

Disciplinary Problems and Modes of Punishment used against Transgressions of upper Primary Learners in Schools for the Hearing Impaired in Vihiga County, Kenya.

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Abstract

Academic achievement largely depends on the students' discipline among other factors in any institution of learning. Studies show that indiscipline students perform poorly in both internal and external examinations including KCPE performance. Hearing impaired students, studies suggest, perform poorly because they display more behavior problems. For instance, there were poor examination results in both internal and national KCPE exams results for the year's 2007 and 2008 in primary schools for the hearing impaired in Vihiga County. This was attributed to high indiscipline cases (over 60%) as reflected in the school internal discipline records. The present study investigated disciplinary problems that existed and modes of punishment used to manage discipline problems in schools for the hearing impaired in Vihiga County. The main objective and research question of this study was to find out the common disciplinary problems that existed and modes of punishment used in schools for the hearing impaired. It was assumed that hearing impaired learners had similar discipline problems to the hearing learners. Descriptive survey design method was used and four schools for the hearing impaired were selected with a study population of 215 learners and 45 teachers to participate in the study. Saturated sampling technique was used to select the study population cited. Six learners and 4 teachers participated in the pilot study while 60 learners and 41 teachers participated in the main study. Questionnaires for teachers and learners were used to collect data which was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study established that the most commonly displayed behavior problems included fighting, stealing, bullying, truancy among others while modes of punishment used included cleaning of rooms, withdrawal of privileges, digging, canning, reprimands and time-outs. The study concluded that teachers used both friendly and non physical punitive methods of punishment as well as non punitive strategies such as guidance, counseling and reinforcement to maintain discipline. These findings may be useful to the area of special Needs Education and the Ministry of Education in revising school discipline procedures. The researcher recommended that teachers should use those modes of punishment that are friendly and non punitive strategies. Also this study recommended that a study to be carried out to find out the impact of hearing impairments on behavior problems and poor academic performance among hearing impaired learners in Kenya.

Key words: Behavior problems, Hearing impairments, Transgressions, special needs education.

1. Introduction

A number of studies have consistently reported that children with hearing impairments display behavior or discipline problems that work against their academic achievement (Olawale, 2000). Apart from developmental incapacitation related to physical disabilities,

children with hearing impairments also have poor communication skills with increased tendencies towards being perceived as having behavior problems (Ademokoya, 2007). In addition, children with hearing impairments also have difficulties related to attention that could essentially limit their academic achievement (Mitchel & Quittner, 1996). Hearing impairment usually influence children to become aggressive due to communication difficulties and the belief that they are oppressed by the hearing people (Howard, 2000).

As a result of the hearing disability, hearing impaired learners exhibit two types of behavior problems that are usually displayed by all school going children both the hearing and those with hearing impairments. Howard further contend that the behavior problems includes absenteeism, lateness, dropping out of school, cheating, sleeping in class, inability to get along with others, fighting, stealing among others. The second type of behavior problems that are unique due to the impairments includes aggressiveness, indifference, mistrust and low self concept (Mba, 1995). The author further noted that aggressiveness is characterized by exhibiting non verbal signs such as shouting, bullying and fighting.

Sugai and Honer (2008) reported that in order for learning institutions to be successful in their academic programmes, students' discipline need to be managed. Maintaining discipline among hearing impaired learners is more challenging because disciplining is perceived as a method of teaching learners behavior expectancies. The difficulty arises when teachers' role expectancy requires them to be firm, fair and consistent while dealing with learners with impairments. In addition, Sugai and Honer suggest that it is further expected they should inculcate socially acceptable behaviors and at the same time trying not to be overwhelmed by stigmatized perception of the hearing impairments. The authors further noted that behaviorally difficulty learners who also have hearing impairments require effective disciplinary strategies including both preventive and teaching appropriate strategies. Akinpelu (2007) noted that discipline problems make many hearing impaired learners not to achieve their academic goals and as a result some of them drop out of school. This therefore implied that the approach to solving discipline problems among hearing impaired and hearing learners are different.

