything at all. Some of them expect to get everything free”.*

*Mr. Ben, Bogle’s Teacher stated “I think that the boys on PATH are more here for the food than anything else…”*

*Miss Craig, Carl’s Teacher**“…The boys are here for the food, that’s what I think and I make no apologies in saying that”*

*My teacher said that some of us just came here for the government’s free food and nothing else. I feel bad when she says this because I am on PATH. I do not come for the free food I come to learn. Some students in my class come for the free food but not me. I come to learn and to pass my GSAT (Adam).*

*Sometimes when we fail a test my teacher tells us that we come to school to only eat the PATH lunches (Bogle).*

*When I**tell my teacher that I don’t understand some of the work, she told me that all I come to school for is to warm the government benches and eat the PATH lunch. This is a lie. If all of us in class come to eat the PATH lunch, we all would not do any class work. We would only come for the food and wait until we finish eating then we would go home. I do not come for the PATH lunch because when you eat it you are still hungry (Carl).*

*Teachers often told PATH students that they were only at school for the PATH lunch and to warm the government’s benches when they perform poorly on tests. Such insults were frequently hurled towards PATH male students in each class. The girls on PATH are seldom insulted by teachers, as most got satisfactory scores on their tests (taken from observation transcript).*

*In 6C (the low-streamed class), it was observed that there were more boys in the class than girls and most of these boys are on PATH. These students are often called ‘time- wasters; ‘careless; ‘lazy’; and ‘greedy’ by Miss Craig. They were also told that the government was wasting tax payers’ money on them. In each of the three classes observed, it was a common punishment to prevent students from eating their lunches if they did not finish the class activities on time. More PATH students, especially the boys were punished by this method than those students who were not on PATH. PATH male students tried to finish their class activities even if it is not done correctly, so they could be allowed to have lunch. Carl tried to finish his work quickly so he can eat lunch but he seldom gets the activities correct (taken from observation transcript).*

*Most of the students expressed that they don’t like to have dealings with the guidance counsellor. He often shouts at us and ridicules us. Although he was not talking to me specifically, he told us that they only come to school for the PATH food and that most of us are just here to milk the system. I think these words should not be spoken by a guidance counsellor. The guidance counsellor is here to help us solve our emotional, mental and family problems so that we can feel good about ourselves. Most PATH student doesn’t like him because he feels as if he is better than us (taken from interview transcript).*

Hence, the boys did not disengage themselves from school as a result of the foregoing challenges; they navigated/endured to the final grade level within their respective schools. The ensuing data from observation transcript revealed that the boys completed their tenure in their respective schools.

*Adam, Bogle and Carl received graduation certificates from their teachers on the podium. Parents took myriads of pictures to commemorate the moment. The smiles and poses were by no means limited as they changed with every snap of the camera.*

*Tom left high school without passing any subject in CSEC examination. He only received a school leaving certificate for attending the high school for five years.*

*Felix was not qualified for a high school diploma nor to participate in the school’s graduation ceremony. He had only received a school leaving certificate.*

*[Frank] did not pass any of these three subjects as he received a grade four in Visual Arts and Mathematics. He also got a grade five in English Language. In the end he received a school leaving certificate.*

*Richard Ryan and Edward Deci’s (2017) Self-determination Theory and the Results:*

In order for readers to clearly understand the results through the lens of Ryan and Deci’s self-determination theory, a brief overview of their theory is necessary.

Ryan and Deci (2017) self-determination theory placed motivation into three (3) categories: Autonomous or intrinsic motivation, controlled or extrinsic motivation and amotivation. Autonomous or intrinsic motivation is those behaviours or activities that individuals enjoy or find pleasurable. Thus, individuals who are autonomously or intrinsically motivated get pleasure or enjoyment from performing the activity itself. Control or extrinsic motivation is those activities or behaviours demonstrated as a result of external rewards. Amotivation is those behaviours or activities that are demonstrated without motives behind them. Thus, behaviours are displayed without a purpose or motivation behind them.

It must be acknowledged that Amotivation is not applicable to the results of the boys’ attendance patterns nor their academic performance as the data revealed that these results concern autonomous/intrinsic and controlled/ extrinsic motivation.

*Richard Edward and Edward Deci’s (2017) Self-determination Theory and the Attendance Results:*

As acknowledged in chapter three, PATH benefits are used to motivate beneficiaries to attend school regularly. Of the six participants, only one boy (Tom) appeared to be autonomously or intrinsically motivated to attend school regularly. The remaining five boys (Adam, Bogle, Carl, Felix and Frank) seemed to be controlled or extrinsically motivated to attend school.

