

*Full Length Research Paper*

# The crisis of student discipline in Botswana schools: an impact of culturally conflicting disciplinary strategies

K. G. Garegae

Department of Mathematics and Science Education, University of Botswana, P. O. Box 70053, Gaborone, Botswana.  
E-mail: [garegae@mopipi.ub.bw](mailto:garegae@mopipi.ub.bw).

Accepted 14 May, 2019

Although student discipline had existed since the beginning of mankind, the disciplinary methods employed have changed over the years, giving rise to culturally irrelevant disciplinary strategies. This study explored teachers' views about approaches to discipline experienced in Botswana schools in terms of policy and practice. In particular, the study sought for information on teachers' day-to-day experiences and their views with regard to the implementation of student discipline regulations. Twenty teachers, who have been in the field for at least eight years, were interviewed once. Interview proceedings were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The study showed that teachers feel disempowered by schools' discipline regulations, and that students take advantage of such regulations to undermine teachers' authority. Based on the premise that discipline approaches are culturally conceptualized and negotiated, the paper argues that student discipline has grown into an epidemic in Botswana schools because culturally inappropriate approaches are employed. Recommendations as to how the problem could be curbed are discussed and suggestions for further studies are made.

**Key words:** student, discipline and regulations.

## INTRODUCTION

Child discipline is as old as the existence of mankind. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve transgressed God's law and disciplinary action was taken against them. Thereafter, discipline became an integral part of human growth and development, hence the proverb "spare the rod and spoil the child". In fact, the Bible construes the 'sparing of the rod' as an open act of child neglect and hate. Parents therefore are expected to correct or discipline their children. This means that discipline deals with good behavior and every society wants its children to get proper socialization, hence the saying "*lore lo ojwa lo sa le metsi*" [A rod is easily bent while still tender]. However, gone are the days when a black African child showed respect and honour to elderly people regardless of whether they are related or not. Good-mannered teenagers in an African setting are indeed a history. One could ask why is it that the problem of indiscipline seems to be ubiquitous in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Because child discipline is part of socialization, every culture has its own approaches, informed by norms and beliefs crafted by a people of that culture. These cultural strategies are usually

infiltrated by philosophies and practices of their cultures; hence the government of Botswana says "Botswana's social structure rests upon a long history and culture, and a set of traditions governing the behaviour and obligations of people towards each other and the community as a whole. It is important that this culture, built over a long period of time, is strong enough to absorb and filter the influx of new ideas and patterns of behaviour without losing its coherence (Botswana Republic, 1997)."

This culture may be ignored in classroom practices. By so doing, "cultural conflict" may arise in the running of the school. This paper restricted itself to government regulations and explored teachers' views on whether or not such regulations support cultural norms of child rearing practices. Apart from imparting knowledge and facilitating student learning, teachers are expected to maintain security and order in classrooms (Brauer, 1981). Thus, the issue of student conduct is a factor in their job satisfaction and they can resign from the profession if students' misbehavior is unbearable (Liu and Meyer, 2005). Student misconduct is not only a nuisance to teachers;

the whole society also gets concerned. For this reason, the Botswana government through its long term vision, Vision 2016, has called upon those concerned with the discipline of children to ensure the elimination of “violent crime, rape and drug abuse” through the cultivation and preservation of “national moral and cultural values in the face of rapid social change” (Botswana Republic, 1997). Parents are called to make sure that “Children ... learn *Botho* (humane) in the home, at school, in the community and in the workplace” (ibid: 56). If children are not properly taught moral issues, they would graduate into criminal gangs instead of educated citizens who could develop the socio-economic sector of the country. Therefore, this study explored practicing teachers’ views and opinions about the strategies suggested in the education act and their experiences in implementing such regulations.

## Background

Children are born without any culture. They are socialized into cultural and social norms of the society through interaction with parents and relatives. For this reason, Mbiti (1988) asserts that a child is brought into this world so that the society may create or mould it accordingly to fit well into the existing way of life. Thus, “the key institution for transmission of traditional values is the family”, (Botswana Republic, 1997). The success of the socialization results in children cherishing similar beliefs, customs and expectations as those of their parents, guardians, and the community at large.

