THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

ST. AUGUSTINE

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

WEST INDIES

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION

M. ED. (YOUTH GUIDANCE)

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EDRS 6900: RESEARCH PROJECT

DUE DATE: June 30, 2011

TITLE

Teacher perceptions on the relationship between pupil discipline and corporal punishment in four primary schools in an education district in Trinidad and Tobago

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

This study is dedicated to my friends in the circle of primary school education as they endeavor to train the young and fertile minds of the boys and girls.

Abstract

Globally, the debate continues over the use of corporal punishment in primary schools. During the 1980s and 1990s, for example, twenty-seven states in the United States of America outlawed physical punishment. One of the main reasons was that corporal punishment was deemed to be an unceremonious relic of 17th century colonialism. The 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations was another drive to undermine the practice of corporal punishment in schools.

Since the ban in the year 2000 on corporal punishment from primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago there has been an intensification of national concerns over the effects of corporal punishment on discipline of primary school children.

Consequently, there have been many notions on the retention versus the substitution of corporal punishment in the primary school system of Trinidad and Tobago. The root of the ongoing conversation on the relationship between corporal punishment and pupil discipline rests on the differing beliefs and assumptions on learning and development of children as well as the concepts of the nature of discipline and methods to achieve it by teachers.

There is evidence in the literature that true discipline is followership which psychologically is the positive approach of nurturing behavior. Richard Curwin (1988), for instance, posits that discipline must be inculcated with dignity. Further evidence in the literature reveals that there is a relationship between corporal punishment and many negative effects such as aggressive

behavior, retaliation, violence and low self-esteem among pupils. Few studies support the use of corporal punishment to achieve positive discipline in pupils.

Evidence from the lived experiences of primary school teachers is therefore highly valuable for this study. It is the hope that a model arising from the analysis of the data of this study will assist teachers in their concerns of dealing with the management of positive pupil discipline.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

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Background to the Study

Despite decades of international debate over the merits of corporal punishment to discipline children, argues Gershoff (2002), a thorough understanding of whether and how corporal punishment affects children has not been reached.

According to Gregory (1995) and Wiehe (1990), this disagreement seems to be rooted in the differing philosophical beliefs and assumptions historically espoused by many on the nature of discipline as well as punishment.

Weihe (1990) submits that during the nineteenth century, it was a grand spectacle to publicly beat criminals as well as commonplace to flog disobedient schoolboys. Towards the latter part of this century, the use of corporal punishment began to decline.

However, according to Gershoff (2002), modern times have seen the resurgence of the use of corporal punishment not only in the family but in the school setting where smacking and spanking on the hand and wrist of students, caning on the buttocks and other forms of hitting on the body of students is administered.

Based on the perspective posited by Walters & Castle (1974) and from a conceptual framework, there are many persons who espouse the notion that discipline is not order or good behavior under the eye of an autocratic, harsh disciplinarian but a way of learning and the development of inner controls or self-discipline by pupils. Such persons not only denounce corporal punishment

but advocate the inculcation of discipline with dignity through the use of alternative discipline methods as championed by Curwin & Mendler (1998).

According to Wiehe (1990), opponents argue that as a method for pupil discipline, corporal punishment achieves the opposite of what it is intended to, consequently leading to further bad behavior.

Cohen (1984) posits that the United Nations is amiss despite its declaration of the rights of the child. If the purpose of the U. N. is to protect and preserve the rights of the child as a human, declares Cohen (1984) "it is imperative that the Convention contain an article establishing guidelines concerning appropriate disciplinary measures that may be used by parents, educators and others in authority since those in authority use various methods including corporal punishment to gain compliance from the child" (p.443).

Opponents to corporal punishment feel that its use results in more rage among victims, leading to criminals in the society. Some opponents, according to Wiehe (1990), claim that even if they think the reasons are good, those who administer corporal punishment themselves feel uneasy after delivering it.

Consequently, the global trend for the past two decades has been the call for the abandonment of corporal punishment in favor of the increased use of alternative discipline methods. Such methods include logical consequences, natural consequences, time outs and withdrawal of privileges.

In keeping with section 28 of the Children's Amendment Act (2000) which prohibits the use of corporal punishment by teachers, the government of Trinidad and Tobago in 2010 via the Ministry of Education, appointed an Alternative Discipline Task Force to guide schools in the art

of alternative methods to achieve pupil discipline and in the long term develop self-disciplined citizens.

On the contrary, proponents of corporal punishment according to Wiehe (1990), advocate that as a method of pupil discipline, it prevents wastage of time, space and other resources by placing students in detention or suspension.

Advocating the use of corporal punishment, the "La Vista Church of Christ", Omaha NE, Canada, defiantly stated that regardless of governmental laws, God's law states that spanking is necessary for proper development of a child. (Consultants on Religious Tolerance, 2002-2009).

Ria Taitt of Trinidad Sunday Express, (June 22, 2008), reported that eighty-three percent (83%) of teachers she interviewed, agreed that corporal punishment should be allowed in schools. Sixty-three percent (63%) of another group of teachers claimed that because of the absence of corporal punishment in schools, sexual deviance on school premises is a "big" problem. Teachers, claims Taitt, state that they feel "disempowered" and "abandoned" on the issue of corporal punishment and classroom control as students mock them saying "government say 'yuh cyar' do me nothing."

Commenting on discipline and other societal issues on a Trinidad radio programme (Sunday, January, 09, 2011), a pastor expressed strong objection to the removal of corporal punishment in schools.

Evidence in Wiehe (1990) suggests that there is a wait and see approach of the long term effects of corporal punishment on pupil discipline since neither side trust the evidence of the other. Indeed, controversy over the practice of corporal punishment as a method of pupil discipline within the education system of Trinidad and Tobago has persisted for decades.

During my tenure as a teacher and subsequently an administrator at the primary school level, I was able to switch roles as witness, counselor and mediator on different occasions in parent-teacher and even teacher-pupil conflict over the issue of corporal punishment. I recall interesting formal and informal meetings with parents and teachers as well as chats with pupils on methods of discipline generally and corporal punishment specifically. Issues such as the formulation and implementation of an alternative discipline plan, the democratic classroom environment and proper planning for effective classroom teaching and management would dominate staff meetings, P.T.A meetings and even fraternity meetings for principals.

Instances in the local education system of threats and actual litigation by parents against teachers who abuse their authority are real. School supervisors and other officers of the strategic apex in the education system are privy to reports from parents and principals of inhumane and illegal disciplinary methods meted out to pupils by teachers. On November 09th, 2010, Caroline Kissoon of the Trinidad Express, reported of police probe of 'abuse' by a female teacher who allegedly slammed a seven year old errant infant to a wall.

Stakeholder discussions through workshops as well as surveys reveal the persistence of widespread debate in the local education system. Contributing to the debate in a workshop in June, 2004 in Guyana, the former minister of education Mrs. Hazel Manning agreed in principle with the idea that the rod and staff of corporal correction were a discomfort to pupils. Like the other participants, Manning listened to the opposing recommendation based on the research by Dr. Ramesh Deosaran that parents, teachers and pupils support the retention of corporal punishment inTrinidad and Tobago schools.

On February 06th2001, the Inter Press Service English News reported the division among parents, teachers and pupils, over the plan by the Trinidad and Tobago government to ban corporal punishment in schools. The call by the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Association (TTUTA), however, was for the adoption of alternative discipline strategies in all schools. The commitment by the ministry of education was to hold discussions with its Child Guidance Unit.

It is within this context of international and local debate over corporal punishment and other methods of pupil discipline that this investigation was located.

The Problem Statement

Generally, for all the schools with which I have interacted, there exists controversy over the need for corporal punishment as a method of discipline for pupils. Some persons strongly believe corporal punishment was, is and will always be 'good' for discipline. Others denounce the practice as barbaric, inhumane and obsolete.

During my forty year tenure as an educator both at the teaching and administrative levels, I have observed that pupils function in a state of fear and ambivalence because of the persistence of corporal punishment as a method of discipline by teachers. Additionally, there exists a gap in local research on the art of managing pupil discipline at the primary level in the national education system.The need for this study is therefore imperative if schools are to be assisted in producing citizens who would eventually be psychologically prepared to contribute towards the political, economic, social and technological development of their country.

Significance of the Study

It was anticipated that the findings of this study would:

a) Contribute to the ongoing conversation on pupil discipline at the primary school level.

b) Contribute to the researcher's understanding of the comparative influence on pupil discipline by corporal punishment and alternative discipline methods.

c) Assist the policy- makers in justifying the abandoning or retention of corporal punishment in schools as well as stimulate further investigation of the phenomenon of pupil discipline methods applied in the primary school system.

The Purpose Statement

Drawing from the perspective of Denzin & Lincoln (2000) on the qualitative paradigm and the phenomenological design, this study therefore proposed to gain insight into, to identify, describe and analyze the perceptions on and lived experiences of four teachers - each from a different primary school in one education district in Trinidad and Tobago – with the managing of school discipline.

Definitions

(i)Discipline

As related to this study, discipline is self-discipline. The attainment of self-discipline is developmental and not an overnight and externally imposed activity that results from fear of punishment, castigation or spanking. Discipline is giving children the tools to succeed in life. It

is more about building the right relationship with a child than using the right techniques (Curwin &Mendler1988).

(ii) Corporal punishment

This study identifies with the definition of corporal punishment which states that "corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purposes of correction or control of a child's behavior" (Strauss as cited in Gershoff, 2002, p. 43).

Research Questions

The Overarching Question:

What are (a) the perceptions and (b) the lived experiences of teachers in the study on pursuing alternative approaches to corporal punishment in managing positive discipline in primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago?

Sub-questions:

In the perceptions of teachers identified in the study:

1. What approaches to classroom and whole school discipline prevail in their schools?

2. How do teachers in the schools under study perceive corporal punishment?

3. How do teachers in the schools under study perceive alternative discipline strategies?

Delineation and Delimitation of the Study

Delineation

The approach of this study was to examine the strength of the relationship between corporal punishment and pupil discipline in an empirical and interpretive manner. The focus was to seek for qualitative data which would describe the perceptions and lived pedagogical experiences of teachers who seek to achieve positive classroom and whole-school pupil discipline through the application of different methods which include corporal punishment.

This study was also undergirded by the notion that the relationship between methods of discipline and pupil behavior is philosophically linked to the perception and conceptualization of the nature of discipline as well as punishment of pupils by teachers and others in authority in the education system.

Delimitations

The study was restricted to four teachers each from four different primary schools in one of the eight education districts in Trinidad and Tobago. While data on different methods of discipline might have emerged, the chief concern of the study was to explore the relationships and outcomes which could have been identified between corporal punishment and the management of pupil discipline.

Limitations

This study was limited by the following factors:

(a)The possibility of biased and flawed data from the participants,

(b)The danger of bias in the purposive sampling of the participants that might have been a challenge,

(c) Bracketing of personal experiences might have been difficult in interpreting the "texts",

(d) Given the nature of the study, generalization with respect to primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago would not have been possible. However, findings might have held implications for national primary schools.