Even though PATH uses extrinsic rewards (monetary and lunch benefits) to motivate beneficiaries to comply with its 85% termly school attendance rate, Tom seemed to be the only boy who was autonomously or intrinsically motivated to attend school regularly. This intrinsic motivation is revealed in the interview by Tom and his mother, Miss Thomas. Tom stated “*I try not to stop from school because I love school. I don’t like to stay at home. Home is boring. School is much more fun for me. I enjoy school. I only stop when I am extremely ill*”. Similarly, Miss Thomas, stated, “*My son only stops from school when he is sick. He loves school and so I try my hardest to make sure he is always in school”*. Notwithstanding that PATH supported Tom’s schooling, it appeared that Tom’s intrinsic motivation (love and passion for school) was stronger than the extrinsic benefits (monetary and lunch) given to PATH beneficiaries for regular school attendance. Tom’s passionate love for school not only allowed him to meet PATH’s 85% termly attendance rate, it further allowed him to exceed such rate to a 99% attendance rate, an almost perfect attendance rate over the course of the grade eleven (11) academic year.

Based on the premise that Adam, Bogle, Carl, Felix and Frank have not met PATH’s 85% termly attendance rate as a result of insufficient funds, they appeared to be controlled or extrinsically motivated by PATH’s monetary benefit. The boys themselves mentioned insufficient funds as the main reason for absence. Adam stated:

*I go to school sometimes four (4) and sometimes five (5) times out of the week. Most times I go five times out of the week. Sometimes on Fridays I stop from school to go to my father’s house for lunch money because the PATH money finishes quickly. My father gets paid on Fridays so I have to collect my school money on that day before he finishes his pay in the bar.*

Bogle stated:

*I come to school five (5) days out of the week most times. I sometimes miss school on Fridays when I am extremely tired or when my mother has no money. My mother lets me to stay home when she doesn’t have any money.*

Carl stated:

*I did not attend school regularly when I was living with my father because he had no money to send me to school. Since I started living with my mother in January, I have been coming to school every day. I attended school badly when I lived with my father. When I lived with my father I had to take the bus to get to school, sometimes he had no money for me to take the bus. I now walk to school from my mother’s house.*

Felix stated:

*I come to school every day. I only stopped when there is no money in the household to send us to school.*

Frank stated:

*I usually attend school for the whole five days of every week. But there are times when my parents can’t find the bus fare for me to travel school. This only happened once in a while.*

It is also assumed that these boys are controlled or extrinsically motivated by PATH’s monetary benefit as they have not expressed love or enjoyment for school in any of the data collected.

*Richard Ryan and Edward Deci’s (2017) Self-determination Theory and the Academic Results:*

It cannot be emphasized enough that the ultimate goal of PATH’s 85% termly school attendance condition is to break intergenerational poverty through education. Thus, academic achievement among beneficiaries is critical to PATH’s extrinsic benefits. Since Adam, Bogle, Carl, Felix and Frank did not meet PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition because of insufficient funds, it appeared that PATH’s extrinsic monetary benefits were too limited to have motivated them to spend more time in school and apply themselves intrinsically to their studies in order to achieve academically. As a result, Adam, Bogle, Carl, Felix and Frank did not graduate with satisfactory grades in keeping with their school’s academic criteria. This result is in keeping with Ryan and Deci’s (2017) theoretical perspectives. They assert that “controlled motivation has been shown to predict not only more impoverished learning but also greater behavioural problems and risk of disengagement or dropout” (p. 18).

Even though Tom loved school and thus was intrinsically motivated to attend regularly, he too did not graduate with satisfactory grades in keeping with his school’s academic criteria. Tom did not pass five internal examinations to have graduated nor was he able to sit the four CSEC examinations recommended as his mother could not afford to pay for them. The thought may lingers that Tom should have achieved academically as he loved school and thus attended school more regularly than all the other boys (Adam, Bogle, Carl, Felix and Frank). Yes, intrinsic or autonomous motivation often leads to academic achievement (Ryan’s and Deci 2017), however, Tom’s grim reality was that the extrinsic benefits from PATH, his innate love for school and his almost perfect school attendance were not enough for him to have achieved. Factors such as stigmatization, limited financial resources and teachers’ verbal abuse and/or low confidence towards PATH boys’ academic powers are also the grim realities of both school settings – all of which are certainly not conducive to learning. Hence, PATH’s extrinsic benefits were just too limited to have led to academic achievements among the six boys understudied.

**Limitation to the Study**

The limitations of the study are as follows:

* Small sample size- This enquiry sought to understand PATH’s impact on the attendance and academic performance of six boys at a particular primary and secondary school. Gaining a deeper insight of PATH’s impact through the in depth lived experiences of the six participants was therefore the intent of the enquiry. With this small sample size it must be acknowledged that generalizations aren’t possible.
* Lack of current data- During the process of reviewing related literature *(see chapter two)* on the research topic, I saw that most of the studies conducted on CCT programmes were done around the first decade of this millennium. Only few were done recently. This was a limitation in the investigation as it was a great challenge to find current studies related to the interest of the investigation.
* Lack of official data- I wanted to include in the literature review, participants’ attendance and academic records prior to joining PATH, PATH boys’ and girls’ CSEC results for the last decade as well as information concerning policy on PATH’s position within the Jamaican educational landscape but was unsuccessful in obtaining such data from Ministry of Labour and National Security and Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. Hence, this was a limitation for the study.

