

PERCEPTION OF DEPUTY PRINCIPALS AND BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BONDO DISTRICT, KENYA

PAMELA A. ONYANGO*

WYCLIFFE H. ODIWUOR*

JOHN O. AGAK*

N. B. OKELO**

Abstract

In Kenya, corporal punishment has been a mode of punishment until it was banned by the Ministry of Education in the year 2001. Before its ban, it was being used in nearly all the schools in Bondo District. Reports from Bondo District Education office indicate that corporal punishment is still in use in over 50% of the schools in the district, despite its ban. In more than 50% of the PTA meetings, parents and the school management committees wanted re-introduction of corporal punishment in effecting change in students' behavior. However, some of the stakeholders felt that corporal punishment was not useful in effecting behavior change among the students. Based on that, this study set out to investigate perception of stakeholders on corporal punishment in secondary schools in Bondo District. The objectives of the study were to: find out the perception of Deputy Principals and Board of Governors on corporal punishment, on corporal punishment. This study was guided by a conceptual framework which shows how various stakeholders in Bondo District perceive the use of corporal punishment. Descriptive survey design

* DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, MASENO UNIVERSITY, MASENO, KENYA

** SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND ACTUARIAL SCIENCE, JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, BONDO, KENYA

was adopted in this study. Study population comprised of 1617 form 2 students, 516 teachers, 24 deputy principals and 24 representatives of the B.O.G. Using stratified random sampling technique, 539 form 2 students, 172 teachers, 8 deputy principals and 8 B.O.G. representatives were sampled from 8 schools that were categorized into 2 boys boarding schools, 2 girls boarding schools, 2 mixed day and boarding schools and 2 mixed day schools were sampled for the study. Questionnaires, interview schedules and focus group discussions were used to collect data. Piloting of the instruments was done in four schools that did not participate in the actual study to determine reliability of the instruments. Face validity of the instruments was ascertained by experts in the Department of Educational Psychology, Maseno University. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency counts. Findings of the study revealed that students do not like the use of corporal punishment while the teachers, Deputy Principals and B.O.G. prefer the use of corporal punishment. The study concluded that students do not perceive corporal punishment as instrumental in effecting behavior change but teachers, Deputy Principals and B.O.G. representatives regard corporal punishment as a useful method of effecting behavior change among students. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should restructure the policy on corporal punishment to accommodate the views of secondary school stakeholders and also come up with regular workshops to expose teachers to constructive ways of correcting students' misbehavior.

1.1 Background of the Study

Corporal punishment is the reasonable force used by school authorities to restrain unruly students, to correct unacceptable behavior and to maintain order (Mcnerney and Herbert, 2001). It's important to note that there's no clear line between corporal punishment and humiliating or degrading punishment. Very often children perceive corporal punishment as also being humiliating or degrading (Soneson, 2005). Corporal punishment is thought to violate a number of international conventions and is considered cruel, inhuman and degrading because it hurts and humiliates children, causes emotional distress, low self esteem, provokes anger and feelings of revenge and instills violent temperaments in children (Smith, 2006).

Corporal punishment works against the process of ethical development. It teaches children not to engage in a particular behavior because they will be beaten. It does not teach them to consider the reasons and ethics for not behaving in a particular manner (Soneson, 2005).

In Afghanistan, surveys carried out in three government schools in Jalalabad and 20 government schools in Mazar-i-Sharif in 2008 found very high levels of physical punishment. However, there was a strong desire among the vast majority of teachers to learn alternatives to physical discipline (Samoon, et.al, 2011). Most children in South Africa who experienced corporal punishment would prefer to be disciplined in a non-violent manner. Children would like teachers and parents to talk to them and explain what they did wrong instead of using corporal punishment or other forms of humiliating or degrading punishment (Clacherty & Donald, 2005).

Kubeka (2004) reports that teachers in South Africa argue that, without corporal punishment, discipline could not be maintained (children would neither show them respect nor develop the discipline to work hard unless they were beaten or threatened with being beaten; their power as educators had been taken away; corporal punishment was quick and easy to administer, while other methods required time, patience and skill, which educators often lacked; unless they were beaten, they (the children) would think they got away with wrongdoing, and would repeat this misconduct; corporal punishment would restore a culture of learning in schools; it was the only way to deal with difficult or disruptive learners; educators had not experienced any harmful effects when it was administered to them as learners, so there was no reason why they should not administer it to their learners as well. Soneson (2005) observes that in schools where corporal punishment is used, the same learners are being beaten for the same offences over and over again.

