

Causes of Boys' Academic Underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands

By

Vivian Uloaku Otuonye

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Dedication

To the four just men in my life, I dedicate this work.

Gene, my friend, my love, my confidant, sounding-board, editor and husband!
No way would I have made it through this without you by my side. Thank you!

Chibuchim: The Lord is my God!

Ifeanyichukwu: Nothing is impossible unto God!

Tochukwu: Praise the Lord!

Your support, encouragement and reassuring words kept me going to the end.

To the 'Fabulous Boys' and the young men of the Turks and Caicos Islands:

You are the inspiration behind this study. You can do it!

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Abstract

This research explores why the boys academically underachieve in Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). The research is set against the backdrop of the ongoing global debate on boys' failings in education - a phenomenon of serious national concern in TCI and the wider English-Speaking Caribbean. TCI has not undertaken any previous research on the causes of the educational failings of their boys. This research seeks in part to remedy this deficit.

Five (5) research questions are formulated and answered. They focus on the effect of the following on boys' academic underachievement (BAU), namely: the negative stereotyping of boys; the predominance of women in education; masculinity (and the boys' negotiations of it) and past historical events such as slavery and its legacy of absentee fathers. These are found to have caused BAU in TCI, thus largely confirming previous research findings on the causes of BAU in the Caribbean.

The literature review, among other things, outlines and engages the main theoretical concepts by which BAU has been debated and explained. Aspects of these theoretical concepts are interrogated through the lens of post-colonial theory and Fanon's psycho-political concept, both of which constitute the theoretical framework of this research. For the purpose of data collection, qualitative research methods of interviews, peer dialogue, focus group and 'second' literature review have been chosen. This choice was informed by my world view and positionality. Psycho-political thematic analytical tool has been deployed in the data analysis. This enabled 'beyond the surface' interpretation of the data.

Although, this research confirms previous research findings, it does so from a fresh theoretical perspective. This perspective looks beyond the boys for their failings and looks to external historical and political forces such as slavery and its deleterious legacies of generational impact. In this sense, this research makes contribution to knowledge by adding theoretical depth and breadth to our understanding of BAU. It also makes recommendations to inform a better articulated boys' education policy and practice in Turks and Caicos Islands. These recommendations include reframing the BAU question from 'why are the boys failing'? to 'why are we failing the boys'?

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List of Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BAU	Boys' Academic Underachievement
BERA	British Educational and Research Association
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Examination Council
CXC	Caribbean Examination Certificate
Ed.D	Doctor of Education
FG	Focus Group
GCE	General Certificate in Education
MOE	Ministry of Education
NIV	New International Version
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAD	People of African Descent
PDP	Peer Dialogue Participants
QRM	Qualitative Research Methods
TCI	Turks and Caicos Islands
TCIG	Turks and Caicos Island Government
SPPD	Strategic Planning and Policy Department
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UWI	University of West Indies
WTO	World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Over-view

This research explores why boys are under-achieving academically in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), a multi - islands British Overseas Territory located in the English-speaking Caribbean. The research is set against the backdrop of the ongoing global debate and public discourses on boys' failings in education. In the Caribbean, the debate has since the late 20th Century, become a topical issue of serious policy concerns for the regional governments (Cobbett and Younger, 2012). These concerns are apparently justified by governments' statistics and research findings which have linked boys' academic underachievement to adverse social and economic consequences, including crimes, drugs, narcotic trafficking and violence (Jha et al., 2012).

The TCI shares the challenges of boys' academic underachievement (BAU) with its Caribbean kith and kin but unlike most of them, no research has been conducted in TCI to contextually determine the nature, extent and causes of their boys' failings in education. Consequently, TCI government policy interventions have been mostly uninformed and haphazard. Consistent with the views of Martino et al. (2004) and Walker et al. (2001) on the need for empirical research for policy formulation, this research is therefore partly intended to address this deficit and to inform a better articulated and implemented policy intervention to boys' academic underachievement in TCI.

The literature review critically examines the theoretical and conceptual framework of the boys' academic underachievement debate. Through post-colonial and 'psycho-political' lens, the review interrogates aspects of the theories and concepts by which boys' academic failings and their causes have been identified and explained in the Caribbean. It advocates an explanation of BAU (and its causes) that is underpinned by a decolonized theoretical and conceptual framework which gives due weight and regard to indigenous (African-Caribbean) socio-political and historical circumstances and contexts. The research data have been collected primarily by qualitative methods of interviews, peer dialogue, focus group and second literature review methods. Psycho-political thematic analysis tool has been deployed in the data

analysis, enabling a 'beyond the surface', 'out of the box' analysis of the data. The findings confirm previously identified causes of the boys' academic under-achievement, but it has done so from a fresh theoretical perspective. This perspective looks beyond the internal personal psychology of the boys for their failings. Instead, it focuses on the external socio-political and historical forces like slavery (over which the boys had no control) but which, according to Hook (2004a), have "conditioned or limited" and thus "intimately linked to" their personal psychology (p.85). More significantly, this theoretical perspective identifies a disabling society and urges it to do two things: first, to re-frame the boys' under-achievement question from, 'why are the boys failing' to 'why are we failing the boys?' Secondly, to take responsibility to enable the boys to achieve their full potentials. The detailed background to this research, the statement of the problem, its purpose and significance, the theoretical framework deployed as well as the structure of the thesis are set out in the paragraphs next following.

1.2 Contextual Background to Research

The background to this study is set on the following contextual circumstances: firstly, the researcher's positionality, that is, her personal and professional experiences of over 30 years as a teacher and guidance counsellor, practising across Nigeria in West Africa, Jamaica, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands in the Caribbean. The second contextual circumstance is the researcher's enrolment in the Ed.D. Programme of the University of Sheffield, which among other things, exposed her to contemporary debate on boys' failings in education, the huge interests the debate has generated, and the concepts and theories formulated to identify and explain the causes of boys' academic underachievement. Thirdly, her exposure to the implications of this debate in the Caribbean, and by extension, the Turks and Caicos Islands.

1.2.1 Researcher's Positionality

My personal experience as a West African woman, wife and mother of three boys, as well as hands-on professional practice experiences spanning over 30 years across West Africa and the Caribbean have largely influenced this research. My family's journey out of Africa to the Caribbean began in 1996, after about 12 years of practice as teacher and guidance counsellor in Nigeria. As with most parents, my husband and I were anxious about the future of our 3 boys in a Caribbean social and

cultural environment which I soon discovered, to my shock, was remarkably different from West African society. I had initially wrongly assumed that there would not be much difference since, from my little knowledge of Caribbean history, the region is predominantly populated by persons of African descent, hence African-Caribbean.

Upon my arrival in the Caribbean, I was first employed by the Jamaican government within their education system as school guidance counsellor. Soon thereafter, I noticed signs of boys' academic underachievement. This became more evident within a few years of my subsequent engagement with the TCI education system, this time, both as a teacher and school guidance counsellor. I became curious and in fact concerned. I made cursory enquiries and understood that, years before my arrival, boys' failings in education was common knowledge and of deep concern to the government, school administrators and parents. My concern stemmed primarily from the fact that I arrived with three children; all boys, then between ages 2 and 6. Raising them in this environment with interest and focus on their academic pursuits was going to be a huge challenge. I was worried about their future. So, their father and I resolved to do whatever we could to save them from joining the ranks of boys' academic underachievers. Among other ways, we were to draw from whatever little and imperfect parenting experience we gained from our West African background, from particularly the Ibo tribe in Nigeria. To the best of my 12 years teaching/counselling experience then (later confirmed by Jha et al., 2012), there was no such boys' academic underachievement 'problem' in Nigeria. Besides my professional practice within the TCI education system, I was (and still am) an active Church and Community youth leader. In these positions, I observed distinctively, that the boys were generally outdoors even during odd hours. I wondered when they had time to study after school. We resolved our boys were not going to have such liberties. Indeed, we ensured that their friends would rather gather in our house for studies, play games and have occasional 'sleep-overs' to which they and their friends looked forward. This informal house-gathering of initially a handful of boys plus our 3, metamorphosed into the first national all-male dance group called *the Fabulous Boys*. I believe, the *Fabulous Boys* experiment became a true success story of a mentorship programme and is still thriving.

We are very humbled by and thankful for the progress our boys and their peers, as the pioneer members of the Fabulous Boys, have made to date. Our eldest son, now

26, is a medical doctor, married to his medical school classmate, and both are currently pursuing Specialist Residency programmes in United States Medical Schools. Our middle boy is 24 and an international athlete. In May 2019, he graduated with a master's degree in Business Administration from Kansas State University, United States. The last of the 3 will be 22 in October 2019. He is a Foundation 1 Medical Doctor in United Kingdom (UK), having graduated in July 2019, from the University of Sheffield Medical School, UK.

The *Fabulous Boys'* story and its theoretical implications are fully articulated in Chapter 2 of this Thesis. It suffices to say that it also has underlying significance for this study. For example, the perplexing struggles and challenges of bringing up our boys, unbeknown to us at the time, have fascinating and meaningful theoretical explanations. However, it was not until I enrolled into the course of the Ed.D programme with University of Sheffield, that I became intellectually sensitized and exposed to the boys' failing 'problem' and the debate associated with it. More importantly, the programme has equipped me, not only to engage in this debate but also to interrogate aspects of the theories and concepts addressing the 'problem'. This has been done in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), but the nature and implications of the debate, especially in the Caribbean, are introduced next as part of the contextual background to this research.

1.2.2 *Boys' underachievement phenomenon (the debate)*

The issue of boys' education and their underachievement has given rise to much academic literature, research findings and theoretical concepts. It has also generated interests in the media, the governments and other stakeholders involved in the education of young people. Not surprisingly, Zyngier (2007) has asked the rhetorical question:

Do we really need another book on boys' education and what is it about boys that seems to have generated this interest (or some would say business) among academics, general public and media in general? (p.112)

The interests generated and the debate that ensued on the phenomenon are global (Smith, 2003), dating back, according to Jha and Kelleher (2006), to the 1970s in the case of Commonwealth countries like the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. They further observe that in other parts of the world like Germany, Japan

and United States, “theories were being formulated... (and) discussions were taken up at popular and academic levels” (p.12) on boys’ failings in education. In the Caribbean, the debate has, since the 1990s been animated, and the issue has become serious policy concerns for the governments, “...legitimately requiring political attention throughout the Anglophone Caribbean...” (Cobbett and Younger, 2012, p.612). Reporting on the boys’ education in the Caribbean, Jha and Kelleher (2006), agree, noting that “...concern for boys’ underachievement is quite high in several Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean region...” (p.82). As to the nature of the debate, Cobbett and Younger (2012) further opine:

Boys' underachievement in the Caribbean has been a high-profile issue since the 1990s; however, the extent of the problem, the extent to which it actually constitutes a 'problem', and the ways it can best be explained and understood have been deeply contested. (p.611)

Thus, one of the key recurring questions in this debate is whether boys’ academic underachievement is really such a problem to have merited the much attention and interventions the governments and other stakeholders have given to it. These interventions have also been questioned as over-reaction, and ‘moral panic’ to the ‘problem’ of boys’ education (Smith, 2003; Gorard et al., 1999). Researchers engaged in the debate such as Cobbett and Younger (2012) and Zyngier (2009) argue that governments’ commitment to solving the ‘problem’ of boys underachievement has tended to perpetuate gender inequalities and social injustice, thus disregarding a strategic approach that looks more holistically at gender and education. However the issue is debated, the reality of boys’ academic underachievement and in some instances, the causes, have been established by research findings and government statistics on Caribbean education (Cobbett and Younger, 2012; Golding, 2012; Plummer, 2007; Jha and Kelleher, 2006; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Renolds, 2001; Figueroa, 2000; Miller, 1986; Parry, 1996; 1997). Indeed, there is abundant evidence of a correlation between boy’s failings in education and the spate of violent crimes, drug and gangsterism in the Caribbean region which, as Jha et al. (2012) have observed,

...has one of the highest murder rates in the world and the youth are disproportionately represented among those committing these crimes. For instance, in 2002, young males from 15–29 years of age were responsible for 80% of the violent crimes, 75% of the murders, and 98% of all major crimes committed in Jamaica... (p.5)

Statistics and research findings like these, have continued to unsettle Caribbean governments. So, while the debate rages on, these governments have desperately sought such appropriate interventions as they consider necessary. Thus, in 2003 at their 15th Conference in Edinburgh, the Commonwealth Ministers of Education made a desperate call for help. In response, a “policy study on boys’ underachievement in education” (Jha and Kelleher, 2006, p.xiv) was commissioned by the Commonwealth and undertaken by Jha and Kelleher (2006). This is one of several such intervention initiatives discussed in detail in this thesis.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Although a British Overseas Territory, Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) is geographically part of the archipelago islands chain of the Bahamas in the Caribbean. Through indirect British rule and the incidence of slavery, TCI has social, cultural, political, historical and familial ties of more than a century old with the Bahamas, Jamaica and Bermuda (Arthur et al., 1998). As evident in government statistics and policy documents, TCI, largely shares similar challenges of boys’ academic underachievement as in the larger Caribbean. For example, the high rate of boys that are dropping out from the secondary school at higher classes and eventually not enrolling in the terminal School Certificate Examination, is quite evident in TCI, just as it is common in the wider Caribbean (TCI Government Education Digest 2013-14). However, my enquiries, confirmed by the TCI Ministry of Education, show that, unlike most Caribbean Countries, no research has been conducted in TCI to empirically determine the nature, extent and why the boys are not performing well academically. In addition, the TCI policy on boys’ education has made certain assumptions on boys’ failing in education that appear to have ‘pathologised’ the boys. In an analysis of this policy, Otuonye (2015c), concludes that:

The TCI policy on boys’ education, not being informed by any research, seems to have been made haphazardly, not thought through and devoid of any meaningful provision for learning and thus not capable of addressing the ‘issues of why boys drop out at higher levels of education’ (p.8)

1.4 Purpose and Significance of Research

This research therefore addresses the TCI research-deficit in boys’ education ‘problem’ by exploring why the TCI boys are underachieving academically. As Otuonye (2016b) notes:

It is not enough to know that in TCI, boys academically underachieve, it is more important to seek answers as to why they are academically underachieving; for then might solutions be found (p.6)

In furtherance of this purpose, the following five (5) research questions have been formulated to guide the quest for answers.

1. How do stereotypes associated with the problematic African-Caribbean boys become incorporated as a truth claim within educational practice?
2. How does the predominance of women in the education system affect boys' academic achievement in the TCI?
3. How does the Caribbean construction of masculinity impact on boys' academic achievement?
4. How do boys negotiate different masculine identities in TCI cultural setting?
5. How have long-past historical events such as slavery and colonialism affected boys' academic achievement in TCI?

This research further provides opportunities in three significant ways: firstly, it enables current TCI Policy on boys' education to be challenged, and to present the TCI Government with what Harper et al. (2009) call "an evidence-based and empirical research" findings (p.228). These findings in turn will hopefully influence and inform a better articulated policy response to boys' academic underachievement. Secondly, it enables a confirmation of the research findings on the causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Caribbean. However, it explains these causes from a different theoretical and conceptual perspective. This perspective looks beyond the boys' personal psychology for their failings, to external socio, political and historical forces that have 'limited' or 'conditioned' and thus formed part of their psychology (Hook, 2004a). It will thus enable a shift of focus from the boys as architects of their own failing and to a society that must rethink; that must reframe the BAU question from 'why are the boys failing?' to 'why are we failing the boys?' This society must also take responsibility for failing the boys and resolve to enable them to succeed. This research therefore makes contributions to our knowledge of boys' academic underachievement phenomenon by adding theoretical depth, breadth and richness to the subject. Thirdly, this research climaxes my University of Sheffield's Ed.D.

Programme, with the benefits of a refreshing hunger for knowledge and scholarship, as well as professional and personal advancement.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This research is underpinned by a theoretical framework that combines the post-colonial and psycho-political theoretical concepts explained below.

Understand

1.5.1 Post-Colonial Theory

Although, a subject of an ongoing debate as to its nature and value, post-colonial theory, refers to a historical period that immediately follows the end of colonialism. It incorporates the critical orientation or thinking that enables us to appreciate what Hook (2004a) calls, the “understanding (of) the relationship between colonisers and the colonised and the psychological, material and cultural effects of these relationships” (p.88). Van Zyl (1998) expresses similar views. Through this critical theoretical perspective, these relationships are kept under scrutiny. They are also exposed and challenged in their attempts to perpetuate colonial dominance or oppression in the different contemporary but disguised economic and other formats, they manifest in post-colonial times and circumstances. The significance of a post-colonial mind-set is articulated by Hook (2004a) when he notes, agreeing with Loomba (1998), that formal cessation of colonialism and consequent “granting of independence did not simply bring to an end colonial politics or the forms of violence and conflicts that had characterized them” (p.87). Hook (2004a) further contends that, in reality, “the post-colonial periods ... are never fully separable from their colonial past” (p.87).

Post-colonial theory is increasingly being deployed in different areas of academic and research studies like Critical Disability Studies, Educational Psychology, etc. It underpinned, for example, Smith’s (1999) call for decolonization of research methods and inspired the advocacy for recognition and respect for knowledge, theories and concepts emanating from parts of the world other than the global north as in Connell (2007). Moreover, according to Mills (2016),

Postcolonial theory is used within ... research to illuminate how intersecting forms of oppression and discrimination (and specifically ableism and

sanism) may be inscribed on people's bodies, psyches and spirits, in multiple ways and across generations. (slide 6)

Together with the 'psycho-political' concept of Frantz Fanon, post-colonial theory has been deployed, primarily in the critical examination and interrogations of the theories and concepts by which BAU and its causes have been explained, and to a lesser degree in my engagement with the BAU debate.

1.5.2 'Psycho-Politics of Fanon'

This is a concept primarily attributed to Frantz Fanon, a French-trained Psychiatrist, born in Martinique - a Caribbean French colony. As a revolutionary, he exerted much influence and spent most of his life in the Algerian liberation struggles against France, Macey (2000a cited in Hook 2004a, p.86). Through his writings, especially *Black Skin, White Mask* (2008) and the *Wretched of the Earth* (2004), first published in 1952 and 1961 respectively, Fanon also "exerted a foundational influence on what would later become the field of post-colonial theory and criticism" (Hook, 2004a, p.86).

According to Hook (2004a), "The Psycho-Politics of Fanon" (p.85) is an aspect of Fanon's critical psychology that psychologises the political and politicises the psychological in the following primary senses: firstly, it uses "psychological concepts to political ends", by drawing "attention to the true extent of damage of colonial/political oppression" (p.86). Secondly, it allows the "explicit politicisation of the psychological" by revealing "the extent to which human psychology is intimately linked to socio-political and historical forces..." (p.115). This latter sense is particularly significant in this research because it presents an 'out of the box' perspective that challenges traditional psychology by looking beyond the internal psychology. Instead, it considers the "specific social, historical, political and economic contexts," (p.89) which, in reality, are the constituent parts of the individual and their personal psychology. Accordingly, in addition to using it to interrogate aspects of the theoretical basis for BAU, 'psychopolitics' has been deployed to seek an explanation for BAU. In so doing, it looks beyond the personal internal psychology of the Caribbean/TCI boy and to consider instead how socio-political and historical factors (like colonial-backed slavery) over which he has no control, have conspired to make him how he is seen, and what he apparently is, today.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This Thesis is structured into 7 Chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the Thesis, and includes an overview, the contextual background, the statement of the problem, and the purpose and significance of the research, as well as its theoretical framework. Chapter 1 ends with how the Thesis has been structured. The Literature Review is taken up in Chapter 2. This chapter identifies and discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework of the boys' underachievement debate. More importantly, it also interrogates aspects of these theories and concepts. Chapter 3 outlines the Methodology and Methods deployed and why. It also discusses the ethical issues and challenges presented and how they have been managed. The Research Findings and Data Analysis are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. In these Chapters, the answers to the 5 research questions are presented, underpinned by the analysis of the data and the themes they generated. Specifically, Chapter 4 discusses findings and analysis of data relating to research questions 1 and 2 with their corresponding themes of *Stereotypes* and *Feminization*. Chapter 5 does the same for research questions 3 and 4 and their corresponding themes of *Hard-Male Image Identity* and *Peer Group*. Chapter 6 focuses exclusively on the findings and analysis of the data specific to research question 5 with its theme as *Historical Past* (and sub-themes as *Slavery and Colonialism*, and *Absent Fathers*).

The Discussion and Conclusion are presented in Chapter 7, the last Chapter. This Chapter restates the research questions and how they have been answered. It also reflects both on the main theories and concepts engaged in the literature review as well as their interrogations through other theoretical lenses. Policy practice implications of the research, recommendations as well as the researcher's reflections are also presented in this Chapter. In conclusion, Chapter 7 recaps the key research findings as analysed from a fresh theoretical perspective and its positive implications for a reflective (reflexive) society. It urges this society firstly, to reframe the BAU question: 'why are the boys failing' to 'how have we failed the boys' and secondly, to seek to provide the answer. This final Chapter also speaks to the theoretical contributions of this research to our knowledge and understanding of why the boys underachieve academically.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Boys' education and their 'achievement' or 'underachievement' have given rise to much academic literature, research findings and theoretical concepts, and generated great interest among academics, the media, governments and the general public. No wonder Zyngier (2009) has posed the following rhetoric questions:

Do we really need another book on boys' education and what is it about boys that seems to have generated this interest (or some would say business) among academics, general public and media in general? (p.112)

The above rhetorical question was in the context of Zyngier's review of Gary Wilson's (2013) *"Breaking through Barriers to boys' achievement"*, in which he severely critiqued Wilson for advocating a more caring masculinity for boys within the education systems. This critique is further examined later in this literature review, but it represents a perspective of the debate on boys' education, especially among academics. Arguably, it is a debate with a global dimension, although Moreau (2011) seems to disagree, insisting that "the boys' underachievement debate as a key policy issue ... is restricted to certain parts of the world" not including the French (p.162). Nevertheless, among the Commonwealth Countries, like United Kingdom (UK), Australia and New Zealand, it goes back to 1970s (Jha and Kelleher, 2006). Smith (2003) opines that the debate reached its climax in the UK in 1998 "when Stephen Byers, the then School Standards Minister" observed that "boys' 'laddish' anti-school attitudes were impeding their progress at School" (p.283). Jha and Kelleher (2006) note that outside the Commonwealth Countries, "theories were being formulated in other countries such as Germany, Japan and the United States (and) discussions were taken up at popular and academic levels" (p.12). Gorard et al. (1999) and Smith (2003) consider as 'moral panic', the public, media and government apparent over-reaction to boys' underachievement concerns. In the Commonwealth Caribbean, the debate became heated in the late 20th Century (Jha and Kelleher, 2006) and about which Cobbett and Younger, (2012) observe:

Boys' underachievement in the Caribbean has been a high-profile issue since the 1990s; however, the extent of the problem, the extent to which it actually constitutes a 'problem', and the ways it can best be explained and understood have been deeply contested. (p.611)

It seems the debate is so animated in the Caribbean partly because, while the reality (empirical or not) and causes of boys' academic underachievement are being contested, the governments, parents, school administrators and other stakeholders in Caribbean education, are grappling with the adverse social and economic consequences which have been empirically linked to boys' underachievement (Jha et al., 2012; Plummer, 2007; Jha and Kelleher, 2006; Figueroa, 2000; Miller, 1986; 1991).

This literature review, among other things, will engage in this debate, focusing on the Caribbean and guided by the thesis topic: *Causes of boy's academic underachievement in TCI*. It should be pointed out that the emphasis is on **academic or educational underachievement** and not on underachievement generally. Smith (2003) while revisiting the 'moral panic' discourses, has questioned the simplistic matrix by which boys' academic or educational underachievement has been measured in the debate. Therefore, her paper partly "focused on the difficulties of defining and conceptualising the term *underachievement*, and the implications this has for identifying groups who may be achieving" (p.283). Nonetheless, boys' *academic or educational* underachievement is a more circumscribed subject than boys' *underachievement* generally. The latter may arguably include, for example, considerations of the boys' world of work or employability as Cobbett and Younger (2012) has done, although they still used the term 'Boys' educational underachievement...' Jha and Kelleher (2006) appear to have adopted boys' underachievement in this narrow sense of boys' *academic or educational* underachievement, although they considered and analysed the issue under two dimensions, namely, *participation* and *performance*. They admit using the word *underachievement* "as a relative term" (p.4). It is Jha and Kelleher's (2006) term and sense that *boys' academic underachievement* (BAU) is used in this research.

In addition to engaging in the BAU debate (as above circumscribed), and in the broader context of my research, I endeavour to identify and outline the major uncritical, ahistorical and apolitical populist theoretical concepts and research findings on the causes of BAU in the Caribbean and by extension TCI. Lastly, through

post-colonial and psycho-political lens, I critically analyse aspects of these theoretical and conceptual explanations for BAU and its causes. In doing so, I draw on the perspectives of writers like Frantz Fanon, and decolonizing research methodologies protagonist, Linda Tuhiwai Smith. The implications or impact of these analysis on the research questions are evaluated. Resulting from this evaluation, the frequently asked ambivalent question: 'why are the boys failing' is reformulated to 'why are we failing the boys'? The literature review concludes by urging, firstly, a decolonized, and critical theoretical and conceptual accounts of the causes of BAU. These decolonized accounts should acknowledge and give weight to the social, political and historical circumstances and contexts of African-Caribbean families and communities. Secondly, the literature review urges a reflective and enabling society that accepts responsibility for the failings of the boys and commits to 'enable' them to succeed.

2.2 Debating the reality and consequences of BAU and interventions in the Caribbean

The starting questions here appear to be: Are boys in the Caribbean *really* underachieving academically? If so, is it a problem? If so, what is the extent of the problem? Are there implications /consequences?

2.2.1 The Reality of BAU

Cobbett and Younger (2012) explored these questions in their paper: "*Boys' educational 'underachievement' in the Caribbean - interpreting the 'problem'*". They said:

Our central concern in this paper is to revisit the debates about the interpretation of the issue, to explore whether boys' underachievement is indeed a 'problem', in the sense of both an empirical reality and an issue requiring political attention. In this paper, we explore contestations over the reality and complexity of educational underachievement and whether this relates to broader political-economic marginalization (or privileging) of the boys (p.611)

In revisiting the debates on boys educational underachievement, they reviewed several academic literature on boys' underachievement contestations in the Caribbean, including Parry (1996; 1997), Bailey (2004; 2007), Miller (1986; 1991), Figueroa (2000; 2004), Lindsey (2002), Plummer, Maclean and Simpson (2008). They examined and analysed relevant research findings, data, reports from regional

and international organizations and institutions. These include, the World Bank, Commonwealth-Secretariat, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Caribbean Examinations Council and Caribbean Community (CARICOM). In the end, Cobbett and Younger (2012) made findings and came to certain conclusions, including the fact that “the data suggest ...that the question as to whether boys’ underachievement is a problem in the sense of an empirically existing reality is complex and multi-faceted” (p.615). The complexity of the problem perhaps shows up in the fact, accordingly to them, boys who are in socio-economic privileged schools seem to do better than girls in schools less socio-economically privileged. This may well be right. However, in the context of BAU, its reality need not be complicated by comparing boys’ performance in socio-economically endowed school with the performance of girls in less socio-economically privileged. The simple and perhaps better approach could have been to find out how the boys are performing in comparison to the girls in a school context with equality of learning opportunities and resources. It appears Cobbett and Younger (2012) did take cognizance of this approach and acknowledge that:

Nonetheless, the fact that within each school type, boys’ academic performance is relatively lower than that of girls’ does seem to be a widespread occurrence requiring explanation. (p.615)

They further acknowledge that quantitative data do show that ‘some’ boys’ underachievement is a real problem empirically speaking. Accordingly, they opine that exclusive attention and intervention that target the boys to the neglect of the girls “are inequitable and inappropriate” and call on policy makers to rethink this approach and shift the debate to “a broader analysis of gender and education within a relational framework” (p.623). This call to policy makers is certainly worthwhile but may have to be properly contextualized as argued subsequently in this section.

It seems however that most of the research findings and reports on Caribbean boys’ education which Cobbett and Younger reviewed and analysed, did not seem to be focused on whether boys’ underachievement in the Caribbean is a ‘problem’, whether in the sense of an empirical reality or not. The fact that it is real, and problematic appears not to be contested. For example, Figueroa (2000), citing research data on tertiary education gender disparity in the Caribbean, notes:

Women now constitute over 70 percent of the graduating class at the Mona (Jamaica) campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), the premier institution serving the English-speaking Caribbean. This reflects a rapid reversal. In 1948, the first UWI class (at Mona) was 70 percent in male. Female registration first surpassed 50 percent in 1982/83 for UWI. By 1997/98 men constituted less than 30 percent of the new student admissions at Mona. (p.68)

By 2015, fifteen years later, this percentage disparity has remained under 30 percent for the male graduates as confirmed by Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, Vice Chancellor of UWI in his address at the 2015 graduation ceremony which I was privileged to attend. To the delight and applause of the students and attendees, he stated that for the first time in many years, the percentage of the male graduates rose from 24 to 29 percent. The reality of BAU in TCI is discussed in section 2.2.5 below, where it is stated to be very evident, given government statistical and policy statements.

Thus, the contestations, it is submitted, appear to be focused, not on the reality of BAU but on why the Caribbean boys are failing academically. Miller (1986; 1991), and Parry (1996) from a slightly different perspective, trace the cause to the historical event of marginalization of black men by some group of powerful men. The objective was to prevent any uprising against and over-powering of this group of powerful men. To give effect to this strategy, the black men were confined “to agricultural and industrial labour” while their female counterparts, were “sponsored ... (academically) in order to marginalize black men” (p.615). Miller opines that the policy was to make teaching a female-dominated profession. Education thus became effeminate. Seen from this perspective, the boys shunned education as the antithesis of their masculinity identity, which in the Caribbean, is constructed as strong, dominant male figure. Figueroa (1998; 2000) counters Miller’s position with his theory of *male privileging* - a socio-cultural practice that allowed the boys the liberties of outdoor life; to go in and out as they liked, while the girls are confined at home and domesticated in ways that eventually prepared them for school and classroom discipline and regimentation. On the other hand, the boys became ill-equipped and thus disadvantaged in education. He critiqued Miller’s theory of male marginalization because it tended to perpetuate the hegemonic masculinity thesis of men’s dominance over women and offers no real solution to boys’ underachievement. Figueroa (2000) argues that his “...notion of a gender privileging dialectic which explains the experience of male educational underachievement as the ironic outcome

of historic male privileging..." (p.68), should be preferred to Miller's '*marginalization black men*'. Lindsey (2002) and Bailey (2004) were equally critical of Miller on different fronts.

Plummer (2007) and Plummer, Mclean and Simpson (2008), weighed in on the implications of masculinity on boys' academic underachievement in the Caribbean. The Caribbean construction of masculinity with its hegemonic variant, reifies maleness as macho, strong and hard (Figueroa, 2000). They argue that this socio-cultural construct constrained the boys into a 'straightjacket' of masculinity peer group codes of taboos and obligations which conceive education as a feminine enterprise and antithesis of their masculine power identity. Turned off from schooling, which has become a 'common ground' for both genders, and with a desire to belong and be accepted, by 'Other', these boys retreat to 'physicality' in which they are invariably exposed to toxic and harmful practices. Parry's (1997) work '*School is fooling*': *Why do Jamaican boys underachieve in School*, took her to 8 Jamaican High schools. Her paper, among other things:

Sets out to illustrate two ways in which females are perceived as problematic and how as teachers and pupils, they are held responsible for the poor educational performances of the boys... (and) offers an alternative perspective on male educational underachievement (p.223)

The above theoretical concepts on BAU in the Caribbean context, are more fully developed in section 2.3 below. Indeed, aspects of Figueroa (2000), '*male privileging*' and other concepts on causes of BAU are subject to critical examination in section 2.4 below. It seems enough at this stage to reiterate that the BAU debate in the Caribbean context, is not so much about its reality as a problem as it is about its causes and the nature and extent of interventions required. This was further underscored in 2003 at the "15th Commonwealth conference of Education Ministers in Edinburgh." (Jha and Kelleher, 2006, p.4). At that Conference, the Ministers desperately called for help on boys' failing in education. In response, according to Jha and Kelleher (2006), "the first Commonwealth Policy Study on Boys' Underachievement in Education was commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat, London" (p.xiv) and undertaken by Jha and Kelleher (2006). From the outset, the reality of boys' underachievement in education was not lost on them as they noted that:

...a new phenomenon has emerged in certain countries where gender disparities in education are turning in favour of girls, and therefore against boys, both in terms of participation and performance. (p.3)

In relation to the Caribbean, they acknowledge Bailey and Bernard (2003), a study commissioned by the Caribbean Community and the University of the West Indies, which highlights “boys’ academic underachievement in terms of performance and drop-out rate” (p.16). Jha et al. (2012) is a “background paper commissioned by the Education for All Global Monitoring Report for its 2012 Report” (Jha et al., 2012, p.i). Both commissioned studies (Jha et al., 2012; Jha and Kelleher, 2006) researched the nature, extent, causes and consequences of boys’ educational failing especially in the Commonwealth developing countries, which include Caribbean Countries. These studies clearly show that boys’ academic underachievement is a reality and a problem in the Caribbean. Jamaica is one of the countries covered in Jha et al. (2012) report and is described there as presenting “a typical case of boys’ disadvantage in the Caribbean” (p.16). According to this report, there is a remarkable trend of disparity against boys in Jamaica in relation to interest in “academic attainment or continuation of secondary and tertiary education...”; they observe that “what is more worrying is that the disparities are increasing rather than decreasing in recent past” at both educational levels (p.15). They conclude, among other things, that “the phenomenon of boys’ disadvantage in secondary education has not shown signs of waning....and therefore deserves greater and immediate attention” (p.16).

In 2013, the Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned yet another study on “the development and implementation of an intervention strategy to address the underachievement of boys in Jamaica.” (Universalialia, 2013, p.iii). That study was conducted by a research team under the umbrella of The Universalialia Management Group Limited. The contextual background of the study notes in part:

In 2012...education statistics identified lower school enrolment rates by boys and in particular declining enrolment rates by boys of age 15 years, combined with increase in grade repetition by male students at the senior level secondary school level. This contrasted sharply with a higher rate of enrolment and graduation by female students at the same level of School... (p.2)

BAU in the Caribbean is therefore not only a reality but a problem with socio-economic and political consequences demanding attention and intervention. These are the focus of the discourse in the section next following.

2.2.2 BAU in the Caribbean: Consequences and Interventions

(a) Consequences

The adverse social and economic consequences of BAU in the Caribbean are well documented in research findings and academic literature. Perhaps the major and worrisome consequences are best summarized by Jha et al. (2012) in the following comment:

...Overwhelming evidence in this respect are available in Latin America and the Caribbean region. The high incidence of crime, drug abuse, narcotics trafficking and violence in this region is often attributed to boy's disadvantage in education. The region has one of the world's highest murder rate in the world and youth are disproportionately represented among those committing these crimes. For instance, in 2002, young males from 15-29 years of age were responsible for 80% of the violent crimes, 75% of the murders, and 98% of all major crimes committed in Jamaica (p.5)

Plummer (2007), drawing on the work of his fellow researchers in Caribbean education (Crichlow, 2004; Figueroa, 2004; Parry, 2004; Bailey et al., 1998; Brown and Chevannes, 1998), critically examined the concept of masculinity, - what it means in the Caribbean socio - cultural context and its implications for boys/men, their education and socialization. Among other things, his research found that the obligations and taboos of Masculinity essentially caused young men to embrace "hard, risk-taking, often anti-social 'hyper-masculinities'..." that endanger them, "sexually, on the road, in the gang, and potentially in conflict with authority..." (p.8). Furthermore, he made a very interesting link between his research and HIV, noting that "gender roles drive HIV" (p.11). Thus, social obligations and taboos of masculinity identity imposed on Caribbean young men, for example, have come with wide-ranging risks, including sexual and other behavioural risks, which have become socially embedded and thus resistant to change. Accordingly, government statistics, research findings and academic literature confirm that crimes, violence, drugs abuse, gangsterism and similar anti-social behaviours in most Commonwealth Caribbean Countries (including the TCI) are attributable mostly to their young men (Jha et al., 2012; Majzub and Rais, 2010).

(b) Interventions

Otuonye (2015a), argues that available research findings and statistics of consequences of BAU such as discussed above, would be clearly unsettling for any government, not the least because they have collateral political consequences. Jha and Kelleher (2006) have noted that: “concern for boys’ underachievement is quite high in several Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean region” (p.82). Accordingly, they are bound to provoke, (and have provoked), rightly or wrongly, some form of interventions by the Caribbean national governments, private sector entities, non-governmental and international organisations. The research work of Jha and Kelleher (2006) and Jha et al. (2012) were both commissioned studies that researched the nature, extent, causes and consequences of boys’ failings in education especially in the Commonwealth developing countries, which included most, if not all English-Speaking Caribbean Countries. Jha and Kelleher (2006) in particular, critically examined the intervention initiatives of the relevant Commonwealth Countries they explored. Their studies and similarly commissioned initiatives are examples of interventions by international and non-government Organizations in the quest for solutions to the problem of BAU. I am indebted to these two commissioned studies, for identifying and critically reviewing specific intervention initiatives by some of the Commonwealth Caribbean governments, notably Jamaica which, accordingly to Jha et al. (2012), presents a classic case of boys’ underachievement in the Caribbean. Citing other examples of interventions from outside the Caribbean national governments, Jha and Kelleher (2006) note:

In Australia, an inquiry into the issue led to a report called *Boys: Getting it Right* (House of representatives, Standing Committee on Education and Training, 2002), while the New Zealand Education review Office produced a publication on the *Achievement of Boys* (Aitken, 1999). In the UK, the Office for Standards in Education published *The Gender Divide: Performance -Differences Between Boys and Girls at School* (OFSTED, 1996), which focused primarily on the increasing visibility of boys’ lower exam scores than girls (p.14-15)

As a prelude to his contribution to the boys’ underachievement debate and its associated ‘moral panic’ discourses, Smith (2003) listed some of these initiatives undertaken by the UK government and others, including: “...homework clubs, black gospel choirs, school trips, ICT programmes to get fathers more involved with their son’s education and mentoring schemes and so on...” (p.283). International Organizations and institutions like the Commonwealth, United Nations International

Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank have at some point or other, sponsored conferences or commissioned and funded various studies, addressing Caribbean boys' failings in education. Examples include, The Universal Management Group Limited (2013), *Base line Study and intervention Strategy Aimed at Addressing the Underachievement of Boys in Jamaica*; Jha et al. (2012); Cobbett and Younger (2012); World Bank and Commonwealth Secretariat 2009 Report of the Regional Caribbean Conference on 'keeping Boys out of Risk'; Jha and Kelleher (2006). According to Jha and Kelleher (2006), notable interventions by Caribbean Governments include, the Jamaican "*Change from within* programme, an applied research project to find ways of building the self - esteem of students" (p.48). Undertaken by a team of scholars from the University of the West Indies, the programme included the involvement of parents in their children's academic work, stringent disciplinary measures aimed at controlling weapons and violence and other critical areas of focus that sought to build the self-awareness and confidence of the students. The Reform of Secondary Education programme in Jamaica, was another policy intervention initiative and focused principally on tackling anti-social conduct in school. So also, the reduction of school fees to enable access to education by poor students. In Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana intervention initiatives included creating single-sex institutions out of some of the mixed gender schools (Jha and Kelleher, 2006).

2.2.3 Critique of the interventions

Arguably, some of these interventions tend to perpetuate discrimination against girls (Cobbett and Younger, 2012; Zyngier, 2009; Parry, 1997). Parry (1997), for example, noted the fact that in Jamaica, the common entrance examination /admission grades were lowered for the boys in 1995. However, the girls still outperformed the boys. In some cases, intervention initiatives have had the unintended consequence of pointing accusing fingers on the female teachers for the boys' failing. Furthermore, the interventions may have also tended to assume that boys and girls are in a competitive daggers-drawn, pitted against each other, so that the gains of one are the loss of the other (Zyngier, 2009; Jha and Kelleher, 2006). In TCI, for example, the Government between 2004/2005, awarded special scholarship to only male students to attract them to the teaching profession. Apparently, this was a policy response to TCI Government statistics that showed the female teachers dominated the school system and a corollary assumption that the boys lacked male mentors or

role models. Similar thinking may have provided the justification for creating single - sex schools in Trinidad and Tobago and in Guyana. Jha and Kelleher (2006) reviewed the debate on the subject and concluded that the arguments for and against single-sex schools 'remains fractured' (p.21). Perhaps not the least because such initiative, according to Cobbett and Younger (2012), represents aspects of controversial affirmative-action-for-boys' strategies which may have also perpetuated discrimination against girls in the Caribbean.

A key question in the boys' underachievement debate is whether it is such a 'problem' to warrant the huge attention devoted to it by academia, the media and of course the political directorate and their associated interventions initiatives. David Zyngier is irked and appears exasperated by this level of attention hence in the sarcastic title of his review essay, Zyngier (2009) queries: *Doing it to (for) boys (again): do we really need more books telling us there is a problem with boys' underachievement in education.* He is a strong critique of any affirmative action for boys that is underpinned by the 'poor boys', 'boys will be boys' or similar discourses (Epstein et al., 1998, p.7). This is evident in his severe critique of Wilson (2013) who had recommended a 'more caring masculinity' for boys within the education systems. Zyngier(2009) submits that Wilson's approach and assumptions to salvaging the boys were flawed. This is because, he argues, these assumptions are "untrue and unhelpful" to conclude that boys and girls are in a competitive daggers-drawn, "pitted against each other (so that) the gains of one" is the loss of the other (p.113).

David Zyngier (like several other academic writers and researchers mentioned in this review) is engaged in the ongoing boys' underachievement debate. His views, perhaps underpinned by his academic positionality and epistemology, and evident in his critique of Wilson's work, are personal and should be respected. However, it is not the last word on the subject. While he is an accomplished and distinguished academic, Gary Wilson is a practising teacher with 30 years of hands-on field experience training teachers and dealing with boys in real school environment. In Wilson (2013), he draws on this experience to identify 28 barriers to boys' underachievement and proffers 'tried and tested strategies' to break through these barriers. However, he acknowledges there is no quick fix, but his approach has at its heart, the desire to help the boys succeed. He prefaced his work, partly, as follows:

No two boys or group of boys are the same, and it is vital that we approach the subject knowing that there is no quick fix. What you will find here is the benefit of my experience and also successful practice from a range of other sources that may well help (p.viii)

I do not think Wilson's advocacy for a more caring masculinity is antithetical to girls' success. Certainly, he could not have been motivated by a desire to disadvantage or undermine the girls in their educational advancement. His stance, perhaps also informed by his positionality and epistemology, should equally be respected and considered in the mix.

2.2.4 The debate versus the practical issues of BAU

As noted earlier, the issue of boys' academic underachievement, appears to strike a note of social, economic and political expediency, especially in the Caribbean (Jha et al., 2012). Cobbett and Younger (2012) assert that "Boys' underachievement in the Caribbean has been a high-profile issue since the 1990s" (p.611). Thus, in their quest for answers to their boys' academic underachievement, it seems, Caribbean politicians, parents and school administrators would more easily be persuaded to try practical solutions (effective or not) as has, for example, been offered by Wilson (2013). Mere academic debate (no matter how well argued) as has, for example, been presented by Zyngier (2009), Smith (2003) and Titus (2004) may remain unattractive. This is the practical issue of boys' academic underachievement phenomenon in the Caribbean context. Cobbett and Younger (2012) appear to be conscious of and indeed sensitive to this reality. They set out to interpret the nature of the 'problem' rather than the traditional policy studies' approach that focuses on 'solution to the problem'. However, it appears, they made strenuous efforts to maintain this focus. For example, the Caribbean construction of masculinity is a socio-culturally embedded reality underpinning literally every academic debate and practical intervention responses to boys' underachievement in the Caribbean. However, they seem to have struggled with how best to interpret, explain and perhaps, challenge it. In one breathe, they admit that:

Writing on masculinities in the Caribbean has been helpful in adding localised detail and texture to quantitative macro-accounts. Importantly, it has shown that while boys may exercise dominance as a social group, restrictive gender codes lead to specific types of disadvantage, which have implications for both men themselves and women. (p.620)

And, in another breathe, they played down on this reality, pointing out the “little clarity in the way the term ‘masculinity’ has been used” (p.621) and critiquing “current research on masculinities” for “its tendency to generalise, revealing remnants of essentialism and reifying norms of masculinity” (p.623). In the end, they acknowledge that boys’ underachievement is “complex and multi-faceted” (p.615) in the Caribbean and recommend:

...a shift in the discourse ...and in policy-makers thinking, from an exclusive focus on boys’ underachievement to a broader analysis of gender and education within a relational framework. (p.622)

Two observations need to be made here. Firstly, the recommendation above, as a product of the ongoing debate, and as sound and well-reasoned as it is, might remain, an academic exercise for the Caribbean politicians, parents, school administrators and similar stakeholders. These are daily challenged by boys’ underachievement issue on the ground in their respective countries and communities and recommendations such as proffered above, do not seem helpful in practical sense. They are therefore not easily persuaded to rethink or change their approaches, as recommended, because they do not believe, for example, that their girls will thereby be neglected or disadvantaged. There is clearly an urgent note to the issue, and it will not admit of any delay, through engagement in academic debate. An African proverb admonishes that you do not run after a rat while your house is on fire; first put out the fire, save the house and then go after the rat if need be. Moreover, there is a thinking (rightly or wrongly), that these stakeholders know the academic state of their boys relative to their girls better than the academics they may consider to be ‘outsiders’ with their feminist agenda, prejudices and subjectivities. These stakeholders do not seem to require or even trust, these ‘outsiders’ to theorize recommendations which are, at best, suspect and do not address their immediate challenges with their boys (Smith, 1999).

This leads to my second observation: the need to ensure that data, including meaning-making experiences, collected from any locality, are given such due weight and interpretation as would not void or make unattainable, the overarching objective for seeking and receiving the data in the first place. A case in point is Parry (1997). It seems she was prepared to disregard the data on paucity of male teachers and how it impacts on the boys’ academic performance within the Jamaican community

where the subject/ researched schools were located. Instead, she challenged the thinking and perspectives of her respondents, drawing on the research findings of others in a different socio-cultural environment, values and time. Her field data and analysis include the following:

Jamaican families are characterized by a large percentage of single-parent, female-headed units. Respondents were concerned about the adverse effect of absentee fathers on the attitudes and behaviour of adolescent males and some clearly felt Jamaican women to be responsible. "You know in Jamaica it is the women who are wrecking the men. In this society, most households don't have men. ¼ respondents felt that 'schools have too many women teachers,' and 'that boys are sick of seeing women.' This concern was stressed by head teachers, including the female head of an urban boys' school... (p.229)

Parry challenged this thinking thus:

There are several reasons for challenging this thinking. The first is that research has shown that it is often an erroneous supposition that female single-parent units do not have access to role models from which children can learn (Stack, 1974; Epstein, 1993). Furthermore, research suggests there is no firm basis to assume boys who grow up in fatherless families are more likely as men to suffer from identity problems as a result of lacking role models (Herzog and Sudia, 1971) (p.229)

This approach, in my respectful view, is unsatisfactory. While it may provide answers, as an academic exercise, to the research questions, it will not be helpful in addressing the challenges or issues revealed by the data. Clearly, it is difficult not to challenge any accusing fingers on women as the cause of boys' underachievement, even when, as in this case, these include the women's own fingers. However, it seems to me, that seen through their socio-cultural eyes and linguistic tone, these respondents, were not in fact blaming women. Instead, they were bemoaning a fundamental issue of absentee fathers and male figures in the life of today's boys who are tomorrow's fathers. If their voices and tone are properly discerned, they may well be crying out for real help. In those circumstances, the response would not be to challenge their thinking on the authority of some researchers who, by reason of accident of history, found themselves on the side of the world that lay claim to the fountain of all superior knowledge. It becomes useful therefore, to critically contextualize these research authorities and, factor in their prejudices, values and other subjectivities.

The starting point, in my view, is to let the collected data speak for themselves. If you have given voice to your indigenous or local respondents, and they spoke, then let their voice be heard; they legitimately expect no less. The issues and concerns they voiced, were effective answers to the obvious research question namely: why do Jamaican boys underachieve in school? These answers ought not to be disregarded or challenged based on previous research findings of differing contexts, subjectivities and motivations. If what is found in the research field work is not given the weight it deserves; if the voices of the respondents are, as it were, silenced; if their stories and meaning-making experiences are taken over and retold through the eyes jaundiced by one form of prejudice or the other and challenged on this basis, then such approach is itself, challengeable. The concluding sentence of Cobbett and Younger (2012) speaks, in part, to the importance of these views, voices and experiences. They said:

Greater depth of conceptual engagement with issues of masculinity and femininity, as well as greater attention to pupils' and teachers' views, voices and experiences will give us more insights and enable more specific understandings of the diversity of experiences that boys and girls have at school. (p.623)

The observations above seem to find support also in the impassioned and eminent words of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in the context of her assault on imperialism, as set out in *Smith (1999)*. In part, she said:

It galls us (the non-westerners or indigenous people) that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us...This collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous people was collected, classified and represented in various ways back to the West and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized (p.1-2)

To be clear, it is not being advocated that the ongoing debate should cease. However, the socio - economic and political expediency in the Caribbean Communities requires that the intervention initiatives to BAU, appropriately adapted for the local environment, should go on without stifling the ongoing academic debate. The debate remains beneficial, not the least because it seems to offer the theoretical and conceptual framework for an ultimate, effective and wholistic remedial approach to BAU. More importantly, it is further submitted that these interventions should go

on but without jeopardizing the advances made in the education of the girls or impede their continual progress.

2.2.5 BAU in the Caribbean: implications for and applicability to TCI.

TCI is a typical, small, but multi-Islands Caribbean Country. It has a population of about 35,000 by the TCI 2012 national census report. Of its 40 Islands, only 6 and 2 Cays are occupied. Geographically, it is part of the Bahamas' archipelago chain of islands and, according to Mills (2008), it

...lies some 575 miles to the southeast of Miami, Florida, about 375 miles to the northeast of Jamaica, approximately 100 miles to the north of Haiti and Dominican Republic, and 350 miles northwest of Puerto Rico. (p.1)

TCI is one of the English-speaking British Overseas Territories. Through British political and colonial administration, slavery and related commercial activities, mainly on salt, TCI has had more than a century's social, cultural, political and familial ties with Jamaica, the Bahamas and Bermuda. From decades past, it has also been related with other Caribbean Islands like Haiti and Dominica Republic through trade and other regional activities (Mills, 2008; Sadler, 2004; Arthur et al., 1989). Thus, the socio-cultural, economic and political realities in the Caribbean, invariably play out in TCI, sometimes with more profound implications, due to its small size. In TCI, boys' academic underachievement phenomenon and associated issues, appear particularly more pronounced as demonstrated by Government statistics, policy and other official statements. The statistical information in Tables 1, 2 and 3 below are but examples at this stage.

Table 1:

Showing Summary of Students' Enrolment (by Gender) and CSEC Examinations taken by Public and Private* High Schools from 2013-2017 in Turks and Caicos Islands

Public /Private High Schools' Enrolment				Public/Private Candidates Registered for CSEC Examination*			
Academic Year	Male	Female	Difference	Examination Year	Male	Female	Difference
2013/14	898	912	14	2014	767	1263	496
2014/15	990	1027	37	2015	764	1348	584
2015/16	898	918	20	2016	903	1385	482
2016/17	1017	1082	65	2017	1022	1349	327
Total	3803	3939	136	Total	3456	5345	1889

Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Government (TCIG): Ministry of Education - Education Digest 2013-14 to 2016-17

The British West Indies Collegiate (BWIC), a private institution in TCI, also offers yearly, a small number of students for Cambridge University-moderated General Certificate Examinations (GCE) at both Ordinary and Advanced Levels.

Analysis of the data on Table 1

Table 1 above shows TCI Government Ministry of Education data summarising:

- (a) the combined students' enrolment figures at the public and private secondary schools in TCI for four (4) academic years of 2013/2014 to 2016/17, and according to gender, and,
- (b) the combined number of students in private and public who registered for the Caribbean Secondary Examination Council (CSEC) Examinations between 2013 and 2017, and according to gender.