Overview of the Methodology

The study was conducted using the qualitative paradigm. This paradigm was managed by applying the phenomenological method which focused on eliciting descriptive data from the participants who live the experiences. Phenomenology facilitated in-depth dialogue with the participants in their natural school settings which assisted in collecting and confirming rich, thick, descriptive data.

The four participants were teachers from four different primary schools from an education district of Trinidad and Tobago. Each teacher was purposively selected from different levels age range, gender and qualification.

Data collected were analyzed manually by transcription of notes, categorizing of themes and coding on an ongoing basis until the completion of the four interviews.

Rationale

Instead of taking a positivistic view, this qualitative approach, underpinned by the ontological quest for reality, facilitated a hermeneutic understanding of the real perceptions and interpretations of the teachers who live the day to day experiences in the actual school situation.

It is the ontological view that the real answers to the issue of the relationship between corporal punishment and pupil discipline are not determined by fixed laws but by the multiple realities of the participants who function in the situation.

From an axiological perspective, the perceptions and experiences of the teachers were of great value. The findings realized from the local setting possessed equal research significance as those from other parts of the globe.

The tradition of phenomenology in the qualitative investigation enabled the researcher to inductively elicit confirmation of the interpretations from the teachers who were part of the school cultures that were studied. As a qualitative tradition and from a contextual perspective, phenomenology facilitated the study of cultural roles and norms.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted the approach to the study of teacher perceptions of the relationship between corporal punishment and pupil discipline. It was the understanding that an insight would have been gained into the connection between other discipline methods and the management of positive pupil discipline. The method of the study was phenomenology which is located within the qualitative paradigm.

This chapter has also presented a definition of discipline and corporal punishment as well as explored the philosophical and conceptual framework within which persons perceive discipline and corporal punishment. In addition to the background and statement of the problem, an attempt was made to explain the purpose and significance of the study.

Inquiry in this study was done through an overarching question and sub-questions that guided the interview questions. Cognizance was given in this study to the anticipated challenges of teacher attitudes and the realities of data collection. A rationale justifying the use of the qualitative paradigm was also included in this chapter.

Chapter 2

The Literature Review

Introduction

This study explored the perceptions and lived experiences of primary school teachers of the relationship between corporal punishment and pupil discipline. As part of this effort, the review of literature focused on the nature and dynamics of discipline, corporal punishment and alternative discipline strategies as well as discipline theories and the management of positive discipline which were themes that emerged from the research questions.

The Nature and Dynamics of Discipline

Historically, discipline has been associated with concepts that vary from strict conformity and punishment to followership and personal responsibility.

Gossen (1998) for instance, explains that while discipline is derived from the Latin word *disciplina* which means learning, the verb to discipline originates from the root word which means disciple. Gossen (1998) elaborates that the original connotation of discipline was the self-discipline of the students of Socrates and Plato, of the competitive athlete and of the "Karate Kid".

Walters & Castle (1974) purport that true pupil discipline is self- discipline which is not based on punishment but on the intention of helping pupils to develop inner controls so that they are empowered with the skills, attitudes, values and knowledge to do the right thing on their own accord throughout their lifetime.

Curwin & Mendler (1988) posit that the attainment of discipline is developmental and not an overnight and externally imposed activity that results from fear of punishment. Punishment, a coercive approach to discipline according to Marshall & Weisner (2004), is based on the idea that students must be harassed to learn or hurt in order to be instructed. This approach to discipline is counterproductive to healthy teacher- pupil relationship argue Marshall & Weisner (2004), since it is externally imposed and prompts negative feelings against the punisher.

Osborn & Osborn (1977) also believe that effective discipline is a slow process and the achievement of minimum classroom discipline problems does not happen overnight. The key to effective discipline argue Curwin & Mendler, (1988) and supported by Osborn & Osborn (1977), is not one of control or the quick mastery of techniques or even the implementation of a packaged method but love and understanding which assist classroom management and teaches students to take responsibility for their behavior.

McEwan & Gathercoal (2000) conceptualize discipline as the judicious, comprehensive approach to democratic classroom management. This approach champions principles of personal rights balanced by social needs and responsibilities of the pupils. Marshall & Weisner (2004) support this discipline that promotes the learning of responsible behavior since it focuses on the human potential. Responsibility helps to cement collaboration as opposed to authoritarianism between teacher and pupil.

Blair (1962) affirms that past police methods of maintaining discipline in classrooms were based on punishment which ignored basic psychological principles such as adjustment or the causes of pupil misdeeds. Blair (1962) also notes that marked changes from the discipline by physical force to the use of sound psychological approaches of prevention, resolution and restitution

guided by sympathy and understanding evolved over time. This psychological approach claims Blair (1962), assists pupils in developing new ideals and patterns of conduct, minimizes discipline problems and facilitates teachers in lifting the self-esteem of children through affirmations, recognition and appreciation thus helping to diminish deviance.

Bernard (1973) notes that prior to the popularity of progressive education when the "good teacher" was the authoritarian, it was assumed that discipline was the stern and inflexible approach needed to break the will of unruly children. While Bernard (1973) contends that coercive control is counterproductive, he notes that the counterbalance to stern and inflexible discipline is not extreme permissiveness but firm adult conviction mixed with warm acceptance of the child. The purpose of discipline persists Bernard (1973) is not to restrict freedom but rather teach children how to use the social system in which they live to maximize their freedom.

According to Walters & Castle (1974), discipline imposed from without does little good. Instead, that which stimulates intrinsic drives in pupils is the discipline which promotes responsible behavior and respects human needs, values and thoughts. Encouraging pupils to initiate responsibility prepares them for personal development and survival in democratic societies.This form of discipline is progressive since it motivates pupils cognitively and emotionally.

Discipline based on coercive and authoritarian rule with its attendant elements of threats, imposed decisions, punishment and the lack of consent, undermines human development. The opposite of this authoritarian type is the discipline based on collaboration which motivates pupil commitment, self-control and self-direction. According to Marshall &Weisner (2004), therefore, traditional enforcement of discipline for obedience reaps rebellion, resistance and defiance rather than the desired compliance and cooperation.

Curwin & Mendler (1988) strongly advocate a model of discipline that is based on a positive value system. This model, 'discipline with dignity,' incorporates strategies that foster a philosophy about behavior management that is based on 'educational, psychological and commonsense principles' such as respect for the dignity of the child, developing a comprehensive discipline plan, reducing student and teacher stress, resolving problems with disruptive students and using special guidelines for rules and consequences that work. The high-point of this model is that the locus of control rests with the child, reflecting John Dewey's and Jean Piaget's child- centredness and constructivism, respectively.

Discipline Theories

Liz Mc (2010) declares that all theories of student discipline stress the need for clear communication and consistency.

According to Mc (2010), discipline theories of student behavior and classroom behavioral management such as the models of Glasser, Skinner, Canter and Jones emerged in the nineteen seventies by educators in response to the concerns among teachers about student behavior. These theories are supplemented by logical consequences, transactional analysis, teacher effectiveness training, judicious discipline and discipline with dignity.

As a theory, explains Mc (2010), the Glasser model suggests that teachers should act as helpers to children. The idea behind this is that behavior is a matter of choice and a teacher facilitates the making of good decisions. Teachers should also create the climate and curricula that foster appropriate behavior by satisfying the needs of belonging and feelings of empowerment by the student. The assumption of this theory as first posited by William Glasser, according to Edwards

(2000), is that students have the ability to make their own positive choices or "become more responsible in a behavioral sense" (p.184).

The Skinner model takes the behaviorist approach to classroom management according to Mc (2010) in which teachers train student behavior in order to achieve desired outcomes. This involves constant positive and negative reinforcement so that good behavior is rewarded and bad behavior is ignored or punished immediately.

The Canter model is the theory of assertive discipline. Edwards (2000) explains that assertive discipline is based on achieving rewards or avoiding punishment and is guided by firm rules which give it a preventative orientation and places the responsibility for bad student behavior on the teacher.

The assumption guiding the Jones model is that children need to be controlled to behave properly and it is appropriate to pressure students to behave by reducing the time they are allowed to spend in preferred activity.

Logical consequences are the expression of the reality of the social order and results that can be expected whenever an individual fails to abide by the rules of living that all human beings must learn in order to function effectively. The consequences are related directly to the misbehavior and devoid of any moral judgments.

The assumption of transactional analysis is that behavior is an outgrowth of information stored in the subconscious mind that has been learned by interacting with others. The critical assumption of teacher effectiveness training is that human beings are self- regulating and can thus learn to manage their own behavior. Students therefore commonly rebel when their teachers actively regulate their behavior. Rewards and praise may undermine intrinsic motivation.

Gathercoal (2000), the pioneer of judicious discipline, posits that school is an appropriate place to prepare students for living in a democratic society where students can learn to regulate their personal behavior so it does not violate school interest. This theory also assumes that students can help create valid rules for the classroom while consequences provide a better way to improve the classroom behavior of children than punishment.

Discipline with Dignity is undergirded by the philosophy of humanism. It is an approach, according to the creators Curwin and Mendler (1988) that values the self-esteem of students. It is the belief of the pioneers that students will protect their self-esteem or dignity at all costs.

The Nature and Dynamics of Corporal Punishment

Weihe (1990) states corporal punishment as a discipline tool originated in the nineteenth century when floggings of disobedient school boys were commonplace. However, according to Gershoff (2002), despite a period of decline in the latter part of the century, modern times have seen the persistence of corporal punishment in school settings in the form of smacking, spanking and caning on the hand, wrist and buttocks.

Radin (1988) declares that the arguments against corporal punishment in schools have been so persuasive that not one country in Continental Europe, East or West permits it. The only country to reinstate it after it was removed in Europe cites Radin (1988) was Nazi Germany. One of the most powerful arguments against corporal punishment in the United States declares Radin (1988) is that it is disproportionately inflicted on black pupils, particularly males. Even if it is not racially biased towards black pupils elaborates Radin (1988), other counterproductive effects include decreased learning, poorer attendance, increased feelings of anxiety, violent reprisals and

alienation. Teachers who corporally punish pupils insists Radin (1988), are demonstrating that physical outburst or aggression is the way to deal with conflict.

The literature demonstrates that corporal punishment simply forces compliance instead of initiating cooperation and collaboration with authority. Strauss (1994 as cited in Gershoff 2002) argues that corporal punishment refers to the intentional application of physical pain as a method of changing behavior.

According to Kandel (1992), the value of corporal punishment is disputed among psychologists; some regard it as harmless, while others consider it potentially harmful. Some researchers according to Kandel (1992) reveal that there is a relationship between physical punishment and aggression. Some critics according to Wiehe (1990) argue that corporal punishment achieves the opposite of what it sets out to do, leading instead to further bad behavior.

