

REACTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MANILA TO SUPERVISION AND CORRECTION*

Maria Felicina Gubuan, S.P.C. and Dr. J. Ross Eshleman

The year 1969 witnessed the beginning of a student protest movement unlike any previous student response. Student demonstrations were a reaction against the increasing prices of tuition, goods, and services, the lack of student involvement in school policy decision making, and the administrative censorship of school publications. Students reacted against selected authority figures in the government and in the schools.

There seems to be a growing recognition that our youth today are not so docile as they once were. They are said to be more questioning than accepting, more defiant than submissive, more disobedient than respectful. Schneiders (1965:vii) cites some differences when he writes:

He [the contemporary adolescent] often goes to school longer than his predecessor of past generations, he is more independent, more separated from home, more clothes conscious, more delinquent, and a great deal more appealing . . . sexually more sophisticated, freer in sexual expression, more group conscious and more influenced by his peers . . .

In the Philippines, technological change has somehow resulted in the spread of functional relations between teachers and pupils, parents and children. The nature of inter-personal relations is being modified. At times, parents and teachers fail to understand why the young behave as they do. The young often cannot find refuge in their estranged elders. To cope with

these problems and the normal changes of adolescence, teachers, parents, and juvenile advisers must know as much as possible about the teenagers' thinking and behavior, their needs, feelings, and goals.

The present paper focuses on the reactions of high school students to supervision and correction. It is intended to investigate the responses of the adolescents themselves about their feelings toward correction and supervision, that is, toward discipline. Do they want discipline and respond positively to it, or are they "restless teenagers" and "immoral youth"? Do teenagers rebel and react negatively to supervision and correction, or is there a favorable response to it?

The adolescent may not know exactly where he stands; yet, he may not seem to welcome parental or teacher control. He may wish to be left alone; yet, he may realize he needs adult supervision. He may resent rules and restrictions; yet, he may get confused and annoyed without them. Indeed, the adolescent often feels lost in himself, in his family, and in society in general.

M. E. Kirkpatrick (1952:275), a speaker at the Mental Health International Congress in New York in 1952, said:

The adolescent child needs restrictions and limitations imposed by his family. His controls are not well established and in attempting to find out just what they should be, he gets some strength in knowing that the limitations imposed by his parents and society will protect him.

It would appear that discipline is positively needed for the orderly growth and development

*The senior author received her M.A. in education from the University of Santo Tomas in 1969, and is now on the faculty of St. Paul College of Manila. Dr. Eshleman, an associate professor of sociology at Western Michigan University, was a Fulbright-Hays lecturer at the University of Santo Tomas in the 1968-69 school year.

of the individual. But the "no-way out" without discipline is not the total answer to the problem of discipline. The "when," "how," "why," and "what" of discipline, as well as the recipients' reactions and feelings toward discipline are important matters to consider.

Hence, there is a necessity to re-evaluate existing disciplinary practices in our schools and a need for information on how students themselves react to supervision and correction.

The Problem. The major purpose of this paper is to discover how high school students feel toward disciplinary measures commonly practiced in our Philippine schools. Specifically, the following hypotheses are presented:

1. High school students will respond positively to supervision.
2. High school students will respond positively to correction.
3. There is no difference by sex in student responses to supervision and correction.
4. There is no difference by type of school (public or private) in student responses to supervision and correction.

The rationale for these hypotheses is based on the following: (1) observations of some guidance counselors show that children themselves want discipline, but only on certain terms, (2) adolescence itself appears to be a period of transition when boys and girls tend to be more anxious, confused, and unsure of themselves than when they were in their childhood period, and (3) adolescents want to know "where they stand"; they desire that certain restrictions and limitations be placed upon their behavior.

Many studies on discipline have proved the teacher pronouncement and judgment that certain measures are effective. The present study turns to the reciprocal perspective, the pronouncement and judgment of the students that certain measures are effective.

Methods. This study included five secondary schools in the Manila area: two public schools, two Catholic schools, and one Protestant school.

These five schools belong to the two coordinate branches of the Philippine educational system, public and private. The public schools were the Manila Science High School and Araullo High School, the private schools were the Union High School of Manila, San Sebastian College, and Assumption Convent.

The number of respondents involved in the study totaled 400 (200 boys and 200 girls). Two hundred students were from the two public schools and the other half from the three private schools. Fifty juniors and 50 seniors of each sex were selected from each co-educational school. These 400 students were selected by random sampling within the third and fourth year classes.

A four-part questionnaire was the main instrument used to gather the data. Part I consisted of information about the respondent. Part II consisted of 20 disciplinary situations to which the respondents were asked to react by choosing an item on a five-point scale (grateful, like, indifferent, irked, and dislike). Part III had 30 direct questions on disciplinary practices. Part IV contained two sub-sections: the first sub-section consisted of five open-ended sentences asking the students their general opinion of the disciplinary practices of their respective schools and why they held that opinion. The second sub-section gave the students the opportunity to offer suggestions for modifying, adding, or dropping disciplinary measures.