Except for the remarkable difference of 60 more girls than boys in the enrolment of 2016/17 academic year, table 1 above shows, on the average, an insignificant difference in the enrolment rate of boys and girls at the High School level. In 4 academic years, the total difference is 136 or 8% more girls' enrolment than boys. Going by available government statistics, this appears to be the trend, since 2003. Boys' enrolment rate is therefore not a matter of concern in TCI. The red flag of boys' academic failings however begins to manifest, for instance, in the entry for the Caribbean Secondary Examination Council (CSEC) Examinations which is the last and critical Caribbean regional examinations following 5 years of secondary

education. Table 1 shows that, except in 2017, there has been remarkable disparity from 2014 through 2016 in the number of boys, when compared to the girls, who registered for these important and final examinations. For example, in 2014, of the total candidates registered for the examination only 38% are boys as against 62% who are girls. In 2015, the percentage difference was 36% for the boys but 64% for the girls. In four years, the total difference is 1886 more girls than boys or 61% as against boys' 39% registered for the CSEC. The data in **Table 1**, corroborates government statistics in **Table 2** below, which again show the remarkable disparity between the male and female graduates from the TCI only public tertiary institution, the TCI Community College.

Table 2:

Showing TCI Community College graduates by Gender (2013-17)

2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
Sex		Sex		Sex		Sex		Sex	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
14	45	18	91	19	62	12	61	16	82

Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Government (TCIG): Strategic Planning and Policy Department (SPPD), Ministry of Finance, Trade and Investment.

Analysis of the data on Table 2

Table 2 above shows the number of male and female graduates in 5 years from the TCI Community College. The table also shows that in 2013, boys accounted for only 24% as against 76% of the girls who graduated that year. By 2014, the disparity widened with boys' 16% as against girls' 84%. In 2017, the average stood at boys' 23% as against girls' 77%. Thus, not only is BAU clearly manifest in TCI at the secondary school level, it is more pronounced at the tertiary level education, consistent with the general trend in the Caribbean. It is also instructive to look at Table 3 below which provides some TCI government statistics on the gender representations of teachers in the TCI education system.

Table 3:

Showing Summary of TCI Teachers (by Gender) in Public Primary and High Schools from 2013/14-2016/7 Academic Years.

Teachers in Public Primary Schools (by gender)				Teachers in Public High Schools (by gender)			
Academic Year	Male	Female	% Ratio	Academic Year	Male	Female	% Ratio
2013/14	12	140	8% : 92%	2013/14	65	102	40% : 60%
2014/15	12	142	8% : 92%	2014/15	65	103	40% : 60%
2015/16	12	141	8% : 92%	2015/16	64	109	37% : 63%
2016/17	12	143	8% : 92%	2016/17	66	114	37% : 63%
2017/18	13	142	8% : 92%	2017/18	63	123	34% : 66%

Source: Turks and Caicos Islands Government (TCIG): Strategic Planning and Policy Department (SPPD), Ministry of Finance, Trade and Investment.

Analysis of data on Table 3

Table 3 above provides TCIG statistics of the male and female teachers engaged by the TCIG in the public primary and high schools for the last 5 academic years (2013/14 to 2017/18). Among other things, it unequivocally reveals the following: Firstly, that the TCI public education system is predominated by female teachers and marked shortage of male teachers especially at the primary school level. Secondly, this predominance of female teachers seems perennial and no indication that the imbalance is abating. For example, at the primary school level, the gender percentage difference has remained 8% male teachers to 92% female teachers for the last 5 years. At the high school level, the 40% male to 60% female teachers' difference in 2013-2015, dropped between 2015/6 and 2017/18 academic years. Two further observations need be made in relation to this data. The first is that although, it does not include statistics from the private primary and high school in TCI, the TCIG Education Digest 2016/17 published early in 2019, shows that for the 2016/17 academic year, there were a total of 27 male and 319 female teachers in both the private and public primary schools or 8% male to 92% female teachers. At the high school level, there were 87 male teachers and 170 female teachers or 34% male as against 66% female teachers. These figures indicate that the gender imbalance in the TCI teaching force is quite evident in both the private and public schools.

Secondly, the teacher gender statistics are significant in the context of my research question on the effect on BAU of the predominance of women in education. Moreover, these statistics appear to confirm from the outset, previous research findings of feminized education system in the Caribbean (Jha et al., 2012; Miller, 1986).

(a) Implications of BAU in TCI

Although, no formal research or study has previously been undertaken in TCI on boys' academic underachievement, research findings and reports on Caribbean boys' education have established a causal link between boys' underachievement and crime and other anti-social and risky behaviours by young Caribbean men (Jha et al., 2006, Plummer, 2007) In the TCI context, such causal link is clearly implied in the following statement of the TCI National Youth Policy, 2012:

...In 2007 a total of 21 juveniles were arrested and charged: all being males. In 2008, 29 juveniles were arrested and charged; of that amount 27 were males and 2 females...statistics show that young men are under performing compared to women in education. Men also largely out-number women in criminal activities... (p.27)

Furthermore, information from the TCI Government Prison Authorities shows that as at January 2018, there were 104 inmates at Her Majesty's Prison in Grand Turk, TCI. Out of this number, only 4 were females, while the remaining 100 were males, of which 75 (or 75%) were young men of ages 18 and 35 years. By April 2019, the female inmates have finished their respective terms of imprisonment but leaving a new figure of 105 male inmates with percentage population of young men still at 75%.

The other causal link flips the coin on the other side, namely, the unprecedented rise to positions of power by women in TCI, obviously by reason of their advancement in education. It seems the world took note. In fact, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported exclusively on it on January 29, 2017 with a headline: "Turks and Caicos: where women hold the top jobs".

The news report said in part:

...there is one Caribbean country where females are bucking the trend. December (2016) saw the election of the first female premier of the tiny British territory of Turks and Caicos (TCI). She is Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson. Women also claim the titles of deputy governor, attorney

general, chief justice, chief magistrate, director of public prosecutions and five of the seven permanent secretaries, among others. In fact, with more females markedly outperforming their male counterparts, efforts are now being made to motivate young men in a bid for equality... Of the 17 students from TCI currently training overseas to be lawyers, 14 are females...

This must be a welcome development for the feminists, but according to the news report, the Deputy Governor of TCI sounded a note of warning:

Whilst it's great having females in so many top positions, as a mother of a young son we must ensure that our young males are motivated, encouraged and given opportunities to excel and take up future positions as well so that we have a gender-balanced society.

In TCI, this news report seems to be a matter of public knowledge and uncontroverted even before the BBC reported on it. The report however sums up BAU in TCI, its consequences and some of the intervention initiatives. Furthermore, the report validates two of my first-hand experiences in TCI education. The first is the concerned voices of TCI School Administrators, Ministry of Education officials and parents. These voices are symbolically represented by the voice of my Principal, who heads the TCI foremost Secondary School, the H J Robinson High School and is Chairman of the Caribbean Examination Council TCI National Award Committee. At every graduation ceremony since 2014, he had lamented, in his annual school report, the unabating poor academic performance of the boys in TCI. Secondly, the BBC news report on TCI validated my personal and professional experience, dealing with the boys' academic underachievement at primary and secondary school levels, as a teacher, School Guidance Counsellor and Community Youth Leader. These experiences triggered what initially appeared to be a panicky and desperate personal intervention initiative to save my 3 boys. However, the initiative metamorphosed into an all-boys dance and mentorship group one of its kind in TCI. It is articulated in this Thesis as the *Fabulous Boys Story*, fully narrated and analysed in the context of masculinity in Chapter 2.3 next following.

2.3 Theorizing and conceptualizing the causes of BAU in the Caribbean.

This section outlines and discusses the major theories and concepts which seek to identify and explain why, in the Caribbean, the boys are failing academically. *Masculinity* (and its Caribbean construct) is especially highlighted here as the

fundamental theoretical concept underlying other theories and concepts on boys' academic underachievement. Its implications and applicability to TCI are also discussed. The other theories and concepts outlined include Miller's (1986) *Marginalization of men*; Figueroa's (1998; 2000) *Male Privileging, Biological Determinism* and others. These are also discussed below.

2.3.1 Masculinity and its Caribbean Construct

Masculinity and its associated theoretical concepts date back to the twentieth Century. Pascoe (2007) writes about early sociologists like Talcott Parson advocating a masculinity concept that enjoins the men (as bread winners) and women (as care-giving mothers) to maintain their respective gender roles to ensure some societal order. This view appears to have influenced the Masculinity concept in terms of what men do, their body and male identity. It connotes the identity of men and their traditional characteristics of boldness, strength, toughness and leadership, the associated power relations of being a man and the gender role they play or expected to play in the scheme of things. However, modern sociologists (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Frosh, et al., 2003; Connell, 1995) have pushed beyond this conceptual boundary, theorizing Masculinity in terms, not simply by what men do; not by men's gender role and not by the traditional attributes associated with and domicile in the male. Rather, they posit a Masculinity concept that exists in multiples, in configurations of social practices and everyday discourses. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) articulate that:

Masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and therefore can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting. (p.836)

For Frosh, et al. (2003), "...masculinity exists only in relation to femininity and is constructed through everyday discourse, in various versions or masculinities" (p.2). They argue that boys negotiate through, adapt to and adopt forms of masculinities that facilitate their functionality in the society at any given time, depending on the varying challenging or subordinated circumstances of their everyday life. They refer to it as "construction of masculinities", a social process by which the boys accept, rebel against or develop their own individual masculine identity, depending on the cultural or normative situations they face or to which they have been positioned by or

in the community generally or at school or home (Allard, 2004). Masculinity is therefore amenable to changes, and as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) opine, it “represents not a certain type of man, but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices” (p.841). It therefore comes in multiple forms and in different power relations’ hierarchies. Connell (1995 cited in Pascoe 2007) identifies and describes these hierarchies in the context of hegemonic masculinity discourse, thus:

Hegemonic masculinity, the type of gender practice that, in a given space and time, supports gender inequality, is at the top of this hierarchy; *Complicit masculinity* describes men who benefit from hegemonic masculinity but do not enact it; *subordinated masculinity* describes men who are oppressed by definitions of hegemonic masculinity, primarily gay men; *marginalized masculinity* describes men who may be positioned powerfully in terms of gender but not in terms of class or race (p.7)

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) recall that in its original formulation, the concept of Hegemonic Masculinity was articulated as a set of practices that perpetuated the dominance of men over women. It was then seen to embody “the currently most honoured way of being a man” and required “all other men to position themselves in relation to it ... and ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men” (p.832). They acknowledge that the concept, while capable of being backed by force, was not synonymous with force, but attainable by ascendancy “through culture, institutions and persuasion” (p.832). Furthermore, they admit that the formulation of Hegemonic Masculinity in these terms, influenced, among other areas, many academic researches on men and masculinity, including, “problems of boys’ education” (p.833). To these masculinity concepts, Pascoe (2007) agrees, but adds that “...different youths (boys and girls) may embody in different ways and to different degrees” the “configuration of practices and discourses of masculinity.” (p.5). To him, masculinity is therefore not homogenous to boys just because they are males. Females can equally exhibit toughness, boldness, leadership, dominance, and similar traits or attributes traditionally associated with or considered to be domiciled in a man. It is not supposed that Pascoe’s (2007) conceptual position is meant to have universal application, not the least because, he admits that his position on the heterogeneity of Masculinity is “as constituted and understood in the social world (he) studied.” (p.5). If his conceptual application were not so circumscribed by the social world in which he studied, it would clearly have flown in the face of Caribbean form

of Masculinity, and in particular, its Hegemonic Masculinity variant. Indeed, the concept underlies contemporary debate and virtually all academic discourses on Caribbean boys' education and their academic underachievement. This is evident in the academic and research works of Figueroa (2004; 2000; 1998), Miller (1986), Plummer (2007), Crichlow (2004), Parry (2004; 1997; 1996), Brown and Chevannes (1998), Bailey et al. (1998), Jha and Kelleher (2006), Jha et al. (2012) and others. As mentioned in Chapter 2.2, Cobbett and Younger (2012) observe that, "writing on masculinities in the Caribbean (context), has been helpful in" (p.620) some respects including showing that boys, as a group, may be dominant, and restrictive gender codes could disadvantage them. They however critique the use of the term 'Masculinity' for lacking clarity, and the "research on masculinities" for "its tendency to generalise, revealing remnants of essentialism and reifying norms of masculinity" (p.623). Whether this is fair critique or not, the Caribbean construct of masculinity clearly reifies 'norms of masculinity'. For instance, Figueroa (2000) articulates the concept of *Male Privileging* (discussed later herein) - a Caribbean socio-cultural construction of masculinity that reifies "Maleness as dominant, appropriate to the public sphere, technologically capable, strong and hard" (p.70). Masculinity is thus constructed in the Caribbean, in terms more consistent with its hegemonic variant. Jha et al. (2012) agree and opine that the concept of masculinity and associated masculine identity have developed in the Caribbean in a way that what "is considered feminine is not masculine" (p.8) and has taken extreme form as a result of Caribbean construction of masculinity. The implication of this is that Masculinity as thus constructed, has been identified by Figueroa (2000), agreeing with Parry (1996) to be responsible "for most of the underachievement of boys, including the lower achievement in Jamaica where the hard image is most developed" (p.71).

The link between masculinity and boys' failing in education is accordingly explained as follows: Firstly, education has long been generally perceived as feminised not only in the Caribbean but also in various parts of the world, including Canada, United States, and United Kingdom (Jha et al., 2012; Majzub and Rais, 2010; Carrington and McPhee, 2008; Plummer, 2007; Miller, 1986). By 'feminisation of education' is meant the dearth or "under representation of male teachers in the education system, the domination of female teachers" (Majzub and Rais, 2010, p.686). Jha et al., 2012 and Carrington and McPhee, 2008 also share same views. In addition, 'feminisation of education' could also be understood in pedagogical terms by reference to

'feminised' curriculum and teaching methodology (Hill-Wilkinson, 2017; Voyer and Voyer, 2014; Kleinfeld, 2009; Stolzer, 2008; Weins, 2006,). It is also explainable in terms of more female than male students in the school system (Plummer, 2007). In this encompassing sense, boys perceive education as a feminine venture where women teach, women learn (Golding, 2010). Education therefore becomes antithetical to anything masculine. Accordingly, the boys, endeavouring to maintain their macho, hard, strong and tough masculine image and identity, become disaffected with and shun education, which has become what Plummer (2007) calls a "common ground" with girls (p.1). So, rather than associate with schooling, the boys prefer to affirm their masculine status by resorting to some form of physicality through which they gain the recognition and acceptance of 'Others', a usually (but not always) noxious peer group, who police the social obligations and taboos of masculinity identity. In the company of this group, the idea is invariably re-enforced that "getting an education is no longer something that a 'real man' would want to do". (Plummer, 2007, p.8). The boys that dare cross this masculine gender identity boundaries, who, for instance, excel academically, are ridiculed and subjected to homophobic name-calling. Hence, as earlier argued, boys' academic underachievement is primarily attributable to Masculinity which, in turn, underpin other theoretical concepts by which attempts are made to explain boys' academic underachievement.

2.3.2 Masculinity and Its Caribbean Construct - Implications and Applicability to TCI:

Masculinity (and its Caribbean construct) and the theories and concepts associated with it have both practical and theoretical implications for, and applicability in the TCI context. These are discussed under two sub-headings namely (a) *Faith and Religion*, and (b) *the Fabulous Boys story*.

(a) Faith and Religion

The Masculinity debate appears to have overlooked the place of faith and religion, especially in the social-cultural scheme of things in the Caribbean and by extension, the TCI. Christianity is the dominant religion in the Caribbean, going back to slavery era, when its tenets were used paradoxically both to justify, and to a greater extent, to denounce slavery and pursue its abolition (Williams, 1970). Writing on the "*Slave History in the Turks and Caicos Islands*", Sadler (2004), records that "throughout the West Indies slaves were forced to become Christians" (p.30), to ensure obedience. But it was also a source of succour and comfort to them, although the liberty to

practice their faith "...was not deemed suitable for the slaves" (p.30). Christianity is the national religion of TCI, secured by their 2011 Constitution, which declares:

The people of the Turks and Caicos Islands as a God-fearing people with convictions based on sound Christian culture, values and principles, tolerant of other religions... (p.8)

These "Christian culture, values and principles"(p.8) are articulated in the Holy Bible, a book Christians generally consider as authoritative Code for behaviour and relationships, among other things. In its books and chapters, it sets out provisions relating to gender positions and roles in the family. A few examples would suffice:

Genesis 2:21-23:

"...So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man..." (Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV), Genesis 2:21-23)

Ephesians 5:21-25

"...Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..." (Holy Bible (NIV), Ephesians 5:21-25)

With reference to these biblical verses, Otuonye (2015a) argues, that:

These passages appear to endorse the earlier but severely criticized sociologist's Masculinity theory of static gender role. They also express hegemonic masculinity in a typical Caribbean Christian family, where the man is the "head of his wife" and so she is required to "submit to her husband in everything" (Ephesians 5:23-24). (p.6)

However, there is a corresponding and enormous responsibility on the man to love his wife so much as to die for her. This would imply providing for and protecting her and indeed his children at all cost. For the same Bible stipulates that a man who cannot provide for "his household has denied the faith and is worse than a non-Christian" (New International Bible Version, I Tim. 5:8). Clearly, this biblical injunction

is consistent with hegemonic masculinity with 'positive' actions which, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), include "bringing home wage, sustaining a sexual relationship, and being a father" as against the "characteristics ... of violence, aggression, and self-centredness" on the part of the man (p.841). Collier (1998) had earlier made similar observation to counteract the notion that hegemonic masculinity is invariably associated with negative actions. More significantly, this biblical patriarchal position of the man, is akin to the traditional West African patriarchal family and their concept of manhood. But as discussed fully in Chapter 6, a major legacy of slavery is the dismantling of this manhood in the enslaved African families that ended up in the American and Caribbean slave plantations (Black, 2007). This resulted in 'paternal abandonment' (Gibson, 2006) or desertion by Fathers (Frazier, 1950) and the current predominant single female - headed households among the African-Caribbean families. (Sutherland, 2011; Hickling et al., 2008; Figueroa, 2000; Parry, 1997; Safa, 1986; Massiah, 1983; Henriques, 1951/2). Chapter 6 also explores the implications of 'absentee fathers' for boys' academic underachievement. It suffices here to conclude that faith and religion, in the TCI context, have significant theoretical and practical bearing on Masculinity and boys' academic underachievement.

(b) *The Fabulous Boys' story.*

This is a true story that encapsulates a key aspect of my positionality and the experience that informed the choice of my research topic. It is discussed here in the context of Masculinity (and its Caribbean construct) to enable a better understanding of the story from theoretical standpoint. The story, first narrated and analysed in Otuonye (2015a) runs thus: In December 2000, five (5) male students, who also attended the same Church, were refused participation in an annual Christmas concert of the Church. The concert was dominated by girls, so apparently, they were refused participation for daring to be part of this female - domain activity. These boys also happen to be excelling academically in school and were being called pejorative names in school as a result. Being about a year in TCI and not fully acquainted with the school system and the Community, I was not sure why the boys (three of whom are my biological children) were being so treated. However, on sensing their frustration, I encouraged them and practised dance moves with them in my house. They were able to perform at the concert that same night and received standing ovation, being the only all-male dance group. They were also called "the Fabulous Boys" (FB) for the first time at this concert. Now in its junior and senior categories,

the FB has evolved into a mentorship group for boys and the only thriving all -male dance group in TCI. Approximately 18 years later, almost all its members have excelled in various endeavours in education, in sports, music and world of work. Six (6) of them are at various Universities in the Caribbean, United States and the United Kingdom(UK) pursuing undergraduate and graduate studies. The youngest of the original five (5), is now a Foundation 1 Medical Doctor in the UK, having graduated last July 2019 from the Medical School of the University of Sheffield. When on college break, he is the Chief Choreographer of the Junior FB. Not all the boys however, remained in the group over the years. About four (4) eventually dropped out, embraced by noxious peer groups and sadly ended up in trouble with the law and in the case of two of them, served prison terms. One remarkable feature of my relationship with the boys was and still is the constant affirmative reminder that they are destined to succeed irrespective of how many times they failed. Our motto remains the words of Paul in his Letter to the Philippians "...I can do all things through Christ that gives me strength..." (Holy Bible, NIV, Philippians 4:13).

By reason of the exposure the University of Sheffield's Ed.D. Programme has afforded me, I am now able to explain the 'Fabulous Boys' Story' in the context of Masculinity and its associated theoretical concepts. Firstly, the story demonstrates the influence (positive or negative) of peer groups, role models and 'significant others' and the opportunity they provide to enable the boys negotiate the various masculinity identities with which they are confronted (Jha et al., 2012; Plummer 2007; Frosh et al., 2003). Secondly, as Otuonye (2015a) notes, the FB story "demonstrates how marginalised identities can be so manipulated and asserted to become complimentarily and hegemonically accepted" (p.13) This is also consistent with the views of Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2012), Frosh et al. (2003) and Renold (2001). The Fabulous Boys' story further confirms the observation of Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), agreeing with Wetherell and Edley (1999) that "one of the most effective ways of being a man in certain local contexts may be to demonstrate one's distance from a regional hegemonic masculinity." (p.840). This observation is also in agreement with Pattman et al. (1998). Drawing on these authorities, Otuonye (2015a) concludes about the Fabulous Boys:

Despite being marginalised and made targets of homophobic attacks, being called 'sissy', 'gay', girlish, 'weak' by peers, for their refusal to conform to the endemic male identity (of feminising and repudiating education),

these boys were bold and assertive enough to choose alternative/other forms of masculine identities. Not only did they choose an 'academic identity' that allowed them to excel in the same area, where most boys had given up for the girls...they braved into dancing, a feminine dominated activity in TCI. (p.14)

Moreover, the excellent academic performance of the boys undoubtedly gained them the respect of the girls and the boys who have come to accept the boys' academic identity, although they initially scorned them for so excelling. Renold (2001) notes this point when she says that:

...hierarchical layer of masculinity can be manipulated to forge more acceptable masculinities," 'demonstrating' "how some boys ironically invest in the very form of masculinity that marginalise or subordinate them, (p.381)

...despite 'being labelled in pejorative terms', (Frosh et al., 2003, p.3). Figueroa (2000) has urged that "boys need to catch up with girls as well... (and) must be made to feel that they can move into fields previously dominated by women" (p.72). Otuonye (2015a) acknowledging this call, observes that "the boys refused to be patronized; did not look forward to any affirmative action, but went into the 'feminised' academic and dance territories and hegemonised there" (p.14). In so doing, they demonstrated that not all hegemonic masculinity, has the characteristics of violence, aggression and noxious practices (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Collier, 1998). This is further demonstrated in the fact that two of these boys took to and also excelled in sports. They represented TCI, at regional and international sporting competitions, including the Commonwealth Games. In this regard, Otuonye (2015a), further states that "...sports as hard masculinity (thus) provided these boys the opportunity to exhibit their masculinity (hegemonically) somehow, while still endeavouring to maintain their academic interest secretly..." (p.14). The 'disguise' and avoidance' process involved, is consistent with Connell's concept of 'layering', where, according to Renolds (2001), boys display a "seamless, coherent and consistent 'masculinity' while 'underneath' they are involved in an on-going struggle to negotiate classroom and playground hierarchies" (p.381).

Finally, the encouraging and verbal affirmations seem to have paid off well as evident in the boys' over-all achievements. As opposed to this affirmative approach, Jha et al. (2012) found that the Jamaican students kept failing as a result of being constantly reminded that they were failures. The Fabulous Boys' story is therefore a testimony

of my modest and amateur efforts to get boys (including my biological sons) to rise above and confront the challenges of Masculinity as constructed in the Caribbean. At the material time, the concept of Masculinity and its implications on boys' academic performance were unknown to me; neither were the theoretical concepts and accounts that better explained and underpinned the Fabulous Boys' story.

Besides Masculinity theory, researchers and other academic scholars on Caribbean boys' education have postulated various other theoretical concepts as to why Caribbean boys are failing academically. Some of these are discussed next.

2.3.3 Marginalization of Men

Miller's (1986) *'Marginalisation of the black male...'* blames the academic failing of Caribbean boys on some ruling class subjugation of the Blackman in favour of his female counterpart. Professor Errol Miller theorizes that:

In the twentieth century, powerful groups of men wanted to stifle the emergence of militant black men who might over-throw the power structure. They wanted, therefore, to confine back men to agricultural and industrial labour, and as a consequence, sponsored black women (academically) in order to marginalise black men. (p.615)

To achieve this goal, policies were formulated and implemented to exclude men from the teaching profession, establish teaching as a female-dominated career and ultimately feminise education. Miller's theorization has been critiqued by some of his contemporaries in Caribbean education, including Figueroa (2000) and Lindsay (1997) who disagrees with Miller's reliance on this historical event to explain why the boys are failing academically. Figueroa's (1998; 2000) critique of Miller is discussed next in the context of his (Figueroa's) theory of *Male Privileging*.

2.3.4 Male Privileging

Figueroa (1998; 2000) puts forward the concept of an historic *Male Privileging* as the rational explanation for boys' academic failing in the Caribbean. He explains in Figueroa (2000) that this is a historic Caribbean socialization process whereby maleness is reified and constructed as synonymous with dominance, leadership "appropriate to the public sphere, technologically capable, strong and hard". (p.70). 'Femaleness', on the other hand, is seen and constructed to be "submissive,

appropriate to the private sphere, sensitive, caring and in need of protection.” (p.70). The gendered values are so socio-culturally embedded that they “are not only internalized by children themselves, but also structure their worlds of home, school, community and work” (p.70). He further elaborates that maleness and femaleness, constructed in this way, have socio-economic and indeed political imperatives and consequences for the boys as well as for the girls. For the latter, it meant being more at home, closely supervised by adult, involved in homework and other domestic chores thus learning discipline, commitment and conscientiousness. These virtues ironically are consistent with Caribbean-type school discipline and regimental pedagogy. As part of the male privileging perks, the boys, on the other hand, are outdoors and undomesticated, at liberty to go out and come in when they like, and thus ill-equipped to meet the demands of the Caribbean-type of schooling and its environment. The consequences for the genders are inevitable: the girls began to excel in school. They overtook the boys not only in school enrolment and retention, but also dominated the boys in subject areas especially natural science and technology) which were previously the province of the boys. The boys, on the hand, could not manage with schooling which they have come to perceive as feminised and incongruent with their hard-masculine identity. Unfortunately, this concept of maleness is institutionally endorsed and perpetuated to the detriment of the boys. In this regard, Figueroa (2000), notes:

Much of child rearing is based on the self-fulfilling prophecy that boys will grow up bad... The negative approaches boys face at home are often reinforced in school. While more care may be exercised in disciplining girls, teachers who assume that boys are going to be bad are much more likely to punish them severely. This involves corporal punishment as well as verbal abuse and public humiliation. This harsh treatment of boys is nothing new; it reflects ideologies of male hardness, which dictate that boys should be able to take tough treatment. (p.70)

There is evidence that both the boys and girls admit the treatment meted to the boys in school are biased and unfair (Evans, 1999; Figueroa, 2000). Faced with a school system and environment which they perceive as feminised and hostile to them, the boys shun schooling and academic success as ‘girlish’ and anti-thetical their ‘manliness’. Boys’ academic underachievement phenomenon, Figueroa contends, is rooted in this historic privileging of the male and should be preferred to and substituted for Miller’s (1986) *Male Marginalization*. He argues that Miller’s theory will

foster men's dominance, perpetuates gender inequalities and constitute part of the problem. His recommendations for addressing the Boys' academic underachievement include: "challenging the structures of male privileging that foster gender inequalities and result in negative outcomes for men and women, boys and girls" (p.73). He further advocates a solution that eschews any targeted affirmative action for boys, rather:

Boys need to catch up with girls as well. Just as girls are made to feel that they can move into fields previously dominated by men, so boys must be made to feel that they can move into fields previously dominated by women. This is the only route to genuine gender equality (p.73)

Aspects of both Miller's (1986) *Male Marginalization* and Figueroa's (1998; 2000) *Male Privileging* theoretical concepts are interrogated in Section 2.4 below.

2.3.5 Biological Determinism

This concept, originating from Sigmund Freud, postulates that human behaviour is explainable in biological (physiological) terms, there being inbuilt energy, drive or instincts that underpin all mental functions operating from birth (Frosh, 1989). The subjectification discourses of 'boys will be boys' appear grounded on this concept and justifies the argument that the boys are not in control of the manifestations of their masculinity. Hence, for example, Wilson (2013) advocates a 'more caring masculinity' for the boys. At the core of this advocacy is the belief that psychologically, boys are born with certain innate biological traits that should be recognized and addressed. Failure to do so will put them to disadvantage from birth and invariably predispose them to certain behaviours which are inimical to good academic performance. Aggression, fighting and delayed maturity are arguably some of these traits.

Some of the barriers to boys' achievement which Wilson (2013) identifies, seem to be rooted in the delayed maturity of boys in relation to girls. He contends, for example, that boys are less developed to read or write on entry to school and yet "they are forced to read and write before being physically or emotionally ready" (p.7). As noted earlier, Wilson's (2013) position has been severely critiqued by Zyngier (2009) who argues that "Wilson's call for a more caring masculinity for boys is evidence of a recuperative but not progressive masculinity" (p.113). This is in addition

to its tendency to ascribe blames to female 'Other' (e.g. mothers, female teachers and girls) for boys' underachievement (Frosh et al., 2003). Zyngier's critique notwithstanding, there is significant body of scientific and academic authorities that boys are in many ways, biologically different from girls, including maturing at slower rate than the girls. It is posited that the failure to recognize and cater for this difference may contribute to the boys' academic underachievement (Hill-Wilkinson, 2017; Stolzer, 2008; Wein, 2006). In her research and discourses on why intellectually gifted boys under-perform academically, Hill-Wilkinson (2017), argues that "...Curriculum today requires sitting, not doing; reading, not exploring; and passively listening, not experiencing. Many boys are not biologically built for the current school model..." (p.21). Graham (2011) agrees. Pattman, et al. (1998), Frosh, (1989) and other psychologists also agree that innate biological traits tend to follow the boy from infancy, impact his early childhood and later life experiences. If this is the case, it may well be that the resultant psychological responses by the boys are beyond their control. They therefore need help, first by appreciating this reality and letting it underpin an appropriate and well-informed policy and other remedial interventions for the boys. Similarly, appropriate intervention should address the girls who are equally born with certain innate biological traits that must be recognized and catered for, if failure to do so would work against their success in life.

Biological determinism, however, appears to fall within the province of traditional psychology (where, as discussed above, inbuilt energy, drive or instincts underpin all mental functions operating from birth), and in this regard, I take a dim view of the concept. Consequently, the concept has been interrogated in Chapter 2.4 through psycho-political lens. In doing so, I identify the concept's implications for the boys' academic under-achievement as follows: firstly, together with 'the boys will be boys', discourse, it has been used to 'psychologise' and stereotype boys as failures (Pomerantz, 2017; Hartley and Sutton, 2013; Turner, 2005; Epstein et al., 1998) and that they would grow up bad (Barbarin, 2010; Figueroa, 2000). Secondly, traditional psychology discounts "specific social, historical, political and economic contexts" (Hook, 2004a, p.89) which are external to and beyond the control of boys but has nevertheless impacted and shaped their internalised "personal psychology". (Hook, 2004a; Hook, 2004b and Fanon, 2008, the latter being first published in French language in 1952).

2.3.6 The psychoanalysts' theoretical concepts

The *object relations* theory and the *unattainable phallus* concept endeavour to unmask Masculinity. Pascoe (2007) and Pattman et al. (1998) expose the fragility and vulnerability of masculinity which is grounded on the early relationship of the mother and her son. The son's early quest and need to carve out his own gendered identity, create a struggle that first considers femininity (whether in himself or around his world) as weak. He then repudiates, rejects and represses it by presenting a masculinity façade as a defensive ego. Similarly, the 'unattainable phallus' concept, deals with the elusiveness of attaining the real masculine identity with its trappings of power and dominance. But the young men, afraid of the exposure of their weakness and lack, project "a masculinity that must forever remain tough, hard and active" (Pattman et al., 1998, p.131).

2.4 Interrogating theories and concepts on the causes of BAU in the Caribbean.

This section examines further and interrogates aspects of the theories and concepts (outlined and discussed in Section 2.3 above) that seek to explain the causes of BAU in the Caribbean and (by extension) the TCI. This task is undertaken on the premise that there is consensus in the debate on BAU that 'hyper masculinity' (especially as constructed in the Caribbean) is not only a major impediment to boys' educational success in the Caribbean, but appears to present the most important explanation for their underachievement (Cobbett and Younger, 2012; Jha et al., 2012; Golding, 2010; Plummer, 2007; Jha and Kelleher, 2006; Frosh et al., 2003; Renold, 2001; Figueroa, 2000; Parry, 1996). Consistent with this premise, this section raises and seeks to theorise answers to the following queries: firstly, why is Masculinity constructed in the Caribbean in terms that reifies maleness as "...dominant, strong and hard" (Figueroa, 2000, p.70). In other words, why the Caribbean extreme form of (hyper) Masculinity, such that what is considered feminine is not masculine (Jha et. al., 2012). Secondly, why, in Figueroa's (2000) *Male Privileging* theory, boys in Caribbean homes are allowed the liberties of outdoor life; to go out and come in as they wished with little or no control from adults. This section, to a lesser extent, also interrogates, Miller's (1986) *Male Marginalization theory* as well as *Biological Determinism* concept. These interrogations are done through the lens of post-colonial theory and 'psycho-politics of Fanon' headlined in Chapter 1 (Introduction). They constitute the theoretical framework of this research.

2.4.1 BAU: Post-colonial and the psycho-political perspectives.

(a) Historical Forces and BAU

The psycho-political perspective of BAU looks beyond the personal psychology of the boys for their failings. It seeks to consider how and to what extent external political and historical forces like the colonial-backed slavery affected or impacted the Caribbean /TCl boys' academic performance. This question is articulated in research question 5. The research data and analysis which addressed this question, are being fully set out in Chapter 6. They are however pre-viewed in this section for the primary purpose of interrogating Figueroa's (2000), *Male Privileging* and other theoretical concepts on BAU.

The data and analysis in Chapter 6, would make a clear link between the historical event of slavery and BAU among the African-Caribbean families in the Caribbean and in TCl. In particular, the data and analysis would reveal that slavery prospered in TCl as in the wider Caribbean. However, the slaves suffered horrific maltreatment at the hands of their Slave Masters. The sufferings were not only during the 'middle passage' from West African communities from whence most of the enslaved were uprooted, but also in the American and Caribbean plantations to which they ended up (Gibson, 2006; Black, 1997). The enslaved black man was particularly targeted because of his crucial role as the bedrock of a typical West African patriarchal family, which looked up to him for provision, protection, emotional succour, order and security (Black, 1997). Slavery emasculated him to the extent and with the intent that his manhood, as conceptualized in the West African society, was dismantled, reducing him to a state of "learned helplessness" (Gibson, 2006, p.7) and psychological impotence (Azibo, 2011; Gibson, 2006; Black, 1997; Akbar, 1984; Grier and Cobbs, 1968; Moynihan, 1965; Frazier, 1950). This resulted in what Gibson (2006) calls 'paternal abandonment' or Frazier's (1950) 'desertion by fathers', being overwhelmed by the feeling and fear of inability to discharge his West African traditional role as father and husband. This psychological disposition (including paternal abandonment) was passed on from generation to generation (Gibson, 2006). Hence Grier and Cobbs' (1968) conclusion that "The Black Father of today is at one end of a psychological continuum which reaches back in time to his enslaved ancestors" (p.24) and "much of the pathology we see in black people had its genesis in slavery." (p.31).

Eventually, it seems the following legacies of slavery with generational impact emerged:

- ‘absentee fathers’ and predominant single female-headed homes among the African-American in the United States and the African-Caribbean families in the Caribbean (Figueroa, 2000; Safa, 1986; Massiah, 1983; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; Frazier, 1950).
- ‘Matrifocal’ or ‘mother-centred’ Families’ (Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; Greenwood et al., 2003) where the Blackman’s presence does not seem to matter anymore in the family scheme of things (Safa, 1986; Massiah, 1983). The boy’s future is considered hopelessly bleak (being no different from his father’s) (Barbarin, 2010; Figueroa, 2000) and thus not deserving of any meaningful investment in education (Pettigrew, 1964; Young, 1964).

Of course, the point must be made that every constituent member of the typical African-Caribbean family suffered from the ravages of slavery. While the father was forced to desert his family, the mother was left alone to shoulder and double role the responsibilities of a father and a mother. The children, particularly the boys, were deprived of a father to model after (Frazier, 1950). It is therefore uncharitable and indeed improper to blame the mother or any other constituent member of this family, disorganized by external forces of slavery over which none of them had any control. It is thus unhelpful to approach the BAU by a simplistic explanation that blame parenting or lack thereof.

(b) Interrogating Figueroa’s (2000) Male Privileging:

It is against the backdrop of these generational legacies of slavery, that Figueroa’s (2000) *Male Privileging* is interrogated. According to him, the historic privileging of the boys should be held responsible (at least in part) for BAU. His recommendation is to challenge “the structures of male privileging that foster gender inequalities and result in negative outcomes for men and women, boys and girls...” (p.71). His theoretical position however does not disclose why and how *Male Privileging* began. Secondly, the boys have never privileged themselves in the sense the theory postulates. Instead, the so-called outdoor liberties ‘enjoyed’ by the boys have been granted to them by adults - parents, guardians, etc. And it is so culturally embedded

that it is expressed in a West Indian saying: 'Tie the heifer and loose the bull', critically examined by Brown and Chevannes (1998). According to Conolly and Parkes (2012), it is an expression "signifying parenting strategies of protection and monitoring of daughters while sons are encouraged to have more freedom and independence" (p.161). Ironically, as the data in this research show, the boys decry the whole idea of *male privileging*, not only because it is inimical to their educational progress (as Figueroa (2000) also agrees) but it is their evidence that the society does not care for them. It is therefore unfortunate for the boys to be blamed as the architect of their own failings; that they cannot eat their proverbial cake and have it back, as the theory seems to postulate.

But whatever is the case, it seems there is a psycho-political answer, namely: that *Male-Privileging* may well be, in reality, a cultural compensation by a matrifocal society for the manhood of the African-Caribbean male-ancestors, which slavery dismantled and destroyed. Their boys must therefore be given all the liberties to go discover and reclaim from outside this lost manhood. The significance of 'outside' is that hopefully, he would find men out there who would teach him how to be a man, because, as the research participants acknowledge, 'there are certain things only a man can teach another young man'. Unfortunately, the pursuit to find and reclaim the lost manhood appears elusive and unattainable as the older men/or the peer group on the outside, are also in search of the same lost manhood and cannot inculcate or impart unto another young man what they have not found and does not have. However, they invariably provide for the young man, 'safe haven' or environment for negative 'physicality', as the 'Other'. In so doing, they become what Chevannes (1999 cited by Plummer 2007) calls "the controlling agent or countervailing force" (p.3) in replacement to the mother and father.

It suffices here to submit that when examined through the lens of the 'psycho-political', it gives insight into the Caribbean extreme masculinity and how it plays out in the life of the Caribbean or TCI young men. Firstly, the pursuit of 'hyper' masculine identity has largely led to the perception that education and academic success are feminine ventures which 'no real' man should be involved in. Secondly and more importantly, this pursuit (of which *Male-Privileging is part*) is in reality, a 'mirage' search for lost manhood. It seems a 'fantasy' search for the 'real man', namely, the male ancestor from West Africa, whose hallmark identity as a father, husband,

provider, protector and defender, was obliterated by the machinations of colonial - backed slavery.

(c) Western Gender Equality versus West African Gender Role

Male-Privileging is further interrogated here through post-colonial lens. It seems obvious that in postulating *Male-Privileging* theory as a preferred solution path to BAU, Professor Mark Figueroa's focus was on gender equality. His recommendations, for example, include the suggestion that "Boys need to catch up with girls as well" (p.73) in the way that girls had caught up and overtaken them. So, he concludes: "This is the only route to genuine gender equality" (p.73). Moreover, he critiqued Miller's (1986) *Marginalization of Men* theory on the ground that it would perpetuate dominance of men over women. Similar critics of Professor Miller (like Lindsay, 2002 and Reddock, 2003) and other scholars in the BAU debate (like Cobbett and Younger, 2012; Zyngier, 2009) have presented similar gender – equality argument. With the greatest respect, this is where, I think, the critics of Professor Miller, would seem to have missed the point. They have all focussed primarily on gender equality. They have given little or no regards to the fact that in the West African patriarchal family from whence the enslaved ancestors of the African-Caribbean families were uprooted, the focus appears to be, not on gender - equality but on respective gender roles. It is about the ability of the man to provide, protect and generally take care of his wife and children in return for which his authority is hallowed. This is the essence of his manhood which he passed on to his sons (Black, 2007). As argued in Chapter 6, slavery deliberately targeted and destroyed this identity of the West African Blackman and the family structure he held together. In its place was inescapably established, a matrifocal, mother-centred families (Pettigrew, 1964) since the psychologically helpless and hopeless fathers and their sons after them, were forced to abandon their families (Gibson, 2006; Moynihan, 1965; Frazier, 1950).

The gender - equality versus gender role distinction is particularly of significance in contemporary TCI. This is because their Christian faith, avowed in their Constitution, is anchored on the authority of the Holy Bible which enacts patriarchal family structure and relationship based on gender-role than gender – equality (Holy Bible, New International Version, Genesis 2:21-23; Ephesians 5:21-25). To keep these biblical injunctions in the families made dysfunctional by slavery, presents a continuing

challenge and tension in addressing BAU in the TCI. In any event, the data and reports show, the gender - equality balance ironically weighs heavily against the men.

Understandably, gender equality is an attractive and an apparently noble pursuit. It has great appeal to and acceptability in the context of an agenda driven by a feminist, western global north. However, importing into the African-Caribbean family and community context, gender-equality theories and concepts which do not take into account the socio-political and historical forces that have shaped and still shaping the fabric of their contemporary society, are fraught with difficulties. Solution to BAU in the Caribbean will remain elusive, so long as it is addressed primarily through theoretical and conceptual lenses, jaundiced by western universal theorizations and their associated prejudices. It seems these theorizations fail to acknowledge and respect the beliefs, norms, traditions, knowledge, theories, concepts and indeed civilizations which do not conform to western thoughts and standards (Hook, 2004a). In *Southern Theory*, Connell (2007) raises this concern, which Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in *Smith (1999)* also laments about.

I submit that the failure to courageously make this distinction between gender - equality and gender-role may continue to flaw theories and concepts on boys' academic underachievement in the Caribbean. Moreover, theories, uncritical and ahistorical in this respect, make it difficult, firstly to appreciate the fact that Caribbean extreme form of 'Masculinity' may well be a manifestation of a 'mirage' pursuit by the men/boys. This pursuit is actively encouraged (through *Male Privileging*) by an ambivalent society that urges the men/boys to go discover and reclaim their manhood lost to slavery. Secondly, the aforesaid uncritical theories make it difficult for this society (which has disabled the boys by its self-fulfilling negative stereotype) to stop blaming the boys for their failings; to accept responsibility for failing the boys and commit to enabling them to succeed.

(d) Interrogating Miller's (1986) Marginalisation of Men

In relation to Miller's (1986) *Marginalisation of Men*, although he theorized (within colonial context and times) about powerful men marginalizing Black men in favour of educating the women, he did not go far back in time nor beyond the shores of the Caribbean. If he did, he would have identified the real culprit of the worst form of marginalization of Black men, namely, slavery.

(e) Interrogating Biological Determinism

As flagged up in section 2.3.5, a dim view is taken about biological determinism in so far as it is underpinned by traditional 'US -American and Eurocentric' psychological theory. It is thus interrogated because of its "focus on the isolated, singular individual" and his or her internalised psychology (Hook, 2004a, p.93). In so doing, it fails to take into account the "specific social, historical, political and economic contexts" (Hook, 2004a, p.89) which have conditioned and constituted part of that internalised personal psychology. Deficient in this respect, traditional psychology, has the tendency, according to Bulhan (1985), "to ignore the central role of the social order" and "blame the victim" (p.85). This appears to be the fate of the African-Caribbean boy. He is 'pathologised' from birth and through life as bad by a society which does not see anything wrong in itself or its institutions; a society and culture which Goodley (2011) describes as "a disabling society and ableist culture" (p.724).

In conclusion, this literature review has endeavoured to outline the key questions involved in the contemporary debate on BAU. These questions include whether BAU is an empirical reality in the Caribbean and if so, its nature and extent. This review has also engaged in this debate. Firstly, it identifies the main theories and concepts by which BAU, and its causes have been explained. Secondly, it critically examines and interrogates aspects of these theoretical concepts through the lens of post - colonial and Fanonian's 'psycho-political'. In the end, a case is made that BAU remains a reality in the Caribbean with consequences requiring urgent, effective and robust interventions. However, these interventions should not undermine the educational advancement the girls have made and are continuing to make. Moreover, the ongoing debate should continue but more underpinned by a decolonised theoretical and conceptual perspectives that acknowledge and give due weight to indigenous socio-political and historical circumstances and contexts.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the methodology and methods chosen for this research, the underlying considerations for these choices and the ways and means by which they have been employed to seek answers to the research questions and to realize the over-arching objective of the research. The chapter identifies and explains qualitative and inductive approach as the primary methodology of choice for this research, underpinned by 'interpretivism' (as opposed to 'positivism') paradigm. In so doing, it highlights the unique feature of Qualitative Research Methodology (QRM) with its focus on the interpretation, explanation and understanding of events, things and meaning – making experiences of peoples' lives, in their natural setting. (Fadyl and Nicholls, 2013; Rakow, 2011; Creswell, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 1984). The subjectivity of QRM has also been acknowledged and justified.

The research focus explores why boys in TCI are failing academically and necessitated the eliciting of their unique personal experiences as well as their construction, understanding and interpretations of these experiences. Accordingly, an interview method, involving two primary Interviewees was used. The rationale for this choice, its merits and utility are explained below. The interview method is supplemented with a Peer Dialogue, data-collecting technique, to reach a broader spectrum of young men, to find their perspectives on their educational pursuit and challenges. To deepen the qualitative data collection, a Focus Group was also used. Research Question 5 looks to some long past historical events, like slavery, to provide insights and explanation for the academic failing of the boys, which interviews alone could not. Consequently, a 'second' literature review was deployed primarily to address this research question 5. This involves a critical review of the literature sources, why they were chosen, and the analysis carried out in the context of BAU. The use of second literature review is not only to mutually complement the different methods, but, according to Cohen et al. (2011), to offer 'methodological pluralism' to the research (p.254). Table 4 below shows the five research questions and the respective research methods (Data Sources) deployed in seeking the answers to the said research questions.

Table 4: showing the research questions and methods that addressed them.

Research questions		Research Methods			
		Primary Interviewees	Peer Dialogue	Focus Group	Second Literature Review
1	How do stereotypes associated with the problematic African-Caribbean boys become incorporated as a truth claim within educational practice?	✓	✓	✓	
2	How does the predominance of women in the education system affect boys' academic achievement in the TCI?	✓	✓	✓	
3	How does the Caribbean construction of masculinity impact on boys' academic achievement?	✓	✓	✓	
4	How do boys negotiate different masculine identities in TCI cultural setting?	✓	✓	✓	
5	How have long-past historical events such as slavery and colonialism affected boys' academic achievement in TCI?				✓

Participants' population and their sampling are also discussed in this chapter. In this , the nature and constituents of the study population are identified and explained, including how and why they have been chosen. This Chapter also outlines the data analysis techniques used, namely, psycho-political thematic analytical method, the justification for this choice and how it was deployed. Ethical concerns and considerations are also identified and addressed in this Chapter 3. The challenges these ethical issues presented and how they have been managed, consistent with the Guidance of the Ethical Committee of the University of Sheffield, have also been addressed in this Chapter.

3.2 Research Approaches and Background

I have been a teacher and school guidance counsellor for about 33 years, practising mainly in Africa and the Caribbean. I have also been privileged to benefit from further international exposure, through various personal and professional development and networking opportunities. The resulting experiences, together with my social, cultural and geographical background, have largely shaped and influenced me to embrace a world view of life, events, things and knowledge which are personal, subjectively experienced and interpreted. I believe that life-experiences, events and phenomena are not static, independent nor objectively real. Rather, they are socially constructed, emerging and amenable to meaningful explanation, through personal exploration and reflexivity (Sikes, 2004). Given this ontological world view and assumptions, I believe, I am what research scholars would call an 'interpretivist' (Goodley, 2011), – because I would rather place premium on the interpretations and meanings that bring quality to my research. I am content to take and use personal accounts and experiences of persons, with their subjectivities, to find explanations and meanings to their world and their construction of it (Sikes, 2004). Accordingly, I would rather have what Goodley and Smailes (2011) refer to as “a subjective inductive engagement with the process of meaning making” (p.48), than get stuck and struggle in the straight – jacket position of the 'positivists'. For their ontological assumptions assert an unreal world that is given, objectively real, static and independent. They further assert knowledge that must be empirically measurable, quantifiable and value-free, devoid of the personal beliefs, experiences and prejudices of the researcher. Accordingly, Goodley and Smailes (2011), posit that positivists methodological research approach is “nomothetic ...which includes scientific, quantitative, experimental approaches to research that measure variables” (p.48). Otuonye (2014) calls them “Quantifiers” (p.6), because of their pre-occupation with numbers and quantities. I do not belong to their Company but to those that Goodley and Smailes (2011) refer to as the “subjectivists with anti-positivist perspectives” (p.48).

This is not to say that the positivists and their quantitative research approach are by any means inferior to their interpretivist's counterparts. Both paradigms and their research approaches have strengths and weaknesses (Punch, 2016; Luyt, 2012). Indeed, in Otuonye (2014), a case is made for more use of a mixture of both the qualitative and quantitative methods, than debating their dichotomy. It is stated:

I am not only of the firm belief that research, and research methodologies can never be value free, but that the academic debate on value neutrality should begin to give way to exploring ways by which the synergies of mixed methods can be maximized for optimum research goals (p.18)

Over the years however, my interpretivist's slants have played out, mostly in my professional interaction and dealings with students, parents, professional colleagues and other stake holders in the educational sectors with which I have been involved. I noted, for example, the remarkable difference in the meaning-making educational experiences of boys in the West African Country of Nigeria and their Caribbean counterparts. I observed, that while they seem to be failing academically in the Caribbean and the resultant raging debate on it, the failing boys discourse is hardly an issue in Nigeria where, according to Jha et al. (2012), "...education continues to have a high premium for boys..." (p.9).

Arriving in the Caribbean with 3 young boys, ages 2-6, to face this phenomenon was therefore not only scary but propelled me to seek answers, drawing on my hands-on professional and other life experiences, and underpinned by my world view assumptions discussed above. The full story of my pursuit for answers and what became of my boys (now 22, 25 and 27) are already set out in Chapter 2 (Literature Review) as the *Fabulous Boys Story*. It suffices at this stage to say that my admission into the University of Sheffield Ed.D programme, opened to me, a door of opportunity to explore the failing boy's phenomenon in the Caribbean and, by extension, the TCI. Accordingly, choosing my research topic: **Causes of Boys' Academic Underachievement in TCI**, did not pose much difficulty. I was aware that finding the **Causes** will be exploratory and interactive with human research participants and it was so. From these participants were elicited, unique, personal, subjective but meaning-making experiences. Also elicited, were their understanding and interpretations of these experiences and how they gave meanings and explanations to the phenomenon of boys' academic failing in TCI (Otuonye, 2016b). According to Default (2015), such a methodology will involve a "depth of inquiry and description about a phenomenon" in the field and not in a laboratory data (p.3). And this is what happened in this study.

3.2.1 Qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research methodology (QRM) was chosen for this research. This choice was inescapable, being consistent with my interpretivist's paradigm perspective of "understanding and interpreting the world from the" eyes of its actors; a world where "meanings and interpretations are paramount" (Cohen et al., 2011, p.31). This perspective, according to Cohen et al. (2011), is clearly anti-thetical of positivism which "strives for objectivity, measurability, predictability ...patterning..." (p.31). The corollary position of the positivists is that methodologies and research must be value-free, devoid of the personal experiences, preferences and prejudices of the researcher. My position, however, is that value-free methodologies are purely imaginary and non-existent in the real world. As Carr (2000) points out, no researcher can embark on any research without a "latent commitment to some educational beliefs..." (p.440). Moreover, Goodley and Smailes (2011) argue that the value-free stance of the 'quantifier'-positivists is itself much a value position as the choice of the qualitative method and its so-called subjectivities. Their strong conclusion is that a value-free research would mean research without a researcher. This will be an absurd situation indeed!

