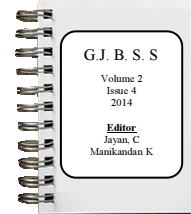




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Student and Teacher Perception of Disciplinary Practices: Types, Reasons, Consequences and Alternatives

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Abstract

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Inculcating self-discipline is important for systematic pursuit of learning. Punishments involve employing a noxious or painful stimulus that generates a variety of problems and negative side effects to the child. Corporal punishments severely affect the human dignity of children. This study throws light on the various disciplinary practices adopted by the upper primary school teachers. Sample was 100 teachers and students each from schools of 2 districts of Kerala. Teachers are using undesirable disciplinary practices more than constructive disciplinary practices. Main consequences of disciplinary practices according to students are low self-esteem, feelings of shame, anger, sadness, fear, pain, tension, mental fatigue and hate towards teachers and subject..

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Education aims at shaping the behavior in a desirable way, creating good citizens, bringing about all-round development of personality and evolving morally oriented human beings. Discipline denotes a decent and decorous conduct that contributes to harmony, respect for authority, love for orderliness, eagerness to discharge duties with regularity and efficiency, and an exalted sense of responsibility that develops a sense of social conscience. Seen in this way, discipline is important in the school system. Nevertheless, indiscipline among school students is a major problem of the day. The Education Commission (Government of India, 1964-66) had expressed serious concern over growing indiscipline among students, raising violence, hatred, drug abuse and other social problems that enter the classrooms. The International Commission for Education in the 21st century has emphasised the importance of the role of teachers as agents for promoting understanding and tolerance among students. The discipline cannot, however, be developed in vacuum, it is the fruit of co-operative work, willingly undertaken and efficiently completed. The school must aim at strengthening the desire for co-operation and afford students opportunities to translate it into practice (Education Commission, 1964-66). Discipline must enable the performance, freedom, choice and autonomy for both the teacher and child. Such disciplinary practices are very necessary in schools.

Punishments involve employing a noxious or painful stimulus generates a variety of problems and negative side effects to the child. Those who implement punishment rarely question the rules and their effects on overall development, self-esteem and interest in learning. Corporal punishment severely affects the human dignity of a child, as it not only inflicts physical pain but also mental harassment, feeling of helplessness, hopelessness and worthlessness. It reduces self-esteem and self-confidence of students. The desire to escape punishment may lead students to dropout or other personality problems. Corporal punishment shatters any semblance of a classroom-climate in which mutual respect, co-operation and seriousness of purpose prevail (Cangelosi, 1990).

Reward is usually considered a more attractive and effective alternative than punishment. The teachers may ignore minor indiscipline of students that causes little



interferences to teaching. Reward and punishment as means of maintaining discipline and modifying behaviour of learners is as old as the history of education. All corporal punishments are abusive because of its deleterious effects on long-term welfare of students and the educational environment of the school. Among other things, corporal punishments by teachers model behaviour, rejected by teachers for the student towards his peers (Dill & Haberman, 1995).

The Convention on Rights of the Child adopted by UN in 1989 under Article 37(a) declares that no child be subjected to torture or any degrading punishments. The Delhi High Court in 2001 held that imposition of corporal punishment on the child is not consonant with his right to life under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (GOI, 2009) prohibits corporal punishment in schools. Education Codes of various Indian states clearly specify the type of punishments that be given to students in case of any indiscipline and prohibit schools from corporal punishments. However, in spite of such rules, corporal punishment is prevalent in schools in various forms. In this context, a study of prevailing disciplinary practices in schools will help further democratize our educational system.

Objectives

1. To find out, in the views of the teachers and students, what disciplinary practices the teachers adopt.
2. To find out the most commonly perceived reasons of using disciplinary practices
3. To find out how do teachers feel after employing disciplinary practices, and, how do the students feel when subjected to punishments
4. To find out the suggestions teachers and students make in order to reduce the use of undesirable disciplinary practices

Method

Participants

The data was collected from a sample of 100 teachers and 100 students from various upper primary schools of Malappuram and Calicut districts of Kerala using a questionnaire on disciplinary practices. Percentage analysis and chi-square test of independence were used for analysing the data.

Instruments

1. Open ended Questionnaire on Disciplinary Practice (Jouhar & Mumthas, 2012). This questionnaire has two versions, one to be responded by teachers and the other by students. Each version of the questionnaire has 3 sections- section 1 consist of 52 probable reasons which may lead to the use of disciplinary practices by the school teachers. The students were asked to write the various disciplinary practices adopted by their teachers for the given reasons. In addition to the 52 listed reasons, students were asked to write any other reasons if any. Section 2 provides provision for the students to write their feelings when they underwent various types of disciplinary practices by their teachers. However Section 2 of teacher version provides teachers to write the feelings of students when they use various types of disciplinary practices. Section 3 meant for listing their suggestions on alternative practices which can be used instead of the present disciplinary practices.

Procedure

The data obtained from the questionnaire was consolidated in to tabular form in which various disciplinary practices (columns) were counted against reasons (rows) thereof. The frequency of teachers and students reporting various disciplinary practices were obtained.

