

Punitive Practices: Accentuating Violent Behavior Towards Classmates In High Schools In Cameroon



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Abstract

Aim: This study aims to examine the relationship between punitive disciplinary practices and the recurrence of violent behavior among high school students in Cameroon.

Methods: This research is based on the observation that the media and social networks regularly relay information about violence perpetrated by learners in schools. And yet, from an early age, adults have used punishment to discipline them and make them docile. So, how can we understand that a secondary school learner is capable of violence? Bandura's theory of social learning allows us to understand that learners are capable of imitating adults' reactions and reproducing them in situations they deem appropriate. Using a qualitative design, the study employed purposive sampling to select 10 high school students. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic content analysis.

Results: The results show that the most visible form of physical violence is punishment-expiation, which aims to inflict pain on the body of the person being punished. It is therefore favored by learners who want to defend themselves from the attacks of classmates or certain rogue school officials. Punishment-banning and punishment-signing are those that induce psychological violence.

Conclusion: The study concludes that punitive disciplinary practices in schools may reinforce violent behavior through modeling, as explained by Bandura's social learning theory.

Recommendation: The study recommends that educational supervisors and teachers adopt non-punitive, restorative approaches to discipline and receive training in conflict resolution and psychosocial support.

Keywords: *Punitive practices, violent behavior, classmates, school violence, social learning theory, Cameroon*

INTRODUCTION

Punishment can be defined as the set of devices and regulations that are commonly established to ensure the normal conduct of activities in a classroom and, more broadly, in an educational institution (Prairat, 2001). It therefore plays a positive role. This is why it is planned in almost all educational settings. This is why it has always existed in home as well as in schools. Like parents, teachers have found it an effective means of restoring order and discipline in classrooms. That's why all schools have internal regulations. School rules are a contract within the school community, designed to harmonize relations between all partners. In the school's internal rules and regulations, there's a section setting out the sanctions to which unruly learners are exposed. In the high schools of the third district of Douala, these sanctions are posted in classrooms, to continually draw the attention of learners to the nature of their actions. Every learner knows exactly what to expect when he or she breaks the rules. Punitive practices aimed at disciplining learners and creating a conducive learning environment are systematically applied in schools in response to acts of indiscipline. So, with the guardrails in place, we should expect to observe a peaceful school environment in which learning activities take place in complete tranquillity.

However, we are witnessing a daily increase in violent behavior on the part of certain learners towards fellow students, teachers, and even administrative staff. Feuzeu (2020) states that in recent months, rising tensions in Cameroonian schools have reached worrying proportions. This information is all the more true since cases of violence are recorded almost daily in Cameroonian schools. Some are managed internally and filed without further action, while recently, others are making themselves heard more and more thanks to social networks and the mass media, very committed to disseminating the slightest information Feuseu (2020). It is for this reason that the Minister of Secondary Education (MINESEC) in his message to the educational community for the 2019-2020 school year, had resolved to focus his fight on intensifying the implementation of the clean school concept, through the fight against violence and the security of schools.

Research Question

The main research question is how do punitive practices influence the manifestation of violent behavior among students in high schools in Cameroon?

The specific questions are:

RQ1: How does punishment exposure influence the manifestation of violent behavior among students in high schools?

RQ2: How does punishment-signing influence the manifestation of violent behavior among students in high schools?

RQ3: How does punishment exercise influence the manifestation of violent behavior among students in high schools?

RQ4: How does punishment-banning influence the manifestation of violent behavior among these students in high schools?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Punitive practices include practices generally described as negative, exclusive, abusive, coercive, repressive, aggressive, or violent in response to one or more problematic behaviors in the classroom or at school (Bernier, 2024). Punitive practices can take several forms. They

include copying, extra work, loss of privileges, isolation, withdrawal, detention, suspension (internal or external), and expulsion. Violent behaviors at school are defined by Beaumont et al. (2010) as any type of unwanted behavior, perceived as hostile and harmful, that violates the physical or psychological integrity of another person, their rights, or their dignity.

It is important to note that these behaviors take various forms depending on whether the learner is the victim or the administrative staff. For the learner, school violence refers to the negative behaviors they experience from their peers or adults at school or behaviors they perceive or observe in their environment. When school staff are the victims of school violence, we are talking about the negative behaviors they have been the target of from students, colleagues at their school, or even parents. School violence is defined according to the Government of Quebec (2019) as any type of unwanted behavior perceived as hostile and harmful, violating a person's physical or psychological integrity, rights, or dignity.