I have remained therefore alive to the fact that my choice of QRM, with its subjectivities, would have been influenced and indeed intricately connected back to my positionality, and my ontological and epistemological assumptions earlier outlined. Braun and Clarke (2006), Greenbank (2003) and Carr (2000) acknowledge that such influence is not unusual. Moreover, Goodley and Smailes (2011) demonstrate this connectivity in their explanation of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Drawing on Clough and Nutbrown's (2002) definitions, they opine that while ontology is the "theory of what exists and how it exists"; epistemology is "...how we can come to know these things", and "methodology, the approach to how we investigate these things" (p.48).

What is most important is that ultimately, I believe my research questions can best be answered by the qualitative approach. I have also adopted an inductive approach in this research, and it has enabled me not to heavily rely or depend on similar, pre-determined and already existing theories (DeVault, 2015; Clarke, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Braun and Clark, 2006). Accordingly, I anticipate my research findings should be able to either find some explanations in established theories or trigger a new

theoretical formulation. My choice of QRM and the underpinning 'interpretivist' paradigm, inescapably also influenced my choice of interview method. With its beneficial and attractive feature of inter-activeness, I was able to engage with human participants in this research in a respectful interchange of their views, their stories and personal experiences (Cohen et al., 2011; Gill et al., 2008). The method enabled me to go for quality information instead of the quantity of the data obtained (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, it provided me an opportunity to probe and explore as deeply and rigorously as possible for answers to some of my research questions, using a rather small number of human participants in broadened interview-based methods. How these participants were chosen, the considerations for choosing them and how these methodical approaches were deployed are fully discussed in the sub-headings next following.

3.3 Study Population and Sample

This section identifies and discusses the human participants involved in this research, how and why they have been chosen, and the challenges encountered in the process. It also highlights relevant theoretical concepts and academic literature which underpin and support the recruitment process involved.

3.3.1 Study population

The research focuses on 'Causes of boys' academic underachievement' hence boys have been purposely chosen for this research. The study population is therefore the male students of the premier secondary school in the Turks and Caicos Islands, with a population of 340 students, 173 of which are boys between grades 7 and 11. However, the target boys' population are those between the ages of 15-17 years in grades 10 and 11. 60 boys fell into this category. The rationale for choosing this category of boys, is as Otuonye (2016b), in agreement with Trotter (2012), has stated:

...boys in grades 10 and 11 will be chosen, being the grade category where the target behaviour of boys' academic underachievement has manifested the most having spent more time in the school than the 7-9 graders (p.15)

For this reason, this category of boys was eventually chosen on the premise that they may have faced more personal experiences with implications for their academic performance (Green and Thorogood, 2009). Although I recognise that girls could also have brought in useful perspectives on why boys are failing, I considered their

involvement would have unnecessarily widened the scope and perhaps the complexity of the research. Involving the girls, I thought, would have brought in a dimension properly fit for another or further research. Another significant study population in this research is the adult population of TCI. These adults were chosen from community persons known for their efforts and commitment to youth development especially the advancement of boys through education. This credential was confirmed after careful consultation with relevant stakeholders and members of the community, as well as from my professional experience and interaction with them directly or indirectly.

3.3.2 Sample

Through a sampling and recruitment process further described below, 7 young men were chosen: 2 as primary interviewees and 5 as peer dialogue participants (PDPs). In addition, 6 adult focus group participants were chosen, thus meeting Cohen et al. (2011) and Wellington & Szczerbinski (2007) criteria that a focus group involves 6 to 8 individuals of a homogeneous group. The choice of only two interviewees was deliberately small as it enabled an in-depth study of their life experiences; to understand and explain how they make meaning of momentous phenomena in their lives, especially their academic underachievement (Bendasolli, 2013; Clarke, 2009; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

With a “focus on collective capacity to generate knowledge,” according to Pieczka and Wood (2013 p.167), the five Peer dialogue participants (PDPs) were used to reach out to a larger population of other young men. Their views, ideas and perspectives on BAU, were articulated in and through the blog/website in which the PDPs co-operated with the researcher. Apart from adding to the rich data collected from the interviews, their findings were used to add depth and triangulate some of the interview data. The characteristics listed above and a deeper understanding of the experiences of the participants were critical in gaining vital and in-depth information and appreciation of boys’ academic underachievement in TCI (Green and Thorogood, 2009). However, the size of the research participants will not be used to make any generalization (in the findings of this research), as it may not be considered a good representation of the study population (Smith and Osborn, 2008; Curtis et al., 2000). The sampling or selection technique has been adopted with a view to meeting Miles and Huberman's (1994 cited in Curtis et al., 2000) qualitative sampling criteria,

namely, that sampling "...should be relevant to conceptual framework and research questions; ...generate rich information on the type of phenomena which need to be studied" and to "produce believable description/explanations (in the sense of being true to life); ...be ethical and... feasible" (p.1003).

Profile of the Focus Group participants

The participants of the Focus Group interview were selected from the Community and include the following:

- (1) A High School Principal
- (2) A Clergy and representative of the Pastor's Fraternity of TCI
- (3) An Honourable Member of the TCI House of Assembly
- (4) A Judicial Official
- (5) A Government, Gender Affairs Department official
- (6) A Government, Youth Department official.

3.3.3 The Recruitment Strategy and Process

Prior to commencement of recruitment, detailed explanations were given to the participants. This involved the nature and purpose of the research, the nature and extent of their participation and the fact that their participation was voluntary. "They were also informed of their liberty to withdraw at any time throughout the research process" without any penalty or detriment. (Pheng, 2012, p.52; University of Sheffield's 'Draft Model Information Sheet', 2013).

a). The boys: The recruitment of the boys was preceded by an engagement with my professional colleagues. Their assistance was enlisted to secure the identity of the target population with whom they had closely interacted (Longhofer et al., 2012; O'Brien, 1998). They were also entrusted with identifying about 20 boys whom they believed can participate in the research. Once identified, my colleagues gave them the initial information 'about the purpose of the study and the extent of their involvement as participants'. This process accords with Longhofer et al. (2012) "convenience sampling technique", whereby adolescent participants are recruited "through discussions with professional staff" (p.69). Given my insider's position as the school guidance counsellor with some knowledge of some of these students, the use of my colleagues in this way, further ensured random sample reliability, devoid of my personal prejudices, actual or perceived. Thereafter, I took over the potential

participants and gave a more detailed information about the study. The information included the need for their parents' consent to be obtained in writing before their involvement in the research as it was ethically doubtful that they possessed the requisite competence to exercise informed consent, being below the age of 18 (BERA, 2011).

Informed consent was crucial and central to my research especially for the primary interviewees and 'peer dialogue' participants (PDPs). Obtaining the required consent therefore involved giving out to the participants and their parents, initial generic introductory letters, specific information sheets and consent forms. It is important to note that the participant information sheets, and the consent forms used in this research were adapted from The University of Sheffield's Student 'Draft Model Information Sheet and Draft Model Participant Consent Form' respectively. These were taken from the Ethical Review Form V1 – 21/3/2013. These documents, between them, introduced the research and the researcher, explained the research focus and purpose, nature of participation, anonymity, privacy and confidentiality of both the participants and the information they would supply. The fact that any participation or involvement in the research would be purely on voluntary basis, was duly emphasised. Added also was the right of the participants to withdraw from further participation. As stated in the University of Sheffield's (2013b) 'draft model information sheet', the participant's right to withdraw can be exercised "at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled" (p.1). Longhofer et al. (2012), Thompson and Russo (2012), Allmark et al. (2009) and Corbin and Morse (2003) all endorsed this requirement. The information sheet also contains likely questions that participants and their parents may want to ask. Answers to these questions were also provided.

The first of the three sets of documents given out to the prospective participants and their parents was the initial generic introductory letters, one for each participant (Appendix 1A) and one for his parents/guardians (Appendix 1B). Each of these letters merely introduced the research and the researcher. They requested the prospective participants and their parents to indicate (within one week) whether they were willing to take part in the research and to return a signed copy as confirmation of such willingness. These letters were handed to each of the twenty (20) prospective participants and their parents. Nine (9) out of the twenty, returned their signed copy

of the generic introductory letter and those of their parents. Three (3) indicated to be primary interviewees while six (6) opted for peer dialogue participation. To each of these three (3) prospective interviewees, was then given specific information sheet for himself (Appendix 2A) and for his parents (Appendix 2B). The other 6 prospective PDPs were each given similar specific information sheet for himself (Appendix 2C) and one for his parents (Appendix 2D). Accompanying the specific information sheet was the consent form given out in similar manner, namely, each to the 3 prospective interviewees and their parents (Appendices 3A and 3B) respectively. The 6 prospective PDPs and their parents also received similar consent forms (Appendices 3A and 3B) respectively. These Appendices (2A to 3B) were delivered to the 9 participants under a generic cover letter (Appendix 4). This appendix 4, thanked the boys and their parents for their willingness to take part in the research. It further requested them to carefully read the attached information sheet and, if still willing to participate, to sign and return each of the attached consent forms. Consent was determined by the return of the signed consent forms. The first two of the prospective interviewees and the first five of the prospective PDPs to return their signed consent forms were then recruited as the research participants for this study. All returned signed forms were countersigned by the researcher in the presence of each of the participants. Copies of these forms as countersigned were returned to each of the participants and their respective parents.

b). The Focus Group: Consent process for the adult focus group was less stringent, not the least because they are adult, non-vulnerable and generally considered to possess the competence to exercise informed consent. Subject to the protocols and processes in their respective walks of life, the focus group members were approached and recruited as set out below. The criteria for their selection and their profile have been set out earlier in section 3.3 (Study Population and Sample). Initially 8 in number, they were approached informally, directly or indirectly through the various organizations and entities they represented. Invitation email (Appendix 5) attaching the relevant information sheet (Appendix 6) and the consent form (Appendix 7) were sent to them. Fortunately, all responded, but the first six positive responses received, constituted my adult focus group. Two gave cogent excuses for their non-participation.

I remained alive not to presume the participants' continued willingness or consent throughout their participation process. Accordingly, I sought and obtained their reflective consent at critical stages as the research progressed, thereby reconfirming their willingness to continue their voluntary participation. This included a reminder of their continuing right and liberty to "discontinue their participation at any time", without suffering any detriment or "loss of any benefits" (University of Sheffield, 2013b, p.3).

3.4 Methods (Data Collection Techniques) and their Procedures

This section identifies and discusses the research methodical techniques used in the data collection, why and how they were used. Also highlighted are the relevant theoretical concepts and academic authorities which underpin and support the data collection techniques used. These techniques are Interview, Focus Group, Peer Dialogue and a 'Second' Literature Review, discussed fully in the section following.

3.4.1 Interview Method:

My choice of qualitative research methodology led naturally and inescapably to choosing interview method. Usually referred to as qualitative research interviews (QRIs), interview method is used to collect quality information about peoples' personal and meaning-making life experiences. Cohen et al. (2011) see it as the "interchange of views, ('inter-view'), between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest," mostly to produce knowledge (p.409). It is considered appropriate and crucial in this study which explores the phenomenon of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands. According to Wellington and Szczerbinski (2007), interview is invaluable in probing "interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives" (p.79). In the process, human face, voice and meaning are placed to otherwise inanimate and abstract data. By its very nature, interview is usually deployed in the gathering of in-depth knowledge of phenomena; in the interpretation of these phenomena in their natural setting and the meaning making experiences that affect people's lives and behaviour, (Fadyl and Nicholls, 2013; Wilson, 2012; Rakow, 2011; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). These attributes of interview method, including its inter-activeness, enabled me to engage with human participants in this research in a respectful interchange of their views, stories and personal experiences (Cohen et al., 2011).

As envisaged, the interviewees and other human participants came laden with their personal, subjective but meaning-making accounts, experiences and reflections on what they considered were the causes of boy's academic underachievement in TCI. This method also helped me to focus on obtaining qualitative rather than numerical data (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Perhaps most importantly, in agreement with Bogdan and Biklen (1998), the interview method provided me an opportunity to probe and explore rigorously and so deeply as to “reach parts which other methods cannot reach” for answers to some of my research questions (Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007, p.79). Aspects of this interactive and exploratory features of the interview technique were also useful in both the Peer Dialogue and Focus Group methods I used. It is also worthy of note that this Interview method used a rather unique small number of human participants to secure in-depth information relevant to my research questions.

3.4.2 *Interview procedure:*

The tables below show the interview participants and summary of research activities undertaken in this interview procedure.

Table 5: Interview participants

Participants	Two Primary Interviewees (males)	Name (Pseudonyms)	Age
1.	Primary Interviewee 1	Matt	16
2.	Primary Interviewee 2	Hew	17

Table 6: Summary of interview research activities

Date of activity	Research activities	Timing
1 – 20 March 2017	Construction of Semi-structured interview questions	3 weeks
3 April 2017 - 6 June 2017	Recruitment of participants (section 3.3.3a)	8 weeks
24 April 2017	Pilot-testing of interview questions	30 minutes
30 April – 15 May, 2017	Interview questions revised and finalized	2 weeks
26 May 2017	Interview venue (and time) chosen - a non-threatening environment, chosen by participants	May, 2017
30 May 2017 – 20 July 2017	Scheduled and conducted 4 interviews: 2 one-hour interview sessions for each interviewee, using the semi-structured interview questions:	7 weeks + 2 days.
30 May 2017 12 June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary interviewee 1, Matt: - Interview 1: 4:37 - 5:40 p.m. - Interview 2: 12:57 - 1:05 p.m. 	1 hour 1 hour (approximately)
19 June 2017 20 July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary interviewee 2, Hew: - Interview 1: 5:00 - 6:10 p.m. - Interview 2: 1:20 - 2:22 p.m. 	1 hour, 10 mins 1 hour
	Obtained participants' reflective continuous consent all through the interview sessions	
	Interviews audio-taped (with participants' consent)	Duration of all interviews
1 July - September 2017	Manual transcription of audiotapes	12 weeks (3 months)
October, 2017	Raw transcripts given back to the participants to confirm the accuracy of their perspectives	2 weeks
Oct. – Dec., 2017	Interview transcripts read over; themes and subthemes generated from transcripts.	12 weeks (3 months)

The two interview participants, aged 16 and 17, were selected through the recruitment procedure outlined in section 3.3.3 above. Semi-structured interview technique was deployed. Informed by the existing relevant literature and careful consideration of the research questions, a set of semi-structured interview questions were formulated, (Appendix 8). This involved asking open ended questions that allowed the participants to, 'freely express their thoughts' on the causes of boys academic failing, (Bogdan and Biklen 1998, p.3). These questions were tested in an informal pilot interview with a randomly selected young man of similar characteristics

to the study sample. This was to test the cohesiveness, appropriateness and relevance of the questions to the research objectives. The outcome of the pilot interview was used to fine-tune and finalise the interview questions and procedures, for clarity, just as Meadows, (2003) noted.

The two interviewees chose the time and the most comfortable and non-threatening environment of their choice for the interviews. Two interview sessions were conducted with each participant; each session lasted for a little over one hour instead of the intended 45 minutes. This was in the process of probing and exploring in detail, the questions, new concepts and the emerging themes, until I interviewed to 'saturation' (Trotter, 2012; Johnson and Morrison, 2007; Green, 1999). I obtained participants' continuous consent all through the interview sessions, affirming their right to end the interview at any time without any penalty or detriment to them. The interviews were audio-taped with the prior consent of participants. Few notes were taken during the interviews. The audio facilitated verbatim recordings of the interviews. Two tape recorders were used during the interviews, to guard against the risk of malfunctioning (Opdenakker, 2006). However, none malfunctioned. I manually transcribed the interviews myself. Though an onerous task, the manual transcription enabled a rewarding familiarity and engagement with the contents of the data. In addition, it enabled a reduction in the risk of confidentiality breach through a third party. The raw transcripts were given back to the (interview) participants to verify and confirm that their perspectives were accurately portrayed. Their feedback affirmed the contents of the transcripts (Vogt et al., 2004). Baxter and Jack (2008) agree with Green (2007), who refers to this as "member checks", done "to validate accuracy and solicit feedback on ambiguous passages" (p.50).

3.4.3 Focus Group Method

This section highlights the exciting potentials and use of the focus group method which provides opportunity for dialogue and debate amongst members on an important topic of national concern, such as BAU. Among other reasons, it was chosen, because of its unique feature that "allows researchers to collect a large amount of data from a substantial group of people in a relatively short amount of time" which in the process, produce "synergistic results from group participation" (Wilson, 2012, p.129). Hence it was specifically deployed to engage six adults in a focus group discussion, to find out their views and perspectives on what they considered worked

in boys' education, and to get their own thoughts, feelings and personal experiences on the topic. The participants were grateful to be part of a research in the area of boys' failings in education in TCI; hence the passionate discussion that ensued. This agrees with Wilson's (2012) observation: "get people talking and the insights will often go further because of the group dynamic" (p.129). The section below outlines the focus group procedure adopted in this research.

3.4.4 Focus Group Procedure

This section describes the procedure that was followed during the focus group research method. It includes two tables, Tables 7 and 8, respectively showing the interview participants and summary of research activities undertaken in this interview procedure.

Table 7: Focus Group (FG) Participants

Participants		
FG1	A Member of the Clergy and Representative of the Pastor's Fraternity of TCI	
FG2	A Government, Youth Department official.	
FG3	A High School Principal	
FG4	A Government, Gender Affairs Department official	
FG5	An Honourable Member of the TCI House of Assembly	
FG6	A Judicial Official	

Table 8: Summary of Focus Group research activities

Date of Activity	Research Activities	Timing
15 – 20 May 2017	Construction of Semi-structured interview questions	5 days
1 – 21 June 2017	Identification and Recruitment of 6 Focus Group members – (section 3.3.3, b)	3 weeks
21 June 2017	Interview date and venue confirmed with participants through email correspondence;	21 June 2017
29 June 2017	Conducted a round table Focus Group interview session with the 6 participants	2 hours, 45 minutes
	Session began at 10:00 a.m. and ended by 12:45 p.m. (inclusive of a 30-minutes break)	
	Introduction of the researcher, (moderator), the focus of the research and the discussion procedure	10:00 – 10:10am
	Participants' introduction and rapport building icebreaker	10:10 – 10:20am
	Interview began, moderated by researcher, using semi-structured interview questions	10:20 – 12:40pm
	Participants enthusiastically answered and exhaustively discussed all and arising questions	
	Closure: Thanking the participants for their coming and for their contribution	12:40 – 12:45pm
	Light lunch / refreshment	12:45
29 June 2017	Obtained participants' continuous consent of participation	Throughout the interview process
29 June 2017	Interview was audio-taped (with participants' consent)	2hrs:15 mins.
August – Sept., 2017	Audiotapes manually transcribed	8 weeks
Nov. – Dec., 2017	Themes and sub-themes generated from transcribed manuscript.	8 weeks (2 months)

The focus group participants were recruited as described in section 3.3.3 (b) above. Consent forms were emailed to them; the date and venue of the interview were also confirmed through email. Semi-structured interview questions characterised by open-ended questions were constructed and used for the focus group session. This facilitated participants' free and detailed group discussions. The researcher introduced herself, the focus of the research and the interview procedure. The participants were also introduced, and the interview began. The interview session lasted for two hours and forty-five minutes of intensive, animated and interactive

discussions. This was inclusive of a thirty-minute break in between, with a light refreshment. Participants' continued consent to participate was obtained throughout the focus group session. They were reminded of their freedom to end or discontinue their participation at any point in the interview, without any penalty or detriment. Satisfied that much relevant information had been received and having exhausted the questions, the session which started at 10:00 a.m., was brought to an end at 12:45 p.m. The interview was audio-taped, with participants' consent. The audiotape was manually transcribed, verbatim.

3.4.5 The Peer Dialogue Method

As a qualitative research method, *Peer Dialogue* is a collaborative activity that engages students in joint problem solving, co-construction of ideas and knowledge building (Deiglmayr, 2018; Zhu and Carless, 2018; Howard et al., 2017; Ruiz and Pardo, 2016). It is a "method of inquiry" that can be used to generate different types of knowledge and "to make a difference in people's lives, specifically the lives of young people in a high school" (Pieczka and Wood, 2013, p.166). Additional benefits of peer dialogue, according to Ruiz and Pardo (2016), is the fact that it:

promotes a positive affective climate where students feel less anxious and more confident, ...and provide opportunities to actively use both their receptive and productive language skills, to provide and obtain feedback from other students. (p.172)

Given these advantages, peer dialogue method was deployed in this research for the purpose of gathering the views and perspectives of some boys and their peers on BAU. Through the selection strategy described in section 3.3.3 (a) above, five boys (peer dialogue participants), were selected as fieldwork collaborators for this purpose. The rationale behind this was to use them to reach a greater population of young men, through deliberative interactive dialogues. Accordingly, the research is not done on them but by them and with them. It involves a commitment by them to be part of the research, even as fieldwork collaborators, on the problem which affect their own lives (McTaggart, 1991). Tables 9 and 10 below respectively show the peer dialogue participants and a summary of their activities undertaken in the research process.

Table 9: Peer Dialogue Participants

Participant number	Peer Dialogue Participants' Names (Pseudonyms)	Age	Form/Grade
1.	Omari	16	11
2.	Luk	17	11
3.	Jon	17	11
4.	Gart	15	10
5.	Rasta	16	10

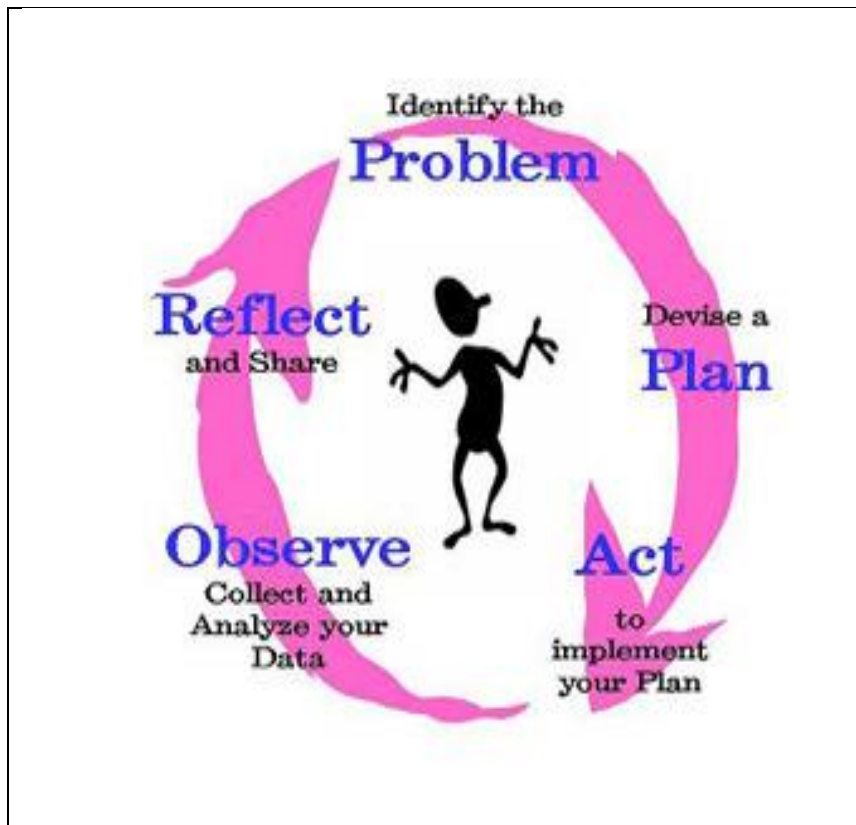
Table 10: Summary of Peer Dialogue Research Activities

Date of Activity	Research Activities	Timing/Duration
3 April – 1 June 2017	Recruitment of Participants (section 3.3.3, a) and preliminary description of research activity	8 weeks
10 May 2017	Website opened as <i>tciboysresearch</i>	
15 – 20 May	Construction of semi-structured peer dialogue questions;	6 days
2 June 2017	Identifying the problem Meeting with participants to identify and clarify the (research) problem;	1 hour (12:00 – 1:00 p.m.)
	Devising an action plan - Clarification of the peer dialogue method and expectation of participants; - Presentation of the informal semi-structured interview questions to the PDPs	
5 June 2017	- Group discussion on the Website and its operation	12:40 – 1:40pm (1 hour)
	- Presentations to familiarize the PDPs with the use of the website.	
	- Email invitation (through wordpress.com) to PDPs, to access the website	
	- Participants reminded of right to withdraw without penalty or detriment.	5 June 2017 & Continuously
5 -12 June 2017	Acting to implement the plan - PDPs access the <i>tciboysresearch</i> website	Within 7 days
5 June 2017	- Field work began; Peer dialoguing commenced:	
6 June 2017	- Presentation of stationery	
7 June – 26 June 2017	- Field data (findings and views) postings on the Website	3 weeks
26 June 2017	- Motivational action:- messages of appreciation posted on the website	
3 July 2017	Observing to collate and analyse the collected data: - Progress-reporting meeting convened - Ensured continuous consent of participants - General review of previous postings - Postings (data) collated and analysed.	1 hour June 6, 12, 26
20 July – 7 August 2017	Reflecting and sharing. - analysed data reposted on the website by PDPs - Further field work undertaken: - More findings, reflections and recommendations shared via the websites	18 days
5 June – 7 August	Secured and maintained the integrity and use of the website	8 weeks
7 August 2017	Restriction of further entry or activity on the website after two months.	7 August 2017

3.4.6 The Peer dialogue Procedure

The peer dialogue activities summarised in **Table 10** above, was guided by the procedure depicted in **Figure 1** below and discussed in this section. Although the research drew on ideas from co-produced action research, it did not implement the action research method. Figure 1 below, for example, is an action research infographic that has been adapted to explain the peer dialogue procedure used in this research. It captures five main action points namely: *identify the problem*; *devise an action plan*; *act to implement the plan*; *observe to collect and analyse the data*; *reflect and share*. These points are discussed further below. Thus the process involves some “dialogic and deliberative techniques” (Pieczka and Wood, 2013, p.167) in a cordial and non-threatening environment (Ruiz and Pardo, 2016).

Figure 1: Action research infographic adapted for peer dialogue procedure



Source: Study.com (2002)

The detailed process involved firstly, *identifying* for the participants and with them, the problem of the Boys’ academic underachievement in TCI, for which the research was being carried out. Secondly, we *devised* a plan of not only how to collect qualitative data through them as ‘peer dialogue participants’ (PDPs) but also what to do with the data when collected. These two action steps were undertaken in a

meeting I convened. At this meeting, I explained how the 'peer dialogue' concept will be deployed and what is expected of them. We discussed the opening and operation of a website through which they would convey their findings, personal views and reflections. The website will be active and accessible for only two months from the date it was opened. Two presentations and a group discussion were held to familiarize the PDPs with how to interact with each other and with the website. Informal semi-structured interview questions were constructed, (Appendix 8), and given out, to guide them in obtaining the required information from their peers. Stationery were also provided to facilitate this, as Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) suggest. The website was opened as '*tciboysresearch*' and access to it was given to all by email invitations through wordpress.com. The researcher became the administrator. Following these interactions, the PDPs organised themselves and began implementation of the plan as discussed. They moved into the 'field', questioning, dialoguing and collecting information from their peers on their views on the causes of and remedies for boys' academic underachievement. They subsequently shared their 'field' data in the website.

Given the information shared on the website, the researcher convened one more meeting with the PDPs; discussed the progress made and the subsequent steps in the action plan, as represented in Figure 1 above. Further action included closely *observing*, analysing and *reflecting* on what they have done so far; and conveying them again through the website. As the website administrator, I secured and maintained the integrity and use of the website and ensured confidentiality and anonymity. PDPs continued consent was also ensured. They were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time of the research, without any penalty or loss of benefits due them. Carefully crafted messages of appreciation for the work being done were posted on the website for the participants' benefit. This and the provision of stationery seem to have motivated the boys into more action, consistent with the observation of Howard et al., (2017), "that the agent's (researcher's) tactics for encouraging the student to begin taking the initiative again were helpful." (p.102). Activities increased in the website as the PDPs went back into the 'field' for more dialogues and data collection especially towards the end of the two months deadline. Finally, PDPs shared all their findings, personal experiences, in addition to their *reflections* and recommendations on ways by which boys could best be supported into education. The website thus, gave them 'a voice' to speak their minds on their academic failings.

The operation of the website was discontinued at the end of two months and the researcher (administrator), restricted further access and activity on the website.

3.4.7 'Second' Literature Review

This section discusses 'Second' Literature Review as a research technique. It explains the necessity for a second Literature Review, the rationale for the choice and details of the literature reviewed, and how the review was carried out and analysed. The literature review undertaken in Chapter 2 is the traditional systematic collection, overview and synthesizing of relevant previous research, including evaluation of what Snyder (2019) refers to as "...theory and evidence..." (p.334) on the topic of boy's academic underachievement (BAU). Its purpose is to get an understanding of the contemporary debate on BAU and its underpinning theoretical and conceptual postulations.

(a) The Need for 'Second' Literature Review

Unlike the Literature Review in Chapter 2, the 'second' Literature Review is embarked upon primarily to address research question 5, which in turn, requires an exploration of how a long past historical event like slavery and colonialism may have affected BAU in the TCI. Chapter 6 has been dedicated to that exploration with the associated analysis. Snyder (2019) points out that "For a number of research questions, a literature review may be the best methodological tool to provide answers" (p.334). Research question 5 is one of those research questions. Other than a literature review, none of the other three data sources of Interviews, Peer Dialogue and Focus Group would have adequately addressed it. In embarking on the second literature review, the integrative literature review in particular, was deployed for the additional purpose that this research may hopefully bring fresh theoretical perspectives to the boys' academic underachievement debate and our understanding of its causes in the Caribbean, and by extension, the TCI. Writing on integrative literature reviews, Torracco (2016) opines:

The integrative literature review is a distinctive form of research that generates new knowledge about the topic reviewed. It reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated (p.404)

Snyder(2019) agrees, adding that:

By integrating findings and perspectives from many empirical findings, a literature review can address research questions with a power that no single study has (p.333)

Furthermore, the second literature review enabled me not only to gather historical data but to analyse them in the context of the historical, social and political background to the boys' academic experience in TCI. In so doing, it helped to root out aspects of the causal discourses that informed the current institutional framing of the boys' identities and concomitant stereotyping.

3.4.8 Choice and Rationale for the Sources, and Details of the Literature Reviewed

Underpinned by the research question 5, the integrative literature review involved firstly, the identification or search for relevant literature materials (sources) on slavery and colonialism in TCI (and the wider Caribbean) and their effect. The rationale for the choice of the literature / category or representative of the literature reviewed has been explained and summarized in **Table 11** below, followed by the full narrative under this section.

Table 11: Summary of Literature Sources and rationale for their choice

LITERATURE SOURCE	RATIONALE
<p>TCI National Museum and its Website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National and international recognition and reputation as a repository for unique historical materials on Trans-Atlantic Slave trade and slavery in TCI. - Site of presentation of the first data collected for the UNESCO/WTO Joint Caribbean Programme of Cultural Tourism on the Slave Route. - has the records of shipwrecks of Slave-bearing ships off the coast of TCI- namely, the Esperenza in 1837 with 320 African Slaves, and The Trouvadore in 1841, laden with 193 Slaves.
<p><i>Slave History in the Turks and Caicos Islands</i> (Sadler, 2004) - also a publication of the TCI National Museum Foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speaks to the history of slavery and colonialism in the TCI; - documents slave history in the Island of Grand Turk, where the study population of this research, resides. - re-captures the widely published personal narrative of Mary Prince - a slave salt-worker in Grand Turk for 10 years
<p>TCI Indigenous Publication</p> <p><i>The History of the Turks and Caicos Islands</i> (Mills, 2008)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speaks to the history of slavery and colonialism in the TCI and the Caribbean; - documents slave history in the Island of Grand Turk, where the study population of this research, resides; - authored by TCI indigenous scholar who seems to have given his accounts from indigenous perspectives
<p>Caribbean Publication</p> <p><i>From Columbus to Castro - The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969</i> (Williams, 1970)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speaks to the history of slavery and colonialism in the Caribbean - authored by Caribbean indigenous scholar who seems to have given his accounts from indigenous perspectives.
<p>Other Literature on slavery and colonialism and their legacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work on slavery and colonialism for their independence, authenticity, scholarship and relevance to my research.

In identifying or searching for literature, my starting point was a visit to the TCI National Museum (the Museum) and the TCI National Library. A cover letter (Appendix 12), which introduced the researcher and the purpose of research, was presented to the Curator of the Museum, and the national Librarian respectively.

(a) *The Museum – its publications and website*

The search for materials on colonialism and slavery at the Museum found one important publication – *Slave History in the Turks and Caicos Islands* (Sadler, 2004) published by the Turks and Caicos National Museum Foundation. This publication is significant in two ways: firstly, it speaks about TCI slave history, especially in the TCI capital Island of Grand Turk, where the study population of this research, resides. Secondly, it re-captures the personal narrative of Mary Prince - a slave from Bermuda who raked salt as slave in Grand Turk for 10 years. She was later sold to several slave masters, until she ended up as a domestic servant in England in 1828 where slavery at the time had become illegal. From England, she was able to give the widely published narrative of her slave life in Bermuda and TCI. See for example, Ferguson's (1996) *History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*; Gates' (1987), *History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave in Classic Slave Narratives*. Besides this publication, I also searched the Museum websites from which I obtained substantial historical data on slavery and colonialism relevant to the Caribbean and TCI.

The choice of the Museum (its publications and website) as data source is based on the fact that, it is nationally and internationally recognized as a repository of unique historical materials on Trans-Atlantic Slave trade, and slavery in TCI. For example, in October 2001, the Museum was used to present the first data collected for the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Trade Organization (WTO), joint Caribbean Programme of Cultural Tourism on the Slave Route. This presentation was made at the 13th Annual General Meeting of the Museum Associations of the Caribbean held at the TCI Museum in 2001 (Sadler, 2004). The Museum also has the records of two important shipwrecks of slave-bearing ships off the coast of TCI - namely, *the Esperenza* in 1837 with 320 African Slaves, and *The Trouvadore* in 1841, laden with 193 Slaves (Sadler, 2004).

(b) The TCI National Library and Indigenous Literature

From the TCI National Library, I searched out two historical literature relevant to slavery and colonialism in TCI and the Caribbean – the first is *The History of the Turks and Caicos Islands*, edited by a well-known TCI scholar, Dr. Carlton Mills, a former Deputy Principal of the TCI Community College and former Minister of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture. The second historical publication is *From Columbus to Castro -The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969* by Eric Williams - a former University Lecturer and former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Besides other historical information which these publications contain, they also narrated the slave history in the Caribbean and the TCI. Moreover, they are authored by Caribbean scholars who seem to have given their accounts from indigenous Caribbean perspectives.

(c) Other Literature on Slavery and Colonialism and their connection with BAU

My initial acquaintance with academic literature on slavery and colonialism came by two main ways, and in the course of my participation in this Doctor of Education (Ed.D) programme. The first was the reading materials (academic Journals) I searched out from the reading list made available to students for the week-end School. The second way was through the 6000 - word written assignments. Two reading materials in particular are worthy of note and impactful. They are Hook (2004a) *Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, 'Psychopolitics and critical psychology'* and Hook (2004b) *Fanon and the psychoanalysis of racism*. These materials opened me to the world of post-colonial academics and scholars, their work and perspectives including the following: Frantz Fanon (and his critical psychological concept of Psychopolitics), his works (*Wretched of the Earth; Black Skin, White Masks*); Smith's (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research with Indigenous Peoples*; Nandy's (2009) *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*; Steve Biko's (1978) *I write what I Like. A selection of his Writings*, among others. The theoretical framework of this research (discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.5) was heavily influenced by my acquaintance and engagement with these post-colonial work.

My further familiarity with literature on slavery and colonialism and their connection with boys' academic underachievement, came as I grappled with one of the Ed.D

Programme assignments, namely: Otuonye (2016a) *Psychology and Education: A review and critical reflection on the contribution of psychoanalytical theory, critical psychology or post-colonial theory on boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)*. Working on this essay required my searching for terms and phrases such as 'boys' academic underachievement' 'boys' education' 'critical psychology' 'masculinity' 'psychoanalysis of boys' academic underachievement', etc. My primary data base was University of Sheffield Library. Consistent with my Supervisor's guidance, I searched more of Journals than books. By the time I completed this assignment, I was exposed to several academic literature and research findings that enabled me to engage in the boys' academic underachievement debate from the perspectives of the psychoanalysts, post-colonial theorists and Franz Fanon's critical psychology concept, which Hook (2004a) calls 'psycho-political'. These perspectives sensitized me on the need to begin to look beyond the Caribbean (and TCI) boys for their academic failings; to focus on the social, political and historical forces like slavery, colonialism, racism and stereotyping, and the psychological effect of these on the black male. In addition, I began to query a society which Goodley (2011) calls a 'disabling society and ableist culture' (p.724) that blame and pathologize the boys for their academic failings. In this regard, I read and engaged with the academic works, among others, of: Cobbett and Younger (2012); Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2012); Goodley (2011); Graham (2011); Zyngier (2009); Pascoe (2007); Connell and Messerschmidt (2005); Hook 2004a); Hook (2004b); Frosh et al. (2003); Miller (1986); Pattman et al. (1998); Frosh (1994); Fanon (1993); Phoenix (1990), and others.

(d) The Breakthrough Literature

In the specific context of my research question 5 and the connection between long historical event like slavery and boys' academic underachievement, I made a breakthrough in my literature search this way: While trying to purchase online, Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* from Amazon, a literature popped up, namely: Gibson's (2006) *A Lesson Before Leaving: The Psycho-historical Impact of Enslavement. White Supremacy, Learned Helplessness on Black Fatherhood in America*. It was recommended in Amazon as a literature bought by persons who also bought Franz Fanon's work. It was available only online as a 'tree-free book' and on CD. I was especially drawn to its preface where he asked a question his writing sought to answer:

What would make me not abandon my son the same way my father abandoned me? In the hope of finding an answer, I began rewording the question: What psychohistorical forces made my father and so many black fathers abandon their Children? I ultimately realized the answer: Learned helplessness regarding both Black manhood and fatherhood deliberately taught the Black man since enslavement via the historically oppressive reality of white supremacy. (p.1)

I bought this literature, read and digested it. In it, Gibson (2006) makes what I think is a powerful and historically-backed connection between slavery and its induced learned helplessness and resultant paternal - abandonment among the enslaved Black African Men who ended up in the plantations in America and the Caribbean. I also searched Gibson (2006) references and found several other scholars like Dr. Daniel Black. In his *“Dismantling Black Manhood - an historical and literally analysis of the legacy of Slavery”*, Black (1997) gives a graphical picture of the dismantling of the manhood of the black African man, through the horrific dehumanizing treatment he suffered from his captors at the West African Coast, through the ‘middle passage’ and unto the slave plantations; I also found Azibo (2011), who makes a case for reparative justice for the mental and psychological damage slavery would have caused its African American victims. There were also referenced, the works of black psychiatrists like Grier and Cobbs (1968) who posit a psychological continuum of the pathology associated with the black father of today, as coming generationally from his enslaved forbears ravaged by slavery. I found and read a critical piece of writing by William (2015) who describes the effect of slavery on the African American Families. She referenced one of America’s most influential (and somewhat controversial) report on the legacy of slavery, namely, the Moynihan’s (1965) *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action*. This report researched and written by Patrick Moynihan, a United States former Senator, and then Secretary of Labour, squarely blamed the disorganization of the negro families on slavery’s “three centuries of sometimes unimaginable mistreatment...” meted to the enslaved negro families in the Unites States, (p.1). Moynihan’s (1965) report also referenced and appeared to have been influenced by other prior influential work on the legacies of slavery, including Frazer (1950) who also wrote on African American families and the ‘desertion’ by their fathers as responsible for the disorganisation of negro families; Pettigrew (1964) who concluded that the absence of fathers arising from slavery, led to the establishment of matrifocal (mother-centred) families; Younger (1964) who confirmed the fact that the mothers perpetuated the mother-centeredness families by

preferring the training of their daughters than their boys, if given the choice. It was also fascinating to note and read aspects of the referenced personal slave narratives of the former slaves themselves, like Frederick Douglas (1855) and Jacobs (1861).

Since the research question 5 focused on the Caribbean and the TCI, I searched the Library of the Caribbean premier University - the University of the West Indies (UWI) and made enquiries from colleague-teachers who are alumni of UWI. From the search and enquiries, I sourced, among others, an important publication of the University's Institute of Social and Economic Research called *Social and Economic Studies*. Under its Vol. 35, No 3, September 1986 edition titled *Women in the Caribbean (Part II)*, Caribbean academic editors like Safa (1986) made strong contribution on the prevalence of single-female homes and the economic independence of Caribbean woman as legacies of plantation slavery. Among other authors, she referenced Massiah (1986) who researched and reported on the issue for the UNESCO. Greenwood et al. (2003) complemented their work, noting that:

West Indian families were matrifocal... the mother often took the place assumed by the father in Western and West African societies. This had begun during slavery and social forces after emancipation encouraged its continuation. (p.146)

'Absence of fathers' or 'absentee fathers' are some of the phrases I also searched because, it was identified by the 3 research data sources of *Interviews, Peer Dialogue and Focus Group* as a major cause of BAU in TCI. Several literature and materials popped up, but I was more focused on 'absentee fathers' as a legacy of slavery and its implications, if any, on Caribbean boys' academic performance. Besides the academic and research works and reports mentioned earlier like Gibson (2006); Moynihan (1965); Frazer (1950); Grier and Cobbs (1986), I found and read the work by Wood and Brownhill (2018) who write in the context of British families in the UK. They advocate "replacement fathers" or "surrogate fathers" in the absence of biological fathers, to remedy what they called "ignored form of deprivation, damaging to children's social and mental development" (p.173). As I was about to submit my final draft Thesis, I read and sought out for a new publication of Leo Lightbourne, a TCI Islander and a psychology graduate of the University of Buckingham. Mr Lightbourne unreservedly shared his life story without a father in an excerpt of his new online book then expected to be published online by Amazon on 23 September 2019.

3.4.9 Review of the Literature

The actual literature review involved many aspects of what has been discussed in the preceding section. The purpose of the second literature review was first identified, namely, to assist in addressing the research question 5 of this study. In so doing, it is also hopefully expected that new or fresh theoretical perspectives that explain or provide better understanding of causes of BAU may be generated. The source and choice of the literature as well as the rationale for the choice was underpinned by the research question. Thus, relevant historical data on slavery and colonialism in TCI was obtained from the TCI National Museum (and its publications and website). Secondly, complementary data on slavery in the Caribbean and TCI were obtained from indigenous work of literature on historical narratives of slavery and colonialism, among other content from the sources aforementioned.

In addition, the research benefited from University of Sheffield Ed.D Programme that afforded opportunities to access relevant literature that discussed slavery, colonialism, racism, stereotyping and their psychologically damaging and lasting legacies on the African Caribbean and African American families. The literature considered to be important were read in full, while the abstract or some highlighted portion of the literature that seemed supportive but less relevant were also read.

(a) Literature with contrary views

The search for literature was initially more focussed on the literature that tend to support the reality of slavery, colonialism and their damaging legacies. This included absentee fathers and its implications on boys' academic performance. However, with my supervisor's guidance, I began searching also for literature with contrary views. There were several literature materials on the reality of slavery and colonialism and their legacies. But there were also contestations on the moral, legal, economic and religious justifications for their existence. In his book "*From Columbus to Castro - The History of the Caribbean*", Eric Williams (1970) articulated and reviewed these contestations. Representing and positioning the perspectives of an indigenous Caribbean scholar, he titled Chapter 13 of his book "crush the Infamy!" - a reference to the evil of slavery and colonialism.

The Moynihan (1965) remains an influential but equally controversial public report of

the devastating effect of slavery on the structure of African American families, among other findings. One of the stringent critiques of the report was American Historian, Professor Herbert Gutman. In *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, Gutman (1976) attacked Moynihan's position that slavery disorganised the negro family. He argued that, on the contrary, the negro families have largely remained stable despite the most trying and frightening conditions to which they were subjected. He was of the view that Moynihan (1965) underestimated the resilient and indomitable spirit of the negro families. Fogel and Engerman's (1995) views that the slaves actually enjoyed their relationship with their slave masters were noted. They appear to be a minority but influential voice.

In relation to absence of fathers, Langa (2010) countered that "idealization of fatherhood" should not be so elevated to forget the stellar efforts and hard work of single mothers who have managed to raise successful men. On her part, Phoenix (1990) has cautioned that absence of father should not be used to pathologize black families given that previous studies on this subject may not have taken certain significant factors into account such as the reason why a father will be absent and at what age in the lives of the children, a father became absent.

(b) Integrative review

In all, the review involved pulling all the data sources together in an integrative and comparative way, critically reviewed them in terms of their recorded historical facts of slavery in the Caribbean and TCI. This exercise included reviewing the evidence of these facts and the various perspectives on the effects of slavery, first on its victims in general and specifically on boys' academic performance, etc. An example of the integration is in bringing the data and literature on slavery and its effect among African Americans and linking them up with TCI people. This was done, by establishing the fact that part of TCI indigenous population includes slaves brought from the United States of America by the Loyalists who came to TCI with their slaves and abandoned them in TCI. This is in addition to slaves shipwrecked in TCI waters who ended up in TCI. A crucial aspect of this second literature review is how the data and information presented by and in the literature were analysed. This is discussed in the section next following.

3.4.10 Analysis of the Literature

Snyder (2019) observes that “the data analysis part of an integrative or critical review is not particularly developed according to a specific standard (or) strict standard...” He opines that “...the general aim of a data analysis in an integrative review is to critically analyse and examine the literature and the main ideas and relationships of an issue”. (p.336). Accordingly, the analysis undertaken in this integrative literature review, involves an assessment and critical review of the literature firstly, of the historical facts on slavery and colonialism, how they were perpetrated, as well as their legacies and effects on the immediate victims and generations after them. Secondly, the analysis explores whether there is any relationship between these legacies and the boys’ academic underachievement in the Caribbean and by extension TCI.

In the analysis (as carried out in chapter 6), I drew on the key planks of the theoretical framework of this research, namely, psycho-political and post-colonial perspectives. Fortunately, this approach is compatible with the psycho-political thematic analytical tool deployed in this research (and discussed in detail in Sections 3.5 and 3.6 below). This tool helped me to ‘look beyond’ the surface historical facts of slavery and colonialism and into the psychological damage they inflicted on People of African Descent (PAD) especially in the Caribbean. This approach further enabled a historical journey back into West Africa from whence most of the slaves were uprooted. There is a comparative analysis of the West African patriarchal family structure (where the man’s authority is hallowed as a great provider, protector, strong husband and father) and the West Indian (Caribbean) matriarchal, single-female headed homes, where the man appears to be non-existent and his boys, like him, are expected to turn out bad. The analysis made a clear connection between absentee fathers as a legacy of slavery and its adverse effect on the academic performance of the boys who lack male or father figure to model after. Continually undertaken through psycho-political and post-colonial lenses, the analysis further enabled an appreciation of the causes of BAU from a fresh theoretical perspective that looks beyond the boys for their academic failings and sees a ‘disabling’ society that blame the boys for these failings. The analysis approach, in the end, enabled the reframing of the BAU debate question from *why are the boys failing?* to *why are we failing the boys?*

Fletchman-Smith (2011) – A Postscript Literature

The interesting work of Barbara Fletchman-Smith on the psychoanalytical perspective of slavery and its effect was graciously brought to my knowledge towards the end of this Ed.D programme. Fletchman-Smith (2011) under the heading *A Circular Situation of Persistent Trauma*, articulates the slavery-induced cyclical and continuing generational traumatic experience of African Caribbean families. She concludes with this sobering comment that:

Until there is an understanding of what happened in the past, and the father is enabled to take his rightful place alongside the mother and to keep his place there, the merry-go-round of trauma will continue to generate trouble for boys. Meanwhile, the assumed “better future” for girls is likely to turn out to be an illusion, and their supposed “sisterhood” will probably prove itself a myth (p.11)

My theoretical perspectives on slavery and its adverse and persistent psychological impact on the lives of African Caribbean families (especially their boys) are fully set out in the actual analysis carried out in Chapter 6. I am humbled that this theoretical position appears to be consistent with the theoretical perspectives that Fletchman-Smith (2011) articulates.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

This section headlines thematic analysis as the data analysis technique chosen for this research. It also gives an overview of the procedural use of this technique, setting out the following primary reasons why this technique was chosen. Firstly, Thematic Analysis technique is liberating, flexible and easy to use. This feature enables a new qualitative researcher, like me “to configure themes and interpret them as appropriate, unshackled by theoretical boundaries” (Otuonye, 2016b, p.13). This flexibility, in turn facilitated the answers to my research questions and the research objectives (Green, 2007; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Secondly, this flexibility also emboldened my use of a latent thematic analysis that “seeks a deeper interpretation” of the semantic contents of data and looks “beyond the surface meanings of participants’ responses”. (Otuonye, 2016b, p.13). In other words, latent thematic analysis adopts a constructionist view that examines or establishes a connection between the events and circumstances in the society as affecting the experiences,

interpretations and realities of participants. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this perspective, rather than “focus on the motivation and individual psychologies...”, ‘it’ seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions that enable the individual accounts that are provided” (p.85). Thirdly, the latent thematic analysis technique was used compatibly with my theoretical framework of post-colonial and psycho political. This is further discussed in section 3.6 below.

3.5.1 Forming the Themes and Sub-themes

In forming the themes and sub-themes, it was necessary to engage and be very familiar with the data. In relation to the interviews, this involved transcribing the data myself and reading the transcripts over several times. Consequently, units of texts that relate to my research aim, (Bendasolli, 2013; Johnston and Morrison, 2007), such as descriptive patterns of responses were identified. These were number coded and grouped together according to their similarity and relationship to each research question. All number codes (identified units of texts or data extracts) with similar patterns of responses and meaning were then brought together, compared further for similarity then grouped into *code names*. As each cluster of patterns (data) emerge, themes and sub-themes were generated (DeVault, 2015; Longhofer et al., 2012; Braun and Clarke, 2006). Once this process was completed with respect to the first interview transcript, it was then used to compare and code other interviews and data from other sources, including the peer dialogue texts and the second literature review texts

3.6 Reflexivity: How theoretical orientations influenced my analysis section

The theoretical framework of this research is anchored on post-colonial theory and the ‘psycho-politics of Fanon’ (Hook, 2004a). The over-view of both has earlier been given in Chapter 1 section 1.5). Hook (2004a) describes ‘psycho politics’ as Fanon’s (2008) critical theoretical concept that challenges the traditional psychology by explaining the internalised experiences of the individual in the context of socio-historical, economic, and political circumstances external to the individual and over which s/he invariably has no control. Thus, through a *psycho-political* lens, socio-political realities are analysed to reveal a deeper understanding that “human psychology is intimately linked to, and in some ways, conditioned or limited by the socio-political and historical forces of its situation...” (Ibid. 85).

Very significantly, the 'psycho-politics of Fanon' therefore works compatibly with my chosen latent thematic analysis technique. Firstly, it enabled the analysis of the data to be done both thematically and, more importantly, psycho-politically. Hence, my chosen thematic analysis technique is called Psycho-Political Thematic Analysis. It is deployed to aid the data analysis in a manner that explores deeper and beyond the surface of the data. For example, although research question 1 is themed *Stereotyping*, and the relevant data are analysed thematically, that is not all there is to the analysis. It is still necessary, through psycho-political lens, to look beyond the stereotyping and ask why the Caribbean/TCI society should assume that their boy from birth, would grow up bad. This entails looking beyond the surface responses and personalised psychology of the boy, and to examine the impact that socio-historical and political events of his lived experience, such as slavery and colonialism would have made on him or even the society that have negatively stereotyped him. The answer to this query would be found in the data and data analysis fully set out in Chapter 6, where both psycho-politics and post-colonial theoretical concepts are fully deployed. They are also deployed in the critical examination of the Turks and Caicos Islands' current policy documents on boys' education. Chapter 2 (Literature Review) equally demonstrates how my theoretical orientations influenced the critical examination and interrogations of the main theories and concepts underpinning the debate on and explanation of BAU and its causes.