Classes with fewer behavioral problems over time are run by teachers who are committed to non-violent and child-centered approaches to classroom discipline (Porteus, & Ruth, 2001). The Gambian case is interesting since most teachers believe that corporal punishment is the only thing that children understand when they disobey, and most children believe that schools and parents are right in beating them. Corporal punishment is deemed to be an effective form of discipline (Tang, 2005).

Physical punishment is not conceived the same way by all stakeholders in Uganda. Some of them consider that children learn from the consequences of the wrong done while others think that children must be protected from physical punishment because it is a coercive measure rather a corrective one. In protecting children from physical punishment, some stakeholders believe that laws should be implemented in order to avoid abuses against children while others are against these laws (Damien, 2012). The deputy head teacher at Kammengo primary school in Uganda was of the opinion that the abolition of corporal punishment had a negative effect on the children's discipline. Corporal punishment was abolished, which had caused more harm than good. The pupils had become unruly, could respond anyhow to elders, generally disrespect school rules and regulations. It had led to deterioration of pupils school performance and as a result the teachers were overworked (Kabonesa & Juuko, 2007).

In Tanzania, the current school regulations regarding corporal punishment are not clear and are not followed consistently. Many teachers and parents feel that a prohibition of corporal punishment is causing a decline of discipline in the schools. There is a dual problem of too much punishment without any alternatives or the absence of any sort of consequences for poor behavior. This leaves many teachers confused and ultimately apathetic about putting any sort of boundaries for the expected behavior amongst students. Corporal punishment and verbal abuse of children is so normalized in community attitudes that teachers and other child care agencies do not even consider such behavior abusive to children (Mkombozi, 2006).

In Kenya, corporal punishment has been a mode of punishment until it was banned in the year 2001 (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Management of student discipline remains one of the major challenges to teachers in learning institutions. While some stakeholders in education such as parents and teachers call for the lift of ban on corporal punishment especially when unrest has occurred, others oppose this call (Mwai, Koros and Otieno, 2008). Parents from a school in Kilifi proposed that caning be re-introduced in school to instill discipline in students and fight drug abuse. However, education officials turned down the proposal by saying the government banned the canning of students in either private or public schools and parents in any learning institution

could not overrule the order, and that it amounted to child abuse and went against the Children's Act (Mwandoto, 2008).

There are several varied perceptions on corporal punishment in secondary schools internationally, in Africa and even in Kenya. A particular case is the management of student discipline in secondary schools in Bondo District which has remained one of the major challenges to the school's stakeholders (Afullo, 2005). The district had increasingly experienced cases of defiant students who openly confront their teachers. Cases of school dropout, rowdiness and drug abuse among students have been reported. Stakeholders in education like parents and teachers in Bondo district have attributed the rise in indiscipline to the corporal punishment ban. Some of them demanded for the re-introduction of corporal punishment (Bondo District Education Office, 2009). Therefore, there was need to find out the perception of various stakeholders on corporal punishment in the district. This study tried to establish perception of stakeholders on corporal punishment on students in secondary schools in the district.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Cases of student indiscipline in Kenya have resulted into extensive damage to property, death of students, arson, increased student dropout and even rape in some secondary schools. Teachers in Bondo district encounter difficulties in the management of student discipline in schools even after the ban on corporal punishment. There is rise in behavior misdemeanor in the schools in the district. The Ministerial policy on corporal punishment is that it should not be used in schools (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Despite that, reports from the Ministry of Education still indicate its continued use in several schools in Kenya. Bondo District is not an exception. Complaints documented from Bondo District Education Office indicate that corporal punishment is used in over 50% of schools in the district. Based on these cases, stakeholders have had mixed reactions on the use of corporal punishment. While some support its use, others are against it. As a result of this, the researcher saw the need to carry out research on perception of stakeholders on corporal punishment. The researcher therefore carried out a study to establish the perception of stakeholders on corporal punishment in secondary schools in Bondo District in Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study set to establish the perception of stakeholders on corporal punishment in secondary schools in Bondo District. The objectives of the study were to:

- i. Establish the perception of Deputy Principals on corporal punishment.
- ii. Determine the perception of Board of Governors (B.O.G.) on corporal punishment.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

- i. What is the perception of Deputy Principals on corporal punishment?
- ii. What is the perception of Board of Governors (B.O.G.) on corporal punishment?

