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TAIWAN'S BAN ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT –
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF IMPACT AND MEANINGS

A Dissertation in
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by
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ABSTRACT

Corporal punishment was long used in Taiwanese schools as an informal disciplinary tool for improving students' academic performance as well as for disciplinary violations. Based on thirty-five interviews and three school activity observations across a nationwide sample of junior high teachers and schools, this study examines the impact of Taiwan's 2006 legislative ban on corporal punishment in the educational system. Its purpose is to understand educators' perceptions of discipline and corporal punishment, current disciplinary practices and problems, and why the practice persists, particularly in junior high schools.

Five main themes emerged in this study. First, corporal punishment is a strong traditional informal norm of teaching in Taiwan. Spanking or corporal punishment had been a "normalized" classroom tool—a fairly reliable non-complex response to the highly complex problem of pupil motivation and control.

The second theme involves opposition to the ban and continued cautious use of corporal punishment. While most teachers adhere to the ban, with respect to harsher forms of corporal punishment, many continue to view its milder form as a practical tool for pupil control and motivation.

The third theme involves support for or indifference to the ban. At the time of the interviews, two thirds of the subjects expressed either supportive or neutral opinions. They either believed in its philosophy or had simply adapted to the ban. As for those teachers with feelings of indifference, they continued their former practices, either using or not using corporal punishment. To them, in the words of one interviewee, this ban was imposed "simply to make some people feel relieved."

The fourth theme is uncertainty. Whether they were opposed to or supported the ban, interviewees generally expressed perceptions of uncertainty, insecurity, or inability to discipline students under the new law. They complained that they only received “formal directives” or “unrealistic guidelines,” rather than practical strategies or advice from the school officials or the Ministry of Education.

The last theme involves the shift toward more humanistic forms of pupil control. The changes include viewing students as having individual educational and social needs, a decrease in punishing students for poor academic performance, and using more positive disciplinary strategies. Though corporal punishment is still used, it is much less frequent and abusive than before.

The principle that students should not be physically punished by teachers has become a prevailing perspective within a global educational environment. But at the same time, Taiwanese schools must operate and maintain legitimacy within local environments, which serve as a conservative check on global influences. Therefore, using both a functional and institutional framework, this study explores how the conflict between global and local values may complicate school reform efforts.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

According to the American annual Gallup Poll of public attitudes toward education, school discipline has been one of the primary concerns among American citizens for decades. Student misconduct may include relatively minor forms of disobedient or disruptive behavior at the classroom level, which teachers are typically expected to deal with on their own. However, in the United States, misconduct can also include acts of violence, drug use, and other more serious illegal or disruptive acts (Imber and Geel, 2000). In comparison, although Taiwanese schools are sometimes believed to be filled with peaceful hardworking students, Taiwan has also seen some increase in student misconduct in recent years, such as dropping out, running away from home, teenage pregnancy, abortion, suicide, robbery, drug addiction, or cyber addiction (Tsen & Kuo, 2003). Though the above problems are not widespread in all Taiwanese schools, teachers are confronted by more and more day to day disciplinary problems when compared to the past authority-centered educational environment. In both nations, increases in student misbehavior combine with changes in school law to make maintaining order a more and more difficult problem for teachers and school officials. Pupil control is important to learning, and school discipline is viewed as an important means of pupil control (Hoy, 2001). Traditionally, many schools on both sides of the Pacific Ocean have taken a somewhat custodial approach to pupil control, one involving the heavy use of punishment, and sometimes corporal punishment.

Though corporal punishment has long served as what might be called a “handy tool” for pupil control, it has become much more controversial in recent decades. Many

American states have outlawed the practice (Figure 1) and those states, districts, and schools where it remains legal have imposed some restrictions on its use. In 2006, Taiwan's legislature outlawed the practice, and the Ministry of Education is now in the process of implementing this ban in all of the nation's public and private schools.

Structural differences, however, have tended to make the corporal punishment ban somewhat different in Taiwan from in the United States. Traditionally, Taiwanese education has been highly grade-and-test-score oriented and rationally hierarchical in terms of management. Yet, while the system tends to function in a rigid top down way, student discipline has long been primarily a classroom matter, exercised primarily at the discretion of individual teachers. For this reason, corporal punishment, usually administered quickly and visibly, has served as the main tool for teachers—a “non-complex” response to the often highly complex problem of student discipline. Although in theory a school's Student Affairs Office regulates school-wide discipline, procedures tend to be informal, non-bureaucratic, often administered in ad hoc or even “spur of the moment” fashion, and widely varying even within the same school.

This description may seem similar to the way corporal punishment was used in American schools in past decades; that is, it was legal in most states and districts, and frequently used at the classroom level on an “as needed” basis. Over the years, however, American schools have become more sensitive to the impact of state, and federal court decisions on matters of school discipline, with these rulings tending to emphasize the need for at least “minimal due process” in matters of student discipline. Student punishment, even when meted out at the classroom level, has become arguably more formal in the U.S. Before punishing students, American teachers may often need to

demonstrate a written record of student misbehavior including the steps they have taken to correct it. American teachers may even be required to show that the rules had been clearly communicated to the student being punished. Taiwan schools, however, have tended to be much more insulated from judicial influence. Parents are less likely to question the policy of their schools, and when they do their complaints tend to be handled on an ad hoc basis. In general, when it comes to discipline and punishment in Taiwan schools, there is little that resembles such American formal structures as standardized procedures, “suspension,” “zero tolerance,” or even “due process.”

In the past, different forms of corporal punishment, especially spanking, were pervasive in Taiwanese schools and perceived as the main tool to discipline students. The purpose of student discipline was to maintain an orderly class or learning environment and, importantly, promote students’ academic performance. Based on the high competitiveness of high school and college entrance examinations, Taiwanese schools are marked by a tightly structured curriculum and instructional practices aimed at preparing students to pass entrance examinations. Over the years, this provided a pattern of practice whereby teachers used corporal punishment to attain higher student academic performance. Corporal punishment typically used to be spanking applied to students’ hands or bottoms when they failed in test scores. Misbehavior, poor attitude, or a failure to reach the school’s or teachers’ requirements lead to corporal punishment as well.

Essentially, Taiwanese teachers have long enjoyed broad informal authority to use corporal punishment to motivate poor performing students or to warn others about becoming too lax in their work. Many Taiwan parents expected or appreciated that teachers might spank their children to instill proper discipline. Even when children were

physically hurt, parents might still impute the fault to the child's behavior or to parental negligence. To some extent, this parental response may relate to dispositions toward collectivism (placing group needs ahead of one's own) and "power distance" (sensing power and authority to lie with "officials") within Taiwan society and culture (Hofstede, 1991; Bush and Qiang, 2002). Disputes over punishment practices were thus seldom, a matter for the nation's legal system. Though county and federal agencies may have written policies regarding school discipline and punishment, these apparently had little influence over local school policies.

Thus it can be seen that using corporal punishment became pervasive in Taiwanese schools, especially in elementary, junior high, private, and cram schools. Most parents, teachers, and even came to accept the idea that judicious corporal punishment guarantees effective teaching and efficient learning. However, in the past decade when the educational reform has been effective, much debate exists as to how to define "judicious corporal punishment" or to regulate its application. Tracking back to 1986, for instance, the Taiwan Ministry of Education specified in its formal letter that banning corporal punishment had been a consistent policy. Therefore, while corporal punishment remained a common pervasive feature of Taiwan schooling, it has also become an increasingly discomfoting one for many educators, citizens, and politicians.

After experiencing some controversial corporal punishment incidences, the legal ban was finally declared in 2006. The ban is influential because corporal punishment had been common in Taiwanese schools. Even on the same day the ban was passed, a fifth-grade pupil was beaten hundreds of times on his hips, arms, and thighs by his homeroom teacher (with an aluminum stick) for failing to turn in assignments and being unable to

recite Analects of Confucius. After having the child's injury examined, the parents sued the teacher for abuse (TVBS News, 2006). Therefore, after corporal punishment was made illegal, lots of educators had no clear ideas regarding how to discipline students under the new regulations, and this trend continues today though new disciplinary strategies are becoming more common.

The purpose of the banning corporal punishment law is to protect students' educational rights, their physical integrity, and their human dignity (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2009). Yet, the extent to which teachers accept the ban remains unclear. News reports and public anecdotes suggest that the practice continues in many schools despite the new law. From theoretical and practical perspectives, it seems useful to understand why this is so. The purpose of this study is thus to understand the following phenomenon:

- The meaning Taiwan teachers and administrators attach to the use of corporal punishment as a means of pupil control.
- Junior high school teachers' ideology of punishment and discipline based on the high use of corporal punishment on junior high school students regarding their behavior and academic performance.
- The disciplinary problems educators face, the forms of discipline use in Taiwanese schools after the practice of forbidding corporal punishment law.
- How the disciplinary change impacts educators' disciplinary practices.

Chapter Two

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

To prepare for this task, the clarification on such terms as “discipline” and “punishment,” the theory of “pupil control,” and the rational/natural systems are discussed first. Moreover, the understanding about Taiwanese corporal punishment policies and laws, educators’ training, and factors relating to school disciplinary practices addressed later will provide background knowledge for this research inquiry.

Concepts of Discipline and Punishment

“Disciple” is the root of the word “discipline,” and the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as “one who follows or attends upon another for the purpose of learning from him” and “to teach, train, or educate.” The word denotes the creation of a pupil or scholar, which explains why “discipline,” in turn, denotes the general methods and process of instilling students’ character and attitude. Of course, the term “discipline” conveys a range of meanings. As a noun, it refers to the training or rules that help students acquire knowledge, moral character, and a disposition toward self control, as well as to the internalized results of such rules and training. Discipline may involve moral persuasion, discussion, praise, negotiation, or setting an example to be modeled (Hyman, 1997). Used as a verb, it denotes actions associated with this training, particularly the act of punishment (e.g., “the misbehaving students will be disciplined”). To “discipline” conveys the idea of applying some action to students to increase the likelihood that they will behave well in the future.

In Chinese, “discipline” is “*kuan-jiou*” and is also used as both a noun and a verb. “*Kuan*” means to control, manage, or annoy as a verb, and control, management, or annoyance as a noun. “*Jiou*” means to teach or to educate as a verb, and teaching or educating as a noun. The tendency in Taiwan, however, is to interpret “discipline” mainly as “*kuan*” and the punishment used to obtain it. That is, as both a noun and a verb combined as one; to force students toward order so as to attain further good performance.

In contrast, “punishment” denotes a natural or imposed aversive consequence to some specific negative behavior (Bear, 2005). Moreover, punishment is a means of social control serving varied purposes: retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation, or even to send a symbolic message to a larger group of people (Ackerman, 2003). Aside (one would hope) from retribution, school punishment appears to incorporate all of these functions as a way to imbue students with good behavior, healthy character, and knowledge needed to function in society. School punishment thus connotes the idea of administering justice after some prior misbehavior, with the goal of promoting better “discipline” in the future.

A good deal of contemporary psychology teaches that humans are more productive when they are able to “discipline” (as a verb) their emotions and appetites and to concentrate on a given task for a given amount of time without self-distraction or interruption (Rosen, 1997). School “discipline” (as a noun), therefore, plays a key role in character education, helping students to establish good behavior, good study habits, and a willingness to work hard. So, this study will examine how teachers conceive of, relate, and possibly contrast the concepts of “discipline” and “punishment” in teaching. In addition, it will aim to understand the extent to which they perceive the maintenance of

student discipline and the use of punishment as major needs in their daily professional lives.

Classroom Discipline and Teacher Pupil Control Ideology

Another way to conceptualize school discipline is in terms of the dominant patterns schools use to control students. Hoy (2001) states that like prisons and public mental hospitals, schools are non-voluntary organizations; clients must participate, and the organization must take them all. In Hoy's words, such factors "insure that client control is central in all these organizations" (p. 425).

Hoy (2001) also argues that there are two "ideal" conceptions of pupil control: the custodial and humanistic orientation. The custodial orientation assumes maintaining order to be a primary concern and that pupils require tight control. Teachers with a custodial orientation of pupil control view students as undisciplined, irresponsible individuals frequently in need of punitive sanction. The humanistic orientation assumes students to be amenable to persuasion, voluntary learning, cooperative interaction, and positive experience. Though few schools practice either ideal orientation, Hoy speculates that educators turn to more custodial means of control during times of high threat to their status, their authority, or the overall decorum of the school. Shouse (2005) suggests that external social or political demands may also push schools toward more custodial, rigid, and bureaucratic forms of student supervision and discipline.

In Taiwan, for example, the greatest external demand on schools has traditionally been related to preparing students to score high on the standardized exams they take for entry into high school and college. This helps explain why corporal punishment and other

forms of harsh discipline have tended to be used for purposes of raising students' academic performance. As long as this external demand remains high, and to the extent that teachers perceive students as increasingly "unruly," we might expect them to cling to what they consider to be their simplest tools for pupil control.

Rational and Natural Systems and Organizational Culture Views of Instruction and Discipline

From a rational systems perspective, policy makers develop regulations and routines to guide organizations toward meeting their goals (Hoy and Miskel, 2005). From a natural systems view, however, regulations and routines are interpreted and reshaped by individuals whose needs and motives conflict with formal organizational goals. Although Taiwan's education system manifests a fairly rigid and rationalistic organizational structure, some aspects may be understood through a natural systems perspective.

Consider, for example, two very important functions of schooling; instruction and discipline. In the U.S., where the goals of schooling have traditionally been diverse and uncertain, teachers have over the years tended to enjoy wide latitude in instructional content and technique. But driven by legalism and external demands for schools to deal with problems related to drugs and weapons, American school discipline has grown rigid, formal, and bureaucratic in recent decades. In Taiwan, however, the situation seems reversed. Owing to the system's hierarchical structure and publicly supported entrance exam system, academic instruction in Taiwan tends to be highly consistent and regulated in terms of content and method. However, though there may be some general school wide discipline policies, decisions regarding punishment tend to be local and irregular. For

example, though schools may bar smoking or fighting, punishments for such acts are rarely formally specified, and students are rarely suspended from school.

Thus, while academic policies in Taiwan seem quite “rational,” disciplinary policies seem much more “natural.” Recently, the apparent clash between organizational goals and individual needs became sharply highlighted in Taiwan with the enactment of national legislation aimed at barring teachers’ use of corporal punishment.

As for views of organizational culture, in addition to standard bureaucratic theory, which emphasizes structural centralization, formalization, and specialization, Hoy and Miskel (2005) argued that many researchers view schools as organizations with ambiguous goals, unclear technologies, fluid participation, uncoordinated activities, loosely connected structural elements, and structures that have little effect on outcomes. Such conditions have been said to create a loosely coupled organizational culture (Hoy and Miskel, 2005). In such a setting it may be difficult to alter or control behavior related to how well the educational work is done. Directives issued at higher levels of the organization may not necessarily translate into changes at the classroom level. In Taiwan, however, the strongest structures of incentive are found in the academic arena, i.e., the high school and college entrance exams. Academic policies are best understood in terms of regulations and implementation. The judicial system is seldom used to change educational policies, especially at the local school level and especially with regard to issues of student discipline. Bolman and Deal’s structural frame thus becomes useful for explaining academic policies in Taiwan. However, driven more by informal school norms, Taiwan discipline policies seem better explained by Bolman and Deal’s human resource

frame, which assumes that organizations exist to serve human needs, and the needs of people and organizations to adapt to each other.

Thus, school discipline in Taiwan is mainly a function of individual teachers based on teachers' individual needs, and is mainly used to promote academic motivation. Note that this differs from the U.S., where discipline policy seems more aimed at promoting student safety, ensuring equal treatment, and protecting schools from costly lawsuits. Even though Taiwan school teachers have to follow national or individual school rules, they seem to have much more flexibility and authority in disciplinary practices than their American counterparts.

For example, though smoking is considered a serious misconduct in Taiwan, teachers themselves are generally expected to impose their own punishment on students they catch or suspect of smoking or possessing tobacco. Teachers might spank them, give them a lesson about how bad smoking is, take the cigarettes away, or inform the parents. Sometimes, teachers recorded "demerits" for students caught smoking. Only in repeat or aggravated cases do teachers send the students to the Students' Affairs Office (SAO), in which case the SAO's response would likely be quite similar to that of teachers. However, being disciplined by the SAO represents a worse disciplinary reputation to students. Regardless, there are usually no explicit regulations or written policies in Taiwanese schools regarding student smoking or possession of tobacco.

Thus, in Taiwan, informal, unwritten policies are common and often constitute the main framework for dealing with student misbehavior. For example, while most secondary schools require students to wear a school uniform or follow a dress code, there may be no formal written rule to that effect; the "rule" is simply understood by

announcements and it would be rare for any student or parent to openly challenge the policy in a formal way. When parents do threaten such a challenge, schools may even make a special agreement for the student in question. In 2002, for example, a public junior high school threatened by a parent lawsuit agreed not to require their son to wear the school uniform, though the “rule” remained intact for all other students. Overall, Taiwan discipline policies tend to operate more on the basis of “respect for authority,” “saving face,” and “solving the immediate problem” than on “proper procedure,” “respect for the rule,” or respect for the “rule of law.” To underscore this contrast with the US, it is noteworthy that such things as detailed codes of student conduct are extremely rare in Taiwan schools, and it is rare for teachers to spend much time devising or explaining written “classroom rules” regarding homework, hall passes, lavatory breaks, talking in class, or other such matters.

To summarize the Taiwan experience, academic achievement has been the most important goal of schooling and public demand for high achievement has tended to place the greatest pressure on Taiwan’s educational system. Discipline policies and practices tended to arise out of local school need and could even vary across teachers and classrooms, but its goal was to serve academic education. Disputes over discipline and punishment practices were seldom, if ever, a matter for national courts. Though county and federal agencies may have written policies regarding school discipline and punishment, these apparently had little influence over local school policies. For example, starting in 1986, corporal punishment had been banned in the Ministry of Education’s policies, but schools and teachers appeared to pay little attention until recently, when in 2006 the Legislature acted to ban the use of corporal punishment in all schools (Love

Education Network, 2007). Between 1986 and 2006, there were several important pieces of legislature regarding banning corporal punishment, which will be discussed in the next section.

Corporal Punishment Policies in Taiwan

Based on the results of a national survey, in 1999, more than 80% of Taiwan's elementary and junior high school students were corporally punished at school, around 70% in 2001, and 64% in 2005 (The Humanistic Education Foundation, 2005). Though the term "corporal punishment" in this survey covered methods such as causing direct physical pain, verbal assault, standing for long periods, or physical labor, some of which might not be defined as illegal in the new law, the results still indicate the frequent use of corporal punishment in schools before the ban. Another implication of the results is that the gradual decline of the use of corporal punishment, from 80% to 64% in the recent six years, shows changes in disciplinary practices even before the 2006 ban.