Day (1998) suggested that those methods that take care of both physical and psychological aspects of hearing impaired learners should be encouraged. Ademokoya (2007) proposed psychotherapeutic treatment on a clinical model while Gage (1998) proposed common disciplinary problems should be managed by different modes such as suspension, canning, reprimands, kneeling down, cleaning of rooms and withdrawal of privileges. James and Thomas (1989) reported that other methods that included extinction and time out should be used to extinguish undesired behavior should be used. They suggested that if teachers have to use different modes of punishment that are effective then the following should apply:

- i, He/she should specify and communicate the punishable behavior to the learners by means of rules for the behavior;
- ii, He/she should post the rules where pupils can see them and review them in groups frequently and individually;
- iii, He/she should provide models of acceptable behavior;
- iv, He/she should apply the punishment consistently;
- v, He/she should be fair in using the punishment;
- vi, He/she should impose the punishment impersonally and that he/she should not punish when angry or otherwise out of control.

Gage (1998) further suggested that some of the effective modes of punishment used against learners who have transgressed include them being requested to remain behind while others go home to discuss their problems, learners fixing properties they have destroyed during strikes, cleaning rooms/compound and losing some privileges among others. Day (1998) noted that the use of reactive physical punishment strategies without teaching appropriate behaviors may be an indicator of less effective teacher discipline control strategy. That

physical punishment is usually linked to socialization outcome such as delinquency, anti-social behaviors, non compliance, low self esteem and social incompetence.

Sugai and Honer (2008) reported that when aversive strategies are used on learners as a means of behavior control, a number of side effects occur. They include an increase in anti-social behavior, more aversive interactions among adults and students, decrease in academic achievements and social behavior displays. Consequently, the authors suggested that when disciplining learners with hearing impairments, teachers need to be fair, consistent and these children with love and respect. Additionally, teachers need to develop a trusting relationship that disregard over dependence on the use of force as a method of establishing teacher control over learner's transgressions. It is therefore important for teachers to overly be conscious about the feelings of the learners and how their disciplining strategies affect the learners under their care. The teachers also need to attach some importance to individual confidentiality. Peterson and Rolies (1987) reported that teachers have to be trained and sensitized on alternative techniques of preventing undesired socialization outcomes such as delinquency, non compliance and low self esteem.

Alternative strategies includes competent teachers using firm, rationale measures, nurturing communication and responsiveness to capabilities of learners. Human Right Watch (1999) recommended that alternative methods of punishment should be used instead of physical punishment. The HRW report noted that if these alternative forms of punishment have to be used, positive outcomes such as self esteem, social competency, cooperation with others in the school and academic achievements are likely to be experienced.

The above observations suggest that discipline among other factors contribute greatly towards academic achievements of learners in any institution of learning. Studies have shown that performance was poor in schools where there were rampant indiscipline cases (Wachira, 2001). Olawale (2000) and Quitner and Mitchel (1996) noted that hearing impaired learners exhibit more discipline problems because of their hearing impairments and the negative attitudes people have towards them. It is likely that the magnitude of discipline problems among hearing impaired learners in schools for the hearing impaired posed greater challenges to the teachers. Few studies had been carried out to find out how teachers manage discipline problems in schools for the hearing impaired in Kenya and specifically in Vihiga County. The purpose of this study therefore was to investigate the disciplinary problems and modes of punishment used against the transgressions of learners in upper primary schools for the hearing impaired in Vihiga County, Kenya. Two main research questions that guided the study were: 1. what were the disciplinary problems that were displayed by hearing impaired learners in schools for the hearing impaired? 2. What were the modes of punishment used to manage learners' transgressions?

2. Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Vihiga County then Vihiga District which was situated in Western Kenya and bordered by Kisumu County and Siaya in the South, Nandi County in the East, Kakamega County both in the West and North. This county was chosen because it had more schools for the hearing impaired which could provide the information that was being sought by the researcher.

