

Discipline/Indiscipline and Violence
in Secondary Schools in Mauritius
(Part I)

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Aims and Objectives

- (i) to explain the disruptive classroom and outside classroom behaviour of secondary school students;
- (ii) to understand the extent to which indiscipline and violence are affecting the Mauritian secondary schools;
- (iii) to identify and describe the different forms of indiscipline and violence in schools;
- (iv) to examine the attribution of students and teachers to the issue of indiscipline and violence;
- (v) to explore the mechanisms that exist within schools to deal with problems of indiscipline and violence.

Methodology

- Questionnaires
- Interviews and FGD
- Document Analysis

Sample for questionnaires

- 25 colleges identified
- 60 students per college
- 10 teachers per college

Objectives of the questionnaire

- To analyse seriousness and frequency of acts of indiscipline and violence
- To find out the causes of these acts of indiscipline
- To study the impact of indiscipline on teaching and learning
- To study the management of these acts in the school
- To bring suggestions from teachers and students

Students' Perception of Indiscipline

Types of offences	Ratings of offences %				
	NA%	Very serious%	Serious%	Not serious%	Not serious at all%
Showing no respect to teachers	3.8	34.9	34.4	18.2	8.7
Being insolent to teachers	8.2	24.5	39.5	18.9	8.9
Using/writing foul language in class	5.7	40.0	29.1	16.5	8.7
Lateness	4.8	8.7	20.1	45.8	20.5
Bunking classes	6.8	38.9	27.4	17.0	9.9
Unjustified absences	7.7	20.3	34.5	24.2	13.3
Exercices not done	6.5	20.6	33.6	29.0	10.3
Physical aggression of teachers	8.4	66.5	9.8	2.9	12.3
Harassing teachers	7.6	55.0	18.5	6.2	12.7
Vandalism	6.5	43.1	30.7	8.3	11.3
Smoking	6.5	60.5	14.1	8.2	10.7
Physical aggression of peers	4.1	42.3	30.1	12.8	10.6
Verbal aggression of peers	4.9	19.6	34.7	26.4	14.3
Stealing	6.9	34.5	33.2	16.2	9.2
Consumption of alcohol	6.9	64.7	13.7	4.9	9.8
Taking drug	8.2	77.7	3.0	1.2	9.8
Bringing pomographic items at school	7.1	41.8	21.7	13.2	16.2
Using mobile phone	5.9	5.7	10.4	29.3	48.7
Making obscene gestures	8.2	34.2	31.7	13.4	12.5
Playing truant	6.1	45.9	28.5	11.0	8.4
Fighting among students	6.1	30.1	35.4	19.5	9.0
Class disruption	5.3	17.2	31.3	29.9	16.3

Students' Perception of Offences

Very serious (> 50%)	Very serious (40% – 50%)	Serious (> 30%)	Not very serious or Not serious at all (> 20%)
physical aggression of teachers	playing truant	insolent with teachers	Lateness
Taking drugs	damage of school property	Absenteeism	Using a mobile phone
Consuming alcohol	bringing pornographic material	fighting with peers	
Smoking	physical aggression between peers	harming verbally their peers	
Harassing teachers	using or writing foul language	not doing the work given	
		stealing others' belongings	
		making obscene gestures	
		showing no respect to teachers	
		Disrupting classes	

