An Analysis of the Influence Mechanism of Educational Punishment on Primary and Secondary School Teachers
—A Qualitative Study Based on Grounded Theory

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Abstract: Educational punishment is an important means for teachers to fulfill their educational responsibilities and promote students’ overall development and growth. However, in recent years, there have been frequent incidents of malignant focus that affect the maintenance of teachers’ dignity, social morality and even personal career destiny, and the function of educational punishment has not been effectively brought into play. Through the root theory method of qualitative research, it is found that the educational punishment behavior of primary and secondary school teachers is affected by the punishment environment. After the operation of the punishment system, teachers get enlightenment and suggestions, and then feedback them to the punishment environment, forming a closed-loop model of teacher education punishment system. Teachers should balance responsibility and risk, separate teaching responsibility from management responsibility, and realize the full-time head teacher. On the basis of abiding by laws, regulations and disciplinary rules, other parties should enhance their sense of responsibility for education and safeguard educational justice. Finally, a virtuous circle of “disciplinary environment—disciplinary system—inspiration and suggestions” will be realized.

Keywords: Educational punishment, Influence mechanism, Grounded theory, Qualitative research.

1. The Raising of Questions

The scientific definition and steady implementation of educational punishment are not only related to moral cultivation and the dignity of teachers, but also related to the overall development and healthy growth of students. In recent years, the frequent occurrence of malignant focus incidents caused by educational punishment has greatly affected the maintenance of teachers’ dignity, social morality, teachers’ sense of individual integration and personal career destiny. On November 22, 2019, the Ministry of Education released the Draft Rules on The Implementation of Educational Punishments for Primary and Secondary School Teachers (Hereinafter referred to as the Draft) to solicit public comments, marking the beginning of the formal institutional confirmation of educational punishments for primary and secondary school teachers. On September 23, 2020, the third Ministerial Meeting of the Ministry of Education deliberated and approved China’s first legal document on educational punishment, The Rules on Educational Punishment for Primary and Secondary Schools (For Trial Implementation), which will come into effect on March 1, 2021.

Scholars at home and abroad hold different views on the concept of educational punishment, among which Ren Haitao, a Chinese scholar, holds a typical view that educational punishment is a negative evaluation of students’ deviant behavior[1]. According to the draft, “Educational punishment refers to the duty behavior of teachers and schools to stop, discipline or correct students who violate rules and conduct in a specific way based on educational purposes and needs in the process of education, teaching and management, so that students can take warning and understand and correct mistakes[2]. Later, the Rules on Educational Punishment for Primary and Secondary Schools (Trial) was changed to “Educational punishment refers to the educational behavior in which schools and teachers manage, discipline or correct students who violate disciplines in a prescribed way for educational purposes, so that students can take warning, understand and correct their mistakes[3].” It can be seen from the changes before and after that, the scope of educational purpose, the scope of disciplinary violations and the scope of disciplinary means of educational punishment have been expanded, from the duty behavior to educational behavior, highlighting the color of teachers’ rights in educational punishment.

No matter at the level of students or teachers, the legalization of educational punishment power undoubtedly plays a crucial role in the development of Chinese education. What kind of educational punishment situation are primary and secondary school teachers facing? What are the factors affecting the implementation of educational punishment by primary and secondary school teachers? What is the mechanism of action among these factors? This is the core question of this study. In view of this, this paper will use the grounded theory method to reveal the core elements of influencing disciplinary behavior through layers of coding interview data, and try to construct a theoretical model to explain this mechanism.

