



Challenges with the Use of Alternative Strategies to Corporal Punishment in Ghanaian Basic Schools

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How to cite this paper: Akyina, K.O. and Heeralal, P.J.H. (2024) Challenges with the Use of Alternative Strategies to Corporal Punishment in Ghanaian Basic Schools. *Open Access Library Journal*, 11: e11825. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1111825>

Received: June 13, 2024

Accepted: July 19, 2024

Published: July 22, 2024

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Abstract

Despite the documented benefits of the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment, Ghana continues to grapple with indiscipline in schools since the abolition of corporal punishment and the subsequent introduction of alternative strategies to corporal punishment. This study sought to find out teachers' lived experiences of the challenges with the use of these alternative strategies to corporal punishment in Ghanaian Basic schools. The qualitative research approach and the phenomenological research design were adopted for in-depth interviews with fifteen basic school teachers and focused on group discussions with fifteen basic school headteachers, who were purposively selected for the study because of their experience in the use of alternative strategies. Two themes namely the non-fearful nature of the alternative strategies and implementation challenges with their use emerged as the main challenges with the use of the alternative strategies. It was recommended that these identified challenges should be addressed by educational stakeholders to prevent the revert to the use of corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools.

Subject Areas

Educational Psychology

Keywords

Challenges, Corporal Punishment, Alternative Strategies, Phenomenology, Teachers Behaviour Modification, Positive Discipline, Basic Schools

1. Introduction

Corporal punishment is a popular means of behaviour modification in most

countries [1]-[3]. It is used in several settings namely schools, homes, penal institutions and even as a sentence for crimes committed. Its use is popular in most countries because it is rooted in the cultural and religious beliefs of most countries and people [3] [4].

Corporal punishment is any kind of discipline in which physical force is used with the goal of causing discomfort or pain, regardless of how minor the level of discomfort or pain is [1]. Similarly, Gershoff, Purtell and Holas [5] described corporal punishment as the use of physical force to inflict suffering on a perpetrator with the goal of correcting or preventing the perpetrator from repeating an unpleasant behaviour. Some countries and states have specific definitions of corporal punishment. For instance, the Texas Education Code defined corporal punishment as "...the deliberate inflicting of physical pain by hitting, paddling, spanking, slapping, or any other physical force employed as a means of discipline" [6]. The government of the Western Coast Province of South Africa, on the other hand, defined it as any intentional act intended to punish or confine a child by inflicting pain or physical discomfort [7]. Therefore, the several definitions of corporal punishment allude to the fact that it is administered to cause pain or some form of bad feeling on the part of the offender, as a means of deterring or preventing an act or behaviour considered unwarranted.

Corporal punishment is administered in several forms. Gershoff, Purtell and Holas [5] and Gershoff [1] enumerated some common forms of administration of corporal punishment in several countries. The forms include hitting, spanking, slapping and paddling an offender of the law. Other means are the use of belts, shoes, sticks, bats, arrows, electric cords and water hoses to cause pain in people. Other forms of administration of corporal punishment involve choking, pulling of hair, dragging by hand, excessive exercising, dangerous posturing and injection of harmful substances. They further noted that corporal punishment is often administered by principals, school heads and their assistants and parents. According to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection [3], corporal punishment is most widespread in homes, but it is also common in schools and is delivered by school personnel. To Gershoff, Purtell and Holas [5], the most prevalent type of corporal punishment at home is beating a child's buttocks with a stick, while the most common form of corporal punishment at school is paddling. However, canning at the buttocks and other parts of the body, in general, is common in Ghanaian schools [8]. The foregoing allusions indicate that corporal punishment is administered in several forms mainly by parents and school staff (teachers) as a deterrent measure against misbehaviour.

The literature denotes that corporal punishment is still legal in most countries. Statistics by End Corporal Punishment Now [4], an advocacy organization striving to end all kinds of corporal punishment in countries in the world, indicate that 136 countries and 23 territories in the world still allow corporal punishment at homes while 129 countries and 23 territories allow it in alternative care settings like foster homes and orphanages as well as daycare centres like preschool, nursery and kindergarten. Sixty-four (64) countries and 14 territories

in the world permit it in schools. Fifty-five countries and 3 territories allow it in penal correctional centres while 30 countries allow it as a sentence for crime.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Reasons for Use of Corporal Punishment

Several reasons have been adduced in support of the use of corporal punishment. A search through the literature brings out the following. According to Agbenyega [9], three main reasons account for the use of corporal punishment. First, corporal punishment is used to serve as a motivation for learning. Many teachers and parents believe that the use of corporal punishment strives in their pupils and wards, respectively, the urge to learn. Second, corporal punishment is believed to help shape the character of pupils and, therefore, guarantees a successful future for them. This belief, therefore, influences teachers and parents to administer corporal punishment on their pupils and wards respectively. Third, people administer corporal punishment as a religious requirement to purge off evil behaviour on children and to ensure their successful future. Thus, these three overriding reasons influence people to use corporal punishment.

