

Perceived Effectiveness of Students' Punishment by Teachers in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Anti-social behaviors among Nigerian in-school adolescents continue to increase in an alarming rate. This study assessed teachers' perceived effectiveness of punishment on student by in Osun State, Nigeria. Participants' age and years of teaching experience were examined. The research design employed in this study was survey with a population of 200 teachers as the participants. For data collection, a questionnaire designed by the researcher was administered. Percentage, t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze the two postulated null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. Results showed that teachers in Osun State perceived punishment on students as highly effective; no statistical difference was found in the participants responses based on age and years of teaching experience. It was recommended that teachers should be aware of the positive ways of executing punishment for it to be effective by attending trainings, talk shows, seminars, and workshops.

Keywords: students, punishment, teachers, Osun, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION ~ The increasing rate of anti-social behaviors in schools, particularly among Nigerian in-school adolescents is alarming. It has become a common phenomenon to read, hear or witness deviant behaviors among secondary school students, such as lying, stealing, fighting, promiscuity, bullying, truancy, alcoholism, and lack of respect for elders among others. Recently, these acts of indiscipline among in-school adolescents have become the concern of parents, teachers and other people in the society as the problem gets more serious by years. Therefore, many school authorities have developed different ways of giving discipline or punishment to students.

Indiscipline and discipline are like sides of the same coin with one being the opposite of the other. Indiscipline is when an individual is not ready or lacks the ability to conform to societal rules and regulations (Orhungur, 2003). Thus, indiscipline in schools can be inferred as students' unwillingness or inability to act in line with the school rules. Students have in many ways violated school rules by playing truancy, tardiness, stealing, fighting, bullying, gambling, assaulting, engaging in cultism, just to mention a few (Zubaida, 2009; Kaburu, 2006).

Indiscipline is classified into (i) acts of disobedience that alter the classroom environment; (ii) disobedience activities that trigger quarrels among students; (iii) acts of disobedience that cause discords among teachers and students. According to Amado and Freire (2009), these categories are listed in the order of frequency i.e. the frequency of the third is more than the second and the first. Contextually, act of delinquency is not to disrupt peace or go against rules and regulations, delinquents engage in the act for their own sanity (Kiprop, 2012). Sadly, indiscipline appears to be the norm among students in Nigeria and there could be a strong link to the environment. In many homes, parents are in search of greener pasture that they lack in monitoring and guiding these adolescents, resulting in them engaging in substance use, succumbing to peer pressure, finding solace in social media, and these acts constitute indiscipline (Gutuza & Mapoliza, 2015).

In addition to parents neglecting their responsibilities of enforcing discipline on their children (Madziyire, 2010), the society is also not helping. Citizens are reflections of what the society is and vice-versa (Kiprop, 2012). According to Sarumi and Okoji (2010), the society is not showcasing discipline to the youths; many teachers and school administrators are not disciplined and they are whom those the students are imitating as role models. A teacher that breaks school rules and regulations is only teaching the students to be unruly and undisciplined. In the opinion of Madziyire (2010), lack of indiscipline in key people such as parents, guardian teachers, parents and others in the society can breed indiscipline in the students.

Further investigating the factors causing indiscipline among students, Ndakwa (2013) argued that peer pressure is a strong factor only second to parental factor. Adolescents of the same age have a strong influence on one another. Therefore, if a secondary student belongs to a peer group that is law abiding and discipline, the student will adopt this culture and be discipline. Same goes for a group that is characterized by indiscipline, the group members who imitate such indiscipline will increase in the society (Carter & McGoldrick, 2005). In essence, the environment, parents, and peer influence are factors of indiscipline.

The school is saddled with the responsibility of shaping and transforming citizens to be productive in any society. The school focuses on producing well-grounded individuals who can better themselves and the larger society. It is unfortunate, however, that many students in schools are either influenced by peer pressure, poor parental monitoring, or low supervision in school that they engage in antisocial behaviors. The main strategy that the schools adopt to anticipate unruly and antisocial behaviors is through punishment. Punishment has been construed to mean the exertion of unpleasant consequences on an individual following an unacceptable response or behavior

(Hugo 2017). According to Evertson and Emmer (2012), punishment is also seen as the removal of reinforcing factors so that the individual can exhibit desirable behaviors.

