

TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AS A BEHAVIOURAL CORRECTIVE MEASURE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, BAYELSA STATE

EBIAREDO PETER COCODIA

Department of Primary Education

School of Early Childhood, Primary & Adult Education Isaac

Jasper Boro College of Education, Sagbama, Bayelsa State

Email: Ebiaredococodia2@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examined the attitude of primary school teachers towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary Schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State. This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised all public and private primary school teachers in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State. This study used a multi-stage sampling technique to involve all the 3 local government areas in the senatorial district. Simple random technique was used. Stratified sampling was used to select 7 public and 3 private primary schools in each of the LGAs. The simple random sampling was used to select primary school teachers in each of the public and private primary schools. At the end of the selection, 30 primary schools were used for the study, 70% were public and 30% were private primary schools. A total of 210 primary school teachers were selected but 204 primary schools teachers fully participated in the study. A self-designed research instrument was used to obtain data for this study. Primary School Teachers' Attitude towards the use of Corporal Punishment Questionnaire (PSTAUCPQ) the reliability co-efficient of the instrument was conducted using t-test method and the value of 0.77 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test). The findings indicated that Primary School Teachers' attitude towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in Primary School was positive ($MA=2.77$), there was no significant difference between public and private primary school teachers' attitude towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in Primary Schools ($t=1.08$; $df= 202$; $p>0.05$). Based on the findings, it was recommended that seminars, workshops and training should be organized for primary school teachers both in public and private schools on other corrective measures of disciplining pupils so as to change their attitude towards the use of corporal punishment.

Keywords: Primary School, Teacher, Attitude, Behaviour, corrective measure, Corporal Punishment.

Introduction

Education at any level is expected to influence the behaviour of the recipients so as to become functional members of the society. Children react to the way things happen around them based on the changing nature of the society prevailing situations. The school is a microcosm of the society where high discipline is expected to be observed and maintained among its members, especially the pupils. According to Kilinei (2009) schools are meant to be one the safest places where learners fulfill their educational aspirations. Umezina and Elendu (2012) noted that there has been high prevalence of indiscipline among learners in all

levels of Nigerian educational system including primary schools. Based on this, different methods have been developed by scholars and employed by teachers to curb the high rate of indiscipline among the learners, including praise, encouragement, reward, corporal punishment, consequence, time out; but the commonly used method is corporal punishment, which might unknowingly serve as violence against children by primary school teachers who uses it. Violence against pupils takes different forms, like physical violence (corporal punishment), sexual violence (harassment and abuse) and mental violence (verbal abuse). The focus of this paper is

corporal punishment, which is the most deliberate form of physical violence against children in the school and one of the perpetrators are teachers.

Corporal punishment refers to the intentional application of physical pain as a method of behavior change. It includes the use of physical force intended to cause pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correcting or controlling a child's behavior. Punishing means subjecting a penalty for an offense and usually includes inflicting some kind of hurt; a practice of disciplining in which, something unpleasant is present or positive reinforces are removed following behavior so that it happens less often in the future (Sedumedi, 2017).

This underscores why teachers need to develop positive attitude in school. In psychology, an attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours toward a particular object, person, thing, or event. Attitudes are often the result of experience or upbringing. They can have a powerful influence over behaviour and affect how people act in various situations. Attitudes are formed concerning situations, persons, or groups with which an individual comes in contact in course of the growth and development of his personality. Attitude denotes a functional state of readiness that determines the organism to react in a characteristic way to certain stimuli. According to Tafa (2018), corporal punishment is an often-used mechanism to discipline children by way of inflicting physical pain as a method of behavior change. It includes a wide variety of methods such as hitting, slapping, spanking, punching, kicking, pinching, shaking, shoving, choking, use of various objects (i.e., wooden paddles, belts, sticks, pins, or others), painful body postures (such as placing in closed spaces), use of electric shock, use of excessive exercise drills, or prevention of urine or stool elimination. Many children who have been subjected to hitting, paddling or other harsh disciplinary practices have reported subsequent problems with depression, fear, and anger. These students frequently withdraw from school activities and disengage academically. There are many laws out there speaking against the unfair and hurtful treatment of others. It is easy to forget that most children overwhelmingly receive this questionable form of correction. Despite the harmful and potential

effects of corporal punishment and the out breaking of laws, abolishment of corporal punishment is still been a controversial issue in many states in our country. Even many teachers argue that corporal punishment is necessary for disciplining school children. Though corporal punishment has been banned, many teachers hold a positive attitude toward it. Based on this background, the study was conducted to examine Primary school Teachers' Attitude towards the Use of Corporal Punishment as a Behavioural Corrective Measure in Primary Schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State

