

ABSTRACT

Teacher Perceptions on [sic] the Relationship Between Pupil Discipline and Corporal Punishment in Four Primary Schools in an Educational District in Trinidad and Tobago

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This study sought to discover, identify, describe, and analyse four primary school teachers' perceptions of the relationship between student discipline and corporal punishment. Data were collected through interviews held with four teachers from two semi-urban and two rural co-educational primary schools in an education district in Trinidad and Tobago. The findings revealed that: 1) both alternative discipline strategies and corporal punishment tend to cause changes in student behaviour; 2) teaching attitude and training, along with professional support services provided by the Ministry of Education or other sources, can greatly contribute to the effective implementation and administration of alternative discipline strategies; 3) there is psychological validity in the application of alternative discipline strategies in the management of positive student discipline; 4) the culture of corporal punishment in schools is not generally appreciated by all teachers; 5) there can be gender bias by teachers in the way corporal punishment is administered among students; 6) teachers believe that factors such as teacher beliefs, experiences, and constraints by law and bureaucracy play a significant role in their decision to apply alternative discipline strategies; and 7) teachers possess a pool of strategies from which they can draw in their effort to shift from corporal punishment.

Keywords: Primary school teachers; Perceptions; Discipline policy; Discipline problems; Primary school students; Corporal punishment; Teacher attitudes; Trinidad and Tobago