

Responsibility of Teachers in Relation to Management of Discipline of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Koibatek Sub County, Baringo County

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| Received: 16.12.2018 | Accepted: 26.12.2018 | Published: 30.01.2019

DOI: [10.21276/jaep.2019.3.1.5](https://doi.org/10.21276/jaep.2019.3.1.5)

Abstract

Globally, corporal punishment in schools was banned. In keeping with the international trends of recognizing the rights of the child, and since Kenya is a signatory to the United Nations Charter on Human Rights; and, having been criticized by the World for allowing the use of corporal punishment in schools, the same was banned in the Kenyan schools about 14 years ago. However despite this ban, newspapers, media and limited research show that corporal punishment is still occurring in schools. The government has made efforts to curb the continuing use of corporal punishment. This research therefore, was about Effects of ban of corporal punishment on discipline in public primary schools in Koibatek Sub County and was guided by the following objective: to establish the role of educators in relation to management of discipline of pupils in public primary schools, The research adopted descriptive survey design and carried out the study in Koibatek Sub County. It targeted primary school head teachers, deputy head teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, teachers (educators) and pupil two Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in public primary schools. To select schools, stratified random sampling will be used. The main respondents were stratified on the basis of their zones. The study sample thus comprised of 20 head teachers, 20 deputy head teachers, 20 guidance and counselling teachers, 54 teachers and 432 pupils making a total of 548 respondents. To collect the required data, the researcher used Questionnaires and interview schedules for data collection. The survey instruments were piloted in Baringo County using the test-re-test method. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.78 which was considered good enough for a scientific study. In addition, the research instruments were subjected to the scrutiny of two experts who established face as well as content validity. The researcher then sought permission from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovations strain before starting the process of data collection. Data was organized, presented, analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistical and inferential techniques using the Statistical packages of social sciences (SPSS) version 20. Presentation of data will be done by use of tables, pie charts and bar graphs, mean and percentages. The study found that out of 20 schools in the study, 16(80%) had taken pupils as partners in developing school rules that would be obeyed. It was concluded that schools are however using alternative methods of instilling discipline in their respective schools. It was recommended that teachers and administrators ought to be flexible to adapt to new information and accept change so that the ban would bring intended changes in the education system.

Keywords: Responsibility, teachers, management, discipline, pupils, schools.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been an international movement toward recognising the rights of the Child banning Corporal Punishment in all countries. Sweden was the first country to pass the “first explicit ban on corporal punishment” [1]. Countries such as united states of America, according to Blandford [2] are making strides in doing away with corporal punishment practices in the classroom. The united states of America developed the organization named the national coalition to Abolish corporal punishment in Schools” in 1987. However, in South

Asia corporal punishment is “often considered necessary to children’s upbringing to facilitate learning and to instil discipline” [3].

In Africa the use of corporal punishment is still practised in countries like Botswana and Kenya. In Botswana there are regulations which govern corporal punishment where only the principal is allowed to administer the punishment on the hand or buttocks with a regulated size of the cane. The same origins seem to be true in South Africa, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Israel, Latvia and Norway [4] have

followed Sweden's path in the outlawing of corporal punishment.

In Kenya, physical harm as a result of corporal punishment is common where bruising, swelling, cuts and occasional death as a result are the norm. Studies done by Ombori, Nyakan, and Yambo [5] alluded that even though there are laws of restricting the use of corporal punishment in Kenya, severe injuries are reported. The guidelines for administering corporal punishment in Kenya are as follows: Only the head teacher is permitted to administer corporal punishment and he or she must use a cane or step of regulation size, hitting boys on the buttocks and girls on the palm of the hand. The head teachers may give no more than six strokes as punishment, and must keep a written record of all the proceedings [6]. These guidelines however are not adhered to and teachers rather than head teachers administer the punishment, often hitting children on other parts of the body in front of their classmates [6].