Contributing to the reasons for the use of corporal punishment, Goodman [10] came out with similar reasons. First, to him, people resort to the use of corporal punishment because it is perceived to work and achieve results. It has a deterrent quality and curtails misbehaviour on the part of its receivers. Second, its use is prevalent because it is easy to mete out or administer and, therefore, can be easily administered by anyone without training. As a corrective measure, no process has to be learnt with the use of corporal punishment as compared with measures like positive discipline or behaviour contracts which require training on the various levels of their use. Third, it is perceived as not time-wasting in its use. No need for supervision and use of time-consuming measures as in the case of guidance and counselling and supervision of detained pupils.

Further contributing to this argument, a report in CONNECTUS [11] adds to the profound reasons for the use of corporal punishment by teachers, parents and significant others in a child's life. Corporal punishment is seen to have effective results when used in moderation. Corporal punishment also motivates pupils to learn as previously alluded to. This is because the fear of receiving corporal punishment for misbehaviour puts pupils off from that misbehaviour. In addition, pupils tend to prefer corporal punishment to other measures like detention and suspension which are seen as more time-wasting and severe to bear.

2.2. Effects of Corporal Punishment

Despite these above enumerated positive outlooks of the use of corporal punishment, literature reports of several negative effects of corporal punishment which have led to calls for it to be banned and its subsequent ban in most countries. In an online study covering young adults of 18 - 23 years from 19 states where corporal punishment was still legal, Gershoff, Sattler & Holden [6] found

that the study participants who had had a previous experience with corporal punishment had lower grade point averages in school achievement. They also indicated a high level of depression and were more likely to mete out corporal punishment to others in the near future. This study, therefore, shows that school corporal punishment has negative effects on school achievement and also is linked to depressive feeling and retaliatory vengeance on the part of someone who experiences it. Le and Nguyen [12] identified that exposure to corporal punishment at home was linked to lower class achievements in mathematics and languages among Vietnamese 5th grade students. Maiti [13] in a study in India, also arrived at that same conclusion in terms of corporal punishment and its effect on class achievement. The study found that there is a significant negative effect of corporal punishment on a child's academic achievement in mathematics and reading comprehension.

Corporal punishment has also been linked to violence and aggression on the part of people who experience it. This was confirmed by a study by Akhtar and Awan [14]. A study by Elgar [15] also confirmed the relationship between corporal punishment and youth violence. The study concluded that the prohibition of corporal punishment leads to a significant reduction in youth violence and vice versa. Adding on to the already discussed effects of corporal punishment, Heekes *et al.* [16], in a review of 53 studies carried out in the United States of America, Africa, Caribbean, Eastern Mediterranean and Western Pacific areas on corporal punishment spanning the period of 1980-July 2017, posited that most of the studies reviewed confirmed that corporal punishment is associated with problems related to physical, mental, health, behavioural and academic development of people who experience it. Furthermore, Hussain and Muhammad [17], in a study in Pakistan, found that corporal punishment leads to aggressive behaviour as well as the development of a sense of nervousness in students, and negatively impacts academic progress and the development of psychological trauma in students.

Studies conducted in Africa on the effects of corporal punishment have not produced a different picture except some few which had findings different from the aforementioned. A study by Dlamini, Dlamini and Bhebhe [18] confirmed some of the aforementioned effects. The study, for instance, found that school corporal punishment is associated with behaviour problems like stubbornness on the part of pupils. However, it led to improvement in academic performance and a reduction in truancy, contrary to points previously discussed. This study was a descriptive survey of purposively-selected teachers, parents, headteachers and students. The different findings might have come about probably as a result of the support of the respondents for the use of corporal punishment and their perceived effectiveness in its use. In a study by Adesope, Ogunwuyi and Olorode [19] in Nigeria to find out the effects of corporal punishment on students' learning and academic achievement, it was revealed that students exposed to corporal punishment exhibited a slow continuous decline in academic perfor-

mance and poor behaviour development as compared with pupils whose behaviours were managed with different strategies. Pupils managed with alternative strategies showed marked improved academic performance. This study gives a good picture of alternative strategies compared with corporal punishment. Om-bori, Nyakan and Yambo [20], in a study conducted in Kenya, found that the use of corporal punishment is widely associated with truancy in school, contrary to the finding of Dlamini, Dlamini and Bhebhe [18].

