

Analysis of Parents/Teachers Perception of the Use of Corporal Punishment in Primary Schools in Delta and Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was meant to analyze Parents and Teachers perception of the use of corporal punishment in primary schools in Edo/Delta state. The purpose was to find time out parents and teachers opinion on the need for continuity or to discontinue the use of corporal punishment among primary school pupils. The method was a descriptive study with the use of questionnaire. The sample size was 390. A multi stage and simple ballots technique was used to sample the population of parents and teachers. Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 and 0.72 stood for teachers and parents reliability of the use of the instrument respectively. Both descriptive and a two-way t-test statistics were used to analyze the data at alpha of 0.05. It was found in this study that both parents and teachers agreed that corporal punishment is an ideal practice for molding children in primary schools. Parents and teachers, males and females, urban and rural parents/teachers did not show any significant difference on their perception of the use of corporal punishment in schools. It was recommended among others, that corporal punishment be restored where it is dis-functional and there is the need to legislate law to protect teachers on their Luco-parentis role in the molding of children, in schools.

Keywords: Corporal punishment, Teachers, Parents, Primary school, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Persons all over the world people think of a society where peace and progress prevails. But the factors that influence peace is an exogenous factor of nature rather than native. Hence issues of moral decadence resulting in armed robbery, kidnapping, prostitution, human trafficking and drugs among others is of concern to every well meaning person especially in developing countries like Nigeria were security issues top government concern.

In Nigeria, many people propose various hypotheses toward finding solution to the use of moral decadence. Many are concern with sudden up-shot of crime and are concern with the etiology of these very important societal issues. One of the causes often though of, was the take over of schools from missionaries by government. According to persons of this school of thought was that moral instruction died with government take over of schools and the moral decadence that is being experienced is the product of school take over. Another school of thought saw moral decadence in the society as a product of the ban of corporal punishment in schools. Many parents of the octogorian believe that "Spare the cane and spoil the child" holds for ever.

Corporal punishment is an action either at home or in the school to rebunke the child of wrong doing, as a means of molding the child towards better adulthood. According to Prve and Alister (2010), corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force towards a child for the purpose of control and/or corrections and as a disciplinary penalty inflicted on the body with the intension of causing some degree of pains or discomfort, however mild. United Nations Committee on the rights of child, (2006) stated that although most forms of corporal punishment involve hitting children with the hand or implement (such as a belt or wooden spoon), other forms of corporal punishment include: Kicking, shaking, biting and forcing a child to stay in uncomfortable positions. The desired out-come of physical punishment is child compliance with adult directives (Gawlik, Henning and Warner 2002; Smith, Gollop, Taylor & Marshall 2004).

Corporal punishment is a contentious issue, attracting debate within the Teachers/Parents Associations. Consequently corporal punishment has attracted legislative debate, requesting it being out law in schools, in most parts of Europe, Canada, Korea, South Africa, New Zealand and several other countries but remains common practice in a middle East. (School Corporal Punishment 2014). In the United State of America, the House of Representative has attempted to push up a bill between 1991 and 2011 to assist corporal punishment without success.

In Nigeria some parents continue to say that corporal punishment is not good enough for the growth and intellectual development of the child. Others are of the opinion that the use of corporal punishment moulds the child. However many cases between Teachers/Board of Education and Parents, has been reported. Napodia (2007) reported several of these court cases between school authority/Teacher versus parents, (p129-131).

The controversy surrounding corporal punishment include: What amount to corporal punishment; who should administer corporal punishment, what is the present status of corporal punishment in our schools among others. This study was prompted to assess the status of corporal punishment in schools as a results of parents being reported to have attacked Teachers in schools resulting from the inflicting of corporal punishment on their wards.

Nigerian schools like others in other parts of the world are governed by laws either peculiar to the

school system or both applicable to the school system and those that are constitutional or statutory in the country, province, state or division. Teachers have the mandate to institute punishment directed at building a responsible child for the society. There are different types of punishment in Nigeria, Primary and Secondary schools. According to Napodia (2007), they include;

Fine, verbal and/or written warning, grass cutting, detention in class after normal school hours, crawling on one's knees, kneeling and looking at the sun, picking the pin with one leg.....
Suspension, dismissal or expulsion and in-school suspension.