Findings

1. High school students will respond to supervision.

Table 1 shows the responses to supervision by the 400 respondents. More than 60 per cent of the students responded positively to every question on supervision with the exception of the question on studying in a school with strict discipline. The highest positive response is towards actual help extended to students in their school work. Approximately 90 per cent responded positively to this item. This result is consistent with the statement by Phillips (1960:160) that the average high school student needs much help

in learning how to study, how to concentrate, how to outline what he has read, how to prepare for examinations, and how to make a report. This does not mean that the students should pass the responsibility of their work over to the teachers, but that teachers must know "how to hand back the ball" to the student.

Highly positive responses were given by approximately 85 per cent of the students to being sent to a school with moderate discipline and to the guidance and direction given in their school task and activities. More than 60 per cent of the students responded positively to being told what and how to do things and to asking for permission to leave the room when necessary during class recitation.

Considering that 60 to 90 per cent of the 400 students respond positively to supervision, it can be concluded that high school students react positively to supervision. Thus, hypothesis 1 is supported.

2. High school students will respond positively to correction.

Table 2 contains the data on the 400 participants' responses to correction. More than 50 per cent of the students responded favorably to correction for each of the seven situations presented. The highest positive reaction is on being corrected in their speech and action when necessary. Nine of ten students like or are grateful for it. Approximately three-fourths of the students appreciate correction of mistakes that

Table 1

Total frequencies and percentages of respondents' reactions to supervision.

<i>How do you feel in the following situations?</i>	<i>N</i> <i>%</i>	<i>POSITIVE</i> <i>RESPONSES</i> <i>(grateful, like)</i>	<i>NEGATIVE</i> <i>RESPONSES</i> <i>(indifferent, irked, dislike)</i>	<i>No/multiple answer</i>
1. When you are supervised in your school work and activities . . .	N %	338 84.50	61 15.25	1 0.25
2. When you are told what and how to do things . . .	N %	271 67.75	126 31.50	3 0.75
3. When you are helped in your school work . . .	N %	359 89.75	33 8.25	8 2.00
4. When you are made to study in a school with moderate discipline . . .	N %	343 85.75	54 13.50	3 0.75
5. When you are made to study in a school with strict discipline . . .	N %	148 37.00	245 61.25	7 1.75
6. When you have to ask your teacher's permission to leave the room when necessary during class recitation . . .	N %	253 63.25	146 36.50	1 0.25

Table 2

Total frequencies and percentages of respondents' reactions to correction.

How do you feel in the following situations?	N %	POSITIVE RESPONSES (grateful, like)	NEGATIVE RESPONSES (indifferent, irked, dislike)	No/multiple answer
1. When you are corrected by your teacher in your speech and action whenever there is a need . . .	N %	362 90.50	34 8.50	4 1.00
2. When you are corrected in your manner of dress . . .	N %	285 71.25	115 28.75	0 0
3. When you are corrected in your manner of hair style . . .	N %	227 56.75	168 42.00	5 1.25
4. When you are told where you are mistaken which you are unaware of . . .	N %	298 74.50	96 24.00	6 1.50
5. When your misdeeds are purposely overlooked . . .	N %	140 35.00	257 64.25	3 0.75
6. When the class is vocally corrected in the form of moralizing after a misdeemeanor . . .	N %	206 51.50	191 47.75	3 0.75
7. When your attention is personally, but politely called out to keep quiet while class is going on . . .	N %	269 67.25	131 32.75	0 0

they are unaware of and of mistakes in their manner of dress.

Slight differences between positive and negative reactions can be noted in responses to vocal correction of the class and correction of their hair style. To a vocal correction of the class in the form of moralizing and lecturing, 51 per cent were positive compared to 47 per cent who disapproved. To being corrected in hair style, 56 per cent responded positively compared to 42 per cent who responded negatively.

The item to which 64 per cent are negative is the situation when their misdeeds are overlooked purposely. This, when interpreted, shows that the students wish to be corrected whenever they have done something contrary to standards of school behavior. Their negative reaction actually supports the hypothesis.

Although students manifested a negative reaction to their misdeeds being overlooked intentionally, it does not follow that teachers should "see and hear everything." It still holds

that sometimes it may be better to overlook a minor misconduct than make an issue of it. If the breach is significant, however, the response of the students suggests that they do not want the misdeed overlooked.

Since the results indicate that more than half of the students are grateful for and like correction, it can be concluded that high school students respond positively to correction. Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported.

3. There is no difference by sex in student responses to supervision and correction.

Both boys and girls responded most favorably toward actual help with school work. However, the percentage of girls (94 per cent) was higher than that of boys (85 per cent). Again, more girls than boys responded positively to supervision in school work and activities. On the other four items dealing with supervision (see items in Table 1, page 43), a higher percentage of boys than girls responded positively.

To test whether these male-female differences were greater than one would expect to occur by chance, rank order coefficients of correlation were computed between the boys and girls on the five-point scale regarding reactions to supervision (grateful, like, indifferent, irked, dislike). The computed rho's all show a high degree of relationship (significant at .10 level or higher) between sexes. This indicates that although the percentage results give slight differences in the boys' and girls' reactions to supervision, they are not statistically different by sex.