Studies conducted in Ghana on the effects of corporal punishment have not painted a different picture. Though its use is supported by a section of the general public and educators [8] [21]-[23], it is seen by others as associated with several negative consequences. Elliason [24], in a study in Ghana, found a number of negative psychosocial consequences of corporal punishment. They included marring the relationship between teachers and students, development of antagonistic relationship between teachers and students, violence on the part of students and problems with mental health. A study by Addison [25] also identified that corporal punishment limits the enrolment of girls in Ghanaian schools. Awoniyi [26], on the other hand, found that corporal punishment is a demotivating factor for girls entering into the area of mathematics in school. Thus, pupils are discouraged from venturing into the area of mathematics in school for fear of being beaten when they commit mistakes.

2.3. Ban and Introduction of Alternative Strategies to Corporal Punishment in Ghanaian Schools

In response to calls for the ban on corporal punishment in schools as a result of its negative consequences, Ghana took a stance by an administrative policy in 2017 and furthermore in 2019, banning its use in all schools [27] [28]. In the policy abolishing the use of corporal punishment in schools in Ghana, teachers were urged to use positive discipline means of behaviour modification as an alternative to corporal punishment [27]. This led to the development of positive behaviour tool kits by GES in collaboration with the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other stakeholders of education [29]. Teachers were further urged to utilize other humane strategies to modify the behaviour of indiscipline pupils.

Most alternative strategies to corporal punishment, particularly positive discipline strategies, aimed at restoring the offender rather than punishing him/her for exhibiting a wrong behaviour. These strategies, therefore, utilize practices that bring together the offender, victim and the entire community or significant players in the child's development, to resolve the problem at stake. The aim of alternative strategies is mostly to appease the victim and to reform the offender by providing him/her (the offender) with skills lacking in the environment that resulted in the offence committed. Thus, alternative discipline strategies are seen as more positive in focus compared with punitive discipline which is mostly criticized for its number of negative repercussions.

3. Statement of the Problem

Indiscipline continues to be a worrying concern to educational stakeholders in Ghana even after the abolition of corporal punishment and the follow up introduction of the alternative strategies. Several educational stakeholders have expressed concern about the increasing spate of indiscipline in Ghanaian schools today. Sottie [22] alluded that, a former Director of Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana described the spate of indiscipline in Ghanaian schools as very disturbing and called for appropriate measures to curb it. The Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary School (CHASS) at its 59th Congress reported that there has been an increasing case of indiscipline in Ghanaian schools following the abolition of corporal punishment [21]. This situation has led to calls for the reintroduction of corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools. In a reported interview with the president of the oldest teacher association in Ghana, the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), the president called for the reintroduction of corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools following the recent spate of indiscipline in Ghanaian schools [30]. In another report by an online tabloid, the Vice Chancellor of Sunyani Technical University called for re-instatement of corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools as a result of increasing cases of indiscipline [31]. Some reports and studies have further brought to light the helplessness of teachers and other educational stakeholders in controlling indiscipline in Ghanaian Schools with the abolition of corporal punishment [23] [32] [33]. The result of these frustrations is that, even though officially, corporal punishment is banned in Ghanaian schools, some teachers still carry it out in several forms, as testified in several recent studies and newspaper reports [3] [34].

The question then is, what is wrong with the use of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools to such an extent that indiscipline is still on the rise in many schools and therefore many stakeholders are calling for the reintroduction of corporal punishment in schools? What are the teaming challenges with the use of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment that make their use ineffective in Ghanaian schools today? This study was therefore conducted to find out the lived experiences of the challenges with the use of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment so as to identify, describe and help educational stakeholders to understand the nature of the challenges so as to find the necessary solutions to them. This it is envisaged to bring confidence in the use of the alternative strategies and prevent the return to the use of corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools.

4. Methodology

The constructivism-interpretivism paradigms research lens guided this study. In line with them, the qualitative research approach was adopted for the study. To obtain the lived experiences of the participants on the challenges of the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment, Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological design was adopted in the data collection and analysis.

Gill [35] asserts that Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method follows

the line of descriptive phenomenology by Husserl. It originated from psychology and its method of enquiry is scientific. The aim of Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method is to reach out to the core essence of a particular phenomenon. In terms of the participants selected to arrive at the core essence of a phenomenon, a minimum of three is suggested for use in this phenomenological method. Key concepts involved in this phenomenological method are bracketing (epoche), eidetic reduction, imaginative variation and meaning units. Giorgi, Giorgi and Morley [36] have presented steps undertaken to arrive at the essence of a phenomenon in the Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method. These steps are collecting the lived experiences of the key experiencers of the phenomenon under consideration, reading through the transcripts of the lived experiences and drawing meaning units from them after bracketing your experiences, and lastly, using the meaning units to form categories, themes and sub-themes after assuming a scientific phenomenological reduction position. These were the steps utilized in the analysis and the arrival at the themes and sub-themes of this study.

