

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT DISCIPLINARY MEASURES ADMINISTERED BY  
SECONDARY SCHOOL AUTHORITIES IN BUNGOMA EAST SUB-COUNTY,  
KENYA**

*Wafula Sammy Wekesa<sup>1</sup> [sammy.wafula43@gmail.com](mailto:sammy.wafula43@gmail.com), David Wafula Lwangale<sup>2</sup> Mt. Kenya University [dlwangale@mku.ac.ke](mailto:dlwangale@mku.ac.ke), and Prof. Charles K. Ngome<sup>3</sup> Mt. Kenya University [cngome@mku.ac.ke](mailto:cngome@mku.ac.ke)*

### **Abstract**

The study assessed student disciplinary measures administered by secondary school authorities in Bungoma East Sub-County, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey design and mainly targeted learners who stayed mainly under the care of guardians instead of their real parents as well as learners who had parents but such parents that never attended to their school issues. Simple random sampling was used to select 4 schools from the 35 schools in the Sub-County. From the 4 schools, 4 guidance and counseling masters; 4 HOD's in charge of discipline, and 4 principals were purposively sampled for the study. Thereafter, a 10% of learners with indiscipline cases per school were purposefully selected. A similar number of learners who enjoyed full parental care at all levels were randomly selected for comparison purposes. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically use of percentages and frequencies. The study established that corporal punishment was cherished by schools. This was attributed to the belief that it is biblically directed that sparing the rod spoils the child. It was also owed to experience where corporal punishment had been seen to control bad behavior. However, this was against the government's directive on ban of corporal punishment. Manual work should be used as form of punishment. Apart from being a form of punishment, manual work is important in training children to do physical work. Suspension from school was also used as a disciplinary measure. However, expulsion was refuted.

*Key words: discipline, punishment.*

### **Literature Review**

The use of corporal punishment has also been linked to a wide variety of negative mental health outcomes, including internalizing characteristics such as lower self-esteem (Gershoff, 2002). A study done by Bender, Allen, McElhaney, Antonishak, Moore, Kelly, & Davis, (2007), correlated the use of harsh discipline with the ability of young adults to establish autonomy while maintaining a healthy parent-adolescent relationship. They found that the use

of harsh discipline by both parents resulted in greater adolescent depression. They also found that the use of harsh discipline by mother resulted in adolescents who were less engaged and warm toward their mothers. This negative effect on the parent-adolescent relationship is found to result in adolescents reported significantly lower levels of self-esteem.

For many years corporal punishment was used as a method for disciplining learners in Britain. Britain was one of the last nations to discard this type of punishment after along and persistent struggle done in parliament, court and streets. When South Africa left commonwealth in 1961 much repressive and authoritative governance was introduced, whereby corporal punishment played a significant role. Although it was officially banned in 1996, pupils are still being caned (Crocker and Pete, 2009).

In Tanzania corporal punishment was allowed to be administered to stubborn students but only by the headteacher and not ordinary teachers. Corporal punishment was legal under national corporal punishment regulations (1979) but the maximum strokes of cane was reduced from 6 to 4 in 2000 after a public outcry and it had continued to decline (Farrell, 2012) such a decline was healthy because a public outcry denotes that corporal punishment had a lot of negative effects on learners.

Schools are meant to be child friendly, where students are able to achieve their educational pursuits. But there are some students whose dreams have been shattered because they fear being subjected to corporal punishment (Mbiti, 2007). In 2006, the UN committee on the Right of the child adopted the following definitions of corporal punishment;

Corporal or physical punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves kitting (smacking slapping, spanking) children with the hand or with an implement, a whip, stick, belt, shoes, wooden spoon etc. but it can also involve, for example kicking, shaking or

throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion for example, washing children's mouth with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices (UN Committee on the Right of the child, 2006, No. 8). This definition is very detailed, in view of the committee, corporal punishment is inhuman. In addition, they identified other non-physical forms of punishment that are harsh and thus conflicting with the convention.