**Summary of the Discussion of Findings**

Only one of the six boys studied was intrinsically motivated about school. As such, he was the only boy who met PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition. None of the boys graduated with satisfactory grades in keeping with their schools’ academic criteria. The results obtained through the lenses of Bourdieu’s cultural reproduction theory as well as Ryan and Deci self- determination theory showed that PATH’s benefits were grossly insufficient to have significantly impacted the attendance and educational attainment among the six boys understudy.

Further, the boys faced stigmatization by fellow students, teachers and other staff members in both schools as a result of being PATH beneficiaries. In spite of such challenges, the lens of Yosso’s community cultural wealth theory revealed that the boys not only navigated through such system, few (the high school boys) had had hopes and dreams for the future.

There were limitations identified in this investigation. The six boys’ experiences may be seen as a limitation in reflecting a generalized truth for other PATH male beneficiaries within the government schools across Jamaica. Current studies related to the topic were limited. The unavailability of the following data was also a limitation for the study.

* boys’ attendance and academic records before becoming beneficiaries of PATH.
* PATH boys’ and girls’ CSEC results for the last decade.
* policy document on PATH’s position within the Jamaican educational landscape.

**Implication for Boys’ Education in Jamaica**

It has been revealed from previous chapters that poor boys in particular are under-represented in education in many countries (Jha et.al 2017; UNESCO 2012a; UNESCO 2012b). Jamaica is one such country that has this problem. The education system in Jamaica not only faced under-representation of male students (Jha et.al 2017;Thompson 2017;Williams 2014), it has been grappling with the longstanding problem of low attendance and academic underperformance of the males, from the poorer groups (Ministry of Labour and Social Security 2017; MOE 2010; Figueroa 2007; Miller 2005) . Nonetheless, great effort has been shown by the government through the implementation of PATH to improve education among the poor. The government tried to motivate poorer boys in the programme to attend school and achieve by giving them more monetary benefits than their female counterpart who have been performing well academically. However, such differentiated benefits stopped since it was not evoking significant changes in the boys’ school attendance.

This investigation found that while the programme is a brilliant initiative to help with the eradication of poverty, there are many deficiencies where poor boys’ education is concerned. In fact, PATH is in dire need of reformation, as the investigation revealed that its benefits were much too limited to impact educational attainment among the six PATH male beneficiaries. If action is not taken to improve PATH, the cycle of poverty will continue among beneficiaries, thus defeating the purpose of the programme.

CCT programmes are effective when they are well targeted and the services which beneficiaries participate in are appealing and of high quality. PATH is weak in these areas. In fact, there is much deficiency where targeting is concerned, as a large population of the most vulnerable poor are not benefitting from PATH (UNICEF 2018). Most beneficiaries are those from the upper income quintile group. If the programme is only concentrated among the vulnerable poor, then there would be sufficient resources to not only increase the benefits but also to improve the service in which beneficiaries participate.

Jamaica has the highest educational investment in Latin America and the Caribbean, yet poor boys are at a disadvantage in the system (Williams 2014). My study also revealed that, poor boys are stigmatized in the system by teachers, fellow students and other staff members in the schools studied. Chin (2014) asserts that teachers’ beliefs inform their pedagogical skills. If teachers believe that PATH boys are lazy and they are only at school to eat the government’s free food then clearly there will be limited pedagogical efforts made to improve the educational performance among PATH male students.

Thompson (2017) asserts that the problem of male academic underperformance in Jamaica is partly the fault of our school system. If the government wants stakeholders to believe in our educational mantra ‘every child can learn, every child must learn’ much consideration needs to be placed in implementing policies and programmes to improve the education among poor boys.

CCT programmes for girls are usually successful because they make the school system appealing to girls (UNESCO 2015). As a result, girls become motivated to attend school and achieve. Our school system has been failing our boys as they are expected to learn under subdued unorthodox conditions (limited resources, stigmatization). In making the school system appealing for PATH boys, the first policy to be implemented is to hold the schools accountable for discriminatory issues and bad treatment of PATH students. Also boys learn and behave differently from girls (Sommer 2015; Gurian and Stevens 2010), as such, teachers should attend workshops and seminars to help them better understand how to reach, teach and connect with boys in the system. Thompson (2017) found that the quality of the relationship between teachers and students impacts students’ academic performance. He further asserts that male academic underperformance is attributable to the lack of connection towards boys in school. Jha et.al (2017) posit that “Boys who do not feel encouraged or academically supported by their communities tend to feel disconnected from the schooling experience” (p.28). Once teachers understand boys learning needs and are able to make connections with them, it is likely that more boys will become motivated to attend school regularly as well as to achieve academically in school.

Parents also need to be held accountable for not sending their children to school regularly. Since parents depend on PATH benefits to send their children to school, the penalty of ending these benefits should be collectively enforced by the school community and the PATH governing office. This is paramount in ensuing beneficiaries’ compliance to the 85% termly school attendance condition.