Included in this enculturation process are discipline and punishment strategies and meanings therein. These may not be understood or comprehended by an individual from another identifiable cultural group (D’Ambrosio, 1985). One must be born in the society in order to fully participate in it (Mbiti, 1988). Zaslavsky (1982), in her study of black African cultures, found that the games children play on streets are instruments of conveyance and perpetuation of cultural heritage from one generation to another. During play, especially the “mantlwane play” [the game is called “Let’s Pretend”], children role-play real life activities, thus learning and acting adult life norms and practices. Therefore, when visiting other cultures, children expect the same kind of understanding, failing which they experience culture shock.

This cultural shock is reported in school discipline studies conducted in Europe and North America. Studies in North America (Reyes, 2006; Monroe, 2005; Day-Vines and Day-Harrison, 2005) have indicated that more people of colour than Caucasians are likely to be affected by the zero tolerance policy. Blacks have been disproportionately removed from schools and sent to correctional facilities because of their misconduct. Unfortunately, this has been associated with the type of disciplinary approaches that black parents employ. Perhaps it has never dawned in the minds of the teachers that the way they

judge these students is largely influenced by their own culture because what is regarded as a norm in one culture may be despised in another. McIntyre and Silva (1992) capture this sentiment succinctly: “The lack of knowledge that most educators possess regarding both child abuse and culturally different childbearing ... creates fertile ground for misjudging the appropriateness of parental practices. Teachers who adhere to disciplinary practices of the majority culture may find themselves viewing culturally different practices as being abusive”.

These authors advise teachers of culturally diverse students to take an initiative of increasing their knowledge about cultures represented in their classrooms. This will enable them to use culturally relevant strategies to cater for each child. For instance, these disciplinary problems among African American students may just be the manifestation of an inner cry that their African culture and ways of knowing are being marginalized and/or ignored. But, unfortunately, teachers from other cultures construe these children’s behaviour as immature and undisciplined (Monrose, 2005) and put them in “discipline referrals, suspension, and expulsion” (Day-Vines and Day-Harrison, 2005).

One of Botswana cultural practices used in disciplining or socializing children is the spirit of corporate-ness. That is, corporatively as a community, people diligently carried out tasks, including the task of child upbringing because “to be human is to belong to the whole” (Mbiti, 1988). Thus, the saying that “*mabogo dinku a a thebane*” [hands, like sheep, bounce on each other]. This proverb means that people help each other in turn. Other Tswana proverbs that show that child rearing demands more than what can be offered by an individual is ‘*kgetsi ya tsie e kgonwa ke go tshwaraganelwa*’, meaning that team work bears more fruit than individual effort, and ‘*Moroto wa esi ga o elele*’ (one person’s urine does not flow) meaning one person’s effort doesn’t have noticeable impact.

Therefore, the whole community was charged with the responsibility to socialize any child born among them.

For example, when children get involved in wrongdoing, they have not put to shame only members of the immediate family, but have also disappointed the community in which they were raised because “whatever happens to an individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual” (Mbiti 1985). Usually, the parents of the wayward child would first engage aunts and uncles to curb children’s misbehaviour before consulting the community elders. Interestingly, approaches used were developmentally appropriate. In most cases, sanctions and/or corporal punishment were for younger children while ‘serious talk’ was employed in chastening youth and young adults.

Therefore, this study explored whether or not the concept of community and responsibility for child upbringing, especially the use of aunts and uncles, is embraced in the school discipline regulations.

## Student discipline in Botswana schools

According to Matsoga (2003), violence and misbehaviour exist in Botswana schools. This lack of discipline, which interferes with the teaching and learning process, manifests itself in various ways including bullying, vandalism, alcohol and substance abuse, truancy, inability or unwillingness to do homework, etc. (Moswela, 2004; Matsoga, 2003). Vandalizing school property is at rampant and this has influenced the government to introduce school fees in order to mend that which was broken such as window panes, furniture and walls.

Theft is also common. For instance, in 2003 students in one senior school broke into a biology lab to steal ethanol (Banda, 2004). Some of these students lost their lives, and others lost their sight. In another senior secondary school, a 19 year boy committed suicide after fighting with another student over a borrowed plate (Maleke, 2003). These horrible acts left the nation speechless, not knowing where such behaviour originated from. These incidents sprang the debate on the use of corporal punishment in schools which concluded by acknowledging that Botswana cannot do away with it, but it has to be used guardedly (Maleke, 2003; Keoreng, 2004). Experience has it that, teachers may ask for transfers; while parents withdraw their children from schools with numerous cases of student misconduct such as the one mentioned above.