Fifteen basic school teachers who had experience in the use of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment, by having undergone professional teacher education which in part, includes topics on behaviour modification strategies of pupils, were purposefully selected for the study after the necessary ethical clearance was obtained. These teachers were engaged in an in-depth interview on their experiences of the challenges with the use of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment. Furthermore, fifteen headteachers with experience in the use of the alternative strategies by virtue of their training and use of the strategies, were engaged in focus group discussion to ascertain their experiences on the use of the strategies. There were three focus groups of five members each. The focus group discussion data were used to triangulate the data from the interviews in the course of analyzing the data. The interview as well as the focus group discussion guides were developed by the researchers and content validated by the Ethical Review Committee of College of Education, University of South Africa.

The data from the two research techniques used namely the interview and the focus group discussion were thematically analyzed using Giorgi, Giorgi and Morley [36] model of phenomenological study analysis to arrive at the themes and the sub-themes of this study. In the analysis of the interview data, the interview participants were represented with the alphanumeric codes P1 - P15 while the three focus groups were represented with alphanumeric codes FGD1 - FGD3. This was done to ensure the anonymity of their responses. Strategies, such as member checking, triangulation and audit trail were used after obtaining the data, to ensure trustworthiness of the findings.

Demographics of the Participants

Table 1 and **Table 2** present the demographic information of the participants of the study.

Table 1. Demographic data of the interview participants.

Participant Code	Sex	Age Range	Years of Teaching Experience	Highest Educational Qualification	Current Rank
P1	Male	41 - 50 years	20	M. Ed.	Assistant Director I
P2	Female	31 - 40 years	12	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
P3	Female	31 - 40 years	15	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
P4	Female	31 - 40 years	12	M. Ed.	Assistant Director I
P5	Male	31 - 40 years	13	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
P6	Female	31 - 40 years	10	B. Sc. (Dip. Ed)	Assistant Director II
P7	Male	41 - 50 years	14	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
P8	Male	20 - 30 years	5	Diploma	Senior Superintendent II
P9	Male	31 - 40 years	10	Diploma	Senior Superintendent II
P10	Male	31 - 40 years	10	B. Ed.	Principal Superintendent
P11	Female	20 - 30 years	7	B. Ed.	Principal Superintendent
P12	Female	31 - 40 years	11	B. Ed.	Principal Superintendent
P13	Male	41 - 50 years	18	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
P14	Male	31 - 40 years	9	B. Ed.	Principal Superintendent
P15	Male	41 - 50 years	21	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II

Table 2. Demographic data of the focus group participants.

Group Code	Sex	Age Range (Years)	Years of Teaching Experience	Highest Educational Qualification	Current Rank
FGD1	Male	41 - 50	26	MPhil.	Deputy Director
	Female	41 - 50	21	M. Ed.	Assistant Director II
	Male	41 - 50	27	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II

Continued

	Female	51 - 60	28	B. Ed.	Assistant Director I
	Male	41 - 50	21	M. Ed.	Assistant Director II
	Male	41 - 50	21	M. A.	Assistant Director II
	Male	31 - 40	14	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
FGD2	Female	31 - 40	12	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
	Female	41 - 50	20	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
	Male	31 - 40	14	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
	Male	51 - 60	28	MPhil.	Assistant Director I
	Female	41 - 50	23	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
FGD3	Male	51 - 60	24	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
	Male	51 - 60	26	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II
	Male	41 - 50	23	B. Ed.	Assistant Director II

From **Table 1** above, it can be seen that nine (9) male and six female teachers were interviewed. They had years of teaching experience ranging from the least of five (5) years to the highest of twenty-one (21) years. Just two (2) of the participants had their highest academic qualification as Diploma. Most of them had Bachelor's degrees, with two (2) of them having Master's degrees. In terms of their ranks in the teaching profession, just two (2) of them were at a near lower rank of the profession, that is, Senior Superintendent II. Majority of them were at the middle and higher ranks, namely, Principal Superintendent and Assistant Director, respectively. This means that the participants had considerable experience in teaching and hence, they tapped from their rich experiences to share their perceptions of the challenges of the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment.

In relation to the focus group discussions, there were five (5) females and ten (10) males who formed the three (3) focus groups. Twelve (12) of them were at the rank of Assistant Director II, two (2) were at Assistant Director I rank, while one (1) was at the Deputy Director rank. Their range in terms of years of teaching experience was twelve (12) to twenty-eight (28) years.

5. Findings

Two main themes were discovered from the thematic analysis of the data from the in-depth interview and the focus group discussion with the three focus groups. These themes were non-fearful nature of alternative strategies and implementation challenges.

5.1. Non-Fearful Nature of Alternative Strategies

Naturally, humans are afraid of cane and hence, with corporal punishment causing pain, most people fear it. Again, the use of corporal punishment dates

back to history and it invokes fear, especially the use of cane. However, alternative strategies to corporal punishment are not pain-inflicting. They mainly seek to reform a learner through appeals, relationships, encouragement and withdrawal of privileges. As a result of that, a number of people tend to misbehave because of the elimination of cane and the fact that the alternative strategies do not evoke fear in them. Two main sub-themes were identified from the perceptions of the participants from their experiences with the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment. These are misbehaviour for no cane and no fear of alternative strategies.

5.1.1. Misbehaviour for No Cane

The use of cane has been the traditional way of correcting misbehaviour at home and schools in the Ghanaian society in the past [3]. With its abolition in schools now, there is a sense of freedom to misbehave on the part of some pupils because the deterrent measure is no more present. These narratives from the participants point to this assertion:

P1 and FGD1 indicated that most students only understand cane language and hence with the abolition of caning in schools, a course has been created for misbehaviour on their part:

P1: We have some students the language they understand is caning. So, when you put the cane aside, they decide to do what they like. Some of them know the policy of the government so they know the teacher is not supposed to cane so they are not co-operating.

FGD1: What is not working too is that these kids, the only language they understand is cane language. When they see you coming without cane, they will not even mind you but when they see you coming with cane, then you see them running.

P2, P6, P10 and FGD2 agreed with P1 that there is misbehaviour of some pupils as a result of the abolition of caning:

P2: They know that when I do this, I am not going to be canned. I am not going to be given a plot of land to weed. Just sweep here.

P6: Some students are too stubborn that if you counsel them today, they will do the same thing, but they fear seeing the cane or being lashed.

P10: They don't concentrate while teaching because they think sir will not do anything to me.

FGD2: Nowadays, they don't fear the teachers. The rate of disrespect and disobedience is very high with the abolition of cane and the use of the alternative strategies.

These perceptions expressed by the participants agree with perceptions in the literature. Twum [23] found similar expressions by teachers that the ban on corporal punishment has encouraged indiscipline on the part of students. Yeboah [8] also reached similar findings in his study, with the participants expressing disquiet with the ban on caning, indicating that the ban has resulted in indiscipline on the part of students.

5.1.2. No Fear for Alternative Strategies

Most of the participants expressed the perception that pupils do not have fear of the alternative strategies. To them, the alternative strategies are not punishing enough. They are normal duties of life. This makes them still misbehave in spite of the use of these strategies on them. These narratives from the participants affirm this assertion:

P2: They don't find those alternatives serious or punitive enough. They don't see anything wrong with standing up.

P3: Sweeping, I always do that so if one takes delight in doing that, it is not punishment. The duties that you assign to the student, if he takes delight in doing them, they will not work in punishing him.

P4: They don't see alternative strategies as punishment. Yes, they say sweeping is normal, and changing seats is normal. So, they don't see anything wrong with that to change from their bad behaviours.

P5: For guidance and counselling, some students still listen but will not abide by it. Again, students become used to the alternative strategies, so they see them as normal.

P12: When you do that, they become used to it so sometimes a child will misbehave, and they will all shout "let him write lines". They are used to those things. They become used to those things so its effectiveness one way or the other is sometimes shaky.

The forgoing assertions expressed by the participants indicate that some students have a misconception about discipline and this perception would have to be changed through education. This agrees with Seliskar [37] that students need training on the use of the alternative strategies. Discipline is mainly to reform and deter and not just to inflict pain.

5.2. Implementation Challenges

Another theme discovered in relation to the ways by which the alternative strategies are not working has to do with challenges with their implementation in Ghanaian schools. Teachers are not conversant with the use of the alternative strategies because they are a new approach to discipline. Again, there are some inherent bottlenecks which hamper the successful use of the strategies. These factors came up as the implementation challenges with the use of the alternative strategies. Five sub-themes were identified here. There were delays of time, non-cooperation of some teachers and students, and high cost of implementation. The rest were lack of knowledge of the strategies and non-continuous use of the strategies at home.

5.2.1. Delay of Time

One challenge perceived by teachers with the implementation of the alternative strategies is the excessive time it takes to use them compared with corporal punishment. There is a perception among teachers that the alternative strategies delay time, require patience in their implementation and are not quick in re-

sponse to an indiscipline act. This they perceive as a challenge in the use of the alternative strategies, as can be seen in the following statements expressed by the participants:

P7, having compared the time span in the use of corporal punishment and positive discipline and the ease of response from them, said:

P7: At times students are afraid of cane so when they are doing something in the classroom and then you raise the cane, they can even keep quiet but for this positive discipline, it will waste time so it will take a long period to work. I will say alternative strategies sometimes delay time. So, something you want to do fast, you have to run to the rules and pupils will be doing what they like. The way you want to do things fast is not fast.

P11 added on by saying that the alternative strategies delay time and bring extra load on teachers:

P11: These strategies are time consuming. If you take cane, by 5 minutes you've finished caning all of them but if you are to counsel everybody one after the other, then it is adding another load to your workload.

P14 lamented on time delay with the use of parental consultation and said:

P14: So, calling parents for discussion, you have to skip your class and have time with them to discuss the student. It is time consuming and a waste of time.

A long narration from FGD1 and a statement by P13 sum up the perception teachers have that the alternative strategies waste time in their usage:

FGD1: It takes patience on the part of the teacher, patience and time. You see that? You will say this and the next moment you see the child is still doing that because the child knows that this time no one will cane me. You see that? And so having the patience and then with its time-consuming nature, that is why some of us have challenges with that. It is time consuming. So that is the challenge most teachers have.

P13: I see the alternative strategies as a waste of time.

This inherent nature of most alternative strategies is something that teachers have to accommodate in the use of the strategies. This supports the assertion by Seliskar [37] and Djabrayan and Hannigan [38] that adequate training is needed to ensure the effective use of these strategies. The training will conscientize the mind of the teachers to know that the strategies are long-term in focus rather than short-term as expressed by FGD3:

FGD3: The alternative strategies, it is long term. It is not easy but gradually if not today, it will work tomorrow.

5.2.2. Non-Co-Operation of Some Teachers and Students

The successful implementation of alternative strategies to corporal punishment requires co-operation of key stakeholders like teachers and pupils to make it work. When there is apathy on the part of teachers in the use of the strategies and students are also adamant about yielding to the necessary reformation required from the use of the strategies, the implementation of the strategies would not be successful. This was the experience expressed by the participants of this

study. This can be seen in these quotations:

P9 indicated that not all teachers have embraced the use of the alternative strategies:

P9: Not all teachers are using these strategies and so when a teacher is not using these strategies and you use them, you end up being an enemy to the child.

P12 added on by showing the apathy expressed by some of her teachers towards the use of the alternative strategies:

P12: In my school, I have seen that the teachers have relaxed. They have relaxed in terms of discipline because they are not prepared to use the alternative strategies.

P11 saw the non-co-operation from the end of pupils:

P11: And even they don't open up. You know this is the situation. You will want to talk to the person. You will talk and talk, and he or she will not respond.

The forgoing narrations support the finding that the successful implementation of positive discipline strategies requires the collaborative support of stakeholders [37] [38].

5.2.3. High Cost of Implementation

The use of the alternative strategies requires the availability of resources to help in its implementation. The high cost of getting these resources was also seen as a challenge in the implementation of the alternative strategies. The following views express that assertion on the side of the participants:

P8 indicated that sometimes, resources needed to support the pupil are not available:

P8: Sometimes, some of the students need physical things but right now, the system is very very hard, so you are not able to get them. So, the materials we going to use to enhance discipline are becoming a problem here.

P13 and P14 noted that they have a problem with getting resources to purchase the materials for the child to do line writing:

P13: If you ask someone to write lines, it is a challenge. Our part here, even taking 4 cedis to buy a book and a pen is a challenge.

P14: It again consumes cash to buy a book for a student to write lines.

The forgoing views expressed by the participants affirm the findings of Djabrayan and Hannigan [38] that resource availability is an important factor for the successful implementation of an alternative discipline policy.

5.2.4. Lack of Knowledge of the Strategies

Knowledge of the tenets and how to implement the tenets of a policy is necessary for the success of the programme. One way the participants indicated that the strategies are not working is in the area of teachers' know-how of the policy. Some participants expressed the view that most teachers do not have the know-how of the new policy. This can be seen from the narratives of P15 and FGD2:

P15: What I have seen is nowadays, there are some teachers who don't have knowledge of it. What they know is to punish a child with a cane.

FGD2: Education is not coming. Most of us, even we the headteachers have not been well equipped with the positive discipline toolkits. Things and matters have not been explained down to the level that you will understand and how to go about the whole situation. There has not been any form of vivid education on the new strategies that they want us to use.

P13 extended the lack of knowledge not making them work to parents by saying that:

P13: So why is it not working is that parents are not aware of it. They are not educated on it. They do not know the importance of it. So, the parents should also be made aware so they can support us to do it.

Know-how of a strategy, therefore, influences the successful implementation and workings of the strategy. This agrees with the findings of [37]-[39] that training on the workings of a strategy is necessary if the strategy is to be successful in its implementation.

5.2.5. Non-Continuous Use of the Strategies at Home

Parents and teachers are partners in the implementation of strategies for the reformation of the child and therefore, they should be seen as working in the same course in trying to reform the child. In a situation where parents and teachers use different approaches in correcting the child's misbehaviour, there can arise a problem: the school does not use corporal punishment, but parents administer corporal punishment while the child is at home. So, there comes a problem, and this was one-way alternative strategies were found as not working. The following narratives from the participants point in this direction:

P9: What is not working is that these strategies that we are using in school are not used at home. So, when you use these strategies in school to curb these misbehaviours, the students think that you don't like them.

FGD1: The teacher uses the strategy in school. At home, the parents are even not there to continue with what the teacher has started. So, the child will come back to school with the same behaviour.

FGD3: At home, if the child does something wrong, he or she is caned. So, if the child does something wrong in school and you invite the parents, they insist that you cane him or her. Even when you invite them, it looks like you have done something useless. The parents will tell you "Why don't you cane him or her rather than inviting us?"

The narratives above show that one reason why the alternative strategies are not effective is the lack of cooperation of parents and teachers in their use of the strategies. This boils down to education for the effective resolution of this challenge. Thus, for a successful implementation of restorative strategies, necessary training is required before and during their implementation [37]-[39].

6. Discussions

Naturally, man is afraid of punishment. Punishment always involves presentation of an unpleasant stimulus and, therefore, tends to be a deterrent in its na-

ture [40] [41]. Thus, from cultural and religious backgrounds, punishments of various kinds have been used to deter misbehaviour [42]. With this established state of punishment, there is a state of fear of punishment among students. This, however, is not the state of alternative strategies to corporal punishment. They are not meant to cause fear, to deter as in the case of corporal punishment, but to reform an offender, and to mend the relationship between an offender and a victim.

When a strategy of behaviour control is not deterrent enough, there is the natural tendency for some misbehaviour on the receivers of that strategy [23]. This was the assertion expressed by the participants in this section that the non-punitive nature of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment, namely, positive discipline strategies, and the mild forms of punishment strategies tend to let students misbehave when they are used because they do not receive any pains for going contrary to the strategies. This outcome from the study is in line with the natural human nature of disobedience when there are no deterrent control measures.

This finding supports the pro-punishment group's argument that there should be retribution for any misbehaviour [43] [44]. What should be noted, however, is that the alternative strategies are different in nature per their intentions. They are mostly not used to deter but to reform. They do not inflict pain and cause fear to the receivers of those strategies as compared with corporal punishment. Therefore, naturally, pupils are likely not to exhibit fear of these strategies as compared with corporal punishment. This accounts for the non-fearful nature of the alternative strategies. The next sub-heading discusses the implementation challenges making the alternative strategies ineffective.

The study revealed that there are several challenges associated with the implementation of the policy of the use of alternative strategies in schools. Some of these challenges are logistical constraints while others are technical know-how of the use of the strategies. Others are inherent in the nature of the strategies, all summing up to make the strategies ineffective.

In comparison with corporal punishment, the use of the alternative strategies delays time. It takes a long while in their use and for results to be achieved. This is inherent in the nature of most of the alternatives. The use of guidance and counselling, for instance, takes a long time to offer and to see its results. Studies on counselling allude to the fact that counselling has a characteristic of being relatively prolonged because changing one's behaviour takes time [45] [46]. Thus, the use of guidance and counselling, which is a positive discipline strategy, naturally takes time to yield results. Similarly, the use of alternative strategies like line writing, parental consultation and withdrawal from pleasant activities takes time to monitor the progress and results of the strategies as compared with corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is fast in terms of its execution and results. Because of the laborious and time-wasting nature of the use of most of the alternative discipline strategies, some stakeholders do not prefer their use. Most prefer the use of the corporal punishment strategy as a result, even with its

negative consequences.

Furthermore, cooperation of teachers and students in the use of the strategies is very crucial for the success of the implementation of the strategies. Studies indicate that lack of stakeholder support of a policy poses a challenge to the implementation of policies [47]-[51]. Djabrayan and Hannigan [38], for instance, noted that for any alternative strategy to be successful in its implementation, stakeholder support is crucial. Most teachers and students, however, do not fully commit themselves to the use of these strategies probably due to the amount of time it takes to utilize them, lack of resources for implementation or lack of knowledge of the strategies.

High cost of implementation of the strategies was also identified as a challenge in the use of the strategies. The use of parental consultation, line writing and rewards presentation involves monetary cost of procuring items and sustaining the use of the strategies. However, most teachers do not have the financial and material resources to implement these strategies. This, therefore, confirms Djabrayan and Hannigan [38] finding that availability of resources for the implementation of a policy is crucial for the success of the policy. With high cost of implementation posing a challenge, some teachers decide not to use any strategy at all or resort to the use of corporal punishment which is cheaper to use.

Knowledge of a strategy and how and when it is used is important for the success of any strategy [37]-[39]. Most of the teachers expressed lack of knowledge of the alternative strategies in terms of the detailed know-how of the strategies. Some indicated having knowledge of the strategies and implemented them to the best of their abilities, but they see that they do not have adequate knowledge on the use of the strategies. Some expressed a concern that they have heard of the strategies, but they need detailed education and training on them before they can use them. The lack of knowledge situations stated above pose a challenge to the use of the strategies and need to be remedied.

It was found in the study that some teachers expressed concern over the use of different strategies at home and in school and said that poses a challenge to the success of the alternative strategies. As established by Ivan Pavlov, an organism gets conditioned to a stimulus when there is the frequency of pairing of the neutral stimulus with the unconditioned stimulus [52] [53]. Therefore, for one to be used to a particular discipline strategy, it should be consistently used by all stakeholders of the child's education. If the teachers use the guidance and counselling strategy to modify behaviour but parents use corporal punishment, it would be very difficult for the guidance and counselling to yield effective results because the parents do not adhere to its use. These factors discussed above pose a challenge to the use of the alternative strategies.

7. Summary and Conclusions

The study has brought to notice that there are two main categories of challenges hampering the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment in Ghanaian Basic schools. These are the non-fearful nature of the alternative strategies and

the implementation challenges of their use. Misbehaviour for the elimination of cane in schools and the non-punitive nature of the alternative strategies were found to be the challenges under the non-fearful nature of the alternative strategies. With respect to the implementation challenges, the following were identified in this study: delay of time in their use, non-co-operation of stakeholders and high implementation cost. The rest were lack of stakeholders' knowledge of the strategies and parents' non-use of the strategies at home. The conclusions from the findings of this study, therefore, are that:

First, there is an attitudinal problem of some stakeholders with the use of the alternative strategies which needs to be addressed for a positive attitude of patience and optimism to be developed by them in the use of the alternative strategies. The perception that the use of the alternative strategies wastes time and is not quick in effect as a corporal with corporal punishment seriously needs to be addressed for wholistic acceptance of these alternative strategies.

Second, there are other several inherent challenges with the use of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment and until these challenges are noted and addressed by educational stakeholders, the use of the alternative strategies in Ghanaian basic schools will continue to be a challenge. This is because until these challenges are addressed, teachers will not be on top of the use of these alternative strategies and might revert to corporal punishment, their most familiar and perceived easy to use strategy of behaviour management.

Third, stakeholders' support and education on the use of the strategies, from the findings of this study, might hold the key to the successful implementation of this policy in Ghanaian schools. To this end, both parents and teachers must wholly embrace the use of these strategies and provide all the necessary support and co-operation for their successful implementation. The government will also have to support education on the use of these strategies and also provide the necessary materials for their use in schools and homes. These will help win the support of teachers and parents in the use of these strategies.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for the stakeholders of education in Ghana:

- 1) Teachers should not give up on the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment for the fact that it is not quick in response to misbehaviour and it invokes no fear in students. They should understand that by nature, the alternative strategies are long-term in focus, and they aim at reforming offenders rather than causing fear in them, which can produce other negative consequences to them.
- 2) Teachers should cooperate and be committed to the use of alternative strategies to make their use more successful. They should not be discouraged by its time delaying nature and its non-quick response to problems.
- 3) Teachers should be patient with parents and pupils in the use of the alter-

native strategies since they are new policy strategies and so will take a while for all stakeholders to adapt to their use.

4) Parents should cooperate and support teachers in the use of alternative strategies. To this end parents should also receive the necessary education in the use of the strategies so as to be able to use them at home when they are there with their children.

5) Pupils should cooperate with the use of alternative strategies to corporal punishment and conform to the dictates of the strategies to erode the belief among some teachers that the alternative strategies are not as effective as corporal punishment.

6) Massive education should be carried out by Ghana Education Service to make teachers, parents, students and all the stakeholders of the policy aware of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment and how they are used. To this end, workshops, seminars and conferences should be organized for parents, teachers and students to educate them on these strategies. Brochures can also be prepared and given to teachers to guide them on their use of the strategies.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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