The Implications of Corporal Punishment on Student Discipline and Academic Performance Within the Berekum Municipality

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Abstract: This study examines the implications of corporal punishment on student discipline and academic performance within the Berekum municipality's learning institutions. Through quantitative analysis, the research assesses the perceptions of students on the effectiveness of corporal punishment and explores the psychological and educational outcomes associated with its use. The study also investigates the ramifications of a corporal punishment ban, considering alternative school disciplinary strategies. Findings suggest a polarized view on the necessity of corporal punishment, with some advocating for its role in maintaining order. In contrast, others highlight its negative impact on student morale and engagement. The research further reveals a trend towards alternative disciplinary measures post-ban, such as counselling, parental involvement, and the empowerment of student leaders, which align with the educational shift towards more empathetic and constructive approaches. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on student discipline, suggesting a need for an integrated disciplinary framework that emphasizes positive behavioural support, the psychological well-being of students, and the development of a supportive educational environment.

Keywords: Corporal Punishment, Student Discipline, Academic Achievement, Behavioral Interventions, Positive Reinforcement, Student Well-being, Educational Practices, Classroom Management

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions serve as foundational platforms dedicated to the task of educating learners. They provide a comprehensive educational experience beyond theoretical knowledge, actively honing a diverse set of skills essential for students' future careers. These skills range from critical thinking and problem-solving to effective communication and teamwork, which are invaluable in the modern workplace. In addition to skill enhancement, these institutions hold the responsibility of guiding students toward ethical maturity. They instil moral principles and social values that shape students' characters, preparing them to act as responsible and ethical citizens in their future personal and professional lives. Through a combination of academic rigour and moral guidance, educational institutions play a pivotal role in shaping well-rounded individuals equipped to meet the challenges of the future. (Rojas-Sánchez et al., 2023). This is done by following a curriculum and providing a code of conduct assessed by various stakeholders, such as the government, parents, and teachers (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). However, since students come from diverse backgrounds, they often do not follow these rules and regulations (Osei et al., 2021). In many instances, this requires the introduction of various punishments to students to ensure they adhere to the code of conduct. In the recent past, it was established that teachers were using excessive force to discipline

students, referred to as corporal punishment (Setorglo et al., 2020). From the context of this study, school discipline meant a system consisting of conduct, punishment and behavioural strategies that were used to regulate students and keep school and classroom in order and control (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). It is also related to actions taken by a teacher or the school organization towards a student (or group of students) when the student's behaviour disrupts the ongoing education activity or breaks a rule created by the teacher or the school system. Discipline could guide children's behaviour or set limits to help them take care of themselves and other people in the world around them (Munir & Hussain, 2019)

School discipline was a socially constructed and symbolic "Space of trouble" that a student fell into when one behaved outside of the normative expectations of a school setting (Heekes et al., 2022). It has been found to be substantially related to students' wellbeing. Initial evidence suggested that it mattered for school success (Heekes et al., 2022). Discipline among secondary school students also had a bearing on their character and behaviour. The resulting students' behaviour affected current and predicted later academic achievement, ultimately affecting important life outcomes and the labour market in the long run (Visser et al., 2022). The most common indiscipline-related behaviour among learners included truancy, fighting, disobeying, shouting, rioting, and snatching other learners' property, bullying, destruction of property, cheating, viewing pornographic materials, and threatening teachers, among others (Visser et al., 2022). The prevalence of violence seems rife in most schools in the world. For instance, (Munir & Hussain, 2019) pointed out that in the United Kingdom, learners were generally noisy, rowdy, and disrespectful to educators. The use of foul language and disrespect towards teachers was also confirmed in the United States of America (Lochan, 2012). According to (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021), administrators, teachers, and parents were struggling to find the solution to the problem. Cases of student indiscipline were also rampant in Africa. For example, in Nigeria, acts of indiscipline, which included truancy, hooliganism, disrespect for school authority, cheating in examinations and drunkenness, were on the ascendancy (Okoson, 2010). Things were no better in Uganda, where many cases of academic and criminal indiscipline were reported, which involved gambling, smoking Marijuana, drug abuse, and sneaking from schools (Bindhe, 2012).

In Ghana, there has been a surge in acts of indiscipline and unrest in both Junior and High schools (Yeboah et al, 2020). Corporal punishment was defined by (Setorglo et al., 2020). as the use of physical force to cause a child to experience pain but not injury to correct or control the child's behaviour. It also included kicking, shaking,

shoving or the use of objects (Scheidegger, 2014). It was characterized by low performance, excess fear among students, low participation in co-curricular activities, visible marks of torture, and absenteeism from school (Stein et al., 2019).

Ghana adopted the practice of corporal punishment in a pre-independence era with the introduction of formal education. It was the main form of punishing students before and after independence. In the late 1970s, the Ghana Education Service (GES) partially banned corporal punishment in schools and permitted head teachers or their deputies to administer it when it was discovered that most teachers were abusing it and injuring students (Setorglo et al., 2020). From a global perspective, corporal punishment has been banned in thirty countries, but it is still widely used by at least twenty states in the United States of America (Batu, 2011). A longitudinal study commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] (2015), painted a grave picture of the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools in four countries (Ethiopia, India, Vietnam, and Peru) despite the fact that in them such practices were outlawed. Disregarding banning corporal punishment was also a concern in Kenya, as some teachers had reportedly continued to administer it. For example, (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021) reported that a class six pupil succumbed due to a thorough beating from a teacher in Mikuyuni Primary School located in Makueni County. With corporal punishment being outlawed and with the South African states being unable to put in place alternatives or more effective disciplinary systems in schools (Setorglo et al., 2020), discipline continued to be one of the most public and contentiously discussed issues in most schools in Africa. Ntuli (2013) investigated ways of managing indiscipline in selected secondary schools within the Sekhukhune district in Limpopo, South Africa, and recommended parental involvement, mentorship, and suspension for serious offences were necessary to help in getting learners to abide by codes of conduct. The use of corporal punishment by regular teachers was supported by authorities in Tanzania (Tanzania reporter, 2013). The government of Tanzania, however, gave guidelines limiting corporal punishment in schools to four strokes administered by the teachers only (Gershoff et al., 2019; Munir & Hussain, 2019; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

In Ghana, Ghanaian students equally exhibit unruly behaviour due to their understanding that no matter how severe their actions, they will not face the severe consequences of corporal punishment (Heekes et al., 2022; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021; Stein et al., 2019) argue that the lack of discipline in secondary schools and classrooms is a significant problem for educators, leading to feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, ultimately hindering effective teaching and learning. According to (Setorglo et al., 2020)., since learners became aware of

the abolition of corporal punishment, their misbehaviour has escalated to the point where most schools in Ghana are now characterized by unruliness. The emphasis on children's rights and the subsequent ban on corporal punishment have resulted in a widespread lack of respect for educators among students (Setorglo et al., 2020). This created a need to investigate the ban on corporal punishment and students' discipline in Berekum Municipality.