3.7 Ethical Issues and Considerations

This study has employed different data collection methods, namely, interview, focus group, peer dialogue and second literature review. Each of these comes with its own ethical issues and considerations. In-depth, semi-structured, face to face interview method that probes intimate, meaning making life experiences of participants were used. Divulging these experiences may elicit uncomfortable feelings. I remained alert on the need to be sensitive, respectful and supportive, ready to employ empathic understanding skill and appropriate response to feelings (Smith and Osborn, 2008). In fact, a primary interviewee became emotional at one point during the interview and I acted accordingly, empathetically. And truly, as Thompson and Russo (2012) observe, this helps to manage the adverse effects of "unwelcome intrusion into participant's privacy" (p.35). Participants were duly informed of the voluntary nature of their participation and their rights to withdraw their participation in the research

entirely or at any point (University of Sheffield, 2013a, 2013b) and or continue later, should the participant become too overwhelmed to continue. This they can do without any consequences or loss of benefits. (Thompson and Russo, 2012; BERA, 2011; Corbin and Morse, 2003).

The practicality of this ethical issue and consideration dawned on me when my first selected interviewee did not show up at the appointed time or at all. He withdrew his participation. I was so disappointed and discouraged to the point of tears. Subsequently, I noticed his discomfort. He started avoiding me. In spite of my disappointment, I was constrained to seek him out, reassured him that he duly exercised his rights and should have no worries. Thereafter, his peace and comfort were evident; he stopped avoiding me and subsequently, would wave with a smile when in proximity. Another example was in the case of two prospective peer dialogue participants. They also withdrew their participation without any notice at all, but it was obvious they were uncomfortable. Again, I managed to reach out to them and put them at ease from their discomfort, despite my (well concealed) displeasure and frustration at their action. Consistent with Thompson and Russo's (2012) observation, I also remained alive to being "both supportive and detached at the same time, to avert the role conflict of being the researcher and counsellor in the same institution", despite the challenges this presented (Otuonye, 2016b, p.17).

The nature and content of my interview methods raised serious ethical concerns especially in securing anonymity and confidentiality of participants (BERA, 2011). Therefore, as Cohen et al. (2011) and Allmark et al. (2009) have cautioned, I also stayed consciously alert to the closer scrutiny to which my research methodologies may be subjected. This is partly due to the challenges and peculiarities of conducting the research in Grand Turk, a typical small Island environment, where familial ties are prevalent and inescapable. Grand Turk, the capital city of TCI, measures 10 by 3 1/2 miles (Arthur et al., 1989) with an approximate population of 4000, according to TCI's Strategic Planning and Policy Department, (SPPD). In this small island, 'everybody seems to know everybody'. Consequently, it was challenging ensuring protection of identity, privacy and confidentiality of participants and institution in this case.

However, as proposed in Otuonye (2016b), I endeavoured to and actually secured privacy, anonymity and confidentiality by a combination of the following steps:

- Obtaining a proper and informed consent from the participants (seven students and six adults);
- Choosing participants through sampling;
- Ensuring that the participants were neither identified by name nor by any method that would reveal their true identity, but by codes;
- Interview venues with privacy and non-threatening features were chosen by participants and in default by me;
- Interviews were conducted by me alone; tape recorded by electronic recording device (with participants' permission) and operated by me;
- Interviews were transcribed by me;
- Records of the interview are stored in my electronic storing device with a backup in a mobile device, all of which are encrypted. These are stored away in the storage device that contains my personal, sensitive and confidential information.

(Thompson and Russo, 2012; BERA, 2011; Cohen et al., 2011; Allmark et al., 2009)

Furthermore, my duties as Guidance Counsellor and community youth leader, involve some community services and professional interactions which are of common knowledge in the small community of Grand Turk. These include regular engagement with young people, students, teachers as well as home visits with parents and guardians. As Cohen et al. (2011) observe, these previous interactions, ironically, may have further ensured the anonymity of the participants. I observed that my research interaction with them did not seem to attract any unusual attention consistent with my anticipation in Otuonye (2016b).

Additionally, my active involvement with community youth work in the island tend to place me in 'loco parentis' with most young people, some of whom are my students. Over the years they have come to repose trust and confidence in me. I feared that some of the young men could be amongst those requested to participate in the research. As it happened, two of them were among the prospective participants. Cognisant of the power relations between us, I consciously exercised due care and sensitivity in my interaction with them. I was careful to avoid any undue influence over them either in the process of seeking to obtain their consent and or having obtained it, throughout the course of the research. (Otuonye, 2016b; Thompson and Russo, 2012; Corbin and Morse, 2003; Munn and Drever, 1999).

I was also presented with ethical issues during the peer dialogue method. I constantly restrained myself from influencing the speed at which the boys were responding through the blog. In the process, I ended up smiling, encouraging them and inquiring how the research was going, while in all honesty, I inwardly wanted to push them to move a little faster. Such a move would have meant taking advantage of the power relations between us and 'demanded' that they get down to work and produce results at my pace. It involved walking a very tight rope; it was a challenging but rewarding experience working with these boys.

In relation to the second literature review, I was particularly conscious of the records, from the Museum, given that some of them, by their nature, are very valuable, sensitive and highly protected, mostly as part of national heritage. Access to them are subject to certain strict procedures. In the end, the only historical book I obtained from the Museum was in fact on sale for \$10, namely, *Slave History in the Turks and Caicos Islands*. I was excited about this 'buy', because it deals directly with a critical area of my research, namely slavery and colonialism. More significantly, it narrates the story of slavery on Grand Turk, the administrative capital Island of TCI. The thought that slavery and its horrors once flourished on Grand Turk, the very soil I step on and where my research population resides, brought a sobering and mixed feeling of sadness and empathy. Firstly, for the TCI boys who are the subject of my research, and secondly, for the TCI and 'People of African Descent' in the Caribbean whose ancestors went through the horrific and 'unimaginable' ravages of slavery. With further reading of this document, and especially the 10-year horrific experience of Mary Prince as a slave in Grand Turk, the reality of this darkest period in human history came home to me. I became more sensitized to the sobering importance of my research and the contribution it would make in the efforts to enable the TCI boys live to their full potentials. I resolved to finish this research no matter the odds.

With respect to government policy and other media publications, I did not encounter any ethical issues as the TCIG policy documents are in the public domain and freely accessible on the government website. However, I preferred to request and was given copies electronically, thus ensuring I got the updated versions. The literature materials were equally available online and, in the Libraries, and were accessed and used in the usual way and duly acknowledged.

3.8 Insider's Research – My Experience

This section ends Chapter 3 (Methodology/Methods) and deals with my experience as an Insider-Researcher. It briefly reviews the academic literature on the subject of Insider's Research, examines its merits and limitations and applies them to my own experience. Using Robson's (2000) model, and in agreement with Graham (2011), I considered myself an Insider-Researcher not the least because this research was largely carried out within an institution where I have served for more than 12 years as the School Guidance Counsellor. In this position, I was also considered part of the school administration. I have an insider's prior knowledge and experience of the school policy and setting. I also have a good understanding of the academic system and the school programme enough to carry the research alongside my work schedule and that of the people involved without interrupting their school world. I know when, where and how to locate or approach a student or teacher. In fact, it is this professional and administrative knowledge and experience of the School environment and its system that revealed to me, the boys' academic failing situation. Costley et al. (2010) note this as a unique position for a researcher to study an issue in depth, in agreement with McTaggart (1991). Being closer to the problem, heightened my desire to seek for solution through this research project (Cohen et al., 2011).

The research legitimately benefited in various other ways from my Insider's position. I had easy and direct access to both teachers and students. Additionally, I remember being panic-stricken when I lost about four of the most (supposedly) promising prospective participants. Although I painstakingly selected their replacement by similar due process, it would have been a greater challenge had I been an outsider researcher. Moreover, with an already established rapport, it was easier to work with the target study population and to seek assistance from any of them, including colleagues (Costly et al., 2010). Being an 'insider', provided me with some measure of protection from certain ethical issues that would have arisen had I been an outsider. For example, the management trusted me to interview students without what Graham (2011) refers to as "issues of regulations, legislation and issues of child protection", (p.162), which may have involved police checks and clearance for an outsider who desires to work with children in a school. This would have had time and financial implications. Additionally, it would have probably led to the awkward situation of a senior member of staff sitting in during the interviews. This would

definitely have impacted the ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality that I was able to secure seamlessly as an insider researcher. My privileged insider's position, also assisted in dealing with the ethical issues related to the methodologies, of tracking and obtaining the informed consent of participants and their parents. It allowed me easier access to the comfortable and non-threatening venues for interviews, which were actually conducted in the school. Most significant was the permission granted me to use the school 'conference room' for the focus group interview, at no cost. Securing this facility would have been an almost impossibility for an outsider researcher. Being an insider- researcher also made it easier to secure permission from both the Director of Education and the school principal, to conduct research in the school and with some of the students as participants. Appendix 11 is the letter of request for this permission.

As I savour these insider's advantages, I was not oblivious to the corresponding heavy responsibilities (some of ethical nature) of ensuring that the trust reposed on me as an *insider* was not abused or misused. Accordingly, I also experienced the downsides and challenges of an insider-researcher. For example, it was difficult for me and certainly for the participants, to differentiate my research time and my official working time. Although this helped with anonymity, there were interruptions and distractions at critical times in the research. At one point, I wished I could have taken the 'research work' to somewhere else, especially my after-school-hours research interviews.

It has also been argued that with an insider researcher, the participants could be less frank or give expected or "acceptable answers for the occasion" (Barr, 1960, p.220), the likes that Cohen et al. (2011) refer to as "socially desirable response" (p.401). This is because they see the researcher every day at school, and there is the likelihood of the fear of being looked at with disdain, of being compromised or that the information they provided may be used against them. With an outsider-researcher, they may not be particularly sensitive about the personal information they give as they may not see this researcher again. These are forceful points with which I agree. However, I consider myself fortunate that the focus of my research, namely, boys' academic underachievement is as much of a concern to parents, government, and school administrators as it is to the research participants themselves. Everybody

is eager for a 'genuine' solution, including the boys themselves. The focus group members were profusely grateful for the opportunity to ventilate their passionate perspectives on the causes of boys' academic underachievement. Indeed, one of the primary interviewees, spoke of how elated he was that eventually he was given a platform to voice the views of the boys who have been wrongly stereotyped as the architect of their academic failing. I believe the participants' responses were genuine and forthright. It seems they were crying out for solution than a pretentious façade to please the researcher. Although I was mindful of the observation of Cohen et al. (2011) throughout the interview sessions, I was pleasantly surprised at their grateful disposition. I thought I should have been the one indebted to them for participating.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

(CHAPTERS 4, 5 and 6)

Introduction

This section deals with the research findings and analysis which are in turn discussed under Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The five (5) research questions are shared among and discussed under these Chapters as follows:

Chapter 4 deals with the findings and analysis with respect to 1 and 2, namely:

1. How do stereotypes associated with the problematic African-Caribbean boys become incorporated as a truth claim within educational practice?
2. How does the predominance of women in the education system affect boys' academic achievement in the TCI?

Chapter 5 covers research findings and analysis relating to research questions 3 and 4, namely:

3. How does the Caribbean construction of masculinity impact on boys' academic achievement?
4. How do boys negotiate different masculine identities in TCI cultural setting?

Chapter 6 deals with the research findings and analysis relating only to research question 5, namely:

5. How have long-past historical events such as slavery and colonialism affected boys' academic achievement in TCI?

The research embarked on data collection using four (4) data-collection techniques. These techniques have been discussed fully in Chapter 3 and are: interviews of two boys (*Interviewees*); a peer dialogue method involving another five boys, all chosen from the school population; a focus group of six adults (*FG1- FG6*) chosen from the community and lastly, a second literature review. The data collected through these techniques were coded into themes and sub-themes.

Table 12 below shows the 5 research questions, the data sources that addressed them as well as the themes and sub-themes. The Table is not intended to show frequency but serves as a quick reference to the research questions, the themes and

sub-themes, the methods used and their independent corroborative identification of the causes of BAU in TCI. The Table is immediately followed by the narratives of the findings and the data analysis. In doing so, Braun and Clarke's (2006) 'beyond the surface' or 'latent' thematic analysis technique has been deployed. This is further aided and influenced by the 'psychopolitics of Fanon' (Hook, 2004a) as well as postcolonial theory. Hence the data analysis technique deployed may be dubbed *psycho-political thematic analysis*. As discussed more fully in Chapter 3, these theoretical orientations have largely influenced the way the data analysis have been enacted in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 which now follow:

Table 12: Showing Research Questions, Themes, Sub-Themes and Data Sources (Methods)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	THEMES and SUB-THEMES	DATA SOURCES (Methods)			
		Primary Interviews	Peer Dialogue	Focus Group	Second Literature Review
1. How do stereotypes associated with the problematic African-Caribbean boys become incorporated as a truth within educational practice?	Stereotyping: <i>-Teachers' stereotype</i> <i>-Family and Community Stereotype</i> <i>-Government Stereotype</i>	✓	✓	✓	
2. How does the predominance of women in the education system affect boys' academic achievement in the TCI?	Feminised Education: <i>-Predominance of female teachers.</i> <i>-Female teachers' attitudes</i> <i>-Lack of male role models</i> <i>-Feminized pedagogy Curriculum</i>	✓	✓	✓	
3. How does the Caribbean construction of masculinity impact on boys' academic achievement?	Masculinity: Hard Male-Image Identity <i>-Male privileging</i> <i>-Resort to Physicality (Risky lifestyle) ('Positive' Physicality)</i>	✓	✓	✓	
4. How do boys negotiate different masculine identities in TCI cultural setting?	Peer Group: <i>-Need for Acceptance and Belongingness</i> <i>-Different Identity Negotiations</i>	✓	✓	✓	
5. How have long-past historical events such as slavery and colonialism affected boys' academic achievement in TCI?	Historical Past: <i>-Slavery and Colonialism</i> <i>-'Absentee fathers'</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

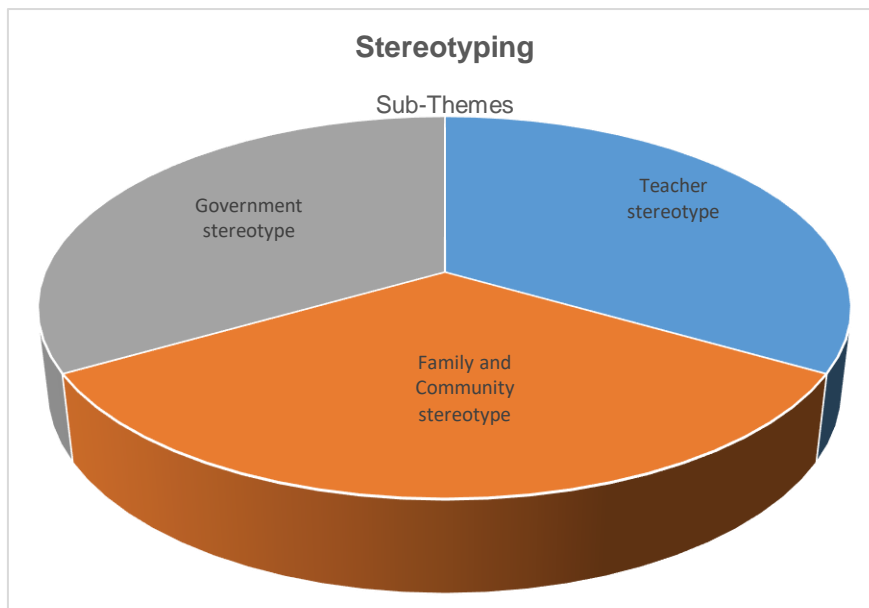
This Chapter discusses the findings and analysis of research questions 1 and 2.

4.1 Research question 1: How do stereotypes associated with the problematic African-Caribbean boys become incorporated as a truth claim within educational practice?

4.1.1 Introduction

Responses in answer to research question 1 are themed *Stereotyping* with the following sub-themes namely, *Teacher's Stereotype*, *Family and Community Stereotype* and *Government Stereotype*. The Theme and Sub-themes are represented in Figure 2 below and discussed.

Figure 2: Showing Theme and Sub-themes



Stereotype appears to arise when a group of people and their constituent members are regarded or thought of in a certain way. Schmuch and Schmuch (1975), opine that it “involves assumptions and beliefs about category of people that are assigned to every member of that category...,” (p.59) and it “becomes detrimental when we do not allow new information to change them” (p.60). They identify three types of stereotypes, which seem to be culturally embedded in our today’s society, namely, those relating to “social class, minority group - class membership, and sex” (p.60).

An important feature of stereotype, irrespective of its kind, is its ability to seem to come true as predicted or prophesied. Merton (1949 cited in Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975) called it a “self-fulfilling prophesy” (p.67). Further and confirmatory studies have been undertaken by Brophy (1983), Rubovits and Maehr (1971), Brophy and Good (1970), Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). Consequently, despite the critique of the methodical flaws in Rosenthal and Jacobson’s (1968) research on self-fulfilling prophesy, Schmuck and Schmuck (1975) believe the essence of their findings. They contend that “the power of self-fulfilling prophecy is very real to us...” (p.71). Stereotype’s ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ seems more evident in the gender academic stereotype of boys as underachievers. Hartley and Sutton (2013) note that whereas “traditional gender stereotype” may have seen men as “competent”, in control and more advantaged than women, “it is possible that boys are at the wrong end of specifically academic stereotypes that portray them as inferior students” (p.1716). Further, they opine that stereotypes become a reality or fulfilled through “stereotypes threat” which they define to occur...

when individuals’ task performance suffers as a result of their awareness that the social group they belong to is not expected to do well. In such a situation, individuals are faced with the threat of confirming a negative stereotype about one’s group and being seen or treated in terms of that stereotype. (p.1716)

This definition accords with McGee’s (2013) and underpinned by Steele (1997). Hartley and Sutton’s (2013), 3-study investigations of “stereotype threat” and its implications for boys’ academic performance, made the following empirical findings: firstly, “...that from a young age, children have become acquainted with a cultural stereotype that boys are academically inferior to girls” (p.1727); secondly that “... boys’ performance can be significantly impaired by a reminder that it is expected to be worse than girls” (p.1724). They also opine that their study (done within the UK context) has provided “a partial diagnosis of the cause of boys’ academic underachievement” (p.1730). They did not seem to claim their findings have universal applicability. However, their findings and the self-fulfilling efficacy of stereotype (especially in relation to boys’ poor conduct and academic performance), appear to have some similarity in the Caribbean as Jha et al. (2012) found in Jamaica. Figueroa (2000), writing in the context of Caribbean construction of masculinity, observes:

Much of child rearing is based on the self-fulfilling prophecy that boys will grow up bad..., the negative approaches boys face at home are often

reinforced in school. While more care may be exercised in disciplining girls, teachers who assume that boys are going to be bad are much more likely to punish them severely (p.70)

Thus, these negative stereotypes against the boys are so culturally embedded in the Caribbean (and by extension) the TCI, that they are unconsciously accepted as the truth and part of the education system. This is perhaps because the sources of the 'stereotype threat' include the community, the schools and even the government. The data and data analysis that follow remarkably bear this out, especially when viewed through psycho-political and post-colonial lens.

4.1.2 Teachers' Stereotype

Research findings have generally highlighted negative stereotype of boys by teachers (Jones and Myhill, 2004) just for their being boys (Martino et al., 2004). Sometimes, it appears to be based either on the teachers' past experience with other boys or on their expectation that the boys will neither behave well nor achieve academically (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975). These findings appear to buttress the boys' claim that teachers have negatively stereotyped them within the TCI school system. According to **Matt** (interviewee):

Teachers, they label you as a troublemaker, they think you are never serious, they really don't pay much attention to you, they feel as if you are labelled for foolishness and everything that comes out of your mouth is foolishness. When you become serious, they still take you as a joke ... they really don't care about what you do in class or in you, how our grades are looking. It seems to me that they are not interested in you.

Luk and **Jon**, (peer dialogue participants) independently concurred. **Luk**:

Teachers tend to consider that all boys are the same and if the boys do like, (make) any mistake or be a little uninterested for some reason, they really do not trust the boys anymore with work and tend to look at them differently since they believe all boys are the same from their experiences ...

Jon, asserted:

Teachers and the school administration should know that because a few boys are noisy and disruptive does not mean that all boys are bad. Stop labelling us all as the same.

The boys' responses above, seem to paint a picture of "classroom interactions" processes infested with teachers' negative gender stereotyping of the boys. (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975, p.59). The teachers see the boys as 'troublemakers';

do not expect anything better from them behaviourally and academically and so do not show any interest in the affairs of the boys. **Luk's** allusion to the fact that teachers think "all boys are the same" unfortunately, seems to be one of the primary grounds for the negative stereotype. **Jon's** appeal to authorities to 'Stop labelling us all as the same...' makes a strong point here. **Hew** (Interviewee) argues that, the teachers' prejudice against boys is "very unfair because they don't take time to understand the boys' situation before they start judging them." So, the boys are simply labelled bad by teachers, just for being boys - a culturally home-grown and negative stereotype in the Caribbean against boys (Jha et al., 2012). Figueroa (2000) acknowledges that, "Much of child rearing (in the Caribbean) is based on the self-fulfilling prophecy that boys will grow up bad." (p.70). In other words, these boys are already labelled and stereotyped as bad and unruly from infancy. Barbarin (2010) confirms this about African-American boys in the United States. But why should an African-American and African-Caribbean boy be so similarly labelled? For one thing, they appear to have similar historical antecedents rooted in slavery. As the data and the data analysis show in Chapter 6, one of the deleterious legacies of slavery is that it destroyed the manhood of the Blackman as he had known it back in the West African Society from whence, he was uprooted. Slavery also disorganized the patriarchal family structure the Blackman held together (Black, 1997). In its place was established 'Matrifocal' (mother-centred) Families (Greenwood et al., 2003; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964). In these families, it appears the Blackman's presence does not seem to matter anymore in the family scheme of things (Safa, 1986; Massiah, 1983). Sadly, it appears the boy's future is also considered hopelessly bleak (being no different from his father's) (Barbarin, 2010; Figueroa, 2000). He is thus not deserving of any meaningful investment in education (Pettigrew, 1964; Young, 1964). There appears therefore a strong inference that the negative stereotyping of boys from birth in the African-Caribbean families may well be rooted in this legacy of slavery. For it does not seem there is any such cultural negative stereotype of a West African boy. On the contrary, he is confidently expected to mature and be ushered into manhood and fatherhood with an elaborate rite of passage (Black, 1997). Psycho-politically therefore, the so called 'badness' of the boy should not be looked for in the boy, but outside of him, to an external historical event, in this case, slavery. This legacy of slavery, as discussed further below, also has implications and seems to have the explanation for Caribbean 'hyper' masculinity.

Of course, there is still the ongoing 'boys will be boys' discourse which Hartley and Sutton (2013) noted "may hinder boys in academic settings, implying that they are too ill-disciplined and inattentive to scale the same academic heights as girls" (p.1717). The 'boys will be boys' cultural proverb (together with the 'poor boys' and 'failing schools, failing boys' discourses (Epstein et al., 1998, p.7) has also been blamed for boys' unruly behaviour (Pomerantz, 2017; Turner, 2005; Epstein et al., 1998). It is a serious and pervasive form of cultural stereotype by which the Caribbean society has disabled its young men from birth. This has consequences for the boys' academic achievement as further discussed below.

Impact of the Teachers' stereotype: To the Teachers' low expectation and negative dispositions towards them, the boys have reacted in various ways. For example, **Hew** (interviewee), stated:

(Since) the teacher is not paying any attention to you so you just stay in the back, trying to be disruptive, trying to get a teacher mad because they don't really care about you... (so) the boys will try to get their revenge back at the teachers by not paying attention in class, focusing on revenge for what the teachers have done to them... We're trying to make them mad and miserable.

Luk (PDP) concurred:

Some boys... develop this 'don't care' attitude or just stay at the back of the class and try to mess with the teacher to get them irritated or mad or make them feel bad, in order to feel satisfied with themselves.

So, the boys became rebellious, noisy and disruptive in class, thus fulfilling the stereotypic prophesy that they are 'troublemakers' (Kessels and Heyder, 2015; Hartley and Sutton, 2013; McGee, 2013; Jha et al., 2012; Figueroa 2000; Brophy 1983; Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975). This reaction is also motivated by vengeance. **Matt** (interviewee), admitted that "Boys behave badly than girls... They fight plenty, they don't really pay... (*attention*), they don't really be into what the teacher is saying..." In response to the reason behind the boys' disruptive behaviour, he said it was their own way of getting back at the teachers: "because of how they are labelled, by teachers..." These attitudes speak also to the resultant lack of mutual respect between the teachers and the boys in this stereotypic milieu. A study by Mac an Ghaill (1988) reveals how, for lack of respect given to them, the black boys, became 'Rebels' and equally related to their teachers disrespectfully. The response given

when questioned by Mac an Ghail about their attitude towards their teachers was, “How can you respect ’em when they don’t respect you?” (p.104). **Matt** (interviewee) gave similar response on his teacher’s disrespectful attitude towards him in class. He said, “It makes you to rebel, ...It made me angry ...if she (teacher) asks you anything, her attitude towards you will reflect back towards her”, meaning that he exhibits a retaliatory disrespect and rudeness in return to the teacher’s rude attitude towards him. Hill-Wilkinson (2017) maintains that when teachers begin to see (label) students as ‘problematic, deviants and academic risks’, they do not give the students the respect they believe they deserve. Feeling disrespected, the students begin a life pattern of truancy from academic work just as Matt and Hew stated (Gosai, 2009). It is also a sad irony that the boys acknowledge that in their consuming pursuit for *vengeance* against the teachers for stereotyping them, their academic work suffers. **Hew** (interviewee) admitted: “It will make them do ‘bad’ in school; they don't actually do well. They are too focused on trying to get back at the teachers that they don't do their work.” **Matt** (interviewee) added:

...it affected my grades because I never used to check for the subject just because she was teaching the subject I never used to pay attention in class and she never really used to check for me, so I used to disrupt the class and I make fun of everything. If she says something in class, I will just make fun of it just to make the children laugh because I was mad at her...

Thus, it could be deduced that as a result of the teacher’s stereotypic disposition, the boys disliked the teacher, became disruptive and withdrew any form of attentiveness to the relevant teacher(s) and her subject. This is consistent with Benskin’s (1994) opinion, that, “if children feel that the schoolteachers have mistreated them, they are more likely to develop anti-school attitudes ...” (p.180). Graham (2009) seem to be in agreement with Blair (2001), Mac an Ghail (1998) and Sewell (1997) on this.

The boys further complained that the teachers’ negative stereotype shows in their bias against the boys on matters of discipline and punishment. On this issue **Matt**, stated:

The boy will be punished more than the girl. ...from personal experience. I am labelled as a talker” I talk a lot in class, a girl used to talk a lot more in class also..., they used to just call her by name and tell her to be quiet. ...but when I say something, I used to get kicked out of class and I used to do punishment like stand up or go on my knees and stuff in that class.

Gart, (PDP), corroborating **Matt**, complained about:

...teachers' sexism by only wanting to discipline the boys and leave the girls to do what they want, which makes us feel under-appreciated, so we don't try in the classroom

Their observations on biased discipline are empirically supported by research studies on Caribbean education (Jha et al., 2012; Figueroa, 2000), and other regions (Wilson, 2013). Figueroa (2000) acknowledges that the punishment for the boys "involves corporal punishment as well as verbal abuse and public humiliation." (p.70). Apparently, the girls also view the punishments meted to the boys as undeserving (Evans, 1999). Clearly, being discriminated against on matters of punishment could aggravate the frustration of stereotype threats, with which Matt and his fellow young men, are already grappling. This triggers more rebellion. Turner (2005) and Lessard et al. (2008) made the observations that historically, frustration leads to more aggression in boys than in girls. Their aggression may also stem from the frustration of and attempt to fight back for being presumptuously judged as troublesome, and perhaps as a protective mechanism against the feeling of battered self-worth and self-esteem brought about by incessant punishments before their peers (Jackson, 2002). **Hew** (interviewee), confessed that "boys behave badly based on their previous/past experiences of being condemned around their own peers." Ultimately, the boys, in large part, give in to the stereotype threat and general expectations of unruly behaviour and poor academic performance. (McGee, 2013; Gosai, 2009; Cullingford and Morrison, 1997). Hence, Allard (2004) maintains the view that boys merely respond or react to the stimulus (teachers' attitude) presented to them. His position is that, although some innate traits are inherent in them, "boys will be the boys they choose to be on the basis of the discursive position offered to them" (p.359). And herein appears to lie the destructive nature of the negative stereotype of boys: it has tended to set off and perpetuate "a vicious circle of indiscipline" which Eate et al. (2017) argue is rarely mentioned "as a possible cause of boys' poor academic achievement" (p.255). These negative stereotypes often provide the recipe for interpersonal conflicts and hostility. It also fosters a belligerent environment, in which persons and institutions concerned with teaching and learning effectively suffer loss - the teachers, students, parents, guardians, and the school system. (Huyge et al., 2015; Hartley and Sutton, 2013; McGee, 2013; Schmuch and Schmuch, 1975). In particular, the boys end up under-performing academically, thus affirming the

stereotype associated with them as underachievers (Kessels and Heyder, 2015; Hartley and Sutton, 2013; McGee, 2013; Jha et al., 2012; Gosai, 2009; Figueroa, 2000; Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975).

It is important to note that the boys' reactions to the teachers' negative stereotype have not always been 'oppositional' as may be expected. **Hew** (interviewee), explained his reaction this way:

Sometimes I'll try to make a teacher mad but, in a way, I would try to do my work and when I do good, I will show it off, to show the teachers that I don't actually need them. I know that I can actually do my work. Because since they want to give the girls all their attention and expect me to behave the same way, I tried to show the teachers that I am better off without them.

Matt (interviewee), adopted similar approach, albeit still vengefully. This was triggered by the fact that the teacher had sent him out of her class for what he thought was a reciprocal disruptive behaviour. His narrative, in part:

She told me that anytime she comes into the class that means I have to go. So anytime she comes into the class I would leave... My grade went low to about 30% because I wasn't even in the class most of the times. ...I was tired of getting bad grades. I was like okay I'm going to make her regret what she did to me. So, I surprised her for the exams. I studied hard and I got a 99% average for her subject. She was surprised...she didn't know how to confront or congratulate me. The only thing, she just was shocked.

Apparently, still holding a grudge against the young man, the teacher could not bring herself to recognise his effort or commend his achievement. This echoes Seyfried (1988) observation that "When students who were expected to do poorly do well, some teachers do not reward their success" (p.387). **Matt** (interviewee) also alluded to this when he said: "(even) when you become serious, they still take you as a joke". Thus, the stereotype here is so endemic and culturally embedded that the perception does not seem to change, even in the face of new information, warranting such a change (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1975; Rosenthal, 1973).

Nevertheless, the above positive responses from **Matt** and **Hew** to the teachers' stereotype exemplify what McGee (2013) calls "stereotype management". So, instead of bemoaning the teachers' negative attitude and stereotype, these boys react positively. They deploy "...the anxiety and stress from being negatively stereotyped ...to challenge" and motivate themselves to achieve test success "and

ultimately attempt to disprove negative stereotypes about (themselves).” (McGee, 2013, p.257).

4.1.3 *Family and Community Stereotype*

Figueroa (2000) opines that “the negative approaches boys face at home are often reinforced in school” because “much of child rearing is based on the self-fulfilling prophecy that boys will grow up bad” ... (p.70). That this cultural perception of the community against their boys may be traceable to slavery and its legacies, has been briefly discussed above and in more details in Chapter 6, below.

Bemoaning teachers’ indifferent treatment and erroneous belief that boys are failing due to their lack of interest in school, **Matt** (interviewee), noted,

Sometimes it don't really be the interest ...it could be personal problems at home or stuff that is bugging them... Sometimes, when you feel unappreciated, you don't really want to try...

Matt further expressed his family’s negative stereotype against him as follows:

In some families... like for me, I don't really get appreciated because everybody wants to look down on you when you do something bad; they say 'you are no good' and stuff like that and 'oh you ain't go do nothing', (*you are not going to amount to anything*), 'you are going to be just like your daddy' or this or that. So, it really keeps you down...So it doesn't even make any sense trying... Instead of encouraging the boys they usually talk down on the boys.

Such disparaging remarks, he noted, “keeps you down” So, it’s no use trying to work hard. So, he acts out rebelliously, lives out the label put on him, refuses to conform to discipline especially in schoolwork. This therefore smacks of a wholly false perception-induced action and reaction that has come to be incorporated at home and within educational practice as if the truth (Hartley and Sutton, 2013; Turner, 2013; Barbarin, 2010; Figueroa, 2000). **Matt** who lives with his grandmother and aunties, shared more personal experience of his family’s stereotype and nonchalance towards him: “Sometimes like when you come back from school, they don't even... (*care*), it's like you don't even live there”. Reflecting on parental care and appreciation, **Matt** noted,

In some homes, parents will question the students ...how was school, what did you do today in school? Let me see your book. Did you understand everything in school today? You have any homework; did you get any assignments?

Matt continued:

When parents tend to show interest in students, I mean interest in their children's education, that's when students tend to show more interest in their education.

Matt's observation seems to portray what Gilmore (1968) describes as an "unfavourable home circumstances with little exchange of affection ...passive indifferent family ...in which the parents paid no attention to the child's accomplishment or failures" (p.60). He considers this one of the factors contributing to underachievement. Ibtesam (2006) expresses similar view that "...motivation and parental support," (p.91) and "...parent encouragement is strongly related to improved student achievement." (p.93).

A further dialogue about Matt's academic performance runs thus:

Interviewer: How is your academic performance?

Matt: It was good, then it dropped...it became consistent on a low level.

Interviewee: Tell me why your grades went low.

Matt: 'Cos I wasn't really checking for schoolwork, I just was living in the moment, like just fitting in.

Interviewer: Hmm wow! Really! ...The boys will rather be accepted than to do their schoolwork.

Matt: Yea

It appears that in search of belongingness and acceptance lacking at home, Matt sought the company and comfort of his peers who may have distracted him academically, thereby confirming Matt's and Ibtesam's (2006) views above and that of Barbarin (2010), that "family life is an especially important predictor of school readiness and adjustment..." (p.83). It also confirms Alfieri et al. (2013) observation about the existence of "a relationship between the attitude of parent and their children" (p.2). Barbarin (2010) goes further to emphasize that "success... is highly dependent on the strength and quality of the relationships boys have with the adults in their lives." (p.85). Interestingly, **Hew** also confirms this:

The thing I'd say is that my parents they actually care for me. They actually would try to give me a little advice from time to time so I don't end up like them boys. But the boys I used to hang around, their parents didn't care about them and some of them didn't even have parents around them so they just...

Interviewer:

Some don't have parents around them? Wow...hmm...that's a great disadvantage. So, for those that have parents, why do you say you think the parents don't care about them?

Hew:

(*Vehemently*) Because their parents just didn't really, their parents don't care what they do, they could be out anytime on the streets, they could go home, and their parents wouldn't tell them nothing.

Interviewer: Interesting! So you think parents have a part to play in children's general performance?

Hew: (*assertively*) Yes ma'am, they play a big part!

Interviewer: So what is your school average score?

Hew: Hmm, I get like 79-80%

Interviewer: 79-80%! Hmm that's good. That looks like some umm sleepless night work you're doing eh? As a boy.

Hew: Yea man! Have to work hard to achieve great things

Unlike Matt, Hew has a close and supportive relationship with his parents, devoid of stereotype, hence his high grades. This agrees with Ibtisam's (2006) views that "motivation and parental support," which involves "high parental control" are "associated with higher academic achievement." (p.91). In contrast, Hew's friends' families have negatively stereotyped them as unruly and hard to tame. These parents allowed them the socio-cultural privilege of outdoor liberties devoid of parental control, at the boys' academic detriment (Figueroa, 1998; 2000).

With regard to the larger community, **Omari** (PDP), blogged: "the community pays more attention to females" and are generally care-free about the boys. **Gart** (PDP) added... "The male population should be able to have the support of the community cheering us on and boosting up our self-confidence" instead of talking down on the boys, as Matt lamented. The Focus Group members shared similar concerns. **FG3** commented:

I think society, and I mean this to no disrespect to anyone, society on a whole, for the last 10 or so years has been so interested in getting women to a particular point, that they've forgotten about the group (meaning the boys) that has been suffering.

This observation is in reference to the TCI national agenda to further the United Nations millennium goal for advancement of women. In the process of implementing

this agenda, it appeared the young men were forgotten. It took a national outcry for the Women's Desk to be changed to 'Gender Desk' to pursue more gender-balanced initiatives. Yet, the new agenda was dogged by the community's negative stereotype of young men. **FG4**, a Government official in the relevant Ministry, confessed, "I know there should've been more done (for males) ...when it transitioned from Women Desk to Gender Desk." This confession agrees with **FG3** observation above, regarding the focus on females in TCI, to the detrimental neglect of the males. Hill-Wilkinson (2017) also acknowledges "that problems facing male students do not get the same attention or solution that has been afforded other groups when found in trouble." (p.17). However, it seems some interest in the males is finally being shown lately in TCI. **FG5** discloses,

We have been focusing more on men and boys... within the last 2 years. But we need more men in the community to step up because we have done a lot of outreaches and we have not really gotten the support from the men... we had to rely on the women who came out sometimes to set up. This is the reason why I think we are losing our boys because there are not sufficient role models and everybody has to play their part: The church, the community and the government. Everyone has to work in sync if we are to effectively address the situations that our boys are facing.

This resonates with Alfieri et al. (2013) observation "...that family and socio-cultural contexts are not mutually exclusive. But rather, inextricably linked." (p.3) in the development of a child.

In conclusion, it is submitted that the negative stereotype of Caribbean boys, appears to be socially constructed, culturally embedded, family and community perpetrated, cradle-dated (Figueroa, 2000; Barbarin, 2010) but slavery-rooted (Greenwood et al., 2003; Black, 1997; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964). Unfortunately, the boys, it seems, are ironically being blamed for their failings. They are psychologically disabled by a society that takes no responsibility for its failure to enable the boys achieve to their true and full potentials. And the TCI Government seems to share in this failure as seen in the next paragraph **4.1.4**. Perhaps it is this awareness that prompted **Gart** (PDP) to challenge his fellow boys that:

...It's time for us males and the male community to change society positively and the mind-set they have towards us... Do the opposite of all the negativity people think or say to you... I encourage us as males to prove society wrong and to show them that we are young men who can achieve great things.

4.1.4 **Government Stereotype**

Analysis of some official TCI government policy documents associated with boys' education, also reveal government's stereotyping of young men as academic failures. Otuonye (2015c) undertook a critical (policy text) analysis of the TCI Government Policy on Boys' Education. The "TCI policy on boys' education" was identified in the analysis as "a one-page document found at page 62 of the Five-Year Education Plan (2013-17)" (p.6). It is 'Appendix 9' to this thesis. For purposes of this sub-theme, the relevant portion of the texts on boy's education analysed states:

Strengthening boys' education has to go beyond academic performance and address issues of why boys drop out at the higher levels of education and also those of boys' self-esteem. There is scope for private sector involvement to consider ways in which to improve the performance of boys. ...This organisation (the 100 Blackmen) looks to provide mentoring for those wishing to excel and the mentors are largely from the business community. Individual schools should look to identifying people from within their immediate community, maybe local building contractors, who have succeeded in life without actually having taken the traditional, academic route to that success ... As was also noted in this plan ...a significant number of children, many of whom will be boys, leave school without any useful certification that can be used for employment purposes. (p.62)

The above policy text encapsulates the TCI Policy on boys' education. On its face value, it seeks to identify the boys' academic problems, namely: self-esteem; not wishing to excel or follow the academic route to success and, graduating without any certification for gainful employment. It purports to proffer solutions, the principal one of which is to look outside to private sector, for mentors for those wishing to excel, and contractors or similar tradesmen to apprentice those who are not capable of following the academic route to success. I have been part of the TCI school administration and education system for the last 18 years. During this period, enquiries at the relevant Ministries, confirmed that the boys' 'problems', as identified in the policy document, were not informed by any relevant empirical research, despite its importance, as stressed by Harper et al. (2009), Dawkins and Harper (2006), Martino et al. (2004) and Walker et al. (2001). Thus, the so-called problems of the boys, (in the absence of any research), were therefore assumptions that constructed the boys as failing. Neither does the policy acknowledge any failure on the part of the education system but blamed the boys for their own failing (Otuonye, 2015c). **FG6** for example noted:

If we are really serious as a people in trying to help our youngsters, in reality we are not, because if we are truly serious, we have two major businesses

here in the TCI: construction and we have tourism and hospitality. Boys like diving, scuba diving, kite boarding. Those type of things you don't really need academics, those are the things that can attract boys, but we don't have a vocational school that deals with those things.

In fairness to the government, it appears a Caribbean Vocational Qualification programme (CVQ) was started. However, as **FG5** noted below, it did not address the real needs of the boys, as level one qualification of CVQ, obtainable at the secondary school, is of no use without level two from the local community college, where it is not offered.

I think we may be failing our students when we put in short term fixes, like the CVQ Program... We already know this from the initial start of the program, but you go into the college and ask about CVQ, no training has been done, no resources are there, no anything. So what's going to happen to these students who just get level 1 qualifications?

Thus, even if the boys' problems were a reality (unable to follow academic stream), it fell on the Government to address it, by adopting a robust and realistic remedial policy approach to boys' education as was done in Australia through their "*Boys; getting it right*" initiative, fully discussed by Weaver-Hightower (2008). On the contrary, the TCI Policy-constructed panacea for the boys' problems, was to contract out to private sector (like 100 Blackmen and local contractors) "to consider ways in which to improve the performance of boys" (p.62). This was and always will be a critical and non-transferable responsibility of the Government. Bauman (2005) surmised that in so doing, the Government essentially washes clean its hands. And this, it appears, is the result of succumbing to the seduction of 'neo-liberalism', which Otuonye (2016b; 2015c), drawing largely on Giroux (2005), describes as: ...

a political orientation that espouses minimization of 'government interventions... and reduced public expenditure on social services' and lures the government into abdicating its core responsibilities. (p.12)

The oddity of this transfer of critical responsibility, is that no meaningful follow up was pursued as evident in the dialogue with an official of the famed 100 Blackmen, below.

Interviewer:

...what have you done for the boys as '100 Blackmen' because 'You' are in the policy? Have you even implemented that part..., did you know that the 100 Blackmen are in the policy?

FG6:

No, I only knew that through you recently in the last few weeks. I do know that we have worked with the gender department, but we have just been left on our own, because we struggle and have been unable to have the resources to get other individuals or partnerships

It is evident in the above dialogue that the primary implementers of the policy were not made aware of what the policy articulates. For example, FG6 only learnt for the first time, during the planning of the Focus Group interview held in 2017, that the Education Policy of 2013 - 2017 mentioned his organization in the salvaging of the boys. Furthermore, it appears the government avoided the cost of resourcing meaningful implementation of the boys' education policy. There is nothing inherently wrong in private-public sector partnership in education. Indeed, Ball (1998) urges such a relationship with some qualifications. What is wrong and unacceptable is what Otuonye (2015c) describes as "...wholesale transfer of responsibility to the private sector in a critical area like the boys' education..." (p.13). Ultimately then, the boys and their private sector handlers, not the government, are blamed for any subsequent failure of the programme, – a situation Ball (1998) describes as contracting out "blame and responsibility" (p.215). This ambivalent but negative stereotype of the boys by a Government policy document, is clearly one of the most influential ways by which the failing boys' stereotypes have unquestionably come to be incorporated into the TCI educational system and practice and treated as if it the truth.

In conclusion, it is important to restate the backdrop to the negative stereotype of the Caribbean boys, as articulated by Figueroa (2000). He says: "Much of child rearing is based on the self-fulfilling prophecy that boys will grow up bad (and) the negative approaches boys face at home are often reinforced in school..." (p.70). But why the boys would be so negatively labelled so early in life, may be explained through psycho-political lens as traceable to slavery and its deleterious legacies of generational impact. The four research data sources independently confirm the negative stereotyping of Caribbean (TCI) boys in terms similar to the findings of Figueroa (2000) and Barbarin (2010). This is perpetrated against the boys from early age at home by family members and through the community by people; then transferred to the school and exhibited mostly by teachers; and finally, unwittingly endorsed by Government through its policy responses to boys' failings in education. The negative stereotyping of the boys, therefore, seem to have become pervasive, endemic and so culturally embedded that it has become unquestionably incorporated into the TCI educational system and practice as if it is the truth.

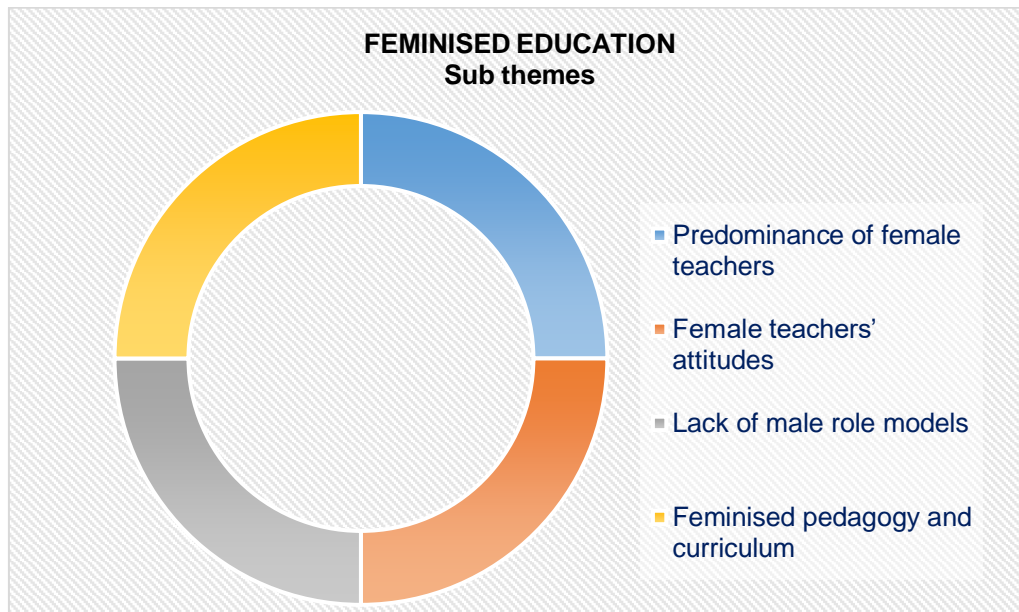
4.2 Research Question 2.

How does the predominance of women in the education system affect boys' academic achievement in the TCI?

4.2.1 Introduction

Data from the interviewees, peer dialogue participants (PDPs), focus group and the second literature review methods, identified the predominance of women in the education system as contributing to the boys' academic underachievement in TCI. These findings are supported by previous research and studies in Caribbean education and further afield (Eate et al., 2017; Jha et al., 2012, Hartnett and Lee, 2003; Miller, 1986). The data are broadly themed '*Feminised Education*' with the following sub-themes: *Pre-dominance of female teachers; female teachers' attitudes; lack of male role models; and 'feminised' pedagogy and curriculum.* According to Jha et al. (2012), feminised education refers to the "feminisation of the teaching force" (p.6) and the gross "under representation of male teachers in the education system..." To this, Majzub and Rais (2010) add, "...the accompanying female characteristics which colour classroom climate and interactions with boys" (p.686). Drawing on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition, Jha et al. (2012), considered that an education system with a teaching force above 70% female is "highly feminised" and "50 to 70 percent as low to medium feminised" (p.6). Caribbean research statistics undoubtedly bring most of the Caribbean education systems within this definition. As noted in Chapter 2 (Literature Review), Miller (1986) theorizes that the Caribbean education system is highly feminised due to the marginalization of men by some powerful men that decided to educate women at the expense of the men. Similarly, the TCI Government statistics (in Table 3, Chapter 2) demonstrate a female-dominated teaching force. 'Feminised education' could also be understood in pedagogical terms where, for example, the curriculum, teaching methods and styles or even the education policy, itself are considered 'feminised' (Eate et al., 2017; Griffiths, 2006; Turner 2005). Also included in the term is the outnumbering of boys by the female students, especially at the upper secondary and tertiary levels (Jha et al., 2012; Plummer, 2007; Parry, 1997; Figueroa (2004; 2000; 1998). The TCI Government statistics (Tables 1 and 2, Chapter 2) again demonstrate this glaring gender imbalance. 'Feminised education' in this broad sense, has been adopted in formulating the Theme and Sub-themes shown in Figure 3 and their analysis that follow.

Figure 3: Showing Theme: Feminised Education and Sub-themes



4.2.2 Predominance of female teachers.

The participants' accounts on predominance of female teachers begin with **Jon** (PDP) who said:

We cannot lie, teaching is becoming more a feminine profession and many schools lack many male teachers especially at the lower schools like kindergarten and primary where female teachers dominate.

FG5 (Focus Group) confessed that he grew up amidst only women (mother, grandmother, sisters and aunties). He eventually became a teacher and, at some point, was the only male teacher out of 22 teaching staff. In his words:

I thought about it..., growing up, in primary school, I can't remember having any male teachers aside ...my grade 4 teacher. I can't remember having any male principals, always females, I'm going to church, always females, I'm in my house it's always females.

Matt, (interviewee) in apparent frustration said:

But there are too many females in the homes, too many females at school, too many females, they got females all about...

TCI Government statistics set out earlier (in Table 3, Chapter 2,) strongly corroborate the participants' claim especially on predominance of women in education. Griffiths (2006) may argue that this was a misplaced outcry because, according to her, the predominance of female teachers is being exaggerated. With due respect, this argument is however not sustainable in TCI given the government statistics. The question is, what are the implications of this phenomenon on boys' academic

achievement? Firstly, Jha et al. (2012), agreeing with West (2002), opine that “the overwhelming presence of women makes boys think that only women teach”. (p.7). And in the context of Caribbean construction of Masculinity, this perception causes boys to regard education as a feminine venture and consequently shun education as something no real man would want to pursue (Plummer, 2007). This perception appears also to inform their rebellious disposition towards female authority figures in School. For instance, **Omari** (PDP) noted that “there are males (boys) who feel that female teachers should not tell them what to do.” Secondly, it appears the boys connect better with the male teachers as **Hew** (interviewee) confessed:

We would like more male teachers; the boys will feel like the male teachers inspire them to do their work by being role models and the male teachers understand the males better because the male teachers used to be like them...

Luk (PDP) also advocated for male teachers because they will “...relate to the boys and inspire them in their academics...” **Jon** and **Gart** (PDPs) agreed. **Matt** (interviewee) raised an interesting point about the absence of male Guidance Counsellors because the boys, sometimes “would rather ... talk to a male guidance counsellor.”

Incidentally, information from the history of the school and Ministry of Education, indicates that this school, (the sample population for this study) has never had a male Guidance Counsellor in its almost 100 years of its existence. Presently, of the 13 Guidance Counsellors in the Turks and Caicos Islands’ schools, only two are males. Given the predominance of female teachers, **Gart** (PDP) blogged: “this only allows male students to interact mostly with female teachers who usually find the girls ‘more easily’ to teach, rule and understand the teaching methods”. Golden (2010) observes that boys perceive education as a feminine venture, where ‘women teach, women learn,’ Jha et al. (2012) and West, (2002) agree. This perception about education is however rooted in and seen through the lens of the Caribbean construction of masculinity (discussed fully in Chapter 2) with its hegemonic variant that reifies maleness as macho, hard, strong and tough, and considers anything feminine, such as education, as anti-thetical to masculine identity (Plummer, 2007; Frosh et al., 2003; Figueroa, 2004). The research findings of Chevannes (1999), Crichlow (2004) and Parry (2004) further attest to the Caribbean boys’ perception that schooling is a ‘girl stuff’ and meddling in it is considered so effeminate as to

attract what Plummer (2007) calls “homophobic and misogynistic taboos” which undermines “the educational aspirations of boys” (p.8). When asked if he or the boys have anything against the females, **Matt** (interviewee) responded in the negative, but expressed the view that, “...women can't teach boys to be men, only men can teach boys how to be men ...women can only teach women how to be women...” There appears to be more than meets the eye in what the boys are saying, and this is discussed further in section 4.2.3 next.