It cannot be overemphasized that this study may very well be the only critical ethnographic study that focused on the impact of a CCT programme through beneficiaries’ interpretations of their experiences. The results from the study have provided great insights in relation to the challenges PATH male beneficiaries face in our school system. Government needs to understand the plight of these boys and act expeditiously to improve both our education system and PATH. Improvements in these areas will not only lead to improved academic performance among poor male students, it will also allow such students to become competent in their field of study, and thus meeting the educational demands of Jamaica’s 2030 vision.

**Chapter Seven: Conclusion and Recommendations**

*Conclusion:*

This research journey, started with the belief that the primary participants (the six PATH boys) ought to meet PATH’s 85% school attendance condition for each term as well as achieve academically, since PATH has been supporting their school retention. I believed that students on PATH had no excuse to not meet the conditions as these were reasonable conditions which they should fulfil. The results contradicted my initial beliefs which I found surprising. I was however satisfied with the results as I was confident that the data gathered was credible, trustworthy and completely based on participants’ lived experiences.

My misconceptions of PATH beneficiaries was far from the truth, as the data revealed that PATH’s benefits were insufficient for the six school boys in the study to achieve desirable educational outcomes. The data also reveals that the boys faced challenges such as verbal abuse from teachers, peers and other staff members in the schools. Particularly, in the primary school setting, discrimination was observed in the preparation and presentation of the meals prepared for PATH beneficiaries as the food was a poorer quality and lower quantity than those prepared for students who were not on the programme. These conditions were not conducive to improving the students’ achievement in school.

Since our educational system was built on the cultural foundations of the privileged class and continues to function as such, opportunity for the six PATH beneficiaries to succeed has been proven through this research to be extremely limited. In the interest of other PATH male beneficiaries, I recommend the following:

*Recommendations:*

* PATH’s monetary benefit needs to be increased. I strongly believe that this will further motivate parents to comply with PATH’s 85% termly attendance condition.
* Since PATH is ultimately designed to promote academic achievement among poor children, I recommend that PATH’s governing body implement an academic condition which demands beneficiaries to perform in accordance with their schools’ academic standards. This may improve academic performance among beneficiaries.
* The PATH governing body should have a nutritionist on their team to fulfil the function of periodically inspecting PATH lunches in schools for quality assurance in both the preparation and serving of meals. This will help to raise the standard as well as to improve the meal experience of the PATH students.
* PATH should host workshops particularly aimed at motivating boys to improve their academic performance. A male speaker who has been a PATH beneficiary could be one of the presenters. Awards should also be given to boys in recognition of school attendance and academic accomplishments. This will also help to lessen the stigma that PATH’s male beneficiaries are not interested in academics.
* To help reduce some of the prejudice towards PATH students the schools could implement mentorship programmes which pairs PATH students and non-PATH students to work together on particular activities in class.
* Principals should establish consequences for discriminatory behaviours towards PATH students by students and staff members.
* Stronger partnership between PATH’s administrators and the schools is certainly needed so that both entities are on one accord in ensuring that beneficiaries adhere to the rules and regulations of the programme. For example, the penalty for reducing and ending benefits for non-compliance of PATH’s conditions should be enforced by both entities. This would help to facilitate better accountability and reduce non-compliance among beneficiaries.
* The PATH social worker should peruse the school register with schools’ guidance counsellor on a monthly basis instead of every two months. Close monitoring of the attendance records can promote early detection as well as early intervention plan for those students who are not only at risk of breaching the attendance condition but also for those students who are facing challenges.

*Recommendations for Further Studies:*

This study provided an insight into the boys’ experiences with PATH in the

government school system but there are other stories to be captured as it relates to the subjects

and their future development. Additionally, investigation needs to be conducted into possible

changes that have been made in the school system in relation to PATH’s male beneficiaries. As such, recommendations for further studies are as follows:

1. An investigation into the six boys’ academic development five years after leaving PATH.
2. An investigation into how teachers’ perceptions of PATH male students affect their academic performance.

**My Reflection**

Even though my intentions for conducting this investigation were clearly communicated and understood by all the participants involved, I was reluctant in publishing this thesis. Considering that it contained sensitive information about the dynamics of PATH, as well as the treatment of PATH male beneficiaries in school, I felt that I was airing my country’s dirty linen in public. As a teacher in the school system, I felt that I was also betraying my colleagues as the investigation portrayed teachers’ inappropriate behaviours toward PATH male students. All these feelings placed a heavy burden on my heart, and thus created a conflict within me as to whether I should publish the study.

It took great consideration for me to arrive at the decision to publish this research. My belief in research as a powerful tool in impacting change for the common good helped me to arrive at the decision to publish. The boys’ stories should be heard so they can hopefully influence positive changes in the programme, as well as in our school system, to help future male beneficiaries of PATH. My not publishing this thesis would have defeated the purpose of this research and the time spent on the painstaking investigation would have been wasted.

Before embarking on this research, I believed that PATH beneficiaries who did not meet the programme’s stipulated 85% attendance condition and under-achieved academically, were not only lazy, but were also unappreciative and lacked ambition. I hate to admit it but like the teacher participants in the research, I had no reservations in expressing that some students on PATH only come to school to warm the benches; eat the PATH lunches and waste tax payers’ money. Since the school faced challenges with attendance and academic performance from mostly male beneficiaries of PATH, they were mainly the target of such accusations.