2. METHODS

Research Design
The study used the quantitative method. The focus of the quantitative approach encompassed the generation of responses into quantitative form (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). A quantitative approach was used because the researcher is interested in finding out relationships and patterns among variables of interest in the study. Descriptive survey research design was employed during this study. This is because descriptive survey research design is a method used when describing the characteristics of the phenomenon being investigated (Sharma, 2019). The use of the descriptive survey research design gave the researcher the ability to gain clearer insight about characteristics with respect to the sample size. Again, according to Newman (2003), the descriptive survey is the best approach in studying a given population's behaviours, attitudes, expectations and characteristics in a shelf-reported manner. Since this study was focused on students self-reporting about ban on corporal punishment and students' discipline in senior high school, the use of descriptive survey was considered appropriate. This is because descriptive survey design can help adequately describe people's views, opinions and beliefs. Furthermore, descriptive survey design, according to Fraenkel and Wallen, (2003) helps to generalise from studying a sample of a population. In other words, large populations are not necessarily needed before generalization. (Best & Kahn, 2009). In spite of these, there are some recognized weaknesses of the descriptive survey design. The major weakness has to do with difficulties in ensuring that the questionnaire used is appropriate for the study. There was pressure to ensure that the questions to be answered are clear and unambiguous, generates honest responses and leads to a high return rate (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Regardless of this, the descriptive survey design's advantage in describing a current phenomenon without manipulation made it suitable for this study. Therefore, It was expedient to use a descriptive survey to determine the factors affecting students' career choices.

Population
Population refers to the entire group of people, events or things of interest that the researcher wished to investigate, it forms a base from which the sample or subjects of the study will be drawn (Viac & Fraser, 2020). The target population was referred to the unit of analysis a study utilized when collecting data (Mohajan, 2018). The study's target population comprises all SHS students from the three Public Senior Schools in the Berekum Municipality. The population was 4427 students.

Sample and Sampling Techniques
The proportional stratified sampling technique and simple random sampling method were used to select a total number of 354 students. The 354-sample size was determined from the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling determination formula, which permits 354 sample sizes to be used for a population of 4500. A sample is a representative number that was used in a study relative to the whole target population (Mohajan, 2018). In selecting the sample for the study, the researcher used proportional stratified and random sampling techniques. A proportional stratified sampling technique was used to sample each subgroup. In using this procedure, the criteria used was the population size of the schools. The senior high school with the highest population was allocated the highest sample size. From table 3.1 Berekum Senior High School had the highest population and therefore, was allocated 38% of the population. Presbyterian Senior High School, with the second highest population was allocated 33%, and Methodist Technical Senior High School was assigned 29% of the population. The same criteria were used to obtain the various sample sizes for each school. The sample was determined by their number relative to the entire population. The sample was stratified based on population and gender. The proportional stratified sampling technique was used because it enhances representativeness, reduces bias, improves precision, allows for meaningful comparisons, and accommodates the heterogeneity of the population. This technique is particularly valuable when you want to draw valid conclusions about specific subgroups within a larger population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Simple random sampling was finally used to select students based on the sample size for each gender in each school. A simple random sampling population is equally likely to be selected (Pittenger, 2003).

In a recent survey that aimed at gathering data from various educational institutions, a combined total of 354 responses were obtained from students attending three different senior high schools. Specifically, Berekum Senior High School, known for its academic excellence, contributed the largest responses, with 134 students participating. Close behind, Presbyterian Senior High School, which is renowned for its disciplined environment and rigorous curriculum, provided a substantial contribution with 116 student responses. Lastly, Methodist Technical Senior High School, an institution that prides itself on technical and vocational training, also participated actively in the survey, yielding

a total of 104 student responses. This collective effort from the trio of schools has offered a significant pool of data, reflecting these respected schools' diverse educational landscapes and student experiences.

Data Collection Instrument

Research instruments are tools or tactics utilized to acquire information suitable to the inquiry to confirm or refute a conjecture (Hakim, 2015). In line with the study's objectives, the study used questionnaires adapted from Anwaar et. al (2021). The questionnaire was made up of two sections: Section "A" is designed to collect demographic data from respondents, while section "B" comprises of questions relating to the objectives of the study. According to Orodho (2009), questionnaires authorise aspects of a certain perspective and can collate a large chunk of information within the minimal time period. It is preferred due to its ease of management and ability to simultaneously acquire information from participants, hence cutting down on time (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013).

Methods of Data Collection

An introductory letter clearing the researcher to acquire data was obtained from the Faculty of Education (Catholic University of Ghana). This ensured that the study was legal and it authorized the researcher to collect data. After getting the permit, the researcher sought permission from the heads of the various senior high schools to collect data. during the admistration of the questionnaire. The researcher first briefed the respondents about the purpose of the study, then personally dispatched the questionnaires to the respondents and collected them later on within a period of 2 days.

Data Analysis

Orodho (2009) stated using cognition to comprehend the acquired data to discern reconcilable connections and outlining appropriate issues divulged in the investigation. It is key to any research; the raw data obtained from the interviews was analysed qualitatively, first by editing through sieving. The key ideas were coded into categories which formed major themes. The study used means and standard deviations to analyze all research questions. The study also used regression and one sample t-test to buttress analysis.