## Rules and regulations on discipline

The education act of 1967 has documented some rules and regulations that govern student discipline in Botswana schools. It stipulates methods and procedures for minor and severe disciplinary measures such as corporal punishment, suspension and student expulsion. Although it is expected that corporal punishment be administered carefully, not all academic staff in schools can administer it. The act states that "corporal punishment shall be administered to a pupil only by (a) a headmaster, (b) a teacher or a boarding master or matron or parent to whom authority to administer corporal punishment has been delegated by the headmaster; or (c) such other person as the Permanent Secretary may, in writing, in special circumstances, authorize" (Botswana, Republic of, 1967). Other restrictions include the forbiddance for a male teacher to inflict corporal punishment on a female student. Moreover, when corporal punishment is administered, the record of the following particulars has to be kept: the name of the pupil, the date of the punishment, grounds for punishment, and the name of the person who administered the punishment. This record has to be produced on request to any officer from the Ministry of Education. The above stated restriction of how and when to use corporal punishment is similar to that of Zimbabwe (Zindi, 1995).

To be suspended from school, (a) a student's conduct

and behaviour must habitually or continually be such that the maintenance of a proper standard of discipline or conduct in school is endangered, (b) he/she must have committed an act of a gravely reprehensible nature; or (c) he/she must have failed to attend school regularly (Ministry of education, 1967). Before the school head could suspend the child, s/he should warn the student and inform his or her parents with regard to the nature of the offense and the action intended to be taken thereof. The copy of the letter to the parents should be sent to the Permanent Secretary who will in turn inform the Minister. While the school head can suspend the student for days not exceeding 20, it is only the Minister who can expel the same. However, parents are given a democratic right to contest against the school head's decision, in writing, to the Minister within 20 days after expulsion or suspension has taken place. The Minister can either endorse the suspension, turn it into expulsion, or direct the withdrawal of the suspension in force against the pupil. This study, explores teachers' lived experiences with regard to the nature of the student discipline regulations and how these affect their day-to-day duties. In particular, the study answered the following questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions concerning the relationship between culture and the school disciplinary regulations?
2. What are teachers' experiences with regard to the implementation of the student discipline regulations?
3. How do these regulations affect teachers' day to day encounter with student misconduct?

## Design and methodology

Phenomenological interviewing was used in this study because the researcher wanted to explore the lived experiences of school teachers (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). The advantage of phenomenological interviewing is that it provides the researcher the opportunity to go into the daily lives of primary, junior and senior secondary teachers in connection with issues of student discipline in schools. Thus, the interview atmosphere created, made teachers to be at ease and talk freely about their encounters and incidents in the classrooms and the school community (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

The use of phenomenological interviewing made it possible for the researcher to discuss with teachers things that are important to them and the meanings that they attach to culture and student discipline. The most important thing is that descriptive data are in teachers' own words, and this enabled the researcher to develop experiences (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). Insights on how teachers interpret their daily school discipline

## Selection and sampling

Purposive sampling was used in this study. This sampling strategy allowed the researcher to deliberately select participants who, in the researcher's view, can provide data that illuminate the phenomenon under discussion (Maxwell, 1996). Twenty (20) teachers, comprising of seven from primary, six from junior secondary, and seven from senior secondary schools, who have taught for at

least eight years, were interviewed with the aim of exploring their experiences concerning student discipline regulations.

### **Data collection procedures**

Because of time constraint, each participant was interviewed once. A semi-structured interview guide was used to help the researcher pose similar questions to all participants. Questions were framed such that they allowed further probing wherever clarification was necessary. Interview proceedings were audiotaped and later transcribed.

### **Data analysis procedures**

With the aid of the coding system (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Straus and Corbin, 1998), the researcher came up with various themes that capture relevant information about the student discipline and how the implication of regulations impede or facilitate teachers' work. Data with similar topics were organized into a folder. Thereafter, we employed Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) approach to data synthesis, in which contents of each folder were read to identify the meaning of the theme or category.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This study aimed at finding out, from practicing teachers' perspective, if school discipline regulations were grounded in the Botswana cultural philosophy. The audiotaped data were transcribed and then organized into themes around the research questions. The themes form the basis of discussion in this paper.

