



**A STUDY ON
THE PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE BY
THE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF
SRI LANKA**

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**A THESIS (M.Phil)
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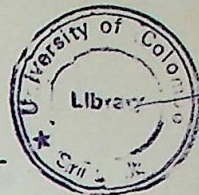
A B S T R A C T

The present study was designed to measure the perception of school discipline by Secondary School teachers of Sri Lanka, to assess the status of discipline prevailing in schools, and to determine the factors that impinge on school discipline.

Six different constructs of school discipline were identified from literature. These were, 'School discipline is' (a) direct authoratative control of pupil behaviour or conduct; (b) a mode of life in accordance with certain rules, regulations and procedures; (c) a patterning to an order, orderly conduct or orderliness in schools; (d) Subordination of immediate wishes and desires for the sake of an ideal; (e) training in 'action' or conduct; (f) control of behaviour by the pupil on his own volition (self-discipline) in pursuit of an active and self directed course of action in the face of difficulties.

A Likert type scale based on the above constructs was used to measure general perceptions of school discipline. The second instrument was used for a pair comparison of 16 factors presumed to affect school discipline. The third instrument used was a teacher questionnaire to assess the status of discipline prevailing in schools.

A five percent random sample of 79 schools, stratified by school type and district were selected from five education



districts, namely, Colombo, Kegalle, Galle, Kandy and Polonnaruwa. A random sample of 395 Secondary School teachers (five teachers chosen at random) of the above schools, constituted the sample selected for investigation of teacher perception of school discipline.

Distributions of general perception scores on each concept were tested for normalcy, using the method of 'goodness of fit'. A pair comparison technique was used to identify the rank ordering of the 16 factors. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the current status of discipline in schools.

The analysis leads to the conclusion that school discipline was perceived as a form of controlling behaviour by authoratative means, a patterning to an order and regularisation of behaviour. The teachers did not perceive school discipline as a form of training, and self discipline.

Out of the 16 factors deduced to impinge on school discipline, the three factors that obtained the highest rank order related to the social context of education. They are the attitudes of student cliques in schools, prevailing competition in the field of education and political interference in schools.

This finding was further corroborated by self reports made by teachers, that the causative factors of discipline issues in schools related to institutional factors and socio-economic factors.

According to reported responses by teachers on the status of discipline in schools, only a small percentage of schools were safe and orderly, while the great majority of the schools had violence and discipline issues. The general conclusion emerging from the study was that an 'educative order' so essential for the development of self discipline is absent in Sri Lankan schools.

The study suggests a new approach in the development of educational objectives, curriculum development, teacher education and school management, based on a vision of school discipline as inner submission of students to valued goals and activities of the school.