4.2.3 Female teachers' attitudes

Female teachers' attitudes involve “the accompanying female characteristics which colour classroom climate and interactions with boys.” (Mazjub and Raiz, 2010, p.686). Jha et al. (2012) have noted that “it is common to indict female teachers for not knowing how to deal with boys and therefore leading to their underperformance” (p.7). This is so evident in the boys' responses on the attitude of the female teachers towards them. **Hew** (interviewee) felt that the female teachers do not understand, nor can they appreciate what the boys go through, so in the event of any slight misbehaviour, they begin to disregard, ignore and abandon the boys, whilst directing all their attention to girls. **Gart** (PDP) felt that “female teachers ...usually find the girls 'more easier' to teach, rule and understand...” His co-peer dialogue participant, **Omari's** complaint was that “teachers also need to refrain from being extremely dominant; this also makes young men frustrated”. Schmuch and Schmuch (1975) addressed this issue and the subject of harmonious classroom environment and advised teachers that:

Holding on tightly to authority and only occasionally allowing students to influence the class often leads to high dependency as well as resistance and interpersonal tension and friction... (p.80)

Teachers generally find girls more compliant while boys, seen as troublesome, tend to resist the teacher's authority in the classroom (Kessels and Heyder, 2015; Turner, 2005). Where a female teacher exhibits any autocratic tendency, it tends to breed frustration for the boys and disposes them to aggressive behaviours (Turner, 2005; Lessard et al., 2008). As noted with teacher's stereotypes, this may breed rebellion against the teacher, a dislike for her subject and other attendant behaviours, which negatively impact the boys' academic achievement. The boys' rebellion to the female teachers' so-called autocratic tendencies appears to have a deeper explanation in the context of Caribbean 'hyper' masculinity and its psycho-political underpinning.

Specifically, it tends to reveal at the classroom level, a culturally embedded masculine identity claim or pursuit that is in constant clash with anything considered to be feminine. This is further discussed at the concluding part of this section's analysis.

A common complaint by most boys was the unforgiving disposition of the female teachers. **Omari** (PDP) echoed their sentiment on the issue, when he said, "female teachers are less forgiving than the male teachers, so boys will want to be taught by males. **Matt** (interviewee) concurred:

...females usually hold grudges (*against us*). They take long to forgive; like said if we did something last week, they still hold us accountable for it in the following classes. Sometimes it takes months, sometimes it takes a whole year ... from my personal experience...

In further comparison with male teachers, **Hew**, was emphatic that:

The female teachers will easily kick you out of class for a little simple reason ...while male teachers will pull me aside and talk to me harshly 'man to man', and deal with the matter there and then and have it over with... the males will try to approach you and discipline you more, ... so that the boys could actually improve their behaviour so they can really care more about school.

There seems to be more than meets the eye in the boys' complaints against female teachers. Apparently, the reason the boys were prepared to be punished by the male teachers is because the male teachers bear no grudge nor stay embittered for a long time unlike their female counterparts. Moreover, the boys claim that male teachers understand them and connect to them better. On the surface, these complaints may well be true. However, there may also well be underlying reasons than the boys may be conscious of or willing to admit. These underlying reasons appear to be revealed in the context of the Caribbean 'hyper' masculine identity, which in turn has a deeper psycho-political explanation. For example, **Matt** (an interviewee) had earlier spoken of how the boys jealously protect their 'respect' status among their peers even at the expense of good grades and would not like to be disrespected by the female teachers before their peers.

In a related response, **Omari** (PDP), complained that the female teachers' domineering attitude frustrates the boys "because they (the boys) are at that age where they don't wish to be dominated like how they were when they were younger". Yet, **Hew (interviewee)** acknowledged that the male teachers would pull them aside

and not only talk to them “harshly man to man” but will “discipline (them) more”. It may well be then that the resentment here is not so much about the female teachers bearing grudge for too long, as it is for the boys’ feeling of humiliation when punished by a female teacher. More importantly (and as fully discussed in Chapters 2 and 6) this rebellious disposition to female authority may stem from a ‘hyper’ masculinity identity and psyche that reject every form of femininity, while asserting a ‘manliness’ that is hard and tough (Jha et al., 2012; Cobbett and Younger, 2012; Plummer, 2007; Jha and Kelleher, 2006; Parry, 1997). This ‘manliness’ or manhood, as understood in the patriarchal West African society, is never subject to a woman, but provides, protects and defends her. (Wilson, 2006; Black, 1997). Slavery destroyed this core patriarchal manly identity, replacing it with matrifocal families, due in part to paternal abandonment (Wilson, 2006; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; Younger, 1964; Frazier, 1950). In these matrifocal families, with predominant single female headed homes (Sutherland, 2011; Hickling et al., 2008; Figueroa, 2000; Parry, 1997; Safa, 1986; Massiah, 1983), the boys grow up surrounded by women and later even more women in the school (Jha et al., 2012; Golding, 2010). This appears to be the ‘beyond the surface’ context in which the boys complain about too many females’ teachers and their attitude toward them. As **Matt** acknowledges, they have nothing against female teachers per se, but “...men can only teach boys how to be men and women can only teach women how to be women...” Thus, their rebellious reaction may well be transferred aggression against a male, an authority figure, who they could neither find at home nor in the school system, to teach them how to be men. Perhaps, it is the female teachers’ sensitivity to this masculine identity dynamics that has informed some of them to simply ignore and disregard the boys in their disruptive and aggressive behaviour. Accordingly, the Caribbean (and TCI) female teacher may well find herself constantly in an invidious situation. For this and other reasons, the unwarranted blaming or pathologisation of the female teachers in these circumstances, is uncharitable and should be eschewed.

Whichever way the chips fall however, there is a likelihood of a break-down in the student-teacher relationship. There is also the likelihood of engendering ‘hostility’ or ‘alienation’ in the learning and teaching environment with implications for the boys’ academic performance. Schmuch and Schmuch (1975) opine that a classroom of “hostility and alienation” may likely breed “anxiety and discomfort...” and “...not facilitate the intellectual development of many students” (p.35). Even for the well-

meaning and hardworking female teacher, how these circumstances play out in the classroom, invariably tend to reflect as poor classroom management on her part. Hence, Jha et al. (2012) found that, in addition to blaming “female teachers of not knowing how to deal with boys”, “...the woman’s ability to maintain discipline in the classroom is also often questioned with implications for boys’ under-performance.” (p.7). In all, the boys, the other data sources, and indeed research findings, confirm that the predominance of female teachers in the education system (especially in the context of Caribbean brand of masculinity) clearly has adverse effect on the boys’ academic achievement.

4.2.4 Lack of male role models

The three human data sources strongly affirm the lack of male role models in the TCI education system and firmly believed that it is one of the causes of boys’ academic underachievement in TCI. Their views appear to be amply supported by research findings (Wood and Brownhill, 2018; Eate et al., 2017; Jones, 2008; Skelton, 2003; Harnett and Lee, 2003). The issue of male role model (or lack thereof) assumes a heightened significance in TCI (and wider Caribbean) perhaps for one major reason namely, the fact that majority of the African-Caribbean boys attend school from single-female headed families (Sutherland, 2011; Hickling et al., 2008; Figueroa, 2000; Safa, 1986; Massiah, 1983; Parry, 1997; Henriques, 1951). These are families with absent fathers and consequent lack of male role model (Wood and Brownhill, 2018; Skelton, 2003). To leave such families every day to attend schools that are also grossly lacking male role models, appears to essentially amount to ‘double jeopardy’ for the boys. Reverting to the research participants’ view about lack of male role model, and its implications for the boys’ academic performance, **Hew** (interviewee) said:

we would like more male teachers, the boys will feel like the male teachers inspire them to do their work by being role models and the male teachers understand the males better because the male teachers used to be like them...they should employ more male teachers to at least balance the school so that the boys could actually improve their behaviour; so, they can really care more about school because these male teachers will have the influence over these boys.

Gart (PDP) agreed that they are underachieving academically because of “the lack of male support in the home or in the school who can encourage them to do better,

discipline them and raise them up with right and positive morals.” Members of the Focus Group also corroborated **Gart** and his fellows. **FG2**, for example, opined that:

...the lack of role models in our communities is part of the causative fact that our boys achieve less than our girls...As soon as these young men find a role model - someone who they can look up to and respect, not family related, their whole perspective on life changes, their thinking and their attitude change...

The above participants' voices of concerns are eloquent. When examined beyond its face value, the participants are screaming out for male presence and participation in the life of the boys. The boys want more male teachers to look up to; for what Frazier (1950) described as the role “model of image of values which should shape their (boys) personalities” (p.274). They want men to look up to for answers and guidance on issues unique to the boys for which the female teachers may undeniably be incapacitated (Wood and Brownhill, 2018). **Matt**, said: “women can't teach boys to be men, only men can teach boys how to be men.” **FG3** concurred: “There are just certain things a man needs to impart to another man.” Thus, with all her good intentions and hard work, there is so much a female teacher, or a mother can impact on a boy (Wood and Brownhill, 2018; Cobb-Clark and Tekin, 2013). The Caribbean construction of Masculinity (especially as psycho-politically explained) would exacerbate the impact of lack of male teachers as role models and perpetuate the boys' perception of education as a feminine venture. **Jon** (PDP) confessed that “in all honesty, male teachers have more success on changing a boy's opinion on school and hard work”. **Hew**, shared the same view and suggested

“...they should employ more male teachers to at least balance the school ... so, they (the boys) can really care more about school because these male teachers will have the influence over these boys”.

In effect, the boys are calling for de-feminisation of the teaching force with at least a balancing number of males. If this is done, they will change their perception of education as a feminine business (Majzub and Rais, 2010; Harnett and Lee, 2003; Jacksons, 2002). Moreover, as Gosai (2009), Odih (2002) and Cullingford and Morrison (1997) found out, male role model teachers who share solid trusting relations with the boys, may be relied upon for interventions with positive impact in the academic life of the boys. The testimony of **FG5** (Focus Group) is relevant in this regard: “I can't remember having any male teachers or principals, always females

aside from my grade 4 teacher”. He later started teaching in his alma mater and continued his testimony in that context:

...I realised I was the only male teacher on the compound. So, there was a demand and a responsibility of me from the young men and the boys in the school... I had to be careful how I dressed, what I did in public, wherever I went ... because they were always watching me...One day I came to school with my shirt untucked, the young boys all told me. ‘Sir, your shirt is out of your pants.’ They were always watching...In school when it came to discipline in the classroom, the female teachers would sometimes call me to handle that situation.

For **FG5**, this was an overwhelming demand to take up the responsibility of a role model of a male teacher and he chose to be there for the boys. Eventually, virtually all the boys and most parents looked up to him as their boys’ role model in and outside the school. For those who came from homes with absent fathers (and as noted earlier, there are many of those homes), **FG5** became and played the role of what (Wood and Brownhill, 2018) call “a surrogate father” or “replacement father” (p.17). Of course, the availability of male role models is not a panacea for all the problems associated with the boys’ education. Cushman (2005) argues:

That one is expected to model particular but unspecified, male characteristics and behaviour is in itself daunting. To know you are expected to be a “father substitute” could be almost inconceivable, especially for young, single males. (p.232)

Smith (2004) observes that the role of a teacher differs from the role of a parent while Bristol (2015) questions the young male teacher’s capability or desirability for the role of a father figure. These are forceful arguments, highlighting some of the challenges of role modelling which were not lost to the Focus Group Members. For example, **FG4** noted that “...the issue is that of getting more persons who you know are ideal for certain roles”. **FG1** was more pungent, raising other interesting question as to who the ideal role model should be:

I could say too: some people would make better role models than others... (but) for a lot of the young boys, their definition of role model is different from ours... And that person probably is someone we wouldn’t consider a role model as they are not a person of integrity.

Perhaps, balancing the number of female teachers with male teachers (as advocated by the boys) may address the boys’ perception of education as a feminine venture, but it may not necessarily fill the gap for positive role models or ‘replacement fathers’ for the boys. However, the participants’ main complaint here is the acute shortage of

male teachers, which in turn, reduces to little or nil, the pool from which positive role model or appropriate 'replacement fathers' could emerge – a situation over which the boys have no control, but which negatively impacts on their academic performance.

4.2.5 *Feminised Pedagogy and curriculum*

Feminised pedagogy and curriculum would generally encompass teaching and learning styles, methods and practices. It also includes subject and other curricula activities or offerings that are geared toward meeting the needs of the girls. For example, in agreement with Leinhardt et al. (1979), Page and Rosenthal (1990) note that it was “found that primary school teachers devoted more time and instructional assistance to female students in reading” (p.128). Incidentally, **Jon** (PDP), reflected on this 'reading' as having implications for boys' academic performance:

Girls read more than boys. Reading proficiency is the basis upon which all other learning is built. When boys don't do well at reading, their performance in other school subjects suffers too. I am not saying all boys do not read but when it comes to actually facts girls read more than boys. All this is saying that if boys started reading more academically, they will perform better.

In relation to the United States, Hill-Wilkinson (2017), Lindsay and Muijs (2006) and Weins (2006) claim that the predominance of women in education, inescapably led in the 1990s, to the restructuring of curriculum and pedagogical practices to suit women. They further opine that the restructuring was to ensure the success of the increasing number of females that began dominating the education sector. In the Caribbean, education appears to have long been feminised, as Miller's (1996) *Male Marginalization* theory suggests. One of the main consequences (intended or unintended) of the feminisation initiatives, is that some pedagogical needs of boys were overlooked (Eate et al., 2017). This has prompted Martino et al. (2004) to “suggest that the 'passive' ('feminised') nature of schooling, has led to the alienation and disengagement of many boys” from school. (p.445). The research participants could not agree more, and their views are now set out and analysed below.

FG3 lamented:

We still have some teachers who are so steeped in 'chalk and talk' that they are just not reaching some children. ...for the average boy in this school, you are basically doing him a disservice if you just expect to go up there and talk. Can't run away from it. In any school in the TCI, the average 12 to 14-year-old boy, you are going to lose them. And we are losing boys to that.

The boys themselves were more emphatic. **Matt** (interviewee) insisted they want practical subjects,

...because you have to use your hands and you got to see what you're doing instead of sitting down and reading, reading all day... girls love poetry, ...they love to read story books, poetry and romantic books and reading in the literature class... boys like to work...they like to be active.

Academic studies and research have consistently confirmed these concerns. Hill-Wilkinson (2017) maintains that “curriculum today requires sitting, not doing; reading, not exploring; and passively listening, not experiencing.” (p.19). She acknowledges this is not suited for the boys, who “are not biologically built for the current school model” (p.19). Eate et al. (2017), agrees that boys are deemed active learners, who “cannot and perhaps should not, adapt to the current classroom setting and “skewed curriculum that prioritises reading and writing” (p.253). Stolzer (2008) labels it a “female way of learning” that has become the golden standard in public schools (p.82) but which has negative effect on boys’ academic performance. On the same note, **‘FG1’** remarked:

But the tactile issue, doing things and experimenting, I think that is more geared to boys. That’s what they like to do. They want to do stuff not to be reading things. They have to be involved in doing more tactical stuff.

On a similar note, Martino et al. (2004) opine that boys rather need “the tactile show me how to do something, and they’ll remember it.” (p.445). Majzub and Rais (2010) corroborating **Matt**, **FG3** and **FG1**, observe:

Boys tend to benefit from more active learning experiences. Boys prefer to learn through concrete hands-on body kinaesthetic activities while girls who excel in language ahead of boys prefer activities based upon linguistic experiences and creativity” (p.686)

Being more conversant with the school practices, **FG3** lamented that:

The material that is being disseminated is more geared towards girls and it only influences the way that young men (respond)..., they will not be as motivated as the young ladies.

Consequently, **Gart** (PDP), confessed that:

“We may find school and schoolwork to be boring and irrelevant so will not put in time for it and rather play game or sports or be with friends.”

Matt, (interviewee) added:

the male students are more attracted to practical subjects and the female students are more to the theory subject and because of the small number

of practical subjects, the females tend to do better because they dominate
(*in number*)

Luk (PDP) shares similar view but advocates for “more practical and diverse subjects
(*to de-feminise education*) so that the boys may feel more comfortable.” Also, **Hew**,
(interviewee) implored that:

The government should be more diverse, with the subjects and the different
things they teach in school because some of the things some boys wouldn't
want to do.

The data above articulate the boys' complaint of limited subject choices, their
relevance and of their being forgotten in the design and delivery of curriculum content
and pedagogical practices. Agreeably, Turner's (2005) study, for example, revealed
that students saw the curriculum to be amongst the leading causes of “truancy and
disruptive behaviour” because they found it was boring, “lacked relevance, stimulus
and variety” (p.36). On their part, Lindsay and Muijs (2006) observe that such
curriculum lacked “relevance and connectivity” to real life experience (p.321), thereby
justifying **Gart's** frustration above. Hill-Wilkinson (2017) thus concludes:

When the students feel academically supported by the teacher, and are
offered legitimate curriculum choices, their cognitive engagement goes up,
and their attendance and behaviour issues go down (p.35)

FG5 however, argues that the teaching style is more to blame than the curriculum.
He exemplifies this with his experience as a male teacher who shares a teaching
subject with a female teacher:

If we don't meet the children's needs in terms of teaching, we will lose them.
Case in point: I teach subject 'AB', and I had some boys who came because
they didn't want to do another class because of a 'particular' teacher.
However, I understood that they had a different learning strategy, so I met
them where they are. The curriculum is strictly theory based. If you don't
have a practical component that is real life that they can apply to.... Most
of my teaching time, I have to apply real life situations for the male students
so that they will be able to catch the subject, if it's a theory-based subject
...and also provide them with the hands-on experience when it comes to
teaching and learning.

This illustration agrees with Turner's (2005) observation that coupled with a positive
student-teacher relationship, “how something is taught is more important than what
is taught” (p.44). **FG5**, unlike his colleague, captured the boys' interest by applying a
learning strategy that is more amenable to the boys. It is important to note that even
pro-feminist critics like Griffiths (2006) seems to concede that the predominance of

female teachers have facilitated “practices associated with women to leak into women’s practices of teaching...” (p.403). She points out that “historically, women have used “whatever spaces are available to them within education to develop their own ways of teaching” (p.403). No wonder the research participants strongly complained that the pedagogy and curriculum administered in the TCI education system, are pervasively feminised and detrimental to the boys’ academic achievement. Unfortunately, the boys are forced to adapt to this feminised environment, and their genuine resistance to it appears to be misconstrued for rebellion and academic disability. Hence, Stolzer (2008) concludes that:

It is unlikely that institutions (i.e., schools) will be successful in their endeavour to force young males to develop according to traditional female norms, so we can, in the future, expect that even more males will be labelled behaviourally disorganised and/or learning disabled when in actuality they are following normal, historically documented male developmental trajectories. (p.82)

Chapter 5

Finding and Analysis (Contd.)

This chapter discusses the findings and analysis of data relating to research questions 3 and 4 as set out below.

5.1 Research Question 3.

How does the Caribbean construction of masculinity impact on boys' academic achievement?

Popular masculinity involves 'hardness', sporting prowess, 'coolness', casual treatment of schoolwork and being adept at 'cussing', attributes which are regulated or 'policed' in peer culture

(Frosh et al., 2003, p.3)

5.1.1 Introduction

Masculinity and its Caribbean construct have been fully discussed in Chapter 2 (Literature Review). There, the overarching point was made that Caribbean Masculinity construct reifies 'maleness as dominant, appropriate to the public sphere, technologically capable, strong and hard' (Figueroa, 2004; 1998). It is thus constructed in similar terms as its hegemonic masculinity variant. Jha et al. (2012) observe that in the Caribbean, masculinity has taken an extreme form and developed in a way that what is considered 'feminine' is not 'masculine'. As a theoretical concept, it underpins to a large extent, the BAU debate (Cobbett and Younger, 2012; Jha et al., 2012; Zyngier, 2009; Plummer, 2007).

The data collected in response to this research question, came from three data sources of interviews, peer dialogue and focus group. Themed, ***Hard Male-Image Identity***, it is demonstrated through the Sub-themes, *Male Privileging and Resort to Physicality* as shown in figure 4 below. The data and the analysis which follow, strongly confirm several research findings and studies in the Caribbean boys' education, that the Caribbean construction of masculinity is literally the bedrock of the causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Caribbean and, by extension, the TCI. These research and academic works include, Plummer's (2007) *Retreat to Physicality*; Figueroa's, (2004; 2000; 1998) and his concept of *Male Privileging* and

Miller's (1986), *Marginalization of Men*. Other studies include Jha et al. (2012), Jha and Kelleher (2006), Crichlow (2004), Brown and Chevannes (1998), Bailey et al. (1998) and Parry (1997). For example, Figueroa (2000) in agreement with Parry (1996) states that the Caribbean "hard male gender identity" brand of hegemonic masculinity, is responsible "for most of the underachievement of boys, including the lower achievement in Jamaica where the hard image is most developed" (p.71). **Jon**, (PDP) referring to 'macho' masculinity and its adverse impact on the boys' academic achievement, blogged:

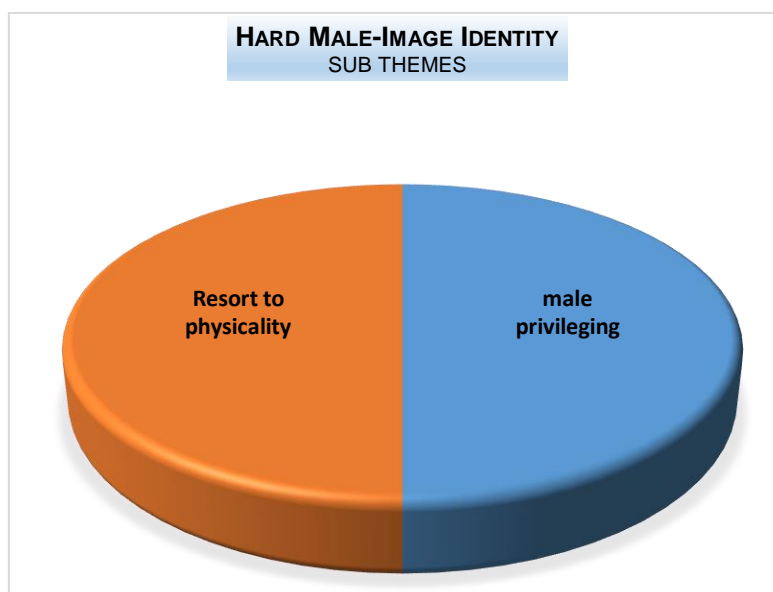
Boys believe they should be macho/strong and masculine; that schoolwork is girly, lame and suck and hard work ...this may seem common or shocking but in schools today working hard is seen as 'girly' and this could account for their poor performance academically. Many boys ...would rather be seen as macho and tough than be seen as so call 'girly' so hearing that working hard is girly, boys tend not to do so...

Jon's observation above, accords with Figueroa's (2000) findings that in the Caribbean context, "There is evidence that boys actually actively assert their maleness by resisting school..." (p.25). **Jon's** view also reinforces the notion among boys that, "getting an education is no longer something that a 'real man' would want to do" (Plummer, 2007, p.8). On this view, **Jon** is also supported by Huyge et al.(2015), Heyder and Kessels (2013) and Connell (1989). Relevant also is the observation of Jha and Kelleher (2006) that:

Conformity to 'masculine gender identity that clashes with the demands of the so called 'feminised' education emerges as the most important and common reason given to explain underperformance of boys... (p.43)

Figure 4 below shows the Theme and Sub-Themes of *Hard Male-Image Identity*, followed by more data and data analysis.

Figure 4: Showing Theme: Hard Male-Image Identity and Sub-Themes



5.1.2 Male privileging

As critically examined in Chapter 2, *Male privileging*, is conceptualized by *Figueroa (2000; 1998)* as a socio-cultural construction of masculinity in the Caribbean which allows the boys the privilege of unbridled freedom and outdoor liberties. In other words, the boys come in and go out from the house as they pleased, with little or no restrictions, and are rarely given responsibilities at home. Girls on the other hand, are kept at home, given chores and responsibilities in the course of which they learn work discipline and ‘conscientiousness’ that eventually prepare them to meet the discipline and regimentation of Caribbean education and academic success (Castello, 2009; Turner 2005; Frosh et al., 2003; Figueroa, 2000; Head, 1999). Figueroa (2000) argues that boys’ academic underachievement can best be understood and explained “... as an ironic outcome of historic male privileging...” (p.68) which effectively incapacitates the boys from meeting the demands of formal education. *Male Privileging* in TCI and its impact on the boys’ academic work, was acknowledged by **Hew** (interviewee) in these words:

The parents would let the boys go out on the streets, go do whatever they want, while the girls got to stay home to study, do chores...do their work and make sure their work is right while the boys might be out on the street having fun, playing. Then when they come home, they'll be tired. They won't really take time to do their work... because they came home late. So, they would just rush and do the work and give it just as it is.

Hew, went further to blame the parents for their laissez-faire attitude towards the boys and “not strict enough to hold their *boy* children down and force them to do their work.” **Luk** (PDP), independently made similar arguments and blogged:

Boys tend to have more freedom on roaming the streets or going out more than the girls since the parents are afraid the girls might be harmed in any way e.g. raped or get pregnant. They believe the boys are stronger, so they do not worry. Meanwhile the boys are out having fun, the girls are home maybe doing their assignments, homework, studying or even doing something constructive. So, when you look at the results the girls are the ones excelling in school.

Matt (interviewee), spoke directly on the negative impact on his schoolwork of the out-door liberties he was granted. He lamented: “when I come home in the night, I’ll be exhausted, so I go straight to sleep. I say I can start it tomorrow. I just keep putting off putting off ...procrastinating.” This agrees with **Hew**’s comments above and alludes to Turner’s (2005) “intentional withdrawal of efforts” and procrastination, which he describes as “defensive strategies” for the “rejection of academic work” (p.48). This, according to Huyge et al. (2015), leads to “less school belongingness” (p.5) and a consequent academic underachievement even as Griffiths (2006), Turner (2005) and Jackson (2002) have also noted. The focus group, most of whom are parents, agreed with the boys. One of them, **FG2**, admitted that “...as parents we don’t demand enough from the male child and that is true...” The participants’ responses clearly speak to ‘male - privileging’ in TCI and its implications for the boys’ academic performance. These responses also appear to highlight a very important issue, namely, the key role of parents (and indeed the Community) in *male privileging*. The boys do not ‘privilege’ themselves; nor do they have any control over the privileging process and its dynamics. Which is why the boys decry the liberties allowed them by the adults because it eventually works against their academic performance.

As set out in Chapter 6, these responses, perhaps unknown to the participants, reflect the slave legacy of matrifocal Negro families in the United States and the Caribbean. In these families, men, from boyhood, are considered irresponsible and of little or no significance in the family scheme of things, having been emasculated and inferiorised by colonial – backed slavery, as Moynihan, 1965 and Pettigrew, 1964 observed. This historical event destroyed the black man’s manhood as he knew it in Western African patriarchal society from whence, he was uprooted during the slavery era. In the

resultant matrifocal, largely single female-headed families, the mothers preferred the education of their girls. Young (1964) postulates that “historically, in the matriarchal Negro Society, mothers, made sure that if one of their children had a chance for higher education, the daughter was the one to pursue it...” (p.64). These findings are also reflected in the TCI Government statistics of glaring gender imbalance especially at the tertiary level of education (See: Tables 1 and 2, Chapter 2). Young (1964) concurred with Pettigrew (1964) who also noted that the Negro women “...often act to perpetuate the mother - centred pattern by taking a greater interest in their daughters than their sons...” (p.16). As argued in Chapter 2, *Male Privileging* appears to find deeper explanation through psycho-political lens. Seen from this perspective, *Male Privileging* appears to be a matrifocal society’s compensation for the manhood of the African-Caribbean male-ancestors, which slavery dismantled and destroyed. Their boys must therefore be allowed or rather ‘privileged’ to discover and reclaim this manhood from outside, although it does not seem attainable.

5.1.3 Resort to Physicality

Resort to physicality as articulated in Plummer (2007) and Plummer, Mclean and Simpson (2008), essentially seems to be an escape route by means of which the boys continue to “maintain the masculine power identity and dominance that they lost academically to the girls...” (Otuonye, 2015a, p.7). Masculinity in its unique Caribbean construct, bears the mark of its hegemonic variant that reifies maleness as macho strong, hard, tough, dominant and anti-thetical to anything feminine (Figueroa 2000, 1998; Jha and Kelleher, 2008; Jha et al., 2012). Underpinned by this construction, the boys perceive education to be effeminate, a ‘common ground’ with the girls and thus must be avoided because it is “something that (no) ‘real man’ would want to do” (Plummer, 2007, p.8). Consequently, they are constrained to seek and find acceptance within a masculinity peer group. This group invariably sets and polices certain social obligatory codes and taboos into which the boys are ‘straight jacketed’ (Cobbett and Younger, 2012)

(a) Risky Lifestyle: In this ‘physicality’ milieu, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) note that the boys invariably “engage in toxic practices” (p.840). Plummer (2007) made similar findings and noted:

Embracing hard, risk-taking, often anti-social ‘hyper-masculinities’ puts the lives of young men in danger: sexually, on the road, in the gang, and potentially in conflict with authority (p.8)

The participants' responses which follow, show the boys' retreat to physicality through risky lifestyles that have far-reaching consequences not only on their lives and their academic pursuits, but also the lives of others.

Interviewer: So how do students see boys who are rebellious and skip classes or behave bad?

Matt:

They see it as a fun thing to do... as being popular. Oh I skip this class; oh I skip that class too. But boys tend to...they call it props. They give you a respect or you give them respect for doing something, tough stuff.

Interviewer: You get respect for doing some of the bad stuff! So, in your own case now, what are the things you do to belong, to fit in?

Matt:

Ok, like say if I skip class; boys just do certain stuff just so they'll have a story to tell their friends so they can say 'boy you did that?' Boy I ain't going to lie, you hard boy! Then he'll say, "Boy you don't play" oh yes you don't play", then all the boys tend to look up to you; they respect you ...they tend to listen to you and stuff, you can come like a leader

Interviewer: You become like a leader for doing the wrong stuff? How does behaving in this manner affect your academic performance?

Matt:

Yes. You don't really check for your grades because your grades go down. Your grades are going down, going down, down ...but you tend to focus on the respect. Because you've already built a reputation, you have to try to live up to it.

In answer to similar questions, **Hew** another interviewee added:

They expect you to behave cool, strong and funny ...you make jokes ...even while the lesson is going on... So you can have more respect ...from your group...

So, by being disruptive and rebellious, the boys acquire popularity and respect from peer group just as Huyge et al. (2015) has pointed out. When asked to give example of behaviour that is 'macho' or 'strong' and 'cool', Hew disclosed involvement in some risky behaviours:

You got to be someone who comes out of the house often; you have to be out to parties ...drinking alcohol. You got to do some illegal stuff... to show them that you are 'cool and macho'...so you'll feel like you fit in and people can actually care about (pay attention to) you.

Matt agreed:

The way boys are expected to behave up here, they tend to be more macho... noisy and being rough ...and a bunch of fighting and stuff. They tend to talk to more girls. That's what being a man up here really consist of. They don't really check for schoolwork like that. They feel as if a girl wouldn't want a guy who is sitting down, quiet. They (girls) tend to like the boys who are a little baddish, like you can see 'bad'.

Matt and Hew's observations on how to 'do boy', finds support in Frosh et al. (2003).

They make the point that:

Popular masculinity involves 'hardness', sporting prowess, 'coolness', casual treatment of schoolwork and being adept at 'cussing', attributes which are regulated or 'policed' in peer culture. (p.3)

However, students engaging in the disruptive, distractive and rebellious behaviours described in the above dialogue, may not be expected to excel academically. Their bad behaviour will invariably have adverse effects on their academic achievement (Gosai, 2009; Cullingford and Morrison, 1997). Unfortunately, as Noguera (2003) has noted: "...black males often adopt behaviours that make them complicit in their own failure" (p.437). He was referring to black Americans, but it is equally true for the TCI (Caribbean) boys and confirmed by the data presented in this research. In fact, the boys themselves seem to be aware of this sad reality and have specifically acknowledged it. As their responses reveal, they engage in these unruly behaviours anyway, just to 'fit in'; to demonstrate their macho masculinity identity. When asked whether their bad behaviour impacts on their academic performance, **Hew** (interviewee) emphatically responded that:

...it will affect your academics ...if you try to belong to this group, you will have to waste time and energy trying to do what the people in the group are doing or what they expect you to do. So, we're not really focused on the school; we are focused on doing what the people in your group are doing so that they can actually acknowledge you.

Matt, concurred:

...my academic performance, it's been uphill and downhill. For now, it's been downhill 'cos I wasn't really checking for schoolwork I just was living in the moment having fun with my friends, - like doing whatever they're doing, like just fitting in...

Sharing the same view. **Jon** (PDP), added: "Boys tend to try to 'fit in with the boys' so doing what they do may make them seem 'cool'". **Omari** (another PDP) blogged "they want to fit in with those who are "cool" and try to do the things that the others are doing and in turn they neglect their schoolwork."

Huyge et al. (2015) aptly note that “these macho behaviours and attitudes worsen relationships with teachers and prevent these boys from doing well at school” (p.3). Moreover, these behaviours are consistent with the social-cultural ‘hyper-masculinity’ codes and taboos which are now socially embedded and policed by the peer group in and outside of school (Plummer, 2007). The boys who choose academics identity are subjected to homophobic and misogynistic harassments, including being ostracized as the participants admit below:

Interviewer:

What of the boys who don't do ‘these things’, how are they seen; ...if you (or any boy) act or behave differently from what they expect, what are the consequences.

Matt:

Other boys don't want to be around you. They call you names like sissy and stuff. The girls wouldn't want to talk to you because they label you as a punk or soft guy or whatever it goes

Hew:

These boys who are seen doing these things... they are left out, they are considered to be sissy, gay, faggots, punks, low lives.

Interviewer:

Ehhe! Hmm did you say sissy, faggots, gay? These are names used for...

Hew continues:

...it's not... they don't actually mean that the person is gay. They don't use it as the real term, just trying to show you that you people are not manly enough. Since you are not doing these things, they consider you to be weak. They're trying to make them feel bad. They're trying to lower their self-esteem, so they can eventually do what they are doing.

Matt, entirely agreed:

Usually they say that a sissy is someone who likes men like the same sex but sissy here means like you are ‘chicken’, you scared to do stuff; it's like, you can't do it like they be pushing you to do it by calling you the names.

Although, not expressly admitted, the responses above make allusions also to the hegemonic marginalization and subordination of what Wetherell and Edley (1999) refer to as “...alternative forms of masculinity such as ...effeminate masculinity”. They point out that: “Typically, it also involves the brutal repression of the activities of gay men and their construction as a despised ‘Other’” (p.336). In any event, the homosexual identity is considered a taboo and a despised masculine sham in the Caribbean construction of masculinity. They are a deviation from the normative

masculinity (Plummer, 2007) and hence its use, to psychologise 'effeminate boys'. Boys therefore invest in and enact hyper-masculinity for social acceptance. However, this is highly discriminatory of the gay boys who are exposed to chronic fear and anxiety from continuous efforts to cover and obliterate any signs of their homosexuality (Fields et al., 2015; Pasco, 2007; Pattman et al., 1998). The energy dissipated in doing this could have been channelled towards their academic endeavours. It seems clear then that masculinity discourse perpetuates other forms of discrimination. This is not only within the dynamics of heterosexual masculinity identity, but more so without, – against the 'despised Other' sexuality. But whatever is the form of discrimination, the victims try to do what other boys are doing to fit in (Fields et al., 2015; Renold, 2004; Phoenix et al., 2003).

Stein (2005) explains that this homophobic attack and calling of pejorative names "allows men/boys anxious about their masculinities to affirm themselves" (p.602). She argues that the boys, "confronted with contradictions in their own masculinities...project their insecurities unto others" (p.602). Her view resonates with the psychoanalytical perspective of Pattman et al., (1998) and Pascoe (2007) who assert that the boys would usually repress and reject anything feminine in them and in the society and project instead, a macho and hard masculinity identity that is a façade or cover up for their vulnerability and weakness. Stein (2005) accordingly concludes: "That is why boys police each other in playgrounds for signs of sissiness; why homosexuality has become a particularly fraught issue..." (p.602). Thus, the vulnerability of 'macho' masculine identity is often concealed, ironically by behaviour(s) that tend to show the opposite (Otuonye, 2015a; Pascoe, 2007; Phoenix, 2003; Pattman et al., 1998). And this is done "through disclaimers, irony and humour" (Korobov, 2004, p.179).

Matt further added:

...if you don't do it, it's like some boys now have a choice to make. When one boy starts calling you one name. Everybody starts to pick it up and start labelling you as one punk or sissy and whatever it is. So then when they're doing some stuff, they wouldn't tell you about it and then you feel left out and lonely. You don't have no friends, and everybody thinks you are a punk or whatever. Then you do certain stuff just to fit in

As discussed fully in Plummer (2007), it seems that the peer groups wield enormous powers and exert great influence over the boys in the enforcement of the set

masculinity taboos and codes they establish. This influence includes shaping and perpetuating new identities that feed the boys' macho masculinity ego to their detriment (Noguera, 2003). Martino et al. (2004) opines that "the role of the peer group cultures in impacting on boys at school is highlighted in terms of their risk-taking activities in order to gain recognition from their friends" (p.445). To this, Huyge et al. (2015), note that "For fear of being mocked and excluded from the peer group, most boys do not want to be seen engaging in academic work" (p.3). Graham (2011), Salisbury (1996), Salisbury and Jackson (1996) and Connell (1989) share similar view. There is therefore ample evidence that boys who display heavy attitude of macho traits and masculine identity are often opposed to school (Huyge et al., 2015; Younger et al., 2005; Jackson, 2002; Griffiths, 2006; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Connell, 1989). Hill-Wilkinson (2017), for example, points to an interesting but disturbing display of heavy macho masculine identity by the boys. She observes that "boys may even underachieve on purpose as a way to establish their masculinity and strength to their peers" (p.22). This observation confirms two earlier findings. First, by Figueroa (2004), that "There is evidence that boys actually actively assert their maleness by resisting school" (p.152). Second, by Huyge et al. (2015) that the boys believe "academic success may threaten their masculinity" (p.3).

Besides the various disruptive behaviours earlier discussed, the boys appear to demonstrate their 'maleness' in other risky forms. For example, they show off their numerous heterosexual and intimate activities with many girls, as one of the perceived benefits of their belongingness to and acceptance by the 'macho' peer group. (Huyge et al., 2015; Frosh et al., 2003; Noguera, 2003). Again, this eventually also works against their academic interests. Below are the participants' acknowledgements:

Hew (interviewee):

To be more macho and cool you know, you got to have to be 'more cool' with the girls. You got to be able to be talking to the girls.

Interviewer: Talking to the girls! What is talking to girls? I talk to girls too.

Hew: (interrupting) to have relationship with girls, different relationships.

Interviewer: What kind of relationship?

Hew: like intimate relationships with the girls, you know.

Interviewer: with girls? You mean more than one girl?

Hew: Yes. They would perceive you as a 'lover', as a 'player'.

Interviewer: Lover? ...what's the other one?

Hew: Yeah! Player. So, the more girls you have the more respect the boys will give you.

In answer to similar questions about being 'macho' and masculine, **Matt** (interviewee) affirmed:

...They tend to talk to more girls. That's what being a man up here (referring to TCI) really consist of. They don't... they don't really check for schoolwork like that...

In confirmation, Brown and Chevannes (1998) state that for these boys, "manhood is demonstrated by sexual prowess... it is actually measured ...by the number of female sexual partners." (p.23). Being faithful with one or having much less than others makes a boy to be derided as less masculine, reducing his macho status (Crichlow, 2004; Bailey et al., 1998). **Rasta** (PDP) however, confessed the adverse effect of this kind of 'relationship' on boys' academic achievement: He said:

Girlfriends distract boys a lot. They stress us out; they have our mind and emotions all messed up which causes boys not to focus, - by boys being either depressed or too busy worrying about girlfriends instead of the schoolwork.

Besides Rasta's admission that intimate relationships with girls distract the boys, demonstrating masculinity by sexual prowess, also has negative impacts on the boys' sexual health. Plummer (2007) explored the link, and posited: "gender roles drive HIV" (p.11). Fields et al. (2015) agree. They also include the risk of contracting and passing on sexually transmitted diseases, all in the name of showing off 'hyper-masculinity'. In so doing, they endanger their lives and those of others. Eate et al. (2017) have argued that it is not the presence of girls that distract boys from academic success but the boys' peculiar undesirable, risky behaviours and recalcitrance. They (as well as Griffiths, 2006), contend that these unacceptable behaviours should rather be challenged and discouraged while addressing their negative attitude towards schoolwork. Holderhead (2012) however differs, insisting that removal of female distraction will reduce boys' behavioural problems and truancy and improve the educational outcome for boys. The academic debate on this subject may rage on. However, in the TCI (Caribbean) context, 'hyper' masculinity remains a complex phenomenon underlying the boys' disposition and relationships in a school environment they perceive to be very 'feminised' and should be avoided (Plummer, 2007).

(b) Retreat to 'Positive' Physicality: It is gratifying to note that there is evidence from the data and research findings, that the boys' 'resort to physicality' does not always lead to 'toxic' or 'harmful practices. Indeed, there are examples of peer group positive and productive influences on the boys. Some of the participants explained their involvement in some sporting activities like athletics, rugby and basketball as their way of expressing their macho masculine identity instead of involvement in risky lifestyles. Involvement in sports shows that they are not soft but tough, hard and 'ideal for public sphere' (Figueroa, 2000; 1998). This is positive physicality and it is further demonstrated in the dialogue that follows:

Interviewer: So, tell me, are there other things some other boys do to try to fit in.

Hew:

Yes, there's other things they try to do. Like, they try to do Sports, other extracurricular activities just to, so they can fit in, so they can be popular.

In response to similar question, **Matt** explained:

Boys tend to go into sports... Sports is like a macho thing, like Rugby is more like a macho sport not much guys will play it, because they ain't trying to get hurt.... shows that you are masculine, that you are strong, and you can handle hits and stuff. So, people will not tend to name you a sissy because this boy plays rugby; this boy is a rough dude; he can handle stuff.

Interviewer: You say that you are always busy with sports like rugby, basketball, Cadets and after this you get so tired... too tired to study. So why do you do a sport that makes you to neglect your studies.

Matt:

I's really don't neglect studying, but it shows that you are macho. Like I said before rugby is a tough sport. You got to do some physical contact you got to tackle, slam people about, you got to run, you get to have fun, you get to shake people. It's really draining, you've got to put a lot of energy towards it. So when you play rugby it is not intentional that you neglect your studies but because you play rugby, it makes you so tired. It really doesn't make you neglect your studies.

Hew, added:

...when you do sports you get some of the popularity, people start knowing you and they look up to you. You become popular, and if you're weak and you do sports, they won't consider you to be...you know, to be a sissy, a punk. They'll consider you to be a strong person because you're always training. And you know you get popular among the opposite sex.

Ironically while resort to sports is positive, it appears to have unintended consequence of tiring the boys out, to the point of affecting their time and concentration needed for schoolwork. **Hew** also confessed that:

Sometimes I'll be distracted by the training and hard work I do in sports so sometimes instead of doing my (school) work I'll be tired, so tired that I fall asleep.

Of course, for others, it remains a way of escape from and avoidance of academic competition with girls. **Gart** (PDP), summed it up:

We find it discouraging of always being beaten by girls in exams over and over ... which is why we give up. So... we may find school and schoolwork to be boring and irrelevant so will not put in time for it and rather play game or sports or be with friends.

And **Matt** (interviewee) seems to find consolation in the fact that “even if I don't do well with my subjects, I do well in sports.” Thus, sports become a symbol of masculinity, a male preserve and considered a ‘masculinity vortex’ that can be used for intense masculine/macho identity formation (Kidd, 2013; Hardin et al., 2009; Connell, 2008). Just as **Matt** vaunted his athletic superiority above, some boys use sports as a macho defence strategy for self-worth while underachieving academically (Turner, 2005; Jackson, 2002; 2003). It is to be further noted that as a ‘patriarchal ideology’, sports, especially hard sports like rugby, football and basketball, are used to show male dominance over females (Kidd, 2013; Martin et al., 2009; Hickey, 2008). It thereby enables a cover up of their fear of competing at the same academic platform with girls (Kidd, 2013; Jackson, 2002; 2003). So, for Matt, Hew and Gart, their resort to sports, is one of their ways of yielding academic superiority to girls. But it also helps them to carve a niche in other areas like sports, through which they regain and maintain some position of dominance and superiority over the girls. Yet, others have a way of using sports to gain the better of two worlds – cover up or disguise their real interest in academic to avoid being labelled effeminate. So, they maintain the ‘hyper’-masculine sports identity that shows them off as rough, tough and even “aggressive, reckless and womanisers” (Hickey, 2008, p.156) while surreptitiously performing well academically. More of the above-described masculine identity negotiation will be discussed in the next section. It suffices to say that among the various reasons proffered to explain the academic underachievement of young men, Turner (2005) and Jackson (2002) remain of the view that the culture of ‘hyper’ masculinity or ‘macho’ behaviour, is mostly responsible. They are thereby echoing

the findings of distinguished scholars and researchers on English-speaking Caribbean boys' education like, Jha et al. (2012), Golding (2010), Plummer (2007), Crichlow (2004), Figueroa (2004; 2000), Parry (2004; 1996), Brown and Chevannes (1998), Bailey et al. (1998) among others.

5.2 Research Question 4.

How do boys negotiate the different masculine identities in TCI cultural setting?

5.2.1. Introduction

“Boys will be the boys they choose to be on the basis of the discursive position offered to them”

(Allard, 2004, p.359).

The data obtained in answer to this research question is theme-coded as *Peer Group* and the Sub-themes are: *The Need for Acceptance and Belongingness*, and *Different Identity Negotiation*.

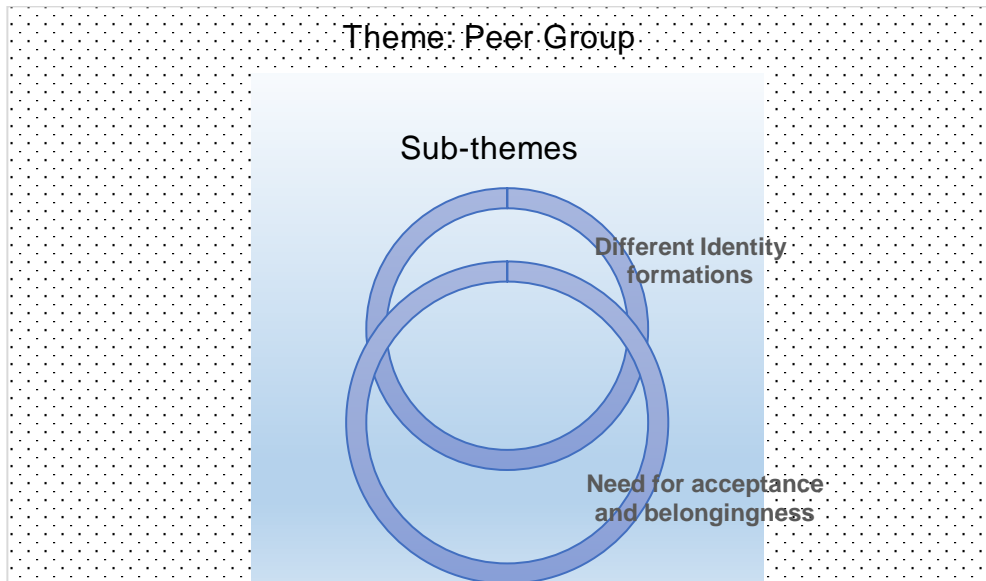
According to Turner (2005) “Different masculine identities are ‘constructed in’ different ‘social settings’” (p.45) in and outside the school, where gender roles, gender development and socialisation processes occur (Golding, 2010; Jha and Kelleher, 2006; Phoenix, 1990; Connell, 1995). Most masculine identities are constructed against Connell’s (1995) hegemonic masculinity. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) posit that “hegemonic masculinity embodied the currently most honoured way of being a man ...required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and ... ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men” (p.832). As fully discussed in Chapter 2 and first part of this Chapter 5, the Caribbean construction of masculinity mirrors Connell’s (1995) hegemonic masculinity in the sense that it appropriates and displays strong masculine characteristics, otherwise called ‘hyper’ or ‘macho’ masculine identity. According to Frosh et al. (2003), agreeing with Connell (2005), it also demonstrates “ways in which approved modes of being male are produced, supported, contested and resisted” (p.2). Masculinity takes many forms, and as Turner (2005) notes, “...boys will follow different paths to adopt different forms of masculinity” that suit them (p.46). These ‘different forms of masculinity’ are defined firstly, against hegemonic masculinity, then other hierarchy of masculinities (Turner, 2005). Connell and Messerschmitt (2005) list these masculinities as Complicit, Subordinated and Marginalised masculinities. According to Frosh et al. (2003), “masculinity exists only in relation to femininity and is constructed through everyday discourse, in various versions or masculinities” (p.2). Drawing on Connell and Messerschmidt (2005),

Turner (2005) and Frosh et al. (2003), Otuonye (2015a) surmises that "...as different challenging or subordinating circumstances arise, men/boys adopt or construct form(s) of masculinity or masculine identities that suit their essence and enable them to function at a given time" (p.4). In other words, in any given time and circumstance, the boys manipulate the "hierarchical layers of masculinity ...to forge more 'acceptable' masculinities" (Renolds, 2001, p.381). They also negotiate the prevalent or popular cultural ideologies relative to their own positioning (Pascoe, 2007; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Allard 2004; Frosh et al., 2003). This is the process of negotiating identities. By this process, the boys are able to "...accept, resist or build their own individual masculine identity according to the situation confronting them at any cultural, or normative setting at home, school and community " (Otuonye, 2015a, p.4).

As submitted earlier, masculinity, (especially its Caribbean constructed 'hegemonic' or 'hyper' variant) has serious deleterious impact on boys' academic achievement. Connell (2008) notes that it "puts pressure on all boys" (p.133) and, as Hickey (2008) agrees, "provide the basis for their bantering and identity negotiations" (p.156). These negotiations involve, for example, interplay between athletic prowess, academic and career interests, heterosexual relationships, etc. In the TCI context, it manifests in the form of athletic identity, learner or academic identity, sexual identity, the court jester identity, and the dominant hegemonic 'macho' masculine identity (Renolds, 2001).

The above theoretical discussions provide the backdrop to the data and analysis of how the boys negotiate different masculine identities in TCI which now follows. The Theme, *Peer Group* and the Sub-themes, *The Need for Acceptance and Belongingness*, and *Different Identity Negotiations* are represented in figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Showing Theme: Peer Group and Sub-Themes



The theme and sub-theme represented in figure 5 which also depict the fluidly nature of masculinity into which the boys negotiate in and out of.

5.2.2. Need for Acceptance and Belongingness

The interviewees, peer dialogue participants and the focus group all acknowledge that the desire of the boys to be accepted by and to belong to a peer group has to a large extent contributed to their academic underachievement. This view of the participants is strongly supported by previous research findings and under-pining theoretical formulations discussed in the preceding Section 5.1. We turn again to the participants.

Matt, (an interviewee) confessed that if you don't do certain 'bad' stuff to belong,

...other boys don't want to be around you; they call you names like Sissy and stuff. The girls wouldn't want to talk to you because they label you as a punk or a soft guy, ...then you feel left out and lonely, you don't have no friends, and everybody thinks you are a 'punk' or whatever. Then you do certain stuff just to fit in...you don't really check for your assignment ...

Interviewer:

"So how do students see boys who are rebellious and skip classes or behave bad"?

Matt:

They see it as a fun thing to do... as being popular. Oh I skip this class oh I skip that class too. But boys tend to...they call it props. They give you a

respect or you give them respect for doing something, tough stuff...then all the boys tend to look up to you; they respect you...they tend to listen to you and ... you come like a leader”

Hew (another interviewee) added: “they expect you to behave cool, strong and funny ...you make jokes ...even while the lesson ...is going...So you can have more respect from your group...” This is the negative peer group that sets and enforces masculinity codes and taboos which dispose the boys to perceive education as effeminate and as “something that (no) ‘real man’ would want to do” (Plummer, 2007, p.8). **Hew**, summed up the ‘cool’ and ‘macho’ attributes for acceptance by this group, even at the expense of a boy’s educational pursuit.

You got to be someone who comes out of the house often; you have to be out to parties ...drinking alcohol. You got to do some illegal stuff... to show them that you are ‘cool and macho’...so you’ll feel like you fit in and people can actually care about (pay attention to) you... (but) it will affect your academics ...if you try to belong to this group you will have to waste time and energy trying to do what the people in the group are doing or what they expect you to do. So, we’re not really focused on the school; we are focused on doing what the people in your group are doing so that they can actually acknowledge you.

5.2.3. Different Identity Negotiations

The boys, however, acknowledge that some of the peer groups through which they negotiate different masculine identities, provide a measure of protection and comfort which ironically impact well on their self-esteem and academic performance. Schmuck and Schmuck (1975) and Turner (2005) confirm that positive peer relationship fosters and enhances self-esteem and better academic performance. The dialogue with the participants below bears this out, revealing how the boys manipulate and negotiate their way through the “...hierarchy of masculinities...” (Renolds, 2001, p.377). It also shows how they “accept, resist or build their own individual masculine identity, according to the situation confronting them...at school” (Otuonye, 2015a, p.4)

(a) Disguise and avoidance:

The Interviewer went further to ask: Tell me, are there other things boys do to try to fit in?

