

CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE
CARIBBEAN SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE®
EXAMINATION**

MAY/JUNE 2013

**SOCIAL STUDIES
GENERAL PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Social Studies examination is offered to candidates at the June and January administration of the examination. The subject continues to attract over fifty thousand registrants for each June sitting. The examination consists of the following papers:

Paper 01	—	Multiple Choice
Paper 02	—	Structured Questions and Extended Essays
Paper 031	—	School-Based Assessment
Paper 032	—	Alternative to School-Based Assessment

Approximately 49,000 candidates sat the June 2013 examination. Of this number 68 per cent achieved Grades I–III, down from 71 per cent last year.

DETAILED COMMENTS

Paper 01 – Multiple Choice

This paper consisted of 60 items, all designed to assess the Knowledge and Comprehension profile. The mean on this paper was 35.12 out of 60, or approximately 59 per cent. This was consistent with the performance in 2012.

Paper 02 – Structured Questions and Extended essays

The paper consisted of ten questions arranged in three sections, labelled A, B and C. Candidates were required to answer a total of five questions, that is, two from Section A, two from Section B and one from Section C. Each question was worth 20 marks. The profiles tested were Profile 1, Knowledge and Comprehension and Profile 2, Application, Evaluation and Problem-solving. The mean on this paper was approximately 37 per cent.

Section A: Individual Family and Society

In this section candidates were required to respond to two out of three questions. The quality of the responses ranged from excellent to less than satisfactory.

Question 1

This was the most popular question in Section A with 44 427 responses. It had a mean of 8.74 out of 20 or approximately 44 per cent. The question tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of the economic functions of the family, how the school prepares young persons to undertake these functions and the factors that may prevent the family from performing those functions. It also asked candidates to suggest legal strategies which families in a community may use to improve their economic situation and explain why each strategy is likely to be successful.

Parts (a) to (c) tested knowledge and comprehension.

Part (a) asked candidates to state two economic functions of the family. A minority of candidates were not able to distinguish between the economic and the other functions of the family. Most candidates, however, responded correctly and gave responses such as: *providing money for food for the family; providing adequate shelter; and saving for emergencies and other needs.*

Part (b) asked candidates to state two factors which may prevent the family from providing for the basic needs of its members. Many candidates gave acceptable responses such as: *parents may be unemployed; family's income may be inadequate and; the breadwinner may be ill.*

For Part (c) candidates were asked to explain two ways in which the school prepares young persons to undertake the economic functions of a family. This section was well done but some candidates did not focus on the economic functions of the family; instead they focused on other functions such as socialization. Many candidates gave good responses such as:

School provides counselling regarding employment opportunities. Students would therefore be able to choose the career for which they are best suited and which would enable them to support their families; includes budgeting in the relevant subject areas in the curriculum. Training in budgeting would help students to spend money wisely when purchasing goods and services for the family and also to set aside savings for emergencies.

Part (d) assessed the application, evaluation and problem solving profile.

Part (d) (i) asked candidates to suggest three legal strategies families in the community may use to improve their economic situation. A significant number of candidates gave responses that included 'illegal' rather than 'legal' strategies. Some gave three responses which could be subsumed under one strategy. The following are acceptable responses that were considered well developed and fully explained.

Strategy 1: Set up kitchen gardens that will reduce the cost of purchasing food for their families. The surplus food items that are produced may be sold to earn an income.

Strategy 2: Organize a free baby-sitting system among themselves where families assist each other with babysitting to allow others to go to work.

Part (d) (ii) asked candidates to explain why each of the strategies is likely to be successful. The following is an example of a relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for Strategy 2 given above.

This strategy is likely to be successful because many parents cannot go out to work to provide for their basic needs, because they cannot afford baby sitting or day care services. The families will be very motivated to organize this system that will allow them an opportunity to work to earn an income.

In many cases candidates' explanations were repetitions of the strategies which were given in Part (b) (i). Many failed to develop their justification adequately.

Question 2

This question had a mean of 9.31 out of 20 or approximately 47 per cent. This was the highest mean of the questions in this section. The question tested candidates' understanding of the concept of social control, types of institutions and their functions. They were also required to suggest three measures which a religious institution could implement that would assist in correcting the behaviour of delinquent young people and justify why each measure would succeed.