Statement of the problem

The problem of corporal punishment (CP) in schools has been a subject of negative debate time and again. This is due to the consequences in terms of negative such as physical, psychological, and educational consequences. It has been argued that CP has more harm than benefits this is because it does not teach pupils acceptable replacement behaviors. Some pupils subjected to corporal punishment ended up developing low self-esteem: feelings of sadness, shame. And depression, etc. They argue that CP sends a message to the mind of a child that violence is an acceptable behaviour and that it is allowed for the stronger person to use force to surrender the weaker one leading to a sustained cycle of violence in the school, family, and society at large. In some schools, parents attack teachers for the excessive use of corporal punishment especially when it results in inflicting bodily damage to the child. The problem of this study is: Teachers' Attitude towards the Use of Corporal Punishment as a Behavioural Corrective Measure in Primary Schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State.

Objective of the Study

The main aim of this study was to examine Primary school Teachers' Attitude towards the Use of Corporal Punishment as a Behavioural Corrective Measure in Primary Schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State

Research question

The study sought answer to the question, what is the attitude of primary school teachers toward

the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between public and private school teachers' attitude towards the use of corporal punishment in primary schools.

Literature Review

Corporal Punishment

Various scholars have defined corporal punishment as a way of disciplining and correcting the antisocial behaviour of children in different ways. According to Bitensky (2006), corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing the child to experience bodily pain or discomfort so as to correct or punish the child's misbehaviour. Alhassan (2013) defines corporal punishment as a disciplinary method in which a supervising adult deliberately inflicts pain upon a child in response to a child's unacceptable behaviour and or inappropriate language. Therefore, corporal punishment, as conceived in this study, is inflicting bodily pain on a child because of an offence committed by the child. The Convention on the Rights of Child (2001) establishes high standard for child protection both in the homes and schools. Article 28(2) of the Act sets forth a child's right to be protected from corporal punishment in schools. Article 221 (1) of the Child Right Act (2003) also states that no child shall be ordered to be subjected to corporal punishment in schools. Section 1 of the Child Right Act also indicates that in every action concerning a child, whether undertaken by individual, public or private body, institution of services, court of law, the best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration". The prevalence of corporal punishment in Nigeria's primary schools is against the United Nations Convention on the Right of a Child (UNCRC) which Nigeria as a member ratified and signed. Umezinwa and Elendu (2012) lists the following forms of corporal punishment: scolding and verbal assault to the pupil, making the pupil to stay back after school, the pupil cutting grasses, the pupil fetching water., the pupil scrubbing the floor of the class, the pupil sweeping the whole class, the pupil washing the whole toilets, sending the pupil out of the class, the pupil kneeling down or standing for a long

time, flogging the pupil with stick or cane, giving the pupil knock on the head, slapping or beating the pupil with hands, kicking and pushing the pupil with legs, and pulling the pupil's ear or hair. Corporal punishment teaches children that hitting, spanking and inflicting pain is how adults solve problems. Children who are spanked and flogged learn to resent and fear their teachers. Corporal punishment can seriously injure a child's emotional, social, physical and intellectual development. Martin and Stein (2012) contend that corporal punishment has numerous adverse psychological effects, including depression, inhibition, and rigidity, lowered self-esteem and heightened anxiety.

Attitude

Gok and Silay (2010) define attitude as a mental concept that depicts favourable or unfavourable feelings towards an object. Teachers' attitude to corporal punishment has to do with emotional reactions, behavioural tendencies and belief about it as a behavioural corrective measure on children, when could be positive or negative. Leklu and Kumar (2015) report that teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment is positive, while in the findings of Fatima et al. (2012) teachers' attitude to corporal punishment was negative. The attitude of primary school teachers towards the use of corporal punishment in this paper is important because, in spite of the abolition of corporal punishment in Nigerian schools, many teachers still use this measure as a means of disciplining children (Mwai et al. 2014). The way we perceive corporal punishment may determine what our reaction and behavioural tendency (attitude) will be.