A punishment is not only a sanction given when inappropriate behavior has been observed but for us to truly call it a punishment, we need to observe a change in the behavior and its frequency, Lichtle (2013). This author highlights the criteria for effective punishment. Thus, for punishment to be effective, it is essential that the inappropriate behavior stop, but above all the student adopts the right behavior. Defrance (2003) speaks of the ineffectiveness of punishment, which can, on the contrary, transform the guilty party into a victim, or give him or her additional prestige in the eyes of his or her peers. Prairat (2007) distinguishes four main categories of punishment that exist or once existed in the classroom: Punishment-expiation, punishment signs, punishment-exercise, and punishment-banning.

Punishment-expiation consists of atoning for the offender's fault through bodily pain. This style of punishment emphasizes physical violence. The punished learner's body is subjected to physical shocks. The punishment must lead the punished to repentance. The suffering of the punished is a sign of repentance. Punishment therefore favors confession. Confessing is already halfway to virtue. Punishment-atonement therefore aims to "purge, purify and deliver" the punished (Prairat, 1997).

Punishment signs are those that emphasize psychological violence. It aims to shame the offending learner. The punishment sign lies in the fact of bearing on oneself the mark of one's fault. The punished student is given a distinctive sign that will enable everyone to identify him or her with the offense committed. This type of punishment is less common. But that doesn't mean it's disappeared. Nowadays, in the case of punishment by sign, the punished student is presented to the whole school at the Monday morning assembly as the learner who has committed a particular offense. Some school heads go even further, posting the learner and his or her fault on the school's WhatsApp groups. As a result, all parents in the group will be informed of the situation.

Punishment-exercise is the type of punishment that arouses boredom in the learner and constraint in the punished. It's the type of punishment that exposes the punished to long, tenacious, recurrent and tedious work, with the aim of normalizing and shaping the offender. For Prairat (1997), punishment-exercise is not brutal but painful. It induces a physical suffering different from that introduced by the whip. Punishments such as copies of course chapters or exercises, in connection with the fault committed, or verbs to be conjugated in all tenses, are no longer used in the primary cycle.

Punishment-banning targets the body in its relationship to other bodies (Prairat 1997). The punished student is excluded from the classroom or the school, either temporarily or

permanently. It comes into play when a pupil seriously interferes with the smooth running of teaching. Temporary exclusion from the classroom is intended to keep the punished learner away from classmates and from all activities taking place in the classroom or on the premises. Permanent exclusion is decided upon when it is realized that other measures taken have not enabled the student to sufficiently improve his or her behavior.

Potentially, the school is an environment that offers quality interactions, teaches prosocial behavior, proposes positive role models, provides a structuring and supportive framework, and so on. This suggests that the school environment plays an important role in preventing and regulating violent behavior (Gottfredson, 2001). Along the same lines, Bowen (2018) provides a comprehensive definition by stating that the school is a complex living environment conducive to multiple manifestations of violence, but also a privileged place to support the learning of positive social behaviors and the development of socio-emotional mechanisms allowing individuals to develop resources to adequately manage their interpersonal relationships.

The school environment is made up of children from all social backgrounds. The difference in behavior observed is because the family environment plays a significant role in the construction of the learner's identity. Thus, we find well-educated children and those who have received no education or only a rough education. School is where young learners come into contact with delinquent peers. A young person's school experience can have both positive and negative effects on the development of violent behavior (Galand et al 2012). Like all social environments, schools are also victims of violence. The WHO (2002, p.5) defines the term violence as follows: *"The intentional threat or use of physical force or power against oneself, others or a group or community that results in, or has a high risk of resulting in, injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation"*. For L'INSPQ (2018) violence at school is defined as any type of unwanted behavior, perceived as hostile and harmful, undermining a person's physical or psychological integrity, rights, or dignity. Violence can be experienced, and committed, by students or school staff, (INSPQ, 2018).

Several forms of violence can be distinguished. Gaudreau (2018) presents the following forms of violence: Verbal violence, physical violence, psychological violence, and sexual violence.

Verbal violence is the act of insulting using foul and abusive language, shouting and raising one's voice, blaming and reproaching a Person's deeds and actions, criticizing and using taunts or humiliating remarks, and threatening directly or indirectly. This type of violence is commonplace in our environment. It is practiced by the majority of the population, parents, teachers, and learners themselves. Physical violence is generally observed based on certain actions. Examples include slapping, pinching, shaking, biting, jostling, kicking, beating, throwing objects, confinement, locking up and the use of weapons.