Part (a) asked candidates to define the term 'social control'. This part was poorly answered. Responses revealed that many candidates lacked knowledge of the concept of social control. Acceptable responses included: *Social control is the means by which a society or a group teaches its members to obey its norms.*

Part (b) asked candidates to name two types of institutions in society, other than religious institutions. Acceptable responses included: *social, educational, economic, political and recreational.*

For Part (c) candidates were asked to explain one function of each of the institutions named in part (b). Most responses were acceptable.

Part (d) tested candidates' application, evaluation and problem-solving skills.

Candidates were asked, in Part (d) (i), to suggest three measures which religious institutions could implement to assist in correcting the behaviour of delinquent young people in the society. The responses were for the most part varied but acceptable. The following are acceptable responses that were considered well developed and fully explained.

Measure 1: Religious institutions can assist in providing vocational training for delinquent youths by either giving them financial support to attend a technical school or getting qualified members to volunteer to train them in specially organized classes.

Measure 2: Religious institutions can engage the services of trained and experienced professionals to provide counselling and professional guidance for their spiritual and moral development.

Part (d) (ii) asked candidates to explain why each of the measures was likely to be successful. In most cases candidates were able to earn marks for the responses which they provided.

The following is an example of a relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for Measure 1.

By providing the youths with vocational skills it can help them to find meaningful employment which is likely to keep them out of trouble because they have a source of income which they can use to provide their needs lawfully.

Question 3

This question was the least popular in this section with 14 484 responses. It also had the lowest mean. The mean was 6.32 out of 20 or approximately 32 per cent. The question tested candidates' knowledge of the structure of government and the role of the civil service (public sector). Candidates were also required to suggest three measures a government may use to improve the efficiency of the civil service (public sector) and explain why the measures were likely to succeed.

The knowledge and comprehension component comprised parts (a) and (b).

Candidates readily provided answers to part (a), which required them to identify the branch of government missing from the diagram of the structure of government that was provided. The acceptable response was *the legislature*.

For Part (a) (ii) candidates were asked to state the branch of government to which judges belong. Again, they were readily able to provide the acceptable response which was *the judiciary*.

Part (b) (i) asked candidates to outline two ways in which the civil service (public sector) in a country directly responds to the needs of the citizens. The most popular response was: *The civil service is one of the largest organizations in a country and therefore provides a wide range of jobs for citizens*. Other acceptable responses included:

The civil service is responsible for providing citizens with essential public services such as health, education, sanitation and welfare.

Civil servants listen to the problems of the citizens pertaining to government's policies and explain government's policies and programmes to the citizens.

In some cases candidates' responses indicated a lack of understanding of the civil service (public sector). They seemed to consider this a reference to the general public.

Part (b) (ii) asked candidates to outline one way in which officials of the Ministry of Education help the Minister of Education to make the educational system function. This part was well answered. An example of an acceptable, well-explained response was: *Officers in the Ministry of Education ensure that educational services are delivered efficiently by providing adequate educational materials for teachers and students*. Other acceptable responses included:

Provide the Minister with research data to guide education policies to ensure that critical educational services are provided for the citizens.

Communicate the citizens' concerns about educational matters and policies to the Minister. This helps to make the Minister aware of whether or not the policies are having the intended effects.

Parts (c) assessed application, evaluation and problem solving skills.

In Part (c) (i) candidates were given the stimulus “*An efficient public sector is essential to the development of a country*” and asked to suggest three measures a government may use to improve the efficiency of the public sector.

The following are examples of measures that were considered well-developed and clearly explained.

Measure 1: Promote civil servants to higher posts on the basis of the quality of their service and qualifications rather than on their length of service alone.

Measure 2: House employees in modern buildings which are equipped with up-to-date technology, furnishings and other resources that would enable them to provide the quality work expected.

Part (d) (ii) asked candidates to explain why each of the measures suggested in Part (b) (i) is likely to be successful.

The following is an example of a relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for Measure 1.

Awarding promotion based on quality of service will motivate employees to set goals at the beginning of the year and encourage them to monitor and evaluate their work and make improvements. It is likely to be successful because monitoring can contribute to the efficiency of the civil service.

Section B: Development and Use of Resources

This section was divided into two parts. Part I consisted of two structured questions (Questions 4 and 5) and Part II of two extended essay questions (Questions 5 and 6). Candidates were required to attempt one question from each part of this section.