Kenya government banned corporal punishment as a method of disciplining students through a legal notice No. 56/2001- this discarded legal notice No. 40/1972 contained in the education Act (Rev. 1980) which allowed corporal punishment with procedures and limits. The government also enacted the children Act in 2001 whereby children are to be protected from all forms of abuse and violence (Silsil, 2008). Currently the act has been strengthened by Basic Education Act No. 14 of 2013 (Government of Kenya 2013). In order to create awareness about the new existing laws and regulations the ministry of education issued a circular G. 9/1/Vol. VII/28 of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2002. Such circulars are very important in that the intent recipients are informed about the government position. A matter that is of national important but sometimes circulars are not read by teachers because they are over looked or they are just kept in headteachers office, therefore inaccessible to teachers (Nyongesa, 2007).

This study was guided by Albert Bandura's *Personality Theory* (Shultz, 1981) that describes personality as an interaction among three things: the environment, behaviour, and the person's psychological processes. Regarding behaviorism, Bandura explains that the emphasis is on experimental methods, which focuses on variables that we can observe, measure, and manipulate, and avoids whatever is subjective, internal, and unavailable i.e mental. In the experimental method therefore, the standard procedure is to manipulate one variable, and then measure its effects on another. All this boils down to a theory of personality that says that one's environment causes one's behaviour. However, it is important

to note that Bandura while studying the phenomena ‘aggression in adolescents’ found the above procedure a bit too simplistic and so decided to add a little something to the formula. He suggested that environment causes behaviour, true, but behaviour causes environment as well Shultz, (1981) He labeled this concept reciprocal determinism and therefore the world and a person’s behaviour causes each other. Later, he went a step further in which he began to look at personality as an interaction between three “things” the environment, behaviour, and the person’s psychological processes. These psychological processes consist of our ability to entertain images in our minds, and languages. The current study was guided by the theory in making an assessment of the student discipline in secondary school. In this case, the behaviour of the students was perceived to be a product of the environment, behaviour, and the person’s psychological processes.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey technique. Descriptive survey design is present oriented methodology and normally used to investigate populations by selecting samples to analyze and discover occurrences. The survey designs was justified for this study because it was economical, provided rapid data collection and provided ability to understand the population from the selected sample and provided a base for further extensive research. The methodology of the study used was qualitative.

The target population was 835 subjects comprising 625 teachers, 175 heads of department and 35 principals of secondary schools in the Bungoma East Sub-County, Bungoma County, Kenya. Simple random sampling technique was used in sample selection. This method ensured that each member of the target population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. The sample was stratified into categories of teachers, heads of department and principals. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 schools from the 35

schools in the Sub-County. From the 20 schools, 20 HODs in charge of discipline and 20 principals were purposively sampled into the sample. Thereafter, 105 teachers were simple randomly selected into the sample, 3 from each sampled school. The main instruments for data collection were questionnaires for respondents. The questionnaire was a convenient tool for this study. Data was analyzed descriptively.

## Results

The third objective of the study was on student disciplinary measures administered by secondary school authorities in Bungoma East Sub-County, Bungoma County. Data on this objective are presented in table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Student Disciplinary Measures Administered by Secondary School Authorities in Bungoma East Sub-County, Bungoma County, Kenya.**

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
1. Corporal punishment is cherished by schools	100	69.0	30	20.7	0	0.0	10	6.9	5	3.5
2. Children should be reprimanded for being undisciplined	98	67.6	22	15.2	0	0.0	22	15.2	3	2.0
3. Manual work should be used as form of punishment	70	48.3	50	34.5	0	0.0	25	17.2	0	0.0
4. Suspension from school should be used	60	41.4	30	20.7	6	4.1	14	9.7	35	24.1
5. Expulsion from school should be	6	4.1	14	9.7	0	0.0	80	5.2	45	31.0

enhanced

6. Guiding and counseling is mostly used in this school	60	41.4	50	34.5	0	0.0	35	24.1	0	0.0
7. Teachers have been sensitized on the ban of corporal punishment	20	13.8	10	6.9	0	0.0	60	41.4	55	37.9
8. Children act interferes with student discipline	90	62.0	40	27.6	0	0.0	15	10.3	0	0.0
9. Parents should be involved in handling discipline cases	90	62.0	55	37.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
10. School rules are the ones used in governing students in the school	90	62.0	30	20.7	0	0.0	25	17.2	0	0.0

