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Corporal Punishment is a Necessary Evil: Parents' Perceptions on The Use of Corporal Punishment In School

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Abstract

Corporal punishment in Zimbabwe is a “hot potato” that is bringing challenges both on the legal and cultural fronts. My interest in doing this study stems from the Supreme Court ruling that ruled the use of corporal punishment is unconstitutional. After the ruling, it became imperative to understand the views of different people pertaining to the use of corporal punishment, especially in schools because that is where it is prevalent. For this study I sought to discover and understand the perspectives and worldviews of parents with regards to the use of corporal punishment in schools. I used the basic interpretive approach for this qualitative research study. A sample of nine participants was selected during one visitation weekend at the school. I collected data through interviews and was analyzed through conventional content analysis. The research findings revealed parents advocated for the continuance in use of corporal punishment. The study revealed that parents considered that corporal punishment had immediate benefits, future benefits, and was also cited in the Bible. The study recommends that Zimbabwe as a country should come up with laws on corporal punishment use that do not erode its cultural values nor break children’s human rights.

Keywords: Corporal punishment; necessary evil; discipline; parents; biblical context

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Introduction

A parent once told me that "if my child were to fail, I will hold you accountable because I have heard that you do not use a stick to put them in line." The statement is in tandem with most findings from studies done on corporal punishment that say that parents, especially in Africa; believe that corporal punishment is part of the child-rearing practices on the continent (Shumba, Mpofu, Chireshe, & Mapfumo, n.d; Zindi, 1995). The issue of corporal punishment in Zimbabwe is a serious matter since the ruling by Justice Esther Muremba who ruled that corporal punishment or the caning of students is unconstitutional (Gambanga, 2015; Magaisa, 2015). Writers on the subject fear that the ruling will breed criminals in schools because the students are now aware that they are not supposed to be disciplined using corporal punishment (Gambanga, 2015; Gudyanga, Mbengo, & Wadesango, 2014).

Prior to the ruling, corporal punishment was used in schools to instill discipline and promote a proper learning environment. In most schools, the Head (Principal) or the Deputy Head were permitted to use corporal punishment and required to record the incident in a log book (Shumba, 2003; Zikhali & Perumal, 2014). However, in practice, teachers would use corporal punishment in the absence of the Head. Parents knew that teachers used corporal punishment and supported the action, arguing that it was an African way of bringing up children (Shumba et al., n.d; Zikhali & Perumal, 2014). In some perspectives, corporal punishment may be regarded as physical child abuse which must never be tolerated.

Parents seem to be divided on the use of corporal punishment in schools by teachers (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013). Some studies have found that parents are of the opinion that students should be taught of their rights to protect themselves from abusive teachers (Makwanya, Moyo, & Nyenya, 2012). The parents in this study were found to be against the use of corporal punishment as a way disciplining their children. They advocated for counseling instead of the use of corporal punishment. Some parents believed reinforcement of good behavior through reward system may be a better way to deal with issues of indiscipline (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013). However, some parents trusted the teachers, considered them capable of disciplining students when they misbehave, and felt that they, as parents had no role to interfere at school (Makwanya, et al., 2012).

The use of corporal punishment is meant to act as a discouragement or deterrent for students from doing the similar bad behavior in the future (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013). It is important to understand from literature the arguments for and against the use of punishment in a bid to lay the ground for the voice of the parents concerning the use of corporal punishment.

Advocates of Corporal Punishment

Advocates of corporal punishment consider it a necessary and effective way of disciplining students, and to some students it is the only language they understand (Shumba, Ndofirepi, & Musengi, 2012). This position is ingrained and has become accepted in black communities. Corporal punishment is seen as a deterrent, a reformative and retributive mechanism with the aim of bringing positive behavior in schools and society (Chemhuru, 2010). Literature points out that some proponents of corporal punishment have a history of being physically abused when they were young and they see no reason why that should stop

(Shumba, et al., 2012). Many advocates of corporal punishment argue that it spurred them to work hard and be successful (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2015). The argument the advocates presented in support of corporal punishment was that if it worked for them, then it should work for their children.