Psychological violence can involve creating social or emotional isolation around a person, controlling a person's comings and goings, using various forms of implicit or explicit threats, denigration, stigmatization, using mental cruelty such as silence, or making a person believe he or she is stupid or good for nothing. Sexual violence includes assault, harassment, exploitation, coercion and touching. This situation is also common at school, where some learners and teachers touch young girls in the classroom. And some of them copy and do the same to fellow students in the absence of the teacher or supervisor.

Social-cognitive theory proposes to analyze psychological and social functioning as the result of a "reciprocal triadic causality" with its series of three factors: 1) factors internal to the

person, the cognitive, affective and motivational processing of events and experience; 2) factors determining behavior, which are patterns of action with their behavioral schemas; 3) the characteristics of the material and social environment, both producers and products of internal and behavioral factors. The socio-cognitive theory is essentially concerned with the subject in activity, with the notion of agentivity designating people's ability to anticipate and regulate their activity. Emphasis is placed on self-management in action with the concept of self-efficacy, i.e. people's belief in their ability to achieve their goals in a given situation (Bandura, 1997). Depending on the level of perceived efficacy, people will set goals, persist and regulate their emotions in the face of difficulties.

The social learning theory developed by Bandura argues that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling of the behaviors of others. It is based on three fundamental theoretical pillars: the role of vicarious, symbolic, and self-regulatory processes. Vicarious learning, or modeling, is based on the thoughtful observation of a model that meets certain favorable conditions in the eyes of the observer. Modeling represents a whole process of active observation by which, by extracting the rules underlying the observed behavioral styles, people construct behavioral modalities close to those manifested by the model and surpass them by generating new skills and behaviors, well beyond those that have been observed. This process has four facets: attention is the process that requires a high concentration of the learner because if he is distracted, it will affect the quality of learning. The learner must pay attention to the model and his actions. In the attentional process, simple actions are indeed easier to learn than complex ones. Memorization, in this process, the learner must be able to retain what he has observed. This involves transforming information into a mental representation.

Reproducing the observed action involves putting the learned behavior into practice. The learner's ability to reproduce the observed behavior of his teacher will depend on his physical and cognitive abilities, his level of practice, but also on the quality of the mental representation he has constructed. The motivation to reproduce human behavior is aroused by the expected consequences of the latter. This amounts to saying here that observation is the process that allows learners to model the violent behavior displayed by teachers when they administer corporal punishment. The second pillar consists of the tremendous human potential for symbolization, to analyze one's own experiences, to communicate, create, imagine, anticipate, and evaluate one's actions. Learners who are victims or Those well exposed to violence assess their ability to resist violent acts. The third aspect concerns the role of self-regulatory processes: highlighting the role of the subject's action. This study is grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals learn behaviors through observing and imitating others, particularly authority figures. Within the school setting, this suggests that punitive practices modeled by teachers may influence students' behavior toward peers.

METHOD

Our study population consisted of learners who had a history of abusing classmates. Student supervisors and class teachers helped us identify students who were regularly punished for violent behavior towards classmates and even teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select the 10 participants with whom we conducted in-depth interviews. After obtaining research approval from the school where the participating students are enrolled, we also received consent from their parents through an informed consent form that was sent to them. In this form, we clearly explained the objectives, potential risks, and benefits of participating in the

study. To ensure the confidentiality of the data, we deliberately refrained from identifying participants by name during the interviews. Additionally, we requested that the school administrator provide us with a secure and private space in which to conduct the interviews, away from prying eyes and ears.

The interview guide consisted of six parts. The first was made up of data on the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics, the second was made up of items that measure punishment-expiation modalities, the third was made up of items that measure punishment signs, and the fourth was made up of items that measure punishment-exercise. The fifth is made up of items that measure punishment banning, and the sixth part is made up of items that measure violent behavior. The data collected was analyzed using thematic content analysis. We began data processing by transcribing the interviews. We then developed a codebook for coding the transcribed text. Relevant information was grouped according to different themes.

Data presentation of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics

Table 1 present data on gender, age, classes attended, number of punishments per week, and number of repeats.