For a period of time, corporal punishment had been used in Kenyan schools until 2001 when it was banned by the Ministry of Education. Although this ban was introduced in 1996 through a circular issued by the Director of Education, it was neither gazetted nor endorsed until later in 2001 [7]. The Committee on Human Rights, Kenya, recommended the ban in its report which was presented to the President of the Republic of Kenya in July 2000. The call to ban caning, the committee suggested that parents, teachers and society be educated on the harm caused by corporal punishment and alternatives to it used instead. It was also recommended by the same committee that Counselling be strengthened to assist the teachers and pupils. The ban was later strengthened by the legislation of the Children Act in 2001 which recommended that no child offender was subjected to corporal punishment [8]. Corporal punishment against a child was defined as the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior [9]. Discipline is either withholding of a reward or the application of unpleasant stimulus in an attempt to extinguish an undesirable response [10].

According to the letter signed by Human Rights Watch, (HRW) African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), the Cradle, Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Rights of Children (KAARC), and Children Legal Action Network (CLAN), it was stated that "Corporal Punishment must be abolished in all settings" as stated by International Human Rights Law and Standards (IHRLS), many international human rights bodies have taken a strong stand against corporal punishment in schools on grounds that it may rise to the level of torture. The UN Convention of the Rights of

the Child (CRC) further states that all forms of corporal punishment are incompatible with the protections given to children under the convention.

Since April 2001 when corporal punishment was banned in Kenya various stakeholders have held debates as to whether to put into effect the ban or not. Kenya being a signatory to the United Nations Charter on Human Rights, there has been much criticism by the world for allowing the use of corporal punishment in schools [11]. The introduction of the Children's Act worsened the situation. Due to continual cases of teachers "battering" learners despite the ban it has not elicited quiet in schools as indiscipline cases still abound. After the ban of corporal punishment, schools in the country were faced with a wave of violence and unrest resulting in several questions being raised about the effect of the ban on caning on discipline in schools [12]. The wave of unrest among pupils countrywide brought to the fore the fear expressed by head teachers at their Annual Conference at Moi University in June 2001. They felt that discipline in schools would collapse unless new school management strategies were introduced to curb the situation and seal the loophole. During this meeting however, no workable solution was reached.

Many stakeholders came out to appeal to the Ministry of Education (MOE) to rescind the decision to ban corporal punishment so as to restore discipline in schools. This was done because the major aim of discipline was to produce responsible citizenry for life. The thought is supported by the Biblical teaching "spare the rod and spoil the child" (Proverbs 23:14, New King James Version,) and that "do not withhold correction from a child for if you beat him with a rod he will not die" (Proverbs 23:13, N K JV). Scholars in school administration also affirm that such children who are thus guided by the cane are able to make their own decisions in a responsible way [10]. The Basic Education Act [13], stipulates the procedure of maintaining discipline in schools. Legal Notice Number 56, 2001 updates the current legal aspects of maintaining discipline in schools [14] without the cane. The Constitution of Kenya [15] encourages alternative means of enhancing discipline with due consideration for human rights in the propagation of discipline away from corporal punishment.

Studies done by Boyd [16] revealed that in December 2004, the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Children Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) commissioned a study on corporal punishment in Kenya, which then began in January 2005 and its findings were to form part of UN study on violence against children; it was presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2006. The same was welcome by the previous Kenyan government, which hosted a regional launch in 2007. However Kenya has failed to take any meaningful steps to

implementing the study's recommendations. It is against this background that the researcher investigated the effects of corporal punishment on pupils' discipline in public primary schools in Koibatek Sub County. In Baringo county the guidelines to administer corporal punishment are often not followed since cases of teachers hitting children in any part of the body using any cane are reported Simatwa [17] and Ombori *et al.*, [5] also reiterated that the guidelines are adequate enough though difficult to follow effectively.

Statement of the Problem

The ban of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools since 2001 threw the country's schools' administrators and teachers into many administrative challenges. Educational stakeholders claimed that the government should have had a gradual sensitization program to effect the change for the management of discipline in schools since corporal punishment had been in use for a long period replacing it with sound alternatives. Pupils have been involved in unwarranted behaviour. Despite government's efforts to introduce various alternatives to replace corporal punishment the level of discipline is still wanting and declining in public primary schools. The study found out the effects of the ban of corporal punishment on pupils' discipline in public primary schools in Koibatek Sub County.