Corporal punishment is used at home and at school in Zimbabwe. In black homes, particularly Zimbabwe, parents view spanking positively and consider it as an appropriate method of molding positive behavior (Shumba, et. al., 2012). Teachers are regarded as parents at the school; hence they act in loco-parentis within the school and use corporal punishment (Matope & Mugodzwa, 2011). Studies have found that although corporal punishment was banned in schools, teachers continue using it especially in remote rural schools where supervision by the Ministry of Education is less frequently (Shumba et al., 2012). The justification for its continued use is that students are developed and molded into loyal, patriotic and productive citizens of the country (Matope & Mugodzwa, 2011).

Teachers consider corporal punishment as an important part of the teaching and learning process. Any attempt at outlawing corporal punishment in schools may give a false assumption that all students respond to the same motivational and disciplinary methods (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2015). Children come from different backgrounds, with diverse values and morals, and cannot all be disciplined with the same method. Children should be exposed to different kinds of discipline and, in the process, learn that committing an offense brings commensurate consequences (Gudyanga, et al., 2014). Matope and Mugodzwa (2011) present an argument that force must be used when negotiations and peaceful means fail. In the same vein, corporal punishment should be used on students when word of mouth has failed.

Teachers consider that corporal punishment results in well-behaved and disciplined students, and any attempt to ban it will put the authority of the teacher in jeopardy (Matope & Mugodzwa, 2011). Children and impugners of corporal punishment should be made aware that the role of corporal punishment is not to destroy but to build (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2015). The researchers also found that the Heads (Principals) supported the use of corporal punishment by teachers but argued that it should be administered properly and soberly.

Advocates of corporal punishment have thwarted voices of children concerning corporal punishment arguing that children are young, do not know what is right for them, and are not yet intellectually developed to understand how corporal punishment works for their own benefit (Chemhuru, 2010). The argument is supported by some studies that cite older people as admitting that corporal punishment they got in school helped them become a better person. Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru (2015) posits that countries that campaign for the outlawing of corporal punishment like America have chaos in their own schools because corporal punishment is illegal. Discipline in these schools rules supreme and both teachers and students are intimidated by bullies. Zimbabwe should not be dictated upon by other countries, and should do what works for her (Gambanga, 2015).

Those who advocate for alternative ways of instilling discipline in students, like manual work, are attacked by corporal punishment advocates. The advocates claim that asking a child in the Zimbabwean context to do manual work will only harden the offender (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013). At times, slow learners would rather do manual work rather than be troubled by having to do academic work. In most cases, those who do manual work will be

supervised by a school prefect or a teacher, thus the supervisor is somehow punished (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013). The best and easy way is to use corporal punishment which may even last for less than a minute.

Impugners of Corporal Punishment

Humanitarians seek to abolish corporal punishment in Zimbabwe arguing that it is inhuman, abusive and breaches children's fundamental human rights (Shumba, et al., 2012). Those who are against corporal punishment, whom I call impugners of corporal punishment, are campaigning for the immediate revocation of all laws that legalize it. The impugners of corporal punishment consider it humiliating, and should never find its way back in Zimbabwean school system and society at large (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2015). The student may come to believe that the only way that society functions is through the use of force or violence. To children, violence will become an acceptable way of dealing with issues (Chemhuru, 2010).

Corporal punishment creates enmity between the teacher and student, and may in turn result in the student not liking the subject taught by the teacher (Gudyanga, et al., 2014). This detachment and resentment may affect the emotional development of the student. There are some students who are just problematic and would not want to be disciplined (Shumba, 2003). Teachers dealing with such students use corporal punishment as a last resort to instill discipline so that learning takes place. Some students respond more to corporal punishment than any other form of discipline (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, 2015).

Most literature against corporal punishment is either European or American, and scholars in Africa argue that Africa, particularly Zimbabwe, is different from these countries. Gambanga (2015) argued that Zimbabweans cannot just pluck laws from British statutes and make it their own since the countries' cultures are worlds apart. It is important for Zimbabwe to develop its own laws that reflecting its cultural values (Gambanga, 2015).

Personal Influences

For the sake of transparency, I have never supported the use of corporal punishment in schools, let alone the home. I do not remember when corporal punishment was used on me during my primary education. However, I do remember vividly the beatings I received at the hands of my teachers for misbehaving and for getting low grades. I am not convinced though that the use of corporal punishment helped to shape me to become the person I am today. At the very least, the experience shaped me to become an advocate for the abolition of the practice in Zimbabwean schools. I became interested in the topic of corporal punishment after I was beaten by a teacher after having been accused of making noise during study time. I had to seek medical attention after the beating and the nurses were not in agreement of whether to make the issue a police case or not.