Part I – Sustainable Development and Use of Resources

Question 4

This question had a mean of 7.96 out of 20, or approximately 40 per cent, and was the more popular question in this part of Section B. It was based on employment. It tested candidates' ability to interpret employment statistics and their understanding of the relationship between a person's level of skills and the type of employment he or she is likely to get. Candidates were also required to suggest three strategies a secondary school may implement to help prepare students for employment and to say why the strategies would succeed.

The knowledge and comprehension component comprised Parts (a) and (b).

Parts (a) (i) to (iv) asked candidates to study employment data in the table provided and answer four questions based on the data. Most candidates demonstrated an understanding of the table and were able to provide plausible responses to Parts (a) (i) to (a) (iii). Some candidates had difficulty with the calculation required by Part (a) (iv).

For Part (b), candidates were required to explain two ways in which the level of a person's skills may influence the type of employment that person can obtain. Most candidates were unable to give acceptable responses. They were unable to explain the relationship between the level of skills and type of employment opportunities.

Acceptable responses included:

Persons who do not have skills may only be able to obtain very low paid forms of employment.

A low level of skills may earn one a job where there are hardly any opportunities for promotion whereas a high level of skills may allow someone to get jobs with opportunity for promotion.

Parts (c) assessed application, evaluation and problem solving skills.

Part (c) (i) asked candidates to suggest three strategies that a secondary school administrator may implement to help prepare students for employment. This part was well answered and the responses were varied. The following are examples of well-developed and clearly explained measures.

Strategy 1: Teach students how to prepare a CV and how to write an effective job application that can impress an employer.

Strategy 2: Organize career guidance seminars and invite human resources professionals and guidance counsellors to advise students about possible career options and the required qualifications.

The following is an example of a relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for Strategy 1.

Teaching students how to write an effective job application will be successful because such applications highlight to employers the strengths and marketability of the applicant. He/she will therefore more likely get the job for which he/she has applied.

Question 5

This question had the highest mean on the entire paper. The mean was 10.54 out of 20 or 53 per cent. This question was based on natural resources. It tested candidates' knowledge of the major natural resources found in the Caribbean, their uses and the environmental consequences of misusing them. Candidates were also required to suggest three measures a government may take to ensure conservation of natural resources and to say why each strategy would succeed.

Parts (a) to (c) assessed knowledge and comprehension skills.

Part (a) asked candidates to identify two of the major natural resources found in the Caribbean. This section was well done, as in most cases candidates were able to identify major natural resources such as *land, water, forests, bauxite and petroleum*.

Part (b) asked candidates to name two uses of one of the resources named in Part (a) of the question. The responses were acceptable and varied. Acceptable responses included:

Land: used for small farming; and for housing settlements

Water: used for irrigating agricultural crops; for domestic purposes e.g. cooking, washing

Forests: produce lumber for making houses and furniture; provide employment

Petroleum: used for domestic consumption; provides power to operate machinery

Bauxite: changed into alumina and exported to earn foreign exchange.

For Part (c) candidates were required to describe two possible environmental consequences of the misuse of one of the resources named in (a). This part presented some difficulty for some candidates as they misunderstood the requirements of the question and instead provided general consequences and not environmental ones. Acceptable responses included:

Land may become polluted by the dumping of solid waste in vacant lots and along the roadside.

Toxic chemicals such as mercury used in gold mining activities, when improperly disposed, may end up in rivers and cause the destruction of aquatic life in the rivers.

Parts (d) (i) and (d) (ii) assessed application, evaluation and problem solving skills.

Part (d) (ii) asked candidates to suggest three measures a government may take to ensure conservation of natural resources. This question proved to be most challenging for the candidates. In most cases responses were either irrelevant or merely a repetition of what was given in Part (i).

The following are examples of well-developed and clearly explained strategies.

Strategy 1: The government can utilize the expertise of environmentalists to introduce education awareness programmes about the value of the resources both at school and for the wider society.

Strategy 2: Government can introduce legislation with heavy penalties forbidding the dumping of harmful wastes in the sea.

Below is an example of a relevant, feasible and well-explained justification statement for Strategy 1.

Through public awareness programmes citizens will be educated about the value to them and the country of conserving the resources and may therefore be influenced to use them wisely.

