

A Critical Literature Review of Corporal Punishment and Its Use in Society

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ABSTRACT: *This critical review, which was done on thematic basis, covers literature mainly from the period of 2015-2022 on corporal punishment obtained from some major databases and textbooks. The review, which took a funnel approach, covers literature from global, African and Ghanaian perspectives on corporal punishment. The review which covers literature on what is corporal punishment, forms of corporal punishment, prevalence of corporal punishment and reasons for the use of corporal punishment among others, is intended to give understanding on the use of corporal punishment in society. It also aims to guide future studies on the use of corporal punishment and the call for the use of other alternatives to corporal punishment.*

KEYWORDS: critical literature review, corporal punishment, society

INTRODUCTION

Corporal punishment is a prominent behaviour modification strategy in homes, schools and other institutions of society. Support for its use is mixed. While some section of society supports its use, others are seriously against its use and hence call for the use of its alternatives. This debate is still ongoing in literature. This review sheds light on this behaviour modification strategy under some important themes as discussed below.

What is corporal punishment?

Corporal punishment is a common means of punishment at homes and schools (Gershoff, 2017; Mayisela, 2021; Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2018). It can be inferred from several definitions of corporal punishment that it is punishment with the intent of causing pain to deter or prevent further exhibition of wrongful behaviour. For instance, according to the United Nation's Committee on the Rights of the Child, 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 (United Nation's report cited by Gershoff, 2017). Similarly, Gershoff, Purtell and Holas (2015) described corporal punishment as the use of physical force to

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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" (Gershoff, Sattler & Holden, 2019). The government of 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 (Veriava & Power, 2017). 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. There are several forms of punishment and modes of administration.

Forms of corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is administered in several forms. Gershoff, Purtell and Holas (2015) and Gershoff (2017) 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 belt, shoe, stick, bat, arrow, electric cord and water horse to cause pain on 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 (2018), corporal punishment is most widespread in homes, but it is also common in schools and is delivered by school personnel. To Gershoff, Purtell & Holas (2015), 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 (Yeboah, 2020). 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.

According to Gershoff (2017), corporal punishment is employed throughout the world as a deterrent against a variety of behaviours. These behaviours include refusal to do homework, lateness to school, sneaking from school and bringing phones to class. Others are dosing in class, incorrect response to questions posed by the teacher, improper dressing, absenteeism and noise making. Stavropoulos, as cited in Boydell et al. (2017), corroborated the existence of these forms of corporal punishment by indicating that girls reported being beaten in school for lateness, misbehaving and showing disrespect. They were beaten at home for damaging and/or misplacing an item, failing to perform house chores and showing gross disrespect to elders. These experiences are not exclusive to girls, but they are more common in boys who are subjected to lots of corporal punishment at home and in school (Ellonen et al., 2017; Mendez et al., 2016).

Commenting on behaviours that attract corporal punishment in schools, Gershoff, Purtell and Holas (2015) alluded that in both elementary and secondary schools, corporal punishment is

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK employed to remedy small and serious offences. However, it is often used in basic schools because of the high incidence of offences in such schools. In their study, reports from pupils and students who received corporal punishment indicated that they received it for fighting, lighting up fireworks in school and drunkenness. School principals, on the other hand, indicated that they used it for cases of fighting but less for cases of stealing. According to a report by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2013), corporal punishment was utilized 48% of the time for disruptive behaviour, 25% for fighting and physical violence, and 26% for using inappropriate language and showing blatant contempt for staff. Studies in Africa on forms of corporal punishment and reasons for administering them both in schools and homes have not produced a different picture (Ngubane, Mkhize & Singh, 2019).

Global prevalence of the use of corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is legal in several countries, and as a result, it is widely used in many countries around the world. World Health Organization (2021) stipulated that, in a survey carried out by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in 56 countries within the period of 2005-2013, 60% of children within the ages of 2-14 reported receiving corporal punishment from their parents and caregivers. The report further said that in some of the countries covered by the study, all the children reported receiving some form of corporal punishment in the course of their life. Gershoff & Font (2016), in their look at the use of corporal punishment in the United States of America, denoted that school corporal punishment is presently permitted in 19 states in the United States of America, with over 160,000 children subjected to it each year. Many African countries still use corporal punishment in schools (Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment, 2017). Studies presented in a report by Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment (2017) indicated that in Botswana, 92% of kids were beaten in school. In the Gambia, corporal punishment was utilized in 70% of schools. In Uganda, 79% of the kids agreed that they had experienced some form of corporal punishment. The report further reiterated that 38% of 8-year-old children in Ethiopia reported receiving corporal punishment from their teachers in the week before the survey and 76% of them said they had ever seen other children experiencing corporal punishment. These statistics present a state of wide use of corporal punishment in various countries.

According to current figures from End Corporal Punishment, an advocacy organization striving to end all kinds of corporal punishment in countries in the world, corporal punishment is still used in a variety of settings in most countries (End Corporal Punishment, 2022). In most countries, corporal punishment goes on at homes, alternative care settings and day cares. The rest of the settings are schools, penal institutions and as sentence for crime. Some countries, however, have enacted laws or are in the process of enacting laws to eliminate it entirely in the countries or at certain settings or institutions in the countries (End Corporal Punishment, 2022).