I grew to hate the teacher who had inflicted corporal punishment on me. I began to detest the use of corporal punishment, and I remain so up to this day. After completing my Bachelor's degree in education, I became a teacher and admit to having used corporal punishment in extreme cases. At times, I threatened to use corporal punishment and the students would apologize and promise never to misbehave again. Although I have used corporal punishment, I never subscribed to the view that it was the right way to discipline

students. I only used corporal punishment because of pressure from senior teachers at the school who often told me that students at the school only understand the language of the stick. Even the Head argued that not using corporal punishment will result in students not liking teachers who use it and that it was not good for relations at school.

I transferred to another school, and I found that they did not use corporal punishment as a way to discipline students. If it was used, it was on rare occasions and I did not witness it. I would threaten to use corporal punishment but I never used it. As a grown up man and having children, I believe corporal punishment is not the right way of disciplining children. I would threaten my daughter with the use of corporal punishment, and she would apologize profusely, and all will be well. Although I have used corporal punishment, I do not believe it is a good, proper, or right way of disciplining a child or a student. Having used it before does not make it right.

Statement of the Problem

Since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, corporal punishment has been used in schools by the teachers to discipline students who misbehave. The aim is to ensure that schools remain places of teaching and learning without disruptive behavior by some rowdy students. Previous research has focused on the views of teachers and administrators on their perceptions of the use of corporal punishment. Very few studies have focused on the views of parents, especially those with children attending private boarding schools

The Purpose Statement

The purpose of this basic interpretative study is to discover and understand the perspectives and worldviews of parents with regards to the use of corporal punishment in their school. Parents' voice is essential in this area for they are the rightful custodians of the children in schools.

Research Questions

In an endeavor to get an understanding of the perceptions of parents on the use of corporal punishment, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of parents and guardians on the use of corporal punishment in schools?
2. How do parents and guardians make meaning of the use of corporal punishment on their children in schools?

Method

Research Design

The study is a qualitative study and I used the basic interpretive approach. According to Merriam and Associates (2002), a basic interpretive approach is used when the researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon. I used the basic qualitative study because I wanted to discover and understand the perspectives and worldviews of the parents with respect to the use of corporal punishment (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Qualitative methods can also be used on things already known so as to gain new perspectives or to gain more in-depth information (Hoepfl, 1997).

Participants

Participants (n = 9) were drawn from parents and guardians who had visited their children at a boarding school on visitation days. At the time of the research, all participants were either a parent or a guardian to at least one child attending the boarding school. Of the nine participants, six were males, and three were females. The parents who participated in the study volunteered after being informed of the nature of the study. The interviews were conducted to get an understanding of parents or guardians' views with regards to the use of corporal punishment by teachers on their children. The sampling procedure that was performed for this study was purposive, as I could not interview all the parents. For the purposes of privacy and anonymity, parent number has been used throughout this research paper.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 9)

Parent Number	Gender	Marital Status	Age group	Number of Children	Used CP	CP Good/Bad
1	Male	Married	30 – 35	2	No	Bad
2	Male	Married (T*)	35 – 40	3	Yes	Good
3	Female	Married	50 – 55	4	Yes	Good
4	Male	Married (T*)	45 – 50	4	Yes	Good
5	Female	Married	45 – 50	2	Yes	Good
6	Female	Widowed	35 – 40	2	Yes	Good
7	Male	Married	40 – 45	3	Yes	Good
8	Male	Married (G ¹)	55 – 60	5	Yes	Bad
9	Male	Widowed	30 – 35	2	No	Bad

Note: T means customary marriage and G¹ means the parent is a guardian to the child*

Procedure

The parents are allowed to visit their children on the first Saturday of every month. During the visit, it is expected by the administrators that parents take the time to see their children's progress in school, bring them some "pocket" money and some foodstuffs. The parents may also take some time to talk with the teachers, and learn from the teachers about their child's progress. The visit may also be used to elect School Development Association (SDA), a parent-led association that is responsible for spearheading development at the school.