Part II – Regional Integration

Question 6

The mean on this question was 6.05 out of 20 or approximately 30 per cent and it was far more popular than Question 7, the other question in this part of Section B. Based on Regional Integration, it tested candidates' knowledge of the factors which promote competition among businesses in the Caribbean and the benefits of this competition to consumers, by requiring candidates to write an essay on stimulus "Development of a Competitive Business Culture in the CARICOM Region". In addition, candidates were asked to suggest three strategies a CARICOM government may pursue in order to encourage manufacturers to produce for the regional market.

The knowledge and comprehension component of the question asked candidates to state two factors that promote competition among businesses in the CARICOM Region. Many candidates found this part very challenging. They wrote about factors which contribute to the development of the arts instead of the development of competitive business attitudes. Acceptable responses included *the removal of barriers to trade in goods of regional origin; the free movement of capital and labour; and the desire to increase market share.*

The question went on to require candidates to explain two ways in which competition among businesses may be beneficial to consumers in the Region. Most candidates provided appropriate responses. Examples of these are:

The competition will result in some businesses lowering their prices in order to increase market share. Consumers will then pay lower prices for goods in competition.

The competition may also influence some businesses to increase their product range or to sell their goods in new markets. The increased range of products will provide consumers with a greater choice among goods in competition.

For the application and evaluation component, candidates were asked to suggest three strategies that the government of a CARICOM country may implement to encourage local manufacturers to produce for the regional market. Examples of well-developed and clearly explained strategies are:

Strategy 1: Government can help manufacturers to reduce their cost of production by offering them duty-free concessions on inputs imported to produce goods for export.

Strategy 2: Government could partner with manufacturers to have public forums to educate the public in the Region on the benefits of consuming goods produced in the Region such as helping manufacturers to improve their competitiveness in order to export to extra-regional markets.

The following are examples of relevant and feasible justifications for Strategies 1 and 2 respectively:

Manufacturers will be able to stimulate demand for their products by passing on the savings from the reduced cost of production to consumers. As a result of making their products more price competitive they will increase their market share in the Region.

Government's partnering with manufacturers to educate the public on the benefits of consuming regional goods will stimulate the demand for goods and encourage the export of goods within the Region. This will happen because consumers will now be aware of how they can contribute to their own prosperity and the economic development of the Region.

Question 7

The mean on this question was 4.74 out of 20 or approximately 24 per cent. This mean was also the lowest on the entire paper. The question tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of the unequal distribution of resources in the Region and how the sustainable use of mineral resources may assist the economic development of the country in which the resource is found. It also required candidates to suggest three strategies CARICOM Heads of Government may employ to use their resources jointly. The stimulus required candidates to write an essay on the topic, "Unequal Distribution of Natural Resources May Hinder Regional Integration".

The knowledge and comprehension component asked candidates to identify two CARICOM countries which have mineral resources in commercial quantities and two which do not. Candidates correctly stated that the countries which have include *Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago* as having such resources in commercial quantities. Those which do not have include *Grenada, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines*.

Candidates were then asked to explain two ways in which the sustainable use of one mineral resource may assist the economic development of the country where it is found. Many candidates stated the use of the mineral resource but failed to explain how its sustainable use can assist the economic development of the country where it is found.

The following is an example of an acceptable response:

The careful use of petroleum would ensure that the country's reserves last longer and the country would be assured of supplies of fuel to develop its industrial base over the long run.

The application, evaluation and problem solving component asked candidates to suggest three strategies CARICOM Heads of Government may employ to use their natural resources jointly. This section was not well done. Most candidates overlooked the word "jointly" and thus gave responses which suggested how countries could develop their resources independently.

An example of a strategy that was well developed and clearly explained was:

Strategy 1: Countries with sources of fuel can offer fuel to the other countries at special CARICOM rates to reduce their high fuel import bill.

Strategy 2: Countries with mineral resources can import more of the products of the poorer countries of CARICOM; this would help to stimulate development in those countries.

The following is a relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for Strategy 1:

This strategy is likely to be successful because access to cheap sources of fuel will enable countries without sources of fuel to reduce the cost of production of their goods. If the savings are passed on to consumers this will stimulate demand for their goods at home and within the Region. This in turn will lead to expansion of industries and increased production.

Section C: Options

There were three questions in this section and candidates were required to answer one. These questions were based on the following optional areas of study: Communication, Consumer Affairs and Tourism.

