

BALANCING TEACHER AUTHORITY AND CHILD RIGHTS: RE-IMAGINING THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN GROOMING SECONDARY SCHOOL TEENAGERS

CLARENCE RUWENDE¹ AND TRUST MACHAYA²

Abstract

In this empirical presentation, complexities of striking a balance between teacher authority and child rights in the grooming of secondary school teenagers are explored. This article navigates the teacher role in the counselling and up-bringing of teenagers in Zimbabwe which, of late, has been hugely affected by legislation which seems to gravitate towards the uplifting of children's rights over modelling of good citizenship. This research is couched in the lenses of inclusivity which emphasises the need to create environments where everyone feels valued, respected and able to participate fully. Through qualitative methods, interviews were conducted with 10 purposively sampled participants who responded to three questions: What are the challenges faced by teachers in grooming teenagers at secondary school? How do teachers balance their authority with respect for child rights? And, What strategies can be employed by teachers in grooming teenagers at a secondary school in Gwanda North District, Zimbabwe. One of the major findings of the research is that teachers should be allowed to continue playing the communal role of grooming teenagers using all the tools required, including corporal punishment although the practice should be modified. In light of the findings, the study argues that the teachers who should continue

1 Department of Humanities and Languages, Joshua Nqabuko Nkomo Polytechnic College, Gwanda, Zimbabwe ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2734-569>, clarenceruwende@gmail.com

2 Department of Science Design and Technology Education, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2889-9067>, machayatrust1@gmail.com

their role of counselling teenagers are currently vulnerable and, hence, should be empowered through legislation, parent involvement, and government involvement through proper remuneration and training support in order to foster human rights-based approaches.

Keywords: *child protection, teacher authority, mentorship*

INTRODUCTION

The traditional role of offering counselling to teenagers by teachers seems to have been usurped by legislation which has proved futile attempts by the traditional counsellors. The current setup in Zimbabwe leaves the role of the traditional teacher blurred and, for the most part, shrouded in mystery. Teachers find themselves in a dilemma on how to operate or attempt to socialise new members of society without being court marshalled. According to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), fundamental rights for children, including the right to education, protection from abuse, and the right to express their views, should be upheld. The implementation of these rights is crucial in the discussions on the role of teachers in the grooming of teenagers. The Constitution of Zimbabwe, adopted in 2013, contains specific provisions related to children's rights, primarily in Chapter 4, which outlines the Bill of Rights. Section 81 specifically addresses the rights of children which everyone, including the educators, should be aware of. As such, the teacher role is hugely curtailed by the law and other educational policies. The argument posited herein is whether these statutes take into cognisance the inherent role of grooming children by teachers.

One major challenge in Zimbabwe is that corporal punishment, which was key in administering discipline in schools, was outlawed based on the constitutional Court ruling of April 2019 (Nemukuyu, 2019). Section 68A of the constitution outlaw's corporal punishment in schools, using the constitutional grounds prohibiting any physical or

psychological torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. However, the continuous re-emergence of corporal punishment is testament that the strategy is a force to reckon with in behaviour control (Gudyanga *et al.*, 2014). It should also be noted that punitive measures like corporal punishment have always been part and parcel of shaping of good human behaviour in the African context, whereby it was believed that Africans clearly recognised, and indeed expected, physical abuse as a reward for misdemeanours (Mayisela, 2017). *Ubuntu*, a part of African heritage, also dictates that in the development of character, there should be respect of elders or those in authority (Achi, 2021). Thus, parental and teacher role should not be downplayed in child discipline.

In some case, a parent was temporarily jailed for disciplining her son who had hosted an unauthorised, illicit party where drugs and alcohol were consumed, This put society in a dilemma as, on one hand, the parental role is that of disciplining the child, whilst on the other end, the law dictates that it is a criminal offence (Jaravaza, and Moyo, 2024). The situation is untenable as the legislation seems to be working against the very foundations of child discipline. The dilemma for the teacher is how to deal with issues of indiscipline if parents are also limited in instituting corrective measures. It is the primary concern of this study to establish how the teacher is executing the role of grooming learners, without violating standing statutes on child rights.

