

Teachers' Perception of the Counter-Influence of Spanking on Secondary Schools Students

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perception of teachers on the counter-influence of spanking on students' behaviours in public secondary schools in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised 288 teachers. A sample size of 45 teachers was drawn using simple random sampling technique. Researchers' developed instrument titled "Teachers' Perception on the Counter influence of Spanking on Students' Behaviour Questionnaire (TPCISSBQ)" which was validated by five experts was used for data collection. The internal consistency was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha and this yielded reliability coefficient of 0.64 and 0.81 for the two parts of the questionnaire. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was utilized to analyze the data. Findings revealed a significant negative correlation between the frequency of spanking and students' social and emotional well-being, indicating that increased use of spanking is associated with adverse social and emotional outcomes in students. The study recommends the adoption of alternative disciplinary methods that promote positive emotional development.

Keywords: Influence, Spanking, Behaviours, Secondary Education, etc

INTRODUCTION

Corporal punishment, particularly spanking, remains a prevalent disciplinary method in many Nigerian schools. While some educators view it as an effective means to correct misbehaviour, others argue that it may have detrimental effects on students' emotional health. In Nigeria, corporal punishment remains prevalent in many schools, despite growing concerns about its impact on students' well-being. Secondary education in Nigeria is seen as a vital level of education for moral development, knowledge impartation and character formation. Strategically its goal is structured on maintaining orderliness and discipline among its students. Proven in the National Policy on Education, the specific objectives of secondary education include inculcating values, morals, social development and civic responsibilities to the children (FRN, 2013). The bids of achieving these strategic objectives make maintaining school discipline paramount for teachers. Thus, discipline involves the training of peoples' character, behaviour and attitude to conform to a patterned order and punishment as a control mechanism for pervasion. Ezeugbor and Ebeatu (2018) saw discipline as a practice of training people to obey rules or code of behaviour and using punishment to correct disobedience. According to Wilter, Nana, Alo, Tajo, Pescuela (2023) school discipline refers to the rules and strategies employed by school to manage student behaviours and support their development. There is no doubt; discipline is fundamental in developing students to have self-control, self-restraint, perseverance, tolerance and respect for human dignity. Accordingly, no meaningful teaching and learning exercise can be achieved in any school environment where the attitude, character and behaviour of people are not disciplined and directed towards a desired goal.

Essentially people express their behaviours in the way they respond to things and these reflect in their actions, mannerism, attitude and interactions. Thus, a student is said to be trained when the discipline received in the school enable him to willfully exhibit accepted social and emotional behaviours both in and outside the school. Exhibiting acceptable social behaviours is the ability of someone to verbally express or interact with others without using degrading or insulting words. In other words, social behaviour is concerned with positive

communication and behaviours that conform to the school rules and regulations. No wonder, Carrie (2023) maintained that social behaviours reflect the way people influence and interact with others which are generally acceptable by the school community. In the same vein, Williams (2022) stated that maintaining positive social behaviours help people to engage in healthy social interaction, cooperation and behaviour. Maintaining a socially acceptable behaviour serves as a guide for students to adhere to behaviours that are in accordance with social norms and expectations in the school. It also helps to influence opinion, reaction, interaction and character of all the school members. More importantly, maintaining a positive social behaviours guarantee a healthy emotional dispositions and behaviours required for effective teaching and learning in the school.

Emotional behaviour is an expression of feelings that is based on experience, characterized by impression which forms peoples' opinion about things and others. They are those behaviours that promote self-esteem and spur personal innate characteristics of an individual and give rise to peoples' actions and reactions to others in a given environment. . In other words social behaviour of the school members trigger emotional disposition of both the staff and students alike. Secondary school students display their emotional behaviours through either expression of love or hatred towards others. Common characteristics among students with emotional disturbances include aggressive behaviour, short attention span, poor school performance, inability to form relationship with others (DeCooman & Cook, 2023). Worthy to note is that social and emotional behaviours have a way of revolving to the extent which the school goals and objectives are attained,

The personnel observations of the researchers show that most secondary school students exhibit anti-social and anti-emotional behaviours such as anger, hostility, envy, resentment and jealousy. Such behaviours trigger the use of weapons, provocative words, slander, gossips, lies, disobedience to school rules, disrespect to teachers and school authorities, among others. These has often resulted to constant quarrels, fight, bully, conflicts, use of weapons and forming of gangs among students. Thus, these observations clearly have some implications for the teachers.