Question 8

This question was based on Communication and tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of forms and media of communication and how geographical factors may influence access to these; factors which may cause a breakdown in communication and how the media can assist in the development of a Caribbean identity. Candidates were asked to write an essay on the stimulus "The Media and Communication". The mean for this question was 5.85 out of 20 or approximately 30 per cent.

The knowledge and comprehension component asked candidates to identify one form of communication and one medium of communication. Most candidates answered correctly. The most popular media of communication stated were *television, radio and newspapers*.

Some popular and acceptable factors for a breakdown in communication which candidates gave included *language differences between sender and receiver* and technological issues such as network failure.

The knowledge and comprehension component continued by asking candidates to explain two ways in which a person's location may affect the medium of communication to which he/she may have access. Acceptable reasons included: *daily delivery of newspapers may not be available to remote areas due to distance, geographical features or lack of proper roads. High mountains affect transportation for the installation of telephone lines.*

The application, evaluation and problem solving component asked candidates to suggest three ways in which the media can assist in the development of a Caribbean identity. Examples of strategies that were considered well developed and clearly explained are:

Strategy 1: Provide opportunities for Caribbean people to share their ideas, thoughts and feelings through regional radio and television link-ups.

Strategy 2: Regulate the balance of foreign and local programmes being aired in order to give more exposure to programmes with local and regional content.

A relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for Strategy 1 is:

Regulating the balance of foreign and local programmes will ensure that more local programmes are aired. Some foreign films promote much violence, promiscuity and other negative behaviours. These influence the youths to imitate what is shown. They begin to imitate this behaviour.

Question 9

This question was based on consumer affairs and tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of the concept of demand and the factors which affect supply and demand; how government influences prices to protect consumers and how consumers can protect themselves when purchasing goods. Candidates were required to write an essay on the stimulus, "Consumers: Understanding supply and demand". The mean for this question was 7.57 out of 20 or approximately 38 per cent. This was the most popular question in Section C.

The knowledge and comprehension component asked candidates to define the term 'demand'. Most candidates did not demonstrate that they understood the concept. They incorrectly interpreted the concept to mean "a very firm request made to someone for something". Few candidates gave appropriate responses which included *the quantity of goods and services which consumers are willing and able to buy at a particular price at any given time.*

Candidates were then asked to identify one factor, other than price, which influences consumer demand. Acceptable responses were: *advertisements, change of income and quality of goods or services.*

Candidates were also asked to state one factor, other than price, which influences the supply of goods. Acceptable responses were:

*availability and cost of transportation;
natural factors such as flooding and drought; and
the hoarding of items which creates short supply.*

The knowledge and comprehension component continued by asking candidates to explain two ways in which governments can influence the price of goods in an effort to protect consumers. Most candidates had difficulty with this part of the essay as most merely stated that the government should lower the price of goods. They could not provide the means by which the government could do this. An acceptable and popular response was:

Government may, by law, fix maximum percentage wholesale and retail mark-ups on basic food items and employ persons to visit businesses to ensure that they were complying with the fixed prices. This would enable consumers in the lower income bracket to have access to basic goods.

The application, evaluation and problem solving component asked candidates to suggest three actions which consumers can take to protect themselves when purchasing goods. An example of a suggestion that was well developed and clearly explained was: *Consumers should read labels to find out the expiry date, constituents and side-effects of the product before purchasing it.*

A relevant, feasible and well-explained justification for the action was:

By reading labels, examining the products and checking the expiry date and constituents before purchase the consumer is unlikely to purchase goods that are unsafe for consumption or which will cause any allergic reactions to him/her and has therefore protected him/herself.

Question 10

This question was based on Tourism, and tested candidates' knowledge and understanding of how tourism benefits Caribbean countries, the challenges that **new** tourist destinations may cause for Caribbean hoteliers and how governments may encourage persons to invest in the tourist industry. Candidates were asked to write an essay on the stimulus "Caribbean Tourism – The Need to Invest". The mean for this question was 5.42 out of 20 or approximately 27 per cent. This question was the least popular in Section C.