3. RESULTS

Demographic data

This section discusses the demographic data of respondents, and the variables were sex, programme, form, position and accommodation. Results on demographic data of respondents are presented on the Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic data of respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentages
Sex	Male	193	55.1
	Female	157	44.9
	Total	350	100.0
Programme	Arts	221	63.1
	Business	33	9.4
	Science	96	27.4
	Total	350	100.0
Form	One	131	37.4
	Two	142	40.6
	Three	77	22.0
	Total	100	100.0
Position	Prefect	38	10.9
	Non-Prefect	312	89.1
	Total	350	100.0
Accommodation status	Day	96	27.4
	Boarding	254	72.6
	Total	**350**	**100.0**

The data presented in Table 1 offers a comprehensive breakdown of the demographic and academic profiles of the respondents. It highlights that there is a relatively balanced gender distribution among the participants, with 157 individuals, or 44.9%, identifying as female, and a slightly higher number, 193 or 55.1%, identifying as male. This indicates a moderate male majority within the group surveyed. In terms of academic specialization, the majority of respondents are pursuing studies in the Arts, with 221 students or 63.1% of the total, representing a

significant majority. This is a notable preference for Arts over other fields of study. Business and Science disciplines are represented to a lesser extent, with only 33 students (9.4%) enrolled in Business courses and 96 students (27.4%) committed to science programs. This distribution suggests a strong inclination among the students toward the Arts, with comparatively fewer students showing an interest in Business or Science. When examining the respondents' educational progression, the data indicates a fairly even spread across the first two academic years, with 131 students or 37.4% in their initial year (form one) and 142 students or 40.6% in their second year (form two). The third year (form three) has a smaller representation of 77 students, accounting for 22.0% of the respondents. These numbers may reflect the school's enrollment patterns or student retention rates.

Leadership roles within the student body are less common, as shown by the fact that only 38 students, or 10.9%, hold the position of prefect, which suggests that this role is likely competitive or selective. The overwhelming majority, 312 students or 89.1%, do not have such responsibilities, which could point to a limited number of leadership opportunities or a selection process narrowing down potential candidates. Lastly, the living arrangements of the students show a dominant preference for boarding, with 254 students or 72.6% living on campus, as opposed to 96 students or 27.4% who commute daily. The high percentage of boarders could be indicative of the school's capacity or the appeal of the boarding facilities, as well as possibly the geographic distribution of the students, where those living further away may choose to board.

What is the extent of the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary control of SHS students in the Berekum Municipality?

The initial inquiry of this research was focused on gauging the frequency and severity with which corporal punishment is employed as a method of behavioral management for students at the Senior High School (SHS) level within the confines of Berekum Municipality. The investigation sought to determine the prevailing state of student discipline within the public senior high schools under examination. To thoroughly explore the first objective of the research, the study was designed to probe into six distinct factors that could provide insights into the disciplinary landscape. The methodology involved gathering data from respondents through a structured questionnaire. This questionnaire prompted the respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements, utilizing a five-point Likert scale as the metric. This scale was graduated as follows: a score of 1 indicated a 'Strongly Disagree' response, whereas a score of 5 represented a 'Strongly Agree' position. The analytical process involved a detailed computation of the means and standard deviations for each of the items presented in the survey. This statistical treatment was intended to yield a quantitative measure of consensus or dissent among the participants regarding each item. To facilitate a clear interpretation of the data, a mean score benchmark of 3.00 was established. This threshold served as a decisive marker: any item that garnered a mean score below 3.00 was interpreted as a signifier of overall disagreement among the respondents. Conversely, an item that achieved a mean score above 3.00 was taken to indicate a general agreement. The findings, which are comprehensively detailed in terms of means and standard deviations, have been systematically compiled and are presented for review in Table 2. This table serves as a visual aid, enabling a straightforward examination of the research results and facilitating a better understanding of the attitudes towards corporal punishment and student discipline within the surveyed schools.

Table 2 Extent of the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary control of SHS students in Public Senior High Schools

Variables	Mean	SD
My school administers caning but in the lightest manner.	3.17	1.11
All forms of corporal punishment in my school have been cancelled.	2.47	1.37
Teachers in my school do not totally do away with caning because of the attitude of students.	3.22	1.39
Only my headmaster is allowed to cane students in my school.	2.23	1.32
My headmasters and other senior teachers supervise the administration of caning in my school.	2.83	1.35
Both boys and girls sometimes receive light strokes of caning in my school in order to transform them.	**3.17**	**1.32**
Grand total	**3.00**	**1.30**

According to the data presented in Table 2, there's a nuanced understanding of how corporal punishment, specifically caning, is administered and perceived in schools. The first item indicates that caning is indeed a part of disciplinary practices, with a mean score of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 1.11. This suggests a general consensus that, while caning is present, it is applied in what is considered a 'light' manner according to those

surveyed. This perspective is significant, as it reflects a belief among a considerable number of respondents that caning is administered but with restraint. The second item, which scored a mean of 2.47 with a standard deviation of 1.37, points to a disagreement among respondents on the complete cessation of corporal punishment in schools.

This disagreement, coupled with the relatively high standard deviation, underscores a substantial divergence in views, indicating that the issue is far from settled in the perception of those involved. Further complicating the picture is the third item, which shares the same mean score and standard deviation as the second item, revealing a split in opinions on whether the persistence of caning is a result of student behaviour. The variance in responses indicates that this is a contentious issue with no clear consensus among those surveyed. The fourth item, with a mean score of 2.23 and a standard deviation of 1.32, highlights a disagreement regarding whether only headmasters are allowed to administer caning. The variability in responses here again points to a lack of uniformity in perceptions, suggesting that the rules around corporal punishment may not be uniformly understood or applied across the board. The fifth item's mean score of 2.83 and a standard deviation of 1.35 reveal divergent views on the supervisory role of headmasters and senior teachers in the administration of caning. This variation in responses suggests that there is considerable debate over who should oversee corporal punishment, highlighting differing philosophies on discipline within the school environment. Lastly, the sixth item, with a mean score of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 1.32, indicates a general agreement that light caning is administered to both boys and girls as a form of discipline aimed at transformation. However, the standard deviation suggests that while there's a general trend towards agreement, the degree to which this practice is endorsed varies significantly among respondents. Overall, the data from Table 2 paints a complex portrait of the state of corporal punishment in schools. While there's some consensus on certain aspects, such as the light administration of caning, there's also considerable debate and disagreement on its cessation, the influence of student behaviour, and the roles of school authorities in its administration. This reflects the contentious and varied nature of perceptions surrounding corporal punishment in the educational setting.

