

## ABSTRACT

**An Investigation into Selected Psychosocial Variables and School Violence in Three Secondary Schools in Barbados****Michelle Queeley-Roberts**

The present study investigated whether or not (and to what extent) a relationship existed among certain psychosocial variables (*attitude to school, self-concept, home and family environment, peers, and the media*) and school violence in three public secondary schools in Barbados. Using a mixed-method research design, that is, a combination of descriptive and correlational approaches, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from a sample of 30 third form students. Results from both phases of the study showed that violence existed in very significant proportions in the schools in a variety of forms.

Results yielded moderate to high levels of *family cohesion, active-recreational orientation, moral-religious emphasis, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual-cultural orientation and organization* for the **home and family environment** variable. Similar results were obtained for the **self-concept** variable. Students expressed moderately high levels of *general, social, and home self-concept/self-esteem*. For the **peer** and **media** variables, modest levels of *peer deviance* and *media violence* were reported. The variables which yielded relatively low ratings were *expressiveness, conflict, and control* for the **home and family environment**; as well as the *social structure and climate* domain, the *peer, teacher, and general school* domains for **attitude to school**.

Significant negative relationships were found specifically between a) general school sentiment and school violence, and b) school-academic self-concept/self-esteem and school violence. Peer deviance was also related to school violence in a positive way. There were also a few significant differences among the three schools on some variables, as well as how students perceived violence at their schools. Differences on the variables for gender were also discovered. Males were said to be more violent than females, and males reported lower levels of family expressiveness and higher levels of media violence than females. However, male students reported higher levels of family cohesion than did female students. For female students, higher levels of general school sentiment were more significantly associated with low levels of school violence than they were for males.

The qualitative phase of the study showed that of all the variables, negative aspects of the school, and home and family environments were strongly associated with school violence.

**Keywords:** Michelle Queeley-Roberts, School Violence; Attitudes to School; Self-Concept; Home and Family Environment; Peers; Media.