The study adopted descriptive survey design that answered the research questions. This design enabled the researcher to gather information, summarized it and presented it for the purpose of clarification of a phenomenon (Orodho, 2003). The research population comprised of 215 learners with hearing impairments and 45 teachers that were drawn from four schools for the hearing impaired in Vihiga County. However, using saturated sampling 60 learners from

upper primary and 41 teachers were selected to participate in the study. Two sets of questionnaires were used, one for the learners and the other for the teachers to collect information. The researcher after obtaining necessary permission personally went to every school and presented the questionnaires to teachers. However, the questionnaire for learners, the researcher used the school interpreters to ask the learners questions and he filled them himself.

2.1 Results and Discussion

The first objective of the study was to examine the type of disciplinary problems that were displayed by learners in upper primary classes in schools for the hearing impaired in Vihga County. The objective sought information from teachers and learners in schools for the hearing impaired. This was to get the perspectives of both teachers and learners about the disciplinary problems that existed. As shown in table 1, the teachers reported that the common type of disciplinary problem displayed by hearing impaired learners included destroying school property (85%), stealing (85%), bullying (80%), rudeness and stubbornness (80%), fighting (80%), failing to attend class (78%), faking illness (77%), refusing to take part in co curricular activities (63%), not doing class assignment (61%), lateness (61%) and absenteeism (56%). On the other hand learners reported that as shown in table 2, bullying and fighting (72%) were the most common disciplinary problem, followed by learners not attending and being stubborn and rude in class (63%). Other disciplinary problems as reported by learners included lateness (55%), destruction of school property (55%), refusing to take part in co curricular activities (52%), and absenteeism (40%), stealing (52%) and faking illness (43%). These findings indicated that there existed different and in varying degrees disciplinary problems in schools for hearing impaired in Vihiga County that needed to be managed and controlled for effective academic achievement. According to this study, it was likely that since almost all the pupils were boarders and pupils could delay coming to school after the official opening days and or for other reasons, absenteeism was reportedly not a serious discipline problem. Other studies done elsewhere found similar disciplinary problems among hearing impaired (Gallaudet University, 2006; Ademokoya, 2007; Mitchel & Quitner, 1996). From these findings, learners with hearing impairments display behavior problems that disrupted teaching learning activities making academic achievement difficult. It is likely that due to disruptive nature of disciplinary problems, learners usually do not learn well and they finally do not perform well in examinations. This makes teachers impose punitive strategies to manage behavior problems in order for the learners to perform well.

The findings suggested that hearing impaired learners were perceived to have discipline problems that needed to be managed. However this could be perceptual problems by teachers probably due to the communication difficulties that characterize teacher/learners interactions. It is also likely that the difficulties involved in teaching learners with hearing impaired probably made teachers perceive the hearing impaired learners as behaviorally difficult and consequently use methods of discipline that guaranteed immediate compliance.

Table 1: Types of Disciplinary problems that were exhibited by hearing impaired learners as reported by Teachers.

Discipline problems	Teachers Response				
	n=41				
	A	DA	UD		
	F	%	F	%	F
Destroying school property	35	85	5	12	1
Stealing	35	85	4	10	2
Bullying	33	1	7	17	1
Fighting	33	80	5	12	3
Rude and Stubborn	33	80	8	20	-
Faking illness	32	78	6	15	3
Failing to attend classes	32	78	8	20	1
Refusing to take part in co curricular activities	26	63	13	32	2
Lateness	25	61	11	27	5
Not doing assignment	25	61	14	34	2
Absenteeism	23	56	10	24	7

KEY: F= Frequency; % = Percentage; A = Agreed; DA = Disagreed; UD = Undecided

Table 2: Types of Disciplinary problems that were exhibited by hearing impaired learners as reported by Learners.