**Source: Field Data (2015)**

Table 1.1 indicates that majority 100(69.0%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that corporal punishment was cherished by schools. In addition, 30(20.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that corporal punishment was cherished by schools. Therefore, 130(89.7%) of the respondents involved in the study acknowledged the statement that corporal punishment was cherished by schools. This was attributed to the belief that it is biblically directed that sparing the rod spoils the child. It was also owed to experience where corporal punishment had been seen to control bad behavior. However, this was against the government's ban of corporal punishment.

In contrast 10(6.9%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that corporal punishment was cherished by schools. Furthermore, 5(3.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that corporal punishment was cherished by schools.

The study also found out that 98 (67.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that children should be reprimanded for being undisciplined. In addition, 22(15.2%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that children should be reprimanded for being undisciplined. Therefore, 120(82.8%) of the respondents involved in the study acknowledged the statement that children should be reprimanded for being undisciplined. However, 22 (15.2%) of the respondents disagreed and 3(2.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement that children should be reprimanded for being undisciplined.

Another form of punishment investigated in the study was manual work. It was found out that 70(48.3%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that manual work should be used as form of punishment. In addition, 50(34.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement in question that manual work should be used as form of punishment. Therefore, 120(82.8%) of the respondents acknowledged the statement that manual work should be used as form of punishment. Apart from being a form of punishment, manual is important in training children to do physical work. However, 25(17.2%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that manual work should be used as form of punishment.

Suspension from school may also be used as a form of punishment in secondary schools. The study established that 60(41.4%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that suspension from school should be used as a form of punishment. In addition, 30 (20.7%) of the respondents agreed with the same statement that suspension from school should be used as a form of punishment. Cumulatively, 90(62.1%) of the respondents

acknowledged that suspension from school should be used as a form of punishment. Furthermore, 6(4.1%) of the respondents were undecided about the statement that suspension from school should be used as a form of punishment. However, 14(9.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement in question as 35(24.1%) strongly disagreed.

Some schools use expulsion as a form of punishments. Table 4.26 indicates that 6(4.1%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that expulsion from school should be enhanced. In addition, 14(9.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that expulsion from school should be enhanced. However, the majority 80(55.2%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that expulsion from school should be enhanced. Furthermore, 45(31.0%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly disagreed with the statement under investigation. Cumulatively, 125(86.2%) of the respondents involved in the study refuted the statement that expulsion from school should be enhanced. Expelling students from schools will limit their access and progress in education.

The government had directed schools to embrace guiding and counseling as a way of dealing with discipline cases. The study found out that 60(41.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that guiding and counseling was mostly used in their schools. Furthermore, 50(34.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that guiding and counseling was mostly used in their schools. Therefore, 110(75.9%) of the respondents involved in the study acknowledged the statement that guiding and counseling was mostly used in their schools. However, 35(24.1%) of the respondents disagreed with the same statement that guiding and counseling was mostly used in their schools.

It was found out that teachers had not been adequately sensitized on the ban of corporal punishment. Only 20(13.8%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the statement that teachers had been sensitized on the ban of corporal punishment. In



addition, 10(6.9%) agreed with the statement in question, that teachers had been sensitized on the ban of corporal punishment. However, the majority 60(41.4%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that teachers had been sensitized on the ban of corporal punishment. Furthermore, 55(37.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that teachers had been sensitized on the ban of corporal punishment. Therefore, 115(79.3%) of the respondents involved in the study refuted the assertion that teachers had been sensitized on the ban of corporal punishment.

