

# Disciplinary Procedures Used by Secondary School Teachers in Calabar Municipality, Nigeria

N. N. Nkomo, M. L. Mayanchi

**Abstract**—The present study investigated various forms of disciplinary procedures or punishment used by teachers in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Nigeria. There are agitations amongst parents and educators on the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure against children. Those against the use of corporal punishment argue that this form of punishment does not teach, it only terminates behaviour temporarily and inculcates violence. Those in support are of the view that corporal punishment serves as a deterrent to others. This study sought to find out the most common measure of discipline employed by teachers in private and public schools. The study had three objectives, three research questions and two hypotheses. The design of the present study was the ex-post facto descriptive survey, since variables under study were not manipulated by the researcher. Teachers in Calabar Municipal Secondary Schools formed the population. A sample of 160 teachers was used for the study. The data collection instrument was a facts finding questionnaire titled Disciplinary Procedures Inventory. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentages and chi-square. The major findings were that physical measures such as flogging, exercise/drills, and painful postures were commonly used by teachers in secondary schools. It was also found that these measures were more often used in public schools. It was recommended that teachers should rather employ non-violent techniques of discipline than physical punishment.

**Keywords**—Discipline, non-violent punishment, physical punishment.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**D**ISCIPLINE is a prerequisite to almost everything a school has to offer students. “In order for a satisfactory climate to exist within a school, a certain level of discipline must exist” [1]. Discipline according to [2] is to instruct a person to follow a particular code of conduct usually, the phase: To discipline carries a negative connotation. This is because it involves the enforcement of order, that is, ensuring that instructions are carried out is often regulated through punishment. Consequently, in the field of child development, discipline refers to methods of modeling character and of teaching self-control and acceptable behaviours. Discipline procedures are a euphemism for punishment, which may also be referred to as disciplinary measures. The term discipline is also applied to the punishment that is the consequence of breaking the rules. The aim of discipline is to set limits restricting certain behaviours or attitudes that are seen as

harmful or going against school policies, educational norms, school traditions et cetera [3]. Reference [4] explains “in an effort to prevent and resolve students’ discipline problems and ensure efficient functioning of schools, there has to be reasonable disciplinary policies and procedures. In addition, various disciplinary approaches such as corporal punishment, suspension, and expulsion, exclusion etc. must be used”.

Reference [5] stressed that effective discipline helps children learn to control their behaviours so that they act according to their ideas of what is right and wrong, not because they fear punishment. For example, they come early to school because they know it is wrong to be late, not because they are afraid of punishment. Though punishment is seen as a disciplinary measure or a consequence of violating set out rules, [5] observes that the purpose of punishment is to terminate behaviours and deter others through the use of painful and unpleasant methods.

Reference [5] identified four basic kinds of punishment:

- **Physical punishment** (corporal punishment) –slapping, spanking, switching, painful postures and drills e.g. frog jump, set – up etc.
- **Verbal punishment** –shaming, ridiculing, cruel words
- **Withholding rewards** – you will not go out to play.
- **Penalties** – you break the glass so you have to pay for it.

Punishment according to [6] involves a sanction or a penalty as a consequence of a child’s unacceptable behaviour. Punishment combines, control, force and pain to get children to behave in acceptable ways. It is characterized by external control.

Reference [7] describes disciplinary measures in two broad categories; thus, physical punishment and nonviolent punishment. Physical or corporal punishment refers to intentional application of physical pain as a method of changing behaviour. It includes a wide variety of methods such as hitting, slapping, choking, use of various objects (wooden paddles, belts, sticks/cane others) painful body postures (as placing in closed space) use of electric shock, use of excessive exercise drills, or prevention from urine or stool elimination.

The alternative non-violent punishment includes soft verbal reproofs, social isolation, and extinction, distractions, with holding pleasure and reward, behaviour modification. Reference [8] argues that punishment, instead of curbing behaviour can aggravate it. Reference [9] affirms punishment does not discourage misbehaviour but rather reinforces the pupils’ view of adults as “treacherous”. Reference [10] notes, ‘although, it has been emphasized that school authorities have the right to punish students for breach of school regulations,

N. N. Nkomo is with the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, Cross River University of Technology, Calabar, Nigeria (Phone: +2348030414111, +2348081451100; e-mail: nkomo606@gmail.com).

M. L. Mayanchi is with the Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria (phone: +2348058169416).

the administration of physical punishment that entails physical chastisement needs to be done with caution'. Corporal punishment must not be inflicted in such a way or with such force as may be considered sadistic, cruel or excessive. Reference [10]: "... the desirability and effectiveness of corporal punishment have been called to question in recent times. While some parents, teachers and school administrators favour the use of corporal punishment, others are strongly opposed to its use in schools.