Matt:

They join in, in the things the boys are doing, like stuff that will not label you as a Sissy and all the names they call you. They start sports. Usually sports is like a macho (thing) like rugby, because I play rugby. Rugby is more like

a Macho Sports because it's more physical contact... Shows that you are masculine that you are strong, so people will not tend to name you a sissy because this boy plays rugby; this boy is a tough, rough dude; he can handle stuff.

Hew:

Yes...they try to do sports and other extracurricular activities, so they can fit in, so they can be popular. So, people will not only say they only study, they do other things just to back up all the studying and hard work they've been doing... if you're weak and you do sports, they won't consider you to be... a sissy, a punk. They'll consider you to be a strong person because you're always training. ... I'm really active in sports. It's just that when I have to do my work, I have to leave sports aside. And I'm like always training.

In the bid to maintain an acceptable masculine status, **Hew** explains the use of sports as a protection from masculinity 'vulnerability' and to disguise their academic interest. The fear of rejection and being called homophobic names has prompted some boys to engage in sports (which is seen as 'macho') like rugby and other extra-curricular activities. These boys include those with strong academic interest; those who consider themselves 'soft and weak', and those whose homosexual leanings have been brutally repressed (Wetherell and Edley, 1999). Since schooling and doing well academically are considered 'girly stuff', identification with schoolwork renders a boy 'feminine', 'gay', 'sissy'-- a subordinated masculinity that will get him marginalised in the peer group. This presents a challenge, demanding an adoption of a new masculine identity that will suit his 'essence' at the moment.

In relation to homosexuality, Fields et al. (2015) further note "the gender role strain" and psychological distress "arising from the conflict between homosexuality and cultural conceptions of masculinity among Black men" (p.122). Thus, hyper-masculinity is linked with heterosexism; it repudiates and denigrates females and homosexuals (Nylund, 2004).The boy negotiates this by manipulating the "contradictory 'layers' within the hierarchy of masculinities which produced him as 'sissy'" (Renolds, 2001, p.377). He then adopts a more acceptable, status-enhancing masculinity, the macho athletic identity. Renolds (2001) refers to this as "joining the opposition: negotiating from 'sissy' to 'star'" (p.377). Thus, sports, as a hard masculinity, gives him a chance to exhibit hegemonic masculinity through athletics, while secretly or overtly maintaining either academic interest or sustaining undercover his homosexual orientation. This is known as 'disguise and avoidance' (Renold, 2001) in the negotiation process. It enables boys like Hew to use sports to

'disguise', for example, their academic interest and 'avoid' homophobic attacks at the outset (Otuonye, 2015a; Jackson and Dempster, 2009; Renolds, 2001; Connell, 1995). In so doing, they simultaneously achieve and maintain both an athletic (macho masculine) identity and an academic (subordinated masculine) identity. The dialogue with the boys below, provide more examples of 'disguise and avoidance' identity negotiations.

Interviewer: What do some boys do to avoid being called these (*derogatory*) names?

Matt:

...one of my friends named K...will be a part of the jokes and name-calling and fun and trouble but not really serious. When all the fighting and the serious trouble comes, he tends to back off, away from it and he tends to go in his own little corner. He doesn't want to be labelled as bad, he doesn't want to damage his character, but he still hangs with the bad guys and whatever, just to fit in...

Interviewer: (laughs)...just to fit in ...and how is his schoolwork?

Matt: His school work! He's acing his class. He's topping up his grades and whatever.

Interviewer: Really! So, you're trying to say that he does his work and uses the group to cover up and not to be called those names, eh.

Matt: Yes.

In a different interview session, the interviewer asked **Hew:** What do 'You' do in order to belong or not to belong?

Hew:

For me, I'll be right there and joking around even though I know that there is a limit to what I can do. You can find me joking around doing some of these things but when I go home, I go and study and do my work. I'll do some of these things just to fit in ...I just don't want to be considered as faggot or gay, sissy and all those words.

Interviewer: I remember you did mention that you are doing well in school, so what is your school average scores?

Hew: Hmm, I get like 79-80%. Yea man, I have to work hard to achieve great things.

Interviewer:

79-80%, hmm that's good. In the midst of all the boys..., how do you achieve that grade? Because you told me that you play around with them, then you go about doing something else.

Hew:

Well, that's really hard for somebody like me. You have to have commitment and perseverance, because to try both tasks, both things₁ is

very difficult but you know you got to do it. To have the time to play is not a bad thing, you need to play and study your work.

These instances of 'disguise and avoidance' are consistent with Connell's (1995) "concept of layering" (p.210), where boys appear to display what Renolds (2001) describes as "a seamless, coherent and consistent masculinity while underneath they are involved in an on-going struggle to negotiate classroom and playground hierarchies" (p.381). In this case, Hew and Matt's friend K, are again adopting strategies to avoid being perceived as 'gay' or non-masculine/feminine identities. They joined the flow, joking around with other boys while playing down on their academic success or probably portraying their success as failures. In the process, they bring in unwelcome 'outside' behaviours into the classroom. This, for example, includes teasing and bullying others (Renolds, 2001), whom they secretly know share the same academic interests or who are not hegemonically positioned. By so doing, they strive to attain male dominance as a defence mechanism by projecting their own feeling of lack and weakness unto others (Pattman et al., 1998; Otuonye, 2015a).

There appears to be social, emotional, psychological and physical energies and efforts involved in constantly negotiating this fluid, fragile and contradictory masculinities. Matt confessed that "sometimes it is confusing trying to do these two things at the same time"; trying to be macho, to belong and do academic work at the same time. Hew said that trying "...both tasks... is very difficult but you know you got to do it..." In other words, the boys try to juggle through the identities while maintaining what Pattman et al. (1998) describe as "a masculinity identity that must always remain tough, hard and active." (p.113). This resonates with Wetherell and Edley's (1999) observation that "hegemony is not automatic, however, but involves contest and constant struggle." (p.336)

(b) Negotiating Peer Influence

"Men's identity strategies are constituted through their complicit or resistant stance to prescribed dominant masculine styles."

(Wetherell and Edley, 1999, p.335)

Like Hew, Matt's friend, K, shared camaraderie with a so-called 'negative' masculinity peer group, but still 'aces his classes and is at the top of his grades...' Thus, he studies hard, excels academically, but uses the peer group as cover up to 'avoid' being called homophobic names for his academic success. Another dimension is K's

bold withdrawal from the coveted 'macho' group, to a subordinate masculinity in the face of trouble; 'he withdraws to his corner', so as not to taint his character, due to his association with the masculinity peer group, an action that should earn him pejorative names, but it did not. This squarely fits with Reynolds' (2001) analogy of how "one boy's acute awareness of how the hierarchical layers of masculinity can be so manipulated to forge more 'acceptable' masculinities" (p.381). Turner (2005) makes similar observation that, "...boys will follow different paths to adopt different forms of masculinity" that suit them (p.46). It seems then that the peer group gave K a sense of belonging and acceptance. The peer group also produced in K, confidence and power identity that has allowed him to manipulate and negotiate different hierarchies of masculinities and power levels. In this sense, the so-called 'negative' masculinity peer group, ironically provides protection and comfort. This in turn contribute to a feeling of both physical and emotional wellbeing, for example, safety from bullying and intimidation (Turner, 2005). It also results in a better mental state for studies, for those who desire academic identity. Thus, the peer group can ironically offer a platform from which the boys can launch out, manipulate their way to achieve both academic success and respectable social status. Hence, Hew also held on to his peer group. In so doing, Otuonye (2015a) in agreement with Allard (2004), describes the boys as having manipulated "... their way through the culturally different ways they have been positioned" and "constructing different masculine identities that suit their essence at any given circumstance" (p.4).

Furthermore, Matt took to rugby but confessed:

it's really draining, you've got to put a lot of energy towards it. It makes you so tired..." (to study) "But it shows that you are macho, rugby being a tough sport.

His consolation is: "even if I don't do well with my subjects, I do well in the sports..." He is thus content with his multiple use of sports to avoid work, build up his self-esteem, and attain macho masculine status. More importantly, doing sports enables him to negotiate his failing academic identity to sports rather than to himself. Jackson and Dempsey (2009) are of the view that boys like Matt, "present an image of indifference to their peers so that if they 'failed' they could blame a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability." (p.349). Turner (2005), in accord with Jackson, (2003; 2002), sees this as a "strategy to recuperate self-worth in the face of underachievement" (p.45). Connell (1989) interprets it as:

The reaction of the 'failed' (*which*) is likely to be a claim to other sources of power, even other definitions of masculinity. Sporting success, physical aggression, and sexual conquest may do. (p.295).

The data also show that the boys who are not athletic or interested in sports, resort to other negotiation and manipulation strategies. **Matt** testified that:

You've got some people who ain't really athletic, like some people may have athletics disabilities and can't really do sports. They do some other stuff like drinking and smoking and other stuff, just to fit in with other boys...

This resonates with Fields' (2014) observation that "...trying to conform to perceived 'social norm' led to other risky behaviours such as fighting, aggression, drinking and taking drugs" (p.2). In this category is the extreme case of those who underachieve on purpose by making deliberate attempts to fail, believing that "academic success may threaten their masculinity" (Huyge et al., 2015, p.3). Hill-Wilkinson (2017) and Graham (2011) made similar findings.

Even with this negative peer group (academically speaking), there is sometimes a silver lining. There is evidence that the African-American/African-Caribbean male occasionally uses such peer group as a mechanism to cope with the discrimination and the negative stereotypes, perceived or actual, meted out to them, (Seyfried, 1998; Graham, 1997). As **Matt** notes,

Like boys usually build up a 'Brotherhood'. The older boys are really looked up to as 'Role Models' so they will rather talk to them because they're going through what they have gone through so they will rather look up to them.

In these circumstances, the peer group becomes a protective and trustworthy fraternal enclave for bonding together, to assuage the fears of racism, exclusion and intimidation. Graham (2011) and Turner (2005) agree that if well negotiated, these boys become emotionally and mentally healthy individuals. Similarly, boys within peer groups also became resources to each other in the classroom, especially when the teacher ignores or does not give them the help they need (Gosai, 2009). Thus, not all peer groups are noxious and, as seen from the data, some peer influence can be positive, creating competitiveness that could encourage boys to do well amongst themselves.

(c) Negotiating oppositional identity and withdrawal:

The dialogue below demonstrates Matt's negotiation within the macho 'oppositional' identity. The interviewer further probed: Now, how is your academic performance?

Matt:

My academic performance... it was high, it was good then it dropped. It keeps going up and down until it really dropped to a point when it really became consistent on a low level.

Interviewer: Ok ...tell me why 'your' grades went low.

Matt:

'Cos I wasn't really checking for schoolwork; I just was living in the moment having fun with my friends, like doing whatever..., like just fitting in, just joining in all the things they are doing. Like staying out late and just going everywhere and don't really checking for what people got to say.

Interviewer: So right now, how is the grade?

Matt: Right now, the grades are good.

Interviewer: They are good? So, what made you realize that your grades need to go up.

Matt:

Over a period of time you tend to realise it ain't really benefiting you. If you really look at it, trying to fit in with other people ain't going to get you a job; it ain't going to make you a successful person in life. To become a successful person in life, you have to be going to school, you got to have a good character and whatever...

Interviewer: Oh really! So, you cared that's why...

Matt: (*interrupting*)

...as you realize the stuff you're doing wrong, you trying to correct it. So, it's just gone back up because I tend to stay to myself. ...not to really care for what people have to label me as...'sissy'.

This exemplifies Renold's (2001) concept of negotiating alternative masculine identities by "ignoring the taunts, jibes and ridicule" and retreating, "removing themselves from the physical space of the dominating peers" who police masculinity (p.380). On realising that his conformity to oppositional identity (the 'masculine gender identity'), clashes with his new academic interest, Matt made a choice that required him to withdraw from the group. He then assertively re-negotiates for a learner identity amidst the social and emotional conflicts he faced or would potentially face, with denouncing or withdrawing from the oppositional (macho) identity. The interview dialogue with Hew below, demonstrates another example of a spectacular negotiation strategy.

Interviewer: You said you go behind, to study. Have you ever been called any kind of name because of trying to do well in school?

Hew: Yeah, they give me names because I used to do my work. They try to call me, they try to insult me by calling me *big head, low beef alioti*.

Interviewer: *Low what? Beef Alioti?* What does that mean?

Hew: it means that you have more head than you get body. That is, you've got a big brain and your poor little body can't handle it, like, '*too smart for yourself.*'

Interviewer: (Laughs out loud with interviewee) So how does it make you feel, being called those names?

Hew: well it lowers my self-esteem but after a while, I use that as a source to my strength.

Interviewer: As a source to your strength? How?

Hew: when they're making jokes, I just go with the flow and when I go with the flow, they stopped calling me that, you know.

Interviewer: What do you mean by going with the flow?

Hew: like if they're making jokes at me and laughing at me, I will just laugh with them and take part in the joke.

So, by playing along with his name-calling peers that police masculinity, Hew, was able to subvert their derogatory name-calling to carve out and perform an acceptable, non-hegemonic alternative masculinity just as Matt did (above). In other words, they resisted hegemonic masculinity, to boldly invest on subordinating masculinities, a 'feminised' academic identity in this case. Faced with marginalisation and homophobic attacks for their quest for academic achievement, these boys stood their grounds. Their identity negotiations here accord with Renold's (2001), example of "how the hierarchical layers of masculinity can be manipulated to forge more 'acceptable' masculinities..." (p.381). It also demonstrates "how some boys ironically invest in the very form of masculinity that marginalise or subordinate them" (p.381) despite their dislike of "being labelled ... in pejorative terms" (Frosh et al., 2003, p.3). So, while Matt completely retreated from his 'macho' masculine peers in his negotiation process, Hew embraced them, but both disregarded their homophobic 'taunts, jibes and ridicule' (Renold's (2001). In so doing, Matt and Hew demonstrated

the observation of Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) “that one of the most effective ways of being a man in certain local contexts may be to ‘boldly’ demonstrate one’s distance from a regional hegemonic masculinity” (p.840), despite the repercussions. Both boys however, positioned and re-positioned themselves to produce personal or hegemonic acceptable masculinities.

In conclusion, negotiating different masculine identities will involve what is referred to as ‘construction of masculinities’ (Frosh et al., 2003). This may be in form of sporting success or sexual prowess, risky behaviour(s), studiousness and academic interest, playing Court Jester role etc. Whatever forms they take, the boys adopt them for the purpose of forging and establishing different masculine identities to meet their survival needs. As evidenced by the data, the TCI boys negotiated and are still negotiating, in their everyday discourse, through the ‘layers of hierarchies’ (Renolds, 2001) of masculinities presented to them in the TCI cultural milieu of the school and the community. The data also show the challenges and difficulties they encounter and deal with, in this process.

CHAPTER 6

This chapter discusses the findings and analysis of data relating to research question 5.

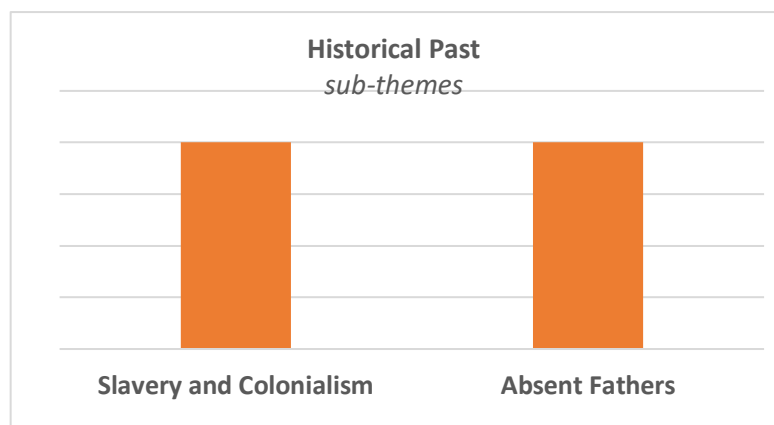
6. Research question 5: How have long-past historical events such as slavery and colonialism affected boys' academic achievement in Turks and Caicos Islands?

6.1 Introduction

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, only the second literature review and analysis of the literature sources could adequately address this research question. These sources highlight slavery and colonialism as historical events as well as their impact on the enslaved and colonized. However, the psycho-political thematic analysis of these historical events makes two important connections. Firstly, it connects these historical events directly to the disorganization of families of enslaved African ancestors and their descendants in the Caribbean and the United States (Gibson, 2006; Black, 1997; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; DuBois, 1908). Secondly, it makes a connection between the resultant prevalent absence of fathers in the families and its generational adverse effect on their boys' academic performance (Azibo, 2011; Gibson, 2006; Corneau, 1991; Akbar, 1984; Blassingame, 1979; Grier and Cobbs, 1968; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; Frazier, 1950; DuBois, 1908).

Historical Past is therefore identified as the Theme for this research question 5, with *Slavery and Colonialism* as the sub-themes. All three human data sources of *Interviewees, the Peer Dialogue Participants and the Focus Group*, independently identify 'absentee fathers' as one of the major causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). Accordingly, '*absentee fathers*' is additionally coded as a sub-theme for the purposes of this research question 5. The theme and sub-themes are represented in Figure 6 below. It is proposed here to first examine the data on slavery and colonialism relevant to the TCI, followed by the analysis of the data, both as they relate to slavery and colonialism but also on 'absentee fathers'.

Figure 6: Showing Theme Historical Past and Sub-themes



6.2 Slavery and Colonialism:

Literature materials identify slavery and colonialism as events of huge historical significance for the Caribbean people and, by extension, the TCI. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, the two TCI indigenous literature sources on the colonial and slavery history of TCI are: (a) *A History of the Turks and Caicos Islands*, edited by Dr Carlton Mills, educator and former TCI Minister of Education; (b) The TCI National Museum (The Museum) and their publications, one of which is *Slave History in the Turks and Caicos Islands* by Nigel Sadler. Through the pages of its website, <https://www.tcmuseum.org>, and other materials in its repository, the Museum provides relevant data on TCI colonial and slavery history. On TCI early history and its indigenous inhabitants, the Museum records:

750AD- Taino Indians from Hispaniola visit the Islands seasonally; 900AD- The Taino Indians set up permanent villages and trading stations. They become known as the Lucayans, “the Island people”; 1300-1500- Lucayan settlements on all the Islands and most Cays; Ca. 1520- All Lucayans are gone. (No paging)

But how and why did the Lucayans, first TCI settlers disappear? Marvel (2008), a contributor to *A History of the Turks and Caicos*, records that Columbus arrived the Turks and Caicos Islands in 1492. “The ‘Island people’ welcomed them hospitably” but Columbus took advantage of these Lucayans’ “naïve disposition and unsophisticated manner” (p.85):

...to set up a colonial system that considered the Indies’ aboriginal inhabitants as chattels that could be used or disposed of in almost any manner. The cruelty of this system, called the ‘**encomienda**’ ...quickly

decimated the native population of the Greater Antilles that includes about 10,000 Lucayan population of the Turks and Caicos Islands. (p.85)

The Museum and Sadler (2008) have similar records. Thus by 1520, the first native settlers of Turks and Caicos Islands have been exterminated. As to what became of TCI subsequently, the Museum provides the information, by way of further key historical facts and dates, and elaborates on colonialism and slavery in TCI:

...1530-1720 - Turks and Caicos Islands are largely uninhabited, except for possible use as hiding places for buccaneers and pirates; 1764 - Britain claims ownership of the Islands... Slavery has played an important role in the development of the Islands. The first recorded African slaves were brought here by the Bermudans to work in the salt ponds... The next large introduction of slaves came when American Loyalists fled the USA after the War of Independence, setting up plantations on the Caicos Islands (no paging)

As regards the loyalists and their slaves who settled in TCI, the Museum further records:

1790s - American Loyalists receive Grants in the Caicos Islands to reimburse them for lost American lands. Cotton and cattle raising begin use of slave labor; ...After years of insect plagues and soil depletion, they (Loyalists) abandon their slaves to the land; 1820s - Many slaves escape to Haiti and freedom. This is just one part of the history of slavery in the Turks and Caicos Islands (no paging)

The second part of the TCI slave history began ironically, “with the emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire” (The Museum), causing a re-population of the TCI by liberated African Slaves. The Museum records that:

Emancipation doesn't end the slave story. The Caicos Islands owe some of its population development to shipwrecked slaves. With slavery being illegal in British territories the slaves were freed, remaining in the Turks and Caicos Islands. (no paging)

Sadler (2004) concurs that:

The most dramatic arrivals of liberated Africans came from two slave ships which were wrecked on the reefs of the Caicos Bank. The *Esperanza* in 1837 and the *Trovadore* in 1841 (p.49)

Besides the rescued shipwrecked slaves who were then set free, Sadler (2004) points out that there were thousands of other African slaves liberated following the capture of their slave ships by the British Navy which patrolled the Atlantic Ocean to enforce the then abolition of slavery law. He asserts that upon being freed, the ex-

slaves were apprenticed to learn English and some training in “arts, trade... or occupation... (However) they were treated no better than slaves working under similar conditions” (p.45).

6.2.1. Treatment of the Slaves

Sadler (2004) acknowledges that, although there has been but limited research on TCI slave history, “a first-hand record of the treatment and experiences of a slave exists.” (p.14). This is the horrific “Mary Prince’s account as related to Thomas Pringle and published in England in 1831 as part of the slavery abolition movement” (p.14). Born into slavery in Bermuda, Mary Prince, as a slave, was sold several times and finally to a Grand Turk (TCI) Salt Proprietor. She had worked in the Grand Turk salt ponds for 10 years between around 1802 and 1812; sold again to an Antiguan Slave Master and finally unto England in 1828. There, she became a free domestic worker since by this time, in England, slavery had been outlawed (Sadler, 2004). Mary Prince was recorded to have recounted her full story of horrors and dehumanization as a slave. Sadler (2004) reproduces Mary Prince’s account as follows: precipitated

We slept in long shed, divided into narrow slips, like the stalls used for cattle. Boards fixed upon stakes driven into the ground, without mat or covering, were our only bed. ..we were sent into the bush and cut the long soft grass, of which we made trusses for our legs and feet to rest upon for they were so full of the salts boils that we could get no rest lying upon the bare boards... Sometimes, we had to work all night... then we had no sleep- no rest - Work-work-work-Oh that Turks Island was a horrible place! ... The people in England I am sure have never found out what is carried on there. Cruel, horrible place! ... (p.15)

On punishment, Sadler (2004) further reproduces Mary Prince’s account thus:

Mr ‘D’ (her owner, supposedly) has often stripped me naked, hung me up by the wrists and beat me with the cow -skin, with his own hand, till my body was raw with gashes. Yet there was nothing very remarkable in this; for it might serve as a sample of the common usage of the slaves on that horrible Islands (p.35)

Mary Prince’s full story has been severally published, for example, by Gates (1987) and Ferguson (1996).

6.2.2. Analysing the data

As indicated earlier, the analysis that follow is through the lens of post-colonial and psycho political. The focus is firstly, to explore the effect (if any) of slavery and

colonialism on the enslaved or colonized African Caribbean and African Americans. These are referred to by scholars, variously as “People of African descent” (PAD) (Sutherland, 2011, p.1175), or “African Descent People” (ADP) (Azibo, 2011, p.8). Secondly, this analysis will determine how slavery and colonization, as long-past historical events, may have affected the enslaved African Black-men and generations after them, in ways that, in turn, have resulted in their boys’ academic underachievement in the English-Speaking Caribbean which includes the TCI. The PAD of the United States are included in the analysis, because the indigenous population of present TCI, includes descendants of enslaved persons brought into TCI by United States slave masters who settled in TCI. Moreover, the PAD of the Caribbean and the United States have common ancestral African roots and they all came through the horrific and dehumanizing passage through the Atlantic Ocean called the ‘Middle Passage’ in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade (Black, 1997).

Based on the data, the following preliminary observations may also be made. Firstly, colonialism, through its legislative and executive powers, was used to support, legitimize and perpetuate slavery (Williams, 2015; Williams, 1970; Beckles and Shepherd, 2004). Secondly, one of the hallmark evils of colonial - backed slavery system was to legitimize the treatment of human beings as chattels (Williams, 2015; Marvel, 2008; Grazer, 1963; Moynihan, 1965). It was on this premises, for example, that the Lucayans (TCI first indigenous settlers) were decimated by the colonial-slavery system of the Spaniards in 1520 (Marvel, 2008). The Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, Professor Hilary Beckles, reminded the Caribbean people in his Emancipation Day (August 1, 2018) message, that it was on the basis of chattel slavery, that slave owners were compensated, because it was determined, by colonial law, that emancipation of the slaves was a great loss of property to slave owners (Beckles, 2018). Grazer (1963, cited in Moynihan, 1965) summarized the chattel slavery status and its implications for the enslaved. He said:

...the slave was totally removed from the protection of organized society; his existence as a human being was given no recognition by any religious or secular agency, he was totally ignorant of and completely cut off from his past, and he was offered absolutely no hope for the future. His children could be sold, his marriage was not recognized, and his wife could be violated or sold (there was something comic about calling the woman with whom the master permitted him to live a 'wife'), and he could also be subject, without redress, to frightful barbarities... (p.11)

The third point is that, although slavery was backed and legitimized by colonial laws, the same colonial laws were paradoxically also deployed, first, in the abolition of slave trade across the Atlantic, in 1807 in Britain, and in Europe at different dates in the 19th Century. However, the abolition of slavery in the British colonies came only in 1833, followed by subsequent emancipation of the slaves, in the British Caribbean colonies (including TCI) under the Emancipation Act of 1834 (Sadler 2008; 2004). Williams (1970) contends that “the abolition of the slave system was basically the result of the fact that the system had lost its former importance ...to the metropolitan economy” (p.218).

The last preliminary observation is that, discounting its modern migrant population, the Turks and Caicos Islands people, are predominantly descendants of three categories of enslaved Africans. There are those that the Bermudans imported into TCI to work at the salt ponds; there are those that were brought by the Loyalists who migrated with their slaves from the Southern United States, and those rescued from either wrecked slave ships or slave ships captured by the British Navy following the abolition of slave trade. Beckles and Shephard (2004), Caribbean scholars, estimate that “about 60 percent of all Africans sold, came to the Caribbean” (p.88). Morgan (2011) opines that, “until the slave trade was abolished, about five times as many Africans as Europeans arrived in the British Caribbean” where ‘slavery was the central institution” (p.378). Thus, regardless of how the slaves ended up in TCI, they were enslaved Africans who came through the horrific transatlantic slavery passage to more horrors at the plantations in the Caribbean and the United States (Sadler, 2008; 2004; Beckles and Shephard, 2004; Kozy, 1983; Black, 1997).

6.2.3. *Effect of Slavery on the People of African Descent (PAD)*

The socio-economic, political and psychological damage of slavery on the PAD in the Caribbean and the United States, and the fact that this damage (especially the psychological damage) has continued to this day, to varying degrees, have been well documented. (Williams, 2015; Azibo, 2011; Gibson, 2006; Beckles and Shephard, 2004; Black, 1997; Akbar, 1984; Grier and Cobbs, 1968; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; Glazer, 1963; Elkins, 1963; Frazier, 1950; DuBois, 1908;). The contrary minority but influential voices of the like of Fogel and Engerman (1995) have also

been noted; they argue that the slaves enjoyed their relationships with their slave masters.

Sadler (2004) recounts that Mary Prince's

...early years seemed protected and she even played with the master's children. However, as she got older, she saw the full extent of the horrors of slavery which included being sold and taken away from her family (p.14)

Williams (2015) points out that the harmful effect of slavery on the enslaved family structure fueled the agitation for abolition of slavery. In her opinion, "slavery not only inhibited family formation but made stable, secure family life difficult, if not impossible" (p.1). From early 20th Century, Dr. W.B. DuBois wrote on how slavery disorganized the Negro families in the United States. He submitted that slavery dislodged the enslaved Africans from their roots and families where the man discharged his fatherly role as protector and provider for his family, including emotional support for his sons (DuBois, 1908). Frazier (1950) affirmed the view that the disorganized nature of the Negro families was never a social vice inherent in the African heritage, as sociologists and social workers had previously but erroneously thought. He argued that illegitimacy and desertion by fathers were the primary cause of the disorganization of the Negro families in the Southern United States. He stated:

...Since the widespread family disorganization among the Negroes has resulted from failure of the father to play the role in the family life required by American society, the mitigation of this problem must await those changes in the Negro and American Society which will enable the Negro father to play the role required of him...(p.277)

In 1965, the US Government published a Report titled: *The Negro Family: A Case for National Action*. Authored by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the Report squarely blamed slavery for what he described was the disintegration of the Negro Family. Citing "...three centuries of sometimes unimaginable mistreatment..." (p.1) meted to the Negroes, and their continuing marginalization, Moynihan (1965), described the state of the Negro family in pathological terms, and in dire need of recovery from the damage of American Slavery. Drawing on the works of Elkins (1963), Glazer (1963) and Frazier (1950), Moynihan (1965), sought to show that as a result of slavery, a critical and essential feature of a stable American family structure, namely, double-parented households, has disappeared. This was especially among the rural low-income Negro families, which then was replaced by what Pettigrew (1964) calls "a

fatherless matrifocal (mother-centered) pattern” (p.14). He further opines “...Negroes in bondage, stripped of their African heritage, were placed in a completely dependent role. ...Most important of all, slavery vitiated family life...” (p.14). Frazier (1950) found that, in those circumstances, the male was most adversely affected because, “the absence of a father figure” in the ‘broken Negro homes’, deprived the boys “the model of image of values which should shape their personalities” (p.274). Moynihan (1965) similarly reported that the disorganization of the Negro homes “worked against the emergence of a strong father figure” (p.12). This, among other things, resulted in the boys’ poor academic performance. He further found “that the matriarchal pattern of so many Negro families reinforces itself over the generations” through the “process (that) begins with education” and resulted in “Negro females (being) better educated than Negro males” (p.20). Although aspects of Moynihan (1965) have been critiqued, notably by Gutman (1976), it remains an important and much referenced US Government official record on the effect of slavery on the Negro families. How the damage of slavery (and indeed colonialism) was inflicted on the families of PAD and how it resulted in the academic underachievement of their boys today, are explored next, again through the lens of post-colonial and psycho political.

6.2.4. *Effect of Slavery and Colonisation: Post – Colonial and Psycho-Political Perspectives*

Economic gains and political power have been advanced as the primary motivation for colonial and slavery systems (Beckles and Shephard, 2004; Williams, 1970; Nandy, 2009; Morgan, 2011). However, the means to these economic and political ends were largely, and deliberately, psychological, with intended long lasting effect (Azibo, 2011; Fanon, 2008; 2004; Gibson, 2006; Hook, 2004a; Black, 1997; Akbar, 1984; Grier and Cobbs, 1968; Glazier, 1963; Pettigrew, 1964,). It was all about, first, colonizing and enslaving the minds of the victims. In *the Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon, referring to the French colonial system in Franco-phone Africa, observed:

Colonization, in its very essence, already appeared to be a great purveyor of psychiatric hospitals ...Because it is a systematized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: “Who am I in reality (p.181)

Articulating Fanon’s (2004) views further, Hook (2004a) notes that the colonized black mind “exists in a state of little or no cultural resources of (his) own because...”

these resources, together with his “black past, black thinking ... (and) black individuality” (p.95), have been wiped away by the colonial masters, leaving only “the debilitating psychological or identity effects of such processes” (p.96). Steve Biko (1978), wrote in similar vein in *I write what I Like* in relation to the then oppressive colonial apartheid regime in South Africa. He and his Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa realized: “that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed” (p.68). Thus, it seems that the colonized goes through the colonizer’s orchestrated psychological process that causes him (the colonized) to lose every sense of his identity and worth to the point where he sees himself only through the eyes of his colonial master.

However, the slave trade through the Atlantic and the enslavement of Africans (mostly from West Africa), involved a more dehumanising and horrifying *modus operandi*. It included the violent uprooting of the West Africans, against their will, from their families and communities. Moreover, this separation was invariably in circumstances of violations and desecration of every pillar of socio-cultural values, ethos, beliefs, and order that held them together as a people (Black, 1997). A fundamental pillar of order and stability in the pre – colonial and pre-slavery West African society was the family - a patriarchal (male-centred) family. Here, the boy, by elaborate rights of passages, becomes a man, then a husband and ultimately a father and a family head (Black, 1997). As head, he is looked up to for provision, protection and defence of his wife (or wives) and his children. Together with other men, he is trained as a warrior, to protect the community. His authority is hallowed and his influence, especially over his sons, and generations after him, is dominant and enduring (Black, 1997). This is the patriarchal (male-centred) society of the West Africa and their culturally deeply rooted concept of manhood, prior to colonialism and slavery (Black, 1997). Although, with slight variations, this is the case in all parts of Africa, from where enslaved persons were taken (Black, 1997).

It appeared the goal then was to dismantle this family structure by emasculating the man that held it together, through the strategy of mental colonization and mental slavery. Azibo (2011) describes it as “menticide” (p.22). But why this strategy? Firstly because, Steve Biko (1978) called it the “greatest weapon in the hand of the oppressor”, namely, “the mind of the oppressed.” (p.68). One of America’s freed slaves and abolitionists, Frederick Douglass, noted in his slave narrative, that:

the physical cruelties (of slavery) are indeed sufficiently harassing and revolting; but they are as a few grains of sand on the seashore, or a few drops of water in the great ocean, compared with the stupendous wrongs which it inflicts upon the mental... (p.356)

With reference to slavery and the concept of Manhood in West Africa, Black (1997) submits that the psychologization process, began with the enslaved African male being captured in his village or other hinterlands. They are then taken through the “Long March” to the coast, and unto the waiting slave vessels. They then began the trans-Atlantic voyage called the “Middle Passage” (no paging), until final destination on the plantations in the United States or the Caribbean. Black (1997) further articulates the process and its impact on the enslaved Blackman and his manhood as follows:

...prior to the arrival of the enslaved African male in the New World, he endured a tragic experience unlike anything he had ever known. It was a moment in which his personal autonomy was usurped, his dignity insulted, and his relationship to historical and personal contexts essentially severed. This transformative moment became known as the Middle Passage. It included the Long March, his journey from his home village to the slave vessels on the coast, as well as the three-to-eight-month journey across the seas to the New World ...Yet this passage was more than simply a cruise from one country to another. The humiliation, dehumanization, and sociocultural displacement sustained on this voyage undoubtedly convinced men that their value equated that of a mere brute and that they possessed no might or authority in the presence of the white captor (p.43)

So, by the time the enslaved Blackman arrived the plantation, he had under-gone what Williams and Collier (1970) describe as a “systematic degradation designed to strip away his humanity and make him ready for the seller’s block” (p.14). It should be remembered that, as part of the mental enslavement, he, and his wife and children (if he had any) have, by law, been defined as chattels, capable of being owned by one or different masters (Williams, 2015; Moynihan, 1965). So, he had not only lost control of himself, but over his wife and children, including the ability to provide for and protect them. His manhood, as he knew it before he was captured, has evaporated. Black (1997) again aptly describes it as follows:

By the time the enslaved African male finally reached America (or the Caribbean), the construction of his new identity was already well underway. Bondage had forcibly removed him from his role as husband, father, provider, and community leader. Consequently, he lost his manhood--as he had known it--and came to regard his days of power, authority, and autonomy as dear, precious memories (p.63)

Consequently, the enslaved African male, was bound to and did respond as he had been psychologically conditioned. He settled for a state of what Gibson (2006) calls “learned helplessness” (p.7). The loss of manhood meant the loss of fatherhood, because “in pre-slave trade West African society, fatherhood was the foundation for elevation to manhood” (Gibson, 2006, p.6). If he still harboured any little hope of regaining anything of this manhood, such hope was hopelessly sealed with further emasculations in the plantations. An excerpt of personal slave narrative of *Jacobs* (1861), one of the witnesses at the plantations, recorded this:

...To be a man, and not to be a man – a father without authority – a husband and no protector – is the darkest of fates. Such was the condition of my father, and such is the condition of every slave throughout the United States: he owns nothing, he can claim nothing. His wife is not his; his children are not his; they can be taken from him and sold at any minute, as far away from each other as the human flesh monger may see fit to carry them. Slaves are recognized as property by the law and can own nothing except by the consent of their masters. A slave’s wife or daughter may be insulted before his eyes with impunity. He himself may be called on to torture them and dare not refuse. To raise his hand in their defence is death by the law. He must bear all things and resist nothing... (p.85)

In other words, at the plantation slavery environment, the man did not exist as in the West African family context. Henriques (1951) describes the West Indian (Caribbean) plantation slavery conditions in similar terms. He notes that “the emphasis in the contemporary slave family was upon the mother-child relationship” (p.17). These “patterns of behaviour”, he further observes, are “strikingly seen in the contemporary family structure” (p.17). It was this circumstance of ‘learned helplessness’ that primarily precipitated ‘paternal abandonment’ or ‘absentee fathers’ (Gibson, 2006). It was not that the enslaved African man did not love his family. On the contrary, whatever little manhood left in him, it was such that would compel him to abandon his family, rather than face the shame and guilt of a perpetual inability and helplessness to demonstrate that he is a real husband and father to his family. Gibson (2006) submits that absentee father phenomenon was thus “an ego defence mechanism... against the loss” (p.4) of manhood, and the power and control associated with it. He further opines that the frequency of “absentee Black fatherhood” among the PAD of today, “...evolved trans-generationally within the Black male’s psyche...” (p.7). His opinion agrees with Psychiatrists, Grier and Cobbs’ (1968) conclusion that:

The Black Father of today is at one end of a psychological continuum which reaches back in time to his enslaved ancestors ...We must conclude that much of the pathology we see in black people had its genesis in slavery. The culture that was born in that experience of bondage has been passed from generation to generation. Constructing adaptations developed during some long-ago time, continue as contemporary character traits (p.24)

As can be gleaned from the account of Jacobs (1861), it appears that, as part of the psychological process, the emasculation and other indignities suffered by the enslaved African man, were deliberately executed before his wife and family. This was perhaps meant to send the message that he had grossly failed as a husband and father and did not deserve the respect and loyalty of his family. Given, the psychological trauma of this, and out of survival instincts, the women apparently began to teach their boys not to manifest any form of "macho" male image or disposition, for fear of attracting the horrific attention of the slave owners. The content of 'Willie Lynch Letter; The making of a slave' (Internet Archive (2005) Full text of "willie Lynch letter 1712") is controversial and of doubtful authenticity. However, its content appears to mirror the reality of this plantation slavery experience. Thus, the women had no choice but to be strong and independent of the men. They also raised their daughters with similar mind-set, resulting in a role reversal between male and female - an anathema to the West African Communities and Families to date. (Gibson, 2006; Black, 1997; Akbar, 1984; Pettigrew, 1964). It seems that one of the devastating and long-lasting heritage of slavery on the families of PAD was therefore the deliberate and systematic dismantling of manhood, as conceptualized in the West African societies prior to colonization and slavery. The enslaved Blackman, thus emasculated and inferiorised, settled for 'learned helplessness' in response. It was then projected, by way of family abandonment, as an ego defence mechanism, and passed on generationally. The abandonment of his family, according to Gibson (2006) was therefore not due to the "personal weakness or moral vulnerabilities" (p.2) of the Black man. Akbar (1984) argues that "...such family irresponsibility does not occur among the African people who have not endured the ravages of slavery" (p.7). Neither is the resultant disorganized family structure, a social-cultural vice inherent in the African people. Rather, it was a historical trend that began with and resulted from their enslavement (Gibson, 2006; Black, 1997; Akbar, 1984; Grier and Cobbs, 1968; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; Frazier, 1950).

6.2.5. Effect of Slavery – The Caribbean and TCI Family Context.

Predominance of families headed by single females and 'matrifocal family' patterns of the PAD in the Caribbean (especially among the black low-income families) have been well settled in the Caribbean from the slavery times. (Sutherland, 2011; Hickling et al., 2008; Greenwood et al., 2003; Figueroa, 2000; Parry, 1997; Massiah, 1983; Henriques, 1951). From these slavery times also, Caribbean women have played very dominant and independent economic role as 'breadwinners' (Figueroa, 2000; Safa, 1986; Massiah, 1983). According to Safa (1986), Caribbean women are often independent of men and unmarried with children from various men. There is also an expectation that they will take "primary responsibility to provide for their families because of the high percentage of female-headed households and children born of unstable union" (p.2). As discussed in detail earlier, the underlining primary cause for this phenomenon may be traceable to the absence of fathers, whose own fore-fathers also abandoned their own families, in forced response to the emasculation and dismantling of their manhood by slavery (Azibo, 2011; Gibson, 2006; Black, 1997; Akbar, 1984; Grier and Cobbs, 1968; Moynihan, 1965; Frazier, 1950). The enslaved Blackman was so emotionally and psychologically rendered impotent, hopeless and helpless, that he lost every authority over and ability to protect, provide and defend his family. This was the hallmark of a father as he knew it in the West African societies from whence, he was uprooted by slavery (Gibson, 2006; Black, 1997). This may have also led to a gender role reversal in most West Indian (African-Caribbean) families just as Greenwood et al. (2003) have noted:

West Indian families were matrifocal... the mother often took the place assumed by the father in Western and West African societies. This had begun during slavery and social forces after emancipation encouraged its continuation. (p.146)

It appears Caribbean Scholars like Miller (1988) and Massiah (1983) are reluctant to admit that the phenomenon of matrifocal family pattern and single female-headed homes should largely be blamed on slavery. However, they appear to concede that it goes back to slavery times. Safa (1986), for example, opines that "it can partially be traced to the levelling effect of slavery on male and female occupational roles... (because)... labour allocation on slave plantation paid little attention to gender..." (p.5). Massiah (1983) attributes it to early emigration by men to Central American countries. She is however not very clear why they emigrated and the conditions of their relationship with the partners and children they left behind after emigration. The

Caribbean reality however seems to be that households of the PAD, are mostly headed by single women who have been forced by the deleterious legacy of slavery, to be dominant, independent of the men, and in control of their lives and homes. As noted by Safa (1986), “even in stable residential unions, men play a negligible role in household decision - making...” (p.10). In other words, these men effectively are nominal heads with little or no authority. They are a reminder of Jacob’s (1861) past slavery reflection of the fate of his father: “to be a man, and not to be a man – a father without authority – a husband and no protector – is the darkest of fates...” (p.85). And as Grier and Cobbs (1986) conclude, “the Black father of today, is at one end of a psychological continuum which reaches back in time to his enslaved ancestors” (p.24). As earlier argued, these forebears abandoned their families in forced response to slavery-induced ‘learned helplessness’ (Gibson, 2006), giving rise to ‘absentee father’ phenomenon among the PAD of the Caribbean. The absence of fathers, as one of the causes of boys’ academic underachievement in the Caribbean (and by extension the TCI) is discussed next.

6.3 Absentee fathers

What would make me not abandon my son the same way my father abandoned me? In the hope of finding an answer, I began rewording the question: What psychohistorical forces made my father and so many black fathers abandon their Children?

(Gibson, 2006, p.1)

The term ‘Absentee Fathers’ or ‘Fathers’ Absence’ is primarily used here as perhaps one of the damaging legacies of slavery. In this context, it is synonymous with what Frazier (1950) referred to as ‘desertion’ by fathers or Gibson’s (2006) ‘paternal abandonment’ discussed in the preceding paragraphs. In those paragraphs, it is noted that ‘Absentee Fathers’ largely contributed to the prevalent matrifocal family pattern and single-headed female homes among the PAD of United States and the Caribbean (Frazier, 1950; Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964). With reference to the West Indian (Caribbean) PAD, Henriques (1951), argues that although these familial forms are stable, they ‘were indicative of the disequilibrium inherent’ in the West Indian Negro Society, which in turn “is the result of plantation slavery rather than of a West African tradition” (p.16). No doubt, it comes with heavy burden and challenges for the women, who are forced to shoulder the responsibilities of taking care of the

whole family (Massiah, 1983). The term also encompasses fathers' absence caused by a variety of other reasons, which are not unique to the PAD of the Caribbean. These include, divorce, death or situations where fathers are nominally present but do not play sufficient positive role as fathers in the life of their sons (Corneau, 1991). It also includes absence caused by employment conditions of the father that, for example, constrain him to work at location far removed from his home. As a result, he rarely returns home and if he does, he comes home at such odd hours that inhibit sustained interaction with his family members especially the boys.

Whichever way it is construed, 'absentee fathers', was identified by all data sources (directly by Interviewees, the Peer Dialogue Participants, Focus Group, and indirectly by the second Literature Review method) as one of the causes of the boy's academic underachievement in TCI. Wood and Brownhill (2018) confirm there is ample empirical evidence in support of these data sources. So how, and in what ways does the absence of the father adversely affect his boys' academic achievement? **FG1**, one of the Focus Group Members responded:

Many of the families are single parent families, - without any of the families' male role model or the figure of authority, the husband or the father, and I think that has a lot of impact on the nurturing and upbringing of our young boys. The single-parent mothers tried their best, but I am one who believes that for the wholesome rearing of a child, particularly a boy, he is in need of a father.

Personalising his comments as a father, he continued: "...without even having to say anything, but my presence in the home has a greater impact on my son. I know that when I am not there, he gets away with a lot of things..." Echoing similar sentiment, **Hew** (interviewee) added:

Some of the boys, they live with single moms. When their Mothers talk to them, the boys don't listen to their ma's. You know she's a female and they believe she's weak, so they can do whatever they want because they don't have any father figure in their lives to show them who's more muscular/masculine.

Matt, (interviewee) agreed that "because men are 'more strict' and stronger, boys tend to obey men". **Omari** (PDP) opined: "If a boy grows up in a single parent household especially when it's only the mother, they tend to lack discipline". Omari's view accords with the other sources that father's presence, does represent authoritative, strong masculine figure at home. This father figure presence ensures

discipline and positive behaviours which are conducive, not only for good academic performance but also to wholesome upbringing of the boys (Wood and Brownhill, 2018; Eate et al., 2017; Cobb-Clark and Tekin, 2013). These sources also agree that fathers play role models and their boys look up to them. Frazier (1950) identified fathers as the role “model of image of values which should shape their (boys) personalities” (p.274). The perspectives of the psychologists and psychoanalysts on this subject, also lend support to these sources (Mandara, et al., 2005; Biller, 1982). Corneau (1991), for example, opines that although single - mothers have largely had to bear the burden of raising their sons alone, the absence of fathers in most cases have meant that “in regard to their sexual identity” (p.16) these boys have developed,

into giants with feet of clay... because the black hole left by the father's absence is usually filled with resentment, guilt, idealization and mistrust that might remain unexplored even after years of therapy (p.16)

This then reveals a “systematic deficiency on social, sexual, moral or cognitive levels...” (p.21). Perhaps, it is against this backdrop that **FG5**, (focus group), who was raised by a single mother and grandmother, candidly said:

Even though, **FG1** said that the elderly ladies (in the church) talked about their successes as single parents, they can speak of it. There is always a need (for a father) when it comes to young men. I consider myself to be a success ... I communicate with my mother, but deep down there will always be a need for a father figure, and in their (the boys) lives... as well

Three points may be made here. Firstly, some single mothers have managed to make success stories of men raised by them. Secondly, ‘absentee fathers’, should not invariably be used to pathologise black families of today, not the least because, as Phoenix (1990) points out, previous research in this area “may have failed to take into account (significant) factors such as length of father absence, age of children when absence begins, reasons for absence, etc.” (p.124). Neither should the women be blamed for filling up the vacuum created in the family by the absent fathers. In this regard, Langa (2010) cautions: “The idealization of fatherhood, however, should not undermine the positive role that female-headed households play in raising boy children” (p.519). The third and very important point is that, the effective presence of a father in the life of his children, especially the boys, remains crucial in their wholesome development (Wood and Brownhill, 2018; Barbarin, 2010; Langa, 2010; Mandara, et al., 2005; Blackenhorn, 1995; Corneau, 1991; Biller, 1982). According to the three research data sources, this, among other reasons, is because a single

mother has a limit to what she can teach her boy. **FG2**, a focus group member admitted that:

...it is hard because... you have single parents, sometimes not of their own fault, ...a mother who will try her best to raise a young man (but), she can only go so far, and she can only do so much...there are just certain things a man needs to impart to another man.

Matt (interviewee) agreed and added: "... how I will see it is that ... women can't teach boys to be men only men can teach boys how to be men." Consistent with the foregoing data, Wood and Brownhill (2018), rightly opine that "boys' upbringing in the absence of a father is likely to be deficient as it may present challenges that mothers may find difficult to deal with single-handedly". They further concluded that father's absence is an "ignored form of deprivation, damaging to children's social and mental development" (p.173), just as Barbarin (2010) expresses. It is in the bid to address this deficit that resort is made, to what Wood and Brownhill (2018) refer to as "replacement fathers" (p.1) or "surrogate fathers" (p.3) to act as positive male role models to the boys. The research participants agree that unfortunately the "surrogate fathers" option is not readily available for the TCI boys. Expressing their concerns, **Jon**, (PDP), said, "the reason why boys achieve less academically than girls is that us boys do not have role models or 'good' role models." His co-peer dialogue participant, **Gart**, concurred: "...the lack of male support in the home or in the school, who can encourage them to do better, discipline them and raise them up with right and positive morals". The Focus Group members also weighed in, with **FG2** noting:

I think also from working with young men in the community throughout the TCI ... our young men are not seeing that role model, not just from the father or parent point of view but persons within their community...the lack of role models in our communities is part of the causative fact that our boys achieve less ...

FG2 further acknowledged the community's ambivalent disposition on the matter. He said the community would usually express statements that urge a failing boy to "just be a man, go out there and be successful, but we do not show them how and I think that is how we are losing some of our young men". Another Focus Group member, **FG4** could not agree more in the following words:

...what I find is ...that there are not enough male role models for our boys. Our boys are crying out...what they see is who they will be... We need more men in the community to step up ...this is the reason why I think we are losing our boys because there are not sufficient role models...

He continued:

You would think that gender roles and with all the technology and how we have advanced and grown over the years, you would've thought that there would be some shift, but it still exists today.

FG4's preceding observation is a very interesting point that appears to strike a chord in slavery history and resonates with Grier and Cobbs' (1968) 'psychological continuum' of the effect of slavery on the enslaved black man and his descendants. This, in turn, raises a related point, namely, that the lack of positive role model in TCI may be directly related to the phenomenon of absentee fathers, in the sense that most of these absent fathers are still very much present in the small Island community and are known. But largely for the same generational disposition of learned hopelessness (Gibson, 2006), they may feel incapable of mentoring any boy in the Community. You cannot give or pass on what you do not have!

It is important to restate, in conclusion, that one of the lasting psychological heritage of colonial-backed slavery was the emasculation and dehumanization of enslaved African man and the resultant disorganized family structure of largely People of African Descent in the Caribbean and indeed the United States. Slavery dismantled his manhood as he had known it in West Africa, and the patriarchal family he held together. He was rendered impotent and forced to abandon or desert his family in reaction to his psychologically conditioned state of 'learned helplessness' which was passed on generationally (Gibson 2006; Akbar, 1984; Grier and Cobbs, 1968). The contemporary predominance of single female headed homes and 'matrifocal' family patterns among the PAD of the United States and Caribbean became inevitable (Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; Frazier, 1950). The data sources of this work are strongly in agreement that the absence of the fathers is one of the major causes of boys' academic underachievement in TCI. There is also ample empirical evidence to support their position (Wood and Brownhill, 2018; Mandara, et al., 2005; Corneau, 1991; Biller, 1982).

As a postscript to this Chapter, perhaps it is important to highlight Leo Lightbourne and his absentee father story reported in TCI Weekly News of August 17- 23, 2019 edition. Mr Lightbourne is a 28- year old, Turks and Caicos Islander and psychology graduate of the University of Buckingham, United Kingdom. He has just written a

new book, *It is Not a Man's World - How I conquered the sins of my Father*. According to the TCI Weekly News (2019), the book “will be officially released on September 24, 2019 as an eBook via Amazon, Apple Books...” (p.15). In a pre-release interview with the TCI Weekly News, Mr Lightbourne, shares the story of his journey from “ a painful childhood desperate to be reacquainted with the father who abandoned him...to the thriving, socially conscious man he is today...” (p.14). He acknowledges the connection between absentee father and academic underachievement and “poor self-esteem” (p.14) and how the Caribbean has thereby been adversely and disproportionately affected. According to him, one of the reasons for this is “‘generational trauma’, traced back to the days of slavery” (p.14). The motive for his book is to “trigger a national conversation about absent fathers and the children they leave behind...” (p.14). I look forward to joining this national conversation if and when it is called.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction:

This discussion and conclusion chapter addresses the key areas of this research by:

- summarising a restatement of the research questions and how they were answered;
- critically reflecting on the how the main theoretical ideas in the literature review have been engaged; giving an overview of the fresh theoretical perspectives deployed and the thesis' contribution to knowledge;
- outlining some recommendations and applications of this research for policy and practice;
- critically reflecting on the overall features of the research - the pros and cons, challenges and successes; and,
- Concluding with the need for an 'enabling' society to reframe the BAU question from: "why are the boys failing?" to "why are we failing the boys"?

