

FACTORS AFFECTING ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES TO
CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF IMENTI
NORTH DISTRICT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Since the ban of corporal punishment in 2001, emphasis has been put on the use of alternative discipline strategies in Kenyan schools. According to research, however, status quo has been maintained in most secondary schools - an indicator of discrepancy in the discipline policy. This means the children rights which the new policy sought to protect are being violated in schools and further, the status quo is evidence that the alternative discipline strategies have not been effective. This research, therefore, sought to find out factors that affect alternative discipline strategies to corporal punishment in secondary schools in Imenti North District. The study was guided by four objectives and research questions. The literature review covered the international and local perceptions of school discipline and punishment, factors that affect discipline methods, theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The study used descriptive survey design; it targeted a population of 10574 students and 432 teachers and it was conducted in 13 out of 44 secondary schools in the District. Stratified and purposive samplings were used to identify the schools and to arrive at a sample size of 286 participants comprising of 234 students and 52 teachers. There were six categories of schools of which the only Boys' Boarding school was purposively sampled to represent its category. Two sets of questionnaires; for teachers and for students were used to collect data after a pilot test in the neighboring District. Analysis of the data was aided by use of a computer package known as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables and percentages were used to explore demographic implications of the data. Tabular and graphical presentations were used to show the relationship between the independent variables (gender, teachers' academic qualifications & work experience, awareness of children rights) and the dependent variable (alternative discipline strategies). Qualitative data yielded was directly reported in summary form and inferences drawn from it. The study established the choice and manner of administering alternatives to corporal punishment is affected by the kind of alternative strategies in place, teachers'/students' gender, teachers' academic qualifications & work experience, and teachers'/students' awareness of children rights. Secondary schools use various alternatives to corporal punishment of which guidance and counseling is considered the most effective. Corporal punishment is however prevalent according to over 80% participants even though majority of teachers and students are aware of children rights. Majority of teachers (59%) posited reinstatement of corporal punishment, claiming they were not consulted when it was withdrawn and that they were not in-serviced on the alternatives. The study recommends: a clear discipline policy from the Ministry of Education which is formulated in consideration of the views of all stakeholders. Schools and teacher colleges to strengthen guidance and counseling, mandatory in-service for all teachers on the management of student discipline in accordance with the new policy, sensitization on children rights, and Government sets a Task Force to look into the demand to reinstate corporal punishment by the majority of teachers.