

**DISCIPLINE IN A KWAZULU-NATAL
SECONDARY SCHOOL: THE GENDERED
EXPERIENCE OF LEARNERS**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Mhlophe Cynthia Msani, declare that this is my own work. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M.C. Msani". The signature is written in a cursive style with a dotted line underneath it.

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I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my loving family for making this study a reality.

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ABSTRACT

The study explores and describes perceptions of learners in a secondary school on how discipline is enforced at Hintsho, with particular attention to gender. Corporal punishment is one of the methods of discipline that is still used at Hintsho. The issue of corporal punishment is a sensitive one since its use is now illegal. In the course of the study the researcher interviewed learners about this and other forms of discipline.

Data was collected through interviews with ten Grade eleven learners. Access was enabled by the position of the researcher as a teacher of over ten years' standing in the school.

The study found that some teachers (especially males) still beat learners in order to enforce discipline and keep order. This occurs despite the fact that the school has formally prohibited the use of corporal punishment and has passed a code of conduct to encourage the use of alternative disciplinary forms.

Learners confirmed that other forms of discipline and punishment are indeed used. But these are generally corporal punishment in another guise. Hard labour, for example, was identified by learners as a frequent form of punishment. While some learners accepted the various forms of punishment that were used, others opposed both corporal punishment and the other forms of punishment introduced as an alternative, especially the cleaning of toilets. Male teachers proved to be stricter and more severe than females as they were less tolerant and less reasonable.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

In 1996 South African Schools Act was passed and it illegalised the use of corporal punishment in schools. Despite this development, corporal punishment is still used and newspapers still periodically contain stories about learners being seriously injured as a result of corporal punishment.

Although there have been some recent studies in South Africa on corporal punishment it remains under researched and it remains a problem in schools. For these reasons I decided to conduct a school based study on corporal punishment.

I will adopt a gendered approach in this study. As I shall explain in later chapters, the practice and perceptions of corporal punishment and discipline are profoundly gendered. In addition, the way in which discipline is handled varies greatly from school to school. Township schools are often resource-poor and have high student: teacher ratios as well as a history of corporal punishment use, the exercise of discipline continues to be authoritarian and differs greatly from liberal approaches taken in middle class (former model C) schools.

I have been a teacher in township schools for 18 years. I am a black African woman and now occupy the position of deputy head. I am thus in the fortunate position of being able to use my own school (referred to in this study by a pseudonym), Hintsho Senior Secondary School as my research site. I will examine the way discipline is administered and

experienced by learners and will pay particular attention to the gendered elements of this subject.

1.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF MY SCHOOL

Hintsho Senior Secondary School is situated at the edge of uMlazi a huge township to the south of Durban. It is closely situated to an informal settlement called Dekle (pseudonym). This informal settlement is ravaged by poverty, unemployment and high rate of crime. About 80% of the learners in my research site come from this poverty stricken area, thus the school is very poor.

The school is exclusively African in all of its components that is, learners (boys and girls), teachers, parents and the School Governing Body (SGB). Parents and the SGB still adhere to the old idea of corporal punishment and many learners are without parents. The majority of learners are isiZulu speakers although there are also Xhosa, Sotho and Tswana speaking learners at the school as well. The school uses isiZulu and English as mediums of instruction.

The school seems undecided about the question of discipline. Different approaches are used of which some are harmful to learners. As a deputy head I am also involved in the disciplinary committee of the school. I have been in the school for almost ten years and I have observed some of the educators using corporal punishment. But the school does have a policy document that is prohibiting the use of corporal punishment.

In the past, as an educator, I also used corporal punishment. This was prior to the passing of the Act that abolished it. Ngcobo argues that in a didactic situation the immediate aim of any disciplinary action is to promote learning, certainly not to act as a vindictive or repressive manner. On a long- term basis disciplinary action aim at putting back the defaulter on his pedagogical tracks and thereby facilitating responsible adulthood (Ngcobo, 1988:159).

Another view argues is that consultative forms of discipline have not historically been preferred in most South African Schools (Morrell, 1999). Punitive measures like detention, kneeling for long periods, silence and writing lines have been more common. Yet where (for example in a girls only middle class school) non-punitive and consultative mechanisms have been in place for some time and the response by students is positive. In my school a liberal approach to discipline has not been adopted. This is partly to be explained by the environment from which learners come and the preference of their parents for corporal punishment.

1.3 Hintsho Secondary School and the context of Discipline

With specific reference to my school (the research site) discipline prior to the act that abolished corporal punishment was not a problem when corporal punishment was widely used by all educators as means of correcting wrongdoing. Parents supported and still support the idea of using corporal punishment. During the apartheid era, teachers used corporal punishment as means of discipline since everybody supported it. Churches as religious institutions also supported chastisement, as there was a belief of ‘spare the rod and spoil the child’. Families too have been

supporting this idea mostly the African families, although punishment was not the same between boys and girls.

Historically and comparative studies suggest that parents often used corporal punishment to 'keep discipline' in the home, things like beatings, working harder, sometimes not even given food if you have done a serious mistake (Parker-Jenkins, 1999; Scott, 1968/1996). A study in the United States, where corporal punishment in schools has long been banned, shows, for example that many parents still literally use corporal punishment and believe that it is necessary for good order (Strauss, 1994).

In South Africa evidence suggests that corporal punishment is also widely used by parents (Holdstock, 1990). In fact corporal punishment is common in many families where it part of a complex where violence is often the 'first-line tactic' in resolving conflicts (Wood and Jewkes, 2001:331). To support this girls are mostly beaten in African families because they are always at home close to their mothers, for example at home I was the eldest girl and always at home. When you wash dishes sometimes a cup or plate breaks and you will be beaten for a minor occurrence. If a mistake has been done it is quickly corrected yet boys are allowed to loiter around and back home at night, and they thereby escape punishment.

According to Morrell, corporal punishment was an integral part of schooling in the twentieth century in South Africa schools. It was used excessively in white, single-sex boys' schools and liberally in all other schools except in single-sex girls' schools where its use was limited (Morrell, 1994). Psychologists argued that it did serious emotional

damage, affected the self-esteem of learners and impacted adversely on academic performance (Cherian, 1990, Holdstock, 1990, Murray, 1985).

Opponents of corporal punishment claimed that ‘hitting someone else, especially younger, smaller, and utterly defenceless, constitutes a violent act. This is true even in those instances where people claim that they cane ‘with love’ (Holdstock, 1990:342). In my school specifically this has created a lot of havoc where learners refused to be punished. Some older boys ended up hitting back at those educators who were performing corporal punishment.

Since the banning of corporal punishment in 1996, teachers have been encouraged to use alternative forms of discipline. This has not prevented some teachers from using corporal punishment. Cherain (1990) stated that in many African homes, children are expected to obey their parents and elders without question and are always told what to do. This is why according to Morrell (2001) corporal punishment continued to be used in schools, sometimes resulting in hospitalisation. But currently there are many different approaches to discipline being used at schools.

According to Cherian (1990) the nature, intensity and frequency of punishment imposed on the children may vary from home to home and hence the effect of punishment on the academic achievement of children is also likely to vary from one type of home situation to another.

While teachers understand the need to stop corporal punishment, they often lack alternatives. For example in my school (the research site), we tried to come up with many alternatives, like giving learners extra work, inviting parents to school, cleaning the school premises, suspension for a

week or two depending on the nature of the offence. But because of the area where many learners come from, they do not co-operate positively with the school. Parents are reluctant to take time off to come to school to discuss their children's poor behaviour and instead expect teachers to beat their children.

For example, if learners are sent to call their parents, they (learners) will just grasp any adult on the streets and bring him or her to school. When a major decision has to be taken, a fake parent will fail and discloses that he or she is not the real parent. This makes things very difficult for the school. Sometimes other learners will give false information about their parents.

The school is situated in a very rough area, alternatives like detention, cannot be put in practise since teachers cannot stay in the school after hours as gang activity makes this risky. Therefore teachers end up not knowing what exact steps to take for disciplinary action and many resort to corporal punishment.

Some teachers instead of using the prescribed alternative forms have replaced corporal punishment with methods of humiliation, sarcasm and neglect.

For example I have noticed this in my research site where teachers resort to insulting learners because they cannot beat them. In similar education contexts in KwaZulu-Natal the practice seems to continue. In Ixopo, for example, a female teacher knocked together the heads of two boys, which resulted in the death of one of the seven-year old boys (The Teacher, 2003). In another incident in 2004 in Hammarsdale a seventeen- year old

boy died after being beaten by a school principal for late coming (The Teacher, 2004).

Personally as a teacher I was interested in conducting this study so that I could better understand the situation in my school and possibly come up with some recommendations. I have seen some of my colleagues (teachers) being charged with contravening the South African Schools Act of 1996, which abolished the use of corporal punishment. As a country with new laws the Bill of Rights states clearly that every child has a right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study has a number of purposes. Firstly, from the perspective of learners, it examines the manner in which discipline is used at the school. Secondly it documents alternative forms of discipline that have been used and experienced by learners. Finally it discusses and compares how male and female learners respond to issues of discipline and corporal punishment in the school.

1.4.1. How is discipline exercised at Hintsho Senior Secondary School?

1.4.2. How do learners experience disciplinary measures at the school?

1.4.3. Is punishment practised differently between boys and girls?

1.4.4. Are there any connections between home and school discipline?

1.5. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND GENDER

It is noted in schools that corporal punishment is gendered. Male teachers beat harder and harsher than female teachers do. Thus there is also a difference insofar as beatings between the boys and the girls are concerned. According to Morrell (2001), African patriarchy maintained a relative autonomy, and masculinities reflected this. Men dominated public space and decision-making. Masculinity was located within the unquestioned dominance of men over women (Morrell, 2001:142). Boys take this type of power to the school life.

Boys are therefore tougher than girls and they force girls to be submissive. There was also a complaint amongst learners that have been interviewed that boys are beaten harder and more harshly than girls. The reason behind this was that boys hit back to teachers who are using corporal punishment. Wolpe (1998), Mac an Gaill (1994), and Connel (1993), cited by Morrell (2001), have highlighted that there is a relationship between the schools and masculinities. Historically, black children have been liberally beaten. Many South African homes are dominated by patriarchy and discipline received at home contributes towards the shaping of masculinity. Masculinity among black boys and men has been shaped by power. This spills over into schools, and this exercising of male power promotes dominance and supports a particular form of masculinity. That is why in schools we get boys who are constantly fighting and bullying so as to be feared by other learners.