Thus, for the teachers to discharge their roles effectively, respect should be accorded to them as they act in *loco parentis*. Some critics argue that the current provisions of the law largely favour child rights over the shaping of good citizenry, hence placing the teacher role in a dilemma. Actually, the teacher, as part of the microsystem, affects the behaviour of the child (Simic *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, it is the importance of uncovering and developing a set of measures that work

together to form a more complete indicator of a teacher's impact on student achievement (Zugic, 2020). The impetus of this study is that of valuing teacher contribution in grooming teenagers in a world where child rights should be upheld.

Various studies which explore the duality of the teacher's role in nurturing and guiding adolescents without tampering with the fundamental rights of the child, have been conducted. Most of the studies centre on corporal punishment, a common feature of instilling discipline and grooming in secondary school. One such study on addressing child disciplinary practices versus child rights in Zimbabwe established that parents use both violent and non-violent disciplinary methods which at times violate children's rights (Simango and Mafa, 2022). They underscored the need for a child rights-oriented discipline. However, they did not elucidate how parents and teachers who act in *loco parentis* should discharge their roles. This research explores the alternative.

Additionally, on parents' perceptions on the use of corporal punishment in school, Gomba (2015) concludes that there should be laws on corporal punishment that do not erode its cultural values nor break children's rights. Whilst Gomba (*ibid.*) takes note of the need to harmonise both the teacher role and the law, the research did not proffer strategies which can be employed by the educators.

Sibanda and Mpofu (2017) assesses factors constraining the use of positive discipline practices in secondary schools and concludes that the factors emanated from teachers, learners, parents and members of the community. They recommended that the schools should initiate training programmes for teachers and parents to positively improve their discipline practices in enhancing the use of positive discipline practices (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, Maphosa and Shumba (2017) focused on the intervention strategies that can be used to discipline pupils instead of corporal punishment. These strategies include guidance and counselling modelling and positive reinforcement in effective discipline and behaviour change in learners. On the other, the absence of corporal punishment is identified as disempowering the teacher (Maphosa and Shumba, 2010), hence that aspect needs to be further interrogated to ascertain the extent of how far the teacher has been stripped of his/her powers.

Lefa (2015) also explores how *Ubuntu* impacts on discipline in South African schools. It is bemoaned that the consequences of failure to embrace *Ubuntu* in South African schools manifest themselves through learner's indiscipline and staff not respecting each other. To that end, the concept of *Ubuntu* as the philosophy of the society in relation to education, can be explored in as far as how it can be implemented as a strategy in achieving discipline. The question to be interrogated is, how can aspects of *Ubuntu* be integrated in order to maintain or improve the teacher role in the grooming of learners?

While the above studies have made a contribution to the study of balancing teacher authority and child rights in the grooming of secondary school teenagers, they all fall short on addressing the perceptions of teachers on their new role. This study is unique in that it delves into the lenses of the teachers themselves and none of the other studies was conducted in Gwanda, Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe, an area covering urban, peri-urban and rural settings, including mining setups which can have a peculiar characteristic likely to give a balanced viewpoint. Again, the study is different from the others in that it does not focus on corporal punishment only as a challenge in administering discipline in schools. In light of this, the aim of the study is to discuss the challenges associated with enforcing children's rights over the grooming of teenagers by teachers and

delves into the strategies that can be employed by teachers in grooming teenagers in Gwanda North district, Zimbabwe.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The role of grooming teenagers has always been reserved for teachers who have had the responsibility of employing all means necessary, including corporal punishment, to shape learner behaviour. With the advent of human rights-based approaches and new legislation in grooming learners, it gives rise to the question on how teachers are performing their role without contravening standing statutes. There is also growing concern on the rise in cases of indiscipline in secondary schools where gross misconduct like drug and alcohol abuse, and teenage pregnancies are frequently reported. Previously, the teacher was given full authority to exercise his/her own discretion to discipline the child, including misdemeanours committed at home, but that role has been thwarted by legislation. This research explores the complexities of striking a balance between teacher authority and child rights in the grooming of secondary school teenagers.