Discipline problems	Learners Response				
	n=60				
	A	DA	UD		
	F	%	F	%	F
Destroying school property	33	55	5	12	1
Stealing	31	52	4	10	2
Bullying	43	72	7	17	1
Fighting	43	72	5	12	3
Rude and Stubborn	38	63	8	20	-
Faking Illness	26	43	6	15	3
Failing to attend classes	38	63	8	20	1
Refusing to take part in co-currilar activities	31	52	13	32	2
Lateness	33	55	11	27	5
Not doing assignment	34	57	14	34	2
Absenteeism	24	40	10	24	7

KEY: F= Frequency; % = Percentage; A = Agreed; DA = Disagreed; UD = Undecided

The second objective of the study was to determine the modes of punishment used against learners who transgress in schools for the hearing impaired in order to manage discipline in schools. The obtained results suggested that majority of teachers (78%) reportedly used reprimands, cleaning of rooms (71%), withdrawal of privileges (66%), time out (61%) as their preferred modes of punishment. Others included digging in school shamba (56%), replacing destroyed school property (54%), caning (44%), doing extra work when other pupils have gone home (37%), detention camps in schools (34%), hair pull (32%) and slapping (17%).as shown in table 3. Learners as shown in table 4, 67 % of them reported that digging was used most as a mode of punishment followed by time out (63%), reprimands (62%), caning (62%), and replacement of destroyed school property (56%). Other modes included cleaning of rooms (53%), withdrawal of privileges (52%), and detention camps (50%), slapping (48%), hair pull (35%), expulsion (35%) and suspension (23%).

Table 3: Modes of Punishment used in Schools for the Hearing Impaired against Learners who transgress as reported by Teachers.

Modes of punishment	Teachers Response				
	A		n=41		
	F	%	DA	UD	F
Reprimands	32	78	7	17	2
Cleaning of rooms	29	71	11	27	1
Withdrawals of privileges	27	66	11	27	3
Time out	25	61	16	39	-
Digging	23	56	16	39	2
Replacing destroyed property	22	54	14	34	5
Caning	18	44	22	54	1
Extra Work	15	37	26	63	-
Detention camps	14	34	25	61	2
Hair pull	13	32	25	61	3
Slapping	7	17	33	80	1
Expulsion	3	7	36	88	2
Suspension	2	5	36	88	3

KEY: F= Frequency; % = Percentage; A = Agreed; DA = Disagreed; UD = Undecided

Table 4: Modes of Punishment used in Schools for the Hearing Impaired against Learners who transgress as reported by Learners.

Modes of punishment	Teachers Response				
	n=60				
	A		DA		UD
	F	%	F	%	F
Reprimands	37	62	16	27	7
Cleaning of rooms	32	53	25	42	3
Withdrawals of privileges	31	52	25	42	4
Time out	38	63	16	27	6
Digging	40	67	15	25	5
Replacing destroyed property	35	58	21	35	4
Caning	37	62	23	38	-
Extra Work	29	48	24	40	7
Detention camps	30	50	25	42	5
Hair pull 13	21	35	35	58	4
Slapping	29	48	27	45	4
Expulsion	21	35	35	58	4
Suspension	14	23	44	73	2

KEY: F= Frequency; % = Percentage; A = Agreed; DA = Disagreed; UD = Undecided

From these findings, it is apparent that teachers used most of these modes though in varying degrees. They included cleaning of rooms, withdrawal of privileges, time out, digging, replacement of school property destroyed by learners during strikes, among others. Corporal punishment was also used (44%). The finding that corporal punishment was still being used by teachers was in contradiction to the Government position whereby it had proscribed the use of physical punishment in learning institutions.