Napodia (2007) stated that corporal punishment usually falls within the scope of the teacher's authority, while suspension and expulsion are usually with the discretionary powers of the school board. In Nigeria, a teacher is usually at the gate of the school with cane waiting for late-comers. It is usually to flog between 2-6 stroke of the cane for late coming as disciplinary measures. However, there is limit to which teachers or school officials administer punishment in order to avoid liability and penalty of damage, fine or imprisonment. Napodia (2007) citing Remmlein and Ware (1970) stated that;

- The punishment be not unreasonable
- Not excessive in view of the age, sex and strength
- Not excessive in view of offence
- Not administered maliciously.

The purpose of this study was to determine parents and teachers perception of the use of corporal punishment in primary schools and make comparison between parents and teachers, urban and rural parents/teachers on their perception of corporal punishment in schools. Some parents and teacher hold the view that the present day moral decadence among adolescents is a factor of the removal of corporal punishment in schools. Based on this assumption this study intends to solve the problem of moral decadence arising from the withdrawal of corporal punishment in schools. As parents and teachers ascent or decent could be a head way towards solving the problem of moral decadence in our society. The study will form the bases for the continuation of the withdrawal and its legal implementation or will be an avenue to advocate for the re-introduction of corporal punishment in primary schools. The findings will be use to the advantage of the educational system through the formulation and implementation of policies that will enhance better child molding and development through primary school education. Parents, teachers and students and the society at large will benefit from the gains that will arise from these policies.

Concept of Corporal Punishment

Napodia (2007) analyzed the conceptual etiology of corporal punishment when he stated that;

Corporal punishment entails physical chastisement of student/pupils for behavior. It is punitive in nature. The Holy Bible is in support of reasonable corporal punishment as can be seen in the book of proverbs chapter 22, verse 15 and proverb chapter 23 verse 12-14 "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child but the rod of correction shall drive it from him" proverb 22:15 Apply thine heart unto instruction and thine ear to the words of knowledge (proverb 23:12). Withhold not correction from the child for if thou beatest him with rod, he shall not die proverb (23:13). Thy shalt beat him with the rod and shall deliver his soul from hell (pro. 23:14). Pp125.

The theological and doctrine of Christian derive from the bible gives the impression that it was wrong to ban corporal punishment in school and the home. It implies that restoring corporal punishment in school will reduce moral decadence and the associated ills. Despite various talks by teachers and parents, the attitude of some parents going to schools to confront teachers over corporal punishment on their wards and court cases of corporal punishment between teachers and board of education on one side and parents/civil right group on the other side, literature and empirical studies published in journals especially in the West African Sub-religion and Nigeria in particular with special reference to Delta/Edo State were also scanty and almost non-existence to the knowledge of this researcher except two textbook on corporal punishment (Napodia and Peretomode, 1990); hence the desire for this study. The study focuses on the attitude of parents, teachers, males, females, urban and rural parents and teachers towards corporal punishment in schools.

Review

Works and literature are available on the use of corporal punishment in school or at home. Smart, Sauson, Baxter, Edwards and Hayes (2008) reported that a longitudinal study of Australia children showed that behavioural problems were strongly linked with higher levels of parental hostility with children being four times more likely to have conduct problems and twice as likely to have hyperactivity problems when experiencing hostile parenting. Gershoff (2002), Smith, Gollop, Taylor and Marshall (2004) and others while reacting to the statement that corporal punishment as effective in achieving immediate child compliance argued in their study that the benefits associated with immediate child compliance can be offset by findings that indicate corporal punishment fails to teach a child self-control and inductive reasoning.

Agreement and Kreen (2012) concluded in their study in Botswana against the use of corporal punishment in school: it's see corporal punishment as undemocratic and teachers should be taught education and the democratization of education in Botswana.