My decision to research this particular topic ‘*An exploration of the impact of the PATH programme on the attendance and academic performances of two groups of corporate area school boys*’, marked the beginning of a transformational journey. I came to understand that Jamaica’s classist school system is quite unfavourable to the PATH boys. They faced challenges such as verbal abuse from teachers and peers, as well as limited resources, all of which were not conducive to their learning.

The research enabled me to see the short-sightedness in my belief system towards male beneficiaries of PATH. At times, I am deeply disturbed by my prior ignorant and prejudicial beliefs about the students. I came to realize that this was indeed very wrong of me.

Since my perception of PATH male beneficiaries has changed, my behaviour towards the boys in my class has also changed. I am now more sensitive to their needs and often find myself advocating for more favourable conditions towards them in the school. I advocate for better treatment of the boys by my colleagues, better lunch menus and a textbook fundraiser to assist with donations to PATH beneficiaries. These initiatives are just a few that I committed to based on my research, in order to improve conditions for the boys at my school.

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**Appendix A**

**Ethical Clearance Letter**



Downloaded: 31/01/2016

Approved: 15/12/2015

Tamara Taylor

Registration number: 90263354

School of Education

Programme: University of Sheffield School of Education (Caribbean) Doctor of Education

Dear Tamara

**PROJECT TITLE:** An exploration of the impact of the PATH programme on the attendance and academic performance of two groups of Coporate Area school boys (a primary and a secondary school): Has PATH helped these boys' academic performance and attendance in these institutions?

**APPLICATION:** Reference Number 007169

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 15/12/2015 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

* University research ethics application form 007169 (dated 10/12/2015).
* Participant information sheet 1014178 version 1 (10/12/2015).
* Participant consent form 1014179 version 1 (10/12/2015).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

I would recommend that in section 2, the word 'honest' is subject to interpretation. To exclude a person from a project on the grounds of dishonesty seems to me to set the researcher as a judge of character. I think this should be discounted as the grounds by which you include or exclude. This is just a suggested amendment. I would also think that you need to keep audio recordings on a password protected device. As the sheet is a public face for the project, check it for typos - there are some.

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](https://www.shef.ac.uk/ris/other/gov-ethics/ethicspolicy/approval-procedure/review-procedure/changes-made-after-approval) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

Professor Daniel Goodley

Ethics Administrator

**Appendix B**

**Permission Letter to Principal**

Tamara A. Taylor

11 Wailers Terrace, Kingston 20 (876)373-2591

[tantronese@yahoo.com](mailto:tantronese@yahoo.com)

February 1, 2016.

The Principal.

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Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is Tamara Taylor and I am currently pursuing a doctoral degree in education at the University of Sheffield. In fulfilment of this degree, I am required to complete a qualitative research project. The title of my research project is: **An exploration of the impact of the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) on the attendance and academic performance of two groups of Corporate Area school boys (primary and secondary level): Has PATH helped these boys’ academic performance and attendance in these institution?**

This research project requires me to spend extensive time at your school collecting data over a period of five months, March to July 2016. I will be interviewing the principal, the guidance counsellors, teachers, parents and PATH social worker. I will also be examining attendance records and test scores from the three male participants at your school. In light of the forgoing, I am seeking your permission to visit your institution; to have access to relevant school documents and to interface with the relevant members of your staff.

Attached you will find supporting documentation which will provide further information and clarification relating to this project. Consent forms for participants are also included, as well as, my ethics approval letter from the University of Sheffield.

Yours sincerely,

Tamara Taylor

**Appendix C**

**Research Information Sheets**

**Adult Participants’ Information Sheet**

**Title of the Study:** The impact of the Programme of Advancement through

Health and Education (PATH) on the attendance and academic performance of a particular group of primary and secondary school boys.

**Researcher’s Name:** Tamara Taylor.

**Researcher’s Supervisor:** Professor Pat Sikes.

**Study Approval:** The University of Sheffield’s ethics board has approved the commencement of this research project as their ethical standards are in accord with my ethical values as a researcher and the ethical commitment that this research project requires.

**Aim of the Study:** This study aims to find out if PATH is encouraging and sustaining the academic achievement of six male students from low socio-economic backgrounds in the particular primary and secondary schools being investigated.

**Research Methods:** The research methods will include participant observation, examination of students’ records, in-depth interviewing and questionnaire and researcher’s journal.

**The Setting:** The study will be conducted at the school and as a result, the researcher will spend an extensive time of five at the school collecting data.

**Duration of study:** Male students’ academic records and attendance record will be examined from the month of March to July 2016. Interviews will be conducted during that time as well.

**Participants’**

**Responsibility:** Participants are required to participate in more than one interview sessions during this research project. It is important for participants to be forthright and candid in his or her response to interview questions.

**Benefits:** Participants will not receive any monetary gains or any incentives for being a part of this study. It is important to note that participating in this study will not affect benefits that parents currently receive from PATH as my research has no impact on PATH funding. It is the researcher’s hope that the results or the knowledge gained from this study will impact boys’ education some way in the near future.