A teacher also known as the classroom manager is the personality equipped with the necessary capacity to inspire, discipline, facilitate, transmit and sustain the process of teaching and learning in order to achieve the desired goals and objectives of education most optimally (Ezemba, Okeke and Ogbuanya, 2023). Teachers are disciplinarians whose modus operandis include redirecting an erring students and disciplining misbehaved students in the school. No wonder, Ugwu (2020) stated that teacher help learners to build, identify, acquire skills and develop inner character. Teacher education training have exposed teachers to special training in coaching, teaching, explaining and educating which is capable of creating behavioural change in a person's attitude. This is to say that the roles of the teacher are numerous but mainly hinged on exacting training through disciplining of the students. In the light of the above, most teachers in in public secondary schools in Anambra State, Ogbaru Local Government Area in particular, have proven their efficiency in ensuring that discipline is maintained among students in the school environment. Most teachers have frequently employed the use of spanking as a control mechanism to various forms of students' misbehaviours.

Spanking involves giving a physical punishment or inflicting a deliberate pain on the students for anti-social behaviours in the school (Okeke-James, Igbokwe, Oguejiofor & Ogbuanya 2023). It is important to note that the primary aim of spanking in the school is to correct misbehavior and to ensure compliance to school rules. In the views of Donally and Stratus (2008) spanking is the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purpose of controlling the child's behaviour. This is to say that the reason for spanking is to stop or reduce occurrences of an unacceptable behavior in the school. This assertion seems in tandem with the definition given by Larzelere, Cox and Smith (2010) that spanking is a physical punishment used in reducing misbehaviours.

Although spanking has been used by most teacher for prevention and correction of anti-social and emotional behaviours among students. Notwithstanding, the use of spanking has been a controversy issue for either being productive or counter-productive in managing misbehaviours among students. Moreover, there has been rise in the argument on either upholding the use of spanking or resolving to non-spanking of students in secondary schools. This controversy seemed to have made most school principals especially in private secondary schools in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State to ban their teachers to the use spanking as disciplinary technique for any form of misbehavior in the school. It is on this background of the use of spanking being either

productive or counterproductive in managing misbehaviours was this study conducted to empirically investigate the counter influence of spanking as disciplinary technique on students' behaviour from the opinion of teachers in public secondary schools in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria.

Problem Statement

Teachers are the people whose job specification includes disciplining students and often at times they employ spanking as management technique for misbehavior. Although, it is a controversial behaviour management technique to various educational stakeholders across countries but is still an acceptable tool for students misbehavior in secondary schools in Nigeria. Moreover, spanking has in recent times received attention of various scholars and education stakeholders alike in Nigeria but most scholars seemed drawn more to its influence on students while its counter-influence receive meager attention in Nigeria. Therefore the need to empirically determine the opinion of teachers regarding the counter influence of spanking because it seemed imperative to form a balance study of the its strengthens and weakness from the locus of whether it is productive or counter-productive among secondary school students in Nigeria, from the opinion of teachers in public secondary schools in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the perception of teachers on the counter influence of spanking on students' behaviours in public secondary schools in Ogbaru Local Government Area of Anambra State. Specifically, the study ascertained:

1. The counter-influence of spanking on the emotional behaviours of secondary school students in Ogbaru Local Government Area
2. The counter-influence of spanking on the social behaviours of secondary school students in Ogbaru Local Government Area.

Significance of the Study

Practically, this study would be useful to the principals of secondary schools, teachers, students, school counselors and future researchers.

To the school principal the findings of this study would provide the requisite knowledge on the counter influence of spanking on students. Equipped with this information, principals as school managers are exposed with information on proper behaviour management that would not be counter-productive on the students as they stand as a link between the teachers and students as much should always have the interest of both teachers and students at heart.

The study would benefit teachers especially those teaching in the secondary schools in Ogbaru Local Government area of Anambra State. In that the study helped to X-ray the counter influence of spanking on the students. Guided with this information, it would help teachers in forming basis for usage of spanking for effective discipline management in the school.

The students would also benefit immensely from the findings of the study. Teachers who hitherto were not interested on how students respond to spanking can know its strengths and weakness and show concern on how best to deploy the usage of spanking. When this is handled, students would relate closely with their teachers during instructional delivery.

School counselors constitute another group of beneficiaries. The information would help them to know reasons of social associated problems of students and would be well guided to giving advice to teachers and proper guidance to students especially those with social associated problems.

Finally, the findings and recommendations from the study would no doubt provide the future researchers with literatures and area that would need further studies.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the counter- influence of spanking on the emotional behaviours of secondary school students in Ogbaru Local Government Area?
2. What is the counter-influence of spanking on the social behaviours of secondary school students in Ogbaru Local Government Area?

