

## ABSTRACT

### AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTORS RELATED TO INDISCIPLINE AND ACADEMIC FAILURE AMONG STUDENTS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS: A CASE STUDY

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There is a general public perception of increasing levels of negative behaviours and indiscipline both in and out of the school setting. The lack of a general consensus on which behaviours in the school setting should be of cause for concern and the most efficacious methods for addressing them, has further compounded the problem. A study of a second form at one secondary school in Barbados, termed *Fairview* for the purposes of this investigation, was undertaken during 2001-2002 with the aim of highlighting the factors related to indiscipline and academic achievement among students with emotional and behavioural disorders. An ethnographic, or qualitative approach was taken with the views of students, educators, the Guidance Counsellor and a parent being sought through interviews and questionnaires. Participant observation was used and school records were consulted. Data in the form of direct quotations and information gleaned from school records, revealed that the home, school and peer group were significant variables in this matter. The troubled students ( $n = 7$ ) six of them male, were experiencing difficulty in meeting the academic requirements of the school. Teachers felt that their negative behaviours were

impeding their ability to maintain control of the class and to impart knowledge. Students who presented behavioural problems were rejected by their peers. The deviant behaviour of aggressive students seemed to be enhanced by a sense of isolation. The students who were repeating were more likely to engage in disruptive behaviours which appeared to mask the sense of ineptitude brought about by their standing as academic failures. Also, another high status group of academically focused female students had emerged. Persons from the other groups wished to gain admittance to this clique. It was suggested that the behavioural problems of youth cannot adequately be addressed by any single social agency. A cohesive and determined effort on the part of many individuals and organizations is required in order to counter the negative behaviours currently being exhibited by the youth.

**Keywords :** Pauline Millar; Academic Failure; Delinquency; Deviance; Discipline; Emotional Behavioural Problems; Grade Repetition, Peer Relationships