Some researchers posit that the use of corporal punishment to correct children demonstrates a hegemonic relationship between adults and children and consequently negative reinforcement. Bernard (1973) demonstrates that corporal punishment perpetuates a long tradition of punishment as an antidote to misbehavior. However, to Bernard (1973), punishment inhibits the development of a personal and social conscience and is therefore futile. Further negative results from administering corporal punishment, according to the literature, include not only physical injuries to the child but social and psychological harm to child, adult and society. Evidence is that corporal punishment is tantamount to abuse and violence.

Gershoff (2002) & Bitensky (2007) agree that there is little empirical evidence that corporal punishment helps to achieve the goal of moral internalization and decrease aggressive and anti-social behavior. They also inform that the controversial issue has moved beyond academic

debate in many countries to violation of human rights as defined in the United Nations committee on the Rights of the Child and domestic legal documents in countries worldwide. Sharing in the campaign against corporal punishment, the United Nations International Education Children Fund (UNICEF) denounces the practice as the wrong way to discipline a child since it relies on fear and submissiveness, causes physical pain even though not wounds and diminishes a child's capacity to grow up as an autonomous and responsible person.

Advocates of corporal punishment according to Wiehe (1990), argue that this method provides immediate response to indiscipline and that students are quickly back in the classroom learning after been punished thereby preventing waste of time, space and other resources if they were to be placed in detention or suspension.The Consultants on Religious Tolerance (2002-2009), have identified religious advocates who believe that it is a divine law to spank for the development of the child.

On the basis of the consequentialist, retributivist and utilitarian theories, Benatar (2001) presents a philosophical argument for the use of corporal punishment in schools and homes. Although he feels that pupils can be disciplined without it and did not use it during his tenure as a teacher, he presents conditions under which corporal punishment can be justly administered. His conditions for use include infrequent administration without injury; nondiscrimination or application regardless of race, color, creed class or gender; due process which according to the distributive theory must be inflicted only on the guilty parties; timing which has implications for immediacy and allowance for time to cool off before inflicting corporal punishment and safeguards which implies putting appropriate mechanisms in place to prevent abuse by parents and teachers.

Taitt (2008) reported in the Trinidad Express Newspaper that sixty-three percent (63%) of a group of teachers interviewed by her claimed that because of the absence of corporal punishment in schools sexual deviance on the school premises is a "big" problem. Other teachers interviewed by Taitt claimed to feel abandoned and disempowered in the absence of government's permission to administer corporal punishment in schools and wished it be reinstituted.

The Nature and Dynamics of Alternative Discipline

Skiba & Peterson (2000) claim that findings up to the period of their writing suggested that the practice of corporal punishment, because of its coercive and authoritarian nature does not appear to be addressing indiscipline in schools. The reaction according to Skiba & Peterson (2000) has been the call for positive behavior support strategies which comprise an alternative discipline model that promotes the teaching of discipline via the curriculum.

According to Skiba & Peterson (2000), alternative discipline embodies concepts of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Its focus is on personal responsibility, restorative and distributive justice as opposed to retributive justice. It is instructional instead of punitive and focuses mainly on prevention according to Curwin & Mendler (1988) and correction as articulated by Beck (1996).

Beck (1996) argues that alternative discipline is wrapped up in teaching and communicating. In this approach, purports Beck (1996), pupils are allowed to reason and develop conscience, cognitive skills and self-discipline. In alternative discipline punishment is logical and there is latitude for reasoning by adult and child according to Beck (1996). There is also the principle of extinction which is the ignoring of the problem behavior or negative reinforcement.

While alternative discipline is non-confrontational and non-coercive, it does not allow permissiveness; neither is it an effort to get mindless compliance in a different way. It is simply a social constructivist approach that requires the transformation of the classroom into a socio-emotionally democratic environment that is conducive to positive behavior modification. Such an environment includes pupils in decision making, encourages cooperation and autonomy and assists the pupils in recognizing the school as a community where they are valued, respected and cared for. This environment, according to Beck (1996), prepares pupils for life tasks such as self-awareness, control of impulsivity, working cooperatively and caring about one-self and others. Alternative discipline requires that teachers give up some power and reconsider the way they define and think about misbehavior.

Strategies and Management of Positive Discipline in schools

Porter (2000) argues that the management of pupil discipline at the level of the class or whole school rests on the beliefs about students and the way they learn; the purpose of discipline; explanations of disruptive behavior and how much autonomy students are allowed to exercise. Beliefs and theories of student discipline, posits Porter (2000), will determine the role of the leader as controlling or guiding and generate a repertoire of congruent responses which Curwin & Mendler (1988) theoretically described as three dimensional - prevention, action and resolution.

Gootman (2001) argues that positive discipline is closely linked to the caring teacher who helps pupils to develop self-worth, responsibility and respect. This approach is underpinned by the teacher's goal to develop a viable, practical approach to discipline, the cooperation by all

teachers, parents and pupils to work together to solve problems and help children be the best they can be. It also rests on the principle that the classroom is a caring community where relationships among the students and between the teacher and students are supportive and based on the psychological needs of the student personnel. The conclusion by Jones (1990) is that the modeling of warm, friendly, positive teacher behavior, blended with firmness, realistic limits and competent teaching is the bedrock of the interpersonal relationship on which positive classroom management depends.

In recognizing how children learn, Gootman (2001) outlines effective strategies in positive discipline which include creating an environment of self-worth, open communication, receptivity,empowerment with responsibility and skills of peaceful co-existence and the caring role modeling from the teacher and students which is conducive to appropriate behavior. The focus of this approach is character development through teachers who support their children unconditionally and accept them for who they are and the integration of discussions and activities of feelings into the curriculum.

Tauber (1990) describes that the control of the environment could be achieved by implementing a logical system of conditioning which he terms interventionist. This means that the methods to modify student behavior are based on the Y theory of McGregor which is the "carrot and stick" approach.

Drawing from Gordon's Parent effectiveness (1970) and Teacher Effectiveness (1974) and Rogers' Freedom to Learn (1969), Tauber (1990) adds that there is a non-interventionist approach of supportive, facilitative environment for students. This, he elaborates, implies that there should be faith in the student's possession of inner motivation which if simply nurtured

instead of controlled will blossom. It also implies that the teacher is the director or facilitator who is no longer at the fore front (not laissez-faire, complete hands- off view).

Dreikurs & Cassel (1972 as cited in Tauber 1990), posit that teachers should create an inter-actionist environment in which conflicts are solved by shared responsibility and full participation in decision-making by all participants. Important in the inter-actionist approach according to Dreikurs & Cassel (1972 as cited in Tauber1990), is not how many conflicts occur but how these conflicts are resolved so that relationships remain intact and in which both parties save face and feel their needs are met.

Jones & Jones (1990) posit that a comprehensive classroom management approach addresses strategies and the management of positive pupil discipline. Such approach incorporates the counseling approach and the application of behaviorist methods. One of the most widely and earliest used methods continues Jones & Jones (1990) is the William Glasser Reality Therapy (1965) derived from the belief that young people need caring professionals who are willing to help them take responsibility for their behavior and develop plans aimed at altering unproductive conduct.

A more clinical model developed by Dreikurs and associates and recommended by Jones & Jones (1990) is that which is based on the belief that by acting-out children were making poor choices because of inappropriate notions of how to meet their basic need to be accepted.

The behavioral approach of Teacher - effectiveness promotes the causes of the student's misbehavior. The focus is on the teacher's behaviors that influence students' behavior and learning which include the teacher's skill in organizing and managing classroom activities, the teacher's skills in presenting instructional material and the teacher- pupil relationship.

Good & Brophy (1973 as cited in Jones & Jones 1990), claim that effective teachers organize their classrooms in a manner that helps to prevent disruptive behavior. Such strategies of prevention of disruptive behavior include listening to students, explaining rationales for the underlying rules and assignments and dropping the use of teacher power. Jones & Jones (1990) advise teachers to replace authoritarian control with natural power which is logical and readily accepted leadership associated with obvious competence, interest and concern.

Smith (1985) stresses the importance of teacher-pupil relationship by noting the need for treating persons as rational agents who must ultimately take responsibility for their own destiny, although for children this does mean full and adequate reasons of abstract and sophisticated sort since they are fully rational. Claims Smith (1995), managing discipline cannot be separated from teaching and learning. According to Moreland (1980 as cited in Smith 1985), good organization in the classroom avoids confrontation and allows the teacher to establish the warm relationships with most of his pupils.

Sprick & Daniels (2010) present a framework for managing student behavior that is based on the theory of motivation which involves structuring the classroom for success, teaching behavioral expectations to students, monitoring student behavior, interacting positively with students by focusing more on acknowledging positive behavior than responding to bad behavior and correcting in a brief, calm and consistent manner.

Apart from parental involvement in the form of conferences and other formal and informal contacts, teachers must be supported by clear, fair, consistent, school-wide disciplinary policies. This according to Jones & Jones (1990) can be done by a systems approach which is the involvement of a variety of stakeholders such as the administration, reference to best practices,

assistance from colleagues, a school-wide management system, school discipline plans, outside consultation with the school psychologists and all relevant personnel who can provide support services, community resources such as religious and legal and when all interventions fail the use of referrals to special education services.

Summary

The review of the literature related to corporal punishment and pupil discipline was guided by five themes. These themes included the nature and dynamics of pupil discipline, corporal punishment and alternative discipline. The focus of the review also included discipline theories as well as strategies and management of positive discipline in schools.In so doing, an effort was made to examine the themes by comparing and contrasting their underlying concepts.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in the research design for the sampling procedure, data collection and data analysis to answer the research questions.

Research design

Qualitative Phenomenological design

Drawing from Creswell (2007), an emergent qualitative design was used with the express the purpose of learning about the problem from the participants and the understanding that phases of the process might have changed, recognizing that the key intention of the research was to learn about the problem from the participants.

In this study, phenomenology which is situated within the constructivist paradigm was applied as a process of learning and constructing meaning through intense dialogue with the participants of the lived experiences that they held in common. According to van Manen (1990), the aim in phenomenology is to gain a deeper understanding of the very nature or meaning of the phenomenon which consequently offers researchers the "possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world" (p.9). Creswell (2007) declares that the type of problem best suited to the phenomenological approach "is one in which it is important to understand several individuals'common or shared experiences of a phenomenon" (p.60). The approach in this study therefore was to not only engage in describing the experiences which is

the focus by Moustakas (1994 as cited in Creswell 2007), but also on interpreting the "texts" of life as endorsed by van Manen (1990).

Sampling Procedure

Sample type

The participants were selected through purposive sampling, a non-random sampling strategy which Patton (1990) defends as logical and powerful because it facilitates the selecting of information-rich cases for in-depth study or allows the researcher, according to Anderson and Burns (1989), to concentrate on a few cases where resources are limited. Additionally, Creswell (2007) argues that purposive sampling tends to create a balance in possible errors in over or under representing elements of the population. It was against the background of these views in the referenced literature that the population sample of four schools and four teachers were selected.

Target Population

Data collected from the Communication Unit from the Ministry of Education in the year 2011 revealed the following:

- In the primary education sector in Trinidad and Tobago the number of primary schools in the eight (8) education districts was five hundred and ten (510).
- Of these primary schools the total number of Government-run was (124).
- Denominational was (322) and Private Primary schools was (64).
- The population of teachers in this sector was (7,738).