Reference [10] made the following points in support of corporal punishment: Corporal punishment is effective because it makes students think twice before committing the same offence. The use of physical punishment can be a deterrent to other students who might violate a rule in the absence of such punishment. He also opposed corporal punishment based on the following reasons: It is cruel and inhuman. It holds considerable potential for child abuse. Physical punishment cannot be totally avoided as a disciplinary measure in school, if students must be disciplined.

Reference [11] found that the banning of corporal punishment in South Africa had made educators to become helpless in dealing with learners discipline in schools, Learners have become ill discipline to the extent that they even openly challenge the teachers' authority because they know that nothing will be done to them. The use of corporal punishment in Nigeria still remains controversial as there are agitations for and against its use. The focus of this study is to find out the disciplinary measure employed by teachers in secondary schools in Calabar, Nigeria. The paper tries to answer these questions: Do the teachers in Calabar employ more of the physical punishment measures than non-violent approach? Which disciplinary measures do the private school teachers employ?

## II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the present study is to find out the disciplinary procedures used by teachers in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality under the following objectives.

1. To determine the common disciplinary procedures used by teachers in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality Nigeria.
2. To find out if teachers in the public secondary schools use different disciplinary approach from their counterparts in the private schools.
3. To assess the views of teachers on the use of corporal punishment in secondary schools in Calabar Nigeria.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the common disciplinary procedures used by secondary school teachers in Calabar Municipality, in Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent do teachers in the public secondary schools use different disciplinary approaches from their counterparts in the private schools?

- iii. What are the views of teachers on the use of corporal punishment in secondary schools in Calabar Nigeria?

## IV. HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between disciplinary approaches used in public schools and those used in private schools by teachers in Calabar Municipality.
2. There is no significant difference between secondary schools teachers who are in support of the use of corporal punishment and those who are not.

## V. METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted the survey method since it did not aim at discovering new phenomena, but concerned itself with describing and interpreting existing practices and points of view. The survey type was employed since samples were drawn to represent the population from which generalizations were made. Focus was on wide coverage rather than in depth investigation. Questionnaire was used to collect data.

The population of the study comprised teachers in registered secondary schools in Calabar Municipality.

A total of 20 secondary schools in the municipal were randomly selected for the present study. The schools were selected through stratified random sampling technique to include the various school characteristics such as, boys' schools, girls' schools and private schools. Proportional random sampling technique was adopted to select teachers, this was to ensure that the number of teachers selected per school were proportional to the size of the school. A total of 160 teachers were randomly selected from 20 schools.

Data was collected through a facts finding questionnaire designed by the author. The instrument (DPI) has three sections, viz, section A: Personal/school data, section B: Disciplinary procedure items and section C: Teachers' opinions on corporal punishment. The instrument has 13 items in all, 10 items on disciplinary procedures, with three response options, (Always, Sometimes, Rarely or Never) and 3 items on individual opinions on the use of corporal punishment in schools, with four response options (Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree).

The instrument was pilot tested on a small sample of teachers not included in the population using the test – retest method to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained.

Descriptive statistic was used to analyse the research question while chi-square statistic was used to test the hypotheses.

## VI. FINDINGS

*Research Question: What Are the Common Disciplinary Procedures Used by Secondary School Teachers in Calabar Municipality?*

To analyse the research question, responses on the DPI were summarized in form of frequencies and percentages as shown in Tables I and II.

TABLE I  
PERCENTAGES OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT USED BY TEACHERS IN CALABAR MUNICIPALITY

Physical punishment used by teachers in Calabar Municipality		N	f always	% always	f rarely	% rarely
1.	Flogging offenders	160	118	73.75%	42	26.25%
2.	Painful Postures	160	137	86.63%	23	14.38%
3.	Exercise/Drills	160	129	80.63%	31	19.38%
Total frequencies of physical punishment		480	384	80%	96	20%

TABLE II  
PERCENTAGES OF NONVIOLENT TECHNIQUES OF DISCIPLINE USED BY TEACHERS IN CALABAR MUNICIPALITY

Nonviolent techniques used by teachers in Calabar Municipality		N	f always	% always	f rarely	% rarely
1.	Isolation from others	160	148	92.5%	12	07.50%
2.	Counselling	160	15	09.39%	145	90.63%
3.	Suspension	160	20	12.5%	80	87.5%
4.	Expulsion	160	31	20%	129	80.63%
Total frequencies of Nonviolent measures		640	163	25.47%	477	74.53%