Twenty years prior to the legislative ban, in fact, corporal punishment was discouraged and even proscribed in Ministry of Education policies. In 1997, the MOE issued *Guidelines for Counseling and Disciplining Students*, which encouraged "positive" disciplinary practices in schools. In 2000, the MOE sent formal letters to each county and major city educational bureau to affirm the prohibition against "improper" forms of discipline and reinforce its earlier "Guidelines" document. In 2003, the "Teacher's Law" was amended to replace MOE guidelines with those developed at the local school level. In 2005, the MOE reaffirmed its ban on the use of corporal punishment, insisting that the ban be added to each local school's guidelines (Love Education Network, 2007).

Despite these regulations, the use of corporal punishment continued in Taiwan schools. In October 2005, a TV news report showed a cell phone video of a teacher beating a student and revealed that the teacher had acted similarly in the past (Hsiu & Su, 2005). This event may have actually prompted the December 2006 legal ban on corporal punishment. The amendments to the Fundamental Law of Education stated in part that

The country should protect students' rights to learning, to education, to their physical integrity and their human dignity, and should protect them from any form of corporal punishment, which constitutes a physical and psychological violation....Where a student's rights to learning, education, physical integrity and human dignity are improperly or illegally violated by the school or by the educational authority, the government should provide the victim or his/her statutory representative with effective and fair channels for remedies (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2007).

These amendments were passed just two weeks after Taiwan's participation in the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children. Although Taiwan could not ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child because it is not a member of United Nations, these amendments reflect Taiwan's support for this study and children's rights.

Following the ban on corporal punishment, the Taiwanese Ministry of Education developed and distributed a so-called *School Positive Discipline Plan*. In individual schools, teachers were also expected to develop alternative disciplinary methods, such as more communication with students and parents, sharing strategies with colleagues, and setting good examples to students. The goals of the law and the new policy guidelines

were to encourage teachers to use professional and positive discipline instead of relying on the instant, short, and often superficial effect of corporal punishment.

Despite such bureaucratic guidance, the process of replacing traditional disciplinary practices and habits with new and externally devised procedures poses huge challenges to Taiwanese schools and teachers. Though the new policy changes are aimed at bringing about a new atmosphere in Taiwanese schools, some early evidence suggests that many teachers struggle with the new procedures or, in many cases, ignore them. For example, in 2007 School Corporal Punishment Report by the Humanistic Education Foundation, 27 % of elementary and junior high school students reported being directly corporally punished (not including standing) in spring semester of 2007, the first semester after the ban.

When compared to the explicated regulations toward corporal punishment in U.S., in Taiwan, there was only minimal national policy on corporal punishment prior to 2006. We might conclude the differences between the U.S. and Taiwan as follows: The US is “a nation of law;” Taiwan tends to be “a nation of men,” that is to say, one based on social relations, status, and authority. U. S. education tends to be legally driven; Taiwan school education tends to be socially and authoritatively driven. A goal of U.S. school discipline policies is setting up clear rules and procedures as a guide for promoting acceptable behavior and avoiding lawsuits and violence as much as possible. However, in Taiwan, the goal of school discipline is mostly training students to form good study habits to get better academic performance.

Where Taiwan and American schools are similar, however, lies in the way in which Taiwan has been attempting to reform and “humanize” its education system over

the past dozen or so years. Though the reform efforts have often met substantial resistance at the local school level, they continue, and one key aspect of reform has been the effort to ban corporal punishment, as has been done in much of the US. This study, therefore, intends to shed light on the conflict and tension between old practices and new policies by examining the meaning Taiwanese teachers attach to the problem of student discipline and punishment.

Factors Influencing Teacher Attitudes toward Discipline and Corporal Punishment

In addition to disciplinary and organizational theories, pupil control concepts, and national policies, knowledge about educators' experiences from their own school days, their teacher training, and the structure and composition of the schools in which they work may help us understand their attitudes toward pedagogy, discipline, and policy change. Although this study does not attempt to attribute attitudes or dispositions to particular background or organizational traits, it is useful to discuss how these may be generally influenced.

Teachers' Experience

Teachers' dispositions, attitudes, and practices are often greatly influenced by their prior student experiences (Lortie, 1975). While they themselves were in junior high school, for example, most current teachers were assigned to advanced classes. (The "basic" classes were also known as "bulls classes," meaning those students were as slow and as hard to tame as bulls). Yet even though almost all of the teachers sampled in this study had been in advanced classes, they almost unanimously reported receiving frequent

harsh corporal punishment. The main reason for this was not misbehavior, but rather their failure to score sufficiently high on exams. In addition, they might still be punished for anything their teachers were not satisfied with, such as talking during the flag-raising ceremony, being late to school, coming to class without a textbook, or having a low class ranking.

Despite the harsh treatment, some teachers look back appreciatively at the “tough love” and high demands they had received, which, in hindsight are perceived to have contributed to their good character and academic success. Those teachers may then tend to use similar practices on their own students. As for those teachers who do not agree with strict punishment, they demand themselves to educate and treat their students in a more reasonable way. For various reasons, however, they still might not entirely abandon corporal punishment in their teaching. For instance, they may not perceive that reasonable effective alternatives exist, or their attempts at using more humane strategies failed to work in a spanking-friendly test-score-centered environment. In other words, teachers often fail to receive enough support and assistance to give up corporal punishment in such environments. Therefore, they tended to follow the “experience rule” and use corporal punishment as a way of promoting students’ academic achievement.

Teachers’ Pre-service Training

In terms of educators’ training, in 1994, the Teacher Education Law diversified pre-service teacher education courses. In place of limiting teacher education to specialized normal colleges and universities, teacher cultivation programs extended to all colleges and universities, which are now qualified to grant these certificates. However,

under the old normal school education system (that under which many of today's teachers were trained), students knew they would become teachers when they first started college. During the latter part of their four year college program, they were immersed in the educational environment as part of their teacher preparation. Though most graduates were really well prepared to be teachers, the old normal universities were homogenizing environments, which tended to be more conservative regarding the instruction and discipline of students. Old normal university students were often viewed as obedient and lacking strong personal opinions. In contrast, college students under the new system have more options for their future careers, and teaching is just one possible choice. Teachers from outside the old normal college/university system may have more diversified academic experiences, but they are thought less likely to devote themselves to education than did teachers in the past.

School Composition and Structure

In addition to educators' training, some other factors might also influence their concepts and practices of discipline. For example, their personalities; their teaching experiences; their positions as administrators, homeroom teachers, or subject teachers; their schools' location or size; their schools' type and community environments. Principal leadership and school composition (in terms of students, teacher age or experience, etc.) may also affect school practices. All these factors intertwine with each other to influence educators' attitudes toward discipline and school change.

In terms of educators' formal position within the school, homeroom teachers and teacher-administrators in the Student Affairs Office might have to face disciplinary issues

more often than other teachers and administrators, since subject teachers and parents tend to seek their help on matters of student low performance or misbehavior. At the same time, other school administrators may have relatively fewer disciplinary problems with which to deal because they teach fewer classes. Having more disciplinary problems with which to deal may push those most responsible toward the use of punishments perceived to be quick and simple, i.e., corporal punishment.

The school's social or institutional environment also may play a role in shaping teacher attitudes and behaviors. Such factors include school type or sector (public, private, religious, or cram schools), school location (northern, central, southern, eastern, urban, or rural areas), school size, and the surrounding community's socioeconomic environment. Among Taiwanese junior high schools, generally speaking, private schools, as well as medium or large urban and large rural public schools, are considered to have a higher quality of students and greater access to community resources. Schools in northern Taiwan are usually believed to have more top schools than those in central, southern, or eastern Taiwan. However, cram schools vary greatly. Schools with higher reputations tend to follow policies more seriously and implement disciplinary regulations more efficiently. In summary, rural school teachers would be more likely to use corporal punishment as well as private and cram school teachers. Students in rural schools are considered as having more disciplinary problems and parents tend to accept teachers' use of harsher punishments. Private and cram schools are more likely to use corporal punishment based on parents voluntarily sending their children there for strict discipline. (And it should be remembered that like teachers, Taiwan parents also grew up in an environment in which corporal punishment was common.)

Teacher composition within schools may also influence disciplinary attitudes and norms. Having more new teachers, young teachers, and substitute teachers in a school may increase the frequency of disciplinary problems, as such teachers may feel a need to demonstrate more pupil control. In other words, if more educators have experience and are stable in their positions in a school, fewer disciplinary problems might ensue. However, some might argue that senior teachers cause more disciplinary trouble because they do not like to change or develop their professional skills.

One last and related factor concerning disciplinary practice, change, and policy implementation is principal leadership. Principals serve as intermediaries between the higher educational authority, communities, and teachers, and their managerial and leadership skills can help with vision building, problem solving, planning, and decision making in the process of disciplinary policy implementation. Furthermore, in some ways, principals hold the potential to “discipline” teachers by team work, communication, logistical plans, or shared decision-making to develop a coherent understanding regarding student discipline. In other words, principal leadership can lead and also support teachers in the process of disciplinary change.

The Global Environment

Currently, 24 countries banned all corporal punishment of children, and 109 countries outlawed corporal punishment at school (Table 1 & 2). It is gradually becoming a global trend to treat children as individual human beings and to respect their human dignity and physical integrity. A growing perception exists that the absence of corporal punishment serves an indicator of institutional legitimacy. Given such global influence,

implementing the ban in Taiwan has been a top-down process. Top-down change is always difficult, even in an authoritatively-driven organization. Therefore, it is important to understand how educators construct meanings regarding discipline and corporal punishment after the legal ban.

Chapter Three

METHODS

In order to generate data rich in detail and embedded in context, qualitative research methods were used in this study. This study has implications for the clarification of educators' disciplinary ideology, their main disciplinary problems, understanding to educators' new disciplinary application, the new law's impact on their disciplinary practices, and suggestions for future research.

Research Questions

Semi-structured one-hour interviews (Appendix A) were conducted with 35 public and private junior high school teachers and administrators in Taiwan during the spring and summer of 2008, about 18 months into the corporal punishment ban. The overall aim of these interviews was to understand how these educators perceived and were influenced by the ban on corporal punishment. To get to that point, the interviews probed into their beliefs and attitudes regarding school discipline and punishment. For example, how do they interpret these concepts? What constitutes "misbehavior" in their eyes? How efficacious do they feel about their ability to change student behavior? In addition, the interviews sought to reveal subject descriptions of past and current disciplinary practices, their opinions and attitudes toward the new law, and their impressions of its influence on their behaviors and those of their colleagues. Furthermore, the following inquiries were also intended to be discovered. Do educators support the law? Or do they feel it goes too far to limit their ability to control student behavior? Do they find the new practices recommended by the Ministry of Education useful and effective?

Or might they perceive them as overly complex? In sum, based on the interviews, this paper focuses on understanding the “social reality” (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) of discipline and corporal punishment in a sample of Taiwan schools, with the ultimate aim of explaining the enduring persistence of corporal punishment as a means of pupil control.

The research questions are described as the following:

- What meaning do Taiwan teachers and administrators attach to the use of corporal punishment as a means of pupil control?
- What are junior high school teachers’ ideologies of punishment and discipline, given the continuing use of corporal punishment on junior high school students for poor behavior and academic performance?
- What disciplinary problems do educators face, and what forms of discipline do they use in Taiwanese schools after the ban on corporal punishment?
- How have the legal changes impacted educators’ disciplinary practices?

Design, Site and Participant Selection

This study is based mainly on interviews with 35 teachers and administrators across a sample of junior high-level schools – public, private, and cram, geographically distributed across the island (Table 3). I used what could be described as “purposeful convenience sampling” (Maxwell, 2005; Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). That is, the sample includes subjects in urban and rural schools in northern, central, and southern regions of Taiwan. In addition, to increase our subjects’ willingness to discuss school-related matters and thus maximize the authenticity of data, the sample consists of people known

to me and others to whom I was introduced to by people I knew. Subjects were also selected on the basis of having either a good disciplinary reputation or strong personal opinions regarding school discipline.

Thus, while some caution may be justified in generalizing my inferences and findings to the entire population of junior high school teachers and administrators, I believe the efforts to identify representative schools and teachers minimized the possibility for systematic sampling bias. That said, the fact that the sampling method tended to favor schools in southern Taiwan may have influenced the findings.

Five subjects worked in schools in northern Taiwan, four in central Taiwan, and twenty-six in southern Taiwan. Sixteen were from urban schools and nineteen were from rural areas. Three subjects were principals, fourteen were administrators (i.e., “directors” and “chiefs” who both manage and teach within the local school), and eighteen were subject area teachers. Fifteen were females and twenty were males.

Interviews were taped, conducted in Mandarin Chinese, and lasted from 30 to 90 minutes depending on individual responses. Selected portions were then transcribed and translated into English. Before proceeding with interviews, three informal school-wide activity observations were conducted to gain some rudimentary understanding of school climate. These included flag-raising ceremonies, student cleaning routines, and weekly assemblies. In addition, official documents, news reports, and data from educator blogs and web forums were also collected as data.

Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis

School-wide activity observations and face-to-face interviews were conducted in May and June, 2008, at which time the law had been “in effect” for one and a half years. Observations were done with post notes. While interviews were partially transcribed and analytic memos were written for each interview. Besides, analysis of transcribed interviews was coded during data collection after transcriptions were available. Grounded theory approach was used in coding (Strauss and Cobin, 1998). That is, open coding, axial coding and selective coding are the methods used in interview transcriptions to generate themes (Strauss and Cobin, 1998; Mikes and Hubersman, 1994; Maxwell, 2005). All interviews were reread specifically for codes which emerge from later interviews. Themes generated from coding were integrated theoretically to look for deeper meanings representing respondents’ hidden ideology (Strauss and Cobin, 1998).

Each individual interview transcription coding and theme has its own individual Microsoft Word document, but I also grouped quotes with the same themes from different transcription in the same document. The purpose is to view data either in individual description or in connection with similar data. Last, triangulation techniques were used to enhance analysis (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007; Maxwell, 2005). In other words, besides my own coding and analysis, regular discussion of emerging conclusions with my advisor and academic colleagues were implemented to increase validation.

Validity Issues

I examined the internal and external validity of this study below according to the validity checklist from Maxwell, 2005. In terms of internal validity, regarding the

possibility that my techniques might introduce some bias into my results, three issues are discussed. First, I tried to select interviewees with diverse experiences and opinions and designed interview questions that avoided influencing their responses in expected ways. However, I could not be sure whether the interviewees' response reflected exactly what they practiced. It is possible, for example, that their answers to the interview questions do not accurately represent the realities of their classroom practices; they may have been more effective or less effective than they indicated. This discrepancy might result from interviewees' expression, the limitation of interviews, such as taping, tendency to be self-critical, or some other factors. However, one advantage of my acquaintance with participants is that they trusted me and would like to share with me a lot of details and even some things embarrassing or unethical.

Second, one interview question concerned interviewees' prior corporal punishment experiences as youths. Based on time and focus considerations, only their experiences at junior high school period were explored. Third, based on my own prior teaching experience, the informal school-wide activity observations I conducted did not show any marked difference from before the ban. This finding might be explained by the tendency for discipline to be practiced privately.

Regarding external validity, the degree to which my findings may be generalized to a larger population, there are three points to address. First, changes anticipated from a new policy may be checked in both a short time, for example, in a year, and a long run. This study may be viewed as an initial evaluation – a snapshot – of the new law's influence on teachers' thinking and practice. Second, my sample may not be sufficient to allow generalization to the population as a whole. There may be some selection bias

associated with my use of a purposeful and convenience sample. In addition, though my interviewees are mostly at the age between 27 and 55 from different kinds of schools in various positions, they tend to be more successful in teaching and discipline. Interviewees struggling in discipline were not recruited a lot. It is likely, however, that my sample though not random, represents the beliefs and practices of some larger population of Taiwan teachers. It is therefore expected that this study will still provide a useful first step to understanding Taiwan school discipline policy change.

Chapter Four

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter broadly describes the data obtained from the interviews summarizing educators' opinions about discipline and corporal punishment. The data are presented using the interview protocol as a framework. The chapter will thus describe educators' backgrounds and schools, their views on discipline and disciplinary practices, and their reflections about the ban. Thus, while Chapter Four lays out a broad portrait of opinion and practice, Chapter Five will focus on answering the research question by synthesizing and highlighting the main themes emerging from the data.

Educators' Backgrounds and School Descriptions

Among the thirty-five educators, twenty were males and fifteen were females. Three were principals, six were directors, eight were chiefs, twelve were homeroom teachers, and six were subject teachers¹. All of the educator interviewees taught Chinese, English, math, science, or health and physical education. Sixteen participants were college or university graduates, eighteen had either received their master's degrees, master's equivalent certificates, or were currently enrolled in a master's program, and one was enrolled in a doctoral program. Their years of experience ranged from four to thirty-two.

As for the interviewees' schools, eighteen could be considered medium-sized (20-40 classes), thirteen large-sized (more than 40 classes), and three small-sized (under 20 classes). Generally in Taiwanese schools, about 35 students are in each class, though there might be fewer students per class in smaller schools. Five of the schools were in

northern Taiwan [e.g., Taipei and surrounding areas], four were in central Taiwan [e.g., Taichung and Changhua], and twenty-six were in the south [e.g., Chiayi, Tainan, and Kaohsiung.]. Twenty-six of the schools were public schools, six were regular private schools, and three were private cram schools (Table 3).

¹ In the hierarchy of Taiwan schools, there are four main administrators below the principal: the Directors of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, General Affairs, and Counseling. Under each director, there are three or four chiefs taking charge of administrative affairs. The Chiefs of Curriculum and Instruction, Register, and Equipment are in the Academic Office. The Chiefs of Behavior, Activity, Sanitation, and Physical Education are in the Student Affairs Office. The Chiefs of Counseling, Special Education, and Media and Data Processing are in the Counselor's Office. The three chiefs in the General Maintenance Office are not teachers. The principals usually do not teach, but directors and most of the chiefs do. Subject teachers only teach their subjects, and homeroom teachers are responsible for one class' business (attendance, supervision during breaks and lunch, etc.), in addition to teaching some classes. In Taiwan junior high schools, students stay in the same classroom for the whole day with the same classmates, but the teachers rotate. There are seven to eight classes a day and five to six ten-minute breaks between classes. Barring special arrangements, teachers usually teach for three years from seventh, eighth, to ninth grade.