The Accessible Population

The accessible population for the study was represented by four (4) out of (48) schools from the North-eastern education district. Four teachers each from four different levels within the different schools also represented the population.

Schools in the sample

Two semi-urban and two rural schools within the same education district were selected. Of these four schools, two were purely government controlled and two denominational. Both the purely controlled government and the denominational primary schools were medium to low performing schools according to the data on pupil achievement in the Secondary Entrance Assessment for the past five years. The schools operated within middle and low socio-economic levels. Most of the pupils of these four schools resided within the nearby catchment area and walked to school.

Of the two purely government controlled schools, pupil discipline was generally lower in one, mainly because of the differences in the levels of parental support and involvement in the school life of their children. The two denominational schools where discipline was positively managed were rural. These two schools boasted of immersing the pupils in religious and moral activities on a daily basis.

All the schools were co-educational and led by female administrators. The average population of pupils for each school was one hundred and fifty. The teaching staff consisted of males and females who engaged the pupils in curricular and co-curricular activities. However, in all four schools, the female staff outnumbered the males. The validity, meaningfulness and insights guaranteed from the qualitative inquiry from the four schools had more to do with information richness according to Patton (1990) than the sample size.

Teachers in the sample

Four teachers each from four different primary schools in one education district comprised the sample. The teachers were selected on the basis of the class level to which they were currently assigned at the school. The levels were infant, junior and senior. The infant teacher was a female with over seven years teaching experience possessing the Teachers' Diploma as well as the Bachelor in Education and fell in the age range of 40 to 55 years. Two teachers were selected from the junior level; one male and one female, falling in the age range of 40 to 55 and 20 to 35 respectively.

While the male had over seven years teaching experience and possessed the Bachelor of Education and the Teachers' Diploma, the female had less than seven years teaching experience and possessed the Teachers' Diploma as a minimum level of certification. The teacher from the senior level was a male in the age range of 20 to 35 who possessed the Teachers' Diploma as a minimum and had less than seven years teaching experience.

Data collection Instruments

Interviews

Primary data on the perceptions and lived experiences of the participants were collected using semi-structured, in-depth interviews in a dialogic, one-on-one approach.The time frame allotted to the process of interviews extended from the last week of March, 2011 to the second week of April 2011. The search for the insights into the lived experiences finds support in the provision of the deep sense of the 'social' derived from the use of interviews as argued by Anderson and Burns (1989). These interviews were purposefully selected according to the availability and willingness of the participants.

Data collection was guided by the use of themes that emerged from the research questions which originated from the review of the related literature as well as the professional and personal experiences in the local education system.

Administration of interviews

Each interview session opened with the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity from the researcher. The researcher also introduced each session with a dialogue about the experience of the participants and an explanation of the purpose of the study. This activity was followed by an introductory broad question which preceded the subsequent open-ended interview questions. Each participant was interviewed once. Interviews ranged from forty-five to sixty minutes. Notes of main elements in the responses were handwritten while the complete conversation between the researcher and participants was audio-taped with the permission from the participants.

Generally, the time, place and format were agreed on by both researcher and participant. Respect to certain preferences was given. Dates and sessions of the interviews were prearranged.During interviews the researcher asked impromptu or unplanned questions. In some cases, questions were expanded or altered for clarification.

Procedure Used in Instrument Administration

The Interview Protocol

The interview protocol consisted of the overarching question and the sub-questions that support part (a) the perceptions and part (b) the lived experiences of the teachers and a predetermined list

of interview questions related to each of the four research questions stated in chapter one. These interview questions were mapped according to variables or themes embedded in each research question and formed a guide that the interviewer used to explore during each interview. The function of the list as a guide confirmed the position assumed by Lofland and Lofland (1984 as cited in Hoepfl 1997) that the protocol helps to ensure good use of time, make interviewing multiple subjects more systematic and comprehensive and help to keep interviewers more focused. The detailed protocol of questions is attached as an appendix to this study. (See page 65).The following table illustrates the research questions vis-à-vis the interview protocol questions.   Table1.

Themes	Research Questions	Interview Protocol Questions
1.(Perceptions of discipline, punishment, corporal punishment and alternative discipline)	Overarching question	1,2,3 & 4
2. Corporal punishment	Sub-question (1)	1 &2
3. Alternative punishment	Sub-question (2)	1, 2&3
4. Positive discipline	Sub-question (3)	1,2,3&4

Overview of Data analysis

Bogdan and Bikden (1982 as cited in Patton1990), define qualitative data analysis as "working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned and deciding what to tell others"(p. 145).

The process of data analysis in this study sequentially moved from transcribing and horizonalization, to categorizing and coding of the handwritten and audio-taped responses from the interviews.

Ongoing transcription of the findings of each interview was done to ensure credibility and rigor in the study. Horizonalization which is the highlighting significant statements, sentences or quotes was done to understand the participants' experience of the phenomenon. Categorizing into themes for the cluster of meaning and writing textual description which, according to Creswell (2007), is the description of what the participants experienced as well as the structural description which is the description of the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon, also formed part of the analysis.

As endorsed by Patton (1990) in the description of cross-case analysis, categorizing the data facilitated the grouping of responses to the common interview questions from the four different participants or the analysis of their different perspectives on central issues which identified similar and dissimilar domains.

The initial grouping of the raw data into the major categories or the identifying of themes, projected by Strauss & Corbin (1990 as cited in Patton 1990) as open coding, preceded the axial coding in which each open coding category was used in a visual pattern or model to focus on the core phenomenon of teacher perceptions and their lived experiences of the relationship between pupil discipline and corporal punishment. The final step in the coding process took the form of selective coding and the development of propositions which again found support from Strauss and Corbin (1990 as cited in Patton 1990).

In summary, the process of inductive analysis according to Patton (1990) that was used in this study began with identifying and tentatively naming the conceptual categories into which the phenomena observed were grouped. The goal of the initial process according to the argument by Strauss and Corbin (1990 as cited in Patton 1990), was to create descriptive, multi-dimensional categories which formed a preliminary framework for analysis. Categorizing, therefore, involved the grouping of similar words, phrases and events into themes. During the subsequent stages of the analysis such as the axial coding, the categories or the initial themes were gradually modified. That audit trail facilitated the breaking up of the raw data into chunks.

Finally, a conceptual model was built through the process of interpretation. This model was translated into a story line or a report that approximates as closely as possible to the reality that it represents.

Research Questions of the study

1. **The overarching question:** What are (a) the perceptions and (b) the living experiences of teachers in the study on pursuing alternative approaches to corporal punishment in managing positive discipline in primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago?

2. **The sub-questions:**

    (a) What approaches to classroom and whole - school discipline prevail in your school?

    (b) How do teachers in the schools under study perceive corporal punishment?

    (c) How do teachers in the schools under study perceive alternative discipline strategies?

Based on the regulations of the School of Education(2009 – 2010) on page twenty- three, section two, sub- section (c) on the presentation format of EDRS 6900: Research Project, one of the

research questions " How do teachers in the school under study perceive alternative discipline strategies?" was pursued.

The rationale for the selection of the third sub-research question rests on the nature of the question to stimulate in teachers the ease and desire in generating data on the similarities and differences between the traditional, old paradigm of corporal punishment and the movement to the more recent and modern approach to pupil discipline. The third research question, like the second and first questions, also formed part of the overarching question and therefore supported and satisfied the overarching objectives of eliciting the perceptions and experiences of the teachers on the matter of corporal punishment and alternative discipline strategies in relation to pupil discipline in light of the present ban on corporal punishment by the Ministry of Education.

Referencing

The presentation of this study with respect to referencing and citation of literature within the text and in the reference list is based on the format prescribed by the 5th edition, 2001 of the American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual.

Chapter 4

Data analysis, Research findings and Interpretation

Introduction

This study was guided by an overarching research question and three sub-questions. Each of the four research questions was driven by interview questions as shown in Table 1(chapter three) and the interview protocol in the appendix. The focus of this chapter was on findings based on the third research sub-question which has emerged from the overarching question and which delves into the core themes of corporal punishment and alternative discipline strategies through the use of four basic interview questions.

Research question #3: How do teachers in the school under study perceive alternative discipline strategies?

Interview question #1: There is the argument in the literature that alternative approaches to corporal punishment have more positive effects on pupil behavior than corporal punishment. Based on your experience, what is your response to advocates who promote this view?

The following direct excerpts graphically illustrate the perceptions of the four different respondents for this first interview question:

(a) "That is a utopian state".

(b) "I agree because when you strike the child it doesn't have a long term-effect".

(c) "Both strategies have positive and negative effects".

(d) "There are times when it is needed. I don't agree with the literature".

Consequently, the perceptions emerging from these excerpts and the rest of the textual data are herein categorized into two broad themes: (a) administration (b) behavior change.

(a) Administration:

It was perceived by Teacher (A) that for alternative approaches to be effective they should be administered along with support services from the Ministry of Education and by the teacher's attitude of support for classroom cultural change. In elaborating, Teacher (A) explained:

> I think that is a utopian state. To be effective you need to implement it with supportive services. If alternative discipline strategies are implemented the children will see that sir is not beating me and we have to wait till ten years to see the results. It is long term. Corporal punishment is short term. For our purposes, we have to do it; immerse ourselves in it. The literature will be validated in the long term; it wouldn't happen overnight. That is the change in behavior. But is a cultural thing too; the licks the culture has to change now for them to see that when a child been given lines that is a bad thing. When a child is given lines now that is nothing. But they have to see when a child is given lines they have to see that is a bad thing. For some children right now they see it as happy for detention. The whole school sees licks. For the change the whole school must see lines as bad. A cultural change is needed; we must start somewhere. We have to start in the classroom I think. Each teacher doing their part to get the change...

It was also perceived by Teacher (B) that because of the cultural implication of corporal punishment, "operant conditioning" through the use of incentives and rewards should be part of the administration of alternative strategies for achieving pupil discipline. Again, in referring to

the method of administering alternative pupil discipline strategies, both Teachers (A) and (B) advocated that teachers should "immerse" themselves in alternative strategies with the belief that "the literature will be validated in the long term".

For Teacher (C) the administration of corporal punishment as well as alternative discipline strategies has both negative and positive effects. Differing with teachers (A) and (B), Teacher (C) declared that the "reward system is costly" and that "the behavior change may not be sincere or permanent". Teacher (C) elaborates that "we do not know if the behavior change is sincere or for the reward".

Like Teachers (A), (B) and (C), it was also the perception of Teacher (D) that corporal punishment was based on a cultural practice in that pupils who are generally familiar with the method at home, experience the same practice at school. Unlike the previous teachers, Teacher (D) felt that either of the strategies should appropriately and justifiably fit the "crime". As articulated by this teacher, "Sometimes there is need for strong measure even if alternative measures might work. I do not agree with the literature".