Role of educators in relation to management of discipline in schools

Different researchers hold the view that educators are responsible to maintain discipline within the school. According to Joubert and Prinsloo [18] educators are responsible to maintain discipline at all times. Wyk [19] further states that beyond their responsibility for teaching, educators are also responsible for the moral development of learners. This means that educators are required to respond to different types of violations of school rules and forms of behaviour such as vandalism, bullying, theft that has a direct bearing on the moral domain. Discipline is fundamental to education as learners' moral behaviour demand discipline [20]. The learners are to develop academically; they also need to develop socially [2]. Raffini [20] states that in the classroom climate educators should maintain order, by so doing; educators will exercise their authority over the learners. Without authority effective control is impossible [21]. The requirements for children are that they learn to behave at home, in the school situation and in the community. The scholars argue that for discipline to be maintained in the classroom situation educators should ensure that they establish and maintain certain classroom rules. These will assist them to do their professional work effectively and manage their classes properly Fontana [22].

Mabelane [23] asserts that it does not matter whether one is dealing with young or more mature learners, straight and focused rules of classroom

management are of great importance if good classroom control is to be maintained. The rules will allow them to understand the consequences of their behaviour that could either be desirable or undesirable. Learners should be involved when drawing up classroom rules. When they are involved in the formulation of the rules they will realize that they are partners in the management of classroom situations and not the subjects that are to be managed. Morrell [24] reached the same conclusions by suggesting that learners should be allowed to take part in the formulation of classroom rules. Msomi [25] also supports this view by stating that learners should have a say in school affairs including the disciplinary issues of the school. McQueen [26] says that inappropriate rules are useless and perhaps disastrous because poorly selected rules create serious management and disciplinary problems. Further Burden [27] opines that the rules can be written in broad, adequate language that encompasses the related behaviour of pupils. Classroom rules should be positive statements of how the learners will behave rather than how they should not behave [28].

It is the role of educators to equip each learner with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required for successful living. Educators must have an impact upon the learners' behaviour by teaching them about the decisions and choices the learners should make each day and how such decisions and choices influence their lives both in school and thereafter. For example, a disciplinary measure against a learner who comes to school late will assist to encourage him/her to be on time and be more responsible and accountable in future [29]. Educators have a role of displaying good work ethics. Their ethics determine how they behave in different situations. To act ethically is to choose what is right. They must be willing to accept the responsibility for their choices. This is true at work and in other aspects of their lives [30, 31]. However, some educators appear to be acting in an unethical way. Wyk [19] states that an investigation exploring the perceptions and practices of discipline in black urban schools found that the conduct of certain educators was unprofessional. Examples of educators' misconduct include: being unprepared for lessons, neglecting their teaching tasks, not coming to class, being absent without reason. Educators are expected to set an example of consistent ethical, just, kind and acceptable behaviour if they want learners to become well behaved and disciplined [32]. When educators are ill-disciplined learners will copy them and also be ill-disciplined. Most of the learners' behaviour is developed by emulating the behaviour of those adults who play important roles therefore be assisted to learn, distinguish and make their own specific values and norms about true and false, good and bad, right and wrong, proper and improper, worthy and unworthy [33].

Educators have a role to handle disruptive learners attending their classes. According to Blandford [2] the problem of ill-discipline in schools can be caused by the educators' lack of training. This view is supported by Kruger [34] who states that discipline has to receive greater attention in the new educational system. Fennimore [35] is of the view that school restructuring at any level needs sensitivity to the feelings of educators and willingness to empower their personal and professional vision of what it will take to improve their schools. According to Carter [36] losing the capacity to control the terms of work causes one to disassociate oneself from the products of the work. Thus in light of the above it is clear that the role of educators include: maintaining discipline, initiate and enforce individual classroom rules consistently, equip each learner with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required for successful living, display good work ethics, handle disruptive learners attending their classes among others. This study therefore, determined the role of educators in relation to discipline in schools.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design. Gay [37] state that survey studies are concerned with assessing attitudes, opinions, preferences, demographic practices and procedures. Orodho [38] further asserts that this design gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationships that exist between specific events. The mixed approach was more suitable because it increased the general strength of study findings by improving the validity and dependable of the study results [39].