Table 1: Presentation of Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Respondents	Gender	Age	Class	Type of violent behavior	Siblings
Respondent 1	M	16	Upper six	Physical	7
Respondent 2	F	16	From 4	Physical	2
Respondent 3	M	17	From 4	Verbal	1
Respondent 4	F	15	From 5	Physical	1
Respondent 5	M	16	lower six	Psychological	3
Respondent 6	M	18	From 5	Physical	4
Respondent 7	M	17	Uper six	Physical	5
Respondent 8	M	15	Upper six	Psychological	2
Respondent 9	M	15	From 4	Physical	2
Respondent 10	F	16	From 5	Verbal	1

The data collected indicated that 3 respondents were females and 7 were males. As for the items measuring age, the table reveals that the youngest is 15 (3 respondents) and the oldest 18 (1 respondent). 4 are aged 16 and 2 respondents are aged 17. As for the item measuring class attended, 3 participants are in the ninth grade, 3 in the first grade, 3 in the second grade, and 1 in the last grade. As for the type of violence they inflict on their classmates, the majority are accused of inflicting physical violence (6 respondents). 2 respondents were accused of verbal violence, and 2 of psychological violence.

RESULTS

In this section, the results of the first research hypothesis are presented first.

Analysis of research hypothesis 1 (HR1): HR1: Punishment-expiation influences violent behavior towards classmates in high schools.

The item measuring how learners were punished in childhood revealed that:

Parents and teachers most often used the whip to punish learners when they made a mistake. Respondent 1: *“My parents only took the whip for and hit my buttocks a lot. They made sure it hurt me a lot”*. In the same vein, respondent 4 says: *“In my house, it was the whip. Sometimes my parents would pour water over your body before beating you”*. Respondent 8 added: *“At school, we used to swing you around, meaning that some classmates would hold your feet and others your hands, and the teachers would give you serious blows with their sticks”*. Parents and teachers didn’t always use corporal punishment; other methods were also used to punish.

One example is asking the learner to kneel. This method always violates the learner’s physical integrity. Respondent 10 says: *“My mother used to make you kneel in the yard, on the little stones, and the sun. And this for long hours”*. Similarly, respondent 6 says: *“My elementary school teacher would make you kneel, hold out your hands and put pebbles on them. If one of the pebbles fell, I didn’t tell her what could happen to you”*.

To punish learners, some leaders use deprivations of their fundamental rights. There are deprivations linked to food and leisure activities. The respondent3 says: *“My grandmother didn’t give me any food. The number of days of deprivation depended on the seriousness of the offense committed”*. In the same vein, respondent 5 says: *“My teacher deprived me of a break. I had to stay alone in class, and I couldn’t spend days with my classmates”*.

The item measuring how learners react when they feel offended brought out the following information: physical violence is used to defend oneself or to assert one’s authority. Respondent 1: *“When a classmate says or does something I don’t like, I just start beating him. I can’t complain to the supervisor because he won’t believe me”*. Respondent 3: *“I fight with my classmates because, when they’re punished by someone else, I always have a feeling of unfinished business. I’m satisfied when I stand up for myself”*. Respondent 4: *“I’m shy by nature, I don’t talk much, I just act”*.

Analysis of the second research hypothesis (HR2): Punishment-signal influences violent behavior toward classmates in high schools

The item measuring how learners feel when exposed in front of all schoolmates because of a fault committed yielded the following information:

Humiliation is the feeling experienced by the punished whose actions have been put on public display. Exposing someone’s mistakes always saddens them. It’s not pleasant to let others discover one’s faults. Respondent 2 says: *“I felt humiliated because it’s a way of sticking labels on me”*. Punished people feel a sense of injustice. They find that punishment is applied differently. Some learners are punished severely, while others are punished less severely, even though they have committed the same fault. Respondent 4: *“I felt I was the victim of an injustice because there are people who do more damage than I do, and who aren’t just like me”*.

- the feeling of rejection is the one that drives the other participants in our study. Respondent 5: *“I felt rejected because, after that scene, most of my friends didn’t want to walk with me anymore, I was like an outcast, it was difficult for me to make new friends”*.

The feeling of being reduced animates learners when they are exposed. Generally speaking, we’re respected when our mistakes are hidden. When our faults are exposed, respect also immediately disappears. Respondent 9 says: *“I felt diminished because when people talk about me, it’s with the fault I’ve committed that they point me out to people who don’t know*

me physically. The whole school knows me, and even in my neighborhood, everyone knows what happened at school”.