The ministry banned the use of corporal punishment in schools in 2001 (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Physical punishment according to the ban has negative consequences to the learners such as delinquency among learners, low self esteem and social incompetence. In schools for the hearing impaired this mode was rarely used as compared to other modes. It is likely that hard labor such as digging and cleaning of rooms their use depended on the catchment area of the school. For instance the school where the study was carried out was in rural areas. This might not be the same case with those schools in urban areas. Vihiga County is an agricultural county thus making learners dig is perceived by teachers as disrupting the learners positively. However, as much as digging is a constructive exercise, when used as punishment, learners hates it and in future they are likely not to engage in agricultural activities that involve digging yet agriculture is the mainstay of Kenyan Economy.

The third objective was to investigate non-punitive strategies that were used in managing discipline problems in schools for the hearing impaired in Vihiga County.

As indicated in table 5, the study found that (93%) of teachers reported that praises (a form of reinforcement) , guiding and counseling(93%) and learners made to apologies in front of others (93%) were some of the non punitive strategies that were being used to manage discipline. Others included reminding of learners of school rules and what was expected of them in terms of behavior (83%), token appreciation (68%), meditating of mistakes they made (56%), pinning list of names of the students who behaved well, did well in exams and sports on notice boards (51%), award of certificates(49%) and making learners describe the negative consequences of their behavior (44%). Pupils also reported that as indicated in table 6, that the strategies used included students apologizing in front of others (82%), praises (78%), guiding and counseling 73%), pinning list of names on notice boards (70%) and displaying rules (73%).

Table 5:Non-punitive strategies to maintain/manage discipline in schools for hearing impaired as reported by teachers.

Non-punitive strategies	Teachers Response				
	n=41				
	A		DA	UD	
	F	%	F	%	F
Praises	38	93	2	5	1
G/Counseling	38	93	1	2	2
Apologizing	38	93	2	5	1
Rules and Expectations	34	83	3	17	4
Token Appreciation	28	68	13	32	-
Meditation	23	56	13	32	5
Names on notice board	21	51	18	44	1
Award of certificates	20	49	18	44	3
Description of the behavior	18	44	21	51	2

KEY: F= Frequency; % = Percentage; A = Agreed; DA = Disagreed; UD = Undecided

Table 6: Non-punitive strategies to maintain/manage discipline in schools for hearing impaired as reported by learners.

Non-punitive strategies	Teachers Response				
	n=60				
	A		DA		UD
	F	%	F	%	F
Praises	47	82	8	13	3
G/Counseling	45	75	6	10	9
Apologizing	49	82	8	13	3
Rules and Expectations	44	73	8	13	8
Token Appreciation	29	48	19	32	12
Meditation	37	62	16	27	7
Names on notice board	42	70	11	18	7
Award of certificates	31	52	20	33	9
Description of the behavior	37	62	19	32	4

KEY: F= Frequency; % = Percentage; A = Agreed; DA = Disagreed; UD = Undecided

The findings suggested that teachers used non punitive strategies in managing discipline in schools for the hearing impaired. This implied that teachers were likely aware of the ineffectiveness of punitive methods and the impact of those strategies on the feelings of learners. Another likely explanation was that the legislative effects on those found using corporal punishment in schools was in itself punitive. It was possible that teachers awareness on the debilitating effects of corporal punishment was making them turn to the use of alternative forms of punishment to maintain discipline in their classrooms. HRW (1999) and Simatwa (2007) also had recommended the use of alternative forms of punishment in Primary schools and secondary schools. These forms included guidance and counseling, letting students make school rules by themselves, award of certificates and hanging names of students with good behavior on notice boards. Oburu (1995) also reported that praises, smiles, encouragement to well behaved students could effectively reduce disruptive students bad behavior in classrooms. It can be argued that these non punitive strategies take care of the psychological aspects of learners with hearing impaired. The hearing disability makes learners with it grow up in difficulty social circumstances without much interaction that includes rejection by parents and lack of love from significant others such as siblings and sometimes teachers and as a result they exhibit behavior problems due to low self concept and esteem.

The fourth objective was to assess the teachers' perception of the effectiveness of different modes of punishment in schools for the hearing impairments in Vihiga County.

