



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CONTRIBUTION OF PHYSICAL AND SPORTS EDUCATION TO THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS: PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS IN SENEGAL

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article History:

Received 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2024  
Received in revised form  
27<sup>th</sup> October, 2024  
Accepted 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2024  
Published online 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2024

##### Key Words:

Violence, Social Value, EPS.

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#### ABSTRACT

This article explores the problem of violence in the school environment and examines the contribution of Physical and Sports Education (PSE) to its prevention, focusing particularly on the Senegalese context. It aims to shed light on how PE, as perceived by teachers, goes beyond its formal role of teaching sports practices to become an educational discipline that fosters the acquisition of social reference values and the promotion of a peaceful school climate. The study targeted PE teachers in Dakar-Plateau high schools, chosen for their role and expertise in the education system. A purposive sample of 30 teachers was selected. A survey questionnaire and a semi-directive interview guide were used to collect data, which were then processed using SPSS and NVivo software for in-depth statistical and qualitative analysis. The results reveal that the causes of violence in schools include inadequate family education, overcrowded classrooms, sometimes lax application of sanctions and authoritarian attitudes adopted by some teachers. Suggested preventive strategies include activities favoring wellbeing, inclusive management and the integration of social rules of reference into PE sessions. Ultimately, the study indicates that this discipline, through its educational and social dimensions, constitutes an important tool in the prevention of school violence, by promoting appropriate behavior and reinforcing social cohesion within the school.

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Citation: Dr. Danty Patrick Diompy. 2024. "Contribution of Physical and Sports Education to the prevention of violence in schools: perceptions of teachers in Senegal". *International Journal of Current Research*, 16, (12), 30879-30886.

## INTRODUCTION

School plays an important role in shaping identities. It transmits academic knowledge and skills, but also inculcates values, norms and attitudes essential to life in society. It is also a place where students learn to interact with their peers and with adults, to respect rules, and to develop a sense of responsibility and autonomy. In this way, the school makes a significant contribution to the construction of students' individual and collective identity, in particular through a curriculum operationalized by various school disciplines. The mission of these disciplines is not only to transmit academic knowledge, but also to instill, implicitly or explicitly, the values and standards essential to life in society. It is in this sense that Physical and Sports Education (henceforth P.S.E.) occupies a singular place. Not only does it teach sports-related knowledge, but also contributes to the assimilation of social values and norms.

From this point of view, PE contributes to the promotion of a healthy and peaceful school climate. It is an instrument capable of preventing and managing conflicts, and thus of combating violence.

**VIOLENCE IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT: A PROBLEM:** Schools, which are supposed to be spaces dedicated to learning and socialization, are increasingly becoming places where various forms of violence take place (Bullis et al, 2001; Paquin, 2004). An undesirable upsurge in acts of violence has been observed in schools in a variety of contexts (UNESCO, 2019). Whether physical, moral or verbal, these manifestations, present in schools, have become a worldwide phenomenon (Beaulieu, 2005; Bowen et al., 2018; Castillo, 2010; Pestana, 2013). Data from UNICEF (2018) indicates that nearly half of the world's students aged 13 to 15, or around 150 million, report being victims of violence from their peers in or around school.

More than one in three schoolchildren in this same age group report being bullied, a figure that is comparable to the percentage of children involved in fights (ibid.). UNESCO (2019) also observes that, worldwide, one in three pupils experiences bullying, and the proportion of pupils affected by physical violence is roughly equivalent. In the same vein, the Global School Survey on Student Health (GSHS), conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), reveals that, in sub-Saharan Africa, the rates are particularly alarming: 48.2% of students report having been victims of harassment, 36.9% have been involved in fights, and 36.4% have suffered physical aggression. In Senegal, a study conducted by COSYDEP<sup>1</sup> in 2022 provides an overview of the phenomenon of violence in five (05) secondary schools.