### **Prevalence of student misconduct**

The first question asked during the interview was about the extent to which indiscipline prevailed in Botswana's schools. All the twenty (100%) participants indicated that students' indiscipline is increasing at an alarming rate.

They stated that hideous forms of student misconduct which used to be seen in the movies and read in fiction books, are now a reality in Botswana schools. One participant had this to say: "Student indiscipline is ubiquitous. It is everywhere and it stinks. Forms of crime that we used to see in movies are acted out in our schools. Perhaps it is through the influence of media, especially TV. We are no longer fighting against laziness of not finishing homework, but we are dealing with more serious things -Drug abuse; use of knives; alcohol, you name them. They all form the school culture. When it is time to go to class, you are thinking of your own safety. Especially when it is the first class, you are not sure if everything will go according to your plan. I do suspect they carry guns and because of that, one needs to talk to

them with some respect, not real respect as such but out of fear."

The above quotations indicate that there is lack of student discipline in schools. This corroborates with studies (Matsogs, 2003; Moswela, 2004) that student discipline in Botswana schools has taken a different angle. It seems the participants blame this lack of student discipline on media and parents. They claim that learners imitate what they see on TV sets whenever they find a chance. They can only get such a chance in the school premises. For instance, when no teacher is observing them, they may engage in drug and substance abuse, harassing other fellow students, and challenging school authorities.

All twenty participants held parents responsible for students' indiscipline and the schools' permissiveness. It is reported that parents do not reprimand their children, believing that reprimanding them would be an abusive behaviour. The quotation below summarizes this concern. "Our children these days watch TV programs such as the Corps on Sunday evening. Whatever they see from TV they experiment it in schools. It is a pity that parents allow their children to watch these things. It is parents' permissiveness. They don't correct children because they think rebuke and reprimands exist where there is no love. So children are not used to be told what is wrong and what is right. In fact, they have no idea of what is right or what is wrong."

### **Teacher exclusion and disempowerment**

All participants (100%) insinuated that the reason for the exponential growth of cases of student misconduct is that school regulations are not founded in the cultural strategies for disciplining children. They claim that child discipline is an integral part of child socialization and that in Africa, particularly Botswana, is not a lonesome work. It is carried out by the whole community. Teachers lamented that they are excluded in matters of discipline because it is only the school head that is authorized by the Permanent Secretary to discipline a learner. Therefore, they did not only feel disempowered but also helpless especially when they encounter discipline challenges in classrooms where the school head is not always nearby. Excerpts below captures well the teachers' sentiments.

"Unlike in the Setswana culture, corporal punishment regulations say that only a school head or a designated individual can administer corporal punishment under strict adherence to the dimensions of a stick and the number of strokes allowed. This makes students to behave in anyway they so wish when a person responsible for punishing them is not within the vicinity. Again, they misbehave more often because they know that they cannot be disciplined through corporal punishment. If at all they are punished in this manner, they can challenge the school head's decision. As teachers, we are both power-

less and sometimes limited on issues of student discipline. Don't you think this is true? What do you think? What I don't like about school discipline regulations is that classroom teachers are not, I repeat, are not included in issues of discipline. The government doesn't want us to join hands together with school administration in molding these children's characters so they have a better future. After all, teachers are the ones who know these students. The school head stays in the office the whole day. S/he doesn't know each child's needs and characters. Sometimes parents blame us when we get inside the class and teach without being concerned about children's participation; whoever is there and wishes to cooperate with the teacher, it is fine. S/he will benefit. But if a student doesn't cooperate, too bad because after all the expectation is that I should not discipline him/her."

Although only the school head is allowed to administer corporal punishment, most teachers ignore this regulation. Participants of this study believed that the manner in which parents and the general public treat teachers is influenced by school discipline regulation. Teachers complain that they are rarely respected by parents and if it happens that they punish learners, their parents would come to reprimand them even in the presence of the students. One teacher said: "Students misbehave with the knowledge that they are not supposed to be beaten, and also knowing that if it happens that the teacher beats them, their parents are going to follow that teacher or even sue him/her."