What is the relationship between corporal punishment and the academic achievement of SHS students in the Berekum Municipality?

The second research question was designed to explore how corporal punishment influences students' academic outcomes. This investigation was thorough, employing a questionnaire comprised of ten carefully crafted items that sought to capture the nuanced perceptions students hold regarding the impact of corporal punishment on their educational attainment. To this end, participants were engaged in a survey where they were invited to express their level of agreement or disagreement with the proposed statements. These statements were measured on a nuanced five-point Likert scale, where the value of 1 was anchored by the response 'Strongly Disagree,' indicating a complete disavowal of the statement, and the value of 5 represented 'Strongly Agree,' suggesting full endorsement. The methodology was rigorous in its approach to data analysis. For each of the ten items, the research team calculated both the mean—representing the average response and the standard deviation, which provides insight into the variability of the responses. These statistical measures were fundamental in understanding the general consensus and the range of opinions among the participants. The researchers established a midpoint score of 3 on the Likert scale to interpret the data more effectively. This score was used as a benchmark to gauge the respondents' agreement level, effectively distinguishing between the participants' tendency to agree or disagree with the impact of corporal punishment on academic success. Those scoring above this midpoint were seen as agreeing to some extent with the positive correlation between corporal punishment and academic achievement, while those scoring below were viewed as disagreeing. The outcomes of this analysis were not merely statistical artefacts; they provided substantive insights into the prevailing attitudes towards corporal punishment in educational settings. The results, which are detailed and tabulated in Table 3, are integral to the study as they offer empirical evidence to the hypothesized relationship between disciplinary methods in schools and the educational performance of the students subjected to them. This evidence forms a crucial foundation for discussions on the appropriateness and efficacy of corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool in educational institutions.

Table 3 Effect of Corporal Punishment on Academic Achievement of Students

Variables	Mean	SD
Corporal punishment affects my personal development, infusing low self-esteem, lack of confidence, stubbornness, depression etc.	2.99	1.36
The feelings of punishment discourage me from attending classes regularly.	2.76	1.32

With the ban, our teachers now feel helpless and disempowered, and this leads to unsuccessful teaching and learning.	2.89	1.24
I think that there is a link between corporal punishment and interest in studies.	3.02	1.20
The use of physical force affects my academic progress as a student.	3.39	1.27
Physical punishment is a threat to my healthy personality development as a student.	3.38	1.48
Corporal punishment increases poor cognitive development and mental illness	2.78	1.33
When I am physically punished, I develop negative attitudes towards learning.	2.93	1.27
When I receive corporal punishment, I show symptoms of dejection in studies and also do not participate in the teaching and learning process enthusiastically.	3.13	1.30
I think that corporal punishment is necessary to maintain control of classrooms and learning.	3.47	1.35
Grand total	**3.07**	**1.41**

Results in Table 3, the first item ''Corporal punishment affects my personal development, infusing low self-esteem, lack of confidence, stubbornness, depression etc.'' scored a mean score of 2.99 and a standard deviation of 1.36 indicating respondents disagreed that corporal punishment has a negative impact on personal development, but opinions vary considerably, as indicated by the standard deviation. The second item ''The feelings of punishment discourage me from attending classes regularly.'' scored a mean score of 2.76 and a standard deviation of 1.32 indicating respondents disagreed that the feelings associated with punishment discourage regular class attendance, although there is variability in opinions. The third item, ''With the ban, our teachers now feel helpless and disempowered, and this leads to unsuccessful teaching and learning'' scored a mean score of 2.89 and a standard deviation of 1.24 indicating respondents disagreed the ban on corporal punishment has left teachers feeling disempowered, affecting teaching and learning to some extent. The fourth item ''I think that there is a link between corporal punishment and interest in studies'' scored a mean score of 3.02 and a standard deviation of 1.20, indicating respondents see a connection between corporal punishment and students' interest in studies.

The fifth item ''The use of physical force affects my academic progress as a student'' scored a mean score of 3.39 and a standard deviation of 1.27 indicating respondents' agreement that the use of physical force, presumably corporal punishment, negatively affects academic progress. The sixth item ''Physical punishment is a threat to my healthy personality development as a student'' scored a mean score of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 1.48 indicating respondents agreed that physical punishment poses a threat to healthy personality development, though there is notable variability in opinions. The seventh item ''Corporal punishment increases poor cognitive development and mental illness'' scored a mean score of 2.78 and a standard deviation of 1.33 indicating respondent disagreement that corporal punishment can contribute to poor cognitive development and mental health issues, with some variability in opinions. The eighth item ''When I am physically punished, I develop negative attitudes towards learning.'' scored a mean score of 2.93 and a standard deviation of 1.27 indicating respondents disagreed that physical punishment leads to negative attitudes toward learning, though opinions vary somewhat. The ninth item ''When I receive corporal punishment, I show symptoms of dejection in studies and also do not participate in the teaching and learning process enthusiastically,'' scored a mean score of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.30 indicating respondent agreement that corporal punishment results in symptoms of dejection in studies and reduced enthusiasm for the teaching and learning process, with some variability in opinions. The tenth item ''I think that corporal punishment is necessary to maintain control of classrooms and learning,'' scored a mean score of 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.35 indicating a relatively strong agreement that some respondents believed corporal punishment is necessary for maintaining control in classrooms and promoting effective learning.

The data collected reveals a wide array of opinions about the impact that physical disciplinary measures have on students' academic outcomes. On one hand, a portion of the respondents are of the conviction that such measures are indispensable for ensuring behavioral control within the educational environment. They argue that corporal punishment is a critical tool for maintaining order and focus among students, which in turn, supports their academic progress. On the other hand, there is a significant number of participants who contend that corporal punishment is detrimental. This group believes that physical discipline not only hinders personal growth by instilling fear and resentment but also negatively affects academic achievement. They suggest that the stress and anxiety caused by corporal punishment can decrease students' ability to concentrate and absorb information, thereby impairing their learning and performance in academic assessments.