The study found that physical and moral aggression accounted for 12%, followed closely by derogatory remarks (10%), humiliation (9%), and insults as well as stigmatization (8%). It also reveals the existence of sexual assaults (7%) and threats (7%). This survey describes a diversity of forms of violence and harassment. In this same context, incidents of vandalism<sup>2</sup> recorded in a number of schools, and reported by the local media, highlight a rise in acts of violence. The deplorable attitude of some pupils, ranging from the damage of school infrastructure to physical aggression against teachers, is a cause for concern, especially as school should be a place of learning free from all forms of violence, whether the pupils are perpetrators or victims. Furthermore, these attitudes go against the respect for social values, norms and rules, as defined in the French Education Act. This law stipulates that the school's mission is:

(...) promoting the values in which the nation recognizes itself: it is education for freedom, pluralist democracy and respect for human rights, developing the moral and civic sense of those it trains, aiming to make of them men and women devoted to the common good, respectful of the laws and rules of social life and working to improve them in the sense of justice, equity and mutual respect. (Law 91-22 of February 16, 1991, Article 1, paragraph 2)

It is clear from this provision that, in addition to the acquisition of knowledge and know-how, the school's function is also to inculcate in pupils the social values essential to community life. However, in view of the recurrent incidents of violence observed, a gap appears

between the objectives legally established by this provision and the reality in schools. Confronted with such a situation, and considering the educational power of school disciplines, it seems pertinent to analyze how these disciplines can contribute to reducing the frequency of violent incidents in schools. More specifically, this article looks at how PE teachers perceive the phenomenon of violence in schools, and how, through their discipline, they contribute to reducing this phenomenon at classroom level and promoting behaviours in line with socially accepted values.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

**The concept of social value:** The notion of "value", according to Larousse (2017, p. 1193), is defined as "*what is posited as true, beautiful, good, according to personal or social criteria, and serves as a reference, a moral principle*". This definition underlines the role of values in guiding human actions and thoughts. In other words, as principles or norms dictating what is deemed good, bad, desirable or undesirable, the notion of value appears to be central to ethical and moral decision-making. In the same vein, Legendre (1993) characterizes the notion of value as follows:

An intrinsic quality, merit, usefulness or importance of a person, thing, body of knowledge or activity. (...) An element of a set of beliefs, aspirations, options, ideas, feelings and principles in which a human community recognizes itself and through which it expresses itself (p. 1391).

In Legendre's (1993) conception, the notion of value has several dimensions and encompasses various aspects that vary according to context and perspective. Value lies at the heart of what defines an entity, be it an individual, a social group or an organization. Legendre's (1993) definition extends this notion beyond the individual. It shows how social values, the foundation of a human collectivity, are the means by which a community expresses and recognizes itself. Thus, at the scale of a society, social values, as essential criteria adopted and shared by individuals, govern their behavior. They guide actions and reactions, in compliance with pre-established norms and rules, thus playing an important role in social cohesion and the formation of a harmonious community. They serve to establish a consensus on what is considered good or bad, fair or unfair, important or unimportant, hence their role in preventing deviant attitudes (Giddens, 1991).

From this point of view, social reference values provide a framework that helps individuals understand their role in society and orient themselves in their relationships with others. They are taught from childhood and are constantly reinforced throughout life by educational bodies such as the family, religious and political institutions, schools, etc. However, social values and

<sup>1</sup> Coalition of Organizations in Synergy for the Defense of Public Education

<sup>2</sup> In July 2021, students at Hann CEM ransacked their classrooms and trampled their lab coats. In Vélingara, at the same time, students in their final year at Jamweli high school smashed down the doors of their classroom, burned the desks and set fire to the teachers' lodgings. At Kébémér high school, in May 2021, a philosophy teacher was strangled and beaten by a student. At Sangué high school (Thiès), an undergraduate supervisor was stabbed by a student. Finally, in 2020, at Lycée Blaise Diagne (Dakar), a PE teacher was attacked and disfigured by a pupil.