In regard to correction, girls consistently express a more positive reaction than boys. This might be seen as consistent with Hacbang's conclusion that boys, whether by themselves or mixed with girls in class, misbehave more than girls (Hacbang 1968). Similarly, in Walther's study on school suspensions, boys accounted for about 71 per cent of the total suspensions (Walther 1966:43-49).

While these studies show that boys are less well-behaved than girls, correspondingly, their reactions toward correction are less favorable than girls' as found in the present study.

A digression in favor of the negative reactions is the girls' higher negative response to vocal correction. This is understandable since this measure may be unsound. In fact, Bagley (1915: 202) said:

Where disorder prevails, admonitions and scoldings are likely to have little force. Their employment is to be avoided because they serve all too well to advertise to the pupils the inefficiency of the teacher.

As was done with supervision, to test whether the differences that exist between males and females were greater than one would expect to occur by chance, rank-order coefficients of correlation were computed between the sexes on the five-point scale reactions to correction. The rho's obtained are greater than the .714 which was needed to be significant at the .10 level of confidence.

The resultant rank-order correlations indicated a high degree of similarity in the percentage rankings of males and females. Thus, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis which states that no difference exists by sex in student responses to supervision and correction cannot be rejected. Hypothesis 3 is supported.

4. There is no difference by type of school (public or private) in student responses to supervision and correction.

Public school students show higher positive reactions to practically all supervision items than the students from private schools. For instance, 87 per cent of the public school group in contrast to 81 per cent of the private school group responded positively to being supervised in their school work and activities; 91 per cent versus 88 per cent in response to being helped in their lessons; 89 per cent versus 82 per cent in being made to study in a school with moderate discipline.

The one exception in favor of the private sector is in the matter of being told what and how to do things; however, the difference of one per cent (40 vs. 39 per cent) is too small to be considered meaningful.

Rank-order coefficients of correlation were computed to test if any statistically significant

differences existed between students of public and private schools in response to supervision. Generally, the obtained rho's for supervision were all greater than the lower limit of .829 needed for significance at the .10 level of confidence. Thus, both public and private school students reacted similarly to supervision.

In regard to correction, 93 per cent of the public school respondents answered positively to correction in their speech and action as against 88 per cent from the private school group. About 78 per cent of the respondents from the public schools and 64 per cent from the private sector welcome correction in their hair style. Both show more favorable responses from the public schools.

Socioeconomic status differences may account for the varying responses. Comparatively, private school students have come from families with higher socioeconomic standing than the public school group. Because of the difference in training at home, private school students may have a clearer understanding of social expectations than the public school group. Correspondingly, they may feel less need of correction. The public school group may tend to have less well-defined definitions about what is right and wrong and may welcome correction more than their counterpart in the private sector. To this effect, Hurlock (1964:578) said:

Children from the higher socioeconomic groups, on the whole, have better moral teaching at home than those from the lower groups. As a result, children from poorer homes tend to experience more confusion about what is right and wrong and to do things that are contrary to social expectations.

The obtained rho's between public and private schools indicate a statistically significant relationship. Only the "like" scale of reaction shows no statistically significant relationship in correction. Thus, in general, both public and private school students reacted similarly to correction.

The lack of a significant relationship for "like" weakens support for the null hypothesis. But with evidence of all other correlations significant at the .10 level of confidence or greater, the null hypothesis which states that there is no

difference by type of school (public and private) in student responses to correction and supervision cannot be rejected. Hypothesis 4 is supported.

Discussion and Conclusion

The general results indicate that about 60 per cent or more of the 400 subjects exhibit positive responses to both supervision and correction. This clearly supports the two hypotheses that high school students will respond positively to supervision and correction.

Results of the comparisons by sex and types of school show that 50 per cent or more of the groups react favorably to supervision and correction. Such results also lend support to the first two hypotheses. Only the items on being sent to a strict disciplined school and on vocal correction had less than 50 per cent of the group approving. Although some percentage differences exist between the responses of males and females (hypothesis 3) and between public and private schools (hypothesis 4), statistical tests showed no significant difference by either sex and type of school. Both sexes and both types of schools desire supervision and correction.

This finding is confirmed by Schmuck (1965: 15-16) who discovered in his study that parents and teachers constitute, respectively, the first and the second major concerns in the life of the adolescents. The youngsters tend to depend on these two important figures when some important decisions have to be made.

Another noted educator said that no matter what social changes take place, the young always need them (parents and teachers). The young will always need the old and their restrictions for security, certainty, and protection (Simon 1963:16). Perhaps, it is not surprising that they react favorably to supervision and correction.

In summary, it can be concluded that high school students respond positively to supervision and correction and that no significant differences exist by sex or type of school (public and private). It may be said that the clamor for independence and freedom among young people

is concomitant with their growing up rather than with real rebelliousness. In the last analysis, these teenagers still hold on to adults for love and protection, for supervision and correction. In the limitations and restrictions placed upon their behavior, they find security, certainty, and strength. What they may need is a greater understanding, a greater sympathy, and a greater tolerance from the adults dealing with them.

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