What are the effects of the ban on corporal punishment on SHS students' discipline in the Berekum municipality?

The primary objective of the third question within the research was to explore the consequences that the implementation of a corporal punishment ban has had on the behaviour and orderliness of students. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the ban's impact, the study initially employed a set of ten specific measures related to the administration of corporal punishment. These measures were carefully selected to serve as indicators of the various facets of discipline that the absence of physical disciplinary methods might influence. Participants in the study, encompassing a range of respondents, were invited to evaluate each of these ten measures. They provided their assessments using a Likert scale that ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating the least effect and 5 indicating the most significant effect of the ban on each measure. This rating system was instrumental in quantifying the perceived impact of the corporal punishment ban on students' discipline. Following the collection of responses, a detailed statistical analysis was conducted. The mean scores were calculated for each item, offering a clear indication of the average impact as perceived by the respondents. Alongside the mean, the standard deviation was also computed for each item. This statistical measure provided insights into the variability of the respondents' perceptions, indicating whether there was consensus or a wide range of views on the effects of the ban. The culmination of this analytical process is presented in a coherent and structured format in Table 4. This table serves as a summary of the findings, allowing for an at-a-glance comprehension of the data and facilitating further discussion and interpretation of the results within the context of the study.

Table 4 Effects of the Ban on Corporal Punishment

Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness
We neither fear nor respect teachers and behave as we please because of ban on corporal punishment	3.09	1.65	4.18
Behavioural problems have increased subsequently in the absence of corporal punishment	3.06	1.20	-0.10
From the time learners became aware that corporal punishment had been abolished, the level of misbehaviour escalated	3.17	1.28	-0.39
The fight on students right and subsequent banning of corporal punishment has really moved the entire country into an era of recklessness on the part of students	3.01	1.85	0.09
Generally, our teachers are unhappy due to lack of discipline and recklessness displayed by students as a result of the ban on corporal punishment	3.26	1.24	-0.24
I think that students no longer respect teachers and some students even carry dangerous weapons to school endangering everybody's lives	2.99	1.46	-0.04
I will consider my school as one of the highly disciplined schools in Ghana	3.70	1.36	-0.66
I think that the ban on corporal punishment has reduced respect among students	3.18	1.30	-0.12
Teachers are reluctant to monitor our movements since they hardly cane misbehaving students	3.30	1.97	9.74
I think that I feel more powerful in my school than before when caning was being administered	3.15	1.33	-0.14
Grand total	**3.19**	**1.46**	

Results in Table 4, It was observed that I will consider my school as one of the highly disciplined schools in Ghana was rated high with [Mean= 3.70, Standard Deviation =1.36 and skewness = -0.66] indicating a disperse view of the respondents. Teachers are reluctant to monitor our movements since they hardly Cain misbehaving students was rated second with [Mean= 3.30, Standard Deviation =1.97 and skewness = 9.74], revealing respondents' opinions to be heterogenous. Generally, our teachers are unhappy due to lack of discipline and recklessness displayed by students as a result of the ban on corporal punishment was identified as the third item with [Mean= 3.26, Standard Deviations = 1.24 and skewness = -0.24] revealing respondents view to be dispersed. I think that the ban on corporal punishment has reduced respect among my colleagues was identified as the fourth item with [Mean= 3.18, Standard Deviation = 1.30 and skewness = - 0.21], which revealed respondents' opinions on I think that the ban on corporal punishment has reduced respect among my colleagues as heterogeneous. The fifth rated variable from the time learners became aware that corporal punishment had been abolished, the level of misbehaviour escalated had [Mean=3.17, Standard Deviation = 1.28 and skewness = -0.39], indicating heterogenous opinions. I think that students feel more powerful in my school than before when caning was being administered was identified as the sixth variable with [Mean = 3.15, Standard Deviation =

1.33 and skewness = - 0.14] indicating a dispersed response. Students neither fear nor respect teachers and behave as they please because of a ban on corporal punishment was identified as the seventh variable with [Mean = 3.09, Standard Deviation= 1.65 and skewness = 4.18] indicating heterogenous responses. Behavioural problems have increased subsequently in the absence of corporal punishment was identified as the eighth variable with [Mean = 3.06, Standard Deviation = 1.20 and skewness = - 0.10] which also revealed respondents' opinions to be heterogeneous.

The ninth rated variable the fight on students and subsequent banning of corporal punishment has really moved the entire country into an era of recklessness on the part of students had [Mean = 3.01, Standard Deviation = 1.85 and skewness = 0.09], revealing respondents' opinions to be heterogeneous. I think that students no longer respect teachers and some students even carry

dangerous weapons to school, endangering everybody's lives was rated the tenth variable with [Mean = 2.99, Standard Deviation = 1.46 and skewness = - 0.04] indicating respondents' opinions to be heterogeneous. The overall mean of the responses of the respondents is 3.19 and the standard deviation of 1.46 indicating respondents rated the items leading to the effect of ban on corporal punishment in general grand mean [Grand Mean > 3.00] a little high above the midway rating value. The positive skewness value indicates that overall respondents rated ban on corporal punishment lower. This depict that respondent rate that though there is ban it seems that teachers are still canning them

Respondents were again asked to rate items leading to the measure of indiscipline behaviour of students on a scale of 1 to 5. Means, standard deviation and skewness of all the items were computed and analyzed as show in Table 5.