their effects on individual behavior are neither automatic nor constant. According to Verplanken and Holland (2002), they need to be activated in order to exert their influence. This activation is a complex process that can occur consciously or unconsciously. In other words, a value can influence behavior even without explicit awareness of that value. This idea is in line with the broader theory that a significant proportion of human information processing takes place unconsciously. The accessibility of a value, i.e. how easily it comes to mind, plays a crucial role in its activation (Bardi, 2000). Values that are more easily accessible are more likely to be activated and, consequently, to influence behavior. This explains why the values most important to an individual, being generally the most accessible, have stronger links with behavior (Schwartz, 2006).

This mechanism of activation and accessibility implies a dynamic interaction between values and behavior. It also suggests that the alignment of behavior with social values is not simply a passive reflection of an individual's priorities. It requires a certain degree of activation, which can be influenced by various factors such as social and cultural context, the individual's mental state and external stimuli (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). This dynamic relationship between values and behavior has been explored in depth by Maio and Olson (1998) and Hitlin and Piliavin (2004). The former examined how values serve as guides for attitudes and behavior, while the latter stressed the importance of understanding values as driving beliefs that influence action.

**The concept of violence:** The notion of "violence" is polysemous. Etymologically, it derives from the classical Latin "violentia", meaning "fierce character". It refers to facts and actions, as opposed to restraint and control. Even so, the definition of violence is a matter of debate, as it is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to grasp due to its many facets. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), violence is:

(...) the deliberate use, or the threat of deliberate use, of physical force or power, or the threat, direct or indirect, towards oneself, towards another person, or towards a group or community, resulting in, or presenting a high risk of resulting in, trauma, death, moral damage, discrimination, poor development or deficiency.

According to Debarbieux (1996), this WHO definition, however comprehensive it may seem, is nonetheless restrictive. He argues that, like noise, violence is related to a person's level of perception. It is based on the social codes, values and vulnerabilities of its victims. E. Debarbieux puts it this way:

(...) the boundaries of violence are difficult to delimit and the thresholds hard to identify, because what is violence for some is not violence for others,

what is bearable for some is not bearable for others, what is unbearable for some is borne by others.

In this way, the qualification of acts deemed violent is a matter of subjectivation, insofar as what is violent for one person may not be so for another. While considering that there is no "universal knowledge" about violence, Debarbieux (1996) defines violence as:

“(...) the brutal or continuous disorganization of a personal, collective or social system, resulting in a loss of integrity which may be physical, psychological or material. This disorganization may be brought about by aggression or the use of force, consciously or unconsciously, but there may also be violence from the victim's point of view, without there necessarily being an aggressor or intent to harm" (1996, p. 180).

In this sense, violence is presented as a break with the established order. It can take many forms, such as antisocial behavior, incivilities, conduct disorders and criminal violence. Besides, the classification of an act as violent often depends on the individual's perspective and the prevailing norm in society. In the school context, violence manifests itself in a variety of forms, from simple incivilities to more serious offenses (Coudeville et al. 2020). It is characterized by behavior that is verbal, physical or directed against the institution itself (Jeffrey and Sun, 2006). Verbal violence, characterized by insults and threats, and physical violence, manifested in fights and pushing and shoving, can leave both physical and psychological scars on the students who fall prey to it. As for violence against the school institution, it can be active, with the degradation of premises and equipment (Debarbieux et al. 2013), or passive, taking the form of constant agitation in class and incivilities such as loud discussions and incessant chatter. These different forms of violence disrupt the learning environment.