AIM OF THE STUDY

This study explores the complexities of striking a balance between teacher authority and child rights in the grooming of secondary school teenagers. It analyses teacher contribution in grooming teenagers within the Zimbabwean educational context where child rights should be upheld. Specifically, it seeks to understand how educators can uphold their authority to maintain discipline and promote effective teaching while simultaneously respecting and safeguarding the rights of learners as enshrined in national policies and international conventions. It further explores the strategies that can be employed by teachers to foster a harmonious learning environment where authority is exercised responsibly without infringing upon students' rights.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do teachers balance their authority with respect to child rights?
2. What are the challenges faced by teachers in grooming teenagers at secondary school?
3. What strategies can be employed by teachers in grooming teenagers at secondary schools in Gwanda North district, Zimbabwe

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF THE STUDY

The article is couched in inclusivity, which traces its roots to Paulo Freire who, in the 1950s and 1960s, advocated for inclusive education. During this period, civil rights movements were at their peak in America with issues such as inequality and exclusion being the main focus. Based on this belief, there is need for the creation of environments where everyone feels valued, respected and supported. It endeavours to promote equity and social justice. This theory informs the study as teachers are part of the diverse members of communities who need to be enabled and empowered to have their voices heard and views represented. Since the preoccupation of this study is finding a balance between teacher authority and child rights, by engaging all stakeholders in planning and decision- making about education, the teacher's role is clearly defined. The theory preferred as a way of taking teacher perceptions on board in a quest to strike a balance between grooming teenagers and upholding of policy. Teachers' views are crucial as they are the policy implementers.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs the interpretivist paradigm founded on the assumption that people's perceptions, ideas, thinking, and the meanings that are significant to them can be understood through

researching their cultures (Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022). It focuses on practising teachers in Gwanda North secondary schools who gave their views on balancing teacher authority and child rights.

The study is purely qualitative in design. It focuses on the teachers in secondary schools in Gwanda North as they are the implementers of the policies and, at the same time, discharge their role of grooming teenagers into good citizens. Their opinions on what strategies should be employed in grooming teenagers versus child rights can be reflective of what is obtaining in other secondary schools in the country. Ten (10) secondary school teachers in this study who responded to the three main research questions, were purposively selected as participants. The study was carried out in Gwanda North A cluster of Gwanda North district, Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe. The district covers eleven (11) secondary schools in Gwanda urban, peri-urban and rural areas which is useful for a balanced analysis of phenomena.

The research uses semi-structured interviews conducted with the 10 sampled teachers.

PROCEDURE AND DATA ANALYSIS

Permission to carry out the study was sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Face-to-face interviews were carried out by the researchers and the participants at their respective schools. The data was audio taped through informed consent from the participants and later transcribed. Notes were also taken to complement the audio tapes. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data as it emerged from the participants. The research data were collected in February and March 2025 and then analysed in April 2025.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The study conducted pre-tests on a smaller sample of teachers through WhatsApp social media applications to identify and refine misleading aspects so as to improve both validity and reliability. The data are presented, analysed and discussed using a content thematic approach. The research participants were interviewed on one-on-one basis and in the absence of their superiors to avoid artificial responses.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study was carried out with full adherence to all ethical issues of carrying out academic research. Clearance from the education authorities and all research ethics including informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, truthfulness and beneficence, met.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study explores the complexities of striking a balance between teacher authority and child rights in the grooming of secondary school teenagers. The findings are presented in thematic form. This includes a deductive and inductive qualitative analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data from an inclusivity theoretical framework.

BALANCING TEACHER AUTHORITY WITH RESPECT TO CHILD RIGHTS

Results from the study established that teachers look for alternatives to the outlawed corporal punishment. Most participants (65%) highlighted that they use threats and instilling fear to control the learners. Bartholomew *et al.* (2018) state that controls pressure students to adhere to values held by the teacher and can, therefore, be used to enforce discipline and secure student compliance by appealing to their feelings of guilt, shame, anxiety, and self-worth. One participant, a sports director at one school said that he usually:

... “uses the child’s love for sports like volleyball to threaten to leave behind all those who misbehave on sports trips, even if they are the best athletes”.

Another lady teacher expressed that:

“...at our school we usually make learners toe the line by threatening to take them to the headmaster”.

It was also stated by one participant that:

“I usually tell a misbehaving learner that I will punish them for their misconduct.”

The findings suggest that teachers attempt to avoid corporal punishment by using alternatives. Also notable is the fact that teachers still identify corporal punishment as a key tool to managing indiscipline, although they are fully aware that it is outlawed. This aspect warrants critical examination.