Types of Offences and Frequency

Types of offence	Frequency of offences				
	N/A %	Never %	Rarely %	Some-times %	Often %
Showing no respect to teachers	2.4	19.9	34.3	28.5	15.0
Being insolent to teachers	8.3	19.8	28.3	28.5	15.1
Using/writing foul language in class	4.5	24.4	16.2	16.5	38.4
Lateness	2.5	11.9	25.3	25.0	35.3
Bunking classes	5.0	33.6	28.0	19.6	13.8
Unjustified absences	4.0	26.6	28.7	22.6	18.1
Exercices not done	4.4	10.1	30.8	29.3	25.4
Physical aggression of teachers	4.2	75.9	13.5	3.1	3.4
Harassing teachers	4.2	69.6	14.0	6.7	5.6
Vandalism	3.0	51.5	23.7	10.7	11.0
Smoking	2.3	53.7	9.9	8.9	25.2
Physical aggression of peers	3.5	44.0	29.9	13.5	7.5
Verbal a ggression of peers	4.1	15.3	24.6	20.5	33.9
Stealing	4.8	39.0	22.4	18.0	14.2
Consumption of alcohol	4.2	64.5	14.3	8.9	6.5
Taking drugs	4.6	86.8	4.1	1.4	1.5
Bringing ponographic items at school	4.0	52.0	19.7	11.2	11.5
Using mobile phone	3.4	12.9	12.9	15.7	53.5
Making obscene gestures	6.2	56.2	19.1	9.6	7.3
Playing truant	4.4	50.5	23.0	12.6	7.9
Fight among students	3.4	28.0	28.2	24.3	14.6
Class disruption	3.5	13.3	24.3	20.9	36.4

- More than 50% - Use of mobile phone
- Between 30 and 40% - foul language, lateness, verbal aggression, class disruption
- About 25% - Exercises not done satisfactorily

Frequency of Offences Where Boys Give Higher Ratings

Types of offences	Frequency		Difference
	Boys %	Girls %	%
Smoking	47.9	19.8	28.1
Physical aggression of peers	44.7	18	26.7
Pornographic items	42.1	18.3	23.8
Alcohol consumption	32.1	13.7	18.4
Obscene gestures	33.7	17.3	16.4
Playing truant	36.9	21	15.9
Vandalism	28.9	14.3	14.6
Bunking classes	39.3	27.2	12.1
Fighting among students	52.2	40.6	11.6
Harassing teachers	17.4	6.9	10.5

Frequency of Offences Where Girls Give Higher Ratings

Types of offences	Frequency		Difference
	Girls %	Boys %	%
Using of foul language	56.3	53.6	2.7
Lateness	63.5	57.3	6.2
Home work not done	55	54.4	0.6

Teachers' Reaction to Minor Acts of Indiscipline

Teachers' reaction	N/A%	Never%	Rarely%	Sometimes%	Often%
Solve the problem through dialogue	2.9	11.2	14.7	28.4	41.2
Punish immediately	3.3	9.8	33.3	27.8	24.3
Ask the student to stay in the detention class	3.4	19.5	28.3	25.0	22.2
Call for the intervention of the rector/ deputy rector	3.7	10.7	29.9	28.6	25.5
Inflict corporal punishment	5.1	42.1	26.3	15.2	9.6
Inform parents	4.0	15.5	29.5	26.5	22.9
Ignore the problem	3.5	47.7	24.3	14.2	8.8
Feel powerless	4.1	42.1	24.8	16.8	10.5

- More than 40% - solve the problem through dialogue
- Between 20-25% - immediate punish, detention class, intervention of Rector, inform parents

Teachers' Reaction to Major Acts of Indiscipline

Teachers' Reaction	N/A %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Solve the problem through dialogue	10.7	32.7	20.2	17.6	18.8
Punish immediately	10.7	6.2	11.4	20.9	50.8
Ask the student to stay in detention class	12.4	15.9	12.4	20.9	38.4
Call for the intervention of the rector/deputy rector	11.8	6.3	7.9	15.4	58.6
Inflict corporal punishment	13.3	32.7	16.7	17.7	19.6
Inform parents	12.3	6.5	7.1	16.2	57.9
Ignore the problem	12.8	59.7	13.0	7.4	7.0
Feel powerless	12.2	47.1	16.0	14.1	10.6

•50% or more – Intervention of Rector, inform parents, punish immediately

Management of Indiscipline by the School Administration

Administrative action	N/A %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Rector/ deputy rector regularly walks around	1.2	6.5	14.2	24.4	52.1
Teachers help to maintain discipline during recess and when school breaks	2.0	33.9	26.8	20.6	15.2
The caretaker helps to maintain discipline	3.0	29.9	21.5	18.4	25.6
Severe punishment is meted out to the offenders	2.6	6.0	17.0	33.4	39.4
Parents are called at school	2.2	3.8	16.6	35.0	40.8
During morning assembly, the rector speaks about the importance of maintaining discipline	2.3	5.0	6.6	13.9	70.6
Students who have 'psychological problems' are taken care of	3.9	14.2	21.1	32.2	27.0

•70% of students acknowledge the importance of morning assembly in sensitising them about discipline.