Work on disciplinary regime, demonstrates that particular disciplinary regimes are implicated in particular types of gender relations and identities that emerge in schools. Aggressive and violent masculinities

arise in schools with harsh and authoritarian school disciplinary systems (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997). I have also observed this in my research site whereby learners have decided to hit teachers. Because of this boys will be always tough and girls will be conforming and submissive.

1.6.Conclusion

The South African School's Act of 1996 abolished corporal punishment but it still appears to be widely used, including at my own school. The Bill of Rights in South African constitution guarantees learners protection from humiliation and cruelty. For a variety of reasons, educators find it difficult to maintain discipline in schools. Good discipline is required for a school to be effective. Yet teachers are unclear about how to instil discipline and since they fear change, they don't want to embrace the new approach to discipline in schools. As a result some teachers have been jailed and others have decided to leave the teaching profession for contravening the law.

In the next chapter I will review the literature relating to discipline and corporal punishment. In chapter three I shall discuss the research methodology used for this project while chapter four will be devoted on presenting the findings and in chapter five I will come up with relevant alternatives that teachers could use in schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter examines the literature from a comparative perspective (comparing the literature on Southern Africa and elsewhere) as well as the policy literature relating to the abolition of corporal punishment in Southern Africa and elsewhere and also takes in the gendered literature on corporal punishment.

Corporal punishment is an issue, which is debated all over the world as educators in schools face this as a challenging problem. Many Western and African countries (including South Africa) have abolished the use of corporal punishment in schools due to the belief that it is a violation of the human rights of children. In order to be in a better position to understand corporal punishment, the concept will be defined and the historical background examined.

2.2 Definition of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is a very broad term that is defined in a multitude of ways. Culture, ethnicity and societal environments influence understandings of corporal punishment. For example in my research site where learners are exclusively African, beating or pinching has not been considered as abnormal, as abusive or as a transgression of law and the rights of the individual.

The Oxford dictionary describes corporal punishment as: - to abuse or inflict a severe blow on an opponent. Corporal punishment is inflicted on the body especially by beating (Oxford dictionary, 1990). Another definition is:- physical punishment as distinguished from pecuniary punishment or any kind of punishment of or inflicted on the body -“or”- the infliction by a teacher or other educational official upon the body of the student as a penalty for doing something which has been disapproved by the punisher (Maree in Morrell, 2001: 293).

2.3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Debate currently centers on the abolition of corporal punishment in our schools, following the South African Schools Act no. 27 of 1996.

A literature search reveals that the issue of the abolition of corporal punishment dates back to the seventieth century when in 1669 there was publication of the children’s petition which described the suffering of children, more especially in England (Newell, 1972:13). It had little effect until, in 1698-9, a pamphlet entitled *Lex Forxia* appeared, directed to parliamentarians and at society members from the Reformation of Manners, to promote a bill to control the use of corporal punishment (Newell, 1972). In these times corporal punishment was abundantly used in England without control. Commentarians stressed the frequency and brutality of punishment in many of the English schools, but these comments were unsuccessful.

It was the introduction of compulsory school attendance by an Act of the English Parliament in 1870 that paved the way for the control of corporal punishment. The London School Board, on 21 June 1871, developed regulations regarding corporal punishment. The regulation stated: -

“Every occurrence of corporal punishment shall be formally recorded in a book kept for the purpose. Teachers shall be prohibited absolutely from inflicting such punishment. The head teacher shall be held directly responsible for every punishment of the kind inflicted in the school” (Newell, 1972:16).

The above were the first tentative steps towards the regulation and control of corporal punishment in the schools’ sector. The first regulation dealt with what is commonly known in South Africa as the corporal punishment book, where every detailed of punishment is recorded. The second regulation prohibited all teachers in training or assistant teachers from practicing corporal punishment. The third one gave the principal the sole mandate to exercise corporal punishment as the only authority directly responsible for punishment. It should be noted that the regulations above applied to London schools only.

Teachers were uneasy about these regulations, as they are still today, simply because there were no regulations for alternatives to corporal punishment. The school board received constant petitions, letters and memoranda from the teachers associations, calling for amendments because of the difficulties of maintaining discipline in the school (Newell, 1972:16). Not all teachers were in favor of retaining corporal punishment. A petition from the Greenwich District Teachers in 1879 stated that the infliction of corporal punishment was an unpleasant part of the teacher’s duties, and that they desired to do without it if at all possible.

The teachers who favoured the retention of punishment put up a fierce protest. They protested that: -

“Under common law, the teachers had the same power of restrain and correction as the parent while the former acted in loco parents. The parent might also delegate part of his authority, namely, the power of restraint or correction, to a school master or tutor” (Newell, 1972:19).

The same could be said in the contemporary context of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa where the MEC for Education said in 1994: -

“The government is acting on delegated power from the society, not absolute power. It must make norms, but if those norms go against what the society wants, then the government must listen. Who should they (government) listen to if they don’t listen to the owners of the children- the parents” (The Teacher, 1994:4).

Support for corporal punishment remains widespread across South Africa although it appears to have particular resonance in rural settings. One male student from a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal recalled that:

“Corporal punishment was applied to both boys and girls for coming late to school, for failing class tests and for making noise in class. We really felt that the punishment we received was fair and appropriate” (In Deacon, Morrell and Prinsloo, 1999: 171).

2.4. ARGUMENTS JUSTIFYING THE USE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Some of the most vocal advocates of corporal punishment in Britain's schools especially during the 20th century were religious fundamentalists, teachers' organisations and school boards. Their belief was that corporal punishment should be used when necessary to maintain order and discipline in schools. A similar advocacy of corporal punishment was by some educators in Britain who believed that the worst offenders (bullies) deserve severe punishment. It was therefore to be used when necessary for badly behaved children to help control them (Parker-Jenkins, 1999).

According to the British writer, Winkley (1987) corporal punishment should be used when necessary, as long as the culture of the child's family and child's own perception of justice accepts it, like in most African cultures, beating is permitted. Some historians like Piek in Grey (1997) has recommended the formal use of corporal punishment as a last resort when all other means have failed, and as a last resort by principals in cases of cross misconduct of learners (in Grey, 1997:4).

Many educators believe that when all other means have failed the most effective means for correcting student's misbehavior is the use of corporal punishment.

Bernard (in Foster, 1999:1-2) a Christian priest, head teacher of Highway Christian Academy in Pinetown (South Africa) argues that caning children is a biblical correction because Proverbs 23:13 exhorts chastisement of children as it says, 'do not be chary of correcting a child. A stroke of the cane is not likely to kill him.' Bernard contends that God is ultimate even

over the government therefore the South African government had no right to ban chastisement out of school without God's permission. The Association of Christian Education South Africa (Foster, 1999) claims that corporal punishment is an act of love towards children as sanctioned by the bible and is crucial in the chastising of children. The above arguments for corporal punishment have highlighted the different ways in which the use of corporal punishment is justified.

2.5. ARGUMENTS AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Let us now look at the disagreements over corporal punishment in the context of Africa including South Africa. As I have mentioned, corporal punishment is defined in a multitude of ways. In Botswana for example, corporal punishment is still used but the government regulates its use. The Education Act spells out the conditions under which corporal punishment can be used.

Corporal punishment shall be administered to a pupil only on reasonable grounds and only where it appears that other disciplinary measures would be inadequate or ineffective in the circumstances of the case. It further states that, corporal punishment shall be administered to a pupil by the head master, a teacher or boarding master or matron or parent to whom authority to administer corporal punishment has been delegated by the head master (Mphele, 1997:49).

Evans and Richardson in (Mphele, 1997) on the other hand argued that many classroom teachers lack the training needed to discipline students without resorting to punishment. The use of corporal punishment in schools is not

conducive to a healthy learning environment, and it is counter productive (Mphele, 1997: 34).

Many African countries still see corporal punishment as an issue to be debated. Studies conducted in Africa show that some educators as those in Kenyan educators are infavour of corporal punishment, although corporal punishment in schools was banned in this country on 30 March 2001 (Simiyu, 2003:17).

In South Africa, as in other countries many educators have used corporal punishment. A study conducted by Sagoni (1997) showed that many educators were in favour of the use of corporal punishment, while Dlamini (1999) showed that most educators were not in favor of the use of the use of corporal punishment because of the fear of prosecution. Another critique is from Morrell, where he argued that the purposeful and frequent infliction of pain by those in authority in a formal and ritualized way in an institutional setting historically promoted violent masculinities among black and white, ruling and working –class men (Morrell, 1997:140).

Porteus et.al (2001) argue that corporal tends to develop aggressive hostility as opposed to self-discipline. It generates feeling of revenge, anti-social aggressiveness and increase vandalism. The fact that some of those subjected to corporal punishment are relatively unscathed does not validate the practice. What must be considered are the numerous more sensitive, vulnerable and less resilient children on whom the deleterious effect of corporal punishment have been long lasting (Porteus et al, 2001:2).

According to Holdstock, the individual is not regarded as having the potential, to develop self-discipline unless he or she is forced to behave appropriately. Perhaps this mistrust is as expression of the attitudes adults have about themselves and of the externally enforced discipline to which they have been exposed to as children (Holdstock, 1990:345).

Teachers and parents tend to rely on their power to try to instill discipline in their pupils and children. Because they (parents and teachers) themselves were brought up in this way, they have a strong belief that by disciplining and punishing children they are setting children in the accepted way. We even justify ourselves as parents that we are beating with love as it is mentioned above in Foster (1999).

On the other hand there is consensus among psychologists that violence and aggression breeds aggression. The child who has experienced the use of physical punishment will tend to become, as an adult, someone who likes to use force to solve problems or achieve his or her goals. Holdstock concurs with the above quotation when he says: -

“Punishment does not prevent aggressive behavior of children, but it actually causes aggressive behavior. Nearly hundred percent (100%) of children and whose parents use physical punishment commits violent acts against other children, as opposed to only twenty percent (20%) of children whose parents have not used physical punishment” (Holdstock, 1990:355).

Morrell (1999), argues that a school's disciplinary regime rests on a relationship between teachers and parents. Parents, particularly African parents and other members of extended family responsible for discipline, seem to believe in corporal punishment.

2.6. NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Many Western and African countries have abolished the use of corporal punishment in schools due to its negative impact on the learners. Bandura's study (1973) showed that corporal punishment in schools causes aggression in the learners and that it is better to use non-violent means of discipline.

In South Africa, corporal punishment was abolished in 1996, but in 2003 and 2004 two extreme incidents have been reported at Ixopo and Hammersdale where learners have been killed. At Ixopo it was a seven-year old boy (The Teacher, 2003), and at Hammersdale, it was a seventeen-year old boy who was punished for late coming (The Teacher, 2004). In another case a learner suffers permanent disability, which he sustained when a female teacher hit him on the head with a metallic pipe. This learner sustained further damage when the principal hit his injured head against the wall (Mtshali and Qwabe, in Dlamini, 1999).