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions guided the study:

- i. Students undergo corporal punishment in secondary schools in Bondo district.
- ii. The selected respondent views reflected their actual perceptions on corporal punishment.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study aimed at finding out the perception of stakeholders on corporal punishment in secondary schools. Where possible, the results of the study would form a basis for school behavioral management for teachers in relation to their positive involvement in the education of students. The results of the study would be expected to provide insights that would enable stakeholders to effectively handle student indiscipline cases without using corporal punishment and policy makers to formulate good policies on corporal punishment on student discipline.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in secondary schools in Bondo District. The study specifically sought to determine perception of stakeholders on corporal punishment. Form 2 students were used for the study because they had two more years in school and were likely to make contributions, knowing that they stood to benefit from any positive changes likely to be implemented by policy makers in the education sector.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

- i. Since this study covered only Bondo district, the findings cannot be generalized.
- ii. Some respondents like teachers did not talk about the use of corporal punishment freely because corporal punishment has been banned by the government of Kenya.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

The study was based on a conceptual framework showing how various stakeholders in Bondo District perceive the use of corporal punishment. The independent variable was corporal punishment. When corporal punishment is used on the learner, it causes pain, injury and fear. Repeated use of corporal punishment does not produce the desired result of correction and a change of heart in the students (Kindiki, 2009). It's on that ground that the Ministry of education abolished the use of corporal punishment (Republic of Kenya, 2001). The dependent variable was perception of stakeholders on corporal punishment. Some stakeholders advocate for the use of corporal punishment while others are against its use. The intervening variable is the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment. Even though corporal punishment has been banned, some stakeholders still advocate for its use in schools. However, the Ministry of Education policy is against the use of corporal punishment in schools. This has further been illustrated in figure 1.

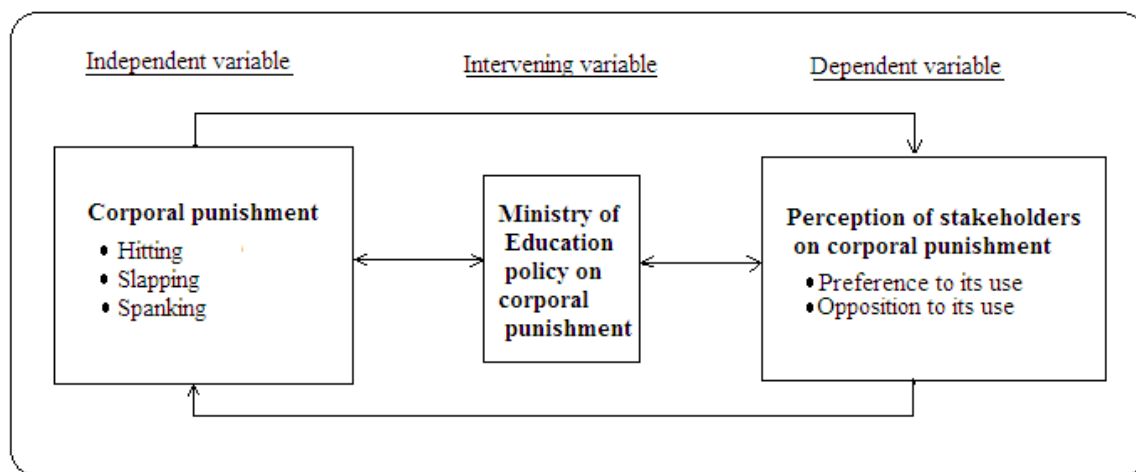


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on Perception of Stakeholders on Corporal Punishment.

Source: self

The figure1 illustrates the connection between independent variable and dependent variable. It also illustrates the connection between intervening variable and both independent and dependent variable.

2.0 Results

2.1 Perception of Deputy Principals on Corporal Punishment.

The third research objective was to establish perception of Deputy Principals on corporal punishment. This was addressed by questions 1-5 in the Deputy Principals' questionnaire and questions 1-5 in Deputy Principals' interview schedule. The corresponding data has been presented in table 3.