7.2 *Research questions and how they were answered.*

This research explores the causes of boys' academic underachievement (BAU) in TCI. It was guided by and sought to find answers to five research questions set out in the Findings and Analysis Chapters. This section restates those research questions and summarizes how they have been answered.

7.2.1 *How do stereotypes associated with the problematic African-Caribbean boys come to be incorporated as a truth claim within educational practice?*

Three main data sources namely, *interviews, peer dialogue and focus group*, provided the data analysed in pursuit of the answers to this question. These data sources independently confirmed that the boys experienced negative stereotype from the teachers, the community (including family members) and the government. More importantly, these negative stereotypes have not only continued unchallenged, but have become so embedded culturally, socially and institutionally as to be incorporated as the truth within the educational practice, not only in the Caribbean

generally but also in TCI. The boys claim that teachers' attitudes towards them, through their classroom interaction and processes, show that they (the boys) are variously labelled as bad, 'troublemakers', disruptive and unserious, just for being boys. The boys also believe that teachers show no interest in them and have very low expectation from them behaviourally or academically. The teachers' negative mind set about the boys appears so embedded and normal, that even when a boy shows a remarkable improvement either in behaviour or in academic performance, it does not attract any commendation from the teacher.

The data further confirmed that the community's negative stereotype against boys goes as far as from birth and traditionally deep rooted, consistent with Figueroa's (2000) acknowledgment that, "Much of child rearing (in the Caribbean) is based on the self-fulfilling prophecy that boys will grow up bad" (p.70). Seen through psychopolitical lens however, this negative assumption, goes even further back. It appears rooted in slavery and its deleterious legacy of an emasculated and inferiorised black man; a hopelessly impotent father that generationally reproduces himself in his son. Thus, the negative stereotype sadly begins from home, where the boy is constantly reminded that he would end up like his 'never-do-well' father. It confronts him in the larger community where he is expected to grow up bad; then it follows him to school where he is considered a troublemaker and academic failure.

Any prospect of challenging these false assumptions, appears to be frustrated by government's own complicity. This is evident, for example, in the TCI Government Policy on boys' education. First, the policy document, without any empirical research, assumes the boys have self-esteem problems; that they do not wish to excel or follow the academic route to success, and most will graduate without any certification for gainful employment. An analysis of the policy texts alone reveals that these assumptions essentially constructed the boys as failing, blamed them for their failings and offer no realistic remedy or intervention. Instead, the government sought private sector-led remedy. They handed the boys over to businessmen and local contractors 'who have succeeded without taking the academic route...to consider ways in which to improve the performance of boys.' In doing so, Government effectively abdicated this obligation to private sector and washed its hands clean, from a critical and non-transferable responsibility such as the boys' education. This state of affairs has gone unchallenged despite its pervasive impact on the boys' education. Consequently, it

appears to be one of the most influential ways, the negative stereotypes associated with the failing boys, have become incorporated within the TCI educational system and practice, as if it is the truth. Sadly, the situation is perpetuated by the boys' own rebellious and disruptive attitudes in response, a vicious cycle of continuous self-fulfilling negative stereotypes, and a resultant academic underachievement by the boys.

7.2.2 *How does the predominance of women in the education system affect boys' academic achievement in the TCI?*

In answering this question, the research sought answers within a more embracing context of 'feminised education' and its impact on the academic achievement of the boys in TCI. Specifically, it looked largely at the predominance of female teachers (as against their few male counterpart) and the concomitant lack of male role models and feminised curriculum and pedagogies. Although the real impact of 'feminised education' on boys' academic performance is still being debated among the academics, information from the three data sources of *interviews, peer dialogue, focus group* confirmed, firstly, the predominance of female teachers and the dearth of their male counterparts in TCI education system. Government statistical information indicates the ratio is approximately 8% male teachers to 92% female teachers at the public primary schools, while at the public secondary school, the teachers' statistics stand at 40% male to 60% female teachers. This ratio, on the average, falls into the category of feminised education, by the 'OECD's definition of feminised education. Secondly, each data source independently confirmed that the predominance of female teachers, the concomitant feminised curriculum and pedagogies and the lack of male role models, remain a major contributor to why the TCI boys are underachieving academically.

The predominance of female teachers is not only in statistical terms but is reflected in the characteristic female attitudes and dispositions which the boys complained were discriminatory to them. These include what the boys complained was the female teachers' domineering nature and unforgiveness against the boys and favouritism towards the girls. These complaints seem to find support in research findings of Kessels and Heyder (2015) and Turner (2005). There appears also to be ample empirical research support that the resultant atmosphere of hostility, anxiety and

discomfort, militated against the boys' good academic performance (Jha et al., 2012; Mazjub and Raiz , 2010).

The significant imbalance of female to male teachers meant fewer good male role models the boys could look up to. There is also strong support for this finding by previous academic research findings of Wood and Brownhill (2018), Eate et al. (2017), Jones (2008), Skelton (2003), Harnett and Lee (2003). This female – male teachers' wide ratio in TCI, underpinned by Caribbean construction of masculinity, significantly heightens the boys' perception of education as a feminine venture that should be avoided. Not surprisingly, the boys earnestly advocated for more male teachers whom they claim, are more inspiring and understanding. They further claim the male teachers make better disciplinarians, while playing the role of surrogate fathers (Wood and Brownhill, 2018) especially as most of the boys came from single-female headed households. Hence, **Matt** (one of the interviewees), said: "women can't teach boys to be men, only men can teach boys how to be men." **FG3** (a focus group member), concurred: "There are just certain things a man needs to impart to another man." Supporting the participants' views are research findings of Gosai (2009), Odih (2002) and Cullingford and Morrison (1997) who reiterate that trusting relationships between good male role models and the boys foster interventions that impact positively on boys' academic endeavours.

This research also confirmed previous research findings that the feminisation of education led to the restructuring of curriculum and pedagogical practices to suit the predominance of women in the education system. The intended or unintended consequence is that the boys' needs academically were overlooked. Thus, both the boys and adult participants, independently decried the curriculum and 'passive' teaching and learning styles that emphasis sitting, reading, writing as opposed to tactile, active, hands-on practical and explorative activities typical of boys' learning styles. Previous studies by Eate et al. (2017), Hill-Wilkinson (2017), Martino et al. (2004) and Odih (2002) agree that these 'passive pedagogical practices' constitute a leading cause of the boy's academic underachievement. It is no wonder the boys complain that they found the TCI education system boring and irrelevant. Consequently, they become disinterested, disengage and inevitably underachieve.

7.2.3. How does Caribbean construction of masculinity impact on boys' academic achievement?

This research found that underlying every cause of boys' academic failing is 'hyper' masculinity, the Caribbean construction of which reifies maleness as hard, macho and strong, and considers anything feminine as anti-thetical to this hard-masculine identity. Perceiving education as a feminine venture, where women teach and women learn (Jha et al., 2012; Golden, 2010; West, 2002), the boys shun it as something no 'real man' would want to pursue (Plummer, 2007), as otherwise they would be ostracised and labelled effeminate or called homophobic names. Thus, they assert their maleness by resisting school just as Figueroa (2000) and Huyge et al. (2015) found.

Furthermore, the research identified a socio cultural and historic privileging of boys as an offshoot of Caribbean construction of masculinity. Articulated as 'male privileging' by Figueroa (2000), it works to incapacitate the boys from meeting the demands of formal education in the Caribbean. Although it is a privilege 'enjoyed' by the boys in the form of unbridled outdoor liberties, the boys themselves decried it as contributing to their failings in education, not the least because they usually come back from outside late, tired and unable to do their schoolwork. Over time, with little or no chores or similar domestic responsibilities at home, the boys also became deprived of the resultant discipline and commitment to hard work needed for school. On the other hand, the girls stayed mostly at home to help and do their schoolwork and thereby excel academically. Besides disadvantaging them in school, the unbridled freedom outside, inescapably brings these boys into contact with welcoming peer groups either within the Community or in the School. These peer groups invariably establish and police masculinity codes and taboos. Together with the peer group, these boys' resort to physicality which most times exposes them to risky lifestyle and harmful practices. Such is the profound impact of masculinity as constructed in the Caribbean, that Jha and Kelleher (2006) conclude that:

Conformity to this 'macho' masculine gender identity that clashes with the demand of 'the so called' feminised education, emerges as the most important and most common reason... explaining boys' 'academic underachievement (p.43)

in the wider Caribbean, and by extension, the Turks and Caicos Islands. The fourth research question next following, summarises how the boys manage the challenges of the various masculine identities they faced at the school and community settings.

7.2.4. How do boys negotiate the different masculine identities in TCI cultural settings?

One of the features of masculinity and its hegemonic or 'hyper' variant as constructed in the Caribbean is the undue pressure it has put on the TCI boys, compelling them into identity negotiations. So, they manipulate, accept, resist and construct different forms of masculine identities that enable them to function in varying circumstances and situations of life. This fact is corroborated also by the research works of Connell (2008), Hickey (2008), Pascoe (2007), Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), Turner (2005), Allard (2004), Frosh et al. (2003), Reynolds (2001) and Connell (1995). The data reveal that the boys' fear of isolation and ridicule as effeminate creates in them, a strong desire to belong and be accepted into a 'macho' peer group that would enable them to construct an acceptable strong, hard, tough macho masculine identity. The negotiation process sometimes necessitates indulgence in risky lifestyle, unruly behaviours, and exhibition of sexual prowess or whatever the specific masculinity code by which their 'machoness' can be demonstrated. The data further show that in this identity negotiation, some of them gave up their learner identities to 'belong' since education, considered a feminine enterprise, is not 'something' real 'macho' men would do.

So, some boys deliberately underachieve academically as a negotiation tool to achieve a desired macho masculine identity. Yet, there are positive masculinity peer groups into which some of the boys negotiated primarily for comfort, safety, protection and indeed, better mental state that enabled them to negotiate into successful academic identity. Some boys successfully manipulated their way towards an athletic identity to resist 'marginalised or subordinate' masculine identities or even to avoid being called homophobic names. Since sports is seen as a rough, tough, macho thing, their deliberate involvement in sports, is used to disguise any masculine identity that is vulnerable (like boys with homosexual leanings or academic interests that render them effeminate or 'gay'). This offers a typical example of 'disguise and avoidance' masculine identity negotiation.

Some of the boys said they boldly negotiated by resisting the once coveted oppositional macho masculine identity, to invest in new non-hegemonic alternative subordinate masculine identities. Some did so, by withdrawing from their dominating peers, another by embracing the peers, adopting a court jester identity, play along and laugh with them at himself thereby subverting their derogatory name calling. Amidst the challenges this presented, the boys found it expedient to construct different forms of masculine identities to suit their essence at any given situation.

7.2.5 *How have long-past historical events such as slavery and colonialism affected boys' academic achievement in TCI?*

The impact of the long past event of colonial - backed slavery on today's boys' academic underachievement in the TCI is hardly apparent without a close analysis of the event. Indeed, of the four data collecting sources of this research, only the 'second' Literature Review was capable of being, and was actually, deployed in search of answers to this question. In this regard, the historical records and publications of TCI National Museum were particularly significant. This source reveals, among other things, that Britain claimed ownership of the Turks and Caicos Islands in 1764; then came batches of African slaves from Bermuda (another colony of Britain); followed by the American Loyalists and their African slaves, and rescued slaves from slave ships that were either wrecked off the coast of TCI or were captured by the British Abolitionist Ships (Sadler, 2004; The Museum).

As narrated by Mary Prince herself (a slave in the Island of Grand Turk, TCI for 10 years), by historians and researchers, the ravages of slavery, spanned for three centuries of "unimaginable mistreatment" (Moynihan, 1965; Sadler, 2004; Williams, 2015; Beckles and Shepherd, 2004; Williams, 1970). These include horrific and dehumanising treatments meted to the enslaved Blackman from the time of his capture in West Africa, during the 'middle passage' to his arrival and stay at the plantations in United States or the Caribbean. The mistreatments were calculated firstly, to emasculate and inferiorise the Blackman before their family (if he had any) and secondly to dismantle his manhood as conceived in West Africa before the onset of slavery. The enslaved Blackman was so emotionally and psychologically rendered impotent and helpless, that he lost every authority over and ability to protect, provide and defend his family. This was the hallmark of a father as he knew it in the West

African Societies from whence, he was uprooted by slavery (Gibson, 2006; Black 1997). In the process, he lost sense of who he was and his past. In this state of 'learned helplessness', he abandoned or deserted his family. It seems this was the beginning of the disorganisation of patriarchal family structure and the establishment of matrifocal families among the People of African Descent in both the United States and the Caribbean. Thus, absentee fathers of today, were in turn abandoned by their own fathers in forced response to the emasculation and dismantling of their manhood by slavery. Hence Grier and Cobbs' (1968) conclude that "the Black father of today, is at one end of a psychological continuum which reaches back in time to his enslaved ancestors" (p.2). Family abandonment is therefore not an inherent moral vice in the Blackman; indeed, as Akbar (1984) opine, family abandonment is alien to "people who have not suffered the ravages of slavery." (p.7).

The deleterious legacies and damages of colonial-backed slavery on People of African Descent in the Caribbean and USA have continued in various degrees to this day. Firstly, it seems the men came to be considered generally irresponsible and of little significance in the family scheme of things (Greenwood et al., 2003; Safa, 1986). Secondly, there was established, matrifocal, single female-headed homes, where mothers historically preferred to educate their daughters than the boys (Moynihan, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964; Young, 1964). Thirdly, and most importantly, the participants in this study acknowledge that despite the single mothers' hard work and sacrifice, a father's presence represents an authoritative, strong masculine figure at home. This, they contend, ensures more discipline and positive behaviours which are conducive, not only to good academic performance but also to wholesome upbringing of the boys. All four data sources independently confirm that absence of fathers is a major contributing factor to boys' academic underachievement in TCI. Previous researchers support these findings. For example, Frazier (1950) posits that the absence of father figure in the life of African American boys deprived the boys, "the model image of values which shape their personalities" (p.274). It is also an "ignored form of deprivation, damaging to children's social and mental development" (Wood and Brownhill, 2018, p.173).

7.3 Engagement with the main theories; deployment of fresh theoretical perspectives; contribution to knowledge.

7.3.1 Engagement with the main theories

Through the literature review, this research identified and critically engaged the main theoretical ideas underpinning the debate and explanations of boys' academic failings. Central to these theoretical ideas is the concept of Masculinity and its hegemonic variant. In the Caribbean, this concept is constructed in terms that reifies maleness as macho, hard, strong and tough, and considers anything feminine as anti-thetical to masculine identity (Figueroa, 2000; 1998; Plummer, 2007; Frosh et al., 2003). Masculinity underlies, for example, Miller's (1986) *Marginalization of men*; Figueroa's (1998; 2000) *Male Privileging*, and Plummer's (2007) *Retreat to Physicality*. Within the context of these theoretical concepts, are contestations about the nature, the extent and causes of boys' academic underachievement (Cobbett and Younger, 2012). However, there is consensus that the hard, 'macho' masculine image by which a typical Caribbean (or Turk and Caicos Island) young man wants to be identified, considers academic success and education generally as feminine and no 'real man' wants to be engaged in it (Plummer, 2007). According to Miller (1986), this came about because of the marginalization of men through a strategic policy of some powerful men that deliberately educated only women and thereby feminised education. Figueroa (2000) contested Miller's view on the ground that it postulates masculinity that perpetuates the dominance of men over women. Instead, he explains the boys' disdain for education and their academic failings on the unbridled outdoor liberties that *privilege* them to go in and out of the home. This 'privilege' however robbed them the opportunity of being domesticated in terms that enabled motivation for and success in education. Figueroa's (2000) *male privileging*, seems also to have opened the young men up to retreat to *physicality*. In so doing, they identify themselves with 'macho' peer group, whether in the rare positive sense like 'sports' or in the invariably negative sense of risky lifestyle, including toxic and harmful practices.

7.3.2 Deployment of fresh theoretical perspectives

It appears however that these theoretical ideas are largely apolitical, ahistorical and uncritical. For example, although Miller's (1986) *Marginalization of Men*, is contextually colonial, it does not seem to go back enough in time, nor does it go

beyond the shores of the Caribbean. Consequently, it avoided or missed the principal culprit of marginalization of men, namely, slavery. Figueroa's (2000) *Male Privileging* does not provide reason(s) for the privileging. The data show the boys do not privilege themselves; rather parents/guardians and indeed the society do the privileging. Ironically, the boys decry this so called 'privileging' as evidence that the parents/guardians do not care about their boys. Accordingly, it became necessary to engage these theories more critically, including interrogating them through a fresh theoretical perspective of post-colonial theory and psycho-politics of Fanon in the following ways:

(a) Figueroa's (2000) *male privileging* theory for BAU, for example, is queried in two respects. The first is its failure to address the question why the African - Caribbean society allow their boys the 'privilege' of unbridled outdoor liberties, even when it is inimical to the boys' academic performance. Ironically, the same society turns around to blame the boys for their failing. However, this research respectfully suggests a psycho-political answer, namely: that male *privileging* may well be the cultural compensation by a matrifocal society for the lost manhood of the African-Caribbean male-ancestors. Slavery dismantled and destroyed this manhood and so the Caribbean boys must be given all the liberties to go and search out, discover and reclaim this manhood.

Secondly, Figueroa's (2000) *male privileging* is further interrogated for its focus on *gender equality* - a subject that smacks of global-north neo-colonial agenda. This agenda pays little or no regards to the beliefs, norms, traditions, and ways of life of former colonies like the West African patriarchal societies from whence the enslaved families of African-Caribbean families were uprooted. In these societies, the focus is not on gender equality, but on *gender role*. Here, the man wields hallowed authority but with corresponding onerous responsibilities of a father, husband, provider, protector and defender of his family and the community (Black, 1997). Thus, he exhibits dominant but positive masculinity postulated by Collier (1998) to which Connell (2005) agreed.

(b) Furthermore, *biological determinism* is interrogated in so far as it represents traditional psychology that looks only at the internal personal psychology of the boys for their failing. By so doing, it discounts "specific social, historical, political and

economic contexts” (Hook, 2004a, p.89) which are external to and beyond the control of boys but has nevertheless impacted and shaped their internalised “personal psychology” (ibid.). Consequently, in some cases, biological determinism concept appears to have provided justification for the ‘pathologisation’ of the boys, including much of the Caribbean society’s negative stereotypical disposition that their boys will grow up bad.

(c) Through this interpretative and fresh theoretical lens, the ‘hyper’, extreme hegemonic form of Masculinity as constructed in the Caribbean, is seen as perhaps a manifestation of a cultural identity tension arising from the ‘mirage’ search for the ‘real’ man. This man was the enslaved Blackman (and ancestor of the African-Caribbean man/boy) whose manhood was dismantled and thereby robbed of his core identity as a father, husband, provider, protector and defender by colonial-backed slavery. In other words, Caribbean ‘hyper’ form of masculinity seems to be an unattainable ‘fantasy’ pursuit of the African-Caribbean man/boy to discover and reclaim this lost manhood; a pursuit expressed through and aided by cultural socialisation process of *male privileging* and *resort to physicality*.

(d) The deployment of psycho-political thematic analysis technique has also enabled an interpretative approach that is less theoretically bound; that looks beyond the surface and ‘out of the box’ in interpreting the data, including the meaning - making experiences of the boys. For example, the boys’ complaint about too many female teachers may be their disguised aversion (underpinned by ‘hyper’ masculinity) to female teachers exercising disciplinary authority over them even when it is for the boys’ benefits. Which is why the boys in this research confessed that they preferred being harshly disciplined by a male teacher as ‘a man to man’ thing, than a ‘slap on the wrist’ by a female teacher.

7.3.3 Contribution to Knowledge

Although this research has largely confirmed previous research findings on the causes of boys’ academic underachievement, it has done so through the lens and fresh perspectives of post-colonial theory and Fanon’s critical psychology concept of psycho-politics. In doing so, it first, highlighted and interrogated aspects of the main theories and concepts of BAU which may have been uncritical, apolitical and ahistorical. Secondly, it was deployed and did influence the ‘beyond the surface’ and

'out of the box' enactment of the data analysis. In this sense, this research would have made contribution to our knowledge and understanding of boys' academic underachievement phenomenon, by adding theoretical depth, breadth and richness to the subject.

More than anything else, the hope is that the deployment of these fresh theoretical perspectives would produce a reflexive outcome, namely, a shift of focus from the boys as architect of their own failings, to a disabling and ambivalent society that must rethink, and see the need to reframe the BAU question from '*why are the boys failing*' to '*why are we failing the boys*'? This point is taken up and discussed further in Section 7.6 as the concluding part of this Thesis.

7.4 Research Recommendations and applications for policy and practice.

Besides other contributions, this study will hopefully fill in the initial empirical research void in the response to boys' educational failings in TCI. The study is expected not only to inform future TCI government's policy interventions on boys' academic underachievement, but also to sensitize the government authorities on the importance of empirical research in effectively addressing issues generally in the education of both boys and girls. To this end, and arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations, which are not exhaustive, are offered for consideration by the TCI government:

7.4.1 *Robust and sustained public education to:*

- sensitise the public on the damaging effect of negative stereotyping of the boys;
- address the damaging (especially the psychological) effect of slavery and colonialism with a view, neither to cast blames, nor to dwell in the past, but to deploy the lessons of the past sad events to chart a new optimistic course for the future. The communities should learn from history and re-create themselves into a beneficial existence;
- dismantle male privileging as a socio-cultural construct. Monitor the boys and give them responsibilities and rules to follow at home, just as the boys themselves have suggested.

7.4.2 *Employ more male teachers:*

This research confirms that male teachers are better role models for boys in education. They are more adept on disciplinary issues concerning boys who are more inclined to obeying them. The continuing paucity of male teachers in comparison to females demands a positive and concrete policy intervention to bridge the gap. This will address the issue of role models from 'inside' and challenge the masculinity claim that feminises education—the major reason, found in this study, for boys' disaffection with and disengagement from education.

7.4.3 *Enhanced Remuneration:*

Increase in teachers' pay and remuneration: According to Otuonye (2015a), the reports of Jha et al. (2012) and Jha and Kelleher (2006) note that teachers' working conditions have implications for boys' underachievement. The conditions of teachers in TCI, including low salaries and limited promotion opportunities, have led to a continuous exodus of especially the few male teachers, to 'greener pastures.' This research therefore advocates for a TCI Government's enhancement of teachers' remuneration.

7.4.4 *Teacher Education Curriculum:*

This should include special training on male and female teaching and learning styles, and pedagogies. The government should invest in teacher education/ in-service professional development that would give support to a more caring and balanced support for all students. This would include affirmative action for boys without compromising or undermining the gains or advancement the girls have made in their education. Additionally, the country should inculcate the use of technology in the teaching and learning process in place of chalk, board, paper and pen, including writing and submitting assignments by email.

7.4.5 *Review the School Curriculum:*

This should be done to reflect more engaging practical subjects that provide hand-on experience for boys. It should include history subject that captures slavery as a very impactful event of historical past. The story should be truthfully told from the perspectives of the victims themselves. The objective is not to cast blame and get stuck in the past, but to use the lessons thereof to forge a rethinking that emancipates from every psychological vestiges and shackles of slavery and colonialism. This will

enable the embracing of genuine liberties and the opportunities they present for advancing and prospering lives in our families and communities. This expectation prompted the lyrics of late Jamaican reggae musician, Bob Marley, from which Hook (2004a) cited a line, “Liberate (*emancipate*) yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves shall free our minds.” (p.84), [Bob Marley redemption song](#).

7.4.6 Mentorship Programmes:

Special clubs, programs and opportunities for boys to interact with successful men of the community should be established. Introducing more activities other than classes, studies and schoolwork would peak the boys’ interest in school. For example, youth centres, youth clubs, sports clubs, dance and drama clubs and similar programmes must be established not just in the school but in the community. This would help keep the boys positively engaged physically and mentally, and away from negative physicality and associated risky lifestyles and toxic practices.

7.4.7 The policy imperatives:

Any policy formulation on boy’s education (whether or not arising from or influenced by this research), must be grounded on the following imperatives:

- (a) A starting point that shifts its focus from the boys as the architect of their failings, unto a disabling society that has for long pathologised the boys as bad from birth; a society, like the proverbial ostrich, that has buried its head in the sand, refusing to accept its responsibility for failing the boys; a society that must repent and commit to enable the boys attain their full potentials;
- (b) A genuine resolve to address boys’ academic underachievement issue, instead of the political grand-standing rhetoric in public speeches. In other words, the politicians and all stake holders must be able to “walk the talk’ about addressing boys’ academic underachievement. As opined in Otuonye (2015c), the policy itself should be devoid of extraneous political and allied interests and robustly tackle the issues in boys’ education without compromising the educational advancement of the girls;

- (c) A public consultation component that is meaningful, purposeful and allows for, what Simmie (2012) refers to as, the "...reinvigoration of public contestation and opening of public space for dialogue ..." (p.492).

7.4.8 A Participant's summing up:

...Years ago, only men used to work and females stay home/kitchen....It should be researched to find out whatever was done back then to make the women to rise up to what they are today, – high academic achievers and sitting on the top jobs in TCI; whatever it was, should be done for the men to achieve the same result...

Jon (PDP)

7.5 Reflections on the Research

This section reflexively and reflectively shares 'the good, the bad and the ugly' of my experiences as a new researcher and the research. It highlights some of my anxious and agonizing moments in the course of the research; the social, cultural and ethical challenges I confronted and managed; my defeats and victories. The opportunity to come to this stage of sharing these reflections is one of those victories. A few specific experiences now follow:

7.5.1 Deploying the Methods:

From the outset, the practical out workings of the methods I chose filled me with a mixed emotion of apprehensions and excitement. In one breath, I was glad at reaching a very active stage of the research: data collection! In another, I harboured apprehensions about the technicalities involved. For example, I was anxious about creating and managing a website or blog by myself in furtherance of 'peer dialogue'. In other words, the deployment of these different methodical techniques presented varying degrees of challenges, some peculiar to specific methods while other challenges were common to all methods. The nature of some of these challenges and how they were addressed are set out as follows:

Firstly, were the challenges associated with recruiting the boys and obtaining their informed consent and those of their parents. Specifically, I had to wait for an uncertain period for the prospective participants to bring back the signed forms without appearing to influence their decision or pressure them to bring back the forms at my own timing. That waiting and the attendant suspense was excruciating. Some of them

asked for replacements, having lost or misplaced the first set of forms. This at least gave me hope that some were still interested in participating in the research but the financial implications of producing the documents was manifesting itself too.

One incident shook me to the core, such that I almost couldn't function for few days. On my very first interview date, amidst the slight apprehension of a first formal Ed.D. data collection, I went, as agreed, to collect the primary interviewee. I knew he was looking forward to the appointment but to my amazement, I found out that he ran away, just before I arrived. No words could explain my sadness, disappointment and confusion at that moment. I subsequently learnt that an argument, on an unrelated matter, had ensued between him and his mother. She had used the interview against him...teasing him that she hoped this interview with his Guidance Counsellor would knock some sense and a change of attitude into his life. He decided that the best way to get back at his mother was to abscond from the interview... some identity formation red flag. The interview was cancelled but it manifested another challenge. The fact that I am an insider-researcher and the attendant conflict of interest of being the school Guidance Counsellor and the researcher, stared me in the face. A few days later, though still sad, I undauntedly began the search for another primary interviewee, just like I did with the peer review participant.

Second challenge: Setting up and scheduling interviews with the Focus Group of 6 adults. As the Turks and Caicos Islands consists of six inhabited Islands, separated by the sea, two of the critical participants were recruited from a sister Island. One of them later declined and to ensure that the other would not also disappoint, I bought an airline ticket and sent it to him by email. He admitted that this gave him no choice but to show up for the group interview. I agonized over calling up adults and interrupting their busy schedules with what may properly be regarded as my personal matter and getting them all to agree on my proposed date. That it all worked out well was beyond what I imagined.

Thirdly, as a Guidance Counsellor, I am familiar with and have been privileged to use semi-structured interviews to elicit in-depth information from my student-clients as opposed to close-ended questions. However, the tension and nervousness that attended the first interview with the primary interviewees was evident, because I fumbled with the interview questions at the beginning, unbeknown to the interviewee.

Moreover, sitting for long hours of probing interview sessions was exhausting and, sometimes, uncomfortable both for the interviewees and myself. Yet, transcribing the interviews, which was spread over approximately three months, was one of the most daunting, burdensome and time-consuming aspects of this research. However, it was worth the troubles as, in the process, I became very familiar and better engaged with my verbose data. More importantly, it enabled me to manage the equally difficult task of coding, classifying and analysing data.

7.5.2 Ethical Reviewer's Hint - My Dilemma

My ethical review approval came with a hint by one of the reviewers. She indicated that my research topic may appear depressing and might put off potential boys' participants who would think they have been chosen to participate because they are underachievers. Until then, it never crossed my mind that my research topic may be so interpreted, but I kept pondering over it as I began deploying the *peer dialogue* method. The reality of the hint was however quick to unfold. Having obtained necessary permissions and consents and, after thoroughly briefing the students, some of them volunteered to participate in the peer dialogue process. One, especially with so much enthusiasm, urged his peers to accept the information sheets. "Let's do this, dudes, this gonna be fun", he said. "C'mon Jay, common Solo, hey Em, we are 'gonna' be CNN reporters", he called out. He was apparently a leader and influential among them, so I was glad to have him in the team. He assisted in quickly distributing the generic information sheets. A few days later, again amid his peers, he called out to decline his participation. Given the lead role he was already playing in the exercise and the influence he wielded, the impact was instant and profound. They developed cold feet. I was devastated as it meant practically starting the sampling process all over. I later discovered that the young man's father probably misunderstood the information sheet or seemed to be in denial of the boys' failings in education in TCI. He had refused his son's participation because he thought (quite erroneously), that his child was selected as a research participant because he was considered an underachiever. The ethical reviewer was right – my research 'topic' was a put off. What were my options? To reframe it? It would have been misleading which was not what the reviewer meant. Besides, it was too late to do so, having obtained my approval on that basis. I agonized over it and in the end left the topic on the information sheet as it was but committed to explaining the topic better as I inter-

faced with the participants and their parents. To my relief, this was eventually done without much ado.

7.5.3 High Expectations – Bitter-Sweet Experience

This research appears to be the first in TCI on the subject. The hope is that it would inform and influence a better articulated policy response to the boys' education concerns in TCI. It has therefore aroused public interest; the expectations are high. During one of the High Schools' graduation ceremonies in the Islands which would normally be broadcast live nation-wide, the principal of my school, speaking at the ceremony, and while encouraging the boys to work harder, reminded the Ministry of Education (MOE) of my research and urged them to look out for its findings which, he said he was optimistic would make useful recommendations for policy and practice. The Ministry itself, seemed to have taken note. I have been invited by the MOE to participate in the review of a draft education policy currently being consulted upon. For my input in that draft policy review, I am indebted to the knowledge and exposure this Sheffield University Ed.D. Programme has afforded me. I remember drawing particularly on one of the Programme Essays: *EDU6082, Approaches to Educational Policy*. Thus, I am honoured and privileged to know that this study is highly regarded and awaited with great anticipation. I am however anxious that it is not expected to provide the panacea for all the problems of boys' education in TCI. This is a bitter-sweet experience for me.

7.6 Reframing the BAU Question

Besides its key findings on the research questions, this research underscores the necessity to reframe and refocus the BAU question from "why are the boys failing" to "why are we failing the boys" in their academic pursuit. This is more than an academic exercise and the theoretical debate it provokes, the importance of which cannot be over-estimated. Instead, the theoretical should rather inform and be translated into policy, practice and effective remedy. So why should the BAU question be reframed as herein advocated? Firstly, because through post-colonial and psycho-political lens, this research identifies a Caribbean/TCI boy, whose life-meaning experiences, including his educational failings, have been wrongly located in and blamed on the boy himself. The right approach however should have been to look beyond the boy and to consider some external forces, like Slavery, over which the boy has little or no

control, but the devastating effect of which has generationally dogged his life to date. Secondly, post-colonial and psycho-political lens has enabled this research to identify a society which sees nothing wrong in itself nor in its institutions; an ambivalent and “disabling society and (its) ableist culture” (Goodley, 2011, p.724). This is a society which, by its socialization process like *male privileging*, sets up the boys to fail, then constructs them as failures even from cradle (Barbarin, 2010; Figueroa, 2000) and turn around to blame them for failing (Bulhan, 1985). This is the society (and its institutions), that must be in deep reflection; a society that must look back on past events like slavery, without dwelling on this past or stuck in its blame game, but use the knowledge of its reality and legacy as a liberating tool to enable its boys and indeed girls to live to their full potentials.

The University of Glasgow, Scotland, recently demonstrated this disposition. Upon being aware that their University had during the Slavery era, became recipient of gifts and bequests from beneficiaries of proceeds from slavery, they commissioned a Committee in 2016 to research the matter. In September 2018, the Commission published its report confirming that the University did receive ‘significant financial gifts’ from slavery profits. As to how to deal with this past history, the University in part, reports:

We believe that what is most important, however, is how we intend to use our knowledge of this past in a 'Programme of reparative justice' ...through creative relationships with new partners such as the University of the West Indies, and through study and teaching about all forms of slavery and trafficking in the past and present (p.3)

In furtherance of the above stated “Programme of Reparative Justice”, the Turks and Caicos Weekly News (2018) reported that:

“the University of the West Indies, (UWI) and the University of Glasgow have to come to an agreement that will see the Caribbean institution benefit from US \$256 million worth of reparations linked to slavery” (p.20)

In April 2019, the University of Cambridge announced the launching of similar inquiry, for according to its Vice Chancellor, Professor Stephen Toope.

We cannot change the past, but nor should we seek to hide from it. I hope this process will help the University understand and acknowledge its role during that dark phase of human history.

This is the society (and its institutions) that must genuinely ask itself and seek answers to the questions *'why are we failing the boys?'; 'how have we failed the boys?'*

7.7 Suggestions for Further Research:

The following areas are recommended for consideration for further research:

1. Caribbean and West African Constructions of Masculinity:– A comparative studies.
2. Western gender-equality Versus West Africa gender-role:- A comparative studies.
3. Boys' academic underachievement – The Teachers'/ Girls' Perspectives;
4. Recommendations and remedies for Boy's academic underachievement – what worked and what did not work.
5. Do boys benefit more from male teachers and girls from female teachers?
6. Gender imbalance in the teaching profession and its impact on Education
7. Re-masculinisation of the teaching profession and boys' academic achievement.
8. Stereotype threat and boys' academic achievement.
9. Caribbean Construction of masculinity and boys' academic achievement.
10. Effects of absent fatherhood on Boys' academic achievement- Single parenthood.
11. Exploration of the psychoanalysts' perspective of Caribbean 'hyper' masculinity, through psycho-political lens.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1A: Generic Introductory Letter to Prospective participants (Boys)

H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands

E-mail: otuonyev@gmail.com

Telephone: 1- 649-2452285

May 9, 2017.

Dear Student/ Prospective participant,

Doctoral Research (fieldwork)

FOCUS: Boys' academic achievement in Turks and Caicos Islands.

I am a Guidance Counsellor at the H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk. I am also pursuing a doctoral degree programme in Psychology and Education at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. I am about to embark on the thesis with a focus on ***Boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands.***

Government statistics have shown a troubling and continuous record of boys' academic underachievement over the years. The purpose of this letter is to seek your permission to participate in this research that seeks to study and determine the causes or the reasons why the boys are underachieving academically in the TC. The research will also endeavour to find out what works to bring boys into education, then make recommendations on possible solutions.

My research methodologies will include working with young men in two ways, - as principal interviewees and others as peer dialogue participants, (who will dialogue with their peers), to find out why boys, are underachieving academically. This will involve seven male students between the ages of 15 and 17. Participation is voluntary. As a participant in this research, you will be anonymous. This means that you will not be asked to identify yourself or give any personal information that will make you identifiable in this research or any report resulting from it. It is also important to note that every information you give will be confidential, meaning that it will not be shared with anyone but will only be used for the purposes of this research. It will not be used for any other purpose without your permission or consent.

If you are willing to participate in this research project, I will be grateful if you will kindly sign in the space provided below and return the attached copy to me. If however, you do not wish to participate, you do not need to sign or return the form.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this letter.

I _____ hereby give my consent to participate in this research project.

Respectfully,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Telephone: 1- 649-245-2285

Email: otuonyev@gmail.com

Appendix 1B – Generic Introductory Letter to Parents/Guardians

H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands

E-mail: otuonyev@gmail.com

Telephone: 1- 649-2452285

May 9, 2017.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Doctoral Research (fieldwork)

Focus: Boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

I am a Guidance Counsellor at the H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk. I am also pursuing a doctoral degree programme in Psychology and Education at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom.

I am about to embark on the thesis with a focus on ***Boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands.***

Government statistics have shown a troubling and continuous record of boys' academic underachievement over the years. The purpose of this letter is to seek your permission for your child to participate in this research that seeks to study and determine the causes or the reasons why the boys are underachieving academically in the TCI. The research will also make recommendations on possible solutions.

My research methodologies will include working with young men in two ways, - as peer dialogue participants and having interviews with some others. This will involve seven male students between the ages of 15 and 17. Participation is voluntary. As a participant in this research, your child will be anonymous. This means that he will not be asked to identify himself or give any personal information that will make him identifiable in this research or any report resulting from it. It is also important to note that every information given by your child will be confidential, meaning that it will not be shared with anyone but will only be used for the purposes of this research. It will not be used for any other purpose without his (and your) permission or consent.

If you are willing for your child to participate in this research project, I will be grateful if you will kindly sign in the space provided below and return the attached copy to me. If however, you do not wish your child to participate, you do not need to sign or return the form.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this letter.

I _____ hereby give consent for my child, _____
to participate in this research project.

Respectfully,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Telephone: 1- 649 2452285

Email: otuonyev@gmail.com

Appendix 2A

Information Sheet for Prospective Interviewees

Re: Research Project Title: **Causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)**

Dear _____,

This is the information sheet on the research project in which you have graciously indicated your willingness to participate. It provides detailed information on the research project in a question and answer format. Please read it carefully and do not hesitate to ask any question if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information before you sign the attached consent form. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

1. What is the project's purpose?

Government statistics have shown a continuous record of boys' academic underachievement over the years in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). The purpose of this project is to find out the causes of this phenomena and make recommendations on possible solutions.

2. Why have I been chosen?

This research is about boys and only boys will participate in it. Twenty young men between the ages of 15 and 17, who are believed to be fit and proper to take part in this project were identified. The first two boys that returned the initial information letters given to them were chosen as primary interviewees. You are one of them. The next five boys that returned their letters will become a group of peer dialogue participants and will engage their peers to find out their issues and ideas for good practice on boys' education.

Other participants in this project include six adults who will also be interviewed; the curator, librarian and government departments from whom information pertinent to this research would be sought. All information obtained from you and the other participants, separately and collectively, will be critical to achieving the objective of this research project and may assist the TCI government in finding solution to the causes of why boys are not doing well academically.

3. Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary and I thank you for signing the initial information letter and agreeing to take part in this research project. You have been chosen as one of the main interviewees and you are being given this information sheet and a consent form to sign as a follow up step in the process. You may still withdraw your participation at any time without any detrimental effect to you or any loss of benefits to which you may be entitled.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will only need to participate in about two initial interview sessions each of which will last about 45 minutes to one hour. The interviews will take place in any comfortable, private and non-threatening environment of your choice. More interview sessions may be conducted for more information, if necessary. Your involvement in this research will be for a cumulative period of not more than two months, although the entire research may last for about two years. The interview styles will involve

questions that will enable open answers so that you can freely express your thoughts, feelings and personal experiences on issues about the causes of boys' academic underachievement. The information you give in the interview will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. You will not be required to give details of your personal information that will enable you to be identified as a participant.

5. What do I have to do; will there be any restrictions in lifestyle?

There are no lifestyle restrictions as a result of participating in this research. Participants can carry on or live their normal everyday lives as they usually do. You can be assured that your identity will not be revealed under any circumstance.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no major disadvantages or risks involved in participating in the project. Some participants may feel uncomfortable with face to face interviews or any probing into their personal life experiences or the use of an audio tape-recorder during an interview. There may also be anxiety about the risk of the information (accidentally) getting into the wrong hands, when not properly and protectively stored. This may have adverse social consequences such as ridicule. Efforts have been made to eliminate or reduce this risk by adequate protective storage of your information

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Taking part in this research would make you a crucial participant in a positive social change: it is hoped that this work will help parents, school administrators and the TCI government to better understand boys' academic underachievement phenomenon in TCI and enable them to effectively address it. Additionally, you would have played a major and important role in facilitating the completion of this doctoral studies at the University of Sheffield, thereby assisting with the researcher's personal and professional development. By participating in this project, you would have made invaluable contributions in these respects.

8. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

This project is expected to last for about two years but if it happens to stop earlier than expected, the reasons will be properly explained to you and the other participants.

9. What if something goes wrong?

If anything serious or adverse occurs during or following your participation in this project, please report this as soon as possible to the researcher, (Mrs. Vivian Otuonye, Tel.: 1 649 2452285; H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk), who should deal with it respectfully and supportively. However, any complain of unfair treatment by the researcher or if you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, then contact the Supervisor, Professor Dan Goodley, Tel: (+44) (0)1142228185. Email: d.goodley@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.05, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK. If still dissatisfied after this, participant may then contact the Head or Director of Psychology and Education, Dr. China Mills, Telephone: +44(0)1142228176, Email: china.mills@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.04, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom.

10. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used; Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

With your permission, the Interviews will be audio recorded for the purpose of this

research. All the information collected will be securely stored in a manner that will ensure anonymity and confidentiality. You will not be identified or be identifiable in any report or publications. The information obtained will only be used for the purpose of this research. No other use will be made of your information, and no art, poetry, drama or song made available will be published, broadcast or shown in public, or deposited in an archive without your permission. Given the potential use(s) of the information collected, it is not envisaged that the information will be destroyed in the foreseeable future

11. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

You will be expected to give information on causes (known to or experienced by you) as to why boys academically underachieve in TCI. This may involve personal experiences that may have affected or is affecting your academic achievement.

The five peer dialogue participants will engage their peers on issues concerning boys' academic underachievement. Without disclosing their identities, they will share their findings, ideas and reflections for good practice on boys' education, through a temporary website/blog which will operate for not more than two months. They may also be asked to produce works of art, poetry, drama, song or any cultural piece that may give insight into their own stories, personal experiences, feelings and challenges that may have affected or are still affecting their education/academic achievement.

Interview with a group of 6 adult participants will help in identifying the issues with boys' education and finding out what works in improving their academic achievements. The curator, librarian and other relevant government departments will make available, records and documents that may provide information on what may have affected young men's academic achievement in TCI. All the information obtained from you and the other participants are separately and collectively, critical to achieving the objective of the research project. This may assist the TCI government in finding the solution to the problem.

12. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The result of this research is likely to be ready by the end of 2018. You may contact the researcher for inquiries about obtaining copies of the published results and especially the area of the project in which you were involved. The research findings may be available to the TCI Government and hopefully will assist them in a positive intervention in boys' education. It is also likely that the data collected during the course of this research will be used for future research. However, your permission must be obtained before your information is shared in this way and if you agree, we will ensure that it remains anonymous and not traceable back to you. This means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any report or publication.

13. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is self-funded. It is not assisted by any organisation or company.

14. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has undergone the ethical review procedure of and approved by the School of Education, of the University of Sheffield.

15. Contact for further information

The following persons may be contacted should the participants need further

information about the research project:

Vivian Otuonye

H. J. Robinson High School

Grand Turk.

Tel: 649 2452285

Dan Goodley,

Professor of Disability Studies and Education,

University of Sheffield,

School of Education Room 8.05

388 Glossop Road,

Sheffield S10 2JA

Telephone: +44 (0) 114 2228185

Participants will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep. I thank you for the time and effort you have taken to read through this information sheet and the consent form. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs)

Appendix 2B

Information Sheet for Parents of Prospective Interviewees

Research Project Title: **Causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)**

May 22, 2017.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This is the information sheet on the research project in which you have graciously indicated your willingness for your child to participate. It provides detailed information on the research project in a question and answer format. Please read it carefully and do not hesitate to ask any question if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information before you sign the attached consent form. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

1. What is the project's purpose?

Government statistics have shown a troubling and continuous record of boys' academic underachievement over the years in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). This has become a matter of serious concern for the Government, parents, school administrators and other stake-holders. The purpose of this project is to find out the causes of this phenomenon and to make recommendations on possible solutions.

2. Why have my child been chosen?

This research is about boys and only boys will participate in it. Twenty young men between the ages of 15 and 17, who are believed to be fit and proper to take part in

this project were identified.

The first two boys that returned the initial information letters given to them were chosen as primary interviewees. The next five boys that returned their letters will form a group of peer dialogue participants and will engage their peers to find out their issues and ideas for good practice on boys' education. They will anonymously share their findings, ideas and reflection for good practice on boys' education through a temporary website/blog. **Your child has been chosen as one of the two primary Interviewees.**

Other participants include a focus group of six adults who will also be interviewed; the curator, librarian and government departments from whom information pertinent to this research would be sought. All information obtained from your child and the other participants are, separately and collectively, critical to achieving the objective of the research project, which may assist the TCI government in finding the solution to the causes of why boys are not doing well academically.

3. Does my child have to take part?

Participation of your child is voluntary, and I thank you for signing the initial information letter and agreeing for your child to take part in this research project. As mentioned earlier, your child has been chosen as one of the two interviewees and you are being given this information sheet and a consent form to sign as a follow up step in the process. However, you may still withdraw your child from participating at any time without any detrimental effect to him or any loss of benefits to which he may be entitled.

4. What will happen to my child if he takes part?

As one of the two key participants, your child will only need to participate in about two initial interview sessions of a duration of about 45 minutes to one hour each. The interviews will take place in any comfortable, private and non-threatening environment of his choice or in default by me. More interview sessions may be conducted for more information. So your child will be involved in this research for about two months, although the entire research may last for about two years. The interview styles will involve open-ended questions, which will enable open answers so that he can freely express his thoughts, feelings and personal experiences on issues about the causes of boys' academic underachievement in TCI. The information your child will give in the interview will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. He will not be required to give any details of his personal information that will enable him to be identified as a participant.

5. What does my child have to do; will there be any restrictions in his lifestyle?

There are no lifestyle restrictions as a result of participating in this research. Participants can carry on or live their normal everyday lives as they usually do. You can be assured that your child's identity will not be revealed under any circumstance.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no major disadvantages or risks involved in your child's participation in this project. Some participants may feel uncomfortable with face to face interviews or any probing into their personal life experiences or the use of an audio tape-recorder during an interview. There may also be anxiety about the risk of the information (accidentally) getting into the wrong hands, when not properly and protectively stored. This may have adverse social consequences such as ridicule. Efforts have been made to eliminate or reduce this risk by adequate protective storage of your

child's information.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those participating in the project, it is hoped that this project will make a contribution to the understanding of boys' academic underachievement phenomenon. It is anticipated that the research findings will inform and underpin a better articulated policy intervention by the Turks and Caicos Islands Government. Your child would thereby become a crucial participant in a positive social change. Moreover, he would have played a major role in facilitating the completion of the researcher's doctoral studies at the University of Sheffield and assisted in the researcher's personal and professional development. By participating in this project, your child would make invaluable contribution in these respects.

8. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

This project is expected to last for about two years but if it happens to stop earlier than expected, the reasons will be properly explained to you and your child.

9. What if something goes wrong?

Should your child experience any serious or adverse event occurrence during or following his participation in the project, please report this as soon as possible to the researcher, (Mrs. Vivian Otuonye, Telephone: 1-649-2452285; H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk), who should deal with it respectfully and supportively. However, any complain of unfair treatment by the researcher or if you feel that your child's complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can then contact the Supervisor, Professor Dan Goodley, Telephone: (+44) (0)114 222 8185, Email: d.goodley@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.05, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK. If you still feel dissatisfied after this, then contact the Head or Director of Psychology and Education, Dr. China Mills, Telephone: +44(0)1142228176, Email: china.mills@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.04, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom.

10. Will my child's taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All information collected from your child during the course of the research, will be kept strictly confidential. Your child will not be identified or be identifiable in any reports or publications. Most, if not all the information collected will be stored in an electronic device appropriately encrypted. This and other information not capable of storage electronically, will be securely stored in a manner that will continue to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. No access to or use of the information obtained will be allowed without first informing you and your child and obtaining your permission; no art, poetry, drama or song, made available by participants, will be published, broadcast or shown in public, or deposited in an archive without their permission.

11. Will my child be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The interview with your child will be audio- recorded for the purpose of this research but with your permission and that of your child. The information from the audio recordings of your child made during this research may be used for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without you and your child being informed and without your permission. As stated above, the audio recording and every other information gathered during this research will be securely stored in a manner that will ensure anonymity and confidentiality, including encryption of the electronic storage device. No one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. Given the potential use

of the data collected either for future research, journal publication or to guide government policy formulation, it is not envisaged that the research data will be destroyed in the foreseeable future.

12. What type of information will be sought from my child and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The two interviewees, one of whom is your child, will be expected to give information on causes (known to or experienced by them) as to why boys academically underachieve in TCI. This may involve sharing their personal experiences that may have affected or is affecting their own academic achievement.

The group of five peer dialogue participants will engage their peers on issues concerning boys' academic underachievement and to identify ways to support young men into education. They will share their findings, ideas and reflections through a temporary website/blog, without disclosing their identities. The website will operate for not more than two months. They may also be expected to produce some art, poetry, drama, song and or any cultural piece that depict their personal experiences, feelings and challenges that may have affected or are still affecting their education/academic achievement.

Interview with a focus group of six adult participants, (stake holders in the community, who have been interested in working to improve boys' education in the Islands), will help in identifying the issues with boys' education, and finding out what works in improving boys' academic achievements. They will make recommendations for remedies. Additionally, a literature review research method will be employed to examine relevant historical public and archival records in the national library, museum and government websites. This will enable the exploration of how some long past historical events and policy information may have impacted boys' academic achievements in TCI. All the information obtained through your child and these other participants are, separately and collectively, critical to achieving the objective of the research project, namely identifying the causes of boys' underachievement in TCI with suggested remedies. This may assist the TCI government in finding the solution to the problem.

13. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of this research are likely to be ready by the end of 2018. However, the researcher may be contacted for inquiries about obtaining copies of the published results and especially the area of the project in which your child was involved. It is likely that the data collected during the course of this research will be used for further research. The research finding may also be available to the TCI Government, hopefully to underpin and inform effective policy intervention in boys' education. We will ask for you and your child's explicit consent for his data to be shared in this way and if you agree, we will ensure that the data collected through your child remains anonymous and not traceable back to him. This means that your child will not be identified or identifiable in any report or publication.

14. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is self-funded. It is not assisted by any organisation or company.

15. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has undergone the ethical review procedure of, and approved by, the School of Education of the University of Sheffield, UK.

16. Contact for further information

The following persons may be contacted should the participants need further information about the research project:

Vivian Otuonye

H. J. Robinson High School

Grand Turk.

Telephone: 649 245 2285

Dan Goodley,

Professor of Disability Studies and Education,

University of Sheffield,

School of Education Room 8.05

388 Glossop Road,

Sheffield S10 2JA

Telephone: +44 (0) 114 222 8185

Parents of the young participants and the participants will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

I wish to thank you for the time and effort you have taken to read through this information sheet and the consent form. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Appendix 2C

Information Sheet for Prospective Peer Dialogue Participants

Re: Research Project Title: **Causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)**

Dear _____,

This is the information sheet on the research project in which you have graciously indicated your willingness to participate. It provides detailed information on the research project in a question and answer format. Please read it carefully and do not hesitate to ask any question if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information before you sign the attached consent form. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

1. What is the project's purpose?

Government statistics have shown a continuous record of boys' academic underachievement over the years in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). The purpose of this project is to find out the causes of this phenomena and also make recommendations on possible solutions.