Prve and Alister (2010) compiled the report which stated that; "Corporal punishment that results in bruising marking or other injury lasting longer than a 24hours period may be deemed to be "Unreasonable" and this classified as physical abuse". Further the report stated that; "it is lawful in Australia to use corporal punishment to discipline children as long as the punishment is "reasonable" in the circumstance". Shumba, Ndofirepi and Musengi (2012) concluded in their study in Zimbabwean schools on the note that teachers who use corporal punishment did not follow the recommended procedures of seeking permission from school head before executing it on the leaners. The author continued that perpetrators of corporal punishment include both teachers and school heads. Earlier studies by Alvy (1987), Newell (1993) and Shamba & Moorad (2000) reported that black parents view spanking more positively and were likely to see physical punishment as valuable tool for teaching such lessons as obedience to authority, appropriate social behavior and right from wrong. Shumba, Ndofirepi and Musengi (2012) also stated that since teachers and parents act in Loco-parentis within the school, they are likely to use corporal punishment in school.

To guide the study, five research questions and three hypotheses were generated:

- To what extent do parents/teachers perceived the use of corporal punishment as a child molding process in primary schools in Edo/Delta State?
- To what extent do parents differ from teachers on the use of corporal punishment as a child molding process in primary schools in Edo/Delta State?
- To what extent do parents and teachers perceive corporal punishment as a legal instrument in primary school in Edo/Delta state?
- To what extent are parents differ from teacher on who should administer corporal punishment in primary schools in Edo/Delta state?
- To what extent do urban and rural parents and teachers perceive corporal punishment as instrument of child molding in Delta state?
- There is no significant difference between teachers and parents on the use of corporal punishment as a child molding process in primary schools in Edo/Delta state.
- There is no significant difference between urban and rural teachers/parents on the use of corporal punishment as a child molding process in primary schools in Edo/Delta State.
- There is no significant difference between male and female teacher/parents on the use of corporal punishment as a child molding process in primary schools in Edo/Delta state.

Material and Method

The study adopted the *ex post facto* design of a descriptive research. The population of the study was built on school population in Edo and Delta state. Edo state has 596 primary schools with about 5960 teachers (Edo State School Board 2012) while Delta state has 449 primary schools with 4690 teacher (Delta State School Board 2012). Thus a total of 1045 Headmaster represented the population of secondary school teachers, and 1045 parents (one each from each school) because principals are acclaimed teachers with experience while the chairman of each school Parent/Teachers Association (PTA) represented parents as they are opinion leaders among parents. The sample size 400 was estimated to be large enough. This was based on the recommendation of Peretemode and Ibeh (1995) and Areoye (2004) who stated that a sample of 384 is enough for any population of more than 10,000.

To obtain the sample, school principals and chairman of PTAs were serialized into sample frame according to their zonal education board (six in number, 3 in each state). Using simple ballot sampling technique, 400 parents and teachers were obtained, two hundred (200) each for parents and teachers. Six trained research assistants who were post-graduate students of the department of physical and health education of Delta State University, Abraka and Ambrose Ali University who were indigene of their zone, distributed the questionnaire, principals were given directly while chairmen of PTA presenting parents were given through their various school

principal. Questionnaire were retrieve after one week. All 400 questionnaire were recovered from the field.

The instrument was a self-designed “corporal punishment appraisal and criticism questionnaire” with 14 statement items. It was validated by experts in Guidance and Counseling and in Test and Measurement in education who were lecturers in Delta State University, Abraka. Amendment were made and corrected for use. Spilt-half-21 was used to obtain the reliability using Pearsman Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) = 0.84 for teachers and .72 for parents. To obtain this, data were obtain from two Education zone of Bayelsa state by administering the questionnaire both to teachers and parents, through the Research assistants.

Mean was used to test the response measures of the questionnaire statement item. The decision rule based on statistical real limits of number was used to determine the acceptance and rejection of the statement items as follows; 2.50 and above was accepted while below 2.50 was rejected. This benchmark or critical level was obtained by dividing the sum of the nominal rating values by the number of the rating items. The t-test statistics has used to test the hypothesis at 0.5 level of significant using SPSS 20 Microsoft wave.