Results

A. *Disciplinary Practices Adopted in Schools*

Teachers were asked, "What are the practices that you employ to discipline the students?" The responses are categorized and presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Teacher Reported Use of Disciplinary Practices

Category	Disciplinary Practices	Frequency	%	Category %
Undesirable	Shouting	61	12.3	56.07
	Reprimand	58	11.7	
	Enforcing	44	8.9	
	Beating	35	7.1	
	Make standing	31	6.3	
	Imposition	25	5.1	
	Pricking ears	23	4.7	
Desirable	Advice	72	14.6	43.93
	Giving responsibilities	48	9.7	
	Loving	44	8.9	
	Urge	32	6.5	
	Changing seat	13	2.6	
	Giving blackboard work	8	1.6	

From Table.1 it is seen that advice, shouting, reprimand, giving responsibilities, enforcing, loving, beating, motivation, make them standing and imposition are used by teachers to a considerable extent. Pricking ears, change of the sitting place, and giving blackboard work are used, to a lesser extent. Table 1 shows that in teachers' testimony itself, they use more undesirable than desirable practices to manage and control the behavior of students.

B. *Disciplinary Practices Employed by Teachers as per Student Reports*

Students were asked, "What disciplinary techniques do your teachers adopt in order to mould your behavior?" The responses are categorized and presented in table 2.

Table 2
Disciplinary Practices Obtained By Students

Category	Disciplinary Practices	Frequency	%	Category %
Undesirable	Send away from the class	56	13.3	65
	Beating	42	10.0	
	Reprimand	41	9.8	
	Imposition	27	6.4	
	Ask to approach the head teacher	22	5.2	
	Inform parents	20	4.8	
	Fine	13	3.1	
	Stand on the bench	12	2.9	
	Make laugh	11	2.6	
	Pinching	8	1.9	
	Harsh punishments	7	1.7	
	Pinching the ear	7	1.7	
	Callous words	4	1.0	
	Hitting on the head	3	0.7	
Desirable	Advice	53	12.6	35
	Disciplinary ministers	32	7.6	
	Assign leadership	19	4.5	
	Warning	16	3.8	
	Awareness	13	3.1	
	Giving prizes	8	1.9	
	Counseling	6	1.4	

Table 2 reveals that according to students, sending away from the class, advice, beating, reprimand, disciplinary ministers, imposition and sending to the headmaster are common practices adopted by teachers. Informing parents, assigning leader roles, warning, creating awareness, fining, making to stand on the bench, laughing at, giving prizes, pinching, harsh punishments, counseling, using mind breaking words, and hitting on the head are also practiced, according to students, though to a less extent. As per students' report, teachers use more undesirable than desirable practices to manage and control the behavior of students.

Teachers tend to under-report the use of undesirable disciplinary practices more than students do. Teachers are not reporting the employment of some kinds of disciplinary practices like sending away from the class, informing parents, fining, beating, standing upon the bench, pronouncing to approach the head teacher etc. However, the students are reporting that they are experiencing these types of disciplinary practices.

Reporting the frequency of use of undesirable and desirable practices in classroom is dependent on who reports them, teachers report significantly less undesirable practices than the students (and more desirable practices than the students do) [$X^2 = 7.54$ (df = 1, $p < .05$)].

C. Reasons for Using Disciplinary Practices

Teacher reported reasons for disciplinary practices are categorized and presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Reasons Attributed By Teachers for Disciplinary Practices

Category	Reasons	Frequency	%	Category %
Academic Reasons	Misbehavior at the time of teaching	68	10.9	53.6
	Misbehavior at the time of activities	63	10.1	
	Noise in the class	43	6.9	
	Not doing homework	42	6.7	
	Backwardness in studies	36	5.8	
	Repetition of mistakes	32	5.1	
	Misbehavior at the time of examination	28	4.5	
	Non attention in the class	22	3.5	
Behavioral Reasons	Bad habits	63	10.1	46.4
	Character problems	49	7.9	
	Destruction of school property	40	6.4	
	Disturbing/ teasing others	39	6.3	
	Lying	32	5.1	
	Mischievous	28	4.5	
	Disobedience	25	4.0	
	Misbehavior at the time of journey	13	2.1	

Teachers are using disciplinary practices for both behavioral and academic reasons. The important reasons for employing disciplinary practices are at the misbehaviours at the time of teaching and at the time of activities, bad habits, character problems, noise in the class, not doing homework, and destruction of school property.

Student reported reasons for disciplinary practices are categorized and presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Reasons Attributed By Students for Disciplinary Practices

Category	Reasons	Frequency	%	Category %
Academic Reasons	Not doing home work	58	12.5	44.7
	Backwardness in studies	56	12.1	
	Non attention in the class	47	10.2	
	Unwanted talks or noises in class	36	7.8	
	Making noise in exam hall	10	2.2	
Behavioural Reasons	For disciplinary problems	58	12.5	55.3
	Bad behaviour	43	9.3	
	Disobedience	42	9.1	
	Not respecting teachers	32	6.9	
	Misbehavior when the classrooms are free	28	6.0	
	Misbehaviour to girls	17	3.7	
	When teachers are angry	13	2.8	
	Wandering	13	2.8	
	Falling in love	6	1.3	
	Use of intoxicants	4	0.9	

Table 4 shows that according to students, teachers are using disciplinary practices more for behavioral reasons than academic reasons. The main reasons cited by the students for using disciplinary practices are for disciplinary problems, not doing homework, backwardness in studies, non attention in the class, bad behaviour, disobedience, unwanted talks or noises in the class and not respecting teachers.