•52% - Rector/Deputy Rector must be seen walking around

Teachers' Rating of Indiscipline and Violence in Schools

Types of Offence	Rating (seriousness of offence)				
	NA %	Very Serious %	Serious %	Not serious %	Not Serious at all %
Showing no respect to teachers	8.1	38.1	27.5	18.6	7.6
Being insolent to teachers	12.7	25.4	37.7	19.5	4.7
Using/writing foul language in class	11.4	33.5	31.8	16.1	7.2
Lateness	13.6	11.9	47.5	24.2	3.0
Bunking classes	13.6	28.8	36.0	16.1	5.5
Unjustified absences	12.7	22.5	48.3	14.4	2.1
Exercises not done	14.8	31.4	42.8	10.6	0.4
Physical aggression of teachers	15.7	58.1	5.9	3.8	16.5
Harassing teachers	15.3	54.7	11.9	3.4	14.8
Vandalism	12.7	49.2	22.5	7.2	8.5
Smoking	13.6	42.8	28.8	7.2	7.6
Physical aggression of peers	12.7	50.0	22.5	6.8	8.1
Verbal aggression of peers	11.9	29.2	43.2	11.0	4.7
Stealing	12.3	38.1	35.2	10.6	3.8
Consumption of alcohol	16.1	59.3	9.3	5.5	9.7
Taking drugs	16.9	61.4	3.4	5.9	12.3
Bringing pornographic items at school	14.4	50.8	18.6	7.2	8.9
Using mobile phone	13.6	13.6	32.2	29.2	11.4
Making obscene gestures	14.8	49.6	19.5	6.8	9.3
Playing truant	14.8	46.2	26.3	8.1	4.7
Fighting among students	14.0	38.1	31.4	10.2	6.4
Class disruption	14.0	25.8	39.4	17.8	3.0
Sending pornographic sms	18.2	47.5	17.8	7.6	8.9

Teachers' Rating of Indiscipline and Violence in Schools

More than 50% of teachers think that the offences are very serious

- Taking drugs- 61%
- Pornographic items - 50%
- Consumption of alcohol - 59%
- Physical aggression of teacher - 58%
- Harassing teachers - 54%

Frequency of Offences as Experienced by Teachers

Types of offence	Frequency				
	NA %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Showing no respect to teachers	5.1	8.9	28.4	40.3	17.4
Being insolent to teachers	7.2	7.2	21.2	43.2	21.2
Using/writing foul language in class	5.1	10.6	25.8	33.5	25.0
Lateness	8.5	18.2	41.1	30.5	1.7
Bunking classes	7.6	4.7	26.3	40.3	21.2
Unjustified absences	5.9	1.3	16.9	37.3	38.6
Exercises not done	8.5	0.0	5.9	33.9	51.7
Physical aggression of teachers	5.9	55.9	27.5	8.5	2.1
Harassing teachers	8.1	46.6	26.7	14.0	4.7
Vandalism	5.9	25.4	29.7	19.9	19.1
Smoking	6.4	26.3	21.2	23.3	22.9
Physical aggression of peers	6.4	16.9	25.0	33.1	18.6
Verbal aggression of peers	4.7	4.2	14.0	31.8	45.3
Stealing	6.8	4.2	20.3	39.0	29.7
Consumption of alcohol	6.8	40.7	26.3	20.8	5.5
Taking drugs	9.7	64.4	19.9	4.7	1.3
Bringing pornographic items at school	7.6	26.7	34.3	26.7	4.7
Using mobile phone	5.9	5.1	9.7	29.7	49.6
Making obscene gestures	5.1	33.5	28.4	23.3	9.7
Playing truant	7.6	7.2	30.9	38.6	15.7
Fighting among students	5.1	15.7	29.2	33.5	16.5
Class disruption	5.9	2.5	9.7	32.2	49.6
Sending pornographic Sms	11.9	33.1	31.4	17.8	5.9