I initiated contact with each potential participant to obtain contact details. I then made a follow up visit to interview each of them during the time I was in Zimbabwe. The interviews were conducted at a place convenient to the parent, either at home or at work. The parents came from different parts of the country. The majority of the parents (five) came from Harare, three came from Gweru, and one came from Masvingo town. Those who permitted the interview at home gave a great amount of information. I also asked questions through email. Unfortunately, the tenth parent did not respond to email and was removed from the study.

Data Collection

For a basic interpretive study, the form of data collection used was interviews in a bid to discover and understand the perspectives and worldviews of parents with regards to the use of corporal punishment in their school (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Through interviewing, I hoped to explore and get an understanding of how parents make meaning of the use of corporal punishment. In order to understand this meaning as the researcher, I have to be immersed in the study so that I interpret the data. Merriam and Associates (2002) postulated that the meaning is mediated through the researcher as an instrument, the strategy is inductive, and the outcome is descriptive.

I used Dolbeare and Schuman's three series interview approach that allows the interviewer and participant to "plumb the experience and to place it in context" (Seidman, 2013). The first interview question was designed to establish the context of parents' experiences with the use of corporal punishment. The second allowed parents to reconstruct the details of their experiences within the context in which the corporal punishment occurred. The third and last interview questions encouraged parents to reflect on the meaning their experiences held for them (Siedman, 2013).

Data Analysis

The data analysis was done through conventional content analysis. Content analysis is "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278). In simple terms, the approach uses a set of codes to reduce large volumes of verbal or print material into small more manageable data from which researchers identify patterns and gain insight (Hall, 2015). The advantage of the content analysis method is that direct information is gained from the participants without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In addition, conventional content analysis provides for corroborating evidence for a phenomenon (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Data analysis process began with the transcription process. The following steps in conventional content analysis were done to analyze the data:

- Reading of the transcribed data repeatedly to get a sense of the data and achieve immersion
- Data was read to derive codes by identifying exact words that captured key concepts of the study
- Developing categories and a coding scheme (frame). Since there was not theory available for this study, I generated categories inductively from the data
- Making of notes of my impressions, thoughts and initial analysis
- Making labels for the codes that emerge from the data. I checked the coding repeatedly to avoid inconsistency.
- Sorting codes into categories (or themes) based on their relatedness and connection.
- Codes were grouped into meaningful clusters from the emergent categories. I rechecked for consistency in my coding after coding the entire data set.

- Based on the relationships that exist, subcategories were grouped into smaller number of categories
- Made sense of the themes identified, and also made inferences and presented my reconstructions of meaning derived from the data. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Thomas, 2006; Zhang & Wildemuth, n.d).

Results

The participant group (n=9) was composed of six males and three females. Of the nine participants, 77.78% were married and 22.22% were widowed. Of the seven participants who were married, 28.57% were traditionally married. However, under Zimbabwean law, the customary marriage is recognized under law as official. All the participants had at least one child at the school where I conducted the study. One male participant was a guardian of the child who was a student at the school. Of the nine participants, 77.78% of the participants had used corporal punishment at home as a method of disciplining the child, while 22.22% had not used corporal punishment. The two participants who had not used corporal punishment fell into the 30-35 age group. Those who had used corporal punishment tended to be on the older side. 66.67% of the participants said corporal punishment is good, while the remaining 33.33% said it was bad. One parent said using corporal punishment does not mean that he regards it as good, but consider it as a necessary evil.

Upholding the use of Corporal Punishment

Most parents who were asked about their view of corporal punishment believed that corporal punishment should be upheld and be used in schools. The argument provided by most parents was that corporal punishment molded "our" generation and "we" grew up able to differentiate something good from bad. Some parents said that the use of corporal punishment must be upheld, but did not give reasons for their position. The parents said that if corporal punishment worked for them, then it should work for their children. Corporal punishment has been there throughout history, and it should be maintained for it helped shape children and the society became safer.

Some parents said the use of corporal punishment should be upheld, and that it must only be used for disciplinary purposes. Some parents said that teachers who use corporal punishment tend to abuse it by using it excessively for petty infractions. Parents could not state what should be done to ensure that corporal punishment being administered is appropriate to the infraction.