The study targeted all public primary school teachers, head teachers, deputy head teachers, guidance and counselling teachers and pupils in Koibatek Sub County. Records in D.E.O's office Koibatek, by the time of the study indicates that there were 20 primary schools in the sub county, 20 head teachers, 20 guidance and counselling teachers, 20 deputy head teachers, 180 teachers, 1440 class 7 and 8 pupils and 2 ZQASOs.

Table-1: Summary of Target Population (n=1682)

Category	Number
No of schools	20
No of ZQASOs	2
No of Guidance and Counselling teachers	20
No of Head teachers	20
No of Deputy Head teachers	20
No of Teachers	180
No of Pupils – Classes 7 and 8	1440 class 7 and 8 pupils

Source: Field Data, 2013

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals from a population such that the selected group contains element representative of the characteristics found in the entire group [38]. In descriptive studies 30 percent of the survey population is representative enough to generalize characteristics being observed [40]. Therefore, in this study thirty percent of the target population was used to select the sample size of teachers and pupils. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers, deputy head teachers, guidance and counselling teachers and the QASOs. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives of the study in question. The cases are just picked because they are informative or they possess the required characteristics. The total number of respondents comprised 20 head teachers, 20 deputy head teachers, 20 guidance and counselling teachers, 54 teachers and 432 class 7 and 8 pupils selected from the 20 schools of study as this category of pupils undertook a questionnaire. All public primary schools were the

sample of this study stratified on the basis of their zones. Lottery technique of the random sampling technique was used where small pieces of papers of equal size and shape were written 'Yes' depending on the number of schools required. The rest were designated 'No'. After carefully mixing them, respondents were asked one at a time to pick the papers. Those who picked 'Yes' were included in the study.

FINDINGS

The Research Question responded to was: What is the role of teachers in relation to management of discipline of pupils in public Primary Schools in Koibatek Sub County? The study interviewed and put together responses of the Head teachers, deputy head teachers and regular teachers. Their responses were looked at in three major items: Rules governing conduct, displaying of rules and involving pupils in formulating them. The responses were as indicated in the tables 2.

Table-2 shows the responses of Head Teachers on the role of teachers regarding the ban of corporal punishment.

The mean of Three and standard deviation 1.45 of the Head Teachers indicated that their respective schools had rules that govern the conduct of their pupils. The same 3(sd. 1.45) displayed the school rules on bulletins and other points by keeping them simple so

that pupils could be reminded time and again. One Head Teacher pointed out that it was appropriate that the government introduced the ban. This and others involve their pupils in formulating school rules and they have seen it work 3(1.145). Most Head Teachers 11(55%) demonstrated that they have a number of guidelines. This was in line with the work of Ombori et al., [5] that they use guidelines to solve indiscipline cases that arise within their precincts.

Table-2: Head Teachers' Responses on Role of Teachers (n=20)

		School has rules governing conduct	School rules are clearly displayed	Pupils are involved in formulating school rules
N	Valid	20	20	20
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		3	3	3
Std. Deviation		1.45	1.45	1.45
Sum		60	60	60

Source: Field Data 2014

In table-3 are responses of the Deputy Head Teachers on the role of educators in curbing the

indiscipline that manifests itself in primary schools as a result of ban of corporal punishment.

Table-3: Deputy Head Teachers' Responses on Role of Teachers (n=20)

		School has rules to govern conduct	School rules are clearly displayed	Pupils participate in making rules
N	Valid	20	20	20
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		3.6	4.1	3
Sum		62	67	60

Source: Field Data 2014

The deputy head teachers indicate that they have taken measures to enhance discipline in their respective schools, as a mean of 3.6 and standard deviation of 1.17 strongly shows that it was the responsibility of the educators and especially the administrators to ensure that the policy of government regarding ban of corporal punishment is adhered to by all. At school level 15(75%) being the ones responsible for the implementation of discipline they have encourage voluntary visiting the guidance and counselling department by the pupils. Of the 20 schools

in the study, 16(80%) had taken pupils as partners in developing school rules that would be obeyed. That was the reason why a large number displayed them in vantage points where they would serve as reminders. Deputy Head teachers like their head teachers recognized the importance of involving pupils in formulating school rules.