Views on Discipline and Disciplinary Practices

This section explores the educators' views on discipline and disciplinary practices and how they have been influenced by the ban on corporal punishment. In the previous chapter, we distinguished the meanings of discipline and punishment. When discipline is used as a noun, it denotes an individual or environmental quality reflecting appropriate internalized academic and social habits, realized through the use of moral persuasion, discussion, praise, negotiation, modeling, or repeated sanction, and reflected both within and outside the classroom (Hyman, 1997). When used as a verb, discipline takes on a meaning similar to the word "punish," that is, the application of some sanction to students to increase the likelihood that they and other students will behave well in the future (Hyman, 1997).

In Chinese, "discipline" is "*kuan-jiou*" and is used as both a noun and a verb. "*Kuan*" means to control, manage, or even bother, and "*jiou*" means to teach. Based on the educator interviews, however, the teachers in this sample tend to understand the word "discipline" primarily in terms of "*kuan*" and the punishment used to obtain it; that is, as both a noun and a verb combined as one. In the light of the interview responses, the following sections flesh these meanings out further by presenting these educators' attitudes, opinions, and behaviors about disciplinary practices, disciplinary problems, and the new law banning corporal punishment. It is hoped that the discussion will help paint the general landscape of junior high school discipline across this sample of Taiwan schools.

Educators' Evolving Notions of Discipline

Teachers' notions and practices of discipline are sometimes based on their prior experiences as youth and as students. For many decades, in junior high school education, spanking or corporal punishment was pervasive and was mainly practiced based on students who failed to achieve certain academic standards or who exhibited behavior problems. However, according to the teachers in this sample, this type of violent discipline began to gradually decline around the turn of the 21st century. While in junior high school, all of the teacher interviewees experienced the tracking system, which is no longer allowed in Taiwan schools. Even though all of the interviewees had been in advanced classes because of their high academic performance, when asked whether they were corporally punished at that time, almost every one of them quickly replied, "Of course! Quite often!" In other words, they almost unanimously recalled frequent corporal punishment no matter whether they studied in public or private schools, and many of them had terrible experiences. The main reason for their being punished was not misbehavior, but rather their failure to score highly. In addition, they recalled their teachers punishing students for anything they were not satisfied with, such as talking during the flag-raising ceremony, being late to school, or coming to class without a textbook.

Subjects also reported their teachers had used a variety of spanking tools (such as rulers, chair boards, or rattans) and punishment methods (pulling students' hair, ears, or cheeks; spanking on bottoms, legs, or both sides of the hands; or making students half squat or kneel on the ground). In addition to punishments inflicted directly by teachers, one interviewee recalled one of her teachers demanded students to "throw a dodge ball at

each other” as a punishment. One teacher used the term “miscellaneous” to summarize all the disciplinary methods her junior high school teachers used. The main form of corporal punishment reported by most interviewees, however, was “spanking on students’ hands or bottoms with a rattan.” The degree of punishment depended on individual students’ academic performance. For example, students might receive one spank for each missing point or wrong answer in a test or exercise.

One teacher who attended private high school described her “hopeless thoughts” as a result of being spanked, stating, “On my way riding to school then, I always hoped a car would hit me! So I could go to the hospital, wouldn’t have to take the tests, and no spanking after the tests!” Another teacher expressed her similar bitter memory about corporal punishment, saying she did not appreciate her junior high school teachers: “I only remember I was spanked every day, from daytime to nighttime. Our teachers took the whole class to their houses after school to *bu-shi* [a verb meaning going to cram schools].... I never went back to my junior high school after graduation.” A third teacher related that she was not only often spanked at school but also spanked more seriously in cram schools. She was unable to resist her mother’s demand that she attended cram schools. However, she later discovered she could not study by herself in high school, without the strict learning schedule enforced by cram school teachers. Even though the above three teachers acknowledged they really did well academically because of the strict discipline or corporal punishment, they believed they studied hard only to avoid spanking.

Being spanked appears to have been a major part of my interviewees’ junior high school life. Though, they might feel uncomfortable or upset, none of them expressed much disagreement or complaint about their experiences. They apparently had no choice

but to accept what happened at school, and they did not dare to tell their parents so as to avoid a possible repeat punishment. They mentioned that some of their classmates had stronger opinions about the punishment they had received, but no one really had much reaction about it. Parents at that time trusted school teachers and also taught their children that teachers were to be strictly obeyed. However, though participants took being spanked for granted, they reacted negatively to humiliating punishment or unfair punishments based on teachers' prejudices or emotional disturbances. A teacher compared her experience of being spanked by two "famous" strict female teachers in her junior high school saying:

Our math teacher liked to spank us on the back of our lower legs with a rattan. We wore skirts and socks then, so the marks were obvious. We felt shamed to be seen with the marks, so we usually rushed to the bathrooms right before the start of a class and then rushed back [because there were fewer students in the hallway]... but compared to our English teacher, I liked the math teacher better. The reason why I didn't like the English teacher was that she used verbal abuse. She had a superiority complex, so she often taunted us when spanking us. The math teacher just spanked us without verbal abuse.

Students back then might take spanking for granted because every student got spanked, at home as well as at school. While students had negative opinions on humiliating forms of punishment, they still grudgingly accepted the practice, though relationships between teachers and students were understandably distant.

Humiliating discipline need not always be corporal. One interviewee related how her ninth grade math homeroom teacher returned students' test papers:

I didn't understand why he always returned our test papers during lunch time, but we usually went to him to take back our papers while eating lunch in the classroom. Only the test papers reaching certain scores could be found on the teacher's desk, otherwise, we had to look for our papers on the ground among many other papers. He threw the test papers, like this, to the ground.

The teacher did not spank his students in this case, but the interviewee quoted above stated that students seemed to feel hurt as bad or worse by this treatment than if they had been spanked. In the students' minds, according to this interviewee, students were judged only by their academic grades and made to suffer even though they were in the most advanced classes.

Moreover, this teacher interviewee mentioned that they had to receive their papers while eating. Her teacher might just want to make good use of class time, instructing instead of doing logistical tasks like returning students' test papers. In fact, it was not unusual for teachers, especially homeroom teachers, to use students' breaks, lunch time, nap time, or some other non-academic classes, like art, music, or PE, to reinforce teaching with discipline. Therefore, this quote illustrated that some teachers in the past not only humiliated students but also pushed them hard by giving them longer days or stressful disciplinary time.

An administrator in the sample described a hurtful and long remembered experience once inflicted by her elementary school janitor:

I took the lunch boxes to the stream room with classmates. We couldn't hear well what the janitor told us might because of the steaming noise there. The janitor was

so angry that he gave me a slap. Yes, the janitor, the janitor in the steam room gave me a slap. I can never forget.

This same administrator recalled another hurtful experience delivered by an old Mainland Chinese female teacher. “She grabbed my hair from the back and slapped me on the back because I forgot to do some of my homework.” This administrator said she would feel fine if she was spanked because she broke rules, but not in this case. She went on to describe and even joke about other spanking experiences, but she did not joke about the two cases described above. Recalling the slap from the janitor, the insulted, hateful, and unsettled feeling was palpable from her voice and words. An unfathomable humiliating slap had apparently bothered her for decades.

With or without humiliation, however, most interviewees seemed to have been trained to accept everything; to blame themselves for not studying hard enough, or to try to avoid corporal punishment by reaching some safe standard of performance. Though some of them admitted that their grades improved under such strict discipline, they firmly stated their refusal to apply similar kinds of strict punishment to their own students’ academic performance. A teacher stated that her prior experience as a youth led her to be more empathetic towards her students’ behavior. Another interviewee was once segregated from the whole class by his junior high school homeroom teacher, who directed the other students to exclude him. After that, he said, “I ate lunch alone against the school enclosing wall for a whole year. I didn’t like the way my teacher treated me, so I don’t want my students to be treated like that.”

Despite much suffering described by many interviewees, five female interviewees claimed they did not receive much serious corporal punishment when in junior high

school. From their descriptions, one possible reason is that they were in either a girls' school or a girls' class, where female students usually had fewer problems academically or behaviorally. Furthermore, some educator interviewees spoke of the positive influence they had received from their junior high school teachers. For instance, some participants mentioned how their junior high or high school teachers inspired them to become teachers. (This is discussed further in a later section.) More than one interviewee expressed appreciation for the "patience," "free books, or even clothing" some teachers had provided them, even though they were still frequently spanked. One perception seemed to be that teachers in the old days showed their love for students through strictness and high demands. An experienced administrator articulated a clear example:

Junior high school life was an important period in my life. My family was very poor, so I never went to any teacher's house [*bu-shi-ban*] to take extra studies. When in the talented class in junior high school, I was taken care of by so many teachers. The teachers took care of me, but they never asked for any money from me. My family was too poor to pay for cram school tuition, after school studies, and extra supplementary learning materials. It was all those teachers who helped me out. I appreciate all my teachers. If not for them, I probably would have attended a basic vocational school, like my other brothers did.

This administrator's teachers helped and guided him, but they also enforced strict and harsh discipline upon him through the use of corporal punishment. He recalled that he once received fifty-one paddles at a single time since he was fifty-one points behind his standard in an exam. However, he claimed that he appreciated his teachers by becoming a good student and a responsible class leader.

One might think that these teachers of the past cared more about students with good grades. A science teacher, however, remembered one particular math teacher, who thought his math was poor and so recruited him to his house to *bu-shi* without charging him. The science teacher interviewee recalled, “The fact that my math is good must have something to do with him. I have no idea why he was so nice to me.” Regardless of the illegal recruitment of students to *bu-shi* at teachers’ homes, this case helps illustrate some teachers’ dedication to students in the old times.

Though a few educator interviewees appreciated the strict discipline or academic assistance from their teachers in youth, many more of them viewed their experiences as unpleasant memories. They responded to my questions in ways indicating they would not wish to discipline their own students with the violent and scary methods they had experienced as students, especially based on students’ test scores. Ironically, however, most respondents reported having used corporal punishment in their early careers before the practice was banned, mainly for reasons of students’ misbehavior and poor learning habits and attitudes. One administrator (quoted earlier in this section saying she never returned to her own junior high school because of her miserable punishment experiences) described her struggle against spanking her own students in her early years of teaching:

In view of my own experience as a youth, when I taught in my first school, I really didn’t want to spank students. But all my colleagues spanked students, the Chinese teacher, math teacher, and science teacher all spanked students, only me, the English teacher didn’t spank them, so students didn’t study English. Students only studied the subjects whose teachers spanked them badly. I finally gave up and spanked my students. I felt so upset to have to spank them, but I had no

choice. I told my students my feeling. I think the situation my spanking students is different from what I received before.

This administrator expressed her powerlessness and helplessness under such social and peer pressure. Perhaps because she was young and not in an administrative position, she felt she had no choice but follow her colleagues' norms of practice. She later transferred to her current school which has forbidden corporal punishment. She said: "I am happy to come to this school because I don't have to paddle students!" Even though she could not "force" her current students to reach high grades, as she had done for her former students, she tried to get her current students to enjoy and want to study English. She hoped to influence students' willingness to learn instead of just forcing them to study.

The prior experiences of these educator interviewees seem to have limited or stopped them from using violent or humiliating punishment on their own students. Nevertheless, some interviewees indicated that they and some of their fellow teachers still occasionally used corporal punishment. The continued use of such practices may be explained by factors such as the social pressure of preparing students with high grades, the lack of other comparably effective disciplinary strategies, and also some teachers' beliefs about the need for strict discipline. This will be discussed further in a later section.

In conclusion, educator interviewees generally indicated that the discipline in the past when they were students was more teacher-centered and commonly supported. According to participants' comments, teachers' disciplinary decisions were generally considered legitimate and supported by parents and society without much doubt. Students then were trained to follow what their teachers and parents demanded. Therefore, relationships between students and teachers were remote, students with good grades

tended to be viewed as good students without troubles, and disciplinary abuse occasionally occurred. One cram school teacher pointed out that teachers in past times could have less fear to do whatever. He used the term “unscrupulous,” *si-wu-ji-dan*, in Chinese, to describe many of these teachers. One science teacher also mentioned the term “unscrupulous,” as well as “cruel,” *shun-hen*, in Chinese. One administrator also commented that: “Teachers before were given great authority, so they could punish students without the fear to get into trouble. Even when they abused or hurt students out of emotional reaction, the public opinion would not criticize the maltreatment.”

The following section will probe how educator interviewees viewed discipline based on all of their experiences, training, professional learning and reflection, and outside policies’ regulations.

Current Disciplinary Attitudes, Meanings, and Behaviors

Educators’ own experience likely plays an important role in their formation of beliefs about disciplinary practices. Also important, however, are personal dispositions, education, and professional philosophies. This section explores the links between these attitudes and teacher disciplinary beliefs by highlighting respondents’ motivation and desire for being a teacher, as well as their personal disciplinary views and practices.

Motivation for Becoming a Teacher and Desire for Continuing to Teach

Because it seemed reasonable to suspect a link might exist between teachers’ career dispositions and their attitudes toward corporal punishment, a question early in the interviews surveyed subjects’ reasons for going into education and their commitment to

that career. The interviews suggest a connection between these two factors and educators' attitudes toward discipline. In other words, their views seem related to whether they practice teaching as just a job or as a professional career. A job is to fulfill the required responsibilities demanded by the supervisors and to work routinely. A career, however, means besides the routine work, more passion, plans, and visions are integrated into it. In other words, those educators viewing teaching as a job might practice discipline as "simply solving instant problems;" while those who practice teaching as a career might view discipline in a long-term perspective strategy. Educators might have visions for their careers, but not for jobs. If teachers have both motivation for becoming a teacher and desire for continuing to teach, they are usually more willing to devote themselves to education and would like to develop professionally over time. If one cannot have both motivation and desire, desire seems to play a more important role than motivation in terms of seeing one's work as not just a job, but a career.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Taiwan's teacher training and employment systems greatly changed in 1994. Prior to that change, the majority of public school teachers consisted of normal college/university graduates, and there was little competition in finding a job. Since 1998 after having first normal school graduates who were not entitled to free tuition and guaranteed teaching jobs, other college graduates could earn teacher certificates and take the teacher selection exams along with the normal college/university graduates. Private schools and cram schools have always had their individual criteria to employ teachers. For instance, they do not necessarily require teachers with certificates or certain educational degrees. They might ask teachers to teach more hours or taking part-time administrative positions.

Motivation for Becoming a Teacher. About a half of the interviewees were graduates of the old normal universities, who were entitled to free tuition when in universities and teaching positions after graduation. Another half of them were either from the new system or the special selection in the old normal universities system. Both systems require teachers to finish training programs and pass the selection; however, the former system is more competitive. When asked for their motivation to become a teacher, more than half of the respondents recalled that they were attracted to teaching because of free college tuition and a desire for a future stable career more than because of academic interest. Along with stability, the mentioned benefits of teaching include summer and winter vacations, a fixed salary, good pensions, and less competition than in other careers. Some normal university graduated educators stated that they would like to have studied law, economics, or go to other universities, but they compromised because of parents' expectation and financial pressure. One principal, for instance, offered a typical response:

The main reason is the financial concern. I'd like to relieve my parents' burden so I went to Taiwan Normal University. The second reason is my gentle personality, which seemed to be better to serve in education. Of course my own ambition to be a teacher mattered a little bit.

One female teacher expressed her motivation in a way similar to other female teachers' answers:

First of all, it was my parents' expectation. They thought it was the best for girls to be a teacher. Another reason was that I myself didn't know what to do at that time. As for majoring in English, I was told that studying English had more career options, such as being a translator or working in a company, besides being a

teacher. Of course I admired teachers when I was little. Isn't it like that? Girls were told to be a teacher or a nurse since being young?

In addition, some educator interviewees started to be a teacher only by chance. One cram school teacher said he started to teach in his parents' cram schools out of his parents' arrangement. Some teachers said they had experiences in tutoring students while in college, and then they could not find other more satisfying jobs, so they became teachers. Even though becoming a teacher might not be those participants' first career choice, most of them agreed that it was still acceptable to them back then.

Though many educators chose teaching based on various reasons other than academic interest, close to half of the participants offered personal narratives that highlighted their academic interests. Some educators recalled the influence from their own teachers back in junior high or senior high schools. One math teacher clearly stated that he made up his mind to become a math teacher by the influence of his junior high school math teacher, who happened to also be his homeroom teacher. One science teacher remembered that his own junior high school science teacher would ask students who were good at science to explain some homework problems to the class. He got praise from his own teacher, and this experience gave him the motivation to be a science teacher.

Another math teacher also mentioned the influence from his own high school math teacher, stating: "My high school math teacher taught systematically, which inspired my interest in math. It also made me feel that it should be a happy thing to teach." All of them later became teachers teaching the same subjects as their mentors.

One Chinese teacher also clearly described the positive influence from those good teachers who helped her and never gave up on her in her junior high school when she was

a poor student. She believed the love for education should be passed forward as a return for her own teachers. She stated:

I got to love teaching when I decided to devote myself to this job. I recalled why I would like to be a teacher.... I was a naughty student with poor grades and was put in a low achievement class. My class was terrible then. I really appreciate those teachers in my life, from my elementary school, junior high school, to high school. Those teachers really helped me a lot. If not for them, I wouldn't be like what I am now. I believe these teachers really loved me. I have nothing to return their love and don't know how to repay them. All I can do is pass forward their valuing me, never giving me up, and their efforts on me.

These above examples just illustrate that how a good teacher can influence students, even though the teacher might not think that they themselves did a lot. However, sometimes the influence happens beyond arrangement.

Besides the motivation from the prior teachers, some educators became teachers out of some other incidents or self-reflection. One principal said when in high school, her first choice was to attend Taiwan Normal University. She would like to be a teacher after college education. In addition to the good influence from own junior high school teachers, she strongly believed that "Education can save our country" while attending "Three Principles of the People¹ Club" in high school. One biology teacher even stated that after

¹ The name refers to a political philosophy, developed by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen after he established the Republic of China in 1910, aimed at building a free, prosperous, and powerful nation. Its legacy of implementation is currently apparent in the governmental organization of Taiwan.

receiving his first Bachelors degree, he took a second college entrance exam and entered a normal university because he later decided to become a teacher. During his teacher training, he participated in some outside volunteering work to prepare himself with more skills to be a teacher; for example, he served as a volunteer guide in a museum and bird park. Furthermore, this biology teacher appreciated the guidance of his mentor in his internship. He described it thusly: “This experienced teacher [his mentor], who had taught so long and was going to retire, still held enthusiasm for teaching. And his teaching methods still could compare with those young teachers.” Thus, he felt confident for his future career with all the advice from his mentor. These two examples suggested that the good motivation might prompt teachers to view teaching as a career, and in turn might also affect their later beliefs regarding discipline.