Corporal Punishment immediate benefits

One of the themes that emerged supporting the use of corporal punishment in school concerned the immediate benefit of maintaining order in schools. Some parents said that the "cry for the abolishment of the use of corporal punishment has seen a rise in juvenile delinquency." They argued that the use of corporal punishment in schools especially in Zimbabwe is of benefit to the normal functioning of the school. Corporal punishment is the only way to "purify" students when growing up, and any other means will only bring disaster.

Some parents stated that some students went as far as taking drugs and alcohol, and just letting it go without punishment, may result in the increased use of drugs by the student.

The only way to discipline the student under such circumstance is to use corporal punishment. To the parents, discipline through the use of corporal punishment saves lives. Parents said that the law prohibits the use of corporal punishment, but argued that they cannot let the law run their families. They said they are responsible for their children's welfare and upbringing and it is their position that if a child misbehaves, corporal punishment should then be used.

Corporal Punishment as a future benefit

If corporal punishment is used properly to discipline students, they will become better citizens of the country. Some parents argued that teens who commit heinous crimes in the country did not experience corporal punishment. In such cases, a teen found guilty of having committed a crime in a court of law, might receive corporal punishment instead jail time with hardcore criminals. This made it less likely that the teen might be influenced to continue criminal activity.

The parents considered that some juveniles committing crime might not have corporal punishment, thus were not corrected early in their lives. Some parents said that the country cannot afford to use its resources on rehabilitating young juveniles when crime might be prevented through corporal punishment. Their argument was that if a juvenile is disciplined by spanked, then the child will not repeat the bad behavior.

Corporal Punishment in Biblical terms

Another theme that emerged from the study was the reference to the Bible in the use of corporal punishment. Parents said they had to refer to the Bible for guidance and have to respect what the Bible advised. According the parents, they quoted Proverbs 13:14 that states, "Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them" (Bible New International Version, 2011).

One parent cited Biblical verses that attest to the use of corporal punishment and argued that in the eyes of God, it is right to discipline the child. The verses that the parents cited are: Proverbs: 3:11-12, 13:24, 19:18, 20:30, 22:15, and 23:13-14. The parent argued that the last verse even advises the parent not to fear death when disciplining the child using corporal punishment. Proverbs 23: 13-14 states that "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death."

The parents challenged pastors of churches who argue that the use of corporal punishment is wrong to state if they had never used it when they felt that their own children had gone too far in their misbehavior. Disciplining children is part of making sure that they grow to be responsible citizens.

Options to the use of Corporal Punishment

One of the themes that emerged from the study focused on alternatives to the use of corporal punishment. Parents asked if there were no better ways of instilling discipline in students rather than the use of corporal punishment. Some of the parents said that a resourceful adult can find ways of disciplining a child without using corporal punishment. To them, use of corporal punishment by either a parent or a teacher, shows that the teacher is not able to think and shows that he/she is short of options of disciplining a child or a student. The

parents said there might be a danger of grooming children who tend to be physically resilient and end up used to it, not feeling the pain at all. According to the parents in this category, they said that children of this period and age are somehow strange, may take pride in being beaten by the teacher or parent, and might treat it as a routine.

Discussion

The purpose of this basic interpretative study is to discover and understand the perspectives and worldviews of parents with regards to the use of corporal punishment in the school where their children were students. The parents' voices are essential in this area for they are the rightful custodians of the children in schools. The overwhelming response was to uphold the use of corporal punishment on their children as a way of ensuring discipline exists in schools.

The finding from that was that the majority of the parents had used corporal punishment at home and most stated that they will continue to use to discipline their children. This finding is consistent with previous research that states that most African parents in Zimbabwe believe in the use of corporal punishment (Shumba, et al., n.d; Zindi, 1995). The belief is that if corporal punishment worked for them when they were young, then it should also work for them. This study found that parents who used corporal punishment in the home are likely to accept its use at school. This is consistent with findings from other research studies particularly those done in Zimbabwe. Corporal punishment is viewed as part of the African cultural practice that nurtures good behavior (Shumba, 2001). Parents believe that the use of corporal punishment in schools spurs children to work hard in their studies and succeed.