In Botswana, there were reported cases of death following the school corporal punishment (United Nations Committee for End Global Punishment, 2001). This shows that even after its abolition, teachers still continue use corporal punishment.

The social consequences of corporal punishment are that it is direct violence (or physical violence as discussed above) against children; it creates

aggressive behavior in children and leads to a cyclic reproduction of violence in society (Strauss, 1994; Wiehe, 1998). It is an abuse of children and curtails their right to be free from pain, torture, harassment, and degrading punishment. Further, the use of corporal punishment creates a relationship of enmity and unequal power between the teacher and the pupils; as a result the pupils get oppressed and coerced by their teachers (Docking, 1980).

Corporal punishment also leads to poor job opportunities since the children undergo a “dampening” effect (Strauss, 1994), with poor creative or innovative skills that are not qualities required for higher-level jobs. Such children will tend to be inclined to low-level jobs that require obedience and submission to authority than being autonomous (Kuhn, 1969 in Murray, 1994:146). But the demand for low-level occupations is very low in contemporary society. Therefore subjecting children to corporal punishment may cause them, as future adults to remain unemployed due to their lack of relevant skills best suited for the job market needs of contemporary society.

2.7. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

A violent structure leaves marks not only on the human body but also on the mind and spirit (Galtung, 1990:294). Corporal punishment in schools has serious psychological consequences that impair children’s learning in schools. Corporal punishment decreases the learner’s motivation and leads to low academic achievement. Caning creates anxiety, fear, aggression and frustration in children that hinder learning rather than improving academic performance (Holdstock, 1990).

Children who dislike their teachers and school are more likely to drop out, (Raven, 1994). Teachers usually respond with authoritarianism to the behaviour that children are free to express as part of their development and this leads to the feeling of anger and resentment in children about unfair conditions under which teachers hit them (Corrigan, 1979). In most cases teachers are not usually ready to listen to childrens' problems nor does the school environment encourage dialogue with children. This predisposes children as future adults to adopt an authoritarian personality, violent attitudes and behaviour.

Some children have known to suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome later in life which in turn creates deep, life long psychological problems such as depression and suicidal thinking (Docking, 1980). This was evident from USA based study which showed that adults whose parents hit them in childhood are more likely to be depressed, have thoughts about killing themselves, than those whose parents did not.

Thus, the more corporal punishment one experienced as a child the greater the chances of being depressed or committing suicide as adult or older children (Strauss, 1994: 71-73).

2.8. GENDER THEORIES WHICH INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Historically Black and White children and other race groups in South Africa particularly boys, have been liberally beaten in South African schools. There have been tendencies to be harsh when boys are punished and lenient when it comes to girls. Most people, that is, teachers, parents and learners themselves, seem to agree on one thing: Boys do need punishment!

Morrell (1994) argues that there is no doubt that schools as forms of organization, their teachers and their procedures were an important agent in the production of specific gender values. Yet they were not alone in the creation of masculinity. Frequently overlooked is the contribution of the boys. It is true that South Africans generally and students at Hintsho in particular believe in the norm of beating boys. Going through the punishment book of the school I have discovered that 80% of the cases concerns boys. This is evidently clear when one considers the early call for the unbanning of corporal punishment. The gendered view of corporal punishment is that boys should be beaten but girls should not. This view is not, however, universally held and, particularly in South Africa, African girls have been subjected to corporal punishment at home and at school. Nevertheless there is widespread support for the differentiation of punishment on grounds of gender. This differentiation can be traced back to the European context of the nineteenth century.

European education systems incorporated the idea that punishment should be differentiated along gender lines. The same view was held in the colonial schools in South Africa. But in the schools established under the Bantu Education Act for Africans, the gender differentiation did not hold so strongly and girls were frequently and severely beaten. In his 1999 Durban-

based study Morrell (2001a) found that there was a belief that boys are beaten harder than girls, and girls wanted boys to get harder punishment because of their behaviors. There was a near universal acknowledgment that male teachers were stricter, disciplined, more severely, were less tolerant and less reasonable. Reasons given to explain the gender differences attributed to male teachers a set of gender specific behaviors: unbending, unfeeling, violent, egocentric, competitive, unsympathetic and rigid.

On the other hand Morrell's study found that female teachers were held to be understanding, reasonable, calm, sensitive, and prepared to give a second chance. These went with the perception that female teachers were prepared to abandon their formal positions of authority in order to create a climate of understanding and negotiation (Morrell, 1999:10).

There is a strong belief among both African boys and girls that for effective classroom control schoolboys still need to be beaten. In Morrell's study one respondent an African female, aged 17-19 years says: -

“Detention is now not that strong and since boys are not beaten the school is worse” (Morrell, 1999:7).

The inference was drawn that boys need to be beaten more often and harshly for their own good, and for teaching and learning to continue. There is also an element of fear that is associated with male teachers the way they beat learners. This became evident where students were asked, who should be responsible for classroom discipline? Many respondents believe that principals are viewed as the authority of the school and the father figure. Three respondents attest to this: -

- “The pupils are more afraid of him than others. He makes the rules in the school. Without him there would be more chaos than ever.”
- “Because he is the most dignified figure in the school and being referred to him cares for you before he even deals with you”.
- “He or she must be responsible for discipline because if he will become the friend of students they would not respect him and they will do what they like” (Morrell, 1999:11).

Though over a period of time punishment has undergone some profound changes, beatings are still common in some schools including my research site; especially male teachers and their female counterparts show a change. According to Morrell, (2001a) many teachers are unhappy about the ending of corporal punishment. They believe that it can be effective in school governance.

Since corporal punishment was banned in South Africa, many schools have ceased to use it and many others have reduced its use. Nevertheless beatings are still common in some (mostly poor, African, rural and township) schools including my research site.

2.9. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND MASCULINITY

The issue of masculinity has in the past been discussed but never really questioned by either women or men, which resulted in men being left out of the gender equation. Masculinity has been blindly accepted as something unchanging and static. Recent theoretical developments have, however, established that masculinity is socially constructed and changes over time

(Connell, 1995). Men experience their different masculinities in numerous ways based on their upbringing, culture, race and class.

How do Black African men and boys experience their masculinity? Blackness is a matter of pigmentation (Biker, 1988:48), but the social category of black men includes queer and straight black men, modern and traditional black men, professionally and unskilled, rural and urban black men. There is no “black” community except through the insertion of subject bodies into racialised structures and discourses (Steve Biko quoted by Kopano Ratele, 1998:63).

Kopano Ratele argues that biological definitions are empty and that the meaning of black men is embedded in history. Black manhood is a historical construction. The construct of black men was an effect of colonial conquest. Black men, however, understand masculinity conquest. Conquests involve power, dominance and control.

Masculinity is significantly associated with “a man’s capacity to exercise power and control” (Kaufman, 1987:145). Morrell (2001:41) concurs to the fact that the question of masculinity in South Africa is powerfully bound up with the history of the country. Racial segregation was the order of the day during the apartheid era when White male settlers by and large enjoyed stable, well paid jobs whilst African men were concentrated in the ranks of the working class.

In rural communities, masculinity is heavily influenced by tribal cultures. In asserting their masculinity, African men adopt violent, intolerant, and insensitive behaviours as a means of survival. As identity, Black masculinity

gets constructed in tension-ridden movements towards and against White hegemonic masculinity. Many memories have swirled into their consciousness, prompted by chance or name that conjured up a moment of their past (Morrell, 1998:1). This is how Black men experienced masculinity.

What is the relationship between corporal punishment and masculinity? The wide spread use of corporal punishment has undoubtedly influenced the construction of masculinity in South Africa. Since corporal punishment involves infliction of pain and is associated with violence, its use, historically promoted violent masculinities.

In schools, educators use corporal punishment to assert and demonstrate their power over learners. Historically, schools dished out a tough, often cruel, experience to pupils, which fed into violent interpersonal relations (Morrell, 1994). The use of corporal punishment is indicative of school masculinity that promotes the ability to endure punishment and pain. In gender terms, it taught boys to be tough and uncomplaining and taught girls to be in their place and to be submissive and unquestioning (Morrell, 2001:142).

School masculinities are implicated in school violence as is corporal punishment because they both, in different ways, make acceptable certain forms of violence. Harsh disciplinary regimes and authoritarian school disciplinary systems are held to fuel gender inequalities (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997).

Boy learners relate violence, toughness, hardships, ability and willingness to inflict pain and receive it, as core values of masculinity. The ability to stand

up to beatings, to “take (it) very well”, defined boys’ manliness. The ability to endure pain is linked to being masculine, being tough and uncomplaining. Boys regard violence as a way of solving problems (Morrell 2001:142). Aggressive and violent masculinities arise in schools with harsh and authoritarian school disciplinary systems (Kenway and Fitzclarence quoted in Morrell, 2001:142).

2.10. APPROACHES TO ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE

It is necessary for educators and the school management to realize that all disciplinary measures taken in schools must aim at changing the learner’s behavior positively rather than frustrating them. In this regard Bey and Turner (1996:29-30), argue that educators have to try many techniques with the understanding that some will be effective and others will not. They further argue that the most common technique in use is the “obedience approach” where learners are told to follow the rules and if they disobey, punishment is used to keep them in line. There is the approach that allows learners to reflect on their “misconduct”, explain the causes and decide how to behave without breaking the rules. In this model learners are taught “positive and negative consequences” of their behavior so that they can make choices on how to behave.

Another approach is acknowledging the learners in the act of doing something right. Educators can also use the suspension and expulsion approach that includes parents. Learners contracts in which the learner agrees not to participate in misbehavior can also be used. These provide a legal basis for the expulsion of a learner who does not conform. In order to remove corporal

punishment it is necessary to create an alternative environment where there is freedom from fear, anxiety and stress and a child can grow intellectually, develop confidence and enjoy the experience of learning (Holdstock, 1990). Porteus et al (2001) has also identified different approaches that should be used in a classroom situation, rather than using corporal punishment. Examples are: -

❖ Clear and Consistent Rules

The development of rules should be directly linked to maintaining high expectations for learners. High expectations should relate to both behaviour as well as academic excellence. Learners are more likely to strive to meet expectations and abide by rules when they sense that teachers truly believe in their potential for excellence and set rules that are consistent with this belief.

❖ Positive Reinforcement

An educator carefully observes the “life cycle” of bad behavior and identifies issues that trigger this behavior. In this way, the educator diverts bad behavior early in the lifecycle of a learner.

❖ Consistent Consequences

Consequences should be designed to teach learners that their behavior was wrong and that the choice they made was not good choice.