Some pupils, worldwide, have even failed to complete their primary and basic education due to factors linked to the use of corporal punishments especially in institutions where the administrators and teachers believe in corporal punishment as the principal strategy to control pupils' behaviour (Stearns and Glennie, 2006, United Nations, 2008). In this situation, which results in dropout, one may want to ask whether corporal punishment yields the intended effective results. Does pain in the flesh rehabilitate one's behaviour? School experience has remarkable effect on the intellectual, physical and socio-emotional development of

children. There are those teachers who see corporal punishment as a means of establishing discipline in classroom management. Unfortunately, they ignore the destructive effect of corporal punishment on child's holistic development. Corporal punishment can cause reduction in pupils mental activities, playing truant from school, increase in reacting against, several personality problems and loss of self-confidence.

A research carried out by Smith et al. (2004) on the guidance and discipline of children argues that corporal punishment as a method of disciplining children is both ineffective and harmful. Linke (2002) noted that corporal punishment teaches a child that problems can be addressed through physical aggression, thereby increasing more disciplinary problems in class. It can be concluded that punishing a wrongdoer by inflicting pain conveys the message that violence is an appropriate way to settle differences or to respond to problems. Gudyanga, Mbengo and Wadesango (2014) claimed that in short term those who are physically punished are alleged to commit violence against other children, against teachers and against school property, and as for long term effects, it numbers of people who commit crimes were children. Therefore, violence breeds violence.

According to Gershoff (2002) corporal punishment can lead to physical abuse based on the severity and frequency of corporal punishment. By implication, the more often or more harshly the children are hit the more likely they are to be physically abused. According to Tharps (2003) corporal punishment does not promote lessons about right and wrong but rather emphasises fear and violence. Alhassan (2000) noted that if the physiological and safety needs of pupils are met, the need for love, affection, and belongingness emerges. The child begins to look to others for satisfaction, both to give and to receive. The educational implications of this need seem obvious: Pupils must feel wanted and experience a sense of affection toward and from the teacher. It is to be noted that children discipline as much as they require love and affection from their teachers. A teacher who possesses charismatic power has a powerful weapon in class management, for pupils obey and follow person they love and admire (Nakpodia., 2007).

Research suggest that it is often a headache for some teachers to maintain classroom control in school because many teachers fail to foster an atmosphere of mutual respect between their pupils and themselves or as originating in failed pedagogical relationships (Mushoriwa and Shumba, 2002). There are some people who were deviant during their school going days and have kept on with such tendencies such that the deviant behaviour has matured in them despite being exposed to corporal punishment at school (Gudyanga, Mbengo and Wadesango, 2014). These people continue to display deviance even as they are now adults.

The fact that corporal punishment has generated a lot of arguments among scholars, parents and teachers shows that the strategy is a force to reckon with to some extent when it comes to behaviour control. Also some teachers and school heads usually use corporal punishment as a last resort for discipline maintenance, which is a clear testimony that some effectiveness and significance in deviance control is attached to corporal punishment by its users. Therefore, based on all these, it is important to examine primary school teachers' attitude towards the use of corporal punishment as a corrective behavioural measure in primary schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for this study comprised all public and private primary school teachers in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State. This study used a multi-stage sampling technique to involve the 3 local government areas that make up the Senatorial District. Simple random technique was used to involve the 3 Local Government Area . Stratified sampling was used to select 7 public and 3 private primary schools in each of the Local Government Areas. Simple random sampling was also used to select 7 primary school teachers in each of the private and public primary schools. At the end of the selection, 30 primary schools were used for the study; 66% were public and 34% were private primary schools. A total of 210 primary school teachers were selected but 204 primary school teachers fully participated in the study. There were 48 males (24%) and 156 females (76%).

A self-designed instrument was used to obtain data for this study: Primary School Teachers' Attitude of the use of Corporal Punishment Questionnaire (PSTAUCPQ). The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was conducted using t-test method and the value of 0.77 was obtained. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test).

Research Question: What is the attitude of primary school teachers towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State ?

Table 1 – Attitude of Primary School Teachers towards the Use of Corporal Punishment as a Behavioural Corrective Measure in Primary Schools.

Here's the reformatted table for the data you've provided:

S/N	ITEMS	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	MEAN	STD.D
1.	Corporal punishment is an inevitable part of our culture, so I use it on pupils.	37 (18%)	72 (35%)	69 (34%)	26 (13%)	2.56	0.993
2.	The use of corporal punishment is the most effective way of correcting pupils, so I use it whenever the need arises.	60 (29%)	70 (34%)	54 (27%)	20 (10%)	2.81	1.021
3.	I use corporal punishment because that was how I was disciplined too when I was young.	73 (36%)	79 (39%)	37 (18%)	15 (7%)	3.02	0.955
4.	I cannot use flogging as a corrective measure on pupils.	14 (7%)	93 (46%)	87 (43%)	10 (5%)	2.53	0.752
5.	As a teacher, one cannot do without using corporal punishment.	46 (23%)	68 (33%)	80 (39%)	10 (5%)	2.74	0.665
6.	I seldom use corporal punishment for certain reasons.	25 (12%)	36 (18%)	123 (60%)	20 (10%)	2.30	0.868
7.	If a pupil constantly proves stubborn, I will inflict pain on him/her so that he/she would stop being stubborn.	80 (41%)	71 (35%)	35 (17%)	14 (7%)	3.09	0.950
8.	I cannot slap pupils so as to correct their misdeeds.	47 (23%)	108 (53%)	30 (15%)	19 (9%)	2.89	0.889
9.	As a teacher, I can kick pupils as long as the motive is to correct them.	112 (55%)	69 (34%)	17 (8%)	6 (3%)	3.41	0.766
10.	I can make pupils stay in an uncomfortable position like kneeling and squatting so as to correct them.	34 (17%)	39 (19%)	94 (46%)	37 (18%)	2.34	0.962
MEAN AVERAGE		-	-	-	-	2.77	-

Table 1 indicates that primary school teachers' attitude towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State was positive with a Minimum Average of 2.77. The detailed analysis is as follows: The following were all rated "agreed", I use corporal punishment because that was how I was disciplined too when I was young (mean =3.02), corporal punishment is an inevitable part of our culture so I use it on pupils (mean =2.56), the use of corporal punishment is the most effective way of correcting pupils so I use it whenever the need arises (mean = 2.81),

as a teacher, one cannot do without using corporal punishment(mean= 2.74), arises (mean = 2.81), as a teacher, one cannot do without using corporal punishment(mean= 2.74), if a child constantly proves stubborn, I will inflict pain on the child so that he/she would stop being stubborn(mean =3.10), I cannot slap a child so as to correct his/her misdeed (mean= 2.89) and as a teacher, I can kick a child as long as the motive is to correct the child(mean= 3.41). While the following were rated "disagreed": I cannot use flogging as a corrective measure on pupils(mean= 2.53), I seldom use corporal punishment for certain

reasons(mean= 2.30) and I can make pupils stay in an uncomfortable position like kneeling and squatting so as to correct them(mean= 2.34).

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant difference between public and private primary school teachers' attitude towards the use of corporal punishment in primary schools

Table 2: Summary of T-test Analysis Showing the Difference between Public and Private Primary School Teachers' Attitude towards the Use of Corporal Punishment

Variable	N	Mean	Std.D	t	Df	Sign.	Remark
Attitude							
Public	135	41.00	7.07				
Private	69	42.09	6.34	1.075	202	0.633	Not Significant

Table 2 reveals that there was no significant difference between public and private primary school teachers' attitude towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools (t =1.08, df =2.02, p > 0.05).

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study is that primary school teachers' attitude towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools was positive. This may be because most of the teachers believe that corporal punishment is an inevitable part of our culture so they can use it on pupils. Also, this might be as a result of the fact that both public and private primary school teachers' attitude were analyzed together; in there are more teachers in private preschools than in public schools. A total of 75% of the teachers reported that they used corporal punishment on the children because that was how they were disciplined too when they were young. This is in line with Teklu and Kumar (2015) who reported that teachers' attitude to corporal punishment was positive. However, this negates Fatima et al. (2012), who opine that teachers' attitude to corporal punishment is negative: they believe it must not be used in school as it has negative influence for creating an environment conducive to the teaching-learning process.

The result of the hypothesis indicated the t-test analysis between public and private primary school teachers' attitude towards the use corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools. The mean scores for the public primary school teachers were 41.00 and that of private primary

school teachers was 42.09. The result shows that there is no significant difference between public and private primary school teachers' attitude toward the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State.

Conclusion

This study was carried out to examine the attitude of primary school teachers towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State. This study concluded that the attitude of primary school teachers towards the use of corporal punishment as a behavioural corrective measure in primary schools is positive; there is a significant difference between primary school teachers' attitude in public and private schools.

Recommendations

The following are recommended based on the findings of this study:

1. Government should ensure that qualified and professional primary school teachers are employed both in public and private schools.
2. Training seminars and workshops should be organized for primary school teachers both in public and private schools on other corrective measure of disciplining pupils and adverse effect of constant use of corporal punishment so as to change their attitude.
3. All the Acts and laws in Nigeria that support use of corporal punishment should be reviewed.

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