Other studies found that many adults claim that corporal punishment works because undesirable behavior in children stops and desirable behavior is promoted (Willow, 2010). The belief is that the methods have been passed from generation to generation and never harmed anyone. With this claim, the study found that parents emphasized that the use of corporal punishment should be upheld and no laws should be used to control their children in the home. Parents agreed on the use of corporal punishment in schools and noted that it yielded desired results of atonement and discipline (Gambanga, 2015).

In light of this parents argued that corporal has immediate and long-term benefits. Students will learn at an early age that misbehaving has its consequences (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013). The use of corporal punishment has brought about discipline and peace in the country and should be maintained (Gambanga, 2015). Zimbabwe is one of the most peaceful nations in Africa, and this can be attributed, in part, to the use of corporal punishment when students do wrong. Zimbabwe cannot blindly follow what other nations are doing in the name of human rights without considering its own culture (Gambanga, 2015).

Parents from the study quoted the Bible as the sole guidance they use to instill discipline in their children. This is a new finding that no previous research has found; therefore this study contributes to the body of literature on the view of the use of corporal punishment in school in the home. Gambanga (2015) argued that corporal punishment has been used in the world since creation and in most cases it proved to be an effective measure for correcting bad behavior. There are some who believe that it is not appropriate to invoke

the Bible to justify violence against children. Willow (2010) is of the belief that humans have been socialized and accepted that routine violence against children is normal and safe. The claim that adults make of saying that they have not suffered any harm from corporal punishment is based on lies and failure to face “our own pain and suffering in childhood” (Willow, 2010 p. 25). Miller (1991) claimed that, those who experienced such violence have built high walls to hide themselves from their painful past.

Those who tend to be against corporal punishment argued on the basis of it as being inhuman and degrading (Gudyanga, et al., 2014). The impugners of corporal punishment argue that other alternative forms of punishment which do not cause physical pain must be used. In Zimbabwe, the immediately available alternative is manual work. However, manual work on its own may cause pain to the doer. Then there are those who argued that children should be counseled, (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013) and at times at the rate at which the children in Zimbabwe's schools misbehave, the time to counsel is not even available. In addition, experience has shown that some children will not change if rebuked by word of mouth (Gambanga, 2015). They have grown used to be beaten and removing the stick will bring disaster in Zimbabwe's schools

Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is up to the people of Zimbabwe on whether to let corporal punishment be used in schools or not. Zimbabwe adopted a new constitution that outlawed the use of corporal punishment. If this is what Zimbabweans want, then be it. However, the research this research has shown the majority of parents interviewed supported the use of corporal punishment in schools. Zimbabwean laws are written by people and can be repealed by people and institute a law that allows the use of corporal punishment in schools (Gambanga, 2015). One thing that we must learn is never to simply copy and paste laws from the Western countries as their culture is different from ours.

Zimbabwe has its own indigenous cultural values and practices and values. One of those values is greeting and respecting our elders. The people of Zimbabwe generally respect elders and it is a must (Hampson, 1990). Willow (2010) states that instead of children respecting elders, there must be mutual respect. This is in contradictory with the Shona culture of Zimbabwe that requires and expects children to respect elders. The argument that Willow (2010) provides is that once respect is regarded as a must, seeds of exploitation are sown and corporal punishment will be used to enforce respect in children. This is against human rights and must not be allowed to happen.

With this study, it is recommended that the government of Zimbabwe should come up with a lasting solution to the issue of corporal punishment. An example might be a legislation that will make schools manageable and promote learning. The legislation should not be in contradiction with the indigenous culture of the people of Zimbabwe. At the same time, children have rights, and these rights should be upheld and be respected. It is not enough for the government of Zimbabwe to take and respect the wishes of one group at the expense of the other. For example Mugabe and Maposa, (2013) and Zindi (1995) found that parents, teachers and principals wished to have corporal punishment remain in schools, while Matope and Mugodzwa (2011) found that students were against the use of corporal punishment and called for its immediate and permanent withdrawal from the school system. Parents and

teachers seem to argue that outlawing corporal punishment will make schools unmanageable (Zikhali & Perumal, 2014). On the other hand, students argue that it is an abuse of the worst kind and is abused by some teachers (Shumba et al., n.d.). All groups of people in the country need to be protected by the law, thus the legislation should ensure the concerns are addressed with respect to maintaining discipline in schools. Is it time to regard corporal punishment as a necessary evil?

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