❖ Daily Report

The purpose of the daily report is to help the learner reflect on their bad behavior patterns and to give them a daily chance to improve. This method is useful for the children who never do their homework or are always talking.

❖ Model Good Behavior

According to Porteus (2001) it is a necessity for educators to model a good behavior. An educator who is effective at working with learners is herself a living example of good behavior and earning values. The importance of modeling good behavior is rooted in the simple fact that children learn from the role models around them.

❖ Learning Barriers and Social Challenges

Corporal punishment most often masks the “heart of the problem”. Child psychologists who study children’s behavior in schools conclude that the majority of behavioral problems in children are rooted in a practical problem faced by that child. These are often problems relating to life circumstances – learning difficulties, problems at home, victimization, and trauma, feeling of being misunderstood. By resorting to a behavioral quick fix, such as corporal punishment, we often miss our opportunity to uncover and address the “heart” of a problem.

Another way of thinking about classroom discipline is to emphasize the importance of understanding the practical problems that underlie a given child's behavior. This way of thinking focuses on appreciating behavior becomes an important resource to educator to identify problems that may otherwise be difficult to uncover and understand.

❖ **Democratic discipline**

The third way of thinking about alternatives to corporal punishment is to put a special emphasis on the importance of participation and involvement in the thinking and decision-making processes in the classroom. Some educators have become frustrated with their understanding of "democracy". They have come to understanding democracy as the freedom of children to do as they please. In fact, a democratic approach to classroom discipline emphasizes a shared responsibility in thinking; decision making; and implementation of classroom discipline.

2.11. CONCLUSION

It is true that educators are faced with many challenges in schools. Some teachers tend to look away even if learners are making serious mistakes – they ignore the mistakes and say "it's right" and act as though there is nothing that they can do. Others resort to corporal punishment in frustration even though it has been abolished. From 1996 to 2005 many teachers have lost their jobs because they did not have proper alternatives to corporal punishment.

Some teachers decided to “create” their own alternatives that were not effective and some even decided to quit the profession because of these problems/challenges. But the alternatives that Porteus et al (2001) have cited are real and show exactly what is supposed to be happening in schools in order to avoid using corporal punishment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I discuss methods and approaches used in the collection of data from respondents on how discipline is administered at Hintsho Senior Secondary School. The type of study, sensitivity of the study, research site, planning, selection of subjects, observation, School Based Documents and the limitations of the research will be discussed.

3.1. TYPE OF STUDY

In this research project a qualitative design was used to explore perceptions of learners in a secondary school because such a design is suited to obtaining rich data from a small number of respondents. This study was designed to study the perceptions of learners in only one institution, a township secondary school in Durban. According to Finch (1986) a qualitative approach to research is taken to encompass techniques, which are not statistically based, but are especially suited to small-scale analysis where the researcher attempts to get to know the social world being studied at first hand.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) define qualitative research as the study of things in their natural settings, trying to interpret ‘phenomena’ in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research also uses several methods of collecting data such as interviews and observations. The aim of using various methods is to get better results from the study. The researcher chose qualitative research in order to gain an understanding of the perceptions of students in a secondary school, Reid and Smith (1981:87-89) argue that in qualitative research the researcher attempts to

gain a first hand, “holistic” understandings of the “phenomenon”. The researcher is particularly interested in the gender dimensions of the perceptions and this requires in depth interviews.

3.2. PURPOSE AND SENSITIVITY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore and describe perceptions of learners in a secondary school on how discipline is enforced at Hintsho, with particular attention to gender. Corporal punishment is one the methods of discipline that is still used at Hintsho. The issue of corporal punishment is a sensitive one since its use is now illegal. In the course of the research, the researcher intended to interview learners about this form of discipline. Questions about corporal punishment were therefore ethically sensitive for the learners (who could theoretically lay criminal charges against teachers who had beaten them) and for the researcher (who, as a teacher in the school, would be placed in a dilemma as to what to do). These issues are in section 3.5 below.

3.3. RESEARCH SITE

Hintsho, the research site of this study, is a senior secondary school formerly under the control of the Kwa-Zulu government’s Department of Education and Culture. Now, along with all other public schools in KwaZulu-Natal, it falls under the provincial Department of Education. The school admits students from Grade 8 to Grade 12 and there are approximately 900 learners at the school. The school is exclusively African in its educator and student complement. Although there are non-isiZulu speakers from other provinces present in the school, like Xhosa, Sotho and Tswana speaking learners, they are forced to speak isiZulu

since the school uses isiZulu as the main language of instruction and all learners in the school are therefore compelled to speak isiZulu.

The school admits both boys and girls. The boys and girls range in age from 14 to 22 years old. The school has a complement of twenty-three (23) teachers, ten (10) males and thirteen (13) females. The school management team (SMT) is made up of six (6) teachers of which 2 are male and 4 are female. The principal of the school is a male and the deputy is a female. The researcher is a teacher at the school and is currently deputy principal as well. Of the four Head of Departments (HODs), one is a male and three are females.

The school is situated in section 3 of uMlazi, which is about twenty kilometres South of Durban. The school is situated close to the Dekle informal settlement. Dekle was formerly a mixed area for both Indians and Africans but because of political violence in the late 1980s and early 1990s many Indians fled the area and new African refugees who were fleeing the rural areas because of violence have now occupied Dekle. “Dekle” informal settlement is a pseudonym.

The school was established in 1991 when a group of local residents went to the offices of the Department of Education and complained about long distances that their children were travelling to other schools and also the high rate of violence and abuse that was affecting learners. The response from the Department of Education was influenced by local conditions: in the area there were buildings that had been abandoned. These had formerly been used for the in-service training of teachers but the Department had moved the centre to Newcastle because of the violence in the late 1980s in early 1990s.

In 1991 the secondary school, located in the former in-service centre, was opened to cater for local learners. When it opened it was well resourced as it took over many of the facilities and resources, which had been used for teacher training. Grade 8 was the first grade to be introduced and a new grade was established in the following years right up to Grade 12. The resources that the school had have in subsequent years been vandalised and stolen by the local residents. Today (2006) the school is very poor in its material resources.

Since the school is only half a kilometre away from the Dekle informal settlement it caters for a great many learners from this area. About 80 percent of the school's learners are from this area. The problem in this area is that unemployment and poverty are prominent characteristics. School fees are R240 per learner per year and a great many learners (about 50%) are unable to pay. As a result of this the school is very poor. Learners too, come to school with different problems, since they are exposed to poverty, violence, abuse, vandalism, etc., which makes it difficult for the school to administer proper discipline.

3.4. ACCESS AND ETHICS

Ethical issues were considered (see appendix A) when conducting this research. De Vos (1998:75) defines ethics as a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for, and behaviour expectations of, the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and learners. Therefore, it is important to follow the protocols that govern access to a research site and conduct and interaction with informants.

According to ethical considerations I was compelled to seek permission from the school principal and all respondents' parents that were going to participate in the study. This was done in writing where the detailed information about how data was going to be collected and the aim of the research was also explained. From the principal the response was very quick because it took him only a week, since he was still going to report the matter to the School Governing Body (SGB). The people who actually delayed me were the parents of learners selected for the study. Many took weeks to sign and return the consent forms that I distributed.

Learners themselves had fears, as they had never been involved in a study like this. Some learners initially declined. I had to be patient. I spoke to the learners to calm their fears and answer their questions while at the same time communicating with the parents. Eventually I obtained written consent from ten (10) learners and these became the respondents in my study. I began the process of selecting respondents and getting consent in March 2005, and only received final consent from all the parents in May 2005.

As a teacher at Hintsho I was well aware that corporal punishment was still used at the school despite government's abolishing of corporal punishment in 1996. Corporal punishment persists despite the fact that the school's disciplinary policy clearly states that teachers should not use corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Teachers are encouraged to use alternative forms of discipline. In the course of the research I knew that I would be placed in a difficult position regarding disclosures about corporal punishment. Problems did indeed surface in the interviews. Some learners were so furious about being beaten that they named

particular educators who were responsible for corporal punishment. As a researcher I was in a dilemma of not knowing what to do, whether to take further to investigate or to ignore learners' complaints.

I did not do anything about these learners' complaints since I had agreed to respect the wishes of learners who participated in the study and I also wanted to protect their anonymity. If I had taken up the matter formally with the named educators, I would have placed my learner respondents in danger of some form of retribution. I therefore decided that after I had finished this research I would sit down with the principal by virtue of my position as deputy and discuss the matter and come up with the relevant recommendations.

3.5. SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

According to Marlow (1993), sampling is necessary because we cannot include everyone in the study and the sample should be representative of the population. A sample was randomly selected by choosing participants on the basis of chance. Everybody had an equal chance of being selected though my personal knowledge of the school and the learners meant that I was more likely to choose learners that I knew and who were familiar with me.

In order to get a balanced view, ten learners were randomly selected from Grade 11. Grade 11 learners were selected because they were relatively senior students, articulate and accessible, unlike matriculants who are considered a very busy class. Moreover Grade 11 in my school is a very active and opinionated class. These boys and girls were ranging in age from between 16 to 19 years, and since all learners were African there

was no need to take race into account. From a population of 182 learners, ten learners comprising of 5 boys and 5 girls, formed the sample. A sample of ten learners was used because in the first instance it was for these learners that I had received consent from parents and secondly, because this is a small and manageable number.

I wanted my sample to reflect the gendered composition of the total population of one hundred and eighty-two (182) Grade 11 learners. The names of the learners were categorised into two groups based on gender. I found that there were one hundred boys and eighty-two girls. The percentages were worked out to find the exact number of boys and girls to be included in the research sample. The calculation showed that I needed five boys and four and half girls and so I decided to have a sample that comprised the same number of boys and girls (5).

This final sample was selected by using the simple random sampling whereby learners' names were drawn randomly. This sampling procedure is useful in that it gives each member of the population under study a chance to be selected without affecting the next population (Cohen and Manion, 2000:100). When I failed to get consent or a response from particular parents, I continued to sample randomly until I had obtained the requirements of my sample.

Grade 11 learners are problematic learners in most schools because of their deviant behaviours. Cases of misbehaviour with Grade 11 learners in my school include amongst other things, cases of bullying, assault, late coming, absenteeism; bunking classes, etc.. An explanation for the number of disciplinary infractions is that Grade 11 learners are in the penultimate year of schooling. They feel that they are nearly adults and

the boys in particular often exercise their masculinity, practise their heterosexuality and rebel against the authority of teachers. It is sometimes in the senior years of schooling that learners form gangs and engage in criminal activity. This is the case in my school. Thus most boys that have been selected were involved in cases of misbehaviour.