**Confidentiality:** It is important that participants note that maintaining anonymity and confidentiality is in keeping with the ethical commitment of this research project. This means that the researcher is obligated to upholding the commitment of maintaining anonymity andconfidentiality. Thus, participants’ identities will not be disclosed in this study.

**Data:** The information you give about PATH will be used specifically for the fulfilment of my doctoral degree at the Sheffield University. Thus, the information will not be used against you in any way. Data collected from participants will be kept in a secure place and/or on security protected devices. Documentation of participants’ data will be shredded after the study is completed. If the study is published, participants’ personal information will still be kept confidential.

**Risk:** In this study participants will not be exposed to any unnecessary or disproportionate levels of risk. It is also important to be aware that even though researcher will make every effort to keep participants’ information safe, however, there is no system that is perfectly safe and secure that will guarantee confidentiality.

**Dissatisfaction:** If at any time you should become dissatisfied with the research procedures or process, you are free to go to your school’s principal or come to me the researcher to express your concerns, or dissatisfaction. This may be done via telephone, e-mail or in person. If absolutely necessary you may also email my supervisor, Professor Pat Sikes at [p.j.sikes@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:p.j.sikes@sheffield.ac.uk). Your concerns will certainly be addressed.

**Consent:** Even though participants’ involvement is paramount to the development of this study, participants are free to refuse to participate in this research project. Participants are also free to withdraw from this study at any time without disclosing their reason(s). There will be no penalty for participant’s withdrawal from this project as participation is voluntary.

**Contact Details:** If participants have any queries or concerns about this research project please feel to call Tamara Taylor at 373-2591 or email me at [tantronese@yahoo.com](mailto:tantronese@yahoo.com)

**Student Participants’ Information Sheet**



**STUDENTS’ INFORMATION SHEET**

My name is Tamara Taylor and I will be carrying out an investigation at your school from March to July, 2016.

**THE NAME OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The impact of the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH) on the attendance and academic performance of a particular group of primary and secondary school boys.

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTIGATION**

The purpose of this investigation is to learn about your experiences with PATH.

**HOW WILL I LEARN ABOUT PATH FROM YOU?**

* I will ask you questions about your involvement with PATH.
* I will look at your school attendance records and academic scores.
* I will also ask your teachers, your parent(s)/guardian(s) questions about PATH.
* I will observe your involvement with PATH at school.

**WHAT WILL YOU GAIN FROM HELPING ME WITH THIS INVESTIGATION?**

* The information I get from you may help other students like yourself in the future.
* You will not receive payment for participating in this investigation.

**YOUR SAFETY**

* No harm will come to you as a result of this investigation.
* The information you give will not be used against you.

**ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS INVESTIGATION**

* You are welcome to ask any question about this investigation at any time.
* Don’t be afraid to ask questions about this investigation.

**WILL YOUR NAME BE REVEALED IN THIS INVESTIGATION?**

* Your name will be kept secret.
* Your parent’s/guardian’s names will be kept secret
* Your teacher’s name will be kept secret.
* Your school’s name will be kept secret.

**YOUR RIGHTS**

* You have the right to stop helping me with this investigation at any time.

**Appendix D**

**Consent Forms**

**Adult Consent Forms**

**Participants’ Statement:** All the details of this research project have been explained to me. All my concerns have been addressed in relation to this study. I have also been given ample time to decide to be a participant in this study. I have thoroughly reviewed the information sheet. I clearly understand my commitment as a participant in this research project.

**Name of Researcher Signature Date**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Principal Signature Date**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Guidance Counselor Signature Date**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Social Worker Signature Date**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parents/ Guardians Signature Date**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of form/ class teacher Signature Date**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Student Consent Forms**

* I have read the information about the investigation.
* I have asked questions about those things that were not clear to me.
* I clearly understand what the investigation is about.
* I have discussed my participation with my parent(s)/guardian(s) and teacher(s).
* I have been given ample time to think about my involvement in this investigation.
* My parent(s)/guardian(s) and teacher(s) have also decided to be a part of this investigation in support of my participation.

**Name of Students Signature Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name of Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) Signature Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name of class/form teacher Signature Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Name of Researcher Signature Date**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Appendix E**

**Research Time-Line Plan**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activities completed in order to gain access to both the research site and the participants** | **Date of completion** |
| 1. Ethical Clearance | December 12, 2015 |
| 1. Approached principals for permission to conduct research in their schools via telephone and written letter (see letter below). | January 19, 2016 (telephone conversation).  January 20, 2016 (letter delivered to principals). |
| 1. Thoroughly informed principals and relevant staff about the project verbally and in written forms (Letter to principals, participants’ information sheets and consent forms, as well as ethics approval letter) in a pre-scheduled meeting. | February 2, 2016 |
| 1. Principals granted permission. Participants consent forms and information sheets were given to principals, teachers and guidance counsellors. | February 2, 2016 |
| 1. Thoroughly informed other relevant participants such as the six PATH boys and their parents about the project verbally and in written forms in a pre-scheduled meeting. | February 9, 2016 |
| 1. Collected signed consent forms from principals, guidance counsellors, teachers, parents and students. 2. PATH social worker was briefed about the project and given information sheet as well as the consent form in this month. | During the month of February |
| 1. Researcher began ethnographic role in the field collecting data. | March 1 to July, 2016. |
| 1. Collected PATH social worker’s signed consent form. | March 30, 2016. |
| 1. School officials and participants were reminded /notified that the researcher will be leaving the field by the end of July, 2016 2. Researcher’s five month’s tenure ended. | July 4-8, 2016.  July, 31, 2016. |