2. Research Design: Architecture Grounded Theory

At present, there are three schools of grounded theory methods: “The classical grounded theory of Glaser and Strauss, the programmatic grounded theory of Strauss and Corbin, and the constructive grounded theory of Karmetz [4].” Among them,” The grounded theory of architecture is more inclined to positivism and pays more attention to practicability. It believes that grounded theory should start from the source of pragmatism and integrate many methods and problems of constructivism, so that grounded theory can...
develop more fully and carefully and be more reflective [5].” This study intends to conduct in-depth interviews with teachers. The interactive process is easily affected by personal values and is highly subjective. The coding technology of the grounded theory of construction is more flexible and emphasizes the joint construction of meaning between researchers and interviewees in the interactive process, which is more suitable for the study of this topic. Therefore, this study decided to use the constructional grounded theory to explore the influence mechanism of educational punishment for primary and secondary school teachers.


3.1 Data Collection

Under the guidance of grounded theory, the interview outline is designed based on the objective and neutral principle. The main interview questions are: (1) understanding of Yang Shoumei event; (2) Educational disciplinary events experienced by oneself or other teachers; (3) What are the attitudes and behaviors of the parties involved in the conflicts caused by educational punishment? (4) Characteristics of teachers who dare to impose educational punishment; (5) Five major issues concerning the understanding of the draft, prospect forecast and suggestions. According to the outline, 12 teachers in R city, W city, T city, L city and D city were selected for in-depth interviews based on the theoretical sampling principle.

3.2 Data Analysis

Data coding analysis includes the initial stage and focus and selection stage, each stage has different emphases, and the coding process is carried out in accordance with the principle of architecture grounded theory.

3.2.1 Initial stage: initial coding

The initial stage is comprehensive and open, and it needs to be problem-oriented and concise sentence by paragraph around the first-hand interview data. After the initial coding, each sentence and paragraph are endowed with concise abstract and general short sentences or words. There is no fixed coding process for architecture grounded theory, which requires a high degree of sensitivity to data[6]. After the completion of the initial coding, a total of 290 primary codes were extracted (see Table 1), while some frequently occurring codes emerged, which found the main analysis object for the focusing and selection stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The original material</th>
<th>The initial coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents do not know why, they only know that the teacher punished the students very severely. So they put it on the Internet</td>
<td>Parents take a negative attitude towards punishment and use public opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can’t we think of the school like the school and the Board of Education, like our own home, right? Can not go out of the problem, in order to clear their relationship, the teacher to push out, so for the teacher is very cold</td>
<td>Teachers have a sense of belonging to the school Schools to teachers: pass the buck Lead to—teachers’ lose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2 Focus and selection

(1) Focus coding. “Focused coding is more general and directional than initial coding[7].” Its purpose is to find the internal relationship between primary codes, by merging primary codes to get more abstract code. On the basis of the primary code table, the connotation and denotation of all primary codes were considered. The primary codes that could be combined were combined into focus codes and given higher-level concepts. At the same time, the frequency of the focus codes was recorded and 55 focus codes were formed (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary code</th>
<th>The frequency of code</th>
<th>Focusing on the coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents have a negative attitude towards discipline</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for affecting punishment: Parents do not approve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of Parent Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent attitude: Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ legal awareness of teachers’ punishment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Abuse of parental power</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Axis coding. The purpose of axial coding is a process of regrouping, assigning genera, making coding more directional, and concretizing the attributes and dimensions of genera[8]. On the basis of understanding the nature of each focusing code, we classify the focusing codes with the help of the “6C” model’s hypothetical relations (causal condition, phenomenon, context, action/interaction strategy, mediating condition, result). In each hypothetical relationship, the categories and attributes of focus codes are extracted and dimensions are determined. Were derived from the social environment, disciplinary rules, disciplinary troubles, teachers’ influence, students’ violation, the difference of students body and mind, the ego to protect consciousness, disciplinary way and degree, disciplinary situation, liability risk game, public opinion, parents joint action concept differences in behaviour, school rules, teachers, parents, community awareness, teachers’ feedback, etc. 16 category.