3.5.1. STRENGTHS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The interview is a conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee or a group of interviewees and this makes it an easy research tool to use (Guba and Lincoln, 1981).

Interviews according to Burgess (1982) are very useful in finding out what is “in and on” someone else’s’ mind. For example, the students’ perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and intentions cannot be directly observed. We also cannot observe behaviours that took place at some previous point in time and the interviews thus, come in handy, allowing interviewees to remember and recall what happened and to generate opinions on questions that are asked.

In the interviews that were carried out, the researcher not only obtained verbal responses from the respondents, but also got a chance of interacting with the interviewees. The researcher was also, as a result of her work in the school over a number of years, familiar with the general atmosphere in the whole school. During the duration of the research project, she was particularly vigilant, observing how discipline was enforced and how learners responded to the school’s disciplinary regime. Interviews are illuminating because interviewees can be asked to clarify examples whenever necessary and the interviewees can ask the

interviewer to clarify, for example if a question requires a yes/no answer, a researcher may further ask the respondent to expatiate.

As a senior teacher in the school, before getting a deputy position, I was a liaison officer. A liaison officer is tasked with taking concerns of learners to the school management team (SMT). Learners have to trust this teacher because they have to open up and discuss critical issues like a swearing teacher, a teacher who does not honour his/her periods etc. Having this position placed me in a position where I was exposed to things like trust and confidentiality amongst educators and learners. When I undertook this study I thus found myself in a situation of some advantage: I am an African, isiZulu-speaking woman, I had experience of the school and was known to learners and our culture respects someone with the above qualities. These advantages meant that learners spoke openly to me, though I have found it more easily talking about some things to girls as a “girl”, as opposed to boys.

3.5.2. WEAKNESSES OF THE INTERVIEWS

Most weaknesses of interviews arise from the fact that interviews are face-to-face encounters. This becomes more complex in a situation where the issue being studied is a sensitive one like that of corporal punishment, which though illegal, is still used by some educators. The interviews can provide problematic responses for a number of reasons. The interviewees may try to respond in such a way as to not offend or to try and please the researcher. They may also elect not to respond and remain silent.

Respondents sometimes give what they think are appropriate responses rather than sticking to honesty. It must be pointed out that the researcher

is a deputy principal, a person who has power and authority in the school, which might cause the interviewees to have that uneasiness. The majority of the interviewees started the interview shy and as the process continued they opened up. They were shy because they were not used to the interview, but they all knew me and were familiar with me as a result of classroom interactions, morning prayers, and counselling and guidance seminars. By the end of the interview, the possible danger of students being silent, coy or guarded had receded and they all were speaking freely.

A tape recorder was used when conducting interviews, which can create suspicions and uneasiness about what the motives of the researcher are, since many respondents were being interviewed for the first time. Some respondents suspected that the researcher wanted to spy on them but nevertheless interviews are time consuming and cheap especially if conducted in one institution. Even though there were some initial suspicions, I was able to put the respondents' minds at rest and I do not think that the tape-recorder ultimately "damaged" the integrity of the interviews.

3.5.3. HOW DATA WAS COLLECTED

The main objective of the study was to get the perceptions of learners about how discipline is administered. I therefore formulated interview schedules around this. I did not pilot the interview schedule because I have had many years' experience at the school to get a good sense of what the important questions are. They were developed and asked on the research day. The interviews were conducted during holidays. This was an advantage because not many teachers were at school and so learners

were accommodated in the staff-room and the interviews were conducted in the deputy's office (which is, in fact, my office!).

As the study was focusing on Grade 11 learners, the interviewer and the interviewee had no problem of communicating since English is used as the language of teaching and learning which means that no translation was necessary. Where the English of the respondents faltered, they switched to isiZulu, but this was not a problem because I am an isiZulu speaker. Each respondent took from 45 to 60 minutes to respond to all of the questions that I had prepared for the interview. I completed the interviews over a three-day period.

My attempts to gather the data were initially frustrated by the slow return of permission from learners' parents. In fact, it took three months before I got permission for/from ten learners. This delayed me and despite having planned carefully and having made prior arrangements I was compelled to interview learners during the June holidays, after they had finished their examinations. This led me to rely on their (learners) willingness to honour appointment during school holidays. Fortunately for me learners did pitch up and they were not in a rush. They were prepared to answer all the problems.

3.5.4. OBSERVATION

This research instrument afforded me the opportunity to gather "live" data in a "live" situation. The behaviour of learners was observed. This observation period started in January 2005 and lasted until the end of the semester (in June). Given my length of service at the school, I could also draw on prior experience and observation which includes seeing a change

of behaviour in the school after the use of alternatives methods of discipline were introduced in 2005.

3.5.5. SCHOOLS BASED DOCUMENTS

Hintsho, as with all public schools, has a range of official documents, which regulate school affairs and record certain developments. These include school policy (formulated in conjunction with the S.G.B); the code of conduct for teachers and learners and a punishment book which lists punishments that have been meted out. The purpose of looking into the records was to establish the disciplinary framework used by the school and to see what kinds of punishable offences were recorded in the punishment book. The punishment book is the school's legal book; it is kept in an office by the school principal. It is also the principal's duty to record the cases of misbehaviour and also the type of punishment awarded to that particular learner. Teachers do not report learners who misbehave, that is why I was unable to find reports on disciplinary measures taken against learners by teachers in the punishment book.

The punishment book contains the following information: The name of learner, the name of the parent of learner, age and gender of learner, the type of offence, details of offence committed, type of punishment and details of the person who administered the punishment. The learner's parents and educators' signatures are also to be found in the book. It should be noted, however, that this book was not a complete record of punishment used in the school as individual educators frequently used corporal punishment without making any record in the punishment book. Since corporal punishment has been abolished and it is illegal to exercise

it, it was not surprising that the punishment book made no reference to the use of corporal punishment.

A second important school source was the policy document. In this document, the learners' code of conduct is clearly indicated (see Appendix C). Offences are ranked as serious and less serious. Disciplinary steps to be applied in this school are clearly stipulated. The policy clearly states that corporal punishment is not permitted.

Other relevant documents consulted by the researcher concerned education law and policy and the South African Constitution. Through perusal of the above records I was able to get the required information and the records were useful in data analysis.

3.6. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

The main limitation of qualitative research is the lack of reliability. Since the researcher is a deputy head, some respondents may not have been truthful in their testimony because they wanted to please the researcher and only said what they thought would be acceptable. Others might have been swayed by emotions. From my side, I was aware that as a researcher I might have focused unduly on the conduct of a particular named teacher, which might have steered the interview away from more general trends.

Another common difficulty with qualitative studies is that they are not generalisable. The findings of my study cannot be generalized to represent the views of learners at Hintshe Secondary, nor can they be generalized to 'speak' about the views more broadly of learners in KwaZulu- Natal.

3.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with the type of study, research site, planning which has also included ethical issues, selection of subjects, interviews, strengths and weaknesses of the interviews, school based documents and the limitations of the study. The next chapter will present and offer an analysis of the research data (findings).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates how discipline is administered at Hintsho, a KwaZulu –Natal secondary school, in Umlazi Township. This chapter relies on the testimony of ten grade 11 learners as well as on my own observations as a teacher in the school. The interviews on which this chapter is primarily based focused on perceptions of discipline as it is maintained at the school.

The learners were asked not only for their opinions but also for examples of discipline that they had personally experienced or witnessed. The chapter also includes examination of the school's code of conduct, The study sought to describe and analyse how discipline was administered in the school, the circumstances under which learners were beaten, how learners were beaten and by whom, the gendered responses to corporal punishment and alternative forms of punishment.

These findings will be presented according to the key questions of the study, which will show how discipline is administered at the school and also the view of learners about disciplinary measures taken at the school.

The key questions are: -

1. How discipline is administered at Hintsho Secondary School?
2. What disciplinary measures are used in the school?
3. How do learners respond to these disciplinary measures?

The main aim of the researcher is to find out the perceptions of learners about how discipline is administered. Despite the fact that corporal punishment is illegal, the study also aims to examine learner experiences of corporal punishment and their response to and perception of this form of punishment.

My main finding in this research is that the school does, and especially its male educators do, use corporal punishment, although alternative forms to corporal punishment are also utilised. In so far as learner responses are concerned, the study finds that learners are divided; some favour the use of corporal punishment as a means of enforcing proper discipline while other learners are totally against it. Those who favour corporal punishment tend to come from homes in which it is still practised.

4.2. CULTURE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Learners interviewed looked at discipline from a range of different perspectives. Many endorsed the school's use of corporal punishment believing that this practice enforces discipline and maintains a culture of learning. Girls were in favour of corporal punishment, particularly as they saw it as a force to contain or control the boys.

Thembi, 16 years, "teachers must continue beating us especially boys. They don't respect."

Zola, 18 years, "culture of learning is not good at school. Boys play while teachers teach."

Dudu, 19 years, “everyday after break we have to wait for boys, they always come late in class. Therefore culture of learning is bad.”

Thola, 18 years, “boys are totally not disciplined in this school. We are always told not to go out during break but they (boys) use “upotsho” (meaning a privately made exit). This place is also used as an entrance if learners are late or if they want to leave the school early.”

Zanele, 18 years, “teachers are doing their work but learners misbehave. Last year (2005) I saw a grade 12 learner coming to school to write examination wearing a T/shirt written “fuck maths”, this was embarrassing and proved that the culture of learning has not been restored.”

Some boys also supported the use of corporal punishment and acknowledged that other forms of discipline were not effective.

Joe, 18 years, “to bring back culture of teaching and learning, corporal punishment should be used rather than alternative forms because we (boys) don’t care about them (alternatives).”

But some boys were opposed to corporal punishment even when they admitted that discipline was a problem at the school and that their own behaviour was a cause of the problem. In fact, some of the boys believe that corporal punishment has itself contributed to the absence of a good learning environment.

Zeff, 19 years, “ya (meaning yes), sometimes we do wrong at school, but I don’t like corporal punishment, I also see the culture of teaching and learning in the school.”

Brian, 19 years;” Culture of learning has not been restored because as boys we come late; we steal and sometimes even leave school early. I think teachers who beat us have created this situation.”

A third kind of response either asserts that there isn’t a problem at the school (other than the continued use of corporal punishment) and/or that disciplinary problems require imaginative solutions, including the use of prescribed alternatives forms of discipline.

Mpilo, 17years, “everything is ok at school and teachers must stop beating us.”

Semi 16 years, “for the school to bring back culture of learning and teaching, other forms of discipline can be used.”

What the testimony of the learners indicates is that corporal punishment appears still to be used and that some support its use while others oppose it.