The study also sought to find out whether children act interferes with student discipline. The study found out that 90(62.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that children act interferes with student discipline. In addition, 40(27.6%) of the respondents agreed with the claim that children act interferes with student discipline. Therefore, 130(89.6%) of the respondents involved in the study acknowledged the statement that children act interferes with student discipline. This was owed to banning of corporal punishment. However, 15(10.4%) of the respondents involved in the study disagreed with the statement that children act interferes with student discipline.

It is important to involve parents in solving students' discipline. The study found out that majority 90(62.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that parents should be involved in handling discipline cases. In addition, 55(37.9%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that parents should be involved in handling discipline cases. Cumulatively, all 145(100%) of the respondents acknowledged that parents should be involved in handling discipline cases.

Each school has its own rules. The study sought to find out whether school rules are the ones used in governing students in the school. It was found out that 90(62.0%) of the respondents involved in the study strongly agreed with the assertion school rules are the ones used in

governing students in the school. Similarly, 30(20.7%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that school rules are the ones used in governing students in the school. Therefore, 120(82.7%) of the respondents involved in the study acknowledged the statement that school rules are the ones used in governing students in the school. However, 25(17.2%) of the respondents disagreed with the assertion that school rules are the ones used in governing students in the school.

### **Conclusion**

The study established that corporal punishment was cherished by schools. This was attributed to the belief that it is biblically directed that sparing the rod spoils the child. It was also owed to experience where corporal punishment had been seen to control bad behavior. However, this was against the government's ban of corporal punishment. Manual work should be used as form of punishment. Apart from being a form of punishment, manual is important in training children to do physical work. Suspension from school was also used as a disciplinary measure. However, expulsion was refuted.

### **Recommendations**

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. There is need for clear-cut discipline policy in Kenya.
2. There should be uniformity in meting discipline to students in all the schools.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). *The Inventory of Parent and*

*Peer Attachment: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 16(5), 427-454. doi:*

*10.1007/bf02202939*

- Baumrind, D. (1975). *The contributions of the family to the development of competence in children. Schizophrenia Bulletin, 1*(14), 12-37.
- Baumrind, D. (1996). *The discipline controversy revisited. Family Relations, 45*(4), 405-414.
- Bender, H. L., Allen, J. P., McElhaney, K., Antonishak, J., Moore, C. M., Kelly, H. O., & Daily Nation. (2006, September 15). *Readmit Suspended Students, School Told*. In Daily Nation. Nairobi, Kenya Nation Media Group.
- Crocker, A. and Pete, S. (2009) cutting the cane: *A comparative analysis of the struggle to Banish corporal punishment from schools in Britain and South Africa: Part 1*Obiter, vol 30,No 1, 44
- Davis, S. M.(2007). Use of harsh discipline and developmental outcomes in adolescence. *Development and Psychopathology, 19*, 227-242.
- Buri, J. R. (1991). *Parental Authority Questionnaire. Journal of Personality Assessment, 57*(1), 110-119. doi: 10.1207/s15327752jpa5701\_13
- Fraley, R. C., Waller, N. G., & Brennan, K. A. (2000). *An item response theory analysis of self-report measures of adult attachment. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(2), 350-365. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.78.2.350
- Gagné, M. H., Tourigny, M., Joly, J., & Pouliot-Lapointe, J. (2007). *Predictors of adult attitudes toward corporal punishment of children. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 22*(10), 1285-1304.
- Gross, A. B., & Keller, H. R. (1992). *Long-term consequences of childhood physical and psychological maltreatment. Aggressive Behavior, 18*(3), 171-185.
- Gullone, E., & Robinson, K. (2005). *The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment—Revised (IPPA-R) for children: a psychometric investigation. Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy, 12*(1), 67-79. doi: 10.1002/cpp.433

Ileri, E.R (1992). *A Study of Pupils Indiscipline Faced by Primary Schools Teachers in a Nairobi Slum Area: The Case of Mathare Primary Schools*. University of Nairobi Unpublished Thesis.