Punishment is any action meant to cause agony through beating or slapping with the aim of forcing the person to behave in accordance with rules (The convention of the Rights of the child CRC,1989; Ganma, Walter & Odundo, 2019). Punishment is imposed on students as a result of tardiness, absenteeism, bullying, being rude to teachers, drug and substance abuse, examination malpractice just to mention a few (Ekanem & Edet, 2013). This punishment can also be in form of beating students through corporal punishment such as kneeling down, cutting grasses, or even beating using a whip. Punishment is aimed at inflicting pain to alter the unwanted behavior (Marrow & Singh, 2014). Most often, punishment is a strategy adopted in schools to foster discipline in students. Mbiti (2004) stated that punishment may mean pain and anguish for students; however, in the context of training, it is positive in order to maintain law and order in the school. This made corporal punishment the most sought form of punishment in schools in most African countries (Lewis, 2007).

Even though punishment may be necessary in schools, it has generated lots of adversities that could lead to outright ban. For instance, it was revealed through a study in Kenya in which punishment strategies such as counseling, suspension, corporal punishment, paying fine, detention and reprimanding are adopted that punishment caused the student to feel several side effects, such as hampered development, psychological trauma, low self-esteem, lack of interest in schooling, injury, hopelessness and helplessness, poor self-confidence, and lack of mutual respect and purpose (Cangelosi, 2000). These put together have led to some negative behavior in students such as dropping out of school. For this reason, this study focused on the teachers perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun state, Nigeria.

Problem Statement

The act of indiscipline among students continued to rise by years, the acts are jointly done by a group of students or individually that could result in revolt or riot (Ganira, Ila and Odundo, 2019). Therefore, this certain indiscipline affects quality teachers and learning process, and the turnout of well-behaved citizens in Nigeria. Iqbal, Handan and Fausal (2013) looked into the possible effect that corporal punishment could have on how students are motivated to learning. The result revealed negative link between punishment and students' willingness to learn.

Ganira, Ila and Odundo (2019) worked on how teachers and parents perceive the use of punishment in Rwanda. The result showed that the respondents considered punishment as a necessity in enforcing orderliness. Adesope, Ogunwuyi and Olorode (2017) worked on how

punishment could impact how student learn and perform academically. The finding revealed that punishment has a negative impact on how student learn and how they perform in school academically. Despite the efforts of earlier researchers on punishment, to the best of the researcher knowledge, none of the previous researchers had worked on the perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun state, therefore, this present study examined teachers' perceived effectiveness punishment on of students in Osun State, Nigeria.

Research Question

This research question was raised for this study:

- What are teachers perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun State?

Research Hypotheses

These null hypotheses were tested in the course of this study

1. No significant difference exists in teachers perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun State on the basis of age.
2. No significant difference exists in teachers perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun State on the basis of years of teaching experience.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A psychologist, B.F. Skinner proposed a theory: Operant Conditioning. Skinner believed that operant conditioning is a way of learning that adopts rewards and punishments for behaviors. Through operant conditioning, a link is created between a behavior and a consequence of that behavior (Skinner, 1953). Skinner suggested that it is not necessary to consider internal thoughts and motivations to explain the cause of behavior, only the external causes of behaviors that can be observed should be observed (Skinner, 1953). There are two types of punishment; the positive punishment and the negative punishment. The positive punishment is one out of the two types of operant conditioning (Kim, 2015). The purpose of operant conditioning is to prevent the future occurrence of an unwanted behavior by putting in aversive stimulus after the individual exhibits the behaviors (Shah, 2022). The positive punishment according to Skinner is to suppress an unwanted or maladaptive behavior. The second type of operant conditioning is reinforcement, which is meant to increase the occurrence of a good behavior. Positive punishment is what is used in schools to keep the adolescents' antisocial behaviors at bay.

Early behaviorists had interest on associative learning. Skinner was however interested in the outcomes of a person's action and how it affects their behavior (Watson, 1913). Skinner's theory was influenced by the work of Edward Thorndike, a psychologist who proposes the law of effect (Angel, 2013). According to the law of effect, actions are followed by desirable outcomes which

are likely to be repeated, while those followed by undesirable outcome are less likely to be repeated (Baum, 2017). In essence, when an unwanted behaviors is exhibited in schools, for instance, stealing, an aversive stimulus will be applied to diminish the behaviors. Thus, actions followed by punishment are not likely to be repeated.