METHODS

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Two research questions guided the study. From the population of 288 a sample of 45 teachers was drawn using simple random sampling technique. Researchers' developed instrument titled "Counter Influence of Spanking on Students' Behaviour Questionnaire" (CISSBQ) which was validated by five experts was used for data collection. The questionnaire was structured on four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1. The internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's Alpha's method and this yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.64 and 0.81 for the two parts of the CISSBQ and 0.76 for the entire instrument. The direct administration and retrieval method was used for data collection. Mean was used to answer the research question. A mean rating of 2.50 and above was interpreted as agree while the mean rating less than 2.50 was interpreted as disagree.

RESULT

Summary of results are presented in table a follows:

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Between Teachers' Perception of Spanking and Students' Emotional Behaviour

Variables	Person Correlation (r)	Sig	No of Respondents
Teachers' perception of Spanking	1.000	-	45
Students' emotional behaviour	-0.62	0,000	45

The result in Table 1 indicates a strong negative correlation between teachers' perception of spanking and students' emotional behaviour. As teachers' endorsement of spanking increases, there is a corresponding decrease in positive emotional behaviour among students. The p-value is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant. This suggests that the observed relationship is unlikely due to random chance. This analysis is based on responses from 45 teachers, providing a sufficient sample to detect meaningful correlations. These results support the hypothesis that teachers who perceive spanking as an effective disciplinary method also recognize its potential negative impact on students' emotional well-being.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Between Teachers' Perception of Spanking and Students' Social Behaviour

Variables	Person Correlation (r)	Sig	No of Respondents
Teachers' perception of Spanking	1.000	-	45
Students' social behaviour	-0.58	0,000	45

The result in Table 2 indicates a strong negative correlation between teachers' perception of spanking and

students' social behaviour. As teachers' endorsement of spanking increases, there is a corresponding decrease in positive social behaviour among students. The p-value is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant. This suggests that the observed relationship is unlikely due to random chance. The analysis is based on responses from 45 teachers, providing a sufficient sample to detect meaningful correlations. These results support the hypothesis that teachers who perceive spanking as an effective disciplinary method also recognize its potential negative impact on students' social well-being.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In research question 1, the results of the findings suggest that teachers who view spanking as an effective disciplinary tool also recognize its potential to negatively affect students' emotional health. This aligns with previous studies that have documented the adverse effects of corporal punishment on children's emotional and psychological development (Fakunmoju et al., 2018). Similarly, studies have shown that spanking as a corporal punishment is associated with increased aggression, anxiety, and depression among students (Yemi, 2018). Therefore, the significant negative correlation underscores the need for educators to consider alternative disciplinary methods that support positive emotional outcomes in students. This disagrees with Okeke-James, Chike, Emengini and Igbokwe (2024) who stated that spanking is a good corrective and preventive technique for misbehavior when used in love for secondary school students.

In research question 2, results from the analysis indicates that teachers who view spanking as an effective disciplinary tool also recognize its potential to negatively affect students' social health. This aligns with previous studies that have documented the adverse effects of corporal punishment on children's social development (Fakunmoju et al., 2018; Ekanem & Edet, 2013). The significant negative correlation underscores the need for educators to consider alternative disciplinary methods that support positive social outcomes in students. This agrees with Slade and Wissow (2004), Altschul, Lee and Gershoff (2016) who submitted that spanking impacts adverse childhood experiences. This is to say that fear of being spanked can make students not to voice their opinion in the school or isolate themselves from teachers who easily spank. The implication is that students is that most students may resort to keeping their problems and challenges to themselves than to share it with the teachers. This situation when not properly handled may make most students to resort to organizational silence and social maladjustment which would be a great hindrance to the achievement of the educational goals.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there is a significant negative relationship between teachers' perceptions of spanking and its perceived impact on students' socio-emotional behaviour in public secondary schools in Ogbaru Local Government Area. Teachers who endorse spanking acknowledge its potential to harm students' emotional well-being, highlighting the need for alternative disciplinary approaches that promote positive socio-emotional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and the discussion that followed, the following recommendations were made:

1. School principals should monitor teachers in discharging their disciplinary roles to students and ensure moderation in the use of spanking as disciplinary measure to misbehaviours
2. Teachers should moderately use spanking to correct misbehavior such that will not create fear on students to decide to isolate themselves or choose not to voice their opinion in the school.
3. Ministry of Education should ensure that seminars on how to maintain discipline in school is regularly organized
4. Ministry of Education should enforce policies that discourage corporal punishment and promote alternative disciplinary methods.
5. Regular workshops and seminars should be organized to educate teachers on positive behavioural management strategies.
6. Schools should provide counseling services to support students' socio-emotional well-being and address behavioural issues constructively.

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