The knowledge and comprehension component asked candidates to state two types of tourism that generate foreign exchange for Caribbean countries. This section was well answered. Acceptable responses were: *land based, cruise and eco-tourism.*

Candidates were then asked to state two ways Caribbean countries benefit from tourism apart from foreign exchange. Popular and acceptable answers were:

*It provides employment for the citizens.
It exposes citizens to people of different cultures.*

The knowledge and comprehension component then continued by asking candidates to explain two challenges that **new** tourist destinations may cause for hoteliers within the Caribbean. This section was poorly answered. Many students did not understand the concept of a “new tourist destination” and their responses incorrectly included new facilities such as hotels, resorts and attractions in the original destination. Acceptable responses included:

New destinations may offer a more attractive product and visitors may prefer to go there rather than to the existing destination. This would result in a reduction in visitor arrivals in the existing destination.

The existing destination may require large sums of money, which it may not have, to improve its tourism product to compete with the new destination.

The application, evaluation and problem solving component also asked candidates to suggest three actions a government may take to encourage persons to invest in the tourist industry. Many candidates gave ways which government could use to attract tourists instead of how to attract investment in the tourist industry.

An example of an action that was well developed and clearly explained was:

Maintain a stable political climate and govern by the law so investors will not feel threatened at any time.

An example of a justification that was relevant and clearly explained was:

A stable political climate is likely to be successful because it will attract investors to a country. It will make investors feel safe and ensure that their investments are also safe.

Recommendations for Candidates

Overall, the frequency of unsatisfactory responses to the questions on this paper reflects a high level of unpreparedness and lack of knowledge among a substantial number of candidates. Where candidates demonstrated the knowledge required, often-times they were not able to adequately justify suggestions given. It is therefore recommended that candidates

1. become familiar with the available resources such as the Social Studies syllabus, CXC’s and other recommended, and reliable websites, such as Notesmaster, newspaper articles and documentaries dealing with current Social Studies issues.
2. practise skills of interpreting and analysing.
3. participate in structured in-class discussions and debates to help them to develop skills in justifying or defining positions taken and suggestions made.

Candidates need to improve their knowledge and understanding of issues pertaining to CARICOM in order to answer questions on CARICOM better. The body of literature on areas such as CARICOM, tourism and integration is increasing. Candidates should avail themselves of such literature so that they are better able to respond to questions in these areas of the syllabus. Teachers should note, too, that in many instances these writings are not produced with the typical CSEC student as the intended reader, so teacher guidance is essential to facilitate effective study and understanding of the articles and other material.

Recommendation for Teachers

It is suggested that teachers engage students in the following:

- Problem-solving exercises involving case studies. This could help to enhance responses to the application, evaluation and problem-solving section.
- Concept-mapping exercises to improve understanding and application of concepts.
- Tasks and exercises which require the application of problem solving, critical thinking and research skills in information gathering to enhance responses.
- Discussions on the rationale for Social Studies and the skills and attitudes to be developed in order to take the subject beyond rote learning and mere knowledge acquisition.

Paper 032 – Alternative to School-Based Assessment

The aim of this paper is to test candidates' knowledge of the research processes and skills and their ability to apply the knowledge of these processes and the skills in analysing a case. For a good performance on this examination, candidates should be exposed to regular and structured instructions in research methodology and practice in carrying out simple research appropriate to the level required to the syllabus.

The paper consisted of five structured questions which were all compulsory and it was marked out of a total of 40.

Question 1

This question assessed candidates' ability to define a research problem. This question required candidates to select a research topic from the two that had been provided, namely: 'The causes of pollution of rivers in my community' and 'Views of citizens in my community on hurricane preparedness'. The question was divided into five sub-sections and carried a total of 8 marks. The mean was 5.15 or 64 per cent.

Part (a) required candidates to give a reason for choosing the topic. Topic (i) was more popular. Some reasons which candidates gave for investigating the topics were

- *To find out if citizens are aware of the importance of hurricane preparedness.*
- *Because of the amount of pollution that is in the rivers.*
- *To undertake the study of how citizens in my community prepare for hurricane.*

For Part (b) candidates were required to provide a problem statement for the topic which they chose. Some of the more appropriate problem statements presented by candidates were as follows:

This study will:

- *show what are the causes of pollution of the rivers in my community*
- *highlight the likely causes of pollution in my community*
- *investigate the factors which cause pollution in my community*
- *reveal how informed and educated citizens are about hurricane preparedness*
- *help me understand how citizens in my community prepare for hurricanes*

For Part (c) candidates were required to define one term in the topic. This part of the question was adequately answered by most candidates.

For Part (d) candidates were required to identify a research instrument which could be used to collect data on the topic chosen. Candidates were able to provide appropriate responses.