METHOD

This study is quantitative in nature, thus survey is considered suitable. This design gives the researcher the opportunity of obtaining the opinion of the sample to draw inference and generalize (Olayiwola, 2007). This study was conducted in 2021 for a period of 8 months.

The population of this study comprised all secondary school teachers in Osogbo LGA, Osun State, while the target population consisted of selected secondary school teachers from various selected secondary schools in Osogbo LGA. The researcher chose the secondary school teachers because they punish students almost every day in school to discipline them and they are in the best position to tell how effective punishment is. Two hundred secondary school teachers were the sample of this study. Daramola (2006) defined sample as a selected group which is a fair representation of the entire population of interest. Accordingly, simple random sampling technique is a method of drawing a portion of a population in such a way that each member of the population has equal chance of being selected (Daramola, 2006).

The researcher selected 10 schools randomly from Osogbo LGA, Osun State using dip-hat sampling method. The method allowed the researcher to put down the names of the secondary schools (both public and private schools) in Osogbo LGA on separate paper sheets. The researcher placed the papers in a hat and shook the papers; after which one paper was taken one after the other. Through this method, 10 secondary schools were chosen for the study. Following that, 20 respondents were randomly selected from each of the schools selected through random sampling techniques. The participants were selected using stratified sampling technique on the basis of age and years of teaching experience. Therefore, in all, two hundred participants participated in the study.

The research tool employed for this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Perceived Effectiveness of Students' Punishment Questionnaire" (PESPQ). The questionnaire comprises of 2 sections (Sections A & B). The first section comprised the demographic data of the respondents such as age and years of teaching experience while section B comprised statements on the perceived effectiveness of punishment on students.

Psychometric Properties of Instrument

Validity: According to Olayiwola (2007), validity is the extent to which a research tool assesses the purpose it is designed for. Five copies of the research instrument were submitted to experts in psychology to check and remove the unnecessary areas and incorporate useful aspects to ensure the content validity of the research tool. Following the corrections made by these experts, the instrument was then concluded valid for this study. Content validity is one of the most powerful techniques available to the researcher through which data gathering instrument like questionnaires can be validated (Daramola, 2006).

Reliability: According to Jefayinka (2005), reliability is the extent at which a research tool assesses consistently whatever it purports to assess at different time interval, which produces the same result. Thus, to measure the consistency of the research tool, the test-retest reliability method was adopted. The researcher used the instrument on 20 participants from secondary schools that would not be part of the sample and later re-administered the instrument for the second time on the same group after four weeks interval of the initial administration. The Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was adopted to correlate the two sets of scores and reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained which made the tool reliable for the study.

The data analyses of the study were done using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data/information obtained from the demographic data (Section A) were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentage, while the data obtained from Section B were analyzed using means score and inferential statistics. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistical tools were used to test all the formulated null hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS

Participants' Data

In this section, data collected from the participants were tabulated using percentages.

Table 1: Percentage Analysis of Participants' Age Distribution

Age	F	%
18-30	48	24.0
31-40	140	70.0
41 and above	12	6.0
Total	200	100

The table reveals the age distribution of the participants. On the table, 48 (24.0%) of the participants fell between ages of 18-30 years, 140 (70.0%) of the participants fell between ages of

31-40 years while 12 (6.0%) of the participants were 41 years old and beyond. This implies that participants who fell between 31-40 years partook in this research more than other age groups.

Table 2: Percentage Analysis of Participants' Distribution on Years of Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	48	24.0
6-10 years	72	36.0
11 years and above	80	40.0
Total	200	100

Table 2 shows the grouping of the participants based on the years they have been teaching. The table reveals that 48 (24.0%) of the respondents had 1-5 years teaching experience, 72 (36.0%) of the respondents had 6-10 years of teaching experience while 80 (40.0%) of the respondents had 11 years and above teaching experience. This indicates that respondents who had more than 11 years of teaching experience took part in the study more than other participants.