(3) Theoretical coding. Theoretical coding aims to “give concrete form to the interrelationships between genera[9]”. In other words, the discrete focused code is expressed in a coherent form, forming the system theory. Through theoretical coding (see Table 3), this study finds that in the context of institutional environment and punishment dilemma, teachers are always under the influence of teachers themselves, students, parents, schools and other subjects before and after the implementation of educational punishment, playing a game between responsibility and risk. The enlightenment gained by teachers in educational punishment will stimulate the institutional environment of educational punishment and finally break the dilemma of educational punishment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A generic</th>
<th>Factors affecting the</th>
<th>Theoretical interpretation</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>The social</td>
<td>The</td>
<td>Teachers’ disciplinary behavior is</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The educational function of teachers has been weakened. This has a direct impact on students, as their educational philosophy, educational methods and willingness to punish to varying degrees of influence on teachers’ discipline actions and fail to reach a consensus with teachers on disciplinary actions, which leads to frequent disciplinary conflicts.

(2) Disciplinary rules. “A series of rules based on the idea of rule of law, whose function is to exclude rather than construct[10].” The law cannot contain every detail, nor match every disciplinary scenario. The ambiguity of disciplinary standards gives rise to discretion, and there is a strong uncertainty in disciplinary decisions based on teachers’ personal responsibility, disciplinary experience and risk considerations. For rational reasons, most teachers are reluctant to take disciplinary action.

4.1.2 Discipline dilemmas

The educational function of teachers has been weakened, and the non-teaching work has occupied most of the energy. Teachers’ disciplinary behavior is subject to parents and various regulations, which weakens teachers’ disciplinary motivation. This has a direct impact on students’ achievements and teachers’ teaching achievements, and the improvement of students’ achievements depends on teachers’ supervision, which leads to the contradiction between teaching achievements and education methods. The realistic situation of teachers is greatly different from the traditional cognition. Teachers are in a predicament of punishment due to strong pressure from public opinion, huge workload, fuzzy disciplinary responsibility boundary and out-of-control classroom order.

4.1.3 Trigger events

(1) Student violations. Students’ violation is the direct cause of teachers’ punishment, including the guidance of collective rules and individuals. Learning in the collective must comply with the constraints of the collective rules, violations of collective interests and violations of school rules and individual behavior should be stopped and corrected.

(2) Self-protection consciousness. Teachers’ self-protection consciousness is reflected in the process of punishment, and disciplinary behaviors are reduced based on risk avoidance. Teachers’ awareness of self-protection is reflected in the fact that when teachers punish them, some students will choose to inform their parents or take advantage of public opinion to protect themselves if they do not agree with it.

(3) Liability risk game. The game between responsibility and risk runs through the whole process of teachers’ educational punishment. When any party has the upper hand, teachers will be guided to make corresponding behaviors. In fact, students, parents, school leaders and education departments all face the game of risk and responsibility before making behavioral choices.

4.1.4 Disciplinary behavior

(1) The way and degree of punishment. In addition to the constraints, guidance and management of the school, teachers’ punishment methods and degrees mostly depend on their own experience or learning, which affects teachers’ judgment on the punishment methods and degrees of students. The interview found that most teachers mainly used verbal punishment in most cases.

(2) Disciplinary situation. Disciplinary situations are divided into scene selection and evidence retention, which jointly affect whether and how teachers discipline. To prove innocence and protect rights, teachers discipline students under supervision or in the presence of a third party.

4.1.5 Multi-Agent intervention

(1) The influence of teachers on punishment. Teachers are the initiator and executor of punishment, and their own subjective factors, including their teaching experience, personality and teaching style, affect their educational philosophy, educational methods and willingness to punish to varying degrees.

(2) Students’ physical and mental differences. The differences of students’ body and mind are mainly reflected in school age, physiological and psychological differences. When the students are younger, with poor physical quality and poor psychological endurance, teachers will take a mild way to punish them; otherwise, they will choose corresponding punishment methods according to the severity of the students’
violations.