Kazdin, A. E., & Benjet, C. (2003). Spanking children: evidence and issues.

*Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(3), 99-103. doi: 10.1111/1467-8721.01239

Mulvaney, M., & Mebert, C. (2010). Stress appraisal and attitudes towards

corporal punishment as intervening processes between corporal punishment and subsequent mental health. *Journal of Family Violence*, 25(4), 401-412. doi: 10.1007/s10896-009-9301-0.

Nakamura, C. Y. (1959). The relationship between children's expressions of

hostility and methods of discipline exercised by dominant overprotective parents. *Child Development*, 30(1), 109.

Nyongesa, B. J. M. (2007) *Educational Organization and Management*. Nairobi: J. K. F.

Pawlak, J. L., & Klein, H. A. (1997). Parental conflict and self-esteem: The

rest of the story. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 158(3), 303-313. doi: 10.1080/00221329709596670.

Quatman, T., & Watson, C. M. (2001). Gender differences in adolescent self-

esteem: An exploration of domains. *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 162(1), 93.

Rodriguez, C. M., & Richardson, M. J. (2007). Stress and anger as contextual

factors and preexisting cognitive schemas: predicting parental child maltreatment risk. *Child Maltreatment*, 12(4), 325-337.

Rono, P. & Gichana. (2006). *Four Students Held after Riot in School*. In Daily nation. Kenya, Nairobi. Nation Media group

Rosenburg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press.

Sheehan, M. J., & Watson, M. W. (2008). Reciprocal influences between maternal discipline techniques and aggression in children and adolescents. *Aggressive Behavior, 34*(3), 245-255. doi: 10.1002/ab.20241

Simons, R. L., Whitbeck, L. B., Conger, R. D., & Wu, C.-i. (1991). Intergenerational transmission of harsh parenting. *Developmental Psychology, 27*(1), 159-171. doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.27.1.159

Slade, E. P., & Wissow, L. S. (2004). Spanking in early childhood and later behavior problems: A prospective study of infants and young toddlers. *Pediatrics, 113*(5), 1321-1330.

Small, S. A. (1988). Parental self-esteem and its relationship to childrearing practices, parent-adolescent interaction, and adolescent behavior. *Journal of Marriage & Family, 50*(4), 1063-1072.

Solomon, C. R., & Serres, F. (1999). Effects of parental verbal aggression on children's self-esteem and school marks. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 23*(4), 339-351.

Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Boney-McCoy, S., & Sugarman, D. B. (1996). The revised conflict tactics scales (CTS2). *Journal of Family Issues, 17*(3), 283-316.

Straus, M. A., Hamby, S. L., Finkelhor, D., Moore, D. W., & Runyan, D. (1998). Identification of child maltreatment with the parent-child conflict tactics scales: Development and psychometric data for a national sample of American parents. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 22*(4), 249-270.

Thompson Gershoff, E. (2002). Corporal punishment, physical abuse, and the burden of proof: Reply to Baumrind, Larzelere, and Cowan (2002), Holden (2002), and Parke (2002). *Psychological Bulletin, 128*(4), 602.

Vereecken, C., Legiest, E., Bourdeaudhuij, I.D., Maes, L. (2009). Associations

between general parenting styles and specific food-related parenting practices and children's food consumption. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 233-240.

Vittrup, B., Holden, G. W., & Buck, J. (2006). Attitudes predict the use of

physical punishment: A prospective study of the emergence of disciplinary practices. *Pediatrics*, 117(6), 2055-2064. doi: 10.1542/peds.2005-2204

Von der Lippe, A.L., Møller, I.U. (2000). Negotiation of conflict,

communication patterns, and ego development in the family of adolescent daughters. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 24(1), 59-67.13