### **Violation of school heads' rights**

When the matter is serious enough to warrant suspension or expulsion, the school head can make a recommendation but only the Permanent Secretary is responsible for expelling a student from school. All the 13 participants from secondary schools (65% of the whole group) believed that this regulation strips off authority from school administrators. Excerpts below illustrate this concern.

"The expulsion regulations sometimes violate the school head's rights because s/he does not have any say on the final decision for the expulsion of the student. But the person who faces the problem is the school head. Expulsion procedures make students believe that the school head has no authority over them and so they can mess up in front of her/him because they know s/he will keep on talking without taking any action. If the Permanent Secretary decides that the child should not be expelled, it creates problems for the school as now students will think the school head has no power and can do as they please. Other students might end up misbehaving too."

The apprehension comes as a result of guess work concerning the Permanent Secretary's verdict after assessing the situation and its contextual implication. When the school's recommendation is rejected, an unpa-

latable mood is said to develop in the school, more so among administrators and teachers over the thought that the concerned child may feel heroic. The quotation below expresses this sentiment: "The permanent Secretary has the final word. That is, after his assessment, the child can be allowed back into school. The school head has limited powers. To students, that means they copy the unbecoming behaviour knowing that somehow they can be favoured by certain situations."

Thirteen (65%) participants also indicated that the time taken between the school head's recommendation and the Permanent Secretary's response is too long. During this period, the suspended student can influence others in school, and this causes stress to the school administrators: Thus, one participant said: "This procedure has made it very difficult for the school administration since they have to put up with undisciplined students for a very long period and other pupils copy their behaviour. Problem students continue to misbehave while the school awaits a response from the Permanent Secretary. "Having authority seems to be an important element in teachers' lives. However, this is understandable because they are expected to play the "in loco parentis' role".

### **Teachers' experiences on the implementation of school discipline regulations**

Teachers find the school discipline regulations practiced in Botswana schools problematic. First, classroom control has become somehow cumbersome for teachers. This is because students are prone to misconduct for they know that teachers are not allowed to administer corporal punishment, and the one who is designated to do so can never be omnipresent. So they make hay whilst s/he is in the administration office knowing that the teacher is not authorized to administer corporal punishment.

It was clear that often times than not, "learning is being disturbed by such behaviour, because a lot of time is wasted on settling disputes". This, they claimed, has proven to disturb those students who are serious with their work. Teachers' concern is genuine because they are accountable to the society at large. When much of their "teaching time [is taken by] trying to settle [problematic] cases", poor performance is inevitable.

Second, suspension and expulsion regulations cause some ambivalence in the school administration. When it comes to making decisions about a problem learner, the school head has to think twice in fear of embarrassment. The participants have experienced situations where the Permanent Secretary was pressured by social factors to revoke the school decision. Thus, one participant said, "Some parents are well connected. Even if the school has a strong case against the student, that decision to expel the student can easily be overridden by the Permanent Secretary. Such students become a nuisance to teachers and boast to their colleagues about it, thus causing students to undermine the authority of teachers".

Also, the length of time before the matter could be settled has a bearing in school. So three (15%) of the participants said, "The process of going through all the appropriate channels is too long to address the crisis. In the mean time, the situation gets worse and other students want to copy the behavior. After waiting for a long time, the Permanent Secretary comes and overrules the verdict. Imagine the humiliation that the school head goes through. Shame! Discredit!. I could see it in his face and I was feeling sorry for him. Students started shouting, rejoicing that their colleague had been saved from expulsion.

Expulsion procedures make students believe that the school head has no authority over them and so they sometimes mess up in front of her/him [school head] because they know s/he will keep on talking without taking any action."

Because of the experiences they have been through, all the participants were of the opinion that implementing the suspension regulations "is just to scare the student because the recommendation could be reversed" by the Permanent Secretary.