Part (e) required candidates identify a problem which a researcher may experience in distributing a questionnaire. For the most part candidates were able to provide appropriate responses.

Question 2

This question tested candidates' knowledge of data sources, and their skill in formulating questions for their research and research instruments. The mean on this question was 2.37 out of a possible 4 marks or approximately 60 per cent.

For Part (a) candidates could identify data sources as they gave appropriate responses as *internet, media, newspapers*.

For Part (b) the majority of candidates could write one 'yes/no' question for a questionnaire; for example.

'Are you aware of when the hurricane season begins?'
'Do you think heavy laws should be put in place for persons found guilty of polluting rivers?'

In Part (c) very few candidates were able to formulate good research questions. Most of the questions presented were too narrow, could be answered by yes/no, or were personalized. Some questions were not relevant to the topic. These questions would not provide adequate focus for the research and would not produce valuable data. Some candidates presented statements as research questions. Examples of well-formulated research questions supplied by candidates were:

What are the causes of pollution of rivers in my community?
What factors are contributing to pollution of rivers in my community?

Question 3

This question tested candidates' knowledge of sampling and sampling methodology. The mean on this question was 1.39 out of a possible 5 marks or 29 per cent. The responses suggest that the majority of candidates were not familiar with the concept and performance on this question was far below the acceptable standard. Only a small percentage of candidates were able to name and describe their sampling method and to give a plausible reason for their choice of method.

Part 3 (a) required candidates to name and describe an appropriate method of sampling for the chosen research topic. An example of an appropriate response for Part 3 (a) was:

Simple random sample: The lottery method where an identifier of each member of the population is placed in a box and drawn randomly.

Part 3 (b) asked candidates to provide a reason for using the sampling method chosen in Part 3 (a). The following were appropriate responses:

It reduces bias.
It gives everyone a fair chance of participating.
It gives everyone an equal chance of being interviewed to all members of the population.

Part 3 (c) assessed candidates' knowledge of ways of protecting the information collected during a research. In most cases candidates could state two ways a researcher could protect data provided by the sample. This, to some extent, demonstrates that they were aware of confidentiality and anonymity.

Question 4

This question was based on a case study. Candidates were required to identify some research elements from the cases such as

- focus of the study
- proportion of a particular age group in the sample
- instrument used by the researcher
- a possible research question which was used by the researcher.

The majority of candidates could interpret the information provided in the case and therefore provided appropriate responses. The mean on this question was 5.27 out of 9 or approximately 60 per cent.

Question 5

This question tested candidates' ability to present data from a case study. The mean on this question was 4.04 out of 14, or approximately 30 per cent.

For Part (a) (i) candidates were required to calculate the percentage of the sample which gave different responses. Many candidates continue to experience difficulty in by calculating percentages, so were unable to obtain full marks.

For Part (a) (ii) required candidates to represent data on a bar graph. The grid for drawing the graph was provided and candidates could have used either the raw data or the percentages to draw the graph. While some candidates were able to draw the graph with four accurate bars, others had difficulty in drawing the bars to accurately represent the responses.

Part 5 (c) tested candidates' ability to draw conclusions by asking them to provide two recommendations which the researchers could give based on their research. Most candidates were not able to provide even one recommendation.

Paper 031 – School Based Assessment (SBA)

The School Based Assessment component is a guided research project. Candidates are required to carry out a research project on a topic drawn from any area of the syllabus. The project may be based on a social or economic process or a situation or problem in the school or community. Each candidate is required to submit a report on the research project. A sample of these reports is sent for moderation each year. Below are some observations of the moderation panel.

Task 1: Problem Statement

For this task candidates were required to formulate a research question which is focused and clearly stated. Many candidates were able to formulate clear research questions. Below are some examples of research questions which were considered appropriate for the level of research carried out by fifth form students.

- *How has the use of Blackberries affected 4th formers' academic performance?*
- *What factors have contributed to the increase of teachers' migration from the -----area?*
- *How does unemployment affect the residents of -----?*
- *What is the level of HIV/ AIDS awareness among students of ----- school?*

The following are some examples of problem statements that were not well written and therefore could not get full marks:

- *What are the factors affecting single parent families and the consequences and solutions?*

There are too many variables in this problem statement so it lacks clarity.

- *What are the factors responsible for the increase of youth involvement in criminal activities and the effects of their involvement in these activities in -----Community?*

There are too many variables in this problem statement.