(3) Public opinion. When the conflict event fermented by the media becomes the focus event, the public opinion will affect the trend of the whole event, and the punishment of teachers will be influenced regardless of the trend of the event.

(4) Parents take joint action. Parents’ joint action means that parents who are dissatisfied with teachers’ disciplinary behavior unite with other parents to demand teachers’ apology and their superior leaders to punish teachers in order to influence public opinion, which causes great pressure on teachers and schools. Parents think it has a remarkable effect.

(5) Differences in parents’ behavior concepts. The differences between urban and rural areas, parents’ attitude towards punishment and their concern for children all have an impact on teachers’ educational punishment. In addition to trust and distrust of teachers, there is a third type of parents in the parent group, namely bi-standard parents. Such parents support teachers verbally but deny them in action. In addition, parents are often wary of new teachers, so teachers will reduce disciplinary behavior and avoid conflict when they do not establish a good communication relationship with parents.

(6) School regulations. As the core organization of educational punishment, the school is the lubricant connecting parents and teachers. On the one hand, the attitude of the school to the punishment and the consistency of the teaching method of the teacher affect the education punishment. When discipline is permitted and is consistent with the way teachers are taught, teachers will be less concerned about discipline. On the other hand, timely communication between schools and parents also affects teachers’ disciplinary behavior. When schools hold lectures to clarify the connotation and significance of educational punishment, they should learn to establish a consensus with parents on punishment to avoid conflicts. When conflict arises, the school brings parents and teachers together to discuss the outcome.

(7) Teachers’ sense of community. There is a sense of community among teacher groups, which improves the cohesion among teacher groups. When teachers are unfairly dealt with, community support will enhance individual teachers’ sense of responsibility, thus influencing their future disciplinary behavior and methods.

4.1.6 Teachers’ feedback

During the interview, the interviewees put forward specific suggestions on the draft, involving six aspects: whether the content of the rules is detailed, whether the subjects of the rules are diverse, whether the rules are mandatory, whether the rules should be integrated, the content related to parents, and the participation of the whole society in the division of punishment power.

4.2 Influence Mechanism: Educational Punishment System Model

The influencing factors of educational punishment include institutional environment, punishment dilemma, triggering event, punishment behavior, multi-subject intervention, inspiration and suggestion. The institutional environment and disciplinary dilemmas jointly constitute the disciplinary environment, which is input to the disciplinary system, which is composed of trigger events, disciplinary actions and multi-subject intervention, and output to inspiration and suggestions through mutual influence, which in turn feed back to the disciplinary environment, forming the educational disciplinary system model.

The relationship between institutional environment and punishment dilemma is duality, that is, they are interrelated and independent, and jointly construct educational punishment environment. The institutional environment constitutes the objective conditions of punishment, and the punishment dilemma can be understood as the teaching background in the micro sense, which is influenced by society and independent of social factors. Institutional environment and disciplinary dilemmas directly affect the progress of triggering events, the occurrence of disciplinary actions, and the effective intervention of multiple subjects, which are interwoven in the chain interaction at any time.

Trigger event, disciplinary action and multi-subject intervention constitute three parts of the occurrence of the disciplinary system, and the influence pattern is circular distribution, and the three interact with each other to form the educational disciplinary system. Educational punishment is a two-way interaction between teachers and students and a complex process involving multiple subjects. First of all, triggering events are the core elements of disciplinary events, and only triggering events can lead to multi-subject participation and intervention of disciplinary behavior. Second, the intervention is more influence the general elements of disciplinary behaviors, which is the premise of disciplinary triggering event, it means that the social main body participation constraints, more pressure from parents, social public opinion, the school to the teacher’s disciplinary behaviors or suspected objective obstacles will change the teacher’s disciplinary behaviors, influence the emergence of the triggering event or development; Again, disciplinary actions are teachers implement disciplinary behavior patterns, are usually arranged in after the intervention of more when do not have the effect of the intervention more obstacles, disciplinary actions, form education disciplinary event, the event as a event to become the next mediation conditions in effect at the time of the disciplinary actions, which hinder the events of the punishment. This incident will also enhance the awareness of students and teachers and continue to influence the next disciplinary trigger event. At this point, a complete educational punishment system closed chain completed, output to inspiration and suggestions.