### **The impact of school discipline on teachers' jobs**

There are at least two effects of lack of discipline on teachers' jobs. The first one is that, teachers feel insecure. They claim that schools are no longer places of safety and order. They say unless "we go back to the roots of child socialization, teaching would become a dangerous vocation" because "When it is time to go to class, you are thinking of your safety. Especially when it is the first class, you are not sure if everything will go according to your plan. I do suspect they [learners] carry guns and because of that, one needs to talk to them with some respect, not real respect as such, but out of fear" because students carry dangerous weapons, "teachers are not free to teach students". When a student misbehaves, the teacher has difficulty of reprimanding the same. "What will I do if the student uses vulgar language to me? How will I react? What about if s/he has a knife?" These are the questions that teachers ask whenever they encounter a discipline problem in their respective classes. "Regulations for corporal punishment have made students difficult to deal with since they know their rights and will question it if a teacher administers corporal punishment."

The second effect of student indiscipline on teaching-learning process is poor performance. Because much time is spent on discipline cases, less time is spent on teaching, and this means that the syllabus is not completed hence students' inadequate preparation for the examinations and learning. Below are excerpts expressing this sentiment. "School discipline has a great affect on school academic performance. The school infrastructure or any other resources/materials are damaged because of this negative behavior. They end up messing the culture of

school. Teaching becomes a problem and the overall performance goes well below the least expected. Indiscipline poses a problem since it leads to poor results. Usually undisciplined students perform badly academically".

As noted above, school indiscipline is blamed for improper teaching. Teachers are always concerned about their lives rather than on trying to improve their teaching and student learning.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

This study explored teachers' views about the school regulations on discipline with regard to their connection to the Setswana culture. Five themes emerged from data and are summarized below together guided by the research questions. The study revealed that student misconduct is prevalent in Botswana schools. Although this seem to be a new phenomenon attributed to availability of TV and other media gadgets, parents are held responsible for not being firm on their children. The attitude displayed in the first theme was that unless parents teach their children desirable conduct, schools would not be free from disruptive students.

While the Ministry of Education perceives the school discipline regulations as an endeavor to promote and maintain order and safety in schools, teachers' point of view differs. According to these teachers, the corporal punishment, suspension and expulsion regulations are a scheme which strips off their rightful authority over students. They feel disempowered. They claim that these regulations contravene the cultural practice of child upbringing where every adult in a society was regarded as a parent and had the right to discipline any child as s/he sees it fit. Similarly, teachers regard themselves as parents, aunts and uncles of the student community. Their assertion is that if the Ministry of Education wanted to inculcate the Botswana cultural philosophy into school ethos, the school regulations would not be discriminating against positions. Each and every teacher, as a parent, would have been given the privilege of moulding students' characters into that of desirable citizenry. This, they believe, would be a successful approach to student discipline.

Because the school head, who is the only person designated to punish students cannot simultaneously be available at all times in all classrooms, teachers experience indiscipline at an alarming rate. They feel powerless. They assert that it is difficult to be a teacher these days. They complain that the Ministry of Education is not giving them enough support especially in cases of suspension and expulsion. Time and again, the school heads are ambivalent when it comes to making such decisions. This lack of action brings chaos in the school. When the Permanent Secretary overrules the school's recommendation, the student community mumbles and a seed of distrust is sown in the 'school culture'. The school head's

limited power over expelling students is regarded by teachers as the violation of his/her rights.

As the saying goes, "if you can't exercise discipline in the classroom, you'll teach nothing, and the students will learn nothing of significance", teachers in this study reported that it is difficult for them to teach because they are afraid of students. Also, much time is being wasted in solving disciplinary issues than on the teaching and learning process. As a result, schools performance poorly.

Finally, this paper concludes by asserting that student discipline has grown into an epidemic in African schools because culturally irrelevant disciplinary strategies are employed. Every culture has its own values and norms (Zaslavsky, 1982; Mbiti, 1988), and these are communicated to its young generation through disciplinary strategies, and being culturally conceptualized and negotiated, these strategies and the language therein, can only be understood by the members of the identifiable cultural group. This sentiment is intelligently captured by Mbiti's assertion: "Each people have its own religious system, and a person cannot be converted from one tribal religion to another: he has to be born in the particular society in order to participate in the entire religious life of the people (Mbiti, 1988)".

Therefore, to ignore the impact of culture on student discipline policies is tantamount to promoting cosmetic, abstract, disciplinary approaches; thus alienating the child from his/her own culture. It is for this reason that the Botswana government must not ignore this fact when reviewing student discipline regulations, lest she allows other cultures to encroach into the country's unique cultural heritage.