Findings

The demographic data of the study were stated as follows; males 139 (34.75%) and females 261 (65.25%). Analyzed by education background; Teachers grade II (TC II) certificate 36 (9%), National certificate of Education (NCE) 44 (11%), Degree 118 (29.5%), Higher degree -2 (1%). Parents educational background; primary school 18 (4.5%), secondary school 60 (15%), NCE and equivalent 42 (21%), Degree 80 (20%)

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of parents and teachers perception of corporal punishment as instrument of child molding in primary schools in Delta and Edo State, Nigeria

S/N	Statements Items	Means	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Corporal punishment corrects the erring child to mold his/her life.	2.87	.904	Accepted
2	Corporal punishment is necessary in schools	2.88	.762	Accepted
3	Corporal punishment is being well-use by teachers	2.70	.828	Accepted
4	Spare the cane and spoil the child is a correct adage	2.93	.727	Accepted
5	Corporal punishment cannot correct the erring child	2.23	.548	Rejected
6	Corporal punishment is necessary in school	2.59	.691	Accepted
7	Corporal punishment is being abused by teachers in school	2.53	.774	Accepted
8	Corporal punishment amount to child abuse	2.41	.603	Rejected
Total		2.74		Accepted

Note: N = 400, Bench mark 2.50

Table 1 reveals that, of the 8 statement items studied, 6 were accepted (item 1,2,3,4,6 and 7). A grand means of 2.74 was recorded thus parents and teachers perceived corporal punishment as instrument of child molding in the school.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of parents and teachers perception on who should administer corporal punishment in schools, in Delta/Edo State, Nigeria

S/N	Statement Item	Means	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	Any teacher can administered corporal punishment in school	2.46	.851	Rejected
2	A discipline teacher should assigned to be in charge of administrating corporal punishment in school	2.76	.808	Accepted
3	Only the principal or headmaster should administer corporal punishment in school	2.23	.884	Rejected

N = 400. Bench mark 2.5

Table 2 reveals that of the 3 statement items under the right to administer corporal punishment, only one (item 2) was accepted while others rejected. Thus only a disciplined teacher should assigned to be in-charge administering corporal punishment in school.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of parents and teachers perception on the legal aspect of corporal punishment in schools in Delta/Edo State, Nigeria.

S/N	Statement Items	Means	Std. Deviation	Decision
1	A state law should govern the use or non use of corporal punishment	2.50	.604	Accepted
2	Corporal punishment should be defined within its limitation by the school PTA	2.11	.473	Rejected
3	Principal/teacher should use their discretion as what falls within reasonable limit on the use of corporal punishment	2.93	.699	Accepted

N = 400, Bench mark 2.50

Table 3 reveals, that of the 3 statement items on the legal aspect of corporal punishment in schools,

only two items were accepted (item 1 and 3) while the other was rejected. Thus the statement that principals and Teachers should use their discretion as to what falls within reasonable limit on the use of corporal statement and the need for law on the use or non use of corporal punishment in schools were accepted.

Table 4: 2 way t-test statistics on the difference between teachers and parents on the practice of corporal punishment in schools in Delta and Edo State, Nigeria

Variables	N.	Means	Std. Dev.	Std. erro	Df	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	Remark
Teachers	200	4.82	.518	.036	398	.005	.943	No sig.
Parents	200	4.81	.511	.036				

Table 4 reveals the difference between parents and teachers on the use of corporal punishment in school. The calculated t-value was .036 and critical value was .943. The null hypothesis that there was no difference between teachers and parents on their perception of corporal punishment was retained.

Table 5: 2 way t-test statistics on the difference between urban and rural Parents/Teachers on their perception of corporal punishment as child molding instrument in Delta and Edo State

Variables	N.	Means	Std. Dev.	Std. erro	Df	Cal. t-value	Critical t-value	Remark
Urban	200	7.53	1.15	.081	398	.030	.863	No sig.
Rural	200	7.51	1.14	.080				

Table 5 reveals that the difference between urban and rural Parents/Teachers on their perception of corporal punishment for child molding in schools in Delta and Edo State, Nigeria. The calculated t-value was .030 and critical value of .863 was recorded. This was found not to be significant. The null-hypothesis that there is no significant difference between males and females was retained.

Table 6: 2 way t-test statistics on the difference between males and females, Parents/Teachers on their perception of corporal punishment for child molding in schools in Delta/Edo State, Nigeria.