In my experience the school’s teachers themselves are also divided in so far as corporal punishment is concerned. Some teachers especially females now abstain from beating learners. Yet others are complaining that the abolition of corporal punishment has led to the lack of discipline in the school. Teachers in this latter category are inclined still to use corporal punishment.

4.2.1. THE CODE OF CONDUCT

According to the code of conduct of the school, educators will in the course of their duty correct minor infractions of behaviour or performance and this usually takes the form of informal reprimands or corrective instructions.

- Where this proves ineffective or if more serious action is warranted, the case may be referred to the principal's office.
- Depending on the seriousness of the transgression like sexual harassment, drug abuse, the office may institute one of the following procedures: -
 - Reprimand the learners.
 - Call the parents or guardian of the learner for discussion and resolution of the issue.

Every year in February all learners are given a copy of the school's code of conduct. My school's code of conduct stipulates expected learners behaviour generally, and it doesn't say anything about the disciplinary measures to be taken when the code is violated. The code is silent about 'gender'.

4.2.2. LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

When respondents were asked about the awareness of the code of conduct, all of them indicated a familiarity with and a general

understanding of the code of conduct. Yet in some areas there was an absence of content familiarity and neglect by both learners and educators. The levels of knowledge by learners did not reflect any obvious gender bias.

Mpilo 17 years, who was totally against the use of corporal punishment said; “why teachers continue to beat us? The code of conduct of the school does not permit them. I want them (teachers) to call my parents.”

Brian 19 years; “code of conduct says we must be taken to the office; but my teacher has never referred me to the office and simple punishes”.

Zeff 19 years; “as much as I don’t like corporal punishment but I don’t want my parents to come to school.”

Zanele 18 years; “my parents beat more than teachers do, I better be punished at school.”

Dudu 19 years; “every year in February the principal give us a code of conduct, it does not say we must be beaten but we fear our teachers and take punishment.”

Thola 18 years; “I have never been punished at school because I always do well. But the code of conduct says nothing about corporal punishment.”

Zola 18 years; “even if we know the code of conduct; but we allow teachers to beat us because we want to learn.”

Thembi 16 years, “I know what the code of conduct says, but there is nothing I can do. I fear my teachers especially my biology teacher.”

Joe 18 years; “we clean the toilets but its not stated in the code of conduct.”

Semi 16 years, “teachers must follow the procedure and call my parents.”

Virtually all learners were aware that corporal punishment was not included in the code of conduct and similarly were aware that teachers who were still using corporal punishment were at odds with the code of conduct. Learners also highlighted the failure of the school to adhere to the process of consulting parents in cases of serious transgression. Educators do not follow this procedure but simply give corporal punishment to learners.

4.3. RESPONSES TO ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE

Discipline forms other than corporal punishment are used at the school. These forms of discipline are not illegal and are mostly used by teachers and are recommended as a correct measure to discipline a child. But these forms of punishment do not have a uniformly positive effect on the school. Learners identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of these measures.

Some see little deterrent effect in alternative disciplinary measures like gardening and cleaning.

Brian 19 years, “I like to go outside the classroom to do manual task, I am used to it.”

Mpilo 17 years; “I work in the garden at home; so working in the school garden does not give me a problem.”

Thola 18 years; “as long as it is work for me it does not matter I am used to cleaning even at home.”

Others are suspicious of these forms of punishment believing that it is either a sign of teacher laziness or of gender weakness.

Dudu 19 years; “some learners do not respect teachers because they want to move out of the classroom.”

Semi 16 years; “females teachers give us light work like picking papers.”

Thembi 16 years; “boys do not respect female teachers and they are happy when told to do cleaning.”

Yet a minority clearly see these manual chores as a deterrent. Zeff, a 19-year-old boy, put it simply: “I do not like to clean toilets.”

Responses of learners show that most learners do not fear cleaning as much as they do not perceive it as relevant punishment for learners. This mean the school ends up not having proper discipline to control the school and teachers resort to corporal punishment.

4.3.1. GENDER PERCEPTIONS OF PUNISHMENT

Learners believe that there are gender differences in the way that teachers dispense punishment. By and large, there is agreement that male teachers are harsher and girls are dealt with less severely.

Mpilo, 17 years says, “male teachers beat harder and harsher than female teachers do.”

Zeff 19 years; “girls get lesser punishment than boys, why?”

Responding to the question of different treatment between boys and girls regarding punishment, all respondents responded by saying “yes”. Some teachers have been highlighted like Mr Dlamini (a pseudonym), the Biology teacher. This is what respondents say: -

Thembi, 16 years; “my parents beat me at home, but Mr Dlamini will beat you like a man”.

Brian, 19 years; “I am not against corporal punishment, but my B.E. teacher, simply touches the girls with a stick and when coming to boys will beat as if he is hitting a snake”.

Semi, 16 years; “when beaten by a female teacher you don’t even feel the pain, they don’t beat with anger”.

Zanele, 18 years; “I support the use of corporal punishment because teachers beat us little on palm of our hands. Boys should be beaten hard, they don’t respect”.

Thola, 18 years; “I have never been beaten at school but its good for teachers to punish boys, they do not listen if Miss Kubheka, Maths teacher teaches, they talk”.

Dudu, 19 years; “I like my History teacher, she speaks soft and I understand her subject.”

The observation of gender differences in the use of punishment produces different responses from the male and female educators. For the most part boys object to what they consider to be pro-girl discrimination. On the other hand, many girls favour the strong use of corporal punishment on boys; presumably because they believe that they either deserve it or that they ‘can take it’. This shows that learners do not have exactly the same views about punishment and reflects gender tensions within the school environment between male and female learners. Levels of harassment and bullying may explain these tensions identified in the Gender Equity Task Team report in 1997 (Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez, 1997).

On the other hand there was unanimous concern expressed about Mr Dlamini who beats everyone the same whether boy or girl. His approach to punishment was condemned as being too harsh even though some of the boys justified his use of corporal punishment by referring to constructions of masculinity – he beats ‘like a man’.

4.4. CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH LEARNERS WERE BEATEN

8 of the 10 learners interviewed reported having been beaten at school. The 'offences' for which they were beaten differed.

Zola, 18 years; "I knew the answer and my hand was not up, and my History teacher pointed at me and gave her the correct answer and she asked me: 'why my hand was not up?' I was beaten."

Dudu, 19 years; "I always do well but I was beaten for telling my friend the answer".

Zanele, 18 years; "I was beaten for not participating in class activity."

Mpilo, 17 years, "I was punished for talking in class whilst the teacher was not in."

Zeff, 19 years; "I was caught smoking by a male teacher behind boys' toilet and severely punished."

Brian, 19 years; "I have a girl friend in the school, my class teacher Mr Dlamini saw us talking after school, and I was beaten".

Semi, 16 years, "I was beaten for late coming".

The range of offences is worrying. Some of the offences (for example Brian's) happened after hours in a context that did not threaten the learning and teaching environment of the school in any way. It could be argued that the teacher had no jurisdiction in this case. The other offences, which received corporal punishment, included disrupting or talking in class and arriving late. In a study conducted by Morrell (2001) in greater Durban in 1998 these were found to be the two most common offences for which African students were punished.

4.5. HOW LEARNERS WERE BEATEN AND BY WHOM

According to the respondents that have been beaten, they were severely beaten especially and mostly by male educators, and even the principal of the school who is also a male educator. Respondents also highlighted that some female educators still beat learners but not as fiercely as males do. They also complained about the intensity of the beating inflicted by male teachers: it is "merciless".

Here are some responses to beatings by girls: -

Thembi, 16 years; "I like punishment, it is quick and you are punished in class, where there are learners you mostly know and there are no fears. After getting corporal punishment you can continue with your learning".

Zola, 18 years; "we subject ourselves to corporal punishment because we don't want to move outside the classroom whilst the teacher is busy teaching. ... It's been highlighted by many girls that if you refuse to be beaten a teacher will take you out of the classroom."

Dudu, 19 years; “I always do best in those subjects taught by male because my Biology teacher, Mr Dlamini, will beat you like a man”.

Thola, 18 years; “I have been passing all subject, I have never been punished at school. ... teachers must continue beating the boys their behaviour is bad in the school. ... They come late and absent themselves or even leave before time”.

The girls noted that the failure of teachers to beat often unleashed male violence against female learners. Thola said “But instead boys beat us”. She explained that at times when subjects were being discussed in class, girls dominated. They provided most of the answers. When this happened, she said, “the boys will just beat you in front of other learners so as to make them feel inferior and keep quiet”. Her friend, Thola, confirmed this; “boys beat us too even out side the classroom in the playground, therefore teachers should continue to beat the boys even though corporal punishment is abolished because of their bad behaviour.

The literature suggests that boys trying to assert their superiority over girls may dominate the relationship between boys and girls. They do this by using physical force, by excluding girls from certain activities and areas and by trying to confine girls to the “private sphere” (Swain, 2003).

Morrell (2001) concurs with this when he says that where African patriarchy remains in place, constructions of masculinity amongst African men legitimate the male dominance of space and of their control of/over women. Men dominated public space and decision-making. This arrangement is reflected in my school where boys dominate inside and

outside the classroom and maintain and signify their power by beating girls.

Dudu, Zanele and Thola are either never or are only seldom beaten but they all supported the use of corporal punishment. These girls abide by the rules of the school and do well academically. They ascribe their good behaviour and performance to the threat of corporal punishment.

Zanele, 18 years, added that, “if teachers beat them (meaning learners), they do well”. The girls believe that corporal punishment is good for boys too, although they say, “boys respect only male educators who use corporal punishment”. They do not respect female teachers, and they are disrespectful in the classroom”.

According to what the girls think, boys should be beaten severely as they believe that this will prevent them (the boys) from making the (the girls) feel inferior in the classrooms and prevent them from dominating space in the playground. The girls’ perceptions are bolstered by the fact that boys disturb lessons in the classroom if a female teacher is teaching since they don’t fear them.

It is likely, therefore, that girls feel positive about corporal punishment because they think that it is the only method that will force boys co-operate since they fear to be beaten by male teachers.

In summary, the girls support disciplinary methods that inspire fear in the boys because they believe that it is only fear that will control the aggression school boys towards them.

4.6. BOYS' RESPONSES TO BEATINGS

Generally, most boys have been beaten although they are against corporal punishment. Out of the five boys interviewed only one had not been beaten in the recent period (March to May 2006). Here are some responses by the boys: -

Joe, 18 years, is the only boy who has never been beaten, but he complained that, "boys get more and tougher punishment than girls". He further added, "boys don't want to be beaten that is why they fight back to teachers".

Mpilo, 17 years, "some teachers are caning us badly in this school. I think this is why many boys become dropouts".