**The concept of PSE:** From an etymological point of view, the notion of PSE comprises two terms. The first term, "physical education", refers to the development and education of the individual, focusing on the biological and mechanical aspects of the body. It involves activities designed to improve physical fitness, motor skills and mental well-being. The second term, "sport", refers to organized, competitive and regulated activities. It should be pointed out that both terms involve the body in a privileged way, but from different angles. An analysis of the historical trajectories of these two terms and their development reveals that sport and physical education have maintained both oppositional (Hebert, 1925) and complementary (Baquet, 1942) relationships. Initially, sport was seen as morally dangerous, destructive and dangerous, because it was not educational and advocated freedom. As a result, it had little place in schools. Whereas, as Arnaud (1983) writes, the aim of physical education is to train morally and physically disciplined

individuals, and also to promote intellectual and academic learning, which are the only things worthy of interest. The relationship between physical education and sport evolved from one of opposition to one of complementarity in the 1940s. The prevailing idea is that gymnastics (associated with PE) should provide a serious foundation, while sports and games represent reward and fun. In this respect, sport is an extension of basic physical education (Baquet, 1942). According to the latter author, sport embodies values, but these are values that must be taught, highlighting the responsibility of teachers. The aim is to develop physical qualities that can be put to good use in sport. In the same vein, Guillemain (1963) observes:

Through sport, freedom and morality cease to be pure concepts and enter the realm of sensitive intuition (...). It is the manifestation in art of all morality's inherent beauty. By means of the sublime, he brings down from the empyrean the moral freedom that was only an idea, and makes it live on earth with the life of the body and the senses. (p.57)

In the 60s, different movements clashed: on the one hand, the sporting movement, led by M. Baquet, the influence of P. Seurin on physical education at school, and the work of J. Le Boulch and P. Parlebas. At the same time, the issue of the sportivization of physical education emerged, meaning that physical education adopted sporting characteristics. One of the major preoccupations was to make sport educational (Merand, 1965), to promote education through sport by emphasizing the animation of sporting activities by teachers, and to seek common principles of execution while questioning the notion of transfer.

## METHODOLOGY

Our framework of study concerns high schools in the Dakar region, in particular those under the authority of the Inspection d'Académie (IA) of Dakar-Plateau. As such, our target population is the PE teachers working in this educational district. There are two main reasons for this choice: on the one hand, their role and position in the hierarchy of school responsibilities, and on the other, their potential capacity, thanks to their experience and expertise, to contribute to an in-depth understanding of our research object. Furthermore, as our survey is more focused on exemplarity than on the representativeness of our sample, we opted for typical, non-probabilistic sampling based on reasoned choice (Fortin and Gagnon, 2022). Thus, 30 teachers (survey subjects) were selected to participate in our study. A self-administered survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide served as data collection instruments. With regard to the processing of the information gathered, we relied, on the one hand, on the SPSS 21.0 computer program to analyze the data from the questionnaire, and, on the

other, on the spiral analysis approach (Creswell and Poth, 2018) using the QRS NVivo 14 qualitative analysis software, to facilitate the organization, the coding of meaning units and their interpretation (Miles and Huberman, 2003).

## RESULTS

**The socio-professional profile of respondents:** The following lines provide an overview of the socio-professional profile of the teachers surveyed. This profile, drawn up on the basis of data collected via the questionnaire, takes into account various aspects such as gender, age and professional experience (seniority in teaching). It should be pointed out that the choice of these aspects is not fortuitous, as they are linked to the way in which teachers deal with the phenomenon of violence in the school environment.

**Distribution of sample subjects by gender:** Table n<sup>o</sup>1 below shows the gender data for the participants in our study sample, illustrating the proportion of women and men in the total workforce. Of the 30 subjects surveyed, around 80% are men, while women represent around 20% of the total workforce. Compared with national data, where women make up 13% and men 87% of PE teachers (DPRE, 2018), our sample therefore shows a slightly higher proportion of women. Although this rate is higher than the national average, it nevertheless bears witness to the under-representation of female teachers in this discipline, a phenomenon that persists on a national scale and reflects a marked gender imbalance in this discipline.