Other participants (25%) said that they use guidance and counselling as mitigation against breaking child rights by teachers. It is one of the strategies available for teachers in grooming learners. Nkechi *et al.* (2016) confirm that guidance and counselling is an important educational tool in shaping orientation in a child from negative ideas that is planted in the child by his/her peers. One participant exclaimed:

“As a class teacher, I usually address my class during registration in the morning on issues which affect them including discipline”.

Another teacher stated that:

“Each class has a guidance and counselling lesson where teachers talk about many topics about life.”

It was also noted by one participant that:

“... we have a guidance and counselling department which includes teachers and learners”.

The research findings suggest that guidance and counselling is an alternative strategy which assists the teacher to observe child rights. It should, however, be further identified if it is enough to groom teenagers at secondary school. On implementation of guidance and

counselling, Gudyanga *et al.* (2015) argued that most of the teachers conducting counselling in schools were not competent counsellors as they had little or no training in counselling. Therefore, it is a strategy which only works when used by qualified people.

Collaboration between teachers and the community was further observed by other participants (10%) as an alternative to grooming learners. According to Lunga (2024), collaboration between and among parents and other community members was seen to be helpful in solving the challenges of poor learning environments for young children in India. One teacher at a school in a mining setup indicated that:

“... for day scholars we usually threaten to tell their parents about their misconduct although they rarely come to school, probably on consultation days”.

Another teacher expressed that:

“... because our school is a church run school, we use the local pastor for counselling and giving weekly lessons to learners”.

One other participant said that:

“The local police occasionally visit the school to address the students on legal issues.”

The findings of the study suggest that teachers can engage the community in grooming learners although efforts on the ground show that it is not enough. It should be further explored how other areas which are not closed communities, can engage the parents in the process. Tshuma and Ncube (2016) argue that in Zimbabwe, parents are involved in their children's academic work through consultation days to find out from the teachers how their children are performing in class. The results on parent involvement are indicative of parents who are concerned only about their child's academic performance more than their grooming.

Challenges faced by teachers in grooming teenagers in Secondary schools

Results from the interviews showed that poor remuneration contributes to the teachers' dilemma in attempting to perform their role as counsellors to teenagers. More than half of the participants (60%) indicated that the poor salaries affect how teachers discharge their duties, particularly the grooming of learners. Mukomana (2021) concurs on the impact of teacher remuneration in Zimbabwe that well-motivated teachers are capable of being agents of change. One of the participants expressed the following sentiment:

"...meagre salaries weigh down teachers who end up hustling to survive at the expense of the moulding learners".

One other participant further explained that:

"a teacher cannot discipline some learners when he or she knows that they are potential customers of what he or she is selling".

It was also highlighted by one participant that:

"... abantwana abasilaleli ngoba bazibona belemali ukwedlula thina ngoba bayanelisa ukuyatsheketsha bazibambele imali yabo esingayitholiyo thina..." (... the learners despise us because they get more money than what we get as salaries through gold panning in the area).

These results concur with findings by Amalu (2013) in Nigeria, who recommends that the Ministry and boards of Education should provide good financial incentives to teachers in order to boost their morale and maintain instructional effectiveness. The findings indicate that the teachers who need to play the 'significant other' role in shaping teenagers' behaviour should be considered. Thus, without addressing the concerns on low salaries, teachers will not play their pivotal role of moulding learners.

Other participants (20%) in this research indicated that the educational policy proclamations and the integration of child rights into education have taken away much power from the teacher and, in turn, armoured the learner. Mpofu and Machingauta (2024) contend that over-emphasis on rights without stressing responsibility is cultivating a

breed of selfish and rowdy children in Zimbabwe. One participant said:

“The ban on corporal punishment has made the teacher lose control of the learner and the classroom as the learners are fully aware that the teacher won’t do anything to them for wrong doing. We fear being arrested and facing court charges without the protection by the ministry ...”

One teacher further explained that:

“Circulars from the ministry, like the one on the treatment of pregnant girls, pamper the girls and water down our attempts to encourage good behaviour. It is difficult to teach against teenage pregnancies when the policies do not allow the expulsion of pregnant girls and allows them to take leave instead ...”.

Another participant stated that:

“The use of ICT tools like smart phones lead to wayward behaviour as teachers cannot control them. Learners visit porn sites and at times record sexually explicit content in class and this is shared with classmates. Some of the content goes viral in the school.”