Desire for Continuing to Teach. Regardless of their motivation to be a teacher, it seems plausible that the desires of some sample members to devote themselves to teaching might greatly influence their views and practices on teaching and discipline. About two thirds of the participants stated that they liked teaching after becoming a teacher regardless of what had originally motivated them to do so. Most of their educational passion appeared to come from the psychic rewards like good interaction with and feedback from students, fulfillment from their administrative work, their own interest in reading and writing, support from the school and parents, as well as some other ancillary benefits like having summer and winter breaks and flexible time for taking care of their children and families.

One teacher expressed his inner happiness in teaching: “I can be myself; I like the chance to be with students, and I feel happy whenever I teach.” Another interviewee, who

became a junior high school teacher in her late 30s after some other jobs, stated that she appreciated her current job even more than those previous positions. She believed teaching in junior high school was what she really wanted, and she would like to cherish it. In addition, a young teacher also commented that he enjoyed being a teacher, even though this job was not as easy as he thought it would be when he was a student. He especially enjoyed the interaction with different students. He said: “Year after year, I face different students. Students bring different things to me. Teaching is not a routine job like what an engineer does. I don’t like routine work. Teaching is not boring.”

One principal, who enjoyed teaching, even said she preferred to be a homeroom teacher, because then she could interact with students greatly and influence them. She claimed: “I believe junior high school is an important period for students. Instead of the academic influence, being a homeroom teacher, my attitude and views on life can influence students.” To offer one final examples, one teacher quickly responded that he had a strong desire for continuing teaching, though his reasons were different from the above interviewees. He said:

“Of course! Don’t joke. My current job is my ideal occupation – lots of money, little work, and being close to home. I can go home three times a day. Isn’t it a good job? Besides, I have students to play with. Students are like toys – you can have fun with, but don’t destroy them! I feel no pressure about my teaching....

The main reason is I can handle my work easily. Then I have time to do whatever I like to do.”

No matter whether they showed an academic or practical emphasis, the above participants generally displayed high enthusiasm and optimistic attitudes towards teaching. Therefore,

it is plausible to infer that educators having more desire for continuing teaching might be more flexible to face and handle disciplinary issues.

At the same time, however, approximately one third of the interviewees either firmly expressed they did not enjoy teaching or described their struggling thoughts. Their main reasons were based on their personal interest or the less friendly teaching environment, which some suggested included the recent ban on corporal punishment, along with other demands placed on them by parents and society. For example, one science teacher said he should have been a policeman, one math teacher wished she could have her own business, and one administrator commented that she did not acquire a sense of achievement from being a teacher. In addition, one private school teacher responded that he felt conflicted in continuing teaching. His main concerns were “many demands and unsettled policies on discipline from the Ministry of Education.” Another teacher also agreed that the outside environment did not support teachers and the images about teachers had changed. People did not respect or value educators as much as they had done before. However, interestingly, one cram school teacher expressed that, although he enjoyed teaching, he would rather be a regular school teacher than a cram school teacher under the current educational environment. In his thoughts, cram schools currently were not on places for teachers to prosper. Therefore, what affected educators’ desires to continue teaching might be not only limited to their academic interest but also related to the changing policy environment in which they had to work.

In summary, although educator interviewees might have various thoughts on their motivation to be a teacher and desires to continue to teach, almost every one of the participants commented that they still could handle teaching and discipline well whether

they view teaching as a job or a career. However, it seems if educators can view teaching as a career, in which they can really enjoy themselves, instead of just a job to make a living, they might have their own pedagogical philosophy to guide them no matter how the outside policies or other people's views change.

Among all responses, one experienced Chinese teacher offered a philosophical thought about teaching. To him, teaching and discipline were not just methods or strategies, but also arts in themselves. He mentioned that he refused opportunities to become an administrator because he believed that doing so would hinder his teaching and limit his time with students. He argued that his main purpose in teaching was not to deliver knowledge, but rather, to promote "whole education." He further elaborated:

In terms of teaching, in my opinion, many students didn't have so much performance and potential, but they strived so hard after contacting certain teachers. They work hard because of some teachers. After many years graduating from school, students will appreciate when they finally find the help in their values and long-term lives, but the instruction was viewed useless when at school. This influence takes time, and it can't be measured by the numbers of students entering the top high schools..... I teach hard not to thank principals or parents; I build a relationship with my students, a long-term relationship. The most happy thing is students coming back to see me years after graduating from school, though they are doctors or some other people now.

This interviewee, an experienced teacher with strong personal belief, also commented on some pressure or struggles he had to face as he persisted along the way. He had a metaphor for the insistence in teaching: "I look up at the sky at night and always can see

some stars twinkling. It is like I know some people are there. But it is impossible that every star is bright, and it is also impossible that there are stars in every corner.”

The Chinese often describe education as the process of planting trees, a long-range program worthy of patience, insistence, and continuing reflective thoughts. In other words, as suggested by the teacher quoted above, when teaching is viewed as a career, not only a job, in which teachers may feel lonely striving for their ideals, but great inner happiness must occur regardless of students’ academic achievement. Educators with the attitude that believes in whole characteristics influence clearly might make them less use spanking or other forms of corporal punishment.

Connections between Pedagogy and Educators’ Disciplinary Concepts

It seems reasonable to suspect that educators’ approaches to discipline might reflect their pedagogical views. When asked what came to mind when hearing the phrase “student discipline,” the interviewees usually responded with words, like “paddles (*goun-dz*, in Chinese),” “misbehavior,” “moral,” “trivial,” “complicated,” “a natural thing in school,” “having no alternative,” “the most important ability for a teacher,” “the biggest problem in junior high schools,” “to teach students to behave properly in the proper occasions,” “to be responsible,” “to use both discipline and counseling,” or “to prevent than to cure.” In other words, respondents’ views on discipline tended to be shown in two ways: first, the objects, or “trappings,” of discipline, and, second, the functions or purposes of discipline. It seems that some interviewees viewed discipline negatively, while others viewed it neutrally or positively.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Hoy's (2001) Pupil Control ideology may help explain some of the variation in these perceptions. According to Hoy, teachers with a custodial orientation toward pupil control tend to view students as undisciplined and irresponsible individuals who respond best to punitive sanctions. By contrast, teachers with a humanistic orientation view students as being receptive to self-discipline and self-regulation built through openness, trust, friendly interpersonal relationships, and the nature of the work itself. Under such a view, schools become viewed as learning communities, not simply places that students are forced to attend.

The custodial orientation was implied in several interview responses. One counselor, for example, explicitly stated that students need moderate discipline. In her words, only people outside the educational scene would even talk about discipline and punishment, for these are things parents and educators simply take for granted. In her thoughts:

Students need [discipline and punishment]. We think it is normal to see parents discipline a running or a screaming child in a restaurant. At school, moderate prohibition, though not corporal punishment, should be accepted.

She argued that people may view discipline as negative because "they are not present in the classroom," and see only a partial scene or picture of school activity.

Expressing a parallel view, a principal stated:

Don't simply punish students when misbehavior happens. Instead, discipline them well in advance, so then no following punishment is needed....Seventh graders should be regulated well with clear demands and norms that define what they can

and what they cannot do. Then when they become eighth and ninth graders, they will not have many extended problems.

It was clear that he meant using strict rules and enforcement, having punishments that students would wish to avoid, and thus prevent them from making mistakes.

In similar fashion, a science teacher upon hearing the phrase “student discipline” stated that students needed stricter discipline, such as outside force or authority, or sometimes even the police. He argued that:

Students are given too much compassion. It is better we teachers are given authority to discipline, but not the ones to practice the punishment; it’s better to be done by the outside authority bureau. A school should be like a society. Students must learn to take the responsibility when they make mistakes instead of knowing they can be forgiven. If they get used to being forgiven, they would take it for granted that they would be forgiven everywhere outside of the school. It is wrong. Because they will eventually enter society, this teacher did not agree that students should get more protection than adults. If we treated students too nice, he suggested, we did not teach them to tell right from wrong. He told a fable about a thief who got forgiveness or even approval from his mother when he stole as a youth. Later, as an adult, the thief was caught and turned to blame his mother for improperly teaching him when he was young. This science teacher concluded from the story that “strict discipline was real virtue even though it appeared uncaring or indifferent.”

Other interviewees had less strenuous opinions than to view students as undisciplined or irresponsible individuals, but they still believed they needed clear rules or demands to direct them to goodness. For example, one homeroom teacher regarded

“discipline” as using specific strategies to educate students with special conditions, though they did not necessarily need to be strict. In her thoughts: “Education is the general means to discipline for most students, while discipline is the particular ways to deal with certain incidents.” One school chief also addressed that “*kuan*” (force and management) and “*jiou*” (education) should complement each other. One math teacher viewed discipline as:

Management and education...to direct students’ incorrect thoughts into right ones, and prepare them to become disciplined people to follow the school’s norms, like people in the society obeying laws.

One Chinese teacher mentioned similar concepts about discipline: “We need to counsel and direct students when they have deviant behavior.” An English teacher commented:

Discipline is management and moral to me. Students have to learn to behave properly in the proper places, like behaving well in a class. If students don’t follow or even destroy the group’s order, teachers must do something to keep everything in order. This is discipline, and it affects the result of teaching.

On the whole, the above educator interviewees generally believed students needed certain force or supervision to guide them. They also agreed with clear regulations and rules for students or a group to follow to form an orderly class. To them, collectivism seems to be more important than individualism and discipline serves this end. Meanwhile, the custodial orientation of some educator interviewees’ was revealed in their answers to a question regarding their interpretation of the phrase, “a strict teacher.” About 80% of those interviewed approved of “being a strict teacher,” though this might imply using

spanking (at least before the ban on corporal punishment) or other strong punishment, and be viewed negatively by students. Interviewees unanimously affirmed that “a strict teacher” meant a teacher was “responsible” and would spend time and energy to demand students follow rules about class order, their grades, learning attitude, or the whole class performance. Participants often commented that being strict was positive, as long as teachers avoided being too harsh or severe.

In contrast to the custodial orientation, some educator interviewees showed a more humanistic view of discipline, occasionally even using words suggesting disapproval of the word itself, perceiving it as negative, forceful, passive, or controlling. Instead, they preferred to use other terms like counsel, educate, direct, or guide. One private school teacher, for instance, clearly articulated how educators often make the mistake to think of “*kuan*” ahead of “*jiou*”:

I also had this wrong concept before. We should start from “*jiou*,” letting students know it is interaction, counseling, and communication. Then we can avoid so many opinion gaps with students.

One male teacher, when asked for his first thoughts on hearing the term “student discipline,” responded that he did not use the word “discipline;” instead preferring to use “company” (*pei-ban*), by which he meant being together with students to help them improve their communication and understanding. He said:

I think the term “discipline” is improper. Students make mistakes, so we should educate them and teach them. “Student discipline” should be “student education,” or “student influence.” In my view, “student discipline” is a little negative and it means to condemn, to spank, and to record a demerit..... “Company” means to be

together, to communicate, and to understand. Students must have their reasons and meanings to do things. To see is not necessarily to believe. If we can understand students' intentions, then discuss with them the whole situation, some students might admit their faults. If we just condemn them, just discipline them and spank them, we might get the opposite effect. Accompanying students is like counseling them, so we have to let them find the problems and be willing to change. It takes time.

This teacher emphasized the importance of being together with students, listening to them, communicating to them, and waiting for students' self motivation to change. He also agreed that the process took time, which might prevent some teachers from doing so, or teachers might give up during the process. Although it might take longer time in the beginning, when understanding exists between a teacher and students, discipline could be more easily done.

Moreover, an experienced teacher mentioned that "in terms of the societal change, schools should use counseling, and parents use discipline. Both counseling and discipline should function well." Another experienced teacher replaced "discipline" with "living education," arguing that living education should be done by every teacher in school.

"Actually, I don't know how to discipline students; I just tell them how to do it," he said.

Following this theme, another teacher stated:

[i]f educators discipline students without feeling, they treat students as broken toys to be fixed rather than human beings needing guidance....If you have good interaction with a student, even though he cannot control himself well, he restrains himself a little bit.

In parallel fashion, one math teacher commented:

If teachers do things with good intention, show empathy, consider students' best interests, and communicate with them, everything teachers do won't be too extreme....[however,] teachers should have fair standards, and never do things out of their own self-interest.

Both the above quotes suggest a willingness to put student needs at center stage, in other words, to act in students' best interest. This idea was also expressed by a cram school teacher who commented that:

We cram school teachers can't discipline student; we can only *direct* them, since we have no restriction on students like what schools can do, such as recording a demerit.... We have to attract them to come to cram schools, to be happy to come to cram schools, and they'd better get good grades afterward.

This cram school teacher went on to that it was "heavy" to enforce discipline in the private institutions. Instead, they just tried to attract students to sit down, listen, and earn high grades.

Based on the different concepts of pupil control, either custodial or humanistic views, one can conceive of ensuing discrepant disciplinary practices among educators. Might a link thus exist, therefore, between custodial views of discipline and a generalized support for the use of corporal punishment?

Connection between Pedagogical Views and Disciplinary Practice

How do the philosophical views expressed in these interviews relate to what teachers actually do? To begin, my interviews suggest that in contrast with the teacher-

centered and “test-score-focused” practices of past decades, disciplinary thinking has shifted in at least three key ways. First, it now emphasizes treating students as individuals or “clients” with different needs, values, and abilities. Second, responses suggest that discipline is now used more broadly, to shape and improve behavior, attitudes, and learning habits. Third, responses reveal a trend toward more positive disciplinary methods like encouragement, persuasive dialogue, and praise. At the same time, some responses indicate that educators perceive a loss of public respect and esteem.

It seems plausible that such environmental changes might then be reflected in teachers’ disciplinary practices. For example, one public school teacher referred to students as “customers,” arguing that schooling was now mainly a matter of meeting students’ needs and providing them with benefits. Another teacher emphasized similar ideas: “Principals should run schools as enterprises instead of viewing themselves as just an official. Teachers have to take business administration classes.”

The responses above emphasize a need for educators to change themselves to adjust to new educational and social trends. Other responses, to be discussed below, provided more depth and detail about these trends and their impact on disciplinary practices. Before presenting these, however, it may be useful to provide a summary or picture of the kinds of disciplinary problems most salient to this sample of teachers. Based on the interviews, the main student disciplinary problems can be classified into three categories: in-class, in-school, and out-of-school (but school related) misbehavior. The most frequently reported in-class misbehavior is disrespectful backtalk or sass to teachers or expressing a bad attitude to teachers and peers. Also mentioned were behaviors such as wandering from one’s seat, being late, skipping class, not handing in

homework, and bothering peers. Frequently reported in-school misbehavior included smoking, improper dress, fighting, bullying, sexual relationships, stealing, damaging school property, and riding a bicycle onto school grounds without a helmet. The main form of out-of-school misbehavior reported was the spreading of online rumors (what many in the West refer to as “cyber bullying”). In other words, educators nowadays seem to focus most of their disciplinary effort on behavior and attitude problems rather than on academic achievement.

Interview responses also suggest that teachers feel their conflicts with students are increasing, though students in urban areas and in the country tend to pose different kinds of disciplinary problems. Students in the rural towns and countryside have more disciplinary problems related to low socioeconomic background (delinquency, skipping school, etc.), while students in urban areas might be considered – as one teacher put it – a little “oily,” meaning precociously or deceptively smooth, suave, or clever in their misbehavior.

When asked about the discipline and punishment practice they currently used, interviewees described a wide range of strategies. One teacher described the approach as “kaleidoscopic,” but still avoiding corporal punishment. “Kaleidoscopic” is *wu-hua-ba-men* in Chinese (“five flowers and eight doors”), used here to encompass a variety of standard and ad hoc methods. Though “disciplinary variety” may not be a new idea, educators in this sample seldom used spanking or harsh forms of non-corporal punishment. Yet as in past generations, interviewees still rely on their own individually devised methods, as school-wide disciplinary regulations simply do not exist in most schools.

Communication appears to be a key part of kaleidoscopic discipline, on a daily basis, before and after punishment. That is to say, discussion about discipline occurs not just as a response to student misbehavior, but as a regular feature of classroom interaction, and interviewees reported spending much time talking to students about appropriate and inappropriate behavior. And, as discussed in an earlier section, disciplinary practices often reflect a diversified and humane pedagogical approach. One math teacher explained that:

The more positive disciplinary strategy should be building trustful relationships with students. Don't let students feel that teachers punish them emotionally. For example, we might preach to students for one class period, but the follow up counseling might take one month, two months, even one year, or after their graduation. We should let students know the good intention of our discipline.... Take cheating as an example, we usually first take students to the office to "save their face." As for fighting incidents, we calm students down first and then deal with it, instead of punish them immediately.

This teacher's response suggests that though students still make mistakes, it is preferable for teachers to negotiate with students about what punishment to use instead of simply making a one-sided decision. The response also suggests that educators should act less as the strong authority figures they were in the past, and more like mentors or caring adults. In this fashion, as indicated in the above quote, teachers express a concern for student dignity to the point of "face saving" and avoiding students' shameful feelings. The teacher quoted above agreed that "in the recent five or six years, there is no coercive discipline but communication, like buddies."

As a whole, based on the interviewees' responses, the discipline that educators currently use might be classified as daily, corrective, and communal. Daily discipline includes understanding students' backgrounds, clarifying class rules, improving classroom management, and telling/sharing life stories about certain incidents or events. Many educator interviewees also mentioned reinforcing students' responsibilities by assigning them to leadership positions. Some emphasized communicating with students through their daily contact logs, in which students record their daily assignments and grades for parents' and homeroom teachers' review. In addition to such strategies, interviewees stated that teachers should "stick to regulations, be fair, set good examples, and establish their authority," though they had better be students' friends in certain ways.

One principal mentioned homeroom teachers' visits to students' homes during a free half day after an exam at his school. He said:

Homeroom teachers visit three to five students after each period exam [three periods in a semester]. Ideally, every student's family will be visited before graduation—there are twenty to thirty students in a class. The families with not very okay students will be visited first. The first purpose of family visits is to let parents know teachers/school care about them. The second one is to increase mutual understanding for solutions of students' future possible problems.

Out of concern for personal safety, as well as other reasons, teacher home visits occur less often than in the past. Instead, most schools hold parent-teacher meetings to facilitate communication with parents. This small rural school practices discipline in an active and caring way by making good use of its advantages – fewer students in each class and parents being home at times convenient for home visits. Though this particular

disciplinary practice was mentioned by only one interviewee, it represents the general direction in which schools have shifted since the corporal punishment ban.