Inspiration and suggestions are independent of the chain of punishment system, and are teachers’ inspiration and suggestions on rules based on direct experience or indirect observation after the end of the punishment event. The behavior patterns of each subject of the chain have a direct impact on the result. This result will feed back to the institutional environment and punishment dilemma, improve the social environment of educational punishment, change the traditional social cognition of educational punishment and long-term institutional deficiency.
Combining the above analysis, this study concluded that the ultimate theory model (see figure 1): facing the education disciplinary system environment and disciplinary trouble, caused by the triggering event teacher education discipline behavior, multi-agent intervention education disciplinary event unceasingly, the different degrees of influence on teachers, its experience and enlightenment will be constantly improving education disciplinary rules effective advice.

![Figure 1: Model of educational punishment system](image)

5. **Conclusions and Suggestions**

5.1 **Main Conclusions**

Under the background of institutional environment and punishment dilemma, teachers are always faced with the influence of teachers themselves, students, parents, schools, education departments, media and other subjects before and after the implementation of educational punishment, and play a game between responsibility and risk. The experience and enlightenment gained by teachers in educational punishment will become the reference suggestions for the construction and effective implementation of national educational punishment rules, which will influence the continuous improvement of educational punishment system environment and finally break the dilemma of educational punishment.

5.2 **Countermeasures and Suggestions**

5.2.1 Actively explore and promote the professional and professional system innovation of head teachers

In the context of educational punishment, teachers have dual roles as teachers and managers, which seems very reasonable, but actually has disadvantages. First of all, teachers are unable to perform simple teaching duties, which reduces the teaching quality of teachers. Secondly, the overlap between teaching and management is more likely to stimulate the contradictions between home and school. Thirdly, teachers and leaders have different understandings of punishment. When faced with the risk of accountability, teachers will reduce their willingness to punish. The full-time head teacher means the full-time management responsibility of the head teacher and the full-time teaching responsibility of the class teacher. Management responsibilities include disciplining students for bad behavior, managing students’ daily lives and performing various non-teaching tasks. Teaching duties include teaching classes, grading papers and other teaching tasks. The two have a clear division of labor and complement each other.

5.2.2 Strengthen social subjects’ sense of responsibility for education and safeguard educational justice

First, the government and educational administrative departments should actively guide teachers to exercise the power of educational punishment, reduce the risks of teachers in the process of educational punishment, and ensure that the power of educational punishment is not abused. At the same time actively assume responsibility, do not shirk, do not shake the pot. Second, according to the relevant documents, the school should refine the actual school rules, class rules and classes, and absorb the participation of the parent committee. On the one hand, teachers should be guided to correct the attitude of educational punishment, clarify the purpose of punishment, ensure the appropriateness of exercising the power of educational punishment, and strengthen the training of teachers on punishment. On the other hand, promote home-school cooperation and strengthen communication between schools and parents[11]. Third, teachers should correct their attitude towards educational punishment and abide by the rules of educational punishment. Rational use of disciplinary means, resolutely put an end to corporal punishment; Strengthen communication with students and parents to find and solve problems in time. Fourthly, parents should pay attention to the psychological state of students and make clear the cooperative relationship between parents and teachers in education of students; Actively communicate with teachers and give feedback in time if there is any problem; We should fully understand the rules of punishment, and deal with them rationally and legally when they are punished unreasonably. Fifth, social media should strengthen the legitimacy and rationality of educational punishment rules and guide the society to form a social atmosphere of respecting teachers and valuing education. At the same time, the details of disciplinary conflicts are fully and positively reported without distorting the facts in pursuit of clicks.

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