The research findings suggest that whilst efforts to empower the learner are visible, the teacher has not been fully equipped to deal with new changes. It is primarily the pre-occupation of this study to establish a balance between the teacher’s role and child rights. The teacher should not be left exposed; there is need to cover the gaps makes his/her role effective in the grooming of learners. This might be a call for a re-look at the teacher training pedagogy which might be lagging behind.

Other findings from research participants (20%) on the challenges faced by teachers in grooming teenagers in secondary school reveal that there is a lack of collaboration between the school and parents. Lunga (2024) highlights the importance of teacher-parent partnerships in promoting sustainable learning outcomes and children’s well-being. One of the participants stated that:

“Most parents are in the diaspora and children live alone. To cover up for their absence, these parents pamper the kids with much money and gadgets which make them lose focus.”

Another teacher said that:

“Parents do not attend consultation days and other school programmes which discuss school issues. Some send proxies who are either the child’s sibling or neighbour who do not relay proper information.”.

It was also stated by one teacher that:

“Abanye bahlala bodwa bayazikhethela ukubuya esikolo lanxa udinga umzali akulamuntu obuyayo” (Some children come from child-headed families and they decide when to come to school and when parents are invited to school, no one will attend on behalf of the learner).

One participant further explained that on disciplinary issues:

“Some parents do not agree with corrective measures on their children; some even threaten the teacher and school head with litigation.”

These findings reveal that there is a gap between teachers and parents in assisting the learner. Newman *et al.* (2019) concur that parental involvement positively affects student attendance, behaviour, and success. Thus, the teacher should not be a lone voice in learner discipline but parental input also is key.

STRATEGIES FOR GROOMING TEENAGERS BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

This study reveals that there is need for a call for the re-imaging of the teacher’s role in grooming teenagers in secondary school if they are to uphold children’s rights as well. Some participants (40%) suggested that one of the strategies which can be employed is that of an all-round stakeholder involvement in protecting the teacher responsible for grooming learners. Mhlongo *et al.’s* (2022) study on collaboration reveals that the pursuit of quality public education requires focused partnerships of all stakeholders in order to unleash the potential of all learners.

One participant exclaimed that:

"The Z.R.P. [Zimbabwe Republic police] should understand that striking a learner lightly on the hand is not abuse."

Another sentiment expressed by a teacher was that:

"Nxa bengasivikelanga, lathi siyayekela abantwana, kukhule lokhula. Esikwenzayo yikuqhuba izifundo eklasini, okunye abantwana bazibonele." ("Without teacher protection the learners will suffer because we will learn to survive in class but leave misbehaving students alone.").

Another teacher stated that:

"When you go to court, you are on your own, MoPSE [Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education] also stands against you."

It is evident from the suggestions that teachers are afraid to fully execute their duty. There is a cry for help from a legal perspective. Simbre *et al.* (2021) on the protection of teachers in Philippines, recognised that teachers are vulnerable and for them to do their roles more effectively and efficiently, they need to be empowered and protected.

Research findings also suggest that 'controlled corporal punishment' should be allowed but only in extreme cases. Almost a third (30%) of the participants suggested that whilst corporal punishment is not ideal for grooming learners, it was necessary in extreme disciplinary cases. One of the recommendations in a study by Ama *et al.* (2020) in rural Nigeria was the introduction of modified corporal punishment appropriate to the learners' age and disposition, which can be implemented to salvage the learners and improve their academic performances. One teacher noted that:

"The headmaster should be allowed to do the canning of malcontents at school so as to protect the teacher."

Another participant concurred:

"Canning should happen to learners accused of drinking beer, smoking and taking of drugs so as to deter others from harmful stuff."

One of the teachers acknowledged that:

"Canning for big cases should be allowed to be done by the school head, but better ways should be found for correcting late comers, noise makers, etc."

From the findings it should be noted that whilst some teachers recommend the use of corporal punishment, they advocate for a cautious use of the method that has legal ramifications. The findings are in tandem with Simango and Mafa (2022) underscore the need for child rights-oriented discipline. The findings also reiterate that teachers are not 'animalistic' beings bent on inflicting pain on the learner, but have genuine concerns for learner discipline. Teachers proffer a modified version of corporal punishment which is consistent with human rights.