Other corrective discipline strategies mentioned in the interviews included verbal warnings, moral persuasion, recording demerits, repentant notes, assigning more homework or extra writing, re-taking tests, lowering grades, depriving students of break or lunch time, detainment, “grounding,” running, doing push-ups, jumping, rope skipping, labor service, class service, standing, or reciting the Heart Sutra (a Buddhist text). One teacher mentioned that new, more positive names had been given to certain punishments; the phrase “school-loving service” instead of “labor service” and “corrective writing” instead of “punitive writing.” In addition to the punitive discipline, educators used positive reinforcement for student’s good performance; verbal encouragement, treats, written praise, raising grades, letting students wear their own clothes (instead of the standard uniform) to school, or awarding honor cards. Nevertheless, interviewees agreed that corporal punishment, especially spanking, was still used in some schools, though it was much less frequent and severe than in the past.

A number of interviewees mentioned seeking out help from administrators, assistants, fellow teachers, or through collaboration with parents. Under recent school reform legislation, schools involve parents and community members in site-based management. Community representatives and parents’ associations typically provide parent-teacher meetings, educational workshops, and student activities providing various forms of non-academic learning. One other resource mentioned by three interviewees was (translated literally) “insurance of teachers’ disciplinary risk,” a form of liability insurance, offering some protection against disciplinary negligence. According to these

interviewees, however, few if any teachers used this insurance and one claimed that “teachers believed that purchasing it is looking down upon their disciplinary abilities.” One rural teacher referred to self-awareness or spiritual learning programs offered by outside organizations whose members would come to the school once a week to meet with troubled seventh and eighth graders. Though this teacher had little knowledge of the specific activities, she believed they had a good influence on school discipline.

This kind of spiritual discipline counseling program is, apparently, not uncommon. A teacher interviewee in a private school funded by a Buddhist foundation described a special disciplinary assistance program and staffed by parent volunteers offered “humanity classes” featuring spiritually uplifting talks and discussions. The teacher referred to this program as “the Tzu-Yi system” (from the use of male and female Buddhist foundation members, called “Tzu Cheng papas” and “Yi Der mamas”), and claimed it to have helped a lot with classroom discipline. The teacher explained the Tzu-Yi system:

There are three to five Tzu Cheng papas and Yi Der mamas in each class. They are trained by our foundation, so they have to learn some psychological and counseling techniques. Their important role is to accompany students. For example, we have 35 students in a class. One homeroom teacher plus three Tzu-Yi parents take charge of 35 students, so it can be said that each one of us is responsible for nine students. It is easier for us to handle students. We work like a team, sharing and discussing things. Tzu-Yi parents come to school once a month, taking care of two classes (one class meeting and one week meeting). In addition to the Tzu-Yi Day once a month, they come to school when they are on duty or

free. They talk to students casually. They are not necessarily those students' biological parents, but they are the bridges of students and parents, because students might tell them things they don't tell their own parents.

Through the Tzu-Yi program, students received more care, company, and humanity education (spirit, manner, etc) than students in nearby public schools. Though not a typical approach, the program illustrates the trend toward building softer yet directive relationships with students as a way of building good school discipline. During my visit to this school, I sensed a harmonic but serious atmosphere among educators and students; their pleasant and respectful facial expressions, tidy uniforms, and clean building.

Despite this trend toward more humanistic forms of discipline, educator interviewees mostly agreed that spanking and corporal punishment had not entirely disappeared from school, and that a few teachers still used controversial punishments like paddling or humiliation (e.g., making students suck baby bottle nipples). Some interviewees claimed that a few teachers had essentially "given up" and stopped disciplining students altogether. At least one teacher seemed to question the efficacy of the ban, saying that "it was possible to discipline without corporal punishment, but that students' discipline and academic achievement would suffer accordingly." Yet, the majority of interviewees claimed that large changes had taken place since the ban on school discipline, and virtually every interviewee noted changes in most teachers' behavior and attitude. They also noted, however, that the changes did not always reflect complete support for the ban. Several interviewees suggested that while some teachers gradually rejected corporal punishment out of humanitarian reasons, others stopped or limited the practice for fear of losing their jobs.

It seems likely that educators' pedagogies influence the disciplinary practices they apply. Some use more daily discipline, while some use more corrective discipline, still others rely on a philosophic concept, while some practice more skills or strategies. It seems plausible to conclude that educators with a custodial orientation apply more explicit disciplinary demands and methods on students. However, educators with a humanistic approach generally use talks, empathy, or rewards. No matter what pupil control orientation or application they use, the educator interviewees constructed a picture of what the student discipline typically looks like in Taiwan's junior high schools today—that is, a mix, or “kaleidoscope” of humanistic and custodial approaches. Student disciplinary practices, however, were still mostly implemented by individual teachers, instead of the school-wide regulated procedures.

Teachers' Views of New Threats to Student Discipline

Educators' current disciplinary problems mostly relate to changes in parenting, the media, and society (i.e., Taiwan's move toward democracy). This section presents interviewee's perceptions of how these changes have posed problems in their schools.

Parent Issues

Though educator interviewees agreed that a large majority of parents either support or have no strong opinion on school policies, they also perceive parents to be more opinionated about schooling today than in the past. Some interviewees reported specific comments from parents concerning the disciplining of their own children, most often in support of corporal punishment. For example, more than one interviewee

reported parents directing, “spank my kid if it is necessary,” and some parents even insist on it. Most interviewees, however, viewed such imperatives with caution. One principal reminded his teachers that parents might later “regret” their decision and say: “I didn’t want you to spank my child so severely!” Another teacher also mentioned that she would not spank students because the other students might take photos with their cell phones. One administrator echoed a joke that “the parents permitted spanking their child, but then the grandpa came and sued the teacher!” This administrator did not believe that most parents were supportive of the school. “This impression fools you! Don’t be fooled!” He said.

Several of my interviewees noted how a few parents had rather strong opinions about schooling and education policy. Most participants pointed to a connection between the tendency for parents to have fewer children and their tendency to spoil them or to have unrealistically high expectations for their future academic and occupational success. One administrator described those parents as “time bombs,” referring to their tendency to suddenly come to school to argue about their child having been academically shortchanged in some way.

In addition, changes in family structure have led to more and more children living with grandparents or a single parent, and some interviewees reported some grandparents or parents as having expressed an inability to effectively discipline their children. One teacher explicitly repeated some parents’ complaints about their discipline: “I can’t

¹ Chinese personal pronouns are genderless, orally. All of the third person pronouns are pronounced the same: *ta*. However, they have different written forms.

discipline him (*ta* – in Chinese)¹.” Another teacher also reported parents’ similar remarks: “I can’t do anything to do about him.” In other words, though parents might love and care for their children, they cannot discipline them well. My interviewees perceive such parents as demanding a great deal of the school, but not always trusting the school enough to grant it wide disciplinary authority. One principal concluded that “Generally speaking, the parents who don’t discipline their own children but have lots of opinions on school education usually are the parents of those problematic students who will report the school to the higher authority or media.” In other words, “those parents would spoil those children.”

One administrator narrated the case of a mother who had been a high school English teacher and frequently wrote long and angry letters to her son’s teachers. She characterized those letters as describing the mother’s opinions on education, English teaching, and special education, as well as suggesting that the teachers’ treatment of her son will affect their karma. According to this administrator, her colleagues’ common feeling about this mother after reading her letters was that “She has mental problems.” Though this mother usually acted reasonably after face to face communication with school teachers, her repeated complaints drove teachers crazy. This administrator described her reaction in the days before her meeting with this parent as “anxious, angry, sleepless, and in a bad mood.” She described her communication with this mother as “a shocking education!” I inferred from these various comments that teachers perceived that the children with the most difficult disciplinary problems usually came from those parents who caused the most trouble for the school. Some interviewees thus emphasized parenthood education as a strategy to decrease student disciplinary problems.

The Media

Changes in the media—new forms and the evolution of traditional forms—was often cited by interviewees as prompting new kinds of disciplinary problems. According to many participants, TV variety shows increasingly present performances filled with “bad examples” for children. The Internet was also mentioned as a source from which children can learn and do many things, some of which are viewed as detrimental to good student behavior, but which schools or parents find hard to censor. In addition, students use cell phones with digital still-shot and video cameras, enabling them to keep visual records and report what happened at schools to websites, newspapers, or official authorities. One national newspaper in particular was mentioned by many interviewees as accepting those reports with little or no supporting evidence and printing them in an inflammatory or sensationalist fashion. Many interviewees stated a belief that media reports based on student photos or videos usually contain twisted or untrue information, a belief that appeared to sometimes discourage or frighten them regarding their disciplinary acts.

One administrator offered a typical reflection held widely among many educators regarding the media: “Parents nowadays are apt to report to the media if they feel unsatisfied, and the media seem to accept everything!” Another administrator agreed, saying, “The public media encourage people to report.” One private teacher described a newspaper report based on one student’s cell phone picture that showed some students gathered together to receive punishment for violating a school’s hair policy. According to this teacher, the student wanted to “warn” the school, that is, to discourage it from imposing any hair code beyond the weak Ministry of Education regulations. This same

interviewee also described a case in her school where a student took a picture of his homeroom teacher fining students for disciplinary infractions, and sent it to the Central Office of the Ministry of Education. Yet another teacher recalled students frequently complaining to the media or educational authorities, and stated that her school's Chief of Behavior had been reported three times during the current semester. "When the news like this comes out," she complained, "everyone takes the side of parents and students. Few speak out for teachers."

According to these educators, after receiving those reports, the educational authorities usually simply notified the school of the complaint and requested them to address it. Occasionally, the schools often dealt with them by changing some teachers' positions. The educational authorities did not punish schools but only gave teachers symbolic warnings. Although this had little impact on the teachers being reported, interviewees indicated that it had a negative impact on teacher morale. Whether truthful or prankish, schools now need to spend energy on student claims, something that rarely happened in the past. One administrator concluded that educators nowadays "must always be cautious."

Other Perceived Problems and Threats to Discipline

In addition to parents and media, interviewees mentioned some other disciplinary problems such as their lack of legal protection, the lack of training in effective alternatives to corporal punishment, the lack of assistance from the Student Affairs Office, growing pressure to improve students' grades (without corporal punishment), and the inconsistency of school disciplinary policies (in particular, those regarding the use of cell

phones). Also mentioned were the difficulties of having to deal with students' problems beyond the classroom or beyond the abilities of teachers (e.g., family issues, mental disorders, or gang problems), the ineffectiveness of counseling or persuasion as a disciplinary tool, or structural problems related to school entry and security.

Some interviewees, however, seemed to strongly believe that educators should be professional enough to adjust and respond to these disciplinary changes instead of merely condemning policies, students, parents, media, and all the other variables of influence. They also pointed out the need to provide assistance for educators weak in disciplinary technique. Interviews indicated that, new teachers, substitute teachers, and those teachers perceived as having low disciplinary effectiveness might encounter more disciplinary problems because they lack experience. One administrator summarized the impact of teacher demographics upon school discipline. She stated: "The number of new teachers and substitute teachers matter school discipline. Since substitute teachers generally perform poorly in classroom management and teaching." One teacher, however, thought senior teachers in her school had more problems adjusting to the change. Also, homeroom teachers may face more disciplinary pressure under the new law because they might receive more subject teachers' reports on the students' problems. An administrator asserted that "this position will force homeroom teachers to have no choice but spank students sometimes." Without the instant and non-complex disciplinary method, corporal punishment, it seems the mentioned teachers above might encounter more disciplinary conflicts.

One female administrator concluded that general school disciplinary problems were caused when: “Parents and society don’t respect and trust teachers, media exaggerate, and educators’ quality doesn’t increase.” She further explained:

Teachers’ quality was low before, but parents’ quality was lower. Now if teachers’ quality can’t compare with parents’, then they are easily questioned. We respected teachers before, though they were low-qualified, but they devoted themselves to teaching. Current teachers care too much about their own rights and don’t want to sacrifice themselves. Then they shouldn’t ask too much respect. Everything now is quantified and formalized: spending how much time, getting how much salary, and obtaining how much respect..... Basically, a good teacher must have certain teaching standards and charms, so he/she then has fewer disciplinary problems to worry about. By contrast, a poor teacher can’t make students understand his/her teaching, so students have more time to make trouble.

This administrator concluded that “Teachers’ professional ability must complement disciplinary ability (classroom management skills) to a certain degree.” She argued that educators currently relied too much on an “experience rules” philosophy, which though not undesirable, is insufficient where there is a lack of professional development. In other words, the ways to solve educators’ disciplinary problems and to increase their disciplinary abilities might rely on not only providing more clear methods and strategies or getting rid of well-known obstacles, but also by equipping them with more professional pedagogy and self-development opportunities.

Negative parental involvement, a more vocal public, and a dearth of clear guidance about student discipline seem to have created some insecure feeling about

disciplinary practices among educators in this sample. Most felt they had few clear ideas about disciplining students or about how to avoid unpleasant external interferences. Educators apparently must operate in a working environment much different from that which they once experienced. Some interviewees supported the idea of professional development as a way to address their insecurity, suggesting that such teacher effort might lead to successful practice and that educators ought not rely simply on their past experience. Changes and professional adjustment are apparently viewed as necessary.

Educator Views on the Impact of Banning Corporal Punishment

Based on the previous discussions, it seems that regardless of pupil control or pedagogical orientation, the participants in this study viewed discipline as a key process and purpose of successful education. In addition, having experienced much corporal punishment as students, they wish to refrain from imposing humiliating punishment on their own students, even though many still believe in strict discipline. As mentioned in prior chapter, the ban on corporal punishment was declared in 2006 and it is influential because corporal punishment had been common in Taiwanese schools. In this section, interviewees' views of and responses to the ban are discussed.

“Zero Corporal Punishment” and Limiting Disciplinary Tools

Though subjects were not asked directly about having personally used corporal punishment on students, some nevertheless recalled and recounted their use of spanking and other kinds of corporal punishment prior to the ban. The responses of those who chose to comment in this way indicated that corporal punishment was once the main

disciplinary method within their schools. One administrator went so far to state that corporal punishment created a peaceful environment in his school. He emphasized, however, that:

The key point doesn't lie in corporal punishment, instead, it is determined by the fact that students knew what consequences they would receive, so they didn't dare to make mistakes.

He further argued that corporal punishment can have an instant powerful effect on students' behavior, claiming that his school was once "straightened out from being in disorder" through its use.

In a similar vein, a female teacher reflected on her early teaching:

I was the teacher who spanked students a lot, especially when I taught in ... school [a southern, rural school serving families with lower educational backgrounds], where students were harder to discipline....I lost my temper more easily before. When I saw something wrong, I lost my temper. I made mistakes to blame students and punish them, which I think is also many teachers' problem.

This teacher also stated that she seldom used spanking after she had more teaching experience, and gradually abandoned the practice even before the ban. Lacking experience and being in a "spanking-friendly" environment might explain her frequent use of spanking.

A private school teacher also recalled his previous experience using corporal punishment and some other punishments which might not be allowed now. He stated:

When I first came to this school, I replaced a seventh grade homeroom teacher and took charge of the class for the next two years. When the class was in eighth

grade, I followed almost all that the seventh grade teacher had done in terms of punishment: spanking, fining, writing, sitting meditation, writing Heart Sutra. For my current class of ninth graders, I used spanking and writing when they were in seventh grade, and then they behaved well in eighth grade. They were afraid of the punishments, so I didn't have to use those afterward.

This teacher mentioned an important principle that experienced teachers often convey to new teachers: if you are strict to the students in the first year you teach them, they will know how to follow your teaching without making much trouble in the following years. Students were educated to understand how to behave well at his school mostly because they were afraid of being physically punished. In summary, these three educators agreed that corporal punishment was traditionally perceived to be a key tool within schools, one upon which teachers relied heavily during past decades.

Initial Thoughts about the Ban. When asked for their initial thoughts about the corporal punishment ban, about two thirds of the educator interviewees stated they had worried about or disapproved of the new policy. Their main concern could be summarized as “How can we discipline students now? Tell us what to do -- don't just tell us what we can't do!” The participants repeatedly used phrases like “I felt my hands and legs are tied.” An administrator vividly described how teachers felt like having had their “*wu-kung*” [skill] taken away, as those swordsmen in olden times without their swords and skills to give full play. One teacher even commented, “We were disciplined strictly before, and we didn't get bad; now the discipline is looser and looser, and the social problems are getting worse.” This quote demonstrates that strict discipline and corporal punishment continued to be perceived as a critical tool for establishing appropriate

behavior. Teacher frustration over its loss is captured in one interviewee's comment that "Love education leads to tears and blood." Another teacher expressed a similar sense of frustration, claiming that he liked the practices of the old days when he was a student, stating firmly, "You have to get punishment when you make mistakes."

Likewise, one female teacher addressed the necessity of corporal punishment as follows:

I always think using corporal punishment is necessary, but we have to regulate it clearly. A total ban on corporal punishment hurts those gentle students. If student A beats student B, and the teacher can only verbally blame student A, it is unfair to student B. I personally still uphold the death penalty. If someone deprives another of life, he/she should be deprived of life, too.... The ban says we can't make students stand for more than two hours, which is too exaggerated! I think the ban only protects bad students' human rights, not gentle students' human rights... I don't think teachers would be perverted enough to spank those gentle students. The abusive teachers are just a few. They won't mind the ban; they would still spank students. This ban just hurts the hard-working teachers and gentle students.

This female teacher expressed the typical disapproval opinion on the ban. That is to say, they argued that the ban protected those students with disciplinary problems but hurt the remaining students' rights. As for those abusive teachers, educators suggested that they should be regulated by incompetent teacher rules instead of by sacrificing hard-working teachers and well behaved students.

Another experienced teacher, who also expressed her support for using corporal punishment, remarked on the necessity of symbolic punishment. She argued for using moderate corporal punishment to properly regulate students. Otherwise, educators would not have some forceful method to effectively warn students. She further explained:

Take the writing punishment as an example. Some students are too naughty to write. What can you do? Some parents might have opinions on this, too. As for the standing punishment, some students would run away after class. How can you chase them back? Spanking is just a symbolic punishment. We shouldn't make punishments too painful. Spanking should be like recording a demerit, just to warn students.

What "symbolic punishment" meant here is similar to what the other educators called "a warning," "a threat," or "a reasonable retribution." This female teacher believed that school teachers did not have much time and energy to deal with those troublemakers, so again, moderate spanking was effective without harm.