The findings of this study showed that teachers rated withdrawal of privileges (76%) as the most effective mode of punishment, followed by students cleaning of rooms in the school (71%), reprimands (66%), and replacing destroyed school property (49%). The modes of punishment teachers considered less effective included digging (44%), detention camps

(41%), caning (34%), time out (32%), doing extra work when other students have gone home (24%), suspension (20%), expulsion (12%) and slapping (5%). See table 7. Learners on the other hand rated caning as most effective mode of punishment (57%) as indicated in table 8, followed by reprimands (55%), cleaning of rooms (53%), withdrawal of privileges (47%), replacing destroyed school property (43%), digging(42%), and time out (40%). The modes of punishment that were considered less effective included slapping (38%), doing extra work when others had gone home (37%0, detention camps (28%), suspension (23%0 and expulsion (18%).

Table 7: Perception of effectiveness of different modes of punishment as reported by Teachers.

Modes of punishment	Teachers Response				
	n=60				
	A		DA		UD
	F	%	F	%	F
Reprimands	27	66	12	29	2
Cleaning of rooms	29	71	10	24	2
Withdrawals of privileges	31	76	8	20	2
Time out	13	32	22	54	6
Digging	18	44	16	39	7
Replacing destroyed property	20	49	15	37	6
Caning	14	34	25	61	2
Extra Work	10	24	24	59	7
Detention camps	17	41	20	49	4
Slapping	2	5	34	83	5
Expulsion	5	12	29	71	7
Suspension	8	20	26	63	7

KEY: F= Frequency; % = Percentage; A = Agreed; DA = Disagreed; UD = Undecided

Table 8: Perception of effectiveness of different modes of punishment as reported by Learners.

Reprimands	33	55	23	38	4
Cleaning of rooms	32	53	25	42	3
Withdrawals of privileges	28	47	30	50	2
Time out	24	40	29	48	7
Digging	25	42	28	47	7
Replacing destroyed property	26	43	25	42	9
Caning	34	57	21	35	4
Extra Work	22	37	31	52	7
Detention camps	17	28	27	45	16
Slapping	23	38	28	47	9
Expulsion	22	18	29	49	9
Suspension	14	23	88	55	23

KEY: F= Frequency; % = Percentage
 A = Agreed; DA = Disagreed; UD = Undecided

These findings implied that hearing impaired learners value privileges accorded to them by teachers. Thus if they are denied privileges such as watching the television, playing football after classes would hurt their feelings. According to Kithure and Chege (2010), persons with disabilities have been denied opportunities and perhaps because of this, denying those privileges amount to oppression and hence values those privileges. Also it is likely that further denying them privileges could be interpreted by hearing impaired learners as a manifestation of the discriminatory practices meted out against them by the general public. Other modes of punishment considered effective were time out and replacement of school destroyed property. These kind of punishment cost pupils time and money and therefore made learners sensitive when they were about to make mistakes. Physical punishment such as caning and slapping were considered less effective by teachers. On the hand learners considered caning as the most effective mode of punishment perhaps because this mode of punishment has been used since time immemorial and when it is used in moderation it has quick results (Gage, 1998). Further even as teachers did not rate it highly, Kimani (, 2003) reported that teachers have been known to abuse corporal punishment. Perhaps teachers hid that information from the researcher because of the ban by the Ministry of education.

3.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that learners with hearing impairment displayed different disciplinary problems some unique to the hearing disability and some common disciplinary problems displayed by any school going children. In addition the study concluded that non punitive strategies were used to manage discipline problems in schools for the hearing impaired and effective strategies included withdrawal of privileges, cleaning of rooms, reprimands, time out, replacing of destroyed school property among others. Some of the recommendations the study made included effective communication between teachers and learners, teachers should

use modes of punishment that are friendly and non punitive strategies to manage discipline in schools for the hearing impaired in Vihiga County. In addition studies should be conducted to find out the impact of hearing impairment on behavior problems and other factors that leads to poor performance in academic achievement.

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