2. Why have I been chosen?

This research is about boys and only boys will participate in it. Twenty young men between the ages of 15 and 17, who are believed to be fit and proper to take part in this project were identified.

The first two boys that returned the initial information letters given to them were chosen as primary interviewees. The next five boys that returned their letters will form a group of peer dialogue participants and will engage their peers to find out their issues and ideas for good practice on boys' education. You have been chosen as one of the five peer dialogue participants.

Other participants include six adults who will also be interviewed; the curator, librarian and government departments from whom information pertinent to this research would be sought. All information obtained from you and the other participants are, separately and collectively, critical to achieving the objective of the research project, which may assist the TCI government in finding the solution to the causes of why boys are not doing well academically.

3. Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary and I thank you for signing the initial information letter and agreeing to take part in this research project. You have been chosen as one of the peer dialogue participants and you are being given this information sheet and a consent form to sign as a follow up step in the process. You may still withdraw your participation at any time without any detrimental effect to you or any loss of benefits to which you may be entitled.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

As a peer dialogue participant, you will be expected to engage your peers on issues in boys' education and ways of supporting young men into education. Together, we would produce a temporary website/blog, through which you will freely and anonymously post your findings, ideas and your reflections for good practice on boys' education. The website/blog will be discontinued after two months or such earlier time as it is considered to have served its purpose. In addition to your participation through the website, you and the other young men may be expected to produce works of art, poetry, drama and song, that convey or give insight into your own stories, personal experiences, feelings and challenges that may have affected or are still affecting your academic achievement.

5. What do I have to do; will there be any restrictions in lifestyle?

There are no lifestyle restrictions as a result of participating in this research. Participants can carry on or live their normal everyday lives as they usually do. You can be assured that your identity will not be revealed under any circumstance.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no major disadvantages or risks involved in participating in the project. Some participants may feel uncomfortable with face to face interviews or any probing into their personal life experiences or the use of an audio tape-recorder during an

interview. There may also be anxiety about the risk of the information (accidentally) getting into the wrong hands, when not properly and protectively stored. This may have adverse social consequences such as ridicule. Efforts have been made to eliminate or reduce this risk by adequate protective storage of your information. For the same reason, the website/blog will be made private and discontinued after two months.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Taking part in this research would make you a crucial participant in a positive social change: it is hoped that this work will help parents, school administrators and the TCI government to better understand boys' academic underachievement phenomenon in TCI and enable them to effectively address it. Additionally, you would have played a major and important role in facilitating the completion of this doctoral studies at the University of Sheffield, thereby assisting with the researcher's personal and professional development. By participating in this project, you would have made invaluable contributions in these respects.

8. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

This project is expected to last for about two years but if it happens to stop earlier than expected, the reasons will be properly explained to you and the other participants.

9. What if something goes wrong?

If anything serious or adverse occurs during or following your participation in this project, please report this as soon as possible to the researcher, (Mrs. Vivian Otuonye, Tel.: 1 649 2452285; H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk), who should deal with it respectfully and supportively. However, any complain of unfair treatment by the researcher or if you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, then contact the Supervisor, Professor Dan Goodley, Tel: (+44) (0)1142228185. Email: d.goodley@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.05, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK. If still dissatisfied after this, participant may then contact the Head or Director of Psychology and Education, Dr. China Mills, Telephone: +44(0)1142228176, Email: china.mills@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.04, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom.

10 Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used; Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

You may not be audio recorded for your participation as a peer dialogue participant, but the interview participants will be audio-recorded (with their permission). All the information collected will be securely stored in a manner that will ensure anonymity and confidentiality. You will not be identified or be identifiable in any report or publications. The information obtained will be used for the purpose of this research. No other use will be made of your information, and no art, poetry, drama or song made available will be published, broadcast or shown in public, or deposited in an archive without your permission. Given the potential use(s) of the information collected, it is not envisaged that the information will be destroyed in the foreseeable future.

11. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

You and the other four young participants will be the peer dialogue participants. This

will involve engaging your peers on issues concerning boys' academic underachievement, to identify ways to support young men into education. Without disclosing your identities, you will share your findings, ideas and reflections for good practice on boys' education, through a temporary website/blog which will operate for not more than two months. You may also be asked to produce works of art, poetry, drama, song or any cultural piece that may give insight into your own stories, personal experiences, feelings and challenges that may have affected or are still affecting your education/academic achievement.

The two interview participants will be expected to give information on causes (known to or experienced by them) as to why boys academically underachieve in TCI. This may involve personal experiences that may have affected or is affecting their academic achievement. Interview with a group of 6 adult participants will help in identifying the issues with boys' education and finding out what works in improving boys' academic achievements. The curator, librarian and other relevant government departments will make available, records and documents that may provide historical and policy information that may have affected young men's academic achievement in TCI. All the information obtained from you and the other participants are separately and collectively, critical to achieving the objective of this research project. This may assist the TCI government in finding the solution to the problem.

12. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The result of this research is likely to be ready by the end of 2018. You may contact the researcher for inquiries about obtaining copies of the published results and especially the area of the project in which you were involved. The research findings may be available to the TCI Government and hopefully will assist them in a positive intervention in boys' education. It is also likely that the data collected during the course of this research will be used for future research. However, your permission must be obtained before your information is shared in this way and if you agree, we will ensure that it remains anonymous and not traceable back to you. This means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any report or publication.

13. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is self-funded. It is not assisted by any organisation or company.

14. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has undergone the ethical review procedure of and approved by the School of Education of the University of Sheffield.

15. Contact for further information

The following persons may be contacted should the participants need further information about the research project:

Vivian Otuonye

H. J. Robinson High School

Grand Turk.

Tel: 649 2452285

Dan Goodley,

Professor of Disability Studies and Education,

University of Sheffield,

School of Education Room 8.05

388 Glossop Road,

Sheffield S10 2JA

Telephone: +44 (0) 114 2228185

Participants will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep. I thank you for the time and effort you have taken to read through this information sheet and the consent form. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Appendix 2D

Information Sheet for Parents of Prospective Peer Dialogue Participants

Research Project Title: **Causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)**

May 22, 2017.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This is the information sheet on the research project in which you have graciously indicated your willingness for your child to participate. It provides detailed information on the research project in a question and answer format. Please read it carefully and do not hesitate to ask any question if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information before you sign the attached consent form. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

1. What is the project's purpose?

Government statistics have shown a troubling and continuous record of boys' academic underachievement over the years in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). This has become a matter of serious concern for the Government, parents, school administrators and other stake-holders. The purpose of this project is to find out the causes of this phenomenon and to make recommendations on possible solutions.

2. Why have my child been chosen?

This research is about boys and only boys will participate in it. Twenty young men between the ages of 15 and 17, who are believed to be fit and proper to take part in this project were identified.

The first two boys that returned the initial information letters given to them were chosen as primary interviewees. The next five boys that returned their letters will form a group of peer dialogue participants and will engage their peers to find out their issues and ideas for good practice on boys' education. They will anonymously share their findings, ideas and reflection for good practice on boys' education through a temporary website/blog. **Your child has been chosen as one of the five peer dialogue participants.**

Other participants include a focus group of six adults who will also be interviewed; the curator, librarian and government departments from whom information pertinent

to this research would be sought. All information obtained from your child and the other participants are, separately and collectively, critical to achieving the objective of this research project, which hopefully, may assist the TCI government in finding the solution to the causes of why boys are not doing well academically.

3. Does my child have to take part?

Participation of your child is voluntary, and I thank you for signing the initial information letter and agreeing for your child to take part in this research project. As mentioned earlier, your child has been chosen as one of the five peer dialogue participants and you are being given this information sheet and a consent form to sign as a follow up step in the process. However, you may still withdraw your child from participating at any time without any detrimental effect to him or any loss of benefits to which he may be entitled.

4. What will happen to my child if he takes part?

Your child is one of the five participants in peer dialogue method. They will engage their peers on issues about boys' education and to identify ways of supporting young men into education. Together with the researcher, they would produce a private and temporary website/blog through which they will freely and anonymously post their findings, ideas and reflections for good practice on boys' education. The website/blog will be discontinued after two months or such earlier time as it is considered to have served its purpose. As peer dialogue participants, they may also be asked to produce works of art, poetry, drama and song that convey or give insight into their own stories, personal experiences, feelings and challenges that may have affected or are still affecting their academic achievement.

5. What does my child have to do; will there be any restrictions in his lifestyle?

There are no lifestyle restrictions as a result of participating in this research. Participants can carry on or live their normal everyday lives as they usually do. You can be assured that your child's identity will not be revealed under any circumstance.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks for taking part?

There are no major disadvantages or risks involved in your child's participation in this project. Some participants may feel uncomfortable with face to face interviews or any probing into their personal life experiences or the use of an audio tape-recorder during an interview. There may also be anxiety about the risk of the information (accidentally) getting into the wrong hands, when not properly and protectively stored. This may have adverse social consequences such as ridicule. Efforts have been made to eliminate or reduce this risk by adequate protective storage of your child's information. For the same reason, the website/blog will be private and temporary, and will be discontinued after two months.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those participating in the project, it is hoped that this project will make a contribution to the understanding of boys' academic underachievement phenomenon. It is anticipated that the research findings will inform and underpin a better articulated policy intervention by the Turks and Caicos Islands Government. Your child would thereby become a crucial participant in a positive social change. Moreover, he would have played a major role in facilitating the completion of the researcher's doctoral studies at the University of Sheffield and assisted in the researcher's personal and professional development. By participating

in this project, your child would make invaluable contribution in these respects.

8. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

This project is expected to last for about two years but if it happens to stop earlier than expected, the reasons will be properly explained to you and your child.

9. What if something goes wrong?

Should your child experience any serious or adverse event occurrence during or following his participation in the project, please report this as soon as possible to the researcher, (Mrs. Vivian Otuonye, Telephone: 1-649-2452285; H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk), who should deal with it respectfully and supportively. However, any complain of unfair treatment by the researcher or if you feel that your child's complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can then contact the Supervisor, Professor Dan Goodley, Telephone: (+44) (0)114 222 8185, Email: d.goodley@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.05, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK. If you still feel dissatisfied after this, then contact the Head or Director of Psychology and Education, Dr. China Mills, Telephone: +44(0)1142228176, Email: china.mills@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.04, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom.

10. Will his taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All information collected from your child during the research, will be kept strictly confidential. Your child will not be identified or be identifiable in any reports or publications. Most, if not all the information collected will be stored in an electronic device appropriately encrypted. This and other information not capable of storage electronically, will be securely stored in a manner that will continue to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. No access to or use of the information obtained will be allowed without first informing you and your child and obtaining your permission; no art, poetry, drama or song, made available by participants, will be published, broadcast or shown in public, or deposited in an archive without your permission. Given the risk inherent in internet interactions, the website/blog will be made private and operated for only two months or less.

11. Will my child be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

Your child will not be audio-recorded for his participation as a peer dialogue participant, but the interview participants will be audio-recorded (with their permission). The information from the audio recordings made during this research may be used for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without the participants being informed and their permission obtained. No one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. Given the potential use of the data collected either for future research, journal publication or to guide government policy formulation, it is not envisaged that the research data will be destroyed in the foreseeable future

12. What type of information will be sought from my child and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The two interviewees will be expected to give information on causes (known to or experienced by them) as to why boys academically underachieve in TCI. This may involve sharing their personal experiences that may have affected or is affecting their own academic achievement.

The group of five peer dialogue participants, of which your child is one, will engage their peers on issues concerning boys' academic underachievement and to identify ways to support young men into education. They will share their findings, ideas and reflections through a temporary website/blog, without disclosing their identities. The website will operate for not more than two months. They may also be expected to produce some art, poetry, drama, song and or any cultural piece that depict their personal experiences, feelings and challenges that may have affected or are still affecting their education/academic achievement.

Interview with a focus group of six adult participants, (stake holders in the community, who have been interested in working to improve boys' education in the Islands), will help in identifying the issues with boys' education, and finding out what works in improving boys' academic achievements. They will make recommendations for remedies. Additionally, a literature review research method will be employed to examine relevant historical public and archival records in the national library, museum and government websites. This will enable the exploration of how some long past historical events and policy information may have impacted boys' academic achievements in TCI. All the information obtained through your child and these other participants are, separately and collectively, critical to achieving the objective of the research project, namely identifying the causes of boys' underachievement in TCI with suggested remedies. This may assist the TCI government in finding the solution to the problem.

13. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of this research are likely to be ready by the end of 2018. However, the researcher may be contacted for inquiries about obtaining copies of the published results and especially the area of the project in which your child was involved. It is likely that the data collected during this research will be used for further research. The research finding may also be available to the TCI Government, hopefully to underpin and inform effective policy intervention in boys' education. We will ask for you and your child's explicit consent for his data to be shared in this way and if you agree, we will ensure that the data collected through your child remains anonymous and not traceable back to him. This means that your child will not be identified or identifiable in any report or publication.

14. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is self-funded. It is not assisted by any organisation or company.

15. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has undergone the ethical review procedure of, and approved by, the School of Education of the University of Sheffield, UK.

16. Contact for further information

The following persons may be contacted should the participants need further information about the research project:

Vivian Otuonye

H. J. Robinson High School

Grand Turk.

Telephone: 649 245 2285

Dan Goodley,

Professor of Disability Studies and Education,

University of Sheffield,

School of Education Room 8.05
388 Glossop Road,
Sheffield S10 2JA
Telephone: +44 (0) 114 222 8185

Parents of the young participants and the participants will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

I wish to thank you for the time and effort you have taken to read through this information sheet and the consent form. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Appendix 3A

Consent Form for All the Boys
(Prospective Interviewees and Peer Dialogue Participants)

Title of Research Project: Causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Name of Researcher: Vivian Otuonye

Participant Identification Number for this project: **Please initial box**

1. I have read and understand the information letter that explains the above research project. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2. I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time I wish to and there would not be any negative consequences. I may contact the researcher at 1– 649 2452285 if need be.

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give Permission for the researcher to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that I will not be identified or identifiable in any report that results from the research.

4. I agree for the information collected from me to be used in future research.

5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

_____ Name of Parent (Or legal representative)	_____ Date	_____ Signature
_____ Name of student participant	_____ Date	_____ Signature
_____ Researcher	_____ Date	_____ Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant.

Copies: Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Appendix 4

Generic Cover Letter

H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands

E-mail: otuonyev@gmail.com

Telephone: 1- 649-2452285

May 23, 2017.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am grateful for your willingness for your child to participate in this research on the causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands. I hope the findings and recommendations of this research will assist the Government, school authorities, parents and other stake holders on how to enable the boys to be more successful in their academic endeavours.

I have attached to this cover letter, an information sheet which provides more information on the research. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask any questions for further clarification. Thereafter you may complete and sign the consent form which I have also attached to this cover letter. Your child has also willingly agreed to participate in the research, so he may also be required to sign the consent form. Upon return of the consent form, I will countersign it in the presence of your child.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this letter and the attached documents. I look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Tel: 1- 649 2452285

Email: otuonyev@gmail.com

Appendix 5

Invitation Email to Focus Group

From: **Vivian Otuonye** <otuonyev@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Jun 21, 2017 at 12:44 PM

Subject: Participation in Research Project

To: *John Doe* <.....@hotmail.com>

Dear _____,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project that focuses on the causes of boys' academic underachievement in 'TCI'.

Further to our conversation earlier today, and as promised, please find attached the information sheet that gives detailed information about the research project and the nature and extent of your participation in it. I have also attached a consent form which I will be grateful for you to sign after reading the information sheet. The purposes of signing the consent form is to meet the ethical approval requirement of the university. I will be grateful to receive the signed consent forms on or before the date on the focus group interview. I will also bring the blank consent form for your signature if you are not able to bring along a signed copy of the attached consent form to the interview.

Please note that the Focus group interview will be held on Thursday, 29th June 2017 at 10 o'clock. The venue will be the Reading Room of the H.J Robinson High School, Grand Turk.

I want to thank you again for your willingness to participate in this research project as a member of the focus group. It is indeed a great support to me.

My regards,

Mrs. V Otuonye.

Appendix 6

Information Sheet for the Focus Group

Research Project Title: **Causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)**

June 20, 2017.

Dear Sir,

This is the information sheet on the research project in which you have graciously

indicated your willingness to participate. It provides detailed information on the research project in a question and answer format. Please read it carefully and do not hesitate to ask any question if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information before you sign the attached consent form. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

1. What is the project's purpose?

Government statistics have shown a troubling and continuous record of boys' academic underachievement over the years in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI). This has become a matter of serious concern for the Government, parents, school administrators and other stakeholders. The purpose of this project is to find out the causes of this phenomenon and to make recommendations on possible solutions.

2. Why have I been chosen?

This research is about boys. The potential participants will include a focus group of 6 adults who will be interviewed together. My consultations in the community, among religious and civil organisations and the private and public sectors, have confirmed that you are one of the most appropriate persons to be in this focus group, having made remarkable contribution in the development of the Youth in TCI. You have been identified for being well known in the community and the country at large, for your active involvement and commitment, over the years in the advancement of boys through education. The focus group members, of which you are one, have in some way or the other provided a circle of support and mentorship for boys in the community. You and others are therefore likely to assist the research by bringing to bear your collective experiences and perspectives on what will work for boys' academic achievement.

Other participants in this research project, include seven young men between the ages of 15 and 17 who were randomly chosen. Out of this number, two were chosen as primary interviewees while the next five boys formed a group of peer dialogue participants and have engaged their peers to find out their issues and ideas, and to identify ways to support young men into education. In addition, these five will anonymously share their own findings, ideas and reflections for good practice on boys' education through a temporary website/blog. Another category of participants in this research include the curator, librarian and government departments from whom information pertinent to this research would be sought. All information obtained from you and the other participants, separately and collectively, will be critical to achieving the objective of this research project and may assist the TCI government in finding solution to the causes of why boys are not doing well academically.

3. Do I have to take part?

Participation is voluntary and I thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project. You have been chosen as one of the members of the focus group and you are being given this information sheet and a consent form to sign as a follow up step in the process. You may still withdraw from participating at any time without any detrimental effect to you or any loss of benefits to which you may be entitled. /+ -*

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will only need to participate in one initial interview session that should last about one to two hours. The interview will take place in a comfortable, private and non-threatening environment. Another interview session may be conducted for more information although the entire research may last for about two years. The interview

style will involve open-ended questions, which will enable open answers, so that you can freely express your thoughts, feelings and personal experiences on issues surrounding the boys' academic achievement in TCI. Your answers will especially include suggestions and recommendations on what can be done to improve boys' performance in education in TCI. The information you will give in the interview will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

5. What do I have to do; will there be any restrictions in my lifestyle?

There are no lifestyle restrictions as a result of your participating in this research. You can carry on or live your normal everyday life as you usually do.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

There are no major disadvantages or risks involved in participation in this project. Some participants may feel uncomfortable with face to face, group interviews or the use of an audio tape-recorder during an interview. There may also be anxiety about the risk of breach of confidentiality as the interview will involve a group of other adults or the information (accidentally) getting into the wrong hands, when not properly and protectively stored. Efforts have been made to eliminate or reduce this risk by adequate protective storage of your information.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Taking part in this research would make you a crucial participant in a positive social change: it is hoped that this project will make a contribution in helping parents, school administrators and the TCI government to better understand boys' academic underachievement phenomenon in TCI and enable them to effectively address it. It is anticipated that the research findings will inform and underpin a better articulated policy intervention by the Turks and Caicos Islands Government. Additionally, you would have played a major and important role in facilitating the completion of the researcher's doctoral studies at the University of Sheffield, thereby assisting in the researcher's personal and professional development. By participating in this project, you would make invaluable contributions in these respects.

8. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

This project is expected to last for about two years but if it happens to stop earlier than expected, the reasons will be properly explained to you and the other participants.

9. What if something goes wrong?

Should there be any serious or adverse occurrence during or following your participation in the project, please report this as soon as possible to the researcher, (Mrs. Vivian Otuonye, Telephone: 1-649-2452285; H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk), who should deal with it respectfully and supportively. However, any complaint of unfair treatment by the researcher or if you feel that your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, you can then contact the Supervisor, Professor Dan Goodley, Telephone: (+44) (0)114 222 8185, Email: d.goodley@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.05, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK. If you still feel dissatisfied after this, then contact the Head or Director of Psychology and Education, Dr. China Mills, Telephone: +44(0)1142228176, Email: china.mills@sheffield.ac.uk, Room: 8.04, The School of Education, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, United Kingdom.

10. Will my part in this project be kept confidential?

All information collected from you during the research, will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified or be identifiable in any reports or publications. Most, if not all the information collected will be stored in an electronic device appropriately encrypted. This and other information not capable of storage electronically, will be securely stored in a manner that will continue to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. No access to or use of the information obtained will be allowed without first informing you and obtaining your permission; no art, poetry, drama or song, made available by participants, will be published, broadcast or shown in public, or deposited in an archive without their permission.

11. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

With your permission, the interviews will be audio recorded for the purpose of this research. The information from the audio recordings made during this research may be used for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your permission. As stated above, the audio recording and every other information gathered during this research will be securely stored in a manner that will ensure anonymity and confidentiality, including encryption of the electronic storage device. No one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. Given the potential use of the data collected either for future research, journal publication or to guide government policy formulation, it is not envisaged that the research data will be destroyed in the foreseeable future.

12. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The interview with the focus group of six adult participants, will help in identifying the issues with boys' education, and finding out what works in improving boys' academic achievements. This focus group will also make recommendations for remedial measures.

The two interviewees will be expected to give information on causes (known to or experienced by them) as to why boys academically underachieve in TCI. This may involve sharing their personal experiences that may have affected or is affecting their own academic achievement. The group of five peer dialogue participants will engage their peers on issues concerning boys' academic underachievement and to identify ways to support young men into education. They will share their findings, ideas and reflections through a temporary website/blog, without disclosing their identities. The website will operate for not more than two months. They may also be expected to produce some art, poetry, drama, song and or any cultural piece that depict their personal experiences, feelings and challenges that may have affected or are still affecting their education/academic achievement.

Additionally, a literature review research method will be employed to examine relevant historical public and archival records in the national library, museum and government websites. This will enable the exploration of how some long past historical events and policy information may have impacted boys' academic achievements in TCI. All the information obtained through you and these other participants are, separately and collectively, critical to achieving the objective of the research project, namely identifying the causes of boys' underachievement in TCI with suggested remedies. This may assist the TCI government in finding the solution to the problem.

13. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of this research are likely to be ready by the end of 2018. However, the researcher may be contacted for inquiries about obtaining copies of the published results and especially the area of the project in which you were involved. It is likely that the data collected during this research will be used for further research. The research finding may also be available to the TCI Government, hopefully to underpin and inform effective policy intervention in boys' education. We will ask for and obtain your express consent for your data to be shared in this way and if you agree, we will ensure that the data collected through you remains anonymous and not traceable back to you. This means that you will not be identified or identifiable in any report or publication.

14. Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is self-funded. It is not assisted by any organisation or company.

15. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has undergone the ethical review procedure of and approved by the School of Education of the University of Sheffield, UK.

16. Contact for further information

The following persons may be contacted should you or any of the other participants need further information about the research project:

Vivian Otuonye

H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk.

Telephone: 649 245 2285

Dan Goodley,

Professor of Disability Studies and Education,

University of Sheffield,

School of Education Room 8.05

388 Glossop Road,

Sheffield S10 2JA

Telephone: +44 (0) 114 222 8185

Participants will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep.

I thank you for the time and effort you have taken to read through this information sheet and the consent form.

Sincerely,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Appendix 7

Consent Form for the Focus Group

Title of Research Project: Causes of boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Name of Researcher: Vivian Otuonye

Participant Identification Number for this project: **Please initial box**

1. I have read and understand the information letter that explains the above research project. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.
2. I know that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time I wish to and there would not be any negative consequences. I may contact the researcher at 1– 649 2452285 if need be.
3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give Permission for the researcher to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that I will not be identified or identifiable in any report that results from the research.
4. I agree for the information collected from me to be used in future research.
5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be placed in the project's main record (e.g. a site file), which must be kept in a secure location.

Appendix 8

Research Focus/Questions – Interview Questions

General research question: **What are the causes of boys' academic underachievement in TCI?**

Specific research questions arising from the above include:

1. How do stereotypes associated with the problematic African-Caribbean boys become incorporated as a truth within educational practice?

- i. *It is said that the behaviour of boys is more challenging than the girls: behave badly How far do you agree with this statement and why? (Or Boys generally in school: How far do you agree with this statement and why?)*
- ii. *How do the teachers see young men (the boys) in relation to (a) their interest in school (b) their behaviour? Why do they think of boys in this way.*
- iii. *What (kind of things) do your teachers say about boys and their school performance?*
- iv. *Are your teachers more likely to punish a boy in the class for the same conduct for which a girl may not be punished? What are your reasons for saying so?*
- v. *How does this teacher's attitude towards the young men affect their behaviour, their attitude towards education and their interest in school?*
- vi. *Can you explain how you feel about your teacher's attitude towards you now and in the past? Has it in any way effected your academic performance? Please explain.*
- vii. *Do you think or believe that a boy's behaviour may affect his academic performance or achievement? If yes or no, please explain how this happens?*
- viii. *How do some young men behave towards their teachers or some teachers in the classroom and why?*
- ix. *What do you think about working hard and doing well in school and why? **x*
- x. *Are there behaviours exhibited by young men to spite their teacher(s)? If so, what are those behaviours and why would a young man want to spite his teacher?*
- xi. *Tell me about the different groups that exist in the school or community. As a young man, do you desire to belong or be accepted to a group of other young men; if yes, how strong is your desire; if not why?*
- xii. *How would belonging or not belonging in this group affect a boy's academic performance? How has it affected your own academic performance?*
- xiii. *Outside of the school, how do parents and other adults see or what do they say about young men (the boys) in relation to (a) their interest in school (b)*

their behaviour? Why do you think they see or talk about boys in this way? How does this attitude of parents and adults affect the boys' performance in school?

- xiv. *Give instances of some personal experiences at home or in school that may be affecting or have affected your academic performance* (positively/negatively)*

2. How does the predominance of women in the education system affect boys' academic achievement in the TCI?

- i. *How do you think boys compare with girls (academically) in the classroom How do you or the boys feel about that – (whatever the answer is)? Or ... Do their feelings about the above (affect how serious they take their schoolwork?) make them work harder or what?*
- ii. *In this school (HJ, Robinson High School) there are 37 female teachers compared to 19 male teachers. The public Primary School from which you graduated has even more female teachers than male (by about 85%). What do you think about this difference in number in relation to how the boys perform in the school? Do you think this has any effect on the academic performance of boys; why and how.*
- iii. *Do you think boys will do better in school if there are more male teachers in the school? Please give reasons for your answer.*
- iv. *Is there any difference in your (boys') behaviour towards male and female teachers? If so what type of attitude do you exhibit towards (a) female teachers (b) male teachers? (c) What are the reasons for these answers?*
- v. *What are the things you like or dislike about school in relation to teachers?*
- vi. *As between the boys and girls, who do you think would more likely have more success in the education system and why?*
- vii. *Do you think boys are at an advantage or disadvantage to girls in succeeding in the classroom? If so, why?*
- viii. *What are some distractions boys go through that you think may put them at a disadvantage to the girls in the education system?*
- ix. *What do you think drives girls to do well in school and how may it also be applied to the boys?*
- x. *It would be nice to know if there are more girls than boys in the class. Or more boys than girls? How has this affected the academic achievement of boys in your class?*
- xi. *Do you think boys would do better in class if there were more boys in the class than girls?*
- xii. ***At the beginning, you indicated that you live with only your mother (and*

siblings). (a) What is your attitude towards the female (or the male) teachers? (b) ...your performance in school?

3. How does the Caribbean construction of masculinity impact on boys' academic achievement?

- i. *How do your fellow boys in school expect you to behave as a boy and why? If you act or behave differently from what they expect, what are the likely repercussions.*
- ii. *How do students see boys who are rebellious to teachers, skip classes and do bad in school? How do they see those who do not do these things? (follow up clarification +/-: For example, is it macho or cool for boys to do badly in school; to skip class; hang around with girls; and be rebellious to teachers?)*
- iii. *What behaviours are macho and popular for boys in schools in TCI? What if girls behave the same way, how would they be seen? Can you explain why some boys are called names like sissy or gay, nerd? (Has it anything to do with their trying to do well in school, running after girls, trying to be good to the teachers or behaving well in class?)*
- iv. *What other kind of pressures do you believe are affecting the way boys perform in school in TCI?*
- v. *What are some of the distractions the boys go through that may put them at a disadvantage to the girls in the education system?*
- vi. *Tell me about the different groups or friendship circles you have in the school and the community.*
- vii. *As a young man, how do you feel about belonging to or being accepted into a group of other young men or friendship circle? How would you feel if you do not belong or not accepted in this group? How will this affect your (or a boy's) performance in school?*
- viii. *Do you belong to any group of boys or friendship circle? If so, could you say what is the acceptable behaviour among your group of friends? Do you think it has any effect on your (or boys') behaviour and academic performance? Please explain.*
- ix. *How do you think the parents of TCI boys could play their part in their boys' performance in education and why?*
- x. *How are children brought up in the Caribbean/ TCI families and communities? By this I mean are boys and girls brought up in the same or different ways? Please explain.*
- xi. *How do these (different) ways affect the way a boy or a girl behave in school and perform academically?*
- xii. *Some boys say they want to make money quickly immediately after Secondary School, so they want to work or do some other thing. What*

do you think about this idea?

xiii. Would this idea affect how you (or any of the boys) will want to perform academically and the decision to pursue further studies? Please explain.

4. How do boys negotiate different masculine identities in TCI cultural setting?

- i. What do you think are the acceptable behaviours of a boy, the students consider to be 'cool' (What behaviours are considered 'cool' for a boy by the students)? (3.viii above)*
- ii. Do you exhibit these or any of these 'cool' behaviours and why?*
- iii. Why do you think the boys that exhibit these 'cool' behaviour do so? (is it to fit in or for some other reasons) =Why do boys exhibit these 'cool' behaviours?*
- iv. For those who do not exhibit these 'cool' behaviours, how are they seen by other students and ...*
- v. how do they fit in and manage their everyday school life (what are the difficulties they face for not fitting in)?*
- vi. Are there special names used to label the boys who fit in OR who do not fit into these expected or popular 'cool' behaviours in the school? If yes, what are those names and what do they mean.*
- vii. What do boys do to avoid being called homophobic names in School?*
- viii. Can you explain how the boys see or behave towards other boys who work hard to do well or to improve their performance academically? (does it include name-calling?).*
- ix. How do they cope with these behaviours towards them?*
- x. What if the boys also do well in Sports? Do these behaviours towards them change? ...and why.*
- xi. Have you ever been called any kind of name because of who you are or because of your attitude or something you did (like doing well academically)? How did you deal with the situation? If no, how will you deal with it if you were being called names?*
- xii. How do you yourself as a boy manage to go through your everyday life in school to avoid being labelled or called names?*
- xiii. Give instances of some personal experiences at home or in school that may be affecting or have affected your academic performance**

5. How have long-past historical events such as slavery and colonialism

affected boys' academic achievement in TCI?

- i. *Can you briefly explain what you know about the slavery or colonial history of the Turks and Caicos Islands/in the Caribbean?*
- ii. *Do you think slavery or colonialism has in any way affected the way the boys perform at school compared to the girls? Please explain.*

6. Miscellaneous

- i. *What are the things you like about schooling?*
- ii. *What are the things you dislike about schooling?*

Focus Group Questions

1. *What role do you (or the group to which you belong) play or have played in supporting TCI boys into education? What progress have you made in this endeavour? Could you share any lessons learned or your experiences that should be considered in addressing the issues and concerns in boys' education?*
2. *What do you think are the main factors in TCI (or indeed the Caribbean) affecting the boy's disposition to education in general and their academic performance in particular? Would the slavery or colonial history of TCI be one of such factors? Please explain.*
3. *What do you think about TCI government education policy as it relates to boys' education? How could it be better articulated and or implemented to have positive effect and impact on boys' attitude to education and their academic achievement?*
4. *What role do you think the Community (including parents) could play to motivate and support TCI boys into education?*

Peer Dialogue Participants ' Questions:

1. *What do you like or do not like about school as it relates to the education of the boys?*
2. *What do you think are the reasons why boys are not doing well academically?*
3. *How in your opinion, can these reasons be addressed by the school administration; the government, the community (including parents) and the boys themselves?*
4. *If you were to create a suitable school environment, what would it be in relation to academics, extra-curricular, disciplinary, administration, etc.?*

APPENDIX 9

AN EXCERPT OF THE TCI FIVE YEAR EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN (2013-17) (On Boys' Education)

Boys' Education

The annual reports from CXC on standards highlight variations in performance by gender. These reports at present are only for secondary education but the DoE should increasingly be making information available for primary education (CA1.1.3 and CA1.1.4). These findings should then be analysed and fed back into the professional development programs and work should start in schools to try and reduce disparities (Strategy CC2.1.1). Any initiatives that are taken should be documented and, where successful, replicated elsewhere. The table below shows the numbers of male and female students sitting for the CXC examinations. The table shows that although about the same percentage of boys and girls gain five or more passes, there are many more girls than boys sitting for the exams.

Examinations data by gender, 2010 to 2013 Year

Year	Number sitting			5 or more passes with English and Maths					
		F	Total	M	% M	F	% F	Total	Total %
2010	107	165	272	29	27.1%	49	29.7%	78	28.7%
2011									
2012	143	207	350	32	22.4%	44	21.3%	76	21.7%
Total	250	372	622	61	24.4%	93	25.0%	154	24.8%

Source: TCI Department of Education

Strengthening boys' education has to go beyond academic performance and address issues of why boys drop out at the higher levels of education and also those of boy's self-esteem. There is scope for private sector involvement to consider ways in which to improve the performance of boys. Role models should be identified who have been successful in varying different walks of life and who could then be asked to mentor young men or groups of young men. The 100 Black Men of the Turks and Caicos Islands describes mentoring as 'the cornerstone of what the organization brings to the community' (Strategy CC2.2.1). This organisation looks to provide mentoring for those wishing to excel and the mentors are largely from the business community. Individual schools should look to identifying people from within their immediate community, maybe local building contractors, who have succeeded in life without actually having taken the traditional, academic route to that success. Boys need to be challenged and need to have something in school to stimulate them. In the primary schools there should be activities in the new primary curriculum that are designed

primarily to attract the attention of boys (Strategy CC2.2.2). It is particularly important that greater emphasis be put on physical education and sports in schools and beyond to incorporate the broader concept of Sports for Development (S4D). There will be many benefits of this and amongst these will be better health, improved completion rates and improved self-esteem for some boys. (Strategy CC2.2.2) The Department of Sports will be able to provide support for the schools in this initiative. As has been noted elsewhere in this Plan – see Strategic Imperative 1 – a significant number of children, many of whom will be boys, leave school without any useful certification that can be used for employment purposes. This is one of the motives behind the proposed establishment of a Technical Institute. The practical, skills-based components of the curriculum offered in the high schools should be reviewed to make them more appropriate and for them to be perceived by the students as being of relevance and value to them (Strategy CC2.2.3...”

Appendix 10

[Full text of "willie lynch letter 1712" - Internet Archive](http://archive.org/stream/WillieLynchLetter1712/the_willie_lynch_letter_the_making_of_a_slave_1712_djvu.tx)
archive.org/stream/WillieLynchLetter1712/the_willie_lynch_letter_the_making_of_a_slave_1712_djvu.tx

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The Willie Lynch Letter: The Making of A Slave!

This speech was delivered by Willie Lynch on the bank of the James River in the colony of Virginia in 1712. Lynch was a British slave owner in the West Indies. He was invited to the colony of Virginia in 1712 to teach his methods to slave owners there. The term "lynching" is derived from his last name.

December 25, 1712

Gentlemen:

I greet you here on the bank of the James River in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and twelve. First, I shall thank you, the gentlemen of the Colony of Virginia, for bringing me here. I am here to help you solve some of your problems with slaves. Your invitation reached me on my modest plantation in the West Indies, where I have experimented with some of the newest and still the oldest methods for control of slaves. Ancient Rome's would envy us if my program is implemented.

As our boat sailed south on the James River, named for our illustrious King, whose version of the Bible we cherish, I saw enough to know that your problem is not unique. While Rome used cords of wood as crosses for standing human bodies along its highways in great numbers, you are here using the tree and the rope on oc

casions. I caught the whiff of a dead slave hanging from a tree, a couple miles back. You are not only losing valuable stock by hangings, you are having uprisings, slaves are running away, your crops are sometimes left in the fields too long for maximum profit, you suffer occasional fires, your animals are killed.

Gentlemen, you know what your problems are; I do not need to elaborate. I am not here to enumerate your problems; I am here to introduce you to a method of solving them. In my bag here, I have a fool proof method for controlling your black slaves. I guarantee every one of you that if installed correctly it will control the slaves for at least 300 years [201 2]. My method is simple. Any member of your family or your overseer can use it. I have outlined a number of differences among the slaves and make the differences bigger. I use fear, distrust and envy for control.

These methods have worked on my modest plantation in the West Indies and it will work throughout the South. Take this simple little list of differences and think about them. On top of my list is "age" but it's there only because it starts with an "A." The second is "COLOR" or shade, there is intelligence, size, sex, size of plantations and status on plantations, attitude of owners, whether the slaves live in the valley, on a hill, East, West, North, South, have fine hair, coarse hair, or is tall or short.

Now that you have a list of differences, I shall give you an outline of action, but before that, I shall assure you that distrust is stronger than trust and envy stronger than adulation, respect or admiration. The Black slaves after receiving this indoctrination shall carry on and will become self-refuelling and self-generating for hundreds of years, maybe thousands. Don't forget you must pitch the old black Male vs. the young black Male, and the young black Male against the old black male. You must use the dark skin slaves vs. the light skin slaves, and the light skin slaves vs. the dark skin slaves. You must use the female vs. the male. And the male vs. the female. You must also have you white servants and overseers distrust all Blacks. It is necessary that your slaves trust and depend on us. They must love, respect and trust only us. Gentlemen, these kits are your keys to control. Use them. Have your wives and children use them, never miss an opportunity. If used intensely for one year, the slaves themselves will remain perpetually distrustful of each other.

Thank you, gentlemen,

Let's Make a Slave

It was the interest and business of slave holders to study human nature, and the slave nature in particular, with a view to practical results. I and many of them attained astonishing proficiency in this direction. They had to deal not with earth, wood and stone, but with men and by every regard they had for their own safety and prosperity they needed to know the material on which they were to work. Conscious of the injustice and wrong they were every hour perpetuating and knowing what they themselves would do. Were they the victims of such wrongs? They were constantly looking for the first signs of the dreaded retribution. They watched, therefore with skilled and practiced eyes, and learned to read with great accuracy, the state of mind and heart of the slave, through his sable face. Unusual sobriety, apparent abstractions, sullenness and indifference indeed, any mood out of the common was afforded ground for suspicion and inquiry.

Let us make a slave. What do we need? First of all, we need a black nigger man, a pregnant nigger woman and her baby nigger boy. Second, we will use the same basic principle that we use in breaking a horse, combined with some more sustaining factors. What we do with horses is that we break them from one form of life to another that is we reduce them from their natural state in nature. Whereas nature provides them with the natural capacity to take care of their offspring, we break that natural string of independence from them and thereby create a dependency status, so that we may be able

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to get from them useful production for our business and pleasure

Cardinal Principles for making a Negro

For fear that our future Generations may not understand the principles of breaking both of the beast together, the nigger and the horse. We understand that short range planning economics results in periodic economic chaos; so that to avoid turmoil in the economy, it requires us to have breadth and depth in long range comprehensive planning, articulating both skill sharp perceptions. We lay down the following principles for long range comprehensive economic planning. Both horse and niggers are no good to the economy in the wild or natural state. Both must be broken and tied together for orderly production. For orderly future, special and particular attention must be paid to the female and the youngest offspring. Both must be crossbred to produce a variety and division of labor. Both must be taught to respond to a peculiar new language. Psychological and physical instruction of containment must be created for both. We hold the six cardinal principles as truth to be self-evident, based upon the following the discourse concerning the economics of breaking and tying the horse and the nigger together, all inclusive of the six principles laid down about. NOTE: Neither principle alone will suffice for good economics. All principles must be employed for orderly good of the nation. Accordingly, both a wild horse and a wild or nature nigger is dangerous even if captured, for they will have the tendency to seek their customary freedom, and in doing so, might kill you in your sleep. You cannot rest. They sleep while you are awake and are awake while you are asleep. They are dangerous near the family house and it requires too much labor to watch them away from the house. Above all, you cannot get them to work in this natural state. Hence both the horse and the nigger must be broken; that is breaking them from one form of mental life to another. Keep the body take the mind! In other words, break the will to resist. Now the breaking process is the same for both the horse and the nigger, only slightly varying in degrees. But as we said before, there is an art in long range economic planning. You must keep your eye and thoughts on the female and the offspring of the horse and the nigger. A brief discourse in offspring development will shed light on the key to sound economic principles. Pay little attention to the generation of original breaking but concentrate on future generations.

Therefore, if you break the female mother, she will break the offspring in its early years of development and when the offspring is old enough to work, she will deliver it up to you, for her normal female protective tendencies will have been lost in the original breaking process. For example, take the case of the wild stud horse, a female horse and an already infant horse and compare the breaking process with two captured nigger males in their natural state, a pregnant nigger woman with her infant offspring. Take the stud horse, break him for limited containment.

Completely break the female horse until she becomes very gentle, whereas you or anybody can ride her in her comfort. Breed the mare and the stud until you have the desired offspring. Then you can turn the stud to freedom until you need him again. Train the female horse whereby she will eat out of your hand, and she will in turn train the infant horse to eat out of your hand also. When it comes to breaking the uncivilized nigger, use the same process, but vary the degree and step up the pressure, so as to do a complete reversal of the mind. Take the mean

st and most restless nigger, strip him of his clothes in front of the remaining male niggers, the female, and the nigger infant, tar and feather him, tie each leg to a different horse faced in opposite directions, set him afire and beat both horses to pull him apart in front of the remaining nigger. The next step is to take a bull whip and beat the remaining nigger male to the point of death, in front of the female and the infant. Don't kill him, but put the fear of God in him, for he can be useful for future breeding.

The Breaking Process of the African Woman

Take the female and run a series of tests on her to see if she will submit to your desires willingly. Test her in every way, because she is the most important factor for good economics. If she shows any sign of resistance in submitting completely to your will, do not hesitate to use the bull whip on her to extract that last bit of resistance out of her. Take care not to kill her, for in doing so, you spoil good economic. When in complete submission, she will train her offspring in the early years to submit to labor when they become of age. Understanding is the best thing. Therefore, we shall go deeper into this area of the subject matter concerning what we have produced here in this breaking process of the female nigger. We have reversed the relationship in her natural uncivilized state she would have a strong dependency on the uncivilized nigger male, and she would have a limited protective tendency toward her independent male offspring and would raise male offspring to be dependent like her. Nature had provided for this type of balance. We reversed nature by burning and pulling a civilized nigger apart and bull whipping the other to the point of death, all in her presence. By her being left alone, unprotected, with the male image destroyed, the ordeal caused her to move from her psychological dependent state to a frozen independent state. In this frozen psychological state of independence, she will raise her male and female offspring in reversed roles.

For fear of the young male's life she will psychologically train him to be mentally weak and dependent, but physically strong. Because she has become psychologically independent, she will train her female offspring to be psychological independent. What have you got? You've got the nigger women out front and the nigger man behind and scared. This is a perfect situation of sound sleep and economic. Before the breaking process, we had to be alertly on guard at all times.

file:///Y: \BPP_Books\temp\Fw It is never too late to get up off of your knees and fight for w... 8/20/2005

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Now we can sleep soundly, for out of frozen fear his woman stands guard for us. He cannot get past her early slave moulding process. He is a good tool, now ready to be tied to the horse at a tender age. By the time a nigger boy reaches the age of sixteen, he is soundly broken in and ready for a long life of sound and efficient work and the reproduction of a unit of good labour force. Continually through the breaking of uncivilized savage nigger, by throwing the nigger female savage into a frozen psychological state of independence, by killing of the protective male image, and by creating a submissive dependent mind of the nigger male

e slave, we have created an orbiting cycle that turns on its own axis forever, unless a phenomenon occurs and re shifts the position of the male and female slaves. We show what we mean by example. Take the case of the two economic slave units and examine them closely.

The Nigger Marriage

We breed two nigger males with two nigger females. Then we take the nigger males away from them and keep them moving and working. Say one nigger female bears a nigger female and the other bears a nigger male. Both nigger females being without influence of the nigger male image, frozen with an independent psychology, will raise their offspring into reverse positions. The one with the female offspring will teach her to be like herself, independent and negotiable (we negotiate with her, through her, by her, we negotiate her at will). The one with the nigger male offspring, she, being frozen with a subconscious fear for his life, will raise him to be mentally dependent and weak, but physically strong, in other words, body over mind. Now in a few years when these two offspring become fertile for early reproduction we will mate and breed them and continue the cycle. That is good, sound, and long-range comprehensive planning.

Warning: Possible Interloping Negatives

Earlier we talked about the non-economic good of the horse and the nigger in their wild or natural state; we talked out the principle of breaking and tying them together for orderly production. Furthermore, we talked about paying particular attention to the female savage and her offspring for orderly future planning, then more recently we stated that, by reversing the positions of the male and female savages, we created an orbiting cycle that turns on its own axis forever unless a phenomenon occurred and resift and positions of the male and female savages. Our experts warned us about the possibility of this phenomenon occurring, for they say that the mind has a strong drive to correct and re-correct itself over a period of time if I can touch some substantial original historical base, and they advised us that the best way to deal with the phenomenon is to shave off the brute's mental history and create a multiplicity of phenomena of illusions, so that each illusion will twirl in its own orbit, something similar to floating balloons in a vacuum.

This creation of multiplicity of phenomena of illusions entails the principle of crossbreeding the nigger and the horse as we stated above, the purpose of which is to create a diversified division of labor thereby creating different levels of labor and different values of illusion at each connecting level of labor. The results of which is the severance of the points of original beginnings for each sphere illusion. Since we feel that the subject matter may get more complicated as we proceed in laying down our economic plan concerning the purpose, reason and effect of crossbreeding horses and nigger, we shall lay down the following definition terms for future generations.

Orbiting cycle means a thing turning in a given path. Axis means upon which or a round which a body turns. Phenomenon means something beyond ordinary conception and inspires awe and wonder. Multiplicity means a great number. Sphere means a globe. Cross breeding a horse means taking a horse and breeding it with an ass, and you get a dumb backward ass long headed mule that is not reproductive nor productive by itself.

Crossbreeding niggers mean taking so many drops of good white blood and putting them into as many nigger women as possible, varying the drops by the various tone that you want, and then letting them breed with each other until another cycle of colour appears as you desire. What this means is this; Put the niggers and the horse in a breeding pot, mix some ass and some good white blood and what do you get? You got a multiplicity of colours of ass backward, unusual niggers, running, tied to a backward ass long headed mule, the one productive of itself, the other sterile. (The one constant, the other dying, we keep the nigger co

nstant for we may replace the mules for another tool) both mule and nigger tied to each other, neither knowing where the other came from and neither productive for itself, nor without each other.

Control the Language

Crossbreeding completed, for further severance from their original beginning, we must completely annihilate the mother tongue of both the new nigger and the new mule and institute a new language that involves the new life's work of both. You know language is a peculiar institution. It leads to the heart of a people. The more a foreigner knows about the language of another country the more he is able to move through all levels of that society. Therefore, if the foreigner is an enemy of the country, to the extent that he knows the body of the language, to that extent is the country vulnerable to attack or invasion of a foreign culture. For example, if you take a slave, if you teach him all about your language, he will know all your secrets, and he is then no more a slave, for you can't fool him any longer. For example, if you told a slave

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that he must perform in getting out "our crops" and he knows the language well, he would know that "our crops" didn't mean "our crops" and the slavery system would break down, for he would relate on the basis of what "our crops" really meant. So, you have to be careful in setting up the new language for the slaves would soon be in your house, talking to you "man to man" and that is death to our economic system. In addition, the definitions of words or terms are only a minute part of the process. Values are created and transported by communication through the body of the language. A total society has many interconnected value systems. All the values in the society have bridges of language to connect them for orderly working in the society. But for these language bridges, these many value systems would sharply clash and cause internal strife or civil war, the degree of the conflict being determined by the magnitude of the issues or relative opposing strength in whatever form.

For example, if you put a slave in a hog pen and train him to live there and incorporate in him to value it as a way of life completely, the biggest problem you would have out of him is that he would worry you about provisions to keep the hog pen clean, or the same hog pen and make a slip and incorporate something in his language whereby he comes to value a house more than he does his hog pen, you got a problem. He will soon be in your house.

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Letter to Director of Education and Principal of Researcher's School for permission to conduct research in the school and with the students (participants).

Vivian Otuonye

Breezy Brae, Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands

E-mail: vivianotuonye.hjr@tciedu.tc, otuonyev@gmail.com

Telephone: 1- 649-245-2285

April 10, 2017

Mr.

Director of Education

Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Library Services

Providenciales

Thru

Mr. P.....

Principal

H. J. Robinson High School

Grand Turk

Turks and Caicos Islands.

Dear Sirs,

Permission to carry out a doctoral research (fieldwork) in school

As you are already aware, I have been a student at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom since October 2014, pursuing a Doctoral degree in Psychology and Education. The course work has been completed. I am about to embark on the thesis, with a focus on *Boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands*. My research methodologies will include interviews and peer dialogues that will involve seven male students between the ages of 15 and 17. I also intend to get the specific consent of their parents. An important feature of their involvement is anonymity and confidentiality, in the sense that they will not be identified or be identifiable in the research or in the report(s) that may result from the research. Moreover, the information they provide will not be used for any other purpose, other than the purposes of this research, without their permission or consent.

The research participants (students) will be chosen by random sampling through the assistance of some colleagues in the school. These colleagues and the students will be fully informed of the nature, aims and objectives of the research, including the nature and extent of their involvements. Their participation will be entirely voluntary.

I will be grateful if you could kindly grant me permission to carry out this aspect of the research with these prospective participants in the school.

Attached herewith is the University of Sheffield, UK's ethical approval for this research purpose and the permission from the Human Resource Management Directorate of Turks and Caicos Islands, to pursue this programme.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Appendix 12

Letter to the Curator and Librarian– Museum and the Library

H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands

E-mail: otuonyev@gmail.com

Telephone: 1- 649-2452285

Title of Study: Causes of Boys' Academic Underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands, (TCI)

Name of Researcher: Vivian Otuonye (Mrs.)

Dear _____,

I am Guidance Counsellor at the H. J. Robinson High School, Grand Turk. I am also pursuing a doctoral degree programme in Psychology and Education at the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom. I am about to embark on the thesis with a focus on *Boys' academic underachievement in the Turks and Caicos Islands*.

Government statistics have shown a troubling and continuous record of boys' academic underachievement over the years. This research seeks to study and determine the causes or the reasons why the boys are underachieving academically in TCI. In the process, the research will seek to find out if and how the society has failed the young men, find out what works to bring boys into education, then make recommendations on possible solutions.

My research methodologies will include a literature review research method. This will involve the examination of relevant historical public and archival records and artefacts in the national library and national museum. This will enable the exploration of how some long past historical events may have impacted young men's academic achievement in Turks and Caicos Islands.

I shall be grateful if you (the curator, librarian and other relevant government departments) will make available to me, archival records, artefacts, and other public documents that may provide historical and policy information that will assist me to meet the purpose of this research.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Regards,

Vivian Otuonye

Tel: 1- 649 2452285

Email: otuonyev@gmail.com

Appendix 13

Ed.D Ethics Application Approval Letter



Downloaded: 24/03/2017
Approved: 20/03/2017

Vivian Otuonye
Registration number: 140234244
School of Education
Programme: EdD Psychology and Education

Dear Vivian

PROJECT TITLE: Causes of Boys Academic Underachievement in Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI)
APPLICATION: Reference Number 011904

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 20/03/2017 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 011904 (dated 27/02/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1027672 version 1 (26/02/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1027671 version 1 (26/02/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1027670 version 1 (26/02/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1026370 version 2 (26/02/2017).
- Participant consent form 1026381 version 1 (06/01/2017).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

All reviewers left various comments on various sections of the application - please do take these into consideration before beginning your fieldwork.

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education