Table 5 Indiscipline Behaviour of Students Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness
Students now come to school late	3.60	0.92	-0.21
Students often sneak out of class and school	3.47	0.94	-0.08
Students now do not attend classes regularly	3.94	0.87	-0.55
Students wear buggy and tight uniform	3.91	0.83	-0.55
Assignment is not regularly turn in by students	3.96	0.84	-0.59
Grand mean	**3.77**	**0.88**	**-0.39**

The statistical data presented in Table 5 offers a comprehensive overview of the effects of banning corporal punishment on student discipline through an analysis of five key variables. The highest concern noted was students' irregular submission of assignments, which had a mean rating of 3.96, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.835 and a skewness of -0.59. These figures suggest a significant consensus among respondents regarding this issue. The second highest concern, with a mean of 3.94, standard deviation of 0.87, and skewness of -0.55, was the decrease in regular class attendance, indicating a similar level of agreement among those surveyed. Issues with school uniforms, specifically the wearing of baggy and tight attire, were ranked third. The statistics show a mean of 3.91, a standard deviation of 0.83, and a skewness of -0.55, which highlights a narrow dispersion in the respondents' perceptions. Lateness to school emerged as the fourth concern, characterized by a mean of 3.60, a standard deviation of 0.92, and a skewness of -0.21, suggesting that respondents generally concurred in their assessment of this issue.

Sneaking out of class and school was identified as the fifth key issue, with a mean of 3.47, a standard deviation of 0.97, and a skewness of -0.08, confirming a uniform view among the respondents. The respondent ratings produced an average mean of 3.77, with a standard

deviation of 0.88 and a skewness of -0.39. These values underscore a pronounced concern about the impact of corporal punishment bans on student behavior, with the grand mean exceeding the critical value of 3.00 and demonstrating a negative skewness. This indicates that, in general, the respondents rated the elements leading to disciplinary issues quite highly. To elucidate the implications of these findings, a simple linear regression analysis was undertaken. This analysis aimed to establish a quantitative link between the prohibition of corporal punishment and changes in student discipline. The regression findings and the summary of the model underscore the direct relationship between the mean ratings of the corporal punishment ban's consequences and the observed behaviors of student discipline, providing a clearer understanding of the ban's impact on school discipline dynamics.
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What are the alternatives to corporal punishment on the disciplinary control of SHS students in the Berekum Municipality?
To thoroughly examine the potential alternatives to physical punishment in the realm of student discipline, a detailed survey was utilized, consisting of ten distinct measures aimed at determining the effectiveness of these alternatives. Participants were asked to express their level of concurrence with the effectiveness of each alternative

disciplinary method by using a five-point Likert scale. On this scale, a score of 1 denoted a very low level of agreement or belief in the effectiveness of the method, suggesting that the respondent believes the method to be the least effective form of discipline. Conversely, a score of 5 indicated a very high level of agreement, implying that the respondent views the method as highly effective. To analyze the data collected through this survey, statistical methods were employed. The mean, or average score, for each item provided an overall indication of how each alternative to corporal punishment was viewed in terms of effectiveness by the sample population. The standard deviation gave insights into the variability or dispersion of the responses, showing how much consensus there was among participants about each method. Skewness was also calculated to determine the asymmetry of the distribution of responses; in other words, it showed whether the ratings were clustered at the higher end (towards more agreement), the lower end (towards less agreement), or if they were evenly distributed.

All these statistical measures were not just computed but also meticulously analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions about the acceptability and perceived effectiveness of the alternatives to corporal punishment. The results of this comprehensive statistical analysis were then systematically presented in Table 6. This table serves as a concise visual representation of the findings, enabling readers to quickly grasp the collective attitudes towards each disciplinary method assessed in the study.

Table 6 Alternatives to Corporal Punishment on the Disciplinary Control of Student

Variables	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mean	SD
There is no other form of punishment equivalent to caning	160(46%)	75(21%)	115(33%)	2.81	1.33
teachers in my school adopt counseling	64(18%)	78(22%)	208(60%)	3.65	1.18
My school invite parents to advising	90(26%)	90(26%)	170(48%)	3.41	2.53
My school empower prefects to advice	79(23%)	44(13%)	227(64%)	3.80	3.18
School chaplain always advice students	84(24%)	79(23%)	187(53%)	3.43	1.19
Deviant students are punish by weeding	56(16%)	78(22%)	216(62%)	3.81	1.92
Rules/regulations are used in my school	67(19%)	86(25%)	197(56%)	3.54	1.16
My school often results to suspension	61(17%)	92(26%)	197(57%)	3.69	1.98
Misbehaving students are dismissed	132(38%)	69(20%)	143(42%)	3.09	1.34
Misbehaving often sign bonds	40(11%)	44(13%)	266(76%)	4.07	1.07
Mean				**3.53**	**1.68**

Table 6 presents an overview of the statistical measures and participant responses regarding ten different disciplinary methods and alternatives to corporal punishment for managing student behaviour. The data includes the average responses (means), variability (standard deviations), and the distribution asymmetry (skewness) from the survey. Out of the respondents, 76% (266 individuals) reported that signing a bond of good behaviour is a common practice for misbehaving students, with an average agreement level of 4.07 and a standard deviation of 1.07, indicating varied perspectives. Weeding as a punitive measure for deviant behaviour is endorsed by 62% (216 respondents), with a mean response of 3.81 and a higher standard deviation of 1.92, reflecting diverse viewpoints.

Additionally, 64% (227 participants) confirmed that student leaders play an advisory role, with an average response of 3.80 and a relatively high standard deviation of 3.18, suggesting a wide range of opinions. School

suspensions are frequently used according to 57% (197 respondents), with an average response of 3.69 and a standard deviation of 1.98, again indicating diverse attitudes. Counselling by teachers is another strategy, supported by 60% (208 respondents), with an average response of 3.65 and a standard deviation of 1.18, pointing to mixed opinions. The enforcement of school rules to enhance desirable behaviour is reported by 56% (197 respondents), with an average response of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 1.16, denoting varied responses. School chaplains' involvement in behavior management is cited by 53% (187 respondents), with an average response of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 1.19, suggesting diverse responses. Involving parents more closely is a strategy for 48% (170 respondents), with an average response of 3.41 and a higher standard deviation of 2.53, indicating varied perceptions. Dismissal from school is a consequence for misbehaviour according to 42% (143 respondents), with a mean response of 3.09 and a standard deviation of 1.07, showing mixed opinions.

Finally, 33% (115 respondents) believe there is no effective deterrent alternative to caning, with an average response of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 1.33, highlighting varied opinions. The overall average response from the survey is 3.53 with a standard deviation of 1.68, suggesting that respondents generally agree that there are viable alternatives to corporal punishment for managing student discipline, as indicated by the grand mean score exceeding 3.00, leaning towards agreement.