D. Consequences of Using Disciplinary Practices

Teacher and student reported consequences for disciplinary practices are categorized and presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Teacher and Student Perception of Consequences of Undesirable Disciplinary Practices

	Consequences of undesirable disciplinary practices	Frequency	%	
Teacher perception	Mental pain	23	22.3	100
	Make problems in relation/love	21	20.4	
	Revenge mentality of the child	19	18.4	
	Child repeats the problems	18	17.5	
	Tension	16	15.5	
	Dissatisfaction of parents	6	5.8	
Student perception	Feel shame	33	25.0	100
	Anger	25	18.9	
	Sadness	18	13.6	
	Fear	13	9.8	
	Pain	11	8.3	
	Tension	9	6.8	
	Hate to teachers	8	6.1	
	Low self esteem	6	4.5	
	Mental fatigue	6	4.5	
Feel hate to the subject	3	2.3		

Table 5 shows that the main consequences of undesirable disciplinary practices according to teachers are mental pain, make problems in relation, revenge mentality of the child, child repeats the mistakes, tension and dissatisfaction of parents. Nevertheless, main consequences according to students are shame, anger, sadness, fear, pain, tension, feeling hate to teachers, low self-esteem, mental fatigue and hate to the subject.

D. Alternative practices for Using Disciplinary Practices

Teacher and student reported alternative disciplinary practices are categorized and presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Alternative practices for Using Disciplinary Practices

	Alternative practices	Frequency	%	Total
Teachers	Counseling	48	21.24	100
	Loving	46	20.35	
	Caring	41	18.14	
	Entrusting responsibility	33	14.60	
	Friendship	25	11.06	
	Knowing the child	18	7.96	
	Sharing	12	5.31	
	Free learning	3	1.33	
Students	Counseling	18	27.27	100
	Modeling	11	16.67	
	Advice	9	13.64	
	Personal counseling	8	12.12	
	Parental approach	8	12.12	
	Love and affection	7	10.61	
	Oral instructions only	4	6.06	
	Good leaders	1	1.52	

Teachers give priority to counselling, loving, caring, entrusting responsibility and friendship as alternative practices for disciplinary practices whereas students consider counselling and modelling as the alternative practices.

Conclusion

Both the teachers and the students report that teachers are using undesirable disciplinary practices more than that of positive and constructive disciplinary practices. Teachers tend to under-report the use of undesirable disciplinary practices than students. Teachers are not reporting some kinds of disciplinary practices like sending away from the class, informing parents, fining, beating, standing upon the bench, making to approach the head teacher etc. However, the students are reporting that they are experiencing these types of disciplinary practices.

Teachers need to know models that are more popular and techniques for dealing with discipline referrals that include prevention techniques, correction and control of misbehavior and treatment. Prevention techniques include preventive classroom management, pro-social behaviour, moral education, social problem-solving, effective communication models, effective teaching practices, frequent monitoring, clear rules and procedures, social praise, and so forth. Systematic reinforcement, modeling of pro-social behavior, verbal instruction and role-playing are effective in preventing undesirable behaviours. Classroom moral discussions of real-life dilemmas, hypothetical situations and literature help to bring in better awareness about desirable behaviours. Student participation in school governance too is a way out. Self-instruction training, dialoguing, value-clarification activities, active listening, communication and interpersonal skills training for students and teachers will prevent indiscipline problems.

Correction and control of misbehavior can be via behavior modification, behavior game, and reality therapy. Direct instruction, reinforcement techniques including social praise, material reinforcers and tokens, punishment-oriented techniques including verbal reprimand, group contingency techniques such as the good behavioural contracting, assertive discipline, teacher assertion, systematic use of behaviour modification techniques and continuous



monitoring, confrontation questioning, classroom meetings, classroom moral discussions, social problem-solving, behavioral contracting, logical consequences, time-out, democratic governance can be considered for correction and control of misbehavior.

Opportunities to forge relationships with caring adults, coupled with engaging curriculum, prevent discipline problems. Discipline that is fair, corrective and includes therapeutic relationship-building with students reduces the likelihood of further problems. Strategies that effectively maintain appropriate social behavior make schools safer. Safer schools are effective learning environments. Positive solutions to discipline problems have to address student needs, environmental conditions, teacher interactions and matching student with curriculum. Reducing student alienation through "schools-within-a-school" and other peer relationship models can dramatically reduce acting out in schools, especially in large settings. When students receive appropriate education in a supportive environment, they improve behavior and performance. Appropriately implemented proactive behavior support systems can lead to dramatic improvements that have long-term effects on the lifestyle, communication skills and problem behavior of students of all types.

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