Other participants (15%) stated that one of the strategies should be teacher training and staff development. Singh (2011) recommends that a structured professional development is beneficial to teachers because it addresses their individual professional needs. In other words, teacher development on specific needs like handling the ever-changing learner discipline, should be deliberately initiated to assist the teacher to evolve. One of the participants expressed these sentiments:

"I am a teacher who trained in 2011 and I was never trained to handle learners under the new circumstances."

One other teacher stated that:

"Workshops are necessary to equip teachers with strategies which will assist the teachers carry out their duties."

It was also noted by another teacher that:

"The college diploma should include modules which address issues to do with child rights and other legal issues."

The findings of the study indicate that learners are being catered for through guidance and counselling and other activities but the teacher

is lagging behind. This gap needs to be closed for the teacher to execute duties of grooming teenagers who are already aware of their rights. Simbre *et al.* (2021) also advocate that tertiary education institutions should also update and include legal courses in their curriculum to better equip future teachers before they embark on their teaching profession. This strategy can work to address the current mismatch which is making the teacher vulnerable.

Some participants (15%) singled out parental involvement and change in attitude as another strategy which can be employed. Pramanik *et al.*'s (2023) study on parental involvement, reveals the importance of paying attention to teachers' perceptions of barriers to parental involvement because they contribute towards teacher well-being. This article argues that the teacher should not be dis-oriented because of the lack of parent involvement or assistance towards their child's discipline. One participant observed that:

"Parents should change their attitude and support the teachers who spend the greater part of the day with their children, for example we have their kids from 0730 am up to 1630 hours."

Another teacher stated that:

"Parents should trust that teachers act for the good of the child even when we institute corrective measures."

Yet another participant said that:

"... often times, when parents come to school, they come to fight the teacher more than seeking solutions to child behaviour."

The research findings suggest that for teachers to be fully in charge of learner discipline, they need parental back up. The argument here is such that if the parent always sides with the child, the teacher is left exposed in his/her attempts of grooming the learner. The teacher becomes the lone voice in instituting discipline.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident from the findings that the teacher is in a conundrum and to strike a balance between teacher authority and child rights, it is necessary to uplift the teacher who is currently vulnerable to legislation and parental attitude. It should be noted that teachers' role of grooming teenagers is currently overshadowed by the teachers' attempts of evading the law. It represents a scenario whereby teachers are trying to survive in class than playing their pivotal role of grooming learners.

The following conclusions are drawn from the research findings:

- Poor remuneration makes teachers less effective in performing their role as counsellors for teenagers.
- Poor salaries compromise their role as the 'the significant other' as learners despise them.
- Educational policy proclamations and the integration of child rights into education have benefitted the learner but weakened the teacher who has not been empowered to deal with the new dispensation.
- There is a lack of collaboration between the school and parents on issues to do with child discipline. One of the strategies which can be employed is that of an all-round stakeholder involvement in protecting the teacher who is responsible for grooming learners.
- Teachers look for alternatives to corporal punishment as a way of instilling discipline because of fear of prosecution.
- The use of guidance and counselling as mitigation against breaking child rights by teachers is not enough to deal with challenges of grooming teenagers.
- 'Controlled corporal punishment' is suggested in extreme cases of child indiscipline.

- Teacher training and staff development can be employed to narrow the gap on teachers whose role is heavily compromised.
- Parental involvement and their change in attitude are needed to guarantee proper grooming of learners by teachers.

Therefore, this study posits the following recommendations:

- Teachers who should continue their role of grooming teenagers but their current vulnerable position should be addressed through legislation and parent involvement in order to foster human rights-based approaches.
- The government should improve the conditions of service for teachers and, in particular, remuneration which is currently taking away their power to control the learners who despise them.
- Teacher training modules should be updated in order to cater for the gaps which currently exist in handling learners in light of child rights and currently compromising the teachers' role in grooming.
- There should be a re-look at how corporal punishment can be integrated in extreme cases of indiscipline without violating child rights.

Overall, the teacher's role in striking a balance between teacher authority and child rights needs an inclusive approach and a collaborative effort from all stakeholders so as to encourage the teacher to foster a supportive learning environment. Policy reforms are needed to cater for the disengaged teacher but prioritising the learner as well. Without the reforms, it is evident that the teacher will continue playing a passive role, making sure he/she is surviving in the system without rendering their services in teenage grooming.

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