**Table 1. Sample distribution by gender**

	Numbers	Percentage (%)	% valid
Male	24	80%	80%
Female	6	20%	20%
Valid Total	30	100%	100%

Source: data from survey questionnaire

The question of gender in the management of violent acts (or behavior) has been the subject of a number of studies. Although nuanced (Jeffrey and Sun, 2006), these studies show that gender can have an effect on styles of dealing with violence in schools (Debarbieux, 1999; Mbanzoulou, 2008). From this point of view, it appears that male teachers often prefer more disciplinary and direct approaches, based on authority and rules, whereas their female colleagues tend to use more relational approaches, based on mediation and negotiation (UNESCO, 2022). So, depending on gender, situations of violence can be tackled differently.

**Age distribution of sample subjects:** Following on from the above, table n<sup>o</sup>2 below shows the breakdown of our sample by age group. The average age of participants is 45, with over 66% of teachers aged between 36 and 46 (i.e. over two-thirds of the sample).

Teachers aged 47 to 57 make up around 26% of the sample. Finally, the 25-35 and 58-60 age groups are very poorly represented.

**Table 2. Sample distribution by subject age**

		Numbers	Percentage (%)	% valid
Valid	[25 to 35 years old]	1	3,3%	3,3%
	[36 to 46 years old]	20	66,7%	66,7%
	[47 to 57 years old]	8	26,7%	26,7%
	[58 to 60 years old]	1	3,3%	3,3%
	Total	30	100%	100%

Source: data from survey questionnaire

The predominance of middle-aged (36-46) and older, more experienced teachers, particularly those aged 47-57, can have a significant influence on the management of violence at school. Indeed, they may be more skilled in conflict management, thanks to their greater knowledge of school dynamics and student behavior. What's more, they are more comfortable in establishing rules of respect and developing strategies to prevent aggressive behavior. Older teachers, having had time to observe a range of student behaviors and conflict situations, develop a "know-how" based on their experience. This experience enables them to anticipate the warning signs of conflict and react with confidence (Jeffrey and Sun, 2006), thus limiting the escalation of violent behavior. Age and maturity can also contribute to the authority perceived by students, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect.

#### **Distribution of sample subjects according to seniority:**

At the same time, table n°3 below presents the profile of teachers according to their professional experience, measured by number of years spent in the profession. The data show that 63% of teachers surveyed have between 11 and 20 years' experience, followed by 20% who say they have accumulated between 21 and 25 years' experience. A further 10% have been teaching for between 5 and 10 years, while 7% have been in the profession for 26 up to 30 years.

**Table 3. Sample distribution by length of service in the profession**

		Numbers	Percentage (%)	% valid
Valid	[05 to 10 years old]	3	10%	10%
	[11 to 20 years old]	19	63%	63%
	[21 to 25 years old]	6	20%	20%
	[26 to 30 years old]	2	7%	7%
	Total	30	100%	100%

Source : data from survey questionnaire

At first glance, if all teachers are at risk in the school environment, seniority, or the number of years in the profession, is an element that enriches the concrete experience of managing school violence. Some authors argue that those with significant seniority (over 10 years, for example) know how to "hold their class" (Jeffrey and Sun, 2006). What's more, they've had time to experiment

with various discipline and violence management strategies, adjusting their practices according to what works best for them and their students. Conversely, teachers with little (or no) experience may find it difficult to cope with situations of violence in the school environment (Coudeville et al. 2020).

**Potential causes of violence and approaches to its management by PE teachers:** In their discourse, the teachers surveyed put forward a number of arguments to point the finger at the origins of violence in the school environment. As one of them put it:

"I think that a deficient family upbringing, a lack of rigor in student management and the non-application of sanctions are generally at the root of repeated acts of violence in the school environment" (Teacher\_11).