The above educators firmly believed that using corporal punishment could lead to some good educational results and create better behaved students who are willing to learn. However, those educators who did not support this ban argued that they would only like to have the option for a few troubling situations. For them, using corporal punishment should remain a disciplinary option or tool, though not necessarily one they would definitely use. For some interviewees, in fact, corporal punishment had more value as a threat than as a reality. As one administrator put it:

We don't necessarily corporally punish students, but we can frighten students. It is like most of us will not be put in a jail, but we know we will be if we do something bad."

He believed what should be banned was "inappropriate corporal punishment.

One teacher also emphasized the importance of helping teachers with emotional management to prevent the inappropriate use of corporal punishment. One principal also stated the belief that although 70 % to 90 % of students could be disciplined without using corporal punishment, about 10 % who could not be communicated with would never change without receiving some "shock" or "alert." Therefore, the educators who did not support the ban liked to keep corporal punishment as a disciplinary alternative to deal with some students having serious trouble.

Furthermore, the educators' worry or disapproval did not just concern their own disciplinary methods, but also their fellow teachers' disciplinary practices. For example, before the ban, the Office of Student Affairs took charge of general school disciplinary issues and the problems that teachers could not handle. Prior to 2006, the Director of Student Affairs and the Chief of Behavior were like judges and executioners all in one. Spanking and yelling were the common scenes in the office. To teachers, sending troubling students there helped with solving their disciplinary problems. However, after the ban, teachers generally began to doubt whether they could seek the same help from the Student Affairs Office as in the past. One male teacher mentioned his experience of sending a misbehaving student to the office of Student Affairs:

My own experience is that it was helpful to send students to the Student Affairs Office before [the ban]. Now I get insulted when I send students there. I sent a

student there; the student left happily and came back happily. It was like nothing happened! I asked how they dealt with my student. Nothing! No news afterwards! The Student Affairs Office administrators look down upon teachers sending students there. They even responded: “Why don’t you discipline students yourself?”

After the ban, most teachers seem to wish to avoid trouble, regardless of whether or not they opposed the ban. Administrators in the Office of Student Affairs who hold similar concerns may wish to shift responsibility back to teachers. For example, one female administrator who agreed with the disciplinary changes at argued, “Teachers need administrative assistance, but do homeroom teachers fulfill their own responsibilities?” Apparently, educators in different positions view the disciplinary change in different ways.

In other words, almost every one of educator interviewees agreed that the law has placed tremendous new pressure on their school disciplinary procedures, especially for those schools that allowed corporal punishment before the ban. Only one out of the thirty-five participants replied that she did not hear about this ban before the interview. The reason might be because the school she served had banned corporal punishment when it was established in 1999, and she had been working in a zero corporal punishment environment since she entered the school in 2002.

Later Thoughts about the Ban. At the time of these interviews, the ban had been in place for one and a half years. When asked for their opinion about the ban after this time, approximately half of the initial disapproval still remained, while half of those who had initially disapproved responded in ways indicating they had accepted the ban. In

other words, about one third of the interviewees still disagreed with the ban. A few of the participants stated they still spanked or used corporal punishment on students, but interviewees all agreed that corporal punishment was much more rarely seen in their schools. For instance, a homeroom teacher mentioned he just spanked his students with a one-foot long glue stick before the interview. A female teacher described her communication with her students that she might still use corporal punishment once a while for discipline. She said maybe based on the trust between her and her students, her students agreed with her.

One cram school teacher even claimed that he still spanked students, thus ignoring the law completely. He said confidently: “I don’t *eat* that law! [I don’t buy it!]” He believed his students and their parents would trust him since spanking was a part of his discipline and he communicated with them well before using the punishment. He further said: “I will close my cram school when no students will come or while I am sued to nothing.” Though the law applies to cram schools, teachers in cram schools generally are not influenced as much as regular school teachers, as they have little contact with the government. Generally, cram school teachers have more freedom in teaching and discipline with less formal government control. Therefore, they can worry about the ban less and follow their pedagogy more.

One female teacher in a top urban city school also declared that she still spanked students. She directly said: “I myself spank students.” But then further explained: “I spank them sometimes when they don’t hand in their homework repeatedly.... I run the risk of my own life to spank them! I’ll make sure I am fine to spank them, like

communicating with them.” She gave an example from her experience during the first summer after the ban, in which spanking worked well:

I was requested to take a ninth grade English class last summer. Their eighth grade English teacher was complained about by parents, so I was put in to reorganize the class. In two months, what I relied on to change them from being unorganized to disciplined was a paddle. After two months, I could teach, they could listen to me when I pointed out their mistakes, in two months. But before I did everything, I got their parents’ agreement for using judicious corporal punishment when needed. Most of the parents accepted it, and the outcome turned to be good. I know this agreement doesn’t have the legal base, but if you want some good outcome in a short time, you have to allow me to use some unusual strategies in the extraordinary situation.

This teacher made a special but interesting example about using spanking after the ban. She said “I risk my own life to spank students!” If spanking them is so risky, why would she still do it? She explained that she made sure it was ok to spank them through communication and agreements with parents. Yet, how certain could she be since “illegal is illegal” and she knew the agreements with parents had no legal basis? In addition, school administrators and parents could accept her way, too!

This female teacher later on responded that she would not spank the seventh graders even though she would still strictly discipline them because she would have more time to regulate them. For the ninth graders in her example, she had to settle them down soon to prepare them with taking the high school entrance exam the next year. She shouldered the expectation and the trust from the school and the parents, and she just had

the confidence that she could attain a good result. This example illustrates something mentioned in a previous chapter; that in Taiwan, academic instruction is more tightly coupled and bureaucratically practiced, while loosely coupled disciplinary practices serve mainly to facilitate academic efforts. Moreover, this quote also indicates the “simplicity” of corporal punishment. Compared to other disciplinary methods, spanking is relatively non-complex, non-time-consuming, but has instant effect. In order to receive the positive results of student’s exams, the moderate use of spanking was accepted by her school administrators and students’ parents.

This female teacher also made an interesting metaphor about students’ discipline levels:

Some students just need teachers’ eye contact to know their mistakes, some students need teachers’ verbal warning, some students get the lesson after being spanked, and some students have to get several spankings to understand.

Again, she emphasized the importance of communication before and after spanking or punishment, and spanking was only one kind of punishment. The main purpose of using the paddle, she suggested, is to “retrieve students’ minds from wildness” and settle them down for academic learning. Therefore, though this teacher mentioned using spanking to settle students down for study, she did not paddle students for missing test points like her own junior high school teachers had done. Her main purpose in spanking students was their classroom behavior and their learning attitude and habits. That is to say, she focused spanking as a way to improve students’ learning processes rather than on results.

These above teachers who continued to use corporal punishment after the ban were indeed not exceptions. Many interviewees agreed that a few teachers in their

schools still use spanking or other forms of corporal punishment. As discussed above, this may be explained by their backgrounds, philosophy, or the pressure they feel to raise achievement. Yet, even those who believed in or continued to use corporal punishment expressed a feeling that they needed to be more cautious in its use. They also suggested that the law may have caused some colleagues to become lax or passive about student discipline. Apparently, a very real fear exists that a teacher might be sued or otherwise punished. As one principal joked, “Only those teachers who have too much money will spank students!” This joke reflects the practice in Taiwanese culture of teachers providing money either under the table or through the legal process to compensate students and their parents for improper discipline.

However, this principal also argued with the theory of “carrots and paddles.” He said:

It is hard to say which one [carrots or paddles] to use. Using too many rewards is useless. It depends on individual situation. The order is “Don’t spank when you can talk; fewer spans than too many spans; then spank when it is necessary.” He also commented that “educators should avoid corporal punishment as much as they can.” However, if some trouble related to using corporal punishment happens, “teachers should get the chance to appeal,” he suggested. In summary, even under the ban and the fear of being punished, some interviewees still upheld the moderate use of corporal punishment and asked for chances of legal protection.

Positive Views of the Ban on Corporal Punishment

Despite the high support for using corporal punishment right after the ban, about one third of participants either had supported or been neutral regarding the ban. Moreover, after one and a half years of the ban, two thirds of all interviewees expressed either supportive or neutral opinions. In other words, acceptance of non-corporal punishment methods appears to have increased among the educators in this sample. One principal briefly but clearly responded that she upheld this ban from the very beginning. “What we learned about educational philosophy and values teaches us to ban corporal punishment. I never doubt it,” she said.

One experienced administrator explicitly described his philosophy regarding the ban:

I feel good, from the start of the ban till now. I understand that only the totalitarian countries and the less-educated countries need to regulate zero corporal punishment. The civilized countries with education do not need to regulate it, since it is self-evident. Therefore, in one hand, this law presents our backward education, but in the other hand, it gives teachers in basic level some alert on using corporal punishment. You may not come out with better strategies, but you have to demand yourself to give up this bad method. Do not say you do corporal punishment for students’ best interest. Even though you care about students’ best interest, you can’t spank them openly.

This administrator firmly stated that education should be “to lead students to righteousness.” That is to say, educators should give students systematic guidance or to teach them with patience and skill instead of using those “uncivilized” strategies of

corporal punishment or spanking, even with good intention. This experienced administrator, however, stated further: “It requires great insistence to not spank students.” He once spanked students but he finally realized that spanking was useless and also caused trouble to himself after a spanking incident which almost led to a law-suit. This shock spurred him to ponder discipline and to change his teaching and disciplinary strategies. He realized: “If I can build a good learning atmosphere, students will like to come to school, and I don’t have to spank them!”

Another administrator also showed optimism toward the ban. She first told a story about one student in her first year teaching. That seventh grader pulled out his hands for spanking after getting his test paper with a poor score from this administrator. She was surprised by this student’s instinctive reaction since she did not intend to spank him. “He must have been spanked quite often in elementary school, so he had the standard reaction,” she concluded. Though this student was not spanked at that time, this story can surely give educators a chance to ponder the question “what on earth do we teach our students?”

She further emphasized that educators should use professional strategies to discipline students, instead of spanking them. She stated:

I think that teachers shouldn’t do what can hurt students. I also agree that as professional figures, teachers are supposed to make students to achieve what they intend by using their professional strategies. I am an administrator having fewer classes than other teachers do, so I don’t dare to demand them more. However, I still expect teachers to develop their profession...If teachers can only reach the

requests of schools by spanking or corporal punishment, then why are teachers paid a high salary? I still believe that teachers' salaries are generally higher.

This administrator mentioned a point that the fewer classes educators had, the less of a disciplinary dilemma they might have. Having many classes might be a possible stress so that teachers are not able to use more professional disciplinary strategies. However, another point this female administrator made concerns the recurring theme of teacher professionalism. Her comments were addressed in the previous section of disciplinary threats. However, some other thoughts still need attention. For example, do teachers receive sufficient training? How much professional training is needed for teachers to deal with disciplinary issues? How should educators develop professionalism? How can it be evaluated?

One teacher who supported the ban since he first became a teacher nine years ago, also agreed with the homeroom teachers' dilemmas. He said:

After several years' teaching, some realistic practices might be different from my previous ideal thoughts. Especially when I was a homeroom teacher, I encountered dilemmas. Corporal punishment can achieve short-term threatening effects; however, it is not useful in the long run. Therefore, if I am not a homeroom teacher, I can never use corporal punishment.

Though this teacher agreed that the homeroom teachers might encounter more disciplinary problems that made it harder to abandon corporal punishment, he still argued that the practice was not effective. He believed that educators could and should figure out methods to treat students professionally without using corporal punishment if they really wanted to do so, even though the process took time and energy.

In addition to the positive opinions on the ban, some educators actually hold neutral attitudes, neither pro or against the ban. They did what they usually did without much influence by the ban. A cram school teacher, for example, expressed his opinion:

Schools ban corporal punishment, but parents upholding corporal punishment are not decreasing much. Parents still agree with corporal punishment, so then who benefits? Cram schools! Once we can have certain understanding and agreements with parents and children, we won't have much disciplinary conflict like that in [regular] schools.

Obviously, this teacher believed that cram schools would not be influenced too much by the ban, though the ban applied to cram schools. Parents who send students to cram schools would like their children to get high grades or be disciplined strictly. Generally speaking, those parents care about their children's learning and may use strong discipline at home. In other words, students going to cram schools may tend not to have serious disciplinary problems. On the other hand, cram schools have choices, like this teacher said: "I have the choices that I can refuse certain students. Schools have fewer choices to turn down a student." However, this teacher also agreed that corporal punishment was decreasing in cram schools because of the law.

One private school teacher, showing neutral attitude, explained that this ban was imposed simply to make some people feel relieved. He believed that only those who were not educators would make this law. He commented: "It is not necessary to make this ban. Regardless of this ban, those teachers would corporally punish students will still do so, and those who wouldn't corporally punish students will not do so." He believed that

[T]he opposite of love is not hatred; it is indifference. If students were punished by the person who cares about them and who disciplines them out of love, the results will be different.

To this teacher, it seems that disciplinary strategies are trivial things, and educators should have their pedagogy to guide either their discipline or teaching instead of only relying on punishment methods.

In addition to the above, some educators supporting or tolerating the ban still seemed uncertain as to what exact kinds of discipline they could or should apply. They agreed with the philosophy of ban, but many wanted clear regulations about what they could do, not only what they could not do. For example, one administrator quoted from a public prosecutor who presented in a workshop:

If a child steals money at home, parents will not be questioned for punishing the child by having him/her kneel down in front of their ancestors' tablet. Similarly, if a child steals money in a supermarket, the clerk can send the child to the police based on burglary. The punishments at home and in the society are clear without questions. However, at school, like a previous case, a student was only reasonably suspected of stealing by a teacher, the teacher took the money, and would talk to the parents later. But then the student committed suicide at home, the death was imputed all to the teacher's improper punishment. No one questioned that the student might have killed himself/herself because of dreading punishment.

This administrator firmly argued that the only thing we could blame the teacher might be his/her not contacting the parents immediately. However, it might be because "the parents were busy." When there are clear regulations for students at home or in the society,

schools rules cannot regulate students, schools may become “hotbeds of crime.”

Therefore, he urged the government to invite school teachers as well as professors and experts to figure out the solutions.

One teacher expressed her similar concern:

I really agree that spanking is bad. But punishment is supposed to be allowed; this law should let educators feel secure....[T]he purpose of the ban is to protect students’ learning rights and their dignity, but it should not turn educators into vulnerable objects without any assistance, especially for those new teachers or teachers with weaker discipline.

Most current Taiwan junior high school educators grew up in an educational environment using spanking and corporal punishment and they were partly allowed to use corporal punishment in their teaching before the ban. They claimed they need clear regulations to tell them what they exactly can do. Insecurity appears to still exist among these educators.

Systematic Assistance in Relation to the Ban

No matter how educator interviewees perceived the ban, the vast majority reported receiving little or no assistance from either their school administration or the Ministry of Education. Some even said they learned about the ban from newspapers or other media. The assistance they got from principals or related administrators was mainly a policy announcement to the whole school or at homeroom teachers’ meeting. One teacher claimed that “[the principal and administrators] advised or warned us about not using corporal punishment and the consequences of violation.” In other words,

participants stated that they only acquired “formal information,” as opposed to practical strategies, about the ban from their school officials.

One experienced administrator, however, offered his opinion about disciplinary assistance from principals or administrators. In his thinking:

Administrators are just teachers taking part-time administrative jobs. It does not mean they necessarily have better abilities in teaching or discipline. Neither do principals.

He thus seemed to diminish the idea that teachers could seek help from administrators concerning problems of teaching or discipline. Although special training and certificates are required for principals and some administrators, this interviewee clearly did not view them as possessing specialized knowledge about student disciplinary strategies.

Asked about whether they could get assistance from the Ministry of Education, almost all of the interviewees responded “no” or “not at all.” One principal, however, said the Ministry of Education provided him with disciplinary concepts and regulations, and another principal claimed her school received a grant for classroom management workshops for teachers. Other interviewees said the Ministry of Education was “threatening educators,” “holding educators back,” “distributing pretty manuals,” or “merely dealing with those disadvantaged students.” In addition, only about half of the participants had heard of the “*School Positive Discipline Plan*” that had been distributed by the Ministry of Education after the ban, and many of those had little idea about its contents.

As for the “*Guidelines of Teachers Counseling and Discipline*,” which is included in the “*School Positive Discipline Plan*” and was required to be locally devised and

implemented by each school, most interviewees had heard of it, since schools were required to periodically create one. However, their common perceptions about the guidelines were “those are unrealistic or formalistic.” One teacher argued that their school only slightly revised the template given them by the Ministry of Education. One administrator stated that “we only followed the demands of the higher authority.” Another administrator echoed that “the guidelines provided more rules than practical strategies.”

Educator interviewees tended to strongly expect the Ministry of Education, the policy makers, the educational experts, and college professors to better understand their practical needs. One principal argued that “the Ministry of Education was directed by the Humanity Education Foundation, and parents only have incomplete comprehension. When MOE got pressure from HEF and parents, it made policies without referral to local teachers.” One administrator also responded:

Our government should invite school teachers as well as professors and the experts like from Humanity Education Foundation to discuss all the educational policies. Local teachers’ opinions should be heard since they always work voicelessly but they understand the educational situations well. Please don’t just listen to some professors’ haranguing about American education or educational experts in Humanity Education Foundation talking loudly about their ideal education.

Though some school teachers were indeed invited in those educational policy meetings and they have other ways to express themselves, it seems that some of the interviewees still expected more understanding from the higher authority and wished their voice could

be heard. Some of the participants seemed to not appreciate those educational experts. One administrator concluded that “though the Ministry of Education doesn’t teach junior high school students directly, they have to take the most responsibility. They don’t understand the basic level teaching, but they make policies. So do college educators.”

However, in contrast to the weak assistance from the Ministry of Education, educator interviewees mentioned some other possible assistance like workshops organized by schools or informal communication with their colleagues. One teacher said her school once had a three-day workshop before the start of the semester, where some experienced teachers with good classroom management skills shared their ideas with colleagues. This teacher emphasized that they shared “classroom management skills,” methods to direct students instead of punishing them after an incident. Again, she emphasized that the term “discipline” was negative, which was discussed in a previous section.

Another teacher also indicated the annual new teacher workshops in his school seemed like a poor use of resources. Though the school spent much money on the two-day resort workshop or other teacher workshops, teachers in his school did not seem to appreciate these events. He claimed that “teachers thought since they could always talk with each other at school, there was no need to spend extra time during their break.” In addition, one teacher recalled her impression on attending the workshops: “After the workshop, experience is still that of others, and we still do things our way. But someday, one of the strategies might occur to us and we might apply it.” However, she still argued that “discipline ability could not be changed by a single workshop; instead, it was influenced by many variables.” In summary, to the participants, workshops might not

help with educators' disciplinary practices directly or greatly, but they surely provided some knowledge for current or future reference.