The feeling of being held back in one’s evolution is also felt by our participants: respondent 9: *“It’s a real brake on my evolution. In my neighborhood, parents no longer want their children to go to school with me. In short, I don’t know who to turn to if I need something, because nobody comes to me if they need something”.* The item that measures whether learners themselves are capable of publicly exposing a schoolmate for an offense committed was answered in the affirmative by some. The reasons given were as follows: It’s an opportunity to clear their name, especially if they’ve been unjustly accused. When a person is unjustly accused, when they find the opportunity to prove that they are not responsible for what happened, they should not hesitate to let the people who condemned them in the past know. Respondent 7 says: *“I’m going to do it because it’s a way for me to clear my name. I won’t be the only one who gets pointed at when he passes, and everyone will know who the real culprit is”.*

Public exposure of fellow students is also an opportunity for the punished to divert attention from himself to someone else. Respondent 3: *“Yes, I’ll do it, it’ll make people forget about me a little bit”.* Another argument is that it’s an opportunity to make other people understand that everyone can make mistakes. Respondent 5: *“Yes, I’m going to do it, so that others will understand that mistakes can happen to anyone”.* Others answered this item in the negative. The following arguments were put forward: The public presentation of other people’s mistakes leaves indelible marks that last a lifetime. Respondent 6 said: *“I wouldn’t do it, because once you’ve been branded, there’s nothing you can do about it. It’s going to follow you all your life. Even if you adopt the right behaviors, it’s still your mistake that people will keep in their heads”.*

The dehumanization of man is the reason why some participants refuse to expose the faults of their comrades. For them, human value is sacred: even if someone does the wrong thing, he’s still human. And his dignity must be preserved. Respondent 4: *“I wouldn’t do it because you feel you’re no longer human. That a dog is better than you. So I wouldn’t prefer someone else to feel the same pain”.*

Analysis of the third research hypothesis (HR3): Punishment exercise influences violent behavior toward classmates in high schools

The item measuring how learners find punishment exercises brought out the following information: Copying an exercise several times is seen to some extent as helping to retain the chapter in question. Writing down the same thing can become like the chorus of a song that’s played over and over in a station. So the student ends up retaining the chapter by copying the same thing over and over again. Respondent 10: *“I like this kind of punishment. When I’m asked to copy a lesson several times, I end up memorizing it.”*

It’s an exercise that seems less painful because the body doesn’t get the lashings. But writing for quite a long time creates joint pain, which is not the least of it. Respondent 7: *“I like it because it’s less painful than the whipping, but it’s still a painful punishment to carry out”.* In the same vein, respondent 3 says: *“The flesh doesn’t suffer, but you’re deprived of doing what you like for lack of time”.* This punitive practice makes some respondents feel sick. When a person spends several hours doing the same thing, a feeling of dizziness sets in. Respondent 8 says: *“When I copy a lesson or redo an assignment several times, I feel like a sick person”.*

This punishment also creates irritation in some respondents. Human beings are not machines; they can't take pleasure in doing the same thing over a period of time. And yet, in the context of the punishment exercise, they are obliged to do the same thing. Respondent 2 says: *"It gets on my nerves. It's terrible because it even paralyzes my fingers. When I do it, I feel like an idiot"*.

Analysis of research hypothesis four (HR4): Punishment-banning influences violent behavior toward classmates in high schools

For this research hypothesis, 6 of our participants claimed to have ever been temporarily excluded from the classroom, and one person claimed to have ever been permanently excluded from a school. The item measuring how learners felt when they were temporarily excluded from the classroom yielded the following information.

They were shocked to see that they were excluded from the classroom. Respondent 1 says: *"When the disciplinary board gave me a 3-day exclusion, I was shocked because I couldn't see what I was going to do for all that time. I couldn't stay at home and see what I was going to do"*. In the same vein, respondent 10 says: *"the first time, it was really like heaven"*. This idea is also shared by respondent 6, who says: *"I was disappointed to know that they could prevent me from having access to school, and yet I have the right to an education"*. In a similar vein, respondent 2 says: *"I was sad and relieved at the same time, because I was bored in class at the time. So being absent from class was a pleasure for me"*. In the same vein, respondent 4 says: *"It was a pleasure for me because I could have the time to do what I love (music)"*.

Some learners feel isolated after being exposed to the school. They find it hard to find friends who want to befriend them. Respondent 10 says: *"I wondered what I was going to do now that I was all alone in the neighborhood when everyone else was out. I didn't have anyone to chat to, and on top of that, my parents locked me out of the house before I left. It was hard for me. The feeling of injustice is also felt by learners who feel they are being punished unfairly because they just want to respond to the attack of other classmates. Respondent 8: "I was disappointed because we were told that school is the learner's fundamental right, so why exclude me from school when everyone knows that I just wanted to defend myself"*.