Frequency of Offences as Experienced by Teachers

- More than 50% - Exercises not done
- Between 40 – 49%
 - Class disruption – 49%
 - Use of mobile phone – 49%
 - Verbal aggression of peers – 45%

A Comparison of Students and Teachers' Perception of Some Very Serious Offences

Types of very serious offences	Teachers %	Students %	Difference %
Taking drugs	61.4	83.6	-22.2
Drinking alcohol on school premises	59.3	68.5	-9.2
Physical aggression of teachers	58.1	72	-13.9
Harassing teachers	54.7	59	-4.3
Bringing pornographic materials in schools	50.8	(45.5)	5.3
Physical aggression among students	50	(43.9)	6.1
Making obscene gestures in schools	49.6	(34.2)	15.4
Unjustified absence	(28.8)	41.3	-12.5
Using/writing foul language in class/school	(33.5)	42.2	- 8.7

- It seems that students are more aware of the gravity of most cases of offences
- Teachers think that unjustified absences and using/writing foul languages are not very serious offences

Causes of Indiscipline: Teachers' Attribution

Reason	NA %	C. Disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	C. Agree %
Adolescents with psycho. prob.	2.5	0.8	8.1	56.8	31.8
Bad company	1.7	2.1	22.5	39.4	34.3
Peer Group influence	2.5	1.3	22.5	40.7	33.1
Bad environment	2.5	1.3	10.2	53.8	32.2
Lack of discipline in the home	3.0	0.8	4.2	43.2	48.7
Irresponsible parents	3.8	1.3	8.1	42.4	44.5
Family problems	3.0	2.1	24.6	47.9	22.5
Domestic violence	3.8	3.4	28.4	45.8	18.6
Influence of tv/video	5.9	5.1	26.3	39.4	23.3
Physical aspect of the teacher	25.8	41.1	25.8	6.4	0.8
Teacher does not master the subject taught	1.7	18.2	27.5	44.9	7.6
A lady teacher working in a boys' school	3.8	22.5	45.8	24.2	3.8
Poor teacher-student relationship	4.2	6.8	19.9	60.6	8.5
Teachers' lack of experience	2.5	7.6	22.5	58.9	8.5
Lack of interest in school	3.0	2.5	6.4	49.2	39.0
Lack of discipline in school	1.7	3.8	11.0	35.2	48.3

Causes completely agree more than 40%

- Lack of indiscipline at home and in the school – 48%
- Irresponsible parents – 44%

Between 30-39%

- Lack of interest in school – 39%
- Bad company – 34%
- Peer group influence – 33%

Characteristics of Indisciplined Students : Teachers' Perspective

Characteristics	Rating				
	NA %	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
Come from a bad environment	0.4	0.8	7.6	59.3	31.8
Try to draw attention to himself/herself	3.4	2.1	20.8	48.3	25.4
Do not work well in class	2.1	1.3	4.7	43.2	48.7
Have not thought about their future	3.4	5.5	10.2	34.3	46.6
Are rather impulsive	5.9	0.4	5.5	37.3	50.8
Do not possess social skills	3.8	1.7	12.7	49.2	32.6
Bear Peer group influence	1.7	2.5	17.8	47.9	30.1
Come from an influential family	5.1	2.1	16.9	50.8	25.0
Are not interested in school activities	5.5	2.5	21.6	41.5	28.8

More than 40%

- Impulsiveness of students – 50%
- Do not work well in class- 48%
- Have not thought about their future – 46%