(a) Behavior change:

The general perceptions by the four teachers were that both corporal punishment and alternative discipline can be used to effect behavior change in pupils. According to Teacher (A) "corporal punishment is short term" and "generally it is a quick fix." On the contrary, to Teacher (A), "alternative discipline is longer lasting." Teacher (B) supports this by the statement "I agree because when you strike the child it doesn't have a long-term effect". The perception of Teacher (D) was "sometimes there is need for a stronger measure, even if alternative measures might work."

In her reaction to the effect of corporal punishment on pupil behavior, Teacher (B) indicated that its use can lead to "hate" from the pupils and that the pupils will want to "get back at you". Expanding, Teacher (B) remarked, "I don't want students to hate me." Highlighting more negative effects of corporal punishment on pupil behavior, Teacher (B)noted that its use can lead to "peer- embarrassment, especially among older children, like standard five pupils that I teach" and the undermining of the "identity of pupils". The conclusion of teacher (B) was that corporal punishment renders "emotional and physical harm to older and younger children" respectively. While Teacher (C) believed "nothing works because the children are all messed up", Teacher (D) perceived corporal punishment as "stronger and better" than alternative strategies in effecting behavior change

With respect to the effect of alternative discipline strategies on pupil behavior, the perceptions of teachers were both negative and positive. According to the comment by Teacher (A), the application of alternative strategies "proves that hitting is not the only way" and that change of behavior in pupils "doesn't take place overnight" All interviewees felt that positive features of alternative discipline approaches include the long-term effects, the engendering of "self-interest, self-management, interest in what they do and motivation" by the pupils. Citing as simultaneously positive and negative, Teacher (C) explained that "when a child wants to be in club, for example, we see behavioral change".

Negatively,teachers articulated the perception that the effect of alternative discipline strategies depends primarily on the goodwill and dedication of the teachers. According to Teacher (D) detention, for instance, can only be effective if teachers are willing to "stay in with the pupils". Teacher (A) criticized the advocacy and claim of the effectiveness of alternative strategies for behavior change in pupils as "utopian". Teacher (C) also negatively commented that change

resulting from the administering of alternative strategies "may not be sincere or permanent". He also criticized that the reward system as a function of the alternative approaches, is costly and that one is never sure if the pupil demonstrates a change in behavior simply for the reward. The interviewee went on to question, "What happens when the teacher cannot afford the reward?"

Interview question # 2: In the light of the ban on corporal punishment, what challenges have you been facing with respect to disciplining students in your school?

Challenges:

The general perceptions of challenges expressed by the four teachers encompassed the child, parents, community, legal and educational bureaucracy.

In their focus on the challenges posed by the child,Teacher (A) felt that oral presentations about values and attitudes are "not received" by pupils. The perception of Teacher (B) was that since boys are those who challenge the management of their teachers by doing"hard things" and "like to prove something", they, instead of girls should be administered corporal punishment.For Teacher (B) children are not significantly affected by efforts to discipline through the use of alternative methods since as she declared "some of the children get licks at home, so when it is administered there is no difference. There is no change in their experience".Teacher (C) who was very critical of the pupil claimed that:

> Children stand up for teachers. They are bold. They get together and bad talk teachers. Teachers get names. There is the threat of legal actions. There is warning from the social workers. There is uncertainty among teachers.

The perception of parents as a challenge, according to Teacher (A) was that "you have to meet with the parents to talk about this child; why is the child being punished the parents. The challenge is the children who not behaving well you not seeing their parents; so that is the problem." Parental avoidance of teacher – parent conferences was perceived as challenge by teacher (A). Also perceiving parents as a challenge in achieving pupil discipline by teachers, Teacher (B) observed that the use of corporal punishment at home by certain parents was responsible for acculturating their children with the custom of "beating". Teacher (C) felt the challenge of parents lay in the parental threats for teachers who flout the policy of the Ministry. Teacher (D) affirmed that the parents on the contrary proved an asset to the management of positive discipline at their school. The testimony of teacher (D) however, was "I have not faced many challenges. The school is small and the children come from disciplined homes."

The challenge of the legal and educational bureaucracy faced by teachers in administering discipline alternative strategies in light of the ban on corporal punishment in schoolswas perceived by Teacher (C) alone, who declared"there is no law against corporal punishment. The Amendment Act has not been passed". This teacher also condemned the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education and the general community for being to foreign-biased with respect to models and practices in education, emphasizing that "we import too wholesale".

Interview question # 3: To what extent has this ban on corporal punishment forced you to resort to alternative strategies for discipline students?

The perceptions elicited from the participants fall into the themes of experience, beliefs and law.

Experience:

With respect to corporal punishment a sub-theme posited by Teacher (A) was that there has been a historical "no effect syndrome" in its application for achieving pupil discipline. Expanding, Teacher (A) submitted that behavioral change in pupils from the use of corporal punishment is always "temporary". He further argued that "children display immunity to licks at school because they are regularly flogged at home". Teacher (B) supported that the "stick" has become "monotonous".

While it was the experience by Teacher (B) that the administering of corporal punishment was "tiring", for Teacher (A) its use was "abusive". Both Teachers (A) and (B) asserted that not only did they always use alternative discipline strategies but that the practice of "modeling" an exemplary lifestyle in words and deeds by teachers or fellow students had been helpful in curbing negative pupil behavior.

Beliefs:

All participants purported the beliefs that they always considered corporal punishment to be wrong. They also projected that behavioral problems of pupils merit the application of other "different" or alternative strategies to corporal punishment. According to Teacher (A) "you see before the ban was in place, I had, growing up as a teacher, always thought that this was right; I never had the problem with behaviors in children, I always tried to model a lifestyle and being a P. E. teacher I was able to get the big boys to behave, to respect me".

Law:

While according to Teacher (A), the law did not force him but he was goaded and guided by his belief about discipline strategies and children, it was the perception and experience of Teacher (B) that resorting to alternative strategies for pupil discipline was compulsory when she claimed : "we didn't have a choice" and because of the vacuum created by the government, in her words: " I think the Ministry has nothing in place to replace it; so the teachers are forced to apply those things they thought would work and come up with their own original methods".Consequently, according to Teacher (B),not only are teachers forced to create "strategies" but also to consult the literature or resort to ideas gained during their "teacher training".

The perception of Teacher (C) was similar to Teacher (A) in the declaration: "It wasn't the ban. It was the experiences; the observation. The conclusion is that there are different strategies to reach children". Again there was concurrence with Teachers (A) and (C) by Teacher (D) who said: "The ban has not forced me to resort to alternative strategies because as I said our school hardly gets discipline problems or pupils seldom give trouble. However, where necessary I give lines or take away their recess to help correct behavior problems".

Interview question # 4: With what strategies have teachers in your school replaced corporal punishment?

Arising from the responses to this fourth question are the basic concepts of modeling, deprivation, support systems and talk.

(a) Modeling:

In expressing their perceptions around the theme of modeling, the emphasis of Teacher (A) was, "I tried to model a certain lifestyle and being the P. E. teacher I was able to get the big boys to behave; to respect me". Generally, modeling strategies mentioned included the use of the positive examples of heroes from the community, religion and sports. Significant also was the reliance on the collegiality and camaraderie of the school staff as well as the role models of family members and exemplary classmates. All teachers declared that they found the example of teacher decorum, dress and self-respect to be an effective replacement tool in achieving pupil discipline.

(b) Deprivation:

Common among all the participants was the practice of deprivation which was demonstrated in such forms as sanctions, detention, withdrawal of free time and rewards, "taking away of recess" and writing of lines.

(c) Support systems:

All participants boasted of the effectiveness and positive reinforcement of such approaches as compliment, rewards, hugs, praises, life-skills in lessons, counseling from teachers, social workers, guidance officers and other worthy personnel.

(d) Talk:

As an alternative to corporal punishment and coinciding with some support systems, positive pupil discipline, according to the participants, has been achieved by them through varied types of verbal communication such as moral addresses on assemblies and in the classrooms, challenges,

counseling moments, infusion of lessons on discipline in the classroom curriculum, instructions, praises and compliments. According toTeacher (A):

> Talk about topical things; in moral education talk about forgiveness, Lent, the sacrifice of Jesus, the Way of the Cross, humility, parent conferencing, whole class or otherwise. If you see a child doing something wrong, you don't call him out in front the assembly. If you well-dressed we praise you; that's what happens on ourAssembly.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings from the investigation, the conclusions drawn in this study are as follows:

a) In most cases alternative discipline strategies are more effective than corporal punishment in achieving positive behavior change in pupils.

b) While the effect of corporal punishment on pupil discipline is immediate and short- term, alternative discipline strategies are more long-term and lasting.

c) The effectiveness of alternative discipline strategies rests on the methods of administration such as application along with support services from the Ministry of Education.

d) In weighing their pros and cons both corporal punishment and alternative discipline strategies have positive and negative effects on pupil discipline.

e) The use of alternative discipline strategies by some teachers has been influenced by their experiences, beliefs teacher training and the law.

f) Teachers have been satisfyingly applying various creative alternative discipline strategies which have been effectively helping to achieve positive pupil discipline.

Chapter 5

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Findings from the third research question presented in chapter four are discussed in this chapter. Insights from the literature review presented in chapter two, the conceptual framework of the study (See page 1), my experience as an educator, relevant readings and information I may have acquired over time were used to inform this discussion. Both conclusions and recommendations brought the chapter to a close.

Summary of Research Findings

In research question 3 --- (See page 34) teacher perceptions revealed that:

(i) Both alternative discipline strategies and corporal punishment tend to bring about changes in pupil behavior. It was also found that while alternative strategies tend to produce lasting effects, corporal punishment tends to generate effects that are more short-term or temporary.

(ii) Teacher attitude and training along with professional support services provided by the local Ministry of Education or other sources of professional development can greatly contribute to the effective implementation and administration of alternative discipline strategies in place of corporal punishment to achieve positive pupil discipline.

(iii) There is psychological validity in the application of alternative discipline strategies in the management of positive pupil discipline.

(iv)The culture of corporal punishment in schools is not generally appreciated by all teachers and where supported should be administered justly.

(v)There can be gender bias by teachers in the way corporal punishment is administered among pupils.

(vi)Teachers believe that such factors as teacher beliefs and experiences and constraints by law and bureaucracy play a significant role in their decision to resort to alternative discipline strategies in the primary school system.

(vii) Teachers possess a reservoir of strategies from which they can draw in their effort to shift from the hegemonic system of corporal punishment.

Discussion

First finding

On the basis of the conceptual framework, the literature review and my forty-year experience in primary school education, I support the first finding that while both corporal punishment and alternative discipline strategies tend to bring about changes in pupil behavior, the effects of the first is short-term and those of the latter are lasting. These two themes of short-term and lasting effects are crucial to the analysis of behavior change resulting from the two divergent methods. Several assumptions are responsible for this phenomenon.