In the light of this teacher's comments, several factors seem to encourage the emergence of violent behavior at school. Firstly, a family upbringing considered insufficient, marked by weak parental authority, often limits the transmission of norms and limits to children. Secondly, according to our interviewee, lax management of pupils by school staff, due to a perceived lack of authority, is also likely to reduce the effectiveness of established rules. Finally, the fact that sanctions are often not rigorously applied creates an environment in which violent acts can be repeated without sufficient consequences to dissuade such behavior. In the same vein, another teacher also suggests that violence cannot be reduced to individual student behavior; that it is linked to systematic and organizational failings which, taken together, generally result in heightened tensions and a difficult school climate at times. In concrete terms, our interviewee states:

"(...) the working conditions of pupils, who find themselves in overcrowded classes; the laxity of supervisors; the lack of control over pupils and the excessive freedom they are granted (...) above all, and this is important and should be noted, the lack of involvement of pupils' parents in the school's operating process. By the same token, the behavior of some teachers, lacking in professional training, can undermine the integrity of pupils, leading to verbal abuse, aggression and a refusal to adhere on the part of learners (...). In my opinion, these cumulative factors explain the violence that often occurs at school." (Teacher\_17)

Some of the elements highlighted by this teacher concerning the occurrence of violent acts are well documented in the scientific literature in the field. Indeed, the problem of overcrowded classrooms, well known in sub-Saharan African education systems, often makes it difficult for the teacher to maintain attention and discipline in the classroom, while limiting individual interactions with learners. Importantly, from a broader perspective, this also highlights the importance of classroom management, not only as a pedagogical skill,

but also as an essential element in preventing disruptive or violent behavior within the classroom microcosm (Perrenoud, 2008, 1999). Plus, evoking a dimension inherent to classroom management, one teacher lists certain teaching postures as potential sources of violent attitudes at school. In this regard, she points out that "the exaggerated authoritarian stance of some teachers, corporal punishment, and the perceived segregation in the creation of level groups, [can] lead to frustration on the part of the child" (Teacher\_23), resulting in violent behavior not in keeping with the school environment.

In fact, an overly authoritarian teaching attitude has counter-productive effects, while exacerbating tensions in the classroom. Feelings of oppression can generate verbal or physical violence, with the teacher becoming part of the problem through his or her authoritarian management. With regard to approaches to managing acts of violence, the survey data collected indicate that they are not monolithic, i.e. there is no single strategy. In other words, there is no single strategy applicable to all situations. Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the acts of violence, the teachers interviewed deploy a variety of strategies. As the following excerpts illustrate, this variety of responses to violent behavior ranges from dialogue to sanctions, from awareness-raising to temporary or permanent exclusion:

"(...) I worked, with the school social worker who approached the student's family to discuss the situation with them." (Teacher\_5)

"(...) in such circumstances, I apply the legal provisions set out in the school's internal regulations, referring the student to the administration and then, if necessary, taking the student to the disciplinary board. (Teacher\_10).

In this way, some teachers (like Teacher\_5) emphasize an approach centered on support, dialogue and mediation. An approach that seeks to tackle the real causes of problem behavior; an approach that reflects an integrative vision of school violence management, geared towards resolution and prevention. Other teachers opt for actions such as summoning parents or communicating in the presence of the headteacher. From this point of view, these practices underline the usefulness of a collective framework for managing acts of violence in the school environment. Still others (such as Enseignant\_10) take a more institutional and regulatory approach, applying the prescribed sanctions and referring acts of violence and their perpetrators to the disciplinary board. These teachers clearly favor the implementation of rules to set clear limits and, if necessary, remind people of the consequences of certain behaviors.