## Recommendations

The paper recommends that: 1. All teachers be given the authority to administer any kind of disciplinary measures without any discrimination. This will re-ignite the old African heritage of corporateness. Every adult in the country would be responsible for every child's behaviour, even if that particular child does not belong to the adults disciplining him or her. 2. A parent-teacher partnership against students' indiscipline should be established. Both parents and teachers should educate students on the impact of indiscipline in the school, and in particular about "*Botho*", "at home, at school, in the community and in the workplace" (Botswana Republic, 1997). 3. School discipline support groups should be formed in school communities. In these forums, peer to peer education must be encouraged. It is through the assistance of their equals that those struggling with alcohol and substance abuse can quit.

## Suggestions for further studies

As this was a small scale study, a country-wide study

with a larger population, is suggested. It is believed that such a study could better inform practitioners, teachers, educators and policy makers about the phenomenon. Also, other researchers in the area of discipline could replicate the study in other geographical or institutional settings. For example, a research similar to this one using a modified form of my instrument could be carried out in other African countries.

## Appendix A: STUDENT DISCIPLINE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE: -----

GENDER: FEMALE/MALE: -----

PRIMARY/SECONDARY SCHOOL-----

1. Comment on the extent to which student indiscipline poses problems in schools.
2. What factors contribute to students' misbehaviour in your school?
3. Have regulations on corporal punishment changed over the years? If so, in what ways?
4. If yes, how has this affected student behaviour in general?
5. Expulsion procedure is such that a school head can suspend a child and recommend to the Permanent Secretary that a child be expelled from school, and the PS has the final word. What are your views on the issue?
6. In the old African culture a child belonged to the whole community. How did this help in child discipline?
7. In what ways did the old African culture help the child develop good behaviour?
8. Do TV programs have any influence on children misbehaviour? If so, how?
9. Describe possible solutions for problems that both parents and school community face in these days.
10. Make any other observations that you think is relevant to the topic of school discipline.

## REFERENCES

- Banda A (2004). Parents order whipping of Masunga SSS students. Mmegi Newsletter. Gaborone 19 May.
- Bogdan RC, Biklen SK (1992). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Botswana Republic of 1997. Botswana long term vision: Vision 2016. Gaborone: Government Printers.
- Botswana Republic of 1967. Ministry of Education Chapter 58:01. Gaborone: Government Printers.
- Brauer S (1982). Chemistry teachers' role in curricular decision making. Unpublished thesis. University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Day-Vines NL, Day-Harison BO (2005). Culturally congruent strategies for addressing the behavioral needs of urban African American male adolescents. Professional Counseling, 8(3): 236.
- D'Ambrosio U (1985). Ethnomathematics and its place in the history of and pedagogy of mathematics. For the Learning Mathematics. 5 (1):44-48.
- Keoreng E (2004). Research blames corporal punishment for school drop-outs. Mmegi Newsletter. Gaborone 12 November.

- Liu XS , Meyer JP (2005). Teachers' perceptions of their jobs: a multianalysis of the teacher follow-up survey for 1994-95. *Teachers College Record*, 107(5):985-1003.
- Maleke L (2003). head teachers prescribe the stick. *Mmegi Newsletter*. Gaborone 17 October.
- Matsoga JT (2003). *Crime and School Violence in Botswana Secondary Education: The Case of Moeding Senior Secondary School*. PhD dissertation. Ohio University.
- Mbiti J (1988). *African religion & philosophy*. London: Heinemann
- McIntyre T, Silva P (1992). Culturally diverse childrearing practices: abusive or just different? *Beyond Behaviour*. 4(1): 8-12.
- Monroe CR (2005). Understanding the discipline gap through a cultural lens: Implications for the education of African American students. *Intercultural Education*, 16(4): 317-330.
- Reyes AH (2006). *Discipline, achievement, and race: Is zero tolerance the answer?* Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Straus A, Corbin J (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- Taylor SJ, Bogdan R (1998). *Introduction to qualitative research methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Zaslavasky C (1982). *Tic tac toe: from ancient Egypt to modern computer and other three-in-row games*. Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
- Zindi F (1995). An analysis of the arguments for and against the use of corpora punishment ins Zimbabwe's secondary schools. *Zimbabwe J. Educ. Res.* 7 : 69-83.