The first assumption has to do with the philosophy of what constitutes sound discipline.Where discipline is interpreted by teachers to be instant, blind compliance to inhumane and autocratic dictates or where the purpose, according to Gershoff (2002), is to control behavior, then corporal punishment simply produces short-term behavior changes in pupils. Where teachers believe that

children are mindless gullible vessels into which ideas are to be poured, they display lack of imagination, creativity and research by resorting to corporal punishment which only produces transient and cosmetic pupil behavior changes. Corporal punishment forces pupils into momentary decisions because of the fear and duress that it generates.I have observed that in the absence of direct teacher supervision and the threat of the rod, pupils do not demonstrate the competence of making independent decisions. They show a lack of self-discipline. It has been seen that the well-behaved pupil under the whip of the teacher is extremely disruptive when left to interact independently with his classmates.

With respect to the results from the use of alternative discipline approaches, Curwin & Mendler (1988) agree with Walters& Castle (1974) who argue that true discipline is self-discipline and not only should the methods of achieving it cater for the dignity of the child but should also blend the cognitive and affective domains in a manner that generate rational thought and decisions as well as warm interpersonal and humane relations. Behavior change therefore from the application of alternative approaches is possible, since, according to Beck (1996), they constitute the art of transforming the classroom, giving up some power and reconsidering the way that teachers define and think about misbehavior. While alternative discipline does not mean getting mindless compliance in a different way from pupils, its pupil and people-centred approach helps to perpetuate self-esteem in pupils which serves as the bedrock and catalyst for permanent positive pupil behavior change.

Support is found in Jones (1990) who posited that the modeling of warm, friendly, positive teacher behavior, blended with firmness, realistic limits and competent teaching is the bedrock of the interpersonal relationship on which positive classroom management rests. Support for permanent positive behavior change is also found in Gootman (2001) who links positive pupil

discipline to the teacher who seeks to develop self-worth, responsibility and respect in pupils through a caring attitude.

On the basis of the conceptual framework, the literature and my experience in the field of education, it is my settled conclusion that it is more beneficial for both teacher and pupil when alternative discipline strategies instead of corporal punishment are used for achieving pupil behavior changes. These changes are always positive and irreversible.

Second finding

Drawing from the literature review, the conceptual framework and my personal experience, the second finding confirms the belief in the tripartite function of teacher attitude, training and professional support services for the effective administration of alternative discipline approaches for the realization of positive pupil discipline.

According to Jones & Jones (1990), this finding has demonstrated the systems approach to discipline which is the involvement of a variety of stakeholders such as administration, reference to practices, assistance from colleagues, a school-wide management system, school discipline plans, outside consultation with school psychologists and other relevant supportive services – legal, religious and others.

The notion of teacher attitude has implications for role modeling and followership as alluded to in the conceptual framework. Not only has the researcher's experience demonstrated the contribution of emulation or imitation as a significant factor in the life of pupils but according to Jones & Jones (1990), the modeling of warm, friendly, positive teacher behavior, blended with firmness, realistic limits and competent teaching is the bedrock of interpersonal relationship on which positive classroom management rests.

The researcher's experience has demonstrated that teachers who are grounded in principles of education are better equipped to guide pupils. Training helps teachers to be alert and ready for the challenges of pupil behavior. Proper training prevents the prepared teacher from producing problem pupils. In other words training enables teachers to be proactive agents in the dynamic psychological and educational life of young persons. It enables teachers for instance to be familiar with life-span and psychosocial development theories such as Erikson's stages of development or Piaget cognitive development theory that helps to explain how children think and behave.

Teachers' attitude and training tend to have a symbiotic relationship. The trained teacher as a result develops an attitude that is more informed and intelligent. This tends to lead to a positive teacher-pupil relationship. Children are always beneficiaries from well-trained teachers who tend to appreciate them emotionally, mentally and physically. They interact with teachers who know how to lead the developing child. Information about the psychological development of children therefore helps teachers to treat with pupils in positive and meaningful ways.

There is evidence also that services from the Ministry of Education, the corporate and general community tend to contribute to the implementation of alternative approaches in achieving positive pupil discipline. As past principal and teacher, I have witnessed the contribution of the government appointed Diagnostic Prescriptive Services in the discipline process at the primary school. I have also witnessed the role of other state agencies such as the Child Guidance and Social Worker Units. These state services have been supplemented by contributions from religious groups, the Parent Teacher Association and other private agencies.

Based on this finding therefore, it is the view of the researcher that the effective implementation of the system of alternative approaches to achieve positive pupil discipline can best be realized by the blending of the competencies of the teacher with the resources of the employer and community stakeholders.

Third finding

According to the third finding, the application of alternative discipline strategies to achieve positive pupil discipline has empirical psychological validity. This is confirmed in the literature which demonstrates that because of the humanistic nature of alternative discipline approaches, children tend to function more effectively in classroom climates where such approaches prevail. The socio-democratic classroom environment,for instance, is known to produce pupils who are more confident, fearless and motivated to perform. The classroom where justice and equality are blended with the recognition of the rights of the child as a human being and as one who though young is allowed the opportunity to choose, think and arrive at decisions is testament to the psychological validity of applying alternative approaches to achieve pupil discipline.

The importance also of the inter-actionist, humanist classroom that is so organized to prevent disruptive pupil behavior and as a consequence foster positive thinking and behavior is a strategy of alternative approach to the management of positive pupil discipline that is supported by Jones & Jones (1990) as well as Tauber (1990). They agree with the theory of Reality Therapy posited by William Glasser (1965) which demonstrates the belief that young people need caring professionals who are willing to help them take responsibility for their behavior and develop plans aimed at altering unproductive conduct.

Psychological validity in the use of alternative discipline strategies in managing positive pupil discipline also finds credence in the theory of discipline with dignity posited by Curwin & Mendler (1998). The core principles of prevention, action and resolution found in discipline with dignity are the fundamental pillars of the proactive approach of alternative forms of managing pupil discipline.

Against the background of the above, I have come to accept that discipline must be viewed from a psychological perspective. Experience has taught me that achieving pupil discipline through the application of alternative approaches transcends the use of brute force which characterizes corporal punishment. Using alternative approaches to discipline pupils is focusing on the cognitive and affective domains. Any physical methods used in applying alternative approaches should be directed towards guiding the mind and emotions. This tends to empower instead of subjugate pupils in such areas as decision-making and self-reliance.

Fourth finding

The fourth finding that the culture of corporal punishment in schools is not generally appreciated by all teachers and where applied, should be done justly, reflects the division in perceptions among the teachers studied. This perception finds support in the literature on corporal punishment in schools. There is loud condemnation and calls in the literature for the outlawing of corporal punishment as a method to discipline pupils. While Benatar (2001) argues that based on the consequentialist, retributivist and utilitarian theories, corporal punishment can be administered under just conditions, Radin (1988) vehemently posits that corporal punishment produces counterproductive effects such as decreased learning, poorer attendance, anxiety, violent reprisals and alienation.

The literature supporting the rejection of corporal punishment by educators and other practitioners is more extensive than that which backs the acceptance. Researchers, according to Kandel (1992) conclude that there is a link between aggression and physical punishment. Additionally, Weihe (1990) condemns corporal punishment as a nineteenth century method that was used to publicly flog criminals and errant schoolboys. Some other notorious effects of corporal punishment include modeling of violence to solve problems, the dissolution of the teacher-pupil relationship, damaging of the child's self-esteem, the feeling of humiliation, shame and fear brought on the child, injuries and the suppression of pupil involvement in learning.

I endorse all the above views that corporal punishment is totally inhumane and possesses nothing worth modeling by children. For me it cultivates a spirit and culture of violence, fear, hatred and vengeance within the school system. It places the teacher as a tyrant and unimaginative beater of younger and less powerful little human beings. If the flogging of pets is frowned upon, then the same applies to human beings. Excuses such as divine law or flogging with love and restraint or with due process to me reflects lack of imagination and unprofessionalism by the perpetrator of physical punishment – whether by teacher or otherwise. Indeed, the use of corporal punishment is nothing else but the barbaric reaction of those who are bereft of creative and exciting ideas that can stimulate the rich and brilliant minds and emotions of the young.

Fifth finding

The tendency of gender bias in the administration of corporal punishment among pupils as the fifth finding is a phenomenon which occurs in literature and in the context of my experience as an educator. Radin (1988) argues that corporal punishment was disproportionately and unjustly used to discipline black male students in certain states in the United States of America. When

Teacher (B) in the interview protocol referred to the boys as deserving of punishment because they "do hard things", my experience in primary school education over the years alerted me to the dangerous scourge of gender bias that permeates the discipline system in the primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago. Even the reference by Weihe (1990) to the nineteenth century use of corporal punishment to discipline disobedient schoolboys and not the girls reflects the old historical root of gender bias in the administering of corporal punishment.

Disproportionate treatment for any gender whether it is in implementing the curriculum or administering of discipline has deleterious effects on the psyche of the pupil. It can undermine self-esteem and the potential for learning. Based on the conceptual framework of the study which demonstrates that discipline comes through followership which implies imitation, it's a drawback for pupils to imitate any form of bias towards their fellowmen.

On the basis of these views, gender bias within the school system can be a serious impediment to both student learning and all-round human development. The male must be recognized as an emotional individual who like the girls also needs nurturing. Further, education amidst discrimination can sow beds of societal discontent and tension among citizens. Equality is an internationally recognized fundamental human right that must be always accorded to every person, adult or child.

Sixth finding

The sixth finding that the beliefs and experiences of teachers and the constraints of the law and bureaucracy tend to influence the decision by teachers to resort to alternative discipline approaches is linked to an amalgam of factors.

The first is that the espousal and consequent application of alternative discipline methods by teachers is not subject primarily to their independent judgment. Teachers are goaded and constrained by the mechanisms within the legal and bureaucratic systems that govern schools and the wider society. Indeed, there are teachers who will adhere to the laws at all cost, consequently enhancing their practice through their exposure to new approaches to discipline. For such teachers the injunctions are seen as opportunities for positive change.

Another factor is that teachers are empowered by their training, research and innate creativity to guide young people into becoming responsible, well-disciplined citizens. It challenges the research finding by Taitt (2008) that because of the outlawing of corporal punishment by the government of Trinidad and Tobago teachers have been disempowered and confused. Again this finding challenges the report of Taitt (2008) that pupils of the nation have been descending into lowly depths of indiscipline since the call for the constitutional removal of corporal punishment in primary schools.

A further explanation of this finding is that teachers who according to the conceptual framework, espouse the notion that true pupil discipline is developing self-discipline in children, are those who will resort to the "training of the mind instead of the behind"of the pupil. Teachers who believe that pupils are complex, cognitive and psychosocial human beings will adopt the humanitarian and rational philosophy of alternative discipline approaches.To such teachers, the practice of corporal punishment is simply punitive and retributive instead of reformative or rehabilitative which is really one of the objectives of true discipline.

It is the conclusion based on this finding that the acceptance and resultant administration of alternative discipline approaches by teachers depends on their intrinsic drive as well as circumstances created by the external administrative systems within the state.