**Concrete acts of violence and preventive measures:** In their account of concrete acts of violence observed during PE sessions, the teachers interviewed report that

these acts manifest themselves mainly in verbal and relational forms. In this respect, the following comments, widely shared by the majority of other survey participants, describe a series of "violent behaviors" observed:

"(...) the most frequent violent behaviors on the work floor are insults, mockery of classmates, heckling, sabotage, invective, inappropriate exchanges of words between students, quarrels." (Teacher\_18)

These statements are particularly illuminating, as they highlight the subtle yet pervasive nature of the forms that acts of violence can take in the school context. Indeed, it's important to emphasize that, whether these acts are verbal or behavioral, their repercussions can be considerable, both on classroom climate and on social dynamics between students (Smith et al. 2020). With regard to preventive interventions based on the practice of PE, the teachers interviewed stated that they make extensive use of the educational potential of this discipline to prevent violent behavior.

From this point of view, one of them confided that the measures generally taken in a preventive perspective often take the form of an intentional, targeted approach during sessions, through "sports practice, in other words proposing pedagogical and didactic situations conveying social reference values" (Teacher\_17). More expressively, another teacher interviewed lists the actions he routinely deploys to prevent potential acts of violence. For him, these are:

"[to] organize activities to promote well-being and strengthen social ties; ensure strict fairness among students, avoiding favoritism; adopt inclusive, participatory classroom management, involving all students in important decisions; and establish clear, proportionate rules, consistently applied according to the seriousness of acts." (Teacher\_27)

Indeed, PE sessions include moments of group games or play activities, one of whose hidden functions lies in their ability to ease tensions, in the sense that they help channel students' energy into positive frameworks. In addition, fair assessment practices and encouragement for all students, whatever their performance, help to reduce perceptions of unfairness or inequity. In this sense, teachers can, for example, vary teams and roles in games to encourage inclusion, just as they can involve students in defining fair-play rules to reinforce their commitment and respect for others. Finally, teachers incorporate appropriate sanctions into their PE sessions (such as a time for reflection outside the activity), as well as restorative actions (such as reintegrating a pupil by involving him or her in positive responsibilities, for example).

**PE: a school discipline for the appropriation of social reference values:** PE sessions are generally times of physical contact, but they are also frequent venues for competition. It's during these sessions that the teacher is most often in contact with the students, which facilitates communication and enables him/her to raise their awareness and sensitize them. Through his or her pedagogical and didactic choices, i.e. the types of teaching practices implemented by the teacher and the quality of interactions offered to the students by the teachers, the teacher transforms these sessions into spaces for learning social skills, managing emotions and respecting others, while limiting the risk of violence..

As one teacher put it: "As the name suggests, physical education is education through physical activity. During his intervention, the PE teacher passes on a lot of information relating to behavior, rules and social life." (Teacher\_23). This teacher clearly evokes the dual dimension of PE. He also highlights the particular pedagogical approach of this discipline, where the body is the main vehicle for learning. In fact, our interviewee extends the role of PE beyond physical performance, emphasizing its contribution to learning social behaviors (respect for rules, collaboration, conflict management).

Moreover, the emphasis placed on "behavior, rules and social life" clearly indicates that this school discipline goes beyond the simple academic framework, preparing students to integrate essential norms and values for their life in society. In concrete terms, for example, through team sports, pupils learn rules of conduct, and learn to respect these rules, which stem from the basics of social education learned in everyday life. So, in a context where school violence and incivism are recurrent problems, PE can play a central role in teaching students to interact with others in a spirit of respect.

## CONCLUSION

Physical and Sports Education (P.S.E.) is a strategic discipline in the fight against violence in schools, thanks to its ability to mobilize the body and social interactions in an educational perspective. By enabling students to experience concrete learning situations in which rules, collaboration and respect for others are essential, this discipline contributes to the acquisition of social reference values. Similarly, its sporting activities foster a calm school climate, while providing a space for channelling energies and managing tensions.

However, the prevention of violence in the school environment cannot rely solely on this discipline. The results of the study show that systemic factors such as family upbringing, working conditions in schools (overcrowded classrooms, lack of teacher training) and the uneven application of sanctions amplify the

phenomenon. As a result, the actions of PE teachers, while fundamental, need to be integrated into a global strategy involving all players in the education system, in particular parents, other teachers and administrative managers.

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