Zeff, 19 years, "teachers hit even when you have made no mistake ...(for example) ... if one child has made noise in class, then the whole class is caned and they (teachers) do not listen to any of our complaints".

Brian, 19 years, "I hate to be beaten".

Semi, 16 years, "I came late with the girls, but I was given severe punishment than girls".

When you look at boys' perceptions, the boys complained about the manner in which boys are beaten and the boys are against these beatings. Joe and Semi further make the comparisons that corporal punishment is gender biased, that boys are beaten more than girls and hence are being discriminated against.

My finding in so far as boys' responses were concerned, is that boys oppose the use of corporal punishment. In one extreme case, it was reported that a boy hit a teacher openly on the school veranda after he was beaten.

4.7. ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF PUNISHMENT

Since the abolition of corporal punishment in 1996, the school has tried to ensure that alternative means of discipline are used. These alternatives were not created by the Department of Education, but each and every school has created its own instruments of discipline. Alternatives included things like: - detention, calling in of parents, giving menial task, suspension for a week or two depending on the nature of the offence.

Many of these alternatives were and are not suitable in African schools especially in the townships. Firstly in the case of detention, teachers in the townships are not inclined to use this because of their own personal safety. Reasons, being, when you as a subject teacher detain a learner you are also supposed to remain with the learner. The communities in which schools are built are often not safe. For example Hintsho, my research site, is closely situated to the informal settlement, the area that is poverty-stricken, with a high rate of unemployment and crime.

When the bell rings at 14h30 for everybody to go home, you see gangs moving around the school. These gangs use "upotsho" (private points of entrance and exit) made by learners to intrude the school. The danger that these gangs pose causes teachers and learners alike to leave the school

when the bell rings. So detention is out of question and learners themselves are aware of that.

I personally, as an educator, feel very vulnerable since the school environment is not safe after hours and sometimes during teaching hours. For example one day armed robbers inside the school in broad daylight attacked the principal and me. They took all our valuables like, earrings, wristwatch and even the wedding rings. The principal was robbed off, his car keys and his expensive watch. Learners are constantly robbed off, their cell phones; so one cannot remain behind after everybody has left.

Another alternative used is subjecting learners to menial tasks. This is not much of a deterrent because many boys are used to hard work. They don't fear this punishment and simply regard it as a convenient chore. The girl respondents described how boys who were given this type of punishment disturbed the whole school. When executing these tasks such as digging they sing raucous songs as if they are enjoying the activity.

Other forms of menial activity include cleaning the school premises, (toilets, verandas and cleaning windows). Since the school does not have a general cleaner, it takes advantage of these learners, who misbehave to perform these chores.

4.8. GIRLS' RESPONSES TO ALTERNATIVES

In most African families, cleaning is compulsory for children. Girls have a particularly heavy burden of domestic duties to perform and frequently they do these with or for their mothers. The number of chores that some girls do has been increased by HIV/AIDS since the epidemic has killed

many African women who in some cases will be mothers and/or female siblings. Cleaning is not, therefore, considered an onerous task for girls except with the exception of the very few learners who do not perform chores at home. Some learners come from wealthy families and have not been exposed to cleaning. Some come from former model C schools where cleaning has been done by employees so they don't want to clean.

Out of five (5) girls that were interviewed, three (3); supported the use of cleaning as an alternative form of punishment. Two (2) of the girls have never performed chores thus they were totally against cleaning at school and wanted the school to come up with a different alternative form of punishment.

Here are some of the girls' responses: -

Thembi, 16 years, "I am very happy when teachers say we must clean the school."

Dudu, 19 years, concurs with Thembi by saying, "I am used to cleaning; even the toilets it does not matter to me."

Zanele, 18 years, "I fear to be beaten, cleaning is OK, even at home I clean."

Zola, 18 years, "I don't like cleaning the school. I have come to school to learn." Zola further substantiated that, "this cleaning is a form of abuse; the school must employ '**Anties**' (general cleaners)". This girl was from a former model C school so she was aware of the cleaners in the school.

Thola, 18 years,” the school must call our parents, and not force us to do cleaning.”

4.9. BOYS’ RESPONSES TO ALTERNATIVES

In most African families chores are regarded as the duty of girls, thus boys are faced with a problem when they are expected to clean. In most African families especially in the townships boys are not expected to help with domestic work. They therefore have time on their hands and they loiter around the street throughout the day and that is why many boys fall into drugs. When I was conducting this research project I discovered that some grade eleven boys do not do washing for themselves. Sisters (even younger sisters) or mothers do their washing. So a stereotype about who does what in African families especially in the townships still prevails.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that all five boys that I interviewed were against cleaning as an alternative form of discipline. They reject cleaning because they regard it as the girls’ work.

Here are some responses by boys: -

Zeff, 19 years; “I have never performed duties in my home, that are girls’ duties. I have never washed a toilet in my life, so I will never do it at school.”

Mpilo, 17 years; ”I hate cleaning, and I don’t clean at home, so why at school?”

Brian, 19 years; “I don’t want to clean, it is even worse when I am expected to clean the toilets.”

Joe, 18 years; “Windows are OK; but I hate doing something else.”

A major alternative to menial chores is calling parents in. But there are obstacles to implementing this alternative. Most learners, particularly boys, don’t want them to be called to come to school and they obstruct the use of this method of discipline.

Semi, a 16-year-old boy said: ”When I am given a letter to call my parents, I don’t give it to them.” In the period that I have served in this school, I have witnessed learners bringing false parents to the school. The learner will bring an adult who is not his or her parent and present this adult or sometimes a youth member of the community **as** the parent to the school authorities. This is particularly common when serious offences have been committed. The false parent then shields the learner from the wrath and censure of the actual parents who remain in ignorance of developments at school.

The Department of Education makes it obligatory to consult parents in serious cases but this policy has serious limitations and has in my school proven to be ineffective as a replacement for corporal punishment.

In general it appears as though learners do not support the alternative forms of discipline that have been introduced at Hintsho and these forms are therefore not effective. Using only cleaning and menial labour as an alternative does not serve a purpose as a corrective disciplinary measure, because learners are against it. Other forms like those highlighted by Porteus, Vally and Ruth (2001), and reviewed in Chapter 2 (section 2.10) have never been adopted.

4.10. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND GENDER

The gendered view of corporal punishment that boys should be beaten and girls should not be beaten can be traced to the European Education systems that dispensed punishment along gender differentiated lines. The same view was held in the colonial schools in South Africa. But in schools established under the Bantu Education Act (1953) for Africans, the gender differentiation did not hold so strong and girls were frequently beaten. African girls were socialised to be passive and disciplined, and were ultimately more compliant with school rules.

After 1996 when corporal punishment was abolished, the Department of Education came up with alternative forms which were very liked by girls since, according to African culture girls perform certain roles like: - cleaning, cooking, etc. This made them (girls) to conform with the school as far as cleaning alternative was concerned. On the other side boys were against performing certain duties like cleaning as cleaning was considered to be girls' work. Instead they were in favour of doing things like digging a hole as part of hard labour that was showing manhood, this was shown by the raucous songs they sing when doing this job.

In my findings I also acknowledge that male teachers were stricter and more severe as they were less tolerant and less reasonable. Reasons given to explain the gender differences attributed to male teachers a set of gender specific behaviours as unbending, unfeeling, violent, competitive and unsympathetic.

Morrell (1999) found that female teachers were held to understand, reasoning, calm, sensitive and prepared to give a second chance. These went with the perceptions that female teachers were prepared to abandon their formal position of authority in order to create a climate of understanding and negotiation (Morrell, 1999:10)

This concurs with what I have discovered in my research site where by males and females behave in a manner that has been explained above and all respondents that female teachers are better and more understanding than males have also highlighted it.

4.11. CONCLUSION

This chapter has described and analysed the results of interviews I conducted with learners at Hintsho school. These interviews revealed the gendered perceptions of learners in so far as discipline is concerned.

These confirmed that some teachers (especially males) still practised corporal punishment in order to enforce discipline and keep order. Learners also highlighted “hard labour” which was used as a form of punishment and some learners were against it as an alternative, especially the cleaning of toilets.

Teachers need to change this system of hard labour and come up with relevant alternatives, as it will be explained in the next chapter. Thus, they (learners) highlighted that the school should implement relevant alternative forms that will remedy the situation.

This may not be an easy task since boys and girls do not share the same view about what works and what does not work and there seems to be quite high levels of gender competition and suspicion between male and female learners at the school. In the next chapter, I will further discuss the question of discipline and how it might be better regulated in the future.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the study, draws conclusions that emerged from the findings and gives recommendations in response to the conclusions.

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter one set the scene of the study. It described the background of the study, the research questions and its' setting. Chapter two reviewed literature relevant to the issues of gender and punishment. Key areas reviewed include current disciplinary legislation on corporal punishment, finally theory on issues of discipline. Chapter three described the research methodology. The study utilized a qualitative study approach. It also described the data collecting methods namely interviews, observations and school based documents. Chapter four presented and analysed the data collected. Conclusions are drawn from the responses of learners.

5.3. FINDINGS

This study found that, first and foremost, corporal punishment is still commonly used. While the school formally follows national legislation that prohibits the use of corporal punishment and has a code of conduct that explicitly identifies corporal punishment as illegal, some educators still resort to beating learners. In some cases, educators use corporal punishment a lot while in others, it is used seldom and sparingly and some staff do not to use it at all.

A number of learners accept the use of corporal punishment as the most effective form of punishment that is still used even by their parents. There is some but not universal support for corporal punishment. It seems that much of this support comes from girls who believe that the only way to 'control' boys is to beat them. They seem to believe that without corporal punishment they (the girls) are more vulnerable to the predation of boys. On the other hand, most boys reject the use of corporal and identify some educators as being particularly harsh in the way they inflict beatings.

Learners attest to the existence of alternatives to corporal punishment such as cleaning, giving menial tasks and calling in parents. These methods are sometimes used in the school. Not all of these alternatives are well received by learners. Both boys and girls seem frightened by the prospect of bringing their parents to school. Boys dislike cleaning either because it offends their sense of what appropriate punishment is (they consider cleaning to be 'girls' work) but in some cases they are nonchalant about cleaning since it does not tax them.

In general, there is no agreement about what punishment or form of discipline works. Despite the existence of a code of conduct there is in fact no commitment to ending corporal punishment or a strategy that has been put in place by the school which prevents educators from using corporal punishment or offers effective alternatives. The code of conduct is largely a dead letter and is overlooked by many teachers especially males.

Learners (male and female) have more fears of male teachers than female teachers and since fear seems to underpin notions of respect and

obedience, discipline in the school is not balanced. Learners fear and respect only those who hit them the most and in most cases these are male teachers.