Seventh finding

My experience has revealed that teachers possess a reservoir of strategies from which they can draw in their effort to avoid holding firmly to the hegemonic system of corporal punishment. When faced with the reality of new contexts such as the ban on corporal punishment by the state, many teachers have displayed the professional competency of adapting to the change. Findings from the study revealed that teachers in the schools were proactively engaged in initiating discipline plans for the filling of the vacuum created by the governmental outlawing of corporal punishment. They were able to draw from their training, experience and beliefs to make the adjustment.

Discussions with teachers of their lived experiences revealed that they appreciated that children are unique individuals who needed humane methods of guidance. Teachers also demonstrated that humane methods of discipline did not mean permissiveness. Indeed, teachers revealed that to discipline pupils is to be involved in planning and thinking. Essentially, teachers demonstrated that the management of positive pupil discipline is to administer strategies with the purpose of developing such significant qualities as responsibility, self-confidence, critical thinking and permanent positive self-esteem in young and future citizens.

The literature demonstrates that teachers have no reason to feel confused or stagnated in the absence of permission to use corporal punishment for discipline. Accessibility to alternative ideas apart from their creativity is accessible in the literature. Porter (2000) for instance,

emphasizes that the management of whole-school and classroom discipline rests on the beliefs and theories espoused by teachers on the purpose of discipline and how children learn.He elaborates that children learn best in positive, warm, realistic, interactive and firm environments. There is also evidence in the literature that children tend to develop into disciplined individuals from the modeling of such positive values as trust, dignity and honesty by teachers.

The generalization herein submitted is that teachers face little or no challenge in sourcing strategies for use in the management of positive pupil discipline at the primary schools.

Conclusions

Through the use of the literature, the concepts of corporal punishment and alternative discipline approaches, the nature of discipline and its theories as well as the management of positive pupil discipline were explored. The study has established that corporal punishment does not contribute to positive pupil discipline as do alternative discipline approaches. Instead it has demonstrated that the relationship between corporal punishment and pupil discipline is skewed towards the selfish desires and misguided beliefs of teachers.

On the basis of the findings and discussion generated, there is conclusive evidence that corporal punishment tends to affect pupil discipline in negative ways. As demonstrated it tends to undermine the socio-emotional and cognitive development of pupils in their interaction in and out of the classroom. Such undermining is reflected in results as hostility and lowered self-esteem in pupils. Specifically, the use of corporal punishment generates immediate but short-term compliance from pupils. Indeed, it must be concluded that the negative effects tremendously outweigh any positive effects of corporal punishment on pupil discipline.

From a humanitarian perspective therefore, the use of alternative measures to manage pupil discipline is the safer option for achieving positive pupil discipline. Crucial to the outcome of the investigation is that since there are humane and uplifting alternative approaches available to teachers to achieve pupil discipline, corporal punishment becomes unnecessary.

In summary, therefore, it is imperative that there is a radical shift from the old paradigm of corporal punishment to the adoption of the more progressive culture of alternative approaches to pupil discipline.

Recommendations

On the basis of the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations for each finding are submitted for consideration.

With immediate effect and on an ongoing basis the Ministry of Education should embark on improved rigorous monitoring of the implementation of its ban on corporal punishment in primary schools as well as establish a permanent system of pre and in-service training for all teachers in the nature and art of pupil discipline which must encompass the alternative discipline approaches. Government assisted in-service training should be conducted on a compulsory basis during the August vacation through modules prepared and delivered by competent contracted certified persons preferably attached to or trained by the School of Education of the University of the West Indies. Pre - service training must be compulsory at teaching or education faculties at the universities that prepare teachers for the nation schools.

The Ministry of Education together with principals and teachers should do all in their power to be pacesetters in fostering a culture of strong partnership between the internal and external school community in the drive to replace corporal punishment with alternative strategies of pupil

discipline within the primary school system. This can be realized by including teachers, parents and representatives from the wider community in planning and delivery of aspects of alternative discipline strategies within the school system.

The Ministry of Education should be the chief provider of the requisite resources to support the policy for teachers to structure their classrooms around a socio-emotional and inter-actionist climate as well as observe the principle of logical consequences together with the other core principles of Discipline with Dignity as posited by Curwin &Mendler (1988). The assurance of this policy can be realized through rigorous Ministry's monitoring of clinical supervision of the staff by principals.It can further be achieved through the introduction of a state policy on planning. Each primary school should collaborate with the Ministry in developing whole-school discipline plans based on alternative psychological considerations. Teachers, pupils and parents must share in the planning. Discipline plans should be guided by sound moral, ethical, legal and educational values that would contribute to the building of responsible, thoughtful and self-disciplined individuals.

Additionally, the Ministry of Education should focus significant resources in ensuring that the culture of the precedence of the core curriculum and the "academic subjects" over the co-curriculum vanishes among educators firstly and then among parents, pupils and the wider community. Recognizing that such areas as Creative, Performing and even Industrial Arts, Agricultural Science, Physical Education and Family Life Education present appropriate and adequate channels for youthful, dynamic, holistic learning and development; teachers, principals and the strategic apex of the Ministry must as a conscious and sacred decision ensure that pupils are not suppressed with only the so-called academic areas. Complementing the approach of catering for the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of pupils through the core and co-

curriculum, teachers under the clinical supervision of their principals must as policy also include practical methods and principles of behavior in their instruction.

If gender bias during the administering of discipline is to end, it is recommended that a concerted, systemic drive be spearheaded by the Ministry of Education towards a radical re-education and acculturation on gender equity within the school communities and general society. This can be achieved through training, advertisement, revisit of appointments of teachers and the revisit to textbook selection for primary schools and the refocusing by all teachers on the teaching strategies used to reach boys in the primary schools.

The Ministry of Education should pay closer attention to its role in initiating the circumstances that can arouse interest and curiosity in willing but tentative teachers. This role of the Ministry can be better attended to by the ongoing employment of a trained cadre of graduates from the school of Education at the University of the West Indies in particular who should be charged with the direct responsibility to spearhead programs. The rationale is that while some teachers are self- propelled pioneers others need strong direction and leadership that should be initiated by the Ministry. The development and implementation of programs by the Ministry must be ongoing with the aim of establishing efforts as part and parcel of the culture and psyche of schools.

Finally, it must be noted that the leading role of the Ministry of Education in promoting alternative approaches of discipline must never exclude the close partnership with all other stakeholders in the education of pupils. All efforts can further be assisted by the permanent formalization of the support services department that would establish a culture of ongoing collaboration with principals and teachers in their effort to achieve positive pupil discipline. The

tendency by teachers towards the use of corporal punishment and other inhumane methods of discipline in schools would surely be avoided if there are supporting officers whose role is to specifically target the affective and cognitive domains as an alternative discipline approach. Support services can be provided by guidance officers, counselors, career guidance officers, deans for discipline and safety officers. Indeed, collaboration between parents and teachers in helping to foster positive discipline in pupils is a prudent form of partnership that can be embraced by schools. Plans, polices, programs and ideas must be worked out among parents and teachers for the benefit of the children.

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APPENDIX A

THE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(i)THE OVERARCHING QUESTION AND THE SUB-QUESTIONS THAT SUPPORT PARTS (a) AND (b).

The Overarching Question:

What are (a) the perceptions and (b) the lived experiences of teachers in the study on pursuing alternative approaches to corporal punishment in managing positive discipline in primary schools in Trinidad and Tobago?

<u>The sub-questions that support part (a) of the overarching research question are:</u>

1) How do teachers in the schools under study perceive corporal punishment?

2) How do teachers in the schools under study perceive alternative discipline strategies?

The sub-question that supports part (b) of the overarching research question is:

1) What approaches to classroom and whole school discipline prevail in the schools under study?

(ii)THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HOW THEY ARE RELATED TO THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

The Overarching Research Question

What are (a) the perceptions and (b) the lived experiences of teachers in pursuing the alternative approaches to corporal punishment in managing positive discipline in primary school in Trinidad and Tobago?

Interview Questions

1) What is your perception of pupil discipline?

2) How would you defend punishment or any corrective action on the teacher's part in relation to pupil discipline?

3) How would you define corporal punishment?

4) What is your opinion with respect to the call by the government to replace corporal punishment with alternative discipline strategies? How do you defend your views on the issue?

Sub – questions (a) (b) and (c)

a) What approaches to classroom and whole school discipline prevail in your school?

Interview Questions

1) What assumptions guide whole school policy and classroom policy on pupil discipline at your school?

2) In what ways have classroom management approaches by teachers in your school been reflecting the whole school policies to discipline of your school?

b) How do teachers in the schools under study perceive corporal punishment?

Interview Questions

1) In what ways do you believe corporal punishment has been helping to manage discipline in your school?

2) How do pupils at your school react to corporal punishment?

3) What is your gut feeling about the use of corporal punishment as a method of pupil discipline?

c) How do teachers in the schools under study perceive alternative discipline strategies?

Interview Questions

1. There is the argument in the literature that alternative approaches to corporal punishmenthave more positive effects on pupil behavior than corporal punishment. Based on your experience, what is your response to advocates who promote this view?

2. In light of the ban on corporal punishment, what challenges have you been facing withrespect to disciplining students in your school?

3. To what extent has this ban on corporal punishment forced you to resort to alternative strategies for disciplining students?

4. With what strategies have teachers in your school replaced corporal punishment?

INTERVIEWS TRANSCRIBED

RESEARCH QUESTION: **How do teachers in the school under study perceive alternative discipline strategies?**

TEACHER A: FROM A DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Researcher: The literatureargues that alternative approaches to corporal punishment have more positive effects on pupil behavior than corporal punishment. Based on your experience, what is your response to advocates of this view?

Respondent: I think that is a utopian state. To be effective you need to implement it with supportive services. If alternative discipline strategies are implemented the children will see that sir is not beating me and we have to wait till ten years to see the results. It is long term. Corporal punishment is short term. For our purposes, we have do it; immerse ourselves in it. The literature will be validated in the long term; it wouldn't happen overnight. That is the change in behavior. But is a cultural thing too; the licks the culture has to change now for them to see that when a child been given lines that is a bad thing. When a child is given lines now that is nothing. But they have to see when a child is given lines they have to see that is a bad thing. For some children right now they see it as happy for detention. The whole school sees licks. For the change the whole school must see lines as bad. A cultural change is needed; we must start somewhere. We have to start in the classroom I think. Each teacher doing their part to get the change...

Researcher: In light of the ban on corporal punishment, what challenges have you been facing with respect to the discipline of students in your school?

Respondent: Yes challenges. You talk and in presenting all forms of alternative punishment it is not received by them. They know they are not getting punished. First you have to meet their parents to talk about this child; why is this child being punished, the challenges… the children who not behaving well you not seeing their parents so this is the problem. And the discipline problem in this school in particular, I don't see as bad. I find discipline here is good. We have no problem out of the ordinary. This school has always been good. When you rationalize the problem there are teachers who need something to fill the vacuum. It's not just stop beating but change the culture.

Researcher: To what extent the ban on corporal punishment forced you to resort to alternative strategies for disciplining children?