4. DISCUSSION

The extent of the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary control of SHS students in the Berekum Municipality

The research aimed to thoroughly investigate the prevalence and perception of student discipline within public senior high schools. During the course of the study, it emerged that a significant number of respondents believed that the use of corporal punishment, specifically caning, plays a crucial role in maintaining discipline and managing student behavior. Despite the controversy surrounding such measures, teachers have not completely abandoned the practice, partly due to the challenging student behaviors that they face. The study found that corporal punishment is administered, albeit in a supposedly mild form, and is directed at both male and female students with the intention of reforming them. There is a general agreement among those surveyed that the policies governing corporal punishment use must be carefully crafted and implemented effectively. Nevertheless, there is a clear dichotomy within the schools themselves; some have discouraged or even eliminated the practice of corporal punishment, following a global trend towards more humane disciplinary methods. This was substantiated by the fact that in some schools, headmasters and senior teachers actively supervise the administration of corporal punishment to ensure it is carried out appropriately.

The statistical data from the survey responses yielding a mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 1.30 indicate that there is no strong consensus among respondents regarding the degree of discipline in the Berekum Municipal public senior high schools, pointing to a division of opinion. This ambivalence stands in stark contrast to findings from other studies, such as those by Munir & Hussain (2019) and Obadire & Sinthumule (2021), which found a predominant favorability towards corporal punishment among teachers in Ghanaian schools. These teachers advocate for its continued use, believing it effects positive behavioral change in students. The findings also oppose those of Najoli et al. (2019), which suggested that despite an official ban, corporal punishment is still practiced in some Kenyan schools. The demographic involved in the study included a diverse group of 32 parents, 32 teachers, 160 students, and 8 principals, which provided a comprehensive overview of the community's stance on discipline within the educational system.

The relationship between corporal punishment and the academic achievement of SHS students in the Berekum Municipality.

The objective of the research was to thoroughly investigate the implications of corporal punishment on the scholastic achievements of students. The findings indicated a clear negative correlation: corporal punishment was found to significantly impede students' progression in their educational journey. The investigation uncovered that a substantial number of students hold the belief that physical discipline is a critical tool for the management and control of classroom behavior Upon closer examination, the data revealed that students who were subjected to physical forms of punishment tend to exhibit a marked reduction in their enthusiasm towards their studies. They displayed signs of emotional withdrawal and a reluctance to engage actively in the educational process. Moreover, a noteworthy portion of the student population made connections between their experiences of corporal punishment and their diminishing interest in academic pursuits. The impact of corporal punishment extends beyond immediate academic effects; it also profoundly affects students' personal growth. The study highlighted several adverse outcomes, including the development of low self-esteem, a pervasive lack of confidence, an increase in defiant behaviors, and the onset of depressive symptoms. Students who endure physical punishment often cultivate a resistant and negative attitude toward the learning process itself. The cessation of corporal punishment in educational institutions has left many teachers feeling vulnerable and ineffective, which in turn can lead to a decline in the quality of teaching and learning environments. The study suggests that the absence of physical discipline may be associated with teachers feeling a lack of authority and control, which could potentially hinder their ability to conduct successful and productive classes.

Furthermore, the research links corporal punishment with suboptimal cognitive development and an increased risk of mental health disorders among students. The anticipation or experience of punishment has been shown to deter students from attending classes with regularity, which obviously hampers their educational experience. The quantitative aspect of the study was manifested in the overall mean of the responses, which stood at 3.19, coupled with a standard deviation of 1.46. These statistics indicate that most respondents recognize corporal punishment's impact on academic achievement, with a consensus veering towards agreement, given that the grand mean is greater than 3.00. This perspective is reinforced by related literature, such as the works of

Heekes et al. (2022) and Visser et al. (2022a, 2022b), which have observed a lack of discipline among Ghanaian students, who seem to be cognizant of the fact that their misconduct will not result in severe corporal repercussions. In a similar vein, research by Munir & Hussain (2019) and Obadire & Sinthumule (2021) supports the notion that teachers in districts where corporal punishment is practiced believe it to be an indispensable strategy for ensuring discipline and order within the classroom setting.

Effects of The Ban on Corporal Punishment and SHS Students' Discipline in The Berekum Municipality

Upon conducting an analysis aimed at understanding the consequences of abolishing corporal punishment on student discipline, the findings revealed a complex scenario. Participants in the study perceive their educational institution as one of the most disciplined within the Ghanaian context. Despite this, there has been a noticeable shift in the oversight of student behavior. Teachers, who were once more directly involved in discipline, now exhibit a reluctance to enforce strict monitoring, primarily due to the unavailability of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. The general atmosphere among the teaching staff is one of discontent. This dissatisfaction stems from an uptick in undisciplined actions and a sense of unchecked boldness among students, which they link to the prohibition of physical disciplinary methods. This policy change, according to the respondents, has undermined the traditional respect that students held for their educators and peers alike.

The dynamics within the school altered significantly when the student body became aware that corporal punishment was no longer permissible. This awareness coincided with a surge in instances of misconduct—a surge that has not gone unnoticed by the respondents. They report a growing sense of empowerment among the students, who now perceive themselves as more authoritative, absent the deterrent of physical punishment. The reverence and apprehension that once governed their interactions with teachers have diminished, leading to a school environment where students are increasingly inclined to act on impulse without regard for authority. The escalation in behavioral problems has been profound in the wake of the corporal punishment ban. This phenomenon suggests that alternative disciplinary measures have not been as effective in maintaining order or instilling a sense of responsibility among the students. Moreover, this trend has extended beyond individual schools, indicating a broader national issue. The campaign against corporal punishment and its eventual eradication has, according to the study's participants, propelled Ghana into an era marked by a lack of restraint among the youth. A notable concern is the erosion of respect for teachers, which has reached a point where some students feel emboldened to bring dangerous weapons into the school environment. This alarming development disrupts the educational process and raises serious safety concerns, endangering the welfare of students and staff alike. The collective view of the respondents paints a picture of a schooling system grappling with the challenges of enforcing discipline in the absence of corporal punishment, calling into question the effectiveness of current disciplinary frameworks and the need for robust alternatives to maintain a conducive learning environment.