**Appendix F**

**Interview Questions**

**Grade Six Boys’ Interview Questions**

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Tick the grade you are in : Grade 6 Grade 11
4. Tick the name of the major examination you will be sitting:

GSAT CSEC

1. How many subjects are you sitting in this examination?
   1. 5-8 9-12
2. How do you prepare for this examination?
3. How long have you been on PATH?
4. How do you receive your PATH benefits?
5. What is it like being on PATH?
6. Have your parents explained to you what it means to be on PATH? What have they said about PATH?
7. What are some of the things that you are required to do when you are on

PATH?

1. How do you know this?

1. On a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the benefits you receive from PATH? What has contributed to this feeling?
2. How many days of the week do you usually attend school? Which day(s) of the week you are frequently absent? Tell me about the factors that contribute to your current attendance pattern.
3. When you are absent from school do you still get PATH lunch when you attend school on other days?
4. If you didn’t have your PATH benefits, how do you think it would affect your attendance at school?
5. If you didn’t have your PATH benefits, how do you think it would affect your academic performance?
6. Tell me about your academic performance at school.
7. Tell me about any positive or negative experience that you have had as a result of being on PATH? How does this make you feel?
8. What has your teacher or classmates said about you being on PATH?
9. How do you feel about the programme?
10. Imagine that you are the PATH Manager, what would you change about PATH?

**Grade Eleven Boys’ Interview Questions**

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. Tick the grade you are in : Grade 6 Grade 11
4. Tick the name of the major examination you will be sitting:

GSAT CSEC

1. How many subjects are you sitting in this examination?

1-4 5-8 9-12

1. How do you prepare for this examination?
2. How long have you been on PATH?
3. How do you receive your PATH benefits?
4. What is it like being on PATH?
5. Have your parents explained to you what it means to be on PATH? What have they said about PATH?
6. What are some of the things that you are required to do when you are on

PATH?

1. On a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the benefits you receive from PATH? What has contributed to this feeling?
2. How many days of the week do you usually attend school? Which day(s) are you frequently absent from school? Tell me about the factors that contribute to your attendance pattern.
3. When you are absent from school do you still get PATH lunch when you

attend school on other days?

1. If you didn’t have your PATH benefits, how do you think it would affect your attendance at school?
2. If you didn’t have your PATH benefits, how do you think it would affect your academic performance?
3. Tell me about your academic performance at school.
4. Tell me about any positive or negative experience that you have had as a result of being on PATH? How does this make you feel?
5. What has your teacher or classmates said about you being on PATH?
6. How do you feel about the programme?
7. Imagine that you are the PATH Manager, what would you change about PATH?

**Parents’ Interview Questions**

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you been receiving PATH benefits for your son?
3. Please tell me about the benefits you receive from PATH.
4. Please tell me about your understanding of the terms and conditions of PATH.
5. Please tell me about what your son knows and understand about PATH’s terms and conditions. How has your son been adhering to these terms and conditions?
6. Have you ever stop receiving PATH benefits for any reason at all? If so explain.
7. PATH stipulates that beneficiaries should adhere to their terms and conditions to continue receiving their benefits, to what extent are you adhering to these conditions?
8. Has any representative from PATH visited your home for any particular reason? What information they seek on such visit?
9. How do you feel being on PATH? Explain why?
10. Tell me about any negative or positive feeling that your son has expressed to you about being on PATH.
11. Please tell me about your son’s school attendance before and since being on PATH.
12. How has your son’s academic performance been affected by his inclusion in PATH? Explain.
13. What was your son’s academic performance like prior to his participation in PATH? Explain.
14. On a scale of one to five, with one being the lowest and five being the highest, how would you rate your level of satisfaction with the benefits you receive from PATH? What has contributed to this feeling?
15. How do you feel about the programme?
16. If you were the CEO of PATH, what changes or improvement you would make to the programme and why

**Primary School Teachers’ Interview Questions**

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you been a teacher in this institution?
3. How long have you been teaching this grade?
4. How many students do you have in your class?
5. How many students are on PATH in your class currently?
6. How many are boys and how many are girls?
7. Are students briefed at school as to what is expected of them while

on PATH? Explain.

1. Please tell me about the PATH programme as it is operated within your

school.