Respondent: It has not forced me. You see before the ban was in place, I had, growing up as a teacher I always thought this was right. Coming from an era this was right but I always thought this was wrong and I started to approach it as well. I never had the problem with behaviors as such children coming back ..to me they know better than that. I tried to model a certain lifestyle and being the P. E teacher I was able to get the big boys to behave, to respect me. They never came to me with misbehavior, they know better than that. In my work, before the ban itself I started to use some other alternative forms. I remember this chap used to misbehave when I came here. But when I was around, he never misbehaved at all. He misbehaved by some other teacher, not around me. When I was at Biche and when the big boys misbehave I would make them sit and wait there. How you talk to them.

Researcher: Finally, Mr…..With what strategies have teachers in your school replaced corporal punishment?

Respondent: This is the first one, modeling. They model no-violence among teachers, the camaraderie and collegiality among staff. Youdon't have to be in the curriculum itself. We show respect. That in itself, the children pick it up.That balances with the moral education on the assembly. The religious aspect of the school; values, we push that; Jesus, forgive, something like that. Talk with them, line conferencing with parents. Parents conferencing whether is whole class or individually.Lines and detention; on the assembly; a teacher always modeling discipline how you dress, you always modeling discipline. The child itself also self- motivated too. Topical things. Talk about the religious, sacrifice Lent, the Way of the Cross Humility. It starts on Assembly e.g two teachers per week. The public cut tail is minimal. If you see a child doing something wrong you don't call him out in front the Assembly. It's not the common practice here. We talk about it generally. And compliment works. If you well dressed we praise you. That's what happens on our Assembly.

TEACHER B: FROM A DENOMINATIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Researcher: There is the argument in the literature that alternative approaches to corporal punishment have more positive effects on pupil behavior than corporal punishment. Based on your experience, what is your response to advocates who promote this view?

Respondent: I agree because when you strike the child it doesn't have a long -term effect. Because you beat them for home –work Monday, they may not do Tuesday. And then they would try to get back at you. Corporal punishment causes hate. I don't want students to hate me.

Then it causes peer embarrassment especially among the older children, like the class 5 pupils that I teach. Corporal punishment is cultural. It is administered at home and threatens to affect the identity of the pupils. While it does more physical harm to the younger children, it affects the older ones emotionally. Alternative strategies as reward proves that hitting is not the only way. If they are to be encouraged to do homework incentives are better. I believe in Skinner's operant conditioning since eventually the children would be able to manage themselves, have self-satisfaction and interest in what they do.

Researcher: In the light of the ban on corporal punishment, what challenges have you been facing with respect to disciplining students in your school?

Respondent: One or two. Some of the children get licks at home. So when it is administered at school, there is no difference. There is no change in there experience. I teach big children. Therefore corporal punishment should not be administered to girls.

Researcher: Why is it alright for boys?

Respondent: Because boys do hard things. Boys always like to prove something. I have moved away from corporal punishment because of experience, observing older people. Hugs, praises although their effects take longer, the effects are long term. There is no quick fix. Alternative punishment has helped the conscience of those who try to carry news home. Values; May be values work. Show the values.Generally corporal punishment is a quick fix. Alternative discipline is longer lasting.

Researcher: To what extent has this ban on corporal punishment forced you to resort to alternative strategies to discipline students in your school?

Respondent: We didn't have a choice; although I think the Ministry has nothing in place to replace it; so teachers were forced to apply those things they thought would work and come up with their own original methods. And then when you start reading about places where they had banned this thing before and you started to see what they were using; taking away privileges and things like that. Although the classroom is a real chaotic place because the children… and they would remind you.

Researcher: In your heart to heart did you think corporal punishment was appropriate?

Respondent: We wanted to get the work finish and it was a quick way to get the work finish. But then I was not so experienced as before and you were thinking about the effects you were thinking about getting the job finished; the syllabus finished. I think is really through extra reading you could come up with other ways you know or the more experience teachers tell how; because there were some teachers who never did it, they would tell you whether it was the law or not the law they would never do it.

Researcher: Did you discipline children for not doing work or behavior?

Respondent: I would never strike somebody for being slow or weak. It was more for behavior, like fighting not even stealing because you would not know who is wrong. So it was more for misbehavior like if they fight you will give them some rules.

Researcher: But the level, the quality or the intensity. Did I hear you say you use rulers?

Respondent: Well personally I get tired. Like sometimes you would threaten them; like all the people who didn't do Homework, you see that as disobedience,. Stand, but when you see more than five, six, seven, eight standing, is like I don't have energy; so you just try something else

right away. You don't have energy. It just taking energy from you; and them sometimes the innocent child, the child who is always well -behaved might be in that group now. And you thinking but I never had trouble with this one before and suddenly she is in the group this morning so right away you think I mean you not suppose to have favors but you can't help it because you have a model child. You might have a model child and he or she might end up in this group this morning; right away you think is nah, you know. But you see over the years you will notice the disobedient one he will always be disobedient. So it don't make sense you have to try something to get him to change to bring about change and change is not instant. So have to change his way of thinking make him see that is not the way to behave in the classroom. So you have to bring about this change and all that take place slowly.

Researcher: So change forced you to use those methods?

Respondent: Yes but originally you were not thinking that far. And then you started to hear about teach the child not the syllabus ….get the work done here teach the child not the curriculum. …. And to tell you the truth even I am teaching ..and is now thirty years and will go to workshops and all that but the first place I heard that line was in my counseling class. Well is about ten years ago more than ten years ago. You know is like they never emphasize it but there it made sense to me; one of my lecturers said that. …… but when you teaching standard five you have to finish the syllabus….. when you teaching standard three, four and the child must reach standard five and the work is not finished you say ah teaching the child here boy….(laughter)

Researcher: What about strategies used by teachers in you school to replace corporal punishment, you think you can name some of them?

Respondent: The main one is taking away the recess you know. You know you keep them in and you give them something to do. Because you know this is an all female staff because when teacher X died …all female ..these ladies are soft. I am the loudest person … but gradually the change came about because we never used to really beat… but then most of the teachers started to go to university and learnt of alternative forms and they and they stared to …because I tried the writing lines thing but it just made the handwriting worse because they were scribbling; so that didn't work. I don't think that work. But keeping them in because they like to go and play and then, give them …give them things so that the others would want. So you take away in one hand and then you give; and you have to talk plenty. You have to talk. You call them aside and talk. And then well the social worker came and the special Ed. workers.So you send those with behavioral problems to the social worker. And all that helped but I think the social worker was more effective because she got the set with the behavioral problems and then she started going to the homes; she was going to the root the source of the problem.

Researcher: So then parental involvement too isn't?

Respondent: Well yes the problem children had to bring the parent.

Researcher: Home visitation?

Respondent: She would call in the parent as well.

Researcher: Parent conference?

Respondent: Sometimes we have to call them in too you know. Those who misbehave their parent don't come. So she goes to the homes. And if you do get them and they come they will

tell well Miss cut they tail. Again the parent too doesn't have time for the child, so they just share some licks on the child…

 Researcher: So I think talk, counseling.

Respondent: Yes, and that is what I did.

TEACHER C: FROM A GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

RESEARCHER: There is the argument in the literature that alternative approaches to corporal punishment have more positive effects on pupil behavior than corporal punishment. Based on your experience, what is your response to advocates who promote this view?

RESPONDENT: All strategies have both positive and negative consequences. For example a child wants to be in a club. One says no. in instances when a child wants to be in a club, we see behavioral change. Outside of that you want to be in a club what happens? The negative side is that the behavior change may not be sincere or permanent. Reward system is costly. We don't know if the behavior is sincere or for the reward. What happens when the teacher cannot afford the reward? The reaction by the child; I don't see the value. At the end of the day, it is the cost factor. The children become so accustomed to reward. The pupils don't water in their mouth. Pupils do things according to their life experiences. Nothing has worked so far because the child's life is messed up; because many are not supervised. Over the years I have seen that the parents have a lot to be responsible for.

RESEARCHER: In the light of the ban on corporalpunishment, what challenges have you been facing with respect to disciplining students in your school?

RESPONDENT: Children stand up for teachers. They are bold. They get together and bad talk teachers. Teachers get names. There is the threat of legal actions. There is warning from the social workers. There is uncertainty from teachers. But there is no law banning corporal punishment. The Amendment act has not been passed. We try to follow the American system. Not long again children will walk to school with guns. We import too wholesale. There is the culture of the community such as crime and pornography. There are legal implications. Parents expose the innocent.

RESEARCHER: To what extent has this ban on corporal punishment forced you to resort to alternative strategies for discipline students?

RESPONDENT: As a young teacher I feel corporal punishment has its place. Growing up I observed how it was used. After college, I learnt a different way. The stick becomes monotonous and of no effect. Over the years there has been the abuse of it and that has created the no effect syndrome. **A**t home children get licks with the broom stick, the pot, the cable you name it. The pupils come from home with the experience so when they get licks they are….

It wasn't a ban. The experiences, the observation… The conclusion is that there are different strategies to reach children.

RESEARCHER: With what strategies have teachers in your school replacedcorporal punishment?

RESPONDENT: Reward system. Sanctions, counseling, integrate the life skills into the lessons. Need to touch on values and experiences learnt at home. Guide them to their wish. Pupils don't deal with problems properly.

Call the parents and talk about their situation as it affects the pupils who are in the middle. Children cannot focus. Challenging the children to do what is right without mention of physical reward.Include community persons; e.g church persons. They can look at others and take a page from their lives. Reference to models in the family; Look at role models in sports such as Brian Lara, not Dwight Yorke; he messed it up. Look at the positive sides.

Discipline has to do with wherever you go, whoever you meet. Discipline builds character. A name comes out of how you behave. I knew a man named hustler whom I befriended not knowing how he got his name until an observer told me he got his name from conning others.

TEACHER D: FROM A GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

RESEARCHER: There is the argument in the literature that alternative approaches to corporal punishment have more positive effects on pupil behavior than corporal punishment. Based on your experience, what is your response to advocates who promote this view?

RESPONDENT: There are times when it's needed. Sometimes there is need for a strong measure, even if alternative measures might work. I do not agree with the literature. In my experience some pupils need more than alternative approaches to solve the problems better. I believe strategies like lines, detention if teachers are willing to stay in with the children can help with corporal punishment where needed.

RESEARCHER: In light of the ban on corporal punishment what challenges have you been facing with respect to disciplining students in your school?

RESPONDENT: I have not faced many challenges because our school is small and the children come from homes that are disciplined. The problems of discipline are therefore few. Pupils are very co-operative.

RESEARCHER: To what extent has the ban on corporal punishment forced you to resort to alternative strategies for disciplining students?

RESPONDENT: The ban has not forced me to resort to alternative strategies because as I said our school hardly gets discipline problems or pupils seldom give trouble. However, where necessary, I give lines or take away their recess to help correct behavior problems.

RESEARCHER: With what strategies have teachers in your school replaced corporal punishment?

RESPONDENT: In our school we use instructions on the Assembly by way moral talks or themes. We also give the pupils lines as well as take away free time. We refer them to the principal and the student support services officer. We also infuse topics on discipline in subjects such as in Social Studies.