Satisfaction is also felt after a permanent exclusion. When a learner doesn't feel at ease in a school, he or she can develop indiscipline behaviors to push the school administration to exclude him or her from the establishment. Respondent 7: *"My exclusion from my old school was good because I was too stigmatized, scorned, and mocked. I liked this decision by the disciplinary board"*.

Analysis of the data revealed that the punishment experience experienced by almost all our respondents was physical violence. It's the one involving physical violence. It's the form of punishment that learners can most easily apply to their peers, and even to teachers. Punishment banning is also widely applied by learners. This manifests itself in the fact that learners can either exclude an undesirable person from their group or even exclude themselves personally from peer groups. Punishment signing is also becoming increasingly rare. We must remember from this analysis that punishment-atonements are strongly correlated with violence in schools.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Research question one showed that all our participants were punished by atonement. Since learners are beaten and jostled when they make mistakes, they don't hesitate to beat, slap and

jostle classmates when they feel offended by them. The practice of punishment, which is supposed to make the learner docile, instead produces the opposite effect. This result corroborates that of Charles (1997), who believes that punishment should be seen as a measure of last resort, to be used only when other techniques have failed. When a child is punished for wrongdoing, what they often remember first is the pain caused by the punishment, and sometimes they don't even retain the lesson that was meant to be taught through it. Filliozat (2011) also believes that the notion of punishment should be eradicated. Because this concept is pejorative, it triggers defensive mechanisms in the learner against the punitive act. As a result, the learner's attention is focused on the effects of the punishment rather than on the message the teacher intends to convey. Frequent exposure to punitive practices can increase the risk of affiliation with deviant peers or street gangs (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

The second point is that the use of punitive measures has an impact on the rise of violent behavior in high schools. Learners who are subjected to such punishments are often labeled, and this label can follow them throughout their lives. This type of punishment leads to psychological violence. Unfortunately, this form of violence is often overlooked, as both the perpetrators and the victims are often unaware of its existence. An invisible conflict may develop between educators and learners. These findings are consistent with the work of Payne (2015) and Trotman et al. (2015), who assert that punitive practices contribute to the development of negative relationships with school staff.

Research hypothesis three, which measures punishment exercise, shows that it causes the person to become bored. Our analysis shows that punishment exercise is also at the root of violent behavior because by doing the exercises all day long, the learner is deprived of other activities. This involuntary deprivation in the learner sometimes generates a desire for revenge, which he will not hesitate to express towards his peer at the slightest opportunity. Our result is consistent with those of (Boudreault et al., 2019; Welsh, 2023), who state that punitive practices can be the source of the escalation of problematic behaviors.

For research hypothesis 4, it appears that banishment-type punishment increases the occurrence of violent behaviors observed in Cameroonian high schools. This refers to symbolic violence, which is characterized by the temporary or permanent exclusion of a learner from the classroom or school. Our results are consistent with those of (Jean-Pierre et Parris-Drummond 2018), who believe that punitive practices, including school suspension, have negative short-, medium-, and long-term effects on students.

In the immediate term, the learner can no longer take part in lessons. This leads to a decrease in motivation to learn (Payne, 2015), and in concentration (Cohen et al., 2023). The consequences are visible in the decline in academic performance, leading to more failure, an increase in absences, and a higher risk of school dropout (Noltemeyer et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

This study is based on the observation that not a week goes by without hearing of a case of violence perpetrated on a teacher or learner by a learner. Adults have always used punishment to make them docile. How can we understand that in adolescence they are capable of violence when all their childhood punishment was used to make them disciplined and docile? This study is based on the observation that not a week goes by without hearing about a case of violence committed against a teacher or a student by another student. Adults have always used punishment to make them obedient. The research revealed that punitive practices most often

produce the opposite effects because teachers and learners do not perceive punishment in the same way. For the teacher, punishing a student remains a legitimate act aimed at contributing positively to their education. However, the learner remembers more the pain of the punishment. The ease with which violent acts are committed is linked to the punishments received. We conclude that through the process of imitation, learners reproduce what teachers do. Therefore, if we want a school environment free of all forms of violence, violent punitive practices must be replaced with alternative approaches. We recommend that school authorities raise awareness among school staff about the negative effects of punitive practices on the cognitive development of learners. We also recommend that the State support the professional development of school staff to minimize, or even eliminate, the use of punitive practices in schools. To teachers, we recommend the use of alternative methods such as positive and proactive educational practices.

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