Variables	N.	Means	Std. Dev.	Std. erro	Df	Cal. T-value	Crit. T-value	Remark
Males	200	20.75	2.26	.160	398	.014	.907	No sig.
Females	200	20.73	2.23	.158				

Table 6 reveals that the difference between males and females, Parents/Teachers on their perception of corporal punishment for child molding in schools in Delta/Edo State, Nigeria. The calculated t-value was .014 and critical value of .907 was recorded. This was found not to be significant. The null-hypothesis that there is no significant difference between males and females was retained.

Discussion

The findings on research question one (1) revealed that corporal punishment is being well-use in primary schools with a grand mean of 2.74. It was accepted by parents and teachers that corporal punishment was highly desirable as an instrument of child molding in school. This finding correlates of Alvy (1987), Newell (1993) and Shamba & Moorad (2000) who found in their study that black parents view spanking more positively and were likely to see physical punishment as valuable tool for teaching such lessons as obedience to authority, appropriate social behavior and right from wrong. Parents and Teachers in this study accepted as very correct the adage, spare the cane and spoil the child as a correct adage in child molding with means of 2.93 (sd .727), Parents and Teachers in this study also accepted the second among the items that corporal punishment is necessary in school with means of 2.88 (sd .762). Parents/Teachers also accepted that corporal punishment corrects the erring child to mould his/her life with means of 2.87 (sd .904) while Parents and Teachers in this study agreed that corporal punishment is being well use by teachers with means of 2.70 (sd .828). On table 2, it was found in this study that any discipline teacher in the school should be assigned to be in charge of the administrating of corporal punishment in school. With a means of 2.76 (sd .808) it was accepted that any discipline teacher could be assigned to administer corporal punishment in school. This finding tally with the view of Napodia (2007) who stated that corporal punishment usually falls within the scope of the teacher's maturity while suspension and expulsion are usually with the discretionary powers of the school board. Parents and teachers in this study accept a law governing the use or non-use of corporal punishment in school with a mean of 2.47 (sd .604). But corporal punishment (2014) has this to say, that corporal punishment has attracted legislative debate requesting it's being out law in schools in most part of Europe and in Canada, Korea, South Africa and New Zealand and in several other countries but remains a common place in a number of countries in Africa, South-east Asia and Middle east.

On the hypothesis, whether there exist difference between parents and teacher on the use of corporal

punishment in school, it was found (in table 4) in this study that parents do not significantly differ from teachers on the use of corporal punishment in school. With a t-test value of .005 and critical value of .907, it was not significant. This correlates the findings of Shumba, Ndofirepi and Museagi (2012) who stated that since teachers and parents act in loco-parentis within the school, they are likely to use corporal punishment in school. On the difference between urban and rural parents/teachers on the use of corporal punishment and difference between male and female parents/teachers with finding of t-value of .030, critical value of .863 and t-value of .014, critical value of .907 respectively were non-significant and rejected. Thus, there is no difference. There are no literatures or previous study to back these findings. This finding becomes base data information of urban-rural differences and male-female differences of parents/teachers respectively, on the use of corporal punishment in primary schools in Edo/Delta State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

It was found in this study that Parents and Teachers see corporal punishment as an important instrument in child upbringing and should necessarily be used. Parents and Teachers strongly believe that “Spare and spoil the child” is not only biblical but real. Parents and teachers see the teacher as a stakeholder in the upright bringing of the teacher being a loco-parentis. Parents and teachers believe that any discipline teacher is qualified to be assigned the responsibility of corporal punishment in primary school. The study also found that parents do not differ from teachers on the use of corporal punishment in school. Also urban and rural parents/teachers and male and female parents/teachers do also differ in the use of corporal punishment in primary schools in Edo/Delta State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

- Corporal punishment in school should be introduced where it is no longer practice in Edo/Delta state.
- There is need for legislation to protect teachers in the use of corporal punishment in schools.
- Although open-hand and discretion be left for teachers, but there is need to include the right-use of corporal punishment in teachers workshops and seminars periodically.
- Abuse of corporal punishment should be reported to school head and school board for sanction.
- What amount to “reasonable discretion”, should be defined by the parents/teachers association at the state level, the school board and the Ministry of Education for caution use of corporal punishment in schools.

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