The interviewees seemed to agree that informal discussion with colleagues, personal adjustment, and professional development were possible forms of assistance for educators trying to respond to the corporal punishment ban. Though some participants said they seldom or never shared disciplinary experiences with other colleagues, many of them agreed on the significance of such discussion. Most of the communication with colleagues was informal, like reminders, collaborative discipline, or even simply having an emotional outlet. One teacher illustrated an interesting kind of reminder that happened among her colleagues:

We might hear some teacher talking about his/her anger at a certain student and how he/she would like to slap the student. The other teachers around her/him might try to comfort her/him by saying: "Cease your anger! You must not slap the student! If you slap him/her, then your hundred thousand pension will disappear! Think thrice!"

Reminders or experience shared between colleagues thus appear to help teachers more than simple formal announcements or directives.

However, one cram school teacher, who was also the person in charge of his institution, stated that he had never communicated with his colleagues over this ban. He believed that everyone in his institution had an unspoken agreement about the ban, even without discussion. He said, "It is obvious that corporal punishment is happening less and less in my cram school." He pointed out a significant discrepancy regarding the influence of disciplinary policy changes and educational policy changes in cram schools. He said:

We talk about the changes in educational policies, but not the disciplinary policies. Cram schools are grade-oriented institutions, so we have to deal with the policy changes, like in test methods. As for disciplinary changes, there are many substitutes, and the ban doesn't affect students' grades or our recruitment. As mentioned in the previous section, cram schools were less influenced than regular schools in terms of this ban, though they are required to follow the same regulations.

Summary

Whether educators approve of or oppose the ban, they commonly agreed that the ban had changed their disciplinary practices, though they also felt that school discipline had been changing over time even prior to the ban. According to interviews, spanking and severe corporal punishment is much less frequent now. In addition, educators report having gradually had to develop their current disciplinary strategies to avoid violating the ban. But because they felt they had received little assistance from the Ministry of Education or the school administration, they were compelled to do so based on their own philosophical or pedagogical beliefs. Problems posed by some parents and the media often make this an even greater challenge for them. Some respondents, however, raised the issues of educators' professional development, emotional management, and with the problems of incapable teachers.

Student discipline seems to still be the individual teacher's business, which is similar to the situation before the ban. One administrator described this situation as teachers having to work "with a conscience as well as a risk." Similarly, one teacher

concluded that educators must now “show special professional strengths and be self-reliant.”

Chapter Five

DICUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Taiwan's legislative ban on school corporal punishment was enacted in 2006 after several prior attempts by the nation's ministry of education to discourage the practice. The ban was not supported by many school administrators and teachers in the beginning for two key reasons. First, it ran counter to traditional school disciplinary routines surrounding and influenced by the need to increase and maintain students' academic performance and by the public's general acceptance of its moderate use. Second, resistance likely resulted from the perception of teachers and administrators that no suitable disciplinary alternatives were available, and that little was available in the form of support for new innovation.

Yet although this resistance has fueled the persistence of corporal punishment in Taiwan schools, a trend appears to exist toward its decreased use. Summarizing the results of the interviews, this chapter attempts to paint a moving portrait of Taiwan's disciplinary change effort by focusing on some key themes and implications uncovered in this study.

Results and Key Emerging Themes

Some major themes emerged from the data to explain the research question: What meaning do Taiwanese junior high school teachers and administrators attach to ideas and concepts of discipline and punishment? These can be categorized as follows:

- Corporal punishment as an informal norm of teaching
- Resistance to the ban and continued cautious use

- Support for or indifference to the ban
- Perceptions of uncertainty and lack of professional support
- The shift toward more humanistic forms of pupil control

Corporal Punishment as an Informal Norm of Teaching

As numerous scholars have suggested over the years, teachers learn a great deal of their craft simply from having experienced schooling for nearly their entire youth life. Despite the fact that the educators in my sample would have tended to be “good students,” all experienced spanking or other forms of corporal punishment throughout their junior high school life. As discussed earlier, subject responses revealed that spankings were most commonly received for having scored below par on a classroom exam. It is thus not surprising that many would continue to view the practice as a “normalized” classroom tool. Moreover, though most indicated that their experiences were often uncomfortable, painful, or upsetting, there was a sense that this was simply a way of life, one that they apparently had no choice but to accept, and one that they never discussed with their parents (as was often stated, so as to avoid further punishment).

But although participants took being spanked for granted, they often disdainfully recalled the humiliating or unfair punishments they had received. For example, a teacher compared her experience of being spanked by two different “highly regarded as being strict” female teachers in her junior high school. To her, her math teacher’s spanking was tolerable, not the English teacher’s because the latter used verbal abuse while spanking. Though not an endorsement of physical punishment, this teacher’s words suggest at least

tolerance for the practice and a disposition toward distinguishing between its forms and motives.

Apparently, even for those subjects with the most negative memories of corporal punishment, such early experiences later facilitated the normative pressures toward its use within the schools they worked. One administrator (who claimed she never returned to her own junior high school because of her miserable punishment experiences) described her struggle against spanking her own students in her early years of teaching. Finally she gave up her insistence under the pressure of promoting students' academic performance because her students only studied the subjects whose teachers spanked. Though she revealed a "this hurts me more than it hurts students" attitude toward physical punishment, she also revealed a grudging acceptance brought about in large measure by the social reality within her school: the needs of teachers to find simple informal ways to meet the expectations of parents and the formal demands of the organization. In a spanking friendly environment, teachers hesitating to use corporal punishment would tend to experience a feeling of isolation from group norms or that students no longer took them "seriously." At the same time, they would have little access to other forms of disciplinary support and might even have their teaching effectiveness questioned by peers and administrators.

Resistance to the Ban and Continued Cautious Use of Corporal Punishment

The majority of subjects stated they did not support the corporal punishment ban when it was first introduced, and several reported they had strongly disapproved of it. One common response concerned the question as to how they could motivate or

discipline students without this tool. A few described the ban as like having suddenly had their main disciplinary strategy taken away without being given anything with which to replace it. Most educator interviewees argued that the Ministry of Education must simply tell them what disciplinary methods can be used without corporal punishment, instead of only telling them not to corporally punish students.

Reflecting on their opinions around the time of the ban's inception, subjects repeatedly used phrases like "I felt my hands and legs are tied." An administrator vividly described how teachers felt like having had their "*wu-kung*" [skill] taken away, like "swordsmen in olden times without their swords and skills to give full play."

At the time of the interviews, about two-thirds of the subjects either expressed support for the ban or stated that they had gotten used to it. Among those continuing to criticize the new policy, however, concerns appeared to remain rather acute. One teacher commented that he and his friends grew up with strict discipline and had not turned out to be bad people. For him and others, strict discipline or even corporal punishment is necessary in today's open society that emphasizes individualism and freedom. This concept demonstrates that strict discipline and corporal punishment continued to be perceived by some as a critical tool for establishing appropriate behavior. Teacher frustration over its loss is captured in one interviewee's comment that "Love education leads to tears and blood." Other teachers expressed a similar sense of frustration, claiming that the practices of the old days were better. It is natural and reasonable that people must receive punishment when making mistakes. It is also fair for those who suffer from others' faults.

In support of somewhat more moderate use of corporal punishment, an experienced teacher remarked on its necessity as a practical and symbolic tool. The idea expressed by many corporal punishment supporters is that the practice is most effective when rarely used; that it may best serve as a warning to control students. Moreover, even its rare use sends a reminder to other students that they need to work hard and behave well, working much the same way as a nation's justice system influences the larger society.

Also implicit here was a recognition that the practice needed to be used more judiciously and less painfully. This sentiment appeared in the words of several subjects who continued to either support or actually still use corporal punishment. The moderate use of corporal punishment is a reasonable protection to those "gentle students" and hard working teachers. As for abusive teachers, subjects suggested they should be regulated or sanctioned through incompetent teacher rules, as opposed to imposing burdens on hard-working teachers and well behaved students.

As mentioned above, whether due to changes in beliefs or fear of being sanctioned, most subjects claimed they no longer used corporal punishment. Still, some of the participants stated that either they themselves or their colleagues continued to use corporal punishment, though less frequently and severely than before the ban. One teacher in the interviews serving in a leading urban school described how she used corporal punishment in the first summer after the law's enactment. Similar to the claims of some other interviewees, she noted how she had arranged an agreement with parents and students over the use of the spanking. Though these teachers knew this consent,

whether oral or written, had no legal base, they expressed certain confidence in using corporal punishment without getting into serious trouble.

Such teachers expressed cautious confidence that they could make good use of corporal punishment to improve their teaching results, suggesting that school administrators, students, and parents supported them and accepted the moderate use of corporal punishment as a way of promoting good academic achievement. At the same time, these teachers indicated that since the legislative ban, corporal punishment was mostly used to punish unacceptable student behavior rather than in cases of low test scores. In addition, some teachers suggested that they limited their use of corporal punishment to cases where a simple quick fix was needed, as reflected by the teacher who used spanking on her ninth graders (who would soon be taking their entrance exams), but not on her seventh graders (with whom she would have more time to use different disciplinary methods).

The further words of this same teacher offer additional insights into the rationale for corporal punishment, which were echoed by some other participants. To them, most students do not need strict discipline; they only need teachers' eye contact or verbal warning. However, spanking or corporal punishment is absolutely necessary for some trouble makers. Therefore, the main purpose of using the paddle, like this teacher stated, is to "retrieve students' minds from wildness" and settle them down for academic learning. However, though some teachers used spanking to settle students down for study, they stated they did not paddle students for low test scores, as their own junior high school teachers had done. Apparently, those educators in the sample using corporal

punishment viewed spanking as a legitimate tool for improving learning conditions, but not for punishing poor results.

Yet, even those subjects who believed in or continued to use corporal punishment expressed a feeling that they needed to be more cautious in its use. They also suggested that the law may have caused some colleagues to become lax or passive about student discipline. Apparently, a very real fear exists that a teacher might be sued or otherwise punished. As one principal joked, “Only those teachers who have too much money will spank students!” Of additional interest here is the implication that, for teachers, the most salient sanction against the use of corporal punishment was not administrative punishment, but the fear of a parent complaint. The message seemed to be one of, “you can do it, but don’t get caught!”

Support for or Indifference to the Ban

As mentioned previously, at the time of the interviews (about 18 months after the ban was imposed), two thirds of the subjects expressed either supportive or neutral opinions. In other words, acceptance of non-corporal punishment methods appears to have increased among the educators in this sample. Many who supported the ban clearly responded that they did so based on the educational philosophy and values they believed. For example, to lead students to “righteousness”; to give them systematic guidance and teach with patience and skill rather than “uncivilized” strategies like spanking; or to build up a happy learning environment to attract students to be willing to learn.

Though some ban supporters expressed the difficulty of not using corporal punishment, most of them still emphasized the ban was a valuable decision to follow.

Some also pointed out the idea of professional development of teachers. With professional knowledge, teachers should be able to educate students into what they intended students to achieve without using the simple and short-effected corporal punishment. Some ban supporters clearly indicated that teachers' resistance to the ban might result from their lack of professional ability. However, even subjects who supported the ban also admitted some problems that might hinder teachers from totally stopping the use of corporal punishment. These included the fact that homeroom teachers are usually stricter due to more responsibilities for students' affairs, that new teachers tend to use strict discipline because of lacking experience, that substitute teachers might need stricter punishment tools to maintain students' attention and respect, or that some subject teachers must teach many different classes. Teachers in the above positions might experience stress to the point that they are less able to use more complex or "professional" disciplinary strategies. Implicit here is the nature of "professionalism" with respect to pupil control. Many teachers perceive the non-use of corporal punishment as a sign of higher professionalism. But this perception may overlook the question of whether teachers receive sufficient training in alternative forms of discipline.

Though participants agreed that spanking or corporal punishment can receive certain instant effects, like quickly settling large numbers of students down or pushing them to achieve higher scores, they still appeared to believe that humanistic disciplinary methods would have stronger long-term results. They believed that educators could abandon corporal punishment once they decided to do so, though the process might take time and energy and the teaching results might not be as good as before.

In addition to the opinions stated above, several teachers expressed what might be interpreted as feelings of indifference or resignation. As one private school teacher put it, the ban was imposed “simply to make some people feel relieved” and that “only those who were not educators would make this law.” Many who expressed such feeling argued that those teachers who would corporally punish students will still do so, and those who would not corporally punish students will not do so. They practiced what they did without comments on teachers believing in the opposite opinions. To them, there was no right or wrong way to discipline students, and they did not imply every one should practice similar methods as long as they could educate students well.

Perceptions of Uncertainty and Lack of Professional Administrative Support

Another feeling emerging from several interviews was that of uncertainty. Regardless of their support or opposition to the ban, several educators expressed concern about the exact kinds of discipline they could or should apply. Among those who agreed with the philosophy of ban, several still wanted clear guidelines or suggestions about what they could do, not just about what they were forbidden to do. As one teacher put it, the ban should not turn educators into vulnerable subjects, though its purpose was to protect students’ learning rights and their dignity. They needed assistance.

Other factors causing educators’ feeling of uncertainty and insecurity result from pressure from parents and media. Parents tended to be more educated than the past and more willing to express their ideas about schooling. Even though the majority of parents either support the school or remain silent, many participants commented that they

sometimes had to deal with argumentative parents, some of whom they considered “irrational.” One administrator described such parents as “time bombs.”

In addition to parents, participants also felt isolated by media reports. They felt disappointed that by only reporting negative disciplinary incidents, the news media was essentially covering up their positive influence on students, thus creating a false public image.

Such feelings of uncertainty may have been exacerbated by the perceived lack of professional administrative support (either at the local level or from the Ministry of Education) that emerged from the vast majority of interviews. Some interviewees claimed they learned about the ban through news media reports, others stated it was simply announced to them at a teachers’ meeting or over the school intercom. Some also claimed that the principal and administrators warned teachers about not using corporal punishment and the consequences of violation. In other words, participants stated that they received “formal directives,” rather than practical strategies or advice, from school officials.

Though teachers stated that they received little official assistance from school officials, one experienced administrator talked about the limits to what kind of support or advice administrators might offer teachers. Some administrators viewed themselves as teachers with part-time administrative jobs, suggesting that they did not necessarily have better abilities in teaching or discipline than regular teachers. Although special training and certificates are required for principals and administrators, some administrators clearly did not view themselves as possessing specialized knowledge or having the responsibilities to assist their fellow teachers about student disciplinary strategies.

Asked about whether they could get assistance from the Ministry of Education, almost all of the interviewees responded “no” or “not at all.” One principal, however, said the MOE provided him with information on disciplinary concepts and regulations, and another principal claimed her school received a grant for classroom management workshops for teachers. Other interviewees, however, said the Ministry of Education was “threatening educators,” “holding educators back,” or “distributing pretty manuals.” In addition, only about half of the participants had heard of the “*School Positive Discipline Plan*” that had been distributed by the Ministry of Education after the ban, and many of those had little idea about its contents.

As for the “*Guidelines of Teachers Counseling and Discipline*,” which is included in the “*School Positive Discipline Plan*” and was required to be locally devised and implemented by each school, most interviewees had heard of it, since schools were required to periodically create one. However, their common perceptions about the guidelines were “those are unrealistic or formalistic.” One teacher argued that their school only slightly revised the template given them by the Ministry of Education. One administrator stated that “we only followed the demands of the higher authority.” Another administrator echoed that “the guidelines provided more rules than practical strategies.”

In conclusion, participants generally express the feeling of uncertainty and isolation regarding what discipline they can apply and resources they can use for the change. It is not only because the law merely banned corporal punishment without providing practical strategies, or the questions from parents and media, but also out of the perceptions of lack of administrative assistance. Discipline is not a clear training field in

teachers' pre-service programs and seldom an issue in in-service or professional development programs.

As mentioned previously, aside from government "decrees," disciplinary practices remain fundamentally unregulated within Taiwan's education system. That is, they remain largely a function of teachers' individual discretion, with little in the way of formal standards. Unlike the United States, where formal written codes of conduct tend to be the norm, Taiwan school discipline tends to be loosely coupled and influenced mainly by external community factors (e.g., parent expectation, media focus, etc.). Clearly, such a setting lends itself to high teacher uncertainty and an atmosphere in which teachers will tend to work in ways that reduce their own vulnerability.

Shift from Custodial to more Humanistic Forms of Pupil Control

Our interviews suggest that disciplinary thinking has changed in recent times, though it is difficult to discern how much of that change is due to the corporal punishment ban. The changes that emerged from my conversations with teachers and administrators included a shift toward viewing students as having individual educational and social needs; a decrease in punishing students for poor academic performance; and a shift toward the use of more positive disciplinary strategies. For example, teachers emphasized the importance of understanding students' backgrounds, clarifying class rules, improving classroom management, telling/sharing life stories about certain incidents or events, and reinforcing students' responsibilities by assigning them to leadership positions. Some teachers emphasized the importance of communicating with students through daily contact logs, in which students record their daily assignments and grades

for parents' and homeroom teachers' review. In addition to such strategies, while interviewees stated that teachers should "stick to regulations, be fair, set good examples, and establish their authority," many also cautioned that teachers "had better become students' friends in certain ways."

Other corrective discipline strategies mentioned in the interviews included verbal warnings, moral persuasion, recording demerits, assigning extra homework, re-taking tests, lowering grades, depriving students of break or lunch time, detention or "grounding," and reciting the Heart Sutra (a Buddhist text). Physical punishments such as running, push-ups, jumping, rope skipping, labor service, class service, or standing were also mentioned. One teacher noted how new, more positive names had been devised; the phrase "school-loving service" instead of "labor service" and "corrective writing" instead of "punitive writing."

In addition to such "repackaging" of punitive disciplinary techniques, educators used positive reinforcement for student's good performance; verbal encouragement, treats, written praise, raising grades, letting students wear their own clothes (instead of the standard uniform) to school, or awarding honor cards. One teacher described the educators' current approach as "kaleidoscopic" (in Chinese, *wu-hua-ba-men*, literally translated as "five flowers and eight doors"), meaning that educators used a variety of standards and ad hoc methods. She emphasized daily "communication" as being a key part of kaleidoscopic discipline, before and after punishment. That is, discussion about discipline occurs not just as a response to student misbehavior, but as a regular feature of classroom interaction, more like classroom management. Several interviewees, in fact,

reported spending much more time talking to students about appropriate and inappropriate behavior now than before the corporal punishment ban.