1. What role do you play in the distribution of PATH benefits to your students?
2. Are benefits to boys and girls distributed in the same way? Explain.
3. Describe any differences that you have notice between boy’s compliance and that of girls.
4. How effective is PATH in raising the academic performance of male students in your class or in the school?
5. Tell me about the academic performance of Adam/Bogle/Carl in your class.
6. Tell me about the schools’ pass mark for grade six (6) students. Tell me about any positive or negative actions taken whether students are performing below, within or above the academic criteria of the school.
7. How has being on PATH impacted the attendance of the boys in the

programme?

1. How do you deal with the matter of frequent absenteeism with PATH male

students in your class?

1. Tell me about any negative or positive feelings that the boys have expressed to you about being on PATH.
2. How do feel about the programme?
3. If you were the CEO of PATH is there anything you would change? If so what would that be?

**High School Teachers’ Interview Questions**

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you been a teacher in this institution?
3. How long have you been teaching this grade?
4. How many students are on PATH in your class currently?
5. How many are boys and how many are girls?
6. Are students briefed at school as to what is expected of them as a result of
7. Please tell me about the PATH programme as it is operated within your

school.

1. What role do you play in the distribution of PATH benefits to your students?
2. Are benefits to boys and girls distributed in the same way? Explain.
3. Describe any differences that you have notice between boy’s compliance and that of girls.
4. How effective is PATH in raising the academic performance of male students in your class or in the school?
5. Tell me about the academic performance of Tom/Felix/Frank in your class.
6. Tell me about the schools’ pass mark for grade 11 students. Tell me about the CSEC performance at your school. Tell me about any positive or negative actions taken whether students are performing below, within or above the academic criteria of the school.

1. How has being on PATH impacted the attendance of the boys in the programme?
2. How do you deal with the matter of frequent absenteeism with Path male students in your class?
3. Tell me about any negative or positive feelings that the boys have expressed to you about being on PATH.
4. How do feel about the programme?
5. If you were the CEO of PATH is there anything you would change? If so what would that

**The Primary School Principal’s Interview Questions**

1. How long have you been a principal at this school?
2. What is the population of your school?
3. Please tell me about the PATH programme as it is operated within your school.
4. Could you outline the arrangement between PATH and your school?
5. How many of your students are PATH beneficiaries? How many male students in your school are beneficiaries of PATH?
6. Are benefits to boys and girls distributed in the same way? Explain
7. Please tell me about the budget for PATH in regards to male students at your school.
8. What information is supplied to parents and students on PATH at your school?
9. Has PATH sent any representative to oversee the programme at your school?
10. How does the school deal with non-compliance to the stipulated PATH conditions?
11. Have you noticed any difference in the compliance of boys as oppose to girls as it relates PATH’s conditions?
12. Explain the major reasons for non-compliance by male students.
13. Please tell me about the attendance level regarding male students on PATH at your school.
14. What are your views as it relates to the academic performance of boys on PATH at your school?
15. Tell me about the schools’ pass mark for grade six/ grade eleven students. Tell me about any positive or negative actions taken whether students are performing below, within or above the academic criteria of the school.
16. If you were asked to modify PATH, what aspects would you change/ what aspects would you maintain? Explain.

**Guidance Counsellors’ Interview Questions**

1. What is your name?
2. How long have you been a guidance counsellor at your school?
3. Describe your schools’ population.
4. How many of the students are currently receiving PATH benefits?
5. How many of the PATH beneficiaries are boys?
6. Please tell me about the PATH programme as it is operated within your school.
7. What information is supplied by guidance counsellors to parents and students who are on PATH at your school?
8. Has PATH sent any representative to oversee the programme at your school? What is the issue when PATH’s representatives visit the school?
9. How are PATH benefits administered to students at your school? Explain
10. Are benefits to boys and girls distributed in the same way? Explain.
11. What role do you play in the distribution of PATH benefits to your students?
12. Tell me about any negative or positive feelings that male students have expressed to you about being on PATH.
13. Please tell me about the attendance level regarding male students on PATH at your school.
14. What are your views on the compliance with PATH’s condition between boys and girls at your school?
15. Explain the major reasons for non-compliance by male students.
16. How is the matter of non-compliance dealt with at your school? Explain
17. What are your views as it relates to the academic performance of the boys on PATH?
18. How do you feel about the programme?
19. If you were asked to modify PATH, what aspects would you change/ what aspects would you maintain? Explain.

**Path Social Worker’s Interview**

1. How long have been working with PATH?
2. Please tell me about your role and responsibilities within the programme.
3. Tell me about the prerequisite needed to qualify for PATH.
4. How does PATH inform beneficiaries about their responsibilities and commitment where the programme is concerned?
5. How does PATH operate towards male students?
6. What is the agreement between PATH and the school in relation to the distribution of PATH benefits to male students?
7. How does PATH operate at: a) the primary level (b) the secondary school level?
8. What are PATH’s aims or expectations in relation to boy’s education?
9. How does PATH deal with the matter of non-compliance? Explain
10. In your experience what is the main reason for non-compliance among male students?
11. What are your views about the programme as it relates to the academic performance of boys?
12. What are your views about the programme in relation to male students’ attendance?
13. If you were asked to modify PATH, what aspects would you change/ what aspects would you maintain? Explain.