Table 1: Deputy Principals' Responses on Perception on Corporal Punishment

N= 8

	Agree		Disagree	
	f	(%)	f	(%)
Your school policy on corporal punishment is line with the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment	7	90%	1	10%
Teachers in your school are conversant with the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment	6	80%	2	20%
Corporal punishment is used in effecting change on students' behavior in this school	5	60%	3	40%
The Ministry of education policy on corporal punishment bars teachers from effecting change on students' behavior	3	40%	5	60%
Corporal punishment should be used to effect change on students' behavior in school.	6	80%	2	20%

Table 3 shows that 90% of Deputy Principals confirmed that their school policy on corporal punishment was in line with the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment. There were 80% of Deputy Principals who confirmed that teachers in their schools were conversant with the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment. This study shows that Deputy Principals were aware that corporal punishment had been banned. However, corporal punishment was still being used in effecting change on the behavior of students in school. The study findings here are similar to Afullo (2005) who argues that despite teachers' awareness of the Ministry of Education policy on discipline; they still used some measures that violate that policy. This study established that Deputy Principals were aware of corporal punishment ban but did not adhere to it. From the responses given, 40% of the Deputy Principals reported that the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment barred teachers from effecting change on the behavior of students. There were 80% of the Deputy Principals who felt that corporal punishment should be used to change students' behavior. From the responses of deputy principals, it appeared that deputy principals preferred corporal punishment in effecting change on the behavior of students. This study established that the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment did not deter teachers from using corporal punishment in school.

Through interview schedule conducted to establish whether deputy principals were conversant with the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment, eight deputy principals were involved. They were asked what Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment was. In response, all the deputy principals confirmed that the Ministry of Education had banned corporal punishment. Deputy Principals were asked the role they played in effecting change in students' behavior. Out of 8 deputy principals, 2 chaired the disciplinary committee meeting, 2 administered punishments, 2 acted as role models and 2 advised the students.

On who undertakes the role of effecting change in students' behavior, 50% of the deputy principals said this was the duty of all teachers, spearheaded by the Deputy Principals while 50% said it was solely the duty of the Deputy Principals. On opinion of teachers on use of corporal punishment, all (100%) of the Deputy Principals said teachers wanted to use corporal punishment to change students' behavior.

Deputy Principals were asked how the behavior of students had changed as a result of the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment. It was reported by 20% of the deputy principals that Ministry of Education policy corporal punishment did not cause any change on students' behavior, 40% said the policy had caused laziness among students while 26.5% said it had caused rowdiness. The remaining 13.5% of the deputy principals said the policy had caused absenteeism, fighting, theft and rebellion among the students.

2.2 Perception of Board of Governors on Corporal Punishment

The fourth research objective was to determine the perception of board of governors on corporal punishment. It was addressed by questions 1-4 in the B.O.G. interview schedule. B.O.G representatives were asked the role the BOG played in effecting change in the behavior of students. Out of eight B.O.G members interviewed, 3 reported that they assisted the school administration in making decisions on serious disciplinary cases, 3 reported that they participated in suspending and expelling students while the remaining 2 said they met with parents, teachers and students to solve disciplinary cases.

B.O.G representatives were asked the method used in their schools in effecting change in the behavior of students. Four of them reported that corporal punishment was in use, one said manual work was the mode of punishment used and one reported guidance and counseling. The other two said that students were made to go for their parents when they had disciplinary issues that needed to be solved at school.

On their opinion on the use of corporal punishment in effecting change in the behavior of students, 2 B.O.G representatives said the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment caused lateness and laziness to school among students, 4 said there was open defiance and cheating in exams and 2 said it caused truancy.

Finally, the B.O.G. representatives were asked how the behavior of students had changed as a result of the Ministry of Education policy on corporal punishment. It was noted by 2 of them that Ministry of education policy on corporal punishment caused truancy, 2 noted lateness of students to school and laziness while 4 said there was open defiance and cheating in exams.

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 Perception of Deputy Principals on Corporal Punishment

There were 80% of the deputy principals who said that corporal punishment should be used for effective behavior change in schools. Moreover, 60% of them confirmed its use in effecting behavior change in schools.

3.2 Perception of Board of Governors on Corporal Punishment

All (100%) of the board of governors' representatives preferred the use of corporal punishment in effecting behavior change among students.

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