Most learners believe that the most effective way of disciplining is to call the parents. Some, however, resent this method and prefer corporal punishment since their parents beat them mercilessly. In gender terms boys respect male educators because they think male educators have power over them by virtue of being male and ignore female teachers since single mothers bring up most of them.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1. Whilst teaching is part of the task description of the teachers; cognisance must be taken of the meaningful role the learners need to play in society. Learners must therefore be educated holistically. This includes disciplining the learner so that he or she learns self-control. Teachers need to change their mindset regarding discipline because it is only through self-control can a learner attain self-actualisation.

5.4.2. In response to the changes that schools are constantly bombarded with; all role-players can meet these challenges by empowering themselves. Role-players taking the initiative to study; staff development programs being arranged by the SMT or workshops being organised by the various role-players, can do this. A needs analysis must precede this. In this way certain emerging issues arising from data analysis can be addressed. Improving their counselling skills can assist the educators. In this way they will feel more competent to handle indiscipline arising out of behaviour problems.

The teachers and SMT can also be workshopped on alternatives to corporal punishment and co-operative discipline. This will prevent the need to use corporal punishment. Parents can also learn to improve their parenting skills so that they can become co-operative partners in helping the school reduce indiscipline. The fact that most parents when called to school, opt for corporal punishment to be used on their children, is indicative of the fact that they do not understand the implications of using corporal punishment at school and at home.

The difficulty that parents have of making arrangements with their employers limits their ability to participate in the school activities and affairs of their children. Recognising this, extra efforts should be made by SGB to encourage their participation. The Representative Council of Learners (RCL) and prefects can learn leadership and assertive skills. This will help them support the teachers in maintaining discipline in the school as well as inside the classrooms.

5.4.3. Whilst the school has a school code of conduct, findings suggest that for this document to become a working document it must be owned by all role-players. There is a need for this document to be formulated in a collaborative manner by the community, the school representative council of learners and teachers. In this way stakeholders become morally bound to implement the school code of conduct.

Although this is going to be a mammoth task but the agency produced with all the stakeholders will create the energy, which is required to find solutions around this challenge. Having a school code of conduct, which has been collaboratively formulated, will also help maintain consistency

in the strategies employed by all educators to correct indiscipline. Periodic review of the school code of conduct will also help incorporate new strategies in response to change.

5.4.4. The involvement of sister departments like the psychological services, South African police, and child protection unit is recommended. The expertise that will be shared with the mentioned structures will assist in providing a broader perspective to the community on issues of discipline. Their involvement will not only assist the school but also benefit the entire community because issues of discipline in schools are an extension of discipline at home and in the community.

Awareness campaign on children's right is recommended for the school. This campaign will address issues that affect children like abuse cases (of which the use of corporal punishment is regarded as physical abuse) and right to education. Cases of violence will also be addressed as the inflicting of pain is regarded as violence. This will assist learners in knowing their rights, fighting for their rights and stand for their rights.

5.4.5. Public awareness campaigns are important; most learners' felt that "properly administered corporal punishment" has no negative effect because even their parents are still beating them. There is a need therefore, for the government to initiate public awareness campaigns to disseminate information on corporal punishment as violence and a violent method of socialising children in school.

The campaign should advocate the use of non-violent methods of disciplining children as an alternative to corporal punishment in school. Sufficient information need to be supplied, campaigns aimed at increasing awareness of the harmful effects of corporal punishment and available

alternatives be stepped up. These should be public education campaigns aimed at raising awareness not only among teachers but also to learners and the community at large.

5.4.6. There is a need for listening from teachers. Some learners have complained that teachers do not listen to their problems. It is important for teachers to find out the problems that different learners have which sometimes make them misbehave. Children come from a diversity of social environments and are bound to have varied problems. Talking to them will elucidate the problems they encounter in their environment and ways could be forged to help such learners rather than mere subjection to corporal punishment.

5.5.6. I personally think that, this is also a challenge to government itself. For example when making laws they should also consider the diversity of cultures. Like if you visit the township any (African) beating is permissible in all households as opposed to white suburbs. I have recently moved to a white area. For the first time in my life I have heard a five (5) year old boy telling my son that, he has been on detention for a week, because of bad behaviour. Such a story would be very unusual in the townships and would be regarded as contrary to African culture. For wrong doing a child is beaten as early as two years and if your child is not beaten he or she is considered a spoiled brat.

Secondly, African teachers and learners have to align themselves with government policies, especially on the use of corporal punishment because it has negative consequences for both parties i.e. a teacher who continues using it will end up in jail and learners become rude and violent and hit back at teachers. They take violence as a legitimate means of

solving a problem and as Strauss shows, this lays the foundation for violence later on in their adult lives and in the lives of their children and spouses (Strauss, 1994). Further more African families need to be conscientised about the use of corporal punishment because parents still use it as a first line tactic of discipline.

5.5. CONCLUSION

Despite being a small-scale study, it does demonstrate two important issues. First, is that corporal punishment has been abolished long time ago but the study shows that its still being used by educators and learners themselves if they have done something wrong they still chose to be beaten by educators because they fear their parents. Secondly, is that not all teachers use corporal punishment. This should be taken as a hopeful sign of change. The challenge is to encourage male teachers who seem to use corporal punishment more often and more fiercely, to resist from beating children and, at the same time to develop more humane forms of discipline in family contexts. Teachers are educated and knowledgeable people, thus they are powerful agents of change in so far as promoting the constitution of the country.

Finally I have also found out that girls are still supporting the beating of the boys because of their bad behaviour they are showing at school. Sometimes proper teaching and learning is not effective in classrooms because of boys. Although boys on their side were not happy about the beatings since they considered it as more severe to them than the girls.

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APPENDIX A

Additional Ethical Consideration

A school is obligated to create a disciplined learning environment. In the past one of the major instruments used for discipline was corporal punishment. This is no longer permitted but in course of the study learners were likely to inform me that it was still being used in the school. My professional role as an educator required me to prevent the use of corporal punishment whereas my task as a researcher was to gather data. The ethical dilemma was between gathering the data, protecting the confidential status of the interviews and the interests of the learners and reporting instances of the use of corporal punishment to the principal, which was part of my obligation as an educator.

My paramount concern was to protect the interviewees from victimization. I therefore discussed with the learners what they wanted me to do and ultimately I was bound by their wishes. There was a possibility that if learners divulged cases of corporal punishment in the school this could lead to their victimization by those teachers who still use corporal punishment.

The learners required that I do not raise issues of corporal punishment with either the principal or the teachers concerned. As a result of my ethical responsibility to the learners I therefore did not report any of the cases that they told me to anybody.

Okunye Okubalulekile Kwinqubomgomo Yesikole

Isikole siphokelekile ukwakha usikompilo oluzovumela ukufunda nokufundiseka okuyiko. Eminyakeni eyedlule lolu sikompilo lwaluphoqwa ngenduku ezikoleni, manje lokhu akusavumelekile ngokomthetho wezwe. Umsebenzi wami njengothisha udinga ngikuvimbele ukusetshenziswa kwenduku esikoleni, kanti ucwaningo lwami ludinga ngiqoqe lonke ulwazi.

Ingqinamba engizobhekana nayo izoba sekuqoqeni ulwazi ngocwaningo nasekuvikeleni okuyimfihlo kubafundi, intando yabafundi ngokuba ngibike ukusetshenziswa kwenduku ku-thishanhloko okungumsebenzi wami njengothisha.

Okubaluleke kakhulu ukuvikela abayingxenywe yocwaningo ukuba bangahlukumezeki, ngiyoxoxisana nabafundi ngabafisa ngikwenze, ngiyophokeleka ukuba ingénue ngendlela abafisa ngayo. Isizathu sokuthatha isinyathelo esingenhla yingenxa yokuthi, ukubikwa ngokusetshenziswa kwenduku kuyokwenza ukuba abafundi bahlukumezeke kulabo thisha abasasebenzisa induku. Uma abafundi bengivumela ukuthi udaba lwenduku angiludlulise, ngiyoxoxisana nothisha engxenywe labo abasaqhubeka nokusebenzisa induku, ngibachazele nangemiphumela engemihle yokuqhubeka nokusebenzisa induku nakuba isivaliwe.

Appendix B

Research Questions

1. How do learners experience disciplinary measures at the school?
2. How is discipline exercised at Hintsho Senior Secondary School?
3. Is punishment practised differently between boys and girls?
4. Are there any connections between home and school discipline?
5. What do teachers use as alternatives to corporal punishment?
6. Identify types of punishment used in your school?
7. As a learner how do you respond to punishment?

Appendix C

The code of conduct

According to the code of conduct of the school, educators will in the course of their duty correct minor infractions of behaviours or performance and this usually takes the form of informal reprimands or corrective instructions: -

Where this proves ineffective or if more serious action is warranted, the case may be referred to the principal's office.

Depending on the seriousness of the transgression like sexual harassment, drug abuse, the office may institute one of the following procedures: -

- Reprimand the learners
- Call the parents or guardian of the learner for discussion and resolution of the issue

APPENDIX D.

University of KwaZulu- Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag x03
ASHWOOD
3605
19 September 2005

The Principal
Zwelihle S.S. School
P.O.Box 72136
Mobeni
4060

Sir

LETTER OF REQUEST

I, **M.C. Msani (951056602)** student at the above-mentioned institution wish to make a request to conduct a research among learners in your institution. I am a masters student tasked to research on school discipline. My specific research project will focus on the experiences of school discipline among grade 11 learners and the way they perceive gender differences in the school.

I will take upon myself to respect local customs and school image and also promise to give copies of all field reports on request by the school.

Yours faithfully

M.C. Msani (.....)

.....
RETURN CONSENT SLIP

.....Principal of.....

.....does/ does not consent, to the above in my institution

.....

APPENDIX D

University of KwaZulu Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag x 03
ASHWOOD
3605
19 September 2005

Dear Parent /Guardian

I am Mrs. Msani, the educator at Zwelihle S.S. School. I am presently a student at the University of KwaZulu Natal doing my Masters Degree. I am conducting a study of school discipline and the gendered perceptions of learners, and to find out if corporal punishment is one of the disciplinary measures. Ten learners have been selected and your child is one of them. I, therefore ask for your permission as a parent to work with your child.

To protect the autonomy of the child, pseudonym will be used, and the child will be referred to as a respondent.

Yours faithfully

M.C. Msani (.....) contact 0829714542

Supervisor...Prof. Morrell contact 2601024/2601127

RETURN CONSENT SLIP

I.....parent of.....does/does not give
permission to the above request.

.....

Declaration by Participant

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of Participant..... Date.....