This type of humanistic approach was also represented by the math teacher who emphasized the need for building trustful relationships with students and letting them know the good intention of discipline and punishment. Some teachers' responses suggest that though students still make mistakes, it is preferable for teachers to negotiate with students about what punishment to use instead of simply making a one-sided decision. It also implies that educators should act less as the strong authority figures they were in the past, and more like mentors or caring adults. In this fashion, as indicated in several interviews, teachers show concern for student dignity to the point of "face saving" and avoiding students' shameful feelings when applying punishment. Many teacher interviewees agreed with one respondent's remark that "in the recent five or six years, there is no coercive discipline but communication, like buddies."

Despite this trend toward more humanistic forms of discipline, interviewees mostly agreed that corporal punishment had not entirely disappeared from school, and that a few teachers still used controversial punishments like paddling or humiliation (e.g., "making students suck baby bottle nipples"). Some claimed that a few teachers had essentially "given up" and stopped disciplining students altogether. At least one teacher seemed to regret the ban, saying that while "it was possible to discipline without corporal punishment, ...students' discipline and academic achievement would suffer accordingly."

The majority of interviewees, however, claimed that large changes had taken place since the ban on school discipline, and virtually every interviewee noted changes in most teachers' behavior and attitude. They also noted, however, that the changes did not

always reflect support for the ban, and that while some teachers gradually rejected corporal punishment out of humanitarian reasons, others stopped or limited the practice for fear of losing their jobs.

Summary and Implications

Despite its legal prohibition, corporal punishment lingers in Taiwan junior high schools. Based on my study, several factors seem to explain this. First, corporal punishment is a longstanding common practice in Taiwan schools. Second, it is widely perceived among parents and teachers as a simple, effective, and acceptable tool. Third, the pressure on teachers to produce high student test scores has heightened the importance of strict pupil control within the academic realm of schooling. Fourth, discipline is perceived to be mainly a function of individual teachers, and teachers perceive little in the way of professional support for or training in new forms of pupil control. Fifth, cultural and structural features of Taiwan society have tended to reduce the likelihood of parents taking formal legal action against schools or teachers using corporal punishment.

At the same time, these conservative tendencies appear to be gradually eroded by technology, globalism, and institutional isomorphism. In terms of technology, perhaps one of the greatest constraints on teachers' use of corporal punishment is the cell phone camera. Cell phone ownership is virtually universal among Taiwan children, and most phones include photo and video capabilities. The power of the cell phone is increased by Taiwan's national television news media, which often run feature stories involving teachers' use of corporal punishment. Several of my interview subjects mentioned a fear

of being videoed in the act of spanking a student, and having that video end up being shown twice an hour on cable news.

In terms of globalism, Taiwan colleges and universities of education are becoming increasingly filled with professors who have received their degrees in the United States and other Western nations. As a consequence, Taiwan's newer teachers in particular are more likely to have been trained in more humanistic pupil control techniques. Moreover, Taiwan society easily accesses to the newer global values, emphasizing the importance of individualism. The interviews bear this out to a degree, as I find a majority of the subjects now support the corporal punishment ban, even as they struggle to develop alternative forms of pupil control.

Related to globalism is the issue of institutional isomorphism. As numerous researchers have observed, institutionalization occurs as organizations increase their publically perceived legitimacy by adhering to well-established "myths" within their organizational environment (Selznick, 1957; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). As the environment wields more influence and as myths become more powerful, organizations gradually resemble each other in terms of technical routines.

A "myth," of course, is not necessarily true or untrue, but simply a belief perceived as essential for social or institutional cohesion or survival. The principle that students should not be physically punished by teachers has become a strong prevailing myth within an increasingly influential global educational environment. As one of the subjects put it, "...only totalitarian countries and the less-educated countries need to regulate zero corporal punishment. The civilized countries with education do not need to regulate it, since it is self-evident." The codification of this idea within Taiwan school

law can thus be viewed as a means of demonstrating “civility” and increasing global legitimacy. At the same time, however, Taiwan schools must operate and maintain legitimacy within local environments, which serve as a conservative check on global influences. The conflict between global and local myth and how it relates to gaps between policy and practice is clearly a topic worthy of further discussion and research.

Also worthy of further study is the degree to which Taiwan school discipline can be regularized within a professional context. By this I mean to ask, can teachers’ shift toward the use of more humanistic forms of pupil control be facilitated through some combination of standardization and professional development training? Although the latter may provide new disciplinary ideas and routines for teachers, the former (as evidenced here in the United States) can lead to systems of pupil control that are rigidly bureaucratic and in some ways even more custodial than those currently used in Taiwan (Shouse, 2005). For example, the idea that two boys might get into a fight at school, but then be calmed down and sent back to class by caring teachers has become virtually impossible in today’s American public schools.

All in all, this study leads to suspect that corporal punishment will become less and less frequent in Taiwan schools. Moreover, the lack of officially imposed formal procedures and support structures might not necessarily be a bad thing for Taiwan school discipline, especially as new informal norms, practices, and lines of communication develop among teachers. The shift away from corporal punishment represents as much, if not more, a cultural change as a legal one. Cultural change in school is slow and often messy, but my findings suggest that Taiwan teachers are making reasonable progress.

Figure 1: States in the U.S. Banning School Corporal Punishment (source: *The Center for Effective Discipline, 2009*)



State	Year Present Statute
Alaska	1989 AK Statutes Section 04AAC 07.010
California	1986 CA Education Code Section 49000-49001
Connecticut	1989 CT Penal Code Sec. 53a-18
District of Columbia	1977 DC Municipal Regulations, Regulation 2403
Delaware	2003 DE Education Code Sec. 702
Hawaii	1973 HI Rev. Statutes Sec. 302A-1141
Illinois	1993 IL Compiled Statutes, School Code Sec. 5/24-24
Iowa	1989 IA School Code Sec. 280.21
Maine	1975 ME Criminal Code Sec. 106
Maryland	1993 MD Code Education Sec. 7-306
Massachusetts	1971 MA General Laws , Education Sec. 37G
Michigan	1989 MI Compiled Laws, Rev. School Code Sec. 380.1312
Minnesota	1989 MN Statutes Sec. 121A.58
Montana	1991 MT Code Annotated Sec. 20-4-302
Nebraska	1988 NE Rev. Statutes Sec. 79-295
Nevada	1993 NV Rev. Statutes Sec 392.4633
New Hampshire	1983 NH Rev. Statutes Ann. Sec. 627:6
New Jersey	1867 NJ Permanent Statutes, Education 18A:6-1
New York	1985 NY Regulations of the Board of Regents, 8 NYCRR 19.5
North Dakota	1989 ND Century Code, Elem. and Sec. Education Sec. 15.1-19-02
Oregon	1989 OR Rev. Statutes Sec. 339.250
Pennsylvania	2005 22 PA Code CHS. 7 and 12, Sec. 12.5

Rhode Island	1977	Wolfweseder v. Woonsocket, Commissioner of Education
South Dakota	1990	SD Codified Laws, Sec. 13-32-2
Utah	1992	UT Administrative Rule R277-608
Vermont	1985	VT Statutes, Education Sec. 1161a
Virginia	1989	VA Code, Education Sec. 22.1-279.1
Washington	1993	WA Administrative Code 180-40-235
West Virginia	1994	WV Code Sec. 18A-5-1 (e)
Wisconsin	1988	WI Statute Sec. 118.31

States with limited bans:

State	Year	Present Statute
Ohio	1994	ORC 3319.41 (A) (B) (D) Corporal punishment is banned unless a school board follows several procedures before voting to allow corporal punishment. Parents in districts which allow it may refuse to have their children paddled.

* Dates listed are when the law was enacted, unless otherwise noted.

Some states banned corporal punishment by law and some by regulation. Some states banned corporal punishment by removing permission for its use.

Table 1: Countries with Full Abolition (source: *Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children*, 2009)

<u>Republic of Moldova</u> (2008)	<u>Costa Rica</u> (2008)	<u>Spain</u> (2007)
<u>Venezuela</u> (2007)	<u>Uruguay</u> (2007)	<u>Portugal</u> (2007)
<u>New Zealand</u> (2007)	<u>Netherlands</u> (2007)	<u>Greece</u> (2006)
<u>Hungary</u> (2005)	<u>Romania</u> (2004)	<u>Ukraine</u> (2004)
<u>Iceland</u> (2003)	<u>Germany</u> (2000)	<u>Israel</u> (2000)
<u>Bulgaria</u> (2000)	<u>Croatia</u> (1999)	<u>Latvia</u> (1998)
<u>Denmark</u> (1997)	<u>Cyprus</u> (1994)	<u>Austria</u> (1989)
<u>Norway</u> (1987)	<u>Finland</u> (1983)	<u>Sweden</u> (1979)

Table 2: Countries Banning School Corporal Punishment (source: *The Study Room on Corporal Punishment*, originally from *Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children*, 2006)

Albania	Guinea-Bissau	Oman
Algeria	Haiti	Papua New Guinea
Andorra	Honduras	Philippines
Angola	Hong Kong (China)	Pitcairn Islands (UK)
Armenia	Hungary	Poland
Austria	Iceland	Portugal
Azerbaijan	Iran	Puerto Rico (U.S)
Bahrain	Iraq	Moldova
Belarus	Ireland	Romania
Belgium	Israel	Russian
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Italy	Saint Helena (UK)
Bulgaria	Japan	Samoa (U.S)
Burkina Faso	Jordan	San Marino
Cameroon	Kazakhstan	Sao Tome and Principe
Canada ¹	Kenya	Senegal
China	Kiribati	Serbia and Montenegro
Croatia	Kuwait	Seychelles
Cyprus	Kyrgyzstan	Slovakia
Congo (DRC)	Latvia	Slovenia
Demark	Lesotho	South Africa
Djibouti	Libyan	Spain
Dominican Republic	Liechtenstein	Spitsbergen (Norway)
Ecuador	Lithuania	Sweden
Egypt	Luxembourg	Switzerland
El Salvador	Malawi	Thailand
Estonia	Maldives	Macedonia
Ethiopia	Mali	Turkey
Falkland Islands (UK)	Malta	Uganda
Fiji	Marshall Islands	Ukraine
Finland	Micronesia	United Arab Emirates
Gabon	Mongolia	United Kingdom
Georgia	Mozambique	Uzbekistan
Germany	Namibia	Vanuatu
Greece	Netherlands	Venezuela
Greenland (Denmark)	New Zealand	Yemen
Guinea	Norway	Zambia

Notes:

1. 2004 Supreme Court ruling limited use of force by teachers to restrain and removal and excluded corporal punishment, but not reflected in legislation in all provinces and territories; as at June 2005, there was no legal prohibition in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario or Saskatchewan

2. Taiwan is the 109th

Table 3: Educators' Background and School Description

Educator	Gender	Position & Teaching Subject	Education Background	Years of Experience	School Size	School Location & Type
1	Male	Chief of Curriculum & Instruction Math	University Graduate	10	Medium	Southern Rural Public
2	Male	Chief of Behavior Science	Master Degree	12	Medium	Southern Rural Public
3	Female	Homeroom Teacher English	University Graduate	7	Large	Central Urban Private
4	Male	Homeroom Teacher Math	Master Degree	7	Large	Central Urban Private
5	Male	Subject Teacher Science	Master Degree	7	Large	Central Urban Private
6	Male	Director of AA& SA ¹ Science	University Graduate	5	Small	Southern Rural Public
7	Male	Principal	Master Program	19	Small	Southern Rural Public
8	Female	Homeroom Teacher English	Master Degree	7	Medium	Southern Rural Public
9	Female	Subject Teacher English	Master Degree	15	Large	Southern Urban Public

¹ Director of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

Educator	Gender	Position & Teaching Subject	Education Background	Years of Experience	School Size	School Location & Type
10	Female	Homeroom Teacher Chinese	Master Program	6	Medium	Southern Rural Public
11	Male	Director of General Affairs Chinese	University Graduate	21	Large	Southern Urban Public
12	Female	Director of General Affairs	Master Degree	14	Large	Southern Urban Public
13	Female	Subject Teacher Chinese	University Graduate	9	Large	Southern Urban Public
14	Female	Homeroom Teacher English	Master Degree	16	Large	Southern Urban Public
15	Male	School Store Manager Biology	University Graduate	9	Medium	Southern Rural Public
16	Male	Chief of Equipment Science	Master's Equivalent	19	Medium	Southern Rural Public
17	Female	Homeroom Teacher English	Master Degree	16	Large	Northern Urban Public
18	Male	Director Math	University Equivalent	20	Large	Northern Urban Cram School
19	Female	Principal	Master Program	21	Medium	Northern Rural Public

Educator	Gender	Position & Teaching Subject	Education Background	Years of Experience	School Size	School Location & Type
20	Male	Chief of Behavior Health & Physical Ed	College Graduate	4	Medium	Northern Rural Public
21	Female	Chief of Student Affairs English	Master Degree	14	Medium	Northern Rural Public
22	Female	Homeroom Teacher Math	University Graduate	16	Large	Southern Urban Public
23	Male	Homeroom Teacher Math	Master Program	4	Small	Southern Urban Private
24	Female	Homeroom Teacher Chinese	Master's Equivalent	18	Medium	Southern Rural Public
25	Male	Chief of Sanitary Health & Physical Ed	College Graduate	32	Medium	Southern Rural Private
26	Male	Homeroom Teacher Chinese	University Graduate	25	Medium	Southern Rural Private
27	Female	Homeroom Teacher English	University Graduate	10	Large	Central Rural Public
28	Male	Homeroom Teacher English	Doctoral Program	7	Large	Southern Urban Public

Educator	Gender	Position & Teaching Subject	Education Background	Years of Experience	School Size	School Location & Type
29	Male	Principal	Master's Equivalent	32	Medium	Southern Rural Public
30	Female	Subject Teacher English	University Graduate	18	Medium	Southern Rural Public
31	Female	Subject Teacher Biology	University Graduate	11	Medium	Southern Rural Public
32	Male	Chief of Registrar Science	Master's Equivalent	15	Medium	Southern Rural Public
33	Male	Chief of Counseling Math	Master Program	7	Medium	Southern Rural Public
34	Male	Director Science	University Graduate	19	Medium	Southern Urban Cram School
35	Male	Subject Teacher Math	University Graduate	23	-- ¹	Southern Urban Cram School

¹ this teacher taught in different cram schools

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Appendix A: Interview guides

Interview protocol (English):

Thank you so much for allowing me to interview you. Your assistance will be deeply appreciated.

1. Please tell me a little about yourself. Where are you from, how many years have you been teaching, your teaching position/subject, your graduating school, etc.
2. What made you want to become a teacher? If you could go back in time, would you still become a teacher? [If subject says “no,” probe as to why not.]
3. If I say the words “student discipline,” what thoughts or ideas come to your mind? [Probe: Do you think there are more discipline problems today than in past years? If so, why? Would you say that the students in your school are in need of much discipline?]
4. What does it mean when someone says, “that teacher is very strict on student discipline”? [Possible probe: Do you think the meaning is different today than in the past?]
5. What tools or strategies do teachers in your school use to promote or enforce good student discipline? [Probe: Do you think teachers’ discipline practices have changed over the years?]
6. When you were young and in school, did many of your teachers use corporal punishment? Can you give some examples of what they did? [Probe: What kinds of student misbehavior would cause teachers to use corporal punishment?]
7. Does your school have any problems with student misbehavior? [Probe for examples. Probe for changes over the past years.]
8. In terms of the way they punish students, how do the teachers in your school compare with the teachers you had when you were in school? [Probe for types of punishment used, whether teachers are using corporal punishment, and the kinds of misbehavior that would cause a teacher to use it.]
9. If corporal punishment was used in your school, what would most parents think of that? [Do you think parent opinions have changed over the years?]
10. As you probably know, last year the legislature acted to prohibit corporal punishment in schools. What is your opinion of that? [Probe: a) do you think your opinion is typical among teachers in your school? b) has the new law had much impact on your school? c(for teachers) Has your principal or any other administrator talked to teachers about the new law? Has he/she been helpful?]

11. In terms of implementing the new law, has the MOE been helpful in any way? [Probe for awareness of MOE written guidelines.]

Thank you!

訪談草案大綱 (中文):

非常謝謝您讓我訪問。您的協助我深深感激！

1. 請告訴我一些關於您自己的介紹。例如您來自哪裡？服務教職多久？您的任教職位、科目、您畢業的學校等。
2. 是什麼讓您想成為老師？假如您可以回到過去，您還想成為老師嗎？〔如果答案是否定，探究原因。〕
3. 當我提到「學生管教」這四個字，您的心中有什麼想法嗎？〔深究：您認為目前有比過去更多的管教問題嗎？如果答案是肯定，為什麼？您認為您學校的學生需要很多管教嗎？〕
4. 當有人提到「那個老師管學生管的很嚴」時，您認為那代表什麼意思呢？〔可能的探究：您認為代表的意義在今日和在過去不同嗎？〕
5. 在您服務的學校裡，老師們都使用什麼方法或策略去提升或加強學生的正向管教呢？〔深究：您認為老師的管教方式這幾年來有改變嗎？〕
6. 當您還在學校就學時，您的很多老師使用體罰嗎？您可以舉一些當時的例子嗎？〔深究：什麼樣的學生違規行為容易招致體罰呢？〕
7. 您的學校有學生違規行為問題嗎？〔深究一些例子。深究這幾年的改變。〕
8. 關於他們處罰學生的方式，和您現在服務學校的老師的方式比起來，您認為如何呢？〔深究使用的體罰方式，現在的老師是否使用體罰，及哪些違規行為容易導致體罰。〕
9. 假如您的學校還使用體罰，大部分的家長是如何看待的呢？〔您認為家長的意見這幾年有改變嗎？〕
10. 就如同您應該知道的，去年立法院通過了廢除學校體罰法案。您的看法是什麼呢？〔深究：您認為您的看法和您學校裡的大部分老師相同嗎？新的法案對您的學校有多少影響呢？〈給老師的問題〉您的校長或任何行政人員有和老師談過這個新法案嗎？您覺得他/她們有幫助嗎？〕
11. 關於這個新法案的實施，教育部有過任何的協助嗎？〔深究：是否知道教育部的校園正向管教工作計畫，及各學校訂定的教師輔導與管教學生辦法。〕

謝謝您！

VITA

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Yi-Ching Chiang was born and raised in Taiwan. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Education at Taiwan Normal University in 1992. After graduating, she served as an English and guidance teacher for nine years in three junior high schools in Tainan, Taiwan. She then earned her Master's degree in Educational Administration at The Pennsylvania State University in 2003. Before beginning her doctoral program, she spent another three years teaching junior high school in Taiwan. In 2009, Yi-Ching completed her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership at The Pennsylvania State University.