Research Question 1: What is secondary school teachers perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osogbo Local Government Area, Osun State?

Table 3: Mean and Rank Order Analysis of the Respondents' Perception on Effectiveness of Punishment

Item No	In my opinion: punishment is effective on students because it:	Mean	Rank
12	prevents aggressive behaviors among students	3.70	1 st
1	prevents fighting among students	3.60	2 nd
11	prevents bullying among students	3.57	3 rd
3	prevents disobedience to teachers or prefects	3.54	4 th
8	prevents class disruption	3.53	5 th
5	prevents students from damaging school properties	3.47	6 th
7	prevents examination malpractices	3.44	7 th
2	prevents absenteeism/truancy	3.43	8 th
9	prevents students from making noise in the classroom	3.38	9 th
6	reduces indiscipline cases both at home and in school	3.36	10 th
4	makes students do their assignments regularly	3.26	11 th
17	makes students obey school rules and regulations	3.18	12 th
18	makes students well-behaved among peers	3.07	13 th
14	reduces students' tardiness to school	3.06	14 th
15	increases students' learning capacity	2.99	15 th
10	makes students adopt good study habits	2.95	16 th
16	develops students' potentials for growth and development	2.95	16 th
13	creates self-pity in students	2.94	18 th

20	increases class participation	2.51	19 th
19	makes students perform well academically	2.35	20 th

Table 3 presents the mean and rank order of the respondents' perception on effectiveness of students' punishment. The table indicates that item 12 which states that punishment is effective on students because it prevents aggressive behaviors among students was ranked 1st with the mean score of 3.70. Item 1 which states that punishment prevents fighting among students was ranked 2nd with the mean score of 3.60. Ranked 3rd was item 11 which states that punishment prevents bullying behavior among students, with a mean score of 3.57. Similarly, item 13 which states that punishment is effective on students because it creates self-pity in students was ranked 18th with the mean score of 2.94. Item 20 which states that punishment increases class participation was ranked 19th with the mean score of 2.51. Ranked the least was item 19 which states that punishment makes students perform well academically, with a mean score of 2.35. Since 19 out of 20 items have the mean scores that are above 2.50, then it can be stated that respondents perceived punishment as effective.

Hypothesis One: *No significant difference exists in teachers' perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun State based on age*

Table 4: Analysis of Variance on the Participants' Perception on the Effectiveness of Punishment on Students Based on Age

Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	7512.535	2	3756.268	122.12*	3.00	.000
Within Groups	6059.460	197	30.759			
Total	13571.995	199				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

The table reveals the calculated F-ratio of 122.12 which was higher than the critical F-value of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of .000 which was lower than 0.05 alpha level. As the p-value is lower than 0.05 significant level, the null hypothesis which states that no significant difference exists in the perceived effectiveness of punishment in Osun State on the basis of age is therefore rejected. In order to ascertain where the significant difference lies, Scheffe Post-Hoc was carried out and the output is shown on Table 5.

Table 5: Scheffe post-hoc showing where the significant difference lies based on age

Age	N	Sub set for Alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3

18-30	48	53.42		
31-45	140		65.00	
46 and above	12			67.91*
Sig.		1.000	1.000	1.000

Table 5 shows that respondents who were between 18-30 years old had the mean score of 53.42 (in subset 1), 31-45 years had the mean score of 65.00 (in subset 2), while 46 years and above had the mean score of 67.91 (in subset 3). This implies that the mean score of respondents who were 46 years of age and above was greater than the mean scores of other age groups, thus, contributed to the significant difference.

Hypothesis Two: *No significant difference exists in perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun State based on years of teaching experience*

Table 6: Analysis of Variance of the Participants' Perception on Effectiveness of Punishment on Students Based on Years of Teaching Experience

Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	4475.253	2	2237.627	48.45*	3.00	.000
Within Groups	9096.742	197	46.176			
Total	13571.995	199				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

The table reveals the calculated F-ratio of 48.45 is higher than the critical F-value of 3.00 with a p-value of .000 which is lower than 0.05 alpha level. In as much as the p-value is lower than 0.05 significant level, the null hypothesis which states that no significant difference exists in the teachers' perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun State on the basis of years of teaching experience is therefore rejected. In order to ascertain where the significant difference lies, Scheffe Post-Hoc was carried out and the output is shown on Table 7.