Table-4 shows the responses of the regular teachers on the role of educators in enhancing discipline in the absence of corporal punishment.

Table-4: Teacher Responses on Role of Teachers on Corporal Punishment (n=54)

		There are rule to govern pupil conduct	School rules are clearly displayed	Pupils are involved in school rules
N	Valid	54	54	54
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		2.54	2.15	1.96
Std. Deviation		1.41	1.19	0.97
Sum		137	116	106

Source: Field Data 2014

Sum

Teachers acknowledge with a mean of 2.54 and standard deviation of 1.41 that their schools had rules that governed the conduct of their pupils. They mean of 2,15(sd. 1.19) state that the rules are placed at

strategic points where they can be accessed well. Only a mean of 1.96(sd. 0.97) would agree that pupils were involved in the formulation of those school rules. This is in contrast with what the deputy head teachers and the head teachers themselves had stated earlier. The

teachers as educators see themselves as targeted by the ban because they said: “we mingle with pupils at close range because the first pang falls on us.” They claim that guidance and counselling ‘does not actually solve even half of the discipline challenges.’”

QASO’s Responses on the Role of Teachers on Ban of Corporal Punishment and Discipline

The role of the educators and the ministry is to ensure that the laws passed are given to the people so that they are guided by the principles thus propagated, stated the QASOs. Following the promulgation of the Constitution [41] and enactment of the Basic Education Act 2012 stringent conditions are spelt out in outlawing corporal punishment in Kenya. Strict measures are to be meted upon the offenders. The QASOs explained that it was for the benefit of the administrators and teachers to explore alternative avenues for handling discipline cases in their respective schools. One QASO asserted: Since 2001 in the Sub-County alone, 10 teachers have been dismissed from the Teachers Service Commission register and imprisoned or fined for engaging in corporal punishment related offenses. Two cases are pending in the law courts. The effect of the cane is two edged, it demeans the pupil and the teachers’ job and the person in question is guilty of an offence and is liable to imprisonment as seen in penal code section 238 (1) . Pupils are also human beings and should be treated as such. Beating is inhuman; they said, citing Article 53 of the Constitution of Kenya and related Basic Education Act 2012. These parts of the law promote the rights of the child. The educators, with this background are tasked with the enforcement of the said laws and policies that safeguard the discipline and learning in schools.

Head Teachers pointed out that it was appropriate that the government introduced the ban. This and others involve their pupils in formulating school rules and they have seen it work with a mean of 3 and standard deviation of 1.145. The regular teachers acknowledge with a mean of 2.54(sd. 1.41) that their schools had rules that governed the conduct of their learners. They mean 2.15(sd. 1.19) state that the rules are placed at strategic points where they can be accessed well. Only a mean of 1.96(sd. 0.97) would agree that pupils were involved in the formulation of those school rules [23]. This is in contrast with what the deputy head teachers and the head teachers themselves had stated earlier. The role of teachers in the management of pupils’ discipline as indicated by the respondents included: involving pupils in making or formulating school rules, displaying the formulated rules. Discipline is fundamental to education as pupils’ moral becoming demand discipline. It is the role of educators to ensure that they place enforcing discipline and providing for children’s safety should be the responsibility of educators. According to the respondents it is evident that educators. According to the respondents, it is evident that educators have a role

of initiating and enforcing individual classroom rules consistently which in this cases according to the study, the respondents supported the view that pupils are involved in formulating schools rules which at the same time are displayed in the school through the initiation of educators. These assists them to do their professional work effectively and manage their classes properly.

CONCLUSION

The schools are however using alternative methods of instilling discipline in their respective schools. Although the pace is sluggish it is at least being used to bring up pupils in a disciplined way to enable the function of the schools commensurate with their mission of disseminating education to the citizens. The study found that guidance and counselling has been revamped in many schools. There were plans to capacity built teachers in the use of this aspect through the Ministry of Education by organizing seminars and workshops on use of alternative methods and enforcing government policies. Teachers also have taken the initiative to train on guidance and counselling on their own.

Recommendations

Teachers and administrators ought to be flexible to adapt to new information and accept change so that the ban would bring intended changes in the education system.

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