TABLE III  
DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE USED IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Disciplinary Procedures used	Public School	Private School	Total	Obtained chi	Critical chi	Sig at 0.05
Flogging offenders	58	24	82	13.03	9.49	S
Painful Postures	69	43	112			
Exercise/Drills	55	43	98			
Isolation from others	54	52	106			
Counselling	04	11	15			
	240	193	413			

Significant at (0.05) level

TABLE IV  
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' OPINIONS IN THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOL

Teachers opinion on use of corporal punishment in school	Teachers in support f	Teachers against	Cal Chi	Crit chi	Remark
Flog offenders	128	32	8.25	5.99	S
Use painful postures	115	45			
Use exercise/drills	135	25			
Total	378	102			

Significant at 0.05 level

Results in Tables I and II show that physical punishment (comprising flogging, painful postures, exercise and drills) is more often used by teachers as disciplinary measure in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality than non-violent approach (isolating offenders, counselling, supervision etc). Responses indicate that 80% of teachers in secondary schools use physical approaches to punishment against 25% who use nonviolent approach. The result also indicate that teachers use more painful postures and drills in punishment than flogging.

*Hypothesis 1: There Is No Significant Difference between Disciplinary Approaches Used in Public Schools and Those Used in Private Schools*

To test the hypothesis, frequencies obtained from DPI were summarized and chi-square was computed.

The result in Table III shows that the calculated chi value 13.03 > critical chi value 9.49 at 0.05 level of significance, (with 4df). Since the calculated chi value is greater than the critical chi value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Thus there is a significant different in the use of physical punishment between the public and private secondary schools educators. In public secondary schools, teachers use more physical punishment measures than their counterparts in private schools in Calabar, Nigeria.

*Hypothesis 2: There Is No Significant Difference between Secondary Schools Teachers Who Are in Support of the Use of Corporal Punishment and Those Who Are Not*

To analyse this hypothesis, responses on the DPI were summarized in form of frequencies and chi – square was computed as shown in Table IV.

Result in Table IV shows that the calculated chi value 8.25 is higher than the critical chi value 5.99 with 2df at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between secondary school teachers in support and those against the use of corporal punishment, is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between secondary school teachers who are in support and those who are not in support of the use of corporal punishment. The result indicates that the difference is in favour of those in support of the use of corporal punishment in school.

## VII. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. The common disciplinary procedures used by teachers in secondary schools are more of physical than nonviolent approaches.
2. There is a significant difference between disciplinary approaches used in public and private schools in Calabar

Municipality. Public schools use more physical measure to discipline students than their private schools counterparts.

3. There is a significant difference between teachers in school opinions supporting and against the use of corporal punishment in Calabar Municipality. The difference is in favour of those supporting the use of corporal punishment in schools.

#### VIII. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings that the approaches to discipline are more of physical punishment corroborates with [4] who argued that in an effort to prevent or resolve students' discipline problems and ensure efficient functioning of schools, there has to be reasonable disciplinary policies and procedures for various disciplinary approaches including corporal or physical punishment.

The second finding that public schools use more physical measures than private schools sums up to the fact that private schools restrict their punishment procedures as much as possible to protect their business.

The third finding that secondary school teachers in Calabar Municipality in support of corporal punishment as an effective disciplinary procedure is in consonance with opinion of [10] that corporal punishment is effective because it makes students think twice before committing the same offence. Its use can also be deterrent to other students. In the same vein, [11] found that the banning of corporal punishment in South Africa had made teachers to be incapacitated and helpless in dealing with learners discipline in school. The use of corporal punishment in school has both negative and positive implication but this depends largely on how it is applied. If school rules and regulations have to be guided, then corporal punishment is needed to an extent.

Presently in Nigeria, there is no legal injunction on the use of corporal punishment neither at home nor in schools. It is in the penal code that under 20 offenders should be flogged rather than being imprisoned. Also many Africans including Nigerians believe that when you spare the rod, you spoil the child. This is why the use of corporal punishment still remains the most common disciplinary measure in Nigeria.

#### IX. CONCLUSION

Maintaining discipline is an attempt to ensure that rules and regulations are obeyed. If this has to be very effectively carried out, then punishment with caution will be needed to control certain behaviours or attitudes that are seen as harmful or going against school policies, educational norms and school traditions. Since research is replete that punishment only terminate a behaviour, while discipline teaches guides and directs the offender to learn acceptable patterns of behaviour, both nonviolent and physical punishment should therefore be combined in the discipline process.

#### X. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Physical punishment should be given with great caution so that it may not be considered as cruelty and abuse on the offender.
2. In meting punishment, consideration should be given to age, sex, and health of the offender.
3. Educators should not be too reliant on corporal punishment; other nonviolent techniques of discipline should be explored.
4. Clear rules and regulations should be established, and obedient students should be regularly rewarded.

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