Task 4: Data Collection Instrument

Many of the questionnaires presented were satisfactory. They included a balance of both open ended and closed ended questions.

A maximum of three open ended questions are adequate and most candidates provided these or more.

Task 6: Presentation of Data

Many candidates followed the guidelines for data presentation and presented their data in different ways. Applicable and acceptable ways are

- pie chart
- bar graph
- table
- tally chart
- pictograph.

One general observation is that most of the graphs were not labelled. Candidates should note that for one to read a graph accurately the axes must be accurately labelled and the bars correctly drawn. To improve performance on this task, candidates should consider varying the ways of presenting the data. They could choose to present bar graphs, pie charts and tables that are well labelled and depict accurate information.

Task 7: Data Analysis and Interpretation

This task continues to present difficulties for candidates. For this task to be executed effectively, they should be use analytical terms such as

- majority, in comparison to...
- a larger percentage of...
- the least amount of...
- in relation to...

Task 8: Statement of Findings

Generally candidates presented relevant findings based on their research data.

Task 9: Recommendations

While candidates made recommendations most were not supported by implementation strategies and so could not be awarded full marks. Below is an example of a recommendation with an associated implementation strategy that was considered acceptable.

Recommendation

A qualified psychologist should be recruited to counsel affected children as well as perpetrators.

Implementation

Meetings can be held at the various religious houses where the religious leader can provide support and comfort to the victims. The meetings can be weekly and there are no costs incurred. And community members can sponsor refreshments to make the environment friendlier and have the victims feel comfortable. It can also be beneficial by using a religious building in the sense that victimizers can 'turn over a new leaf' and the victims can overcome their past knowing they have the presence of God with them. This method of overcoming abuse is free, hopeful and is a community based effort so there are no expenses and government assistance and involvement is at a minimum.

General Comments

Some projects did not meet the acceptable standard for submission. Schools and students are reminded that, while expensive binding of the reports is not required, projects must be secured effectively so that the pages will not fall out during the transportation and marking processes.

Candidates continue to submit projects that have been plagiarized. The project is a large task and some students may have difficulty managing it for timely submission. To reduce instances of plagiarism students can be encouraged to seek guidance in managing their time in compiling their SBA projects. One suggestion is to allow students to present regular progress reports in the class on their SBA. At these presentations, they could identify the tasks that are difficult for them to execute and so may need some assistance. Other students could help by critiquing the work and making suggestions for improvement. These presentation sessions may also be used as teaching points or the teacher may identify from them, topics for mini-lessons. These exchanges will not only reduce the opportunity for plagiarism but will help students develop a sense of self-efficacy in completing the task. These may also help to develop the ability to think critically about their work and hopefully produce better projects.

Recommendations

Below are some recommendations which candidates may wish to consider in conducting their research. Some explanations for terms and expressions used in research may also be of benefit to the candidates who register for the alternative paper.

1. Research Questions

Writing research questions, like any other skill, requires frequent practice to develop proficiency. It requires the researcher to think clearly about what he or she hopes to find about the topic and to state these ideas in question form. These questions are expressed broadly as they focus on the general theme of the research. When writing research questions the student could consider the following:

- clarity - the question must be clearly stated
- formulation — it should be stated in question form with a question mark at the end.
- open-ended — it may not be answered by a yes/no response, as in the case of “Is the river in my community polluted?”
- objective — it should not be personalized as in “Why do you prepare for hurricane?”

2. The sample

This is the part of the population which the researcher chooses as a representation of the larger population for study. The sample may be chosen in different ways: The **way** of choosing is called the **sampling method**. Types of sampling methodology which students may use are:

- Random sampling: Names or numbers representing members of the population are written on slips of paper and placed in a container; individual slips are pulled from the container until the required number for the sample is reached. This is to ensure that each person has an equal chance of being selected.

- Purposive sampling: member of the population who meet the set criteria to provide the necessary information are selected.

3. Recommendations

These are suggestions that can be made to solve a problem; therefore the recommendations must be **relevant** to the findings of the study. To improve performance on this question, the following guidelines could be considered:

- Read the entire case study carefully.
- Note the problem statement in the case.
- Pay close attention to the new information the researchers found (the research findings) about the problem being investigated.
- Recommend, suggest or state, based on the findings, the best ways to solve the problem.