Table 7: Scheffe post-hoc showing where the significant difference lies based on years of teaching experience

Teaching Experience	N	Sub set for Alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
6-10 years	72	56.08		
11 years and above	80		65.60	
1-5 years	48			68.21*

Sig.	1.000	1.000	1.000
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Table 7 shows that respondents who had 6-10 years of experience had the mean score of 56.08 (in subset 1), 11 years and more had the mean score of 65.60 (in subset 2), while 1-5 years of experience had the mean score of 68.21 (in subset 3). This implies that the mean score of respondents who had 1-5 years of teaching experience is greater than the mean scores of other groups, thus, contributed to the significant difference.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that secondary school teachers in Osogbo perceived students' punishment as effective because it: prevents aggressive behavior among students; prevents fighting among students; and prevents bullying behavior among students. The finding negates the study of Saeeda and AbdulGhafoor (2018) whose study revealed that students who experienced physical punishments have grown to be violent and aggressive. The finding is in support of the finding of Simatwa (2012) which showed that the control of students' discipline in secondary schools prevents students from fighting among themselves or engaging in other deviant acts. The finding also supports the work of Ovell and Suaning (2001) who asserted that discipline in schools is necessary for appropriate learning, preventing bullying acts, promoting good relationship between teachers and students as well as relationship between peers. This could be that students' punishment instils fear in them and make them desist from deviant behaviors.

Another finding showed a statistical difference in the teachers' perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun State based on age. This implies that the respondents' perceptions on the effectiveness of punishment were different. The Scheffe post-hoc report showed that respondents who were 46 years of age and above contributed to the significant difference. The finding of the study is in line with the study of Mfuneko (2006) who found significant difference in the perception of teachers based on age on the effect of maintaining discipline in schools. This could be that the older secondary school teachers might decide to counsel students who misbehave rather than punishing them.

The finding also revealed a significant difference in the teachers' perceived effectiveness of punishment on students in Osun state based on years of teaching experience. This implies that the respondents' perceptions on the effectiveness of punishment were different. The finding negates the study of Kanmiki (2003) who suggested that teachers' perceptions were not different on corporal punishment as a strategy of tackling indiscipline in schools irrespective of their years of

teaching experience. It was stressed further that corporal punishment has been effective in disciplining students' deviant acts. This could be as a result of the fact that teachers who had not spent many years in school might not know the type of punishment that could be effective on students.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that secondary school teachers in Osogbo perceived students' punishment as effective because it: prevents aggressive behavior among students; prevents fighting among students; prevents bullying among students; prevents disobedience to teachers or prefects; and prevents class disruption among others. It was also revealed that there was significant difference in the perceived effectiveness of punishment on students by secondary school teachers in Osogbo Local Government Area, Osun State based on age and years of teaching experience.

The findings of this study have some implications for counsellors. The current study revealed that punishment is effective on students because it: prevents aggressive behavior among students; prevents fighting among students; prevents bullying among students; prevents disobedience to teachers or prefects; and prevents class disruption among others. School counsellors can introduce non-dehumanizing forms of discipline for students which include counselling the students, giving homework to them which possibly make them divert their time to profitable actions and that will elongate their hours of studying. Similarly, counsellors can educate parents on how to make effective use of punishment to stimulate positive outcomes. The school counsellors should consistently orientate students, teachers and administrators on the effective use of punishment. Students who are unruly can be subjected to positive punishment to prevent deviant behaviors from developing. Counsellors can organize in-house training, seminars and workshops for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills on effective use of punishments for desired results.

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that there is need for regular training and seminars for teachers to increase teachers' knowledge and skills on punishment. This training will enable teachers to make the best use of punishment to be effective on disciplining students' unruly behaviors. Teachers should be aware of the positive ways of giving punishment through seminars, workshops, interactive discussions, and provoking programs so that the practice of giving punishment could be voluntarily stopped. Efforts should also be made by school authorities and governments to prevent indiscipline in schools and the larger society. There is need for school counsellors to identify students who are engaging in indiscipline act and expose them to cognitive behavior therapy in line with other forms of positive punishment.

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