The average score assigned by the respondents regarding the impact of the ban on corporal punishment is 3.19, with a standard deviation of 1.46. This score reflects a middling stance on the ban's consequences, neither too low nor too high, suggesting that respondents are divided on its effectiveness. The findings echo the sentiments of academic research, notably by Gershoff et al. (2019) and Obadire & Sinthumule (2021), which unmistakably illustrate that the removal of corporal punishment has been detrimental to maintaining discipline within schools. Teachers in Ghana are reported to be experiencing significant dissatisfaction, demotivation, and fatigue due to the erosion of discipline, compounded by unclear policy directions and a rise in student misbehavior attributed to the absence of corporal punishment. In support of these observations, Musa and Martha (2020) also reveal disturbing trends where learners are increasingly disrespectful towards educators and are even bringing dangerous weapons to school, creating an environment of fear and risk for all. A noticeable decline in academic diligence further exacerbates the situation; since the ban, students are not turning in assignments punctually, attending classes sporadically, wearing inappropriate school uniforms, arriving late, and sneaking out of classes and school premises. The survey further quantified the level of indiscipline perceived by respondents, with an average rating of 3.77, above the midpoint and indicating a significant concern about student behavior. This heightened concern is supported by the data suggesting that the lack of a formal corporal punishment system has left a vacuum in discipline enforcement. A simple linear regression analysis underscores this relationship, indicating a negative trend: as the enforcement of corporal punishment decreases, student indiscipline proportionately increases. Specifically, the model predicts that for each unit increase in the restriction of corporal punishment, there is a corresponding decrease of 0.701 in the level of student discipline, provided all other variables remain unchanged. This statistical correlation strongly points to the need for a reevaluation of discipline strategies in the post-corporal punishment era.

Alternatives to corporal punishment on the disciplinary control of students

In the quest to explore different methods for managing student discipline beyond corporal punishment, a variety of strategies have been reported. For students who display problematic behavior, it is a common practice for them to commit to future good conduct by signing agreements. To correct deviant behavior, schools typically resort to physical punishments such as caning or corrective tasks like kneeling or weeding, which are believed to act as strong deterrents. Furthermore, schools delegate certain responsibilities to student leaders, such as prefects, who play a pivotal role in guiding and advising their peers towards better behavior. When faced with more serious infractions, schools often take a sterner approach by suspending the students involved. In parallel, teachers may employ counseling techniques as a rehabilitative method to address the underlying issues that lead to misbehavior, aiming to steer students back towards positive conduct. The adherence to and reinforcement of school rules and regulations are considered essential in establishing and maintaining desired student behaviors. When available, school chaplains are given authority and often intervene in student discipline, offering moral guidance and support. Additionally, schools recognize the importance of parental involvement and actively engage with parents in efforts to collaboratively address and rectify students' behavioral problems. In severe cases of misconduct, the school's administration might decide to dismiss the students involved, often without an opportunity for them to redeem themselves. Despite these varied approaches, there remains a sentiment within my school that no disciplinary measure quite matches the dissuasive power of caning, indicating a perception that it is the most effective means of preventing misbehavior. The overall mean of the responses of the respondents is 3.53 and the standard deviation is 1.68 indicating respondents have the view that there are alternatives to corporal punishment on the disciplinary control of students in the sense that grand mean [Grand Mean > 3.00] skewed towards strongly agreed responses.

This finding is in line with the work of Ghafoor Awan and Ghafoor Awan (2018) and Heekes et al. (2022), which suggests that teachers should approach students with kindness, adopting the mantra "Love Not Hit" instead of resorting to fear and harshness. The type of relationship between a teacher and a child is crucial as it affects the child's educational outcomes and behavior, particularly during the early stages of schooling. Furthermore, Munir and Hussain (2019) emphasize that effective guidance and counseling in schools are essential for helping individuals to recognize and develop their academic, extracurricular, and emotional strengths, ultimately achieving greater satisfaction and societal contribution. Similarly, research by Munir and Hussain (2019), Obadire & Sinthumule (2021), and Stein et al.

(2019) examined the impact of student leadership on academic success in the context of Indian higher education. Their findings revealed that student leadership roles positively influenced academic achievements and enhanced prospects for employment post-graduation.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has explored the multifaceted impact of corporal punishment on students' academic achievement and discipline within the Berekum municipality's schools. The findings reveal a dichotomy in perceptions: some respondents affirm the necessity of corporal punishment for maintaining classroom control and fostering effective learning, while others recognize its detrimental effects on students' psychological well-being and enthusiasm towards education. Furthermore, the investigation into the consequences of the corporal punishment ban has illuminated alternative disciplinary measures that schools have adopted. These alternatives, which range from empowering student leaders to engaging parents and counselling, highlight a shift towards more constructive and humane approaches to student discipline. The data indicates a general agreement among respondents that these methods can effectively replace corporal punishment, as suggested by the grand mean skewed towards strong agreement. The outcomes of this study resonate with the broader educational discourse, where positive reinforcement and empathetic teacher-student relationships are increasingly advocated. As evidenced by the research, these approaches align with ethical standards and contribute to enhancing students' academic performance and behavioural adjustment. In light of these findings, it is evident that while the ban on corporal punishment poses challenges in classroom management and discipline, it also opens avenues for more compassionate and effective educational practices that honour the students' dignity and promote a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

6. RECOMMENDATION

In response to the diverse perspectives on corporal punishment and its effects on student discipline and academic achievement, it is recommended that educational stakeholders in the Berekum municipality and beyond consider integrating a multi-faceted approach to discipline that prioritizes positive behavioural interventions. Schools should invest in training teachers in alternative disciplinary techniques that focus on understanding student behaviour, providing constructive feedback, and encouraging self-regulation. Furthermore, the empowerment of student leadership and the active involvement of parents in the disciplinary process should be emphasized to foster a community-centric approach to discipline. Schools could also benefit from implementing comprehensive guidance and counselling programs to address the underlying misconduct issues and support students' personal development. By adopting these

recommendations, educational institutions can create a supportive environment conducive to learning and promote all students' well-being and holistic development.

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