The statistics as given by End Corporal Punishment in their 2022 updated report is indicated below:

Table 1: Number of Countries that have fully and not fully prohibited corporal punishment as of February, 2022.

	Home	Alternative care settings [*]	Day care [†]	Schools	Penal institutions	Sentence for crime
Fully prohibited	63 states 16 territories	70 states 16 territories	70 states 16 territories	135 states 25 territories	144 states 36 territories	169 states 39 territories
Not fully prohibited	136 states 23 territories	129 states 23 territories	129 states 23 territories	64 states 14 territories	55 states 3 territories	30 states 0 territories

Source: End Corporal Punishment (2022)

The statistics indicate that 136 countries and 23 territories still allow corporal punishment at home while 129 countries and 23 territories allow it in alternative care settings like foster homes and orphanages as well as day care 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, but no territory allow it as a sentence for crime. This graphic shows that corporal punishment is still widely used around the world and most countries and territories regard it as one of the most effective measures for discouraging and preventing crime. It is also seen as a good correctional tool against crime in society.

Several recent studies in various countries and regions attest to the continuous usage of corporal punishment around the world. Heekes et al. (2022), 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 to July 2017, arrived at a conclusion that corporal punishment was prevalent even in some countries with clear laws banning its use. In the study, Heekes et al. (2022) report that according to the students' accounts in the various studies reviewed, the lifetime prevalence of school corporal punishment was greater than 70% in two locations (Africa and Central America). In the Eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asia, the prevalence reached over 60% in the previous year while in Africa and Southeast Asia, the frequency over the past week was above 40%.

The situation is not much different in Africa. Several countries continue to utilize corporal punishment in households, alternative care settings, day cares, schools, prisons, and as a sentencing for crimes (End Corporal Punishment, 2022; Vohito, 2021). Several research and reports back this up, indicating that the practice of corporal punishment is widespread in most African countries, even where laws and policies prohibit it. Leoschut (2013), for instance, identified that even though

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South Africa banned corporal punishment in 1996, in a national study carried out in 2012, 49.6% of children indicated that they had experienced corporal punishment from their teachers the past year. Similarly, Veriava and Power (2017), in a presentation of statistics on corporal punishment prevalence in South Africa from General Household Surveys, reported that 1.7 million pupils/students experienced it in 2014, which translated to 12.4% of the learner population. Studies in Nigeria produced a similar picture. According to the findings from a study by Fakunmoju and Bammeke (2015), corporal punishment is used on close to 40% of school learners in Nigeria. Studies in Cameroon (Benbenishty, Daru & Astor, 2022; Gershoff, 2017), Ethiopia (Gershoff, 2017; Kumar & Teklu, 2018; Ogando-Portela & Pells, 2015), Tanzania (Gershoff, 2017; Kambuga, Manyengo & Mbalamula, 2018; Sungwa, Jackson & Kahembe, 2022) and Ghana (ActionAid International, 2013; Curious Minds, 2009; Ghana Statistical Service, 2018; Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2018), among a number of African countries, have painted a similar picture of the continuous prevalence of corporal punishment in individual countries' schools. The conclusion from the forgoing discussion is that corporal punishment is widely used as a disciplinary measure in various countries. Though some countries have enacted laws banning its use and hence have achieved complete elimination of it in their schools, some countries continue to use it despite the ban. Some countries, however, have not enacted laws and policies banning it and hence, it is accepted as a corrective measure in such countries.

Corporal punishment use in Ghana

Ghana has a long history of the use of corporal punishment at homes, schools, day cares and prisons. Its use in Ghana is rooted in the cultural and religious beliefs of the people (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2018). Though Ghana was the first country in the world to approve the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on 5th February, 1990, it has not done much by way of laws prohibiting corporal punishment which is seen as a form of abuse against children (End Corporal Punishment, 2020).

Articles 2, 3, 6, 12, 19 and 37 of the convention mandates countries that ratify it to enact laws banning all forms of corporal punishment in such countries. Article 37 of the convention, for instance, stipulates that “states parties shall ensure that: a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Despite these provisions in the convention, Ghana has not eliminated provisions in some local acts like Children’s Act 1998 and Criminal Offences Act 1960 which justify some forms of corporal punishment. This has led to the continuous use of corporal punishment in the country. Some articles in the Children’s Act 1998, for instance, Article 13(2), allow for the use of some “justifiable” and “reasonable” punishment on the child. The same justification clause is contained in the Criminal Offences Act 1960 Article 41 that “justified correction” can be meted out to someone (Ghana, 1998). These provisions in both Acts have, in some ways, justified and allowed for the use of corporal punishment in Ghana despite the ratification of the United Nations Convention in 1990.

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Following from the above expositions, therefore, End Corporal Punishment (2020), in an analysis of the corporal punishment situation in Ghana, put forward the following report on the use of corporal punishment in the country. First, the organization reports that corporal punishment is lawful in Ghanaian homes. Though the Children's Act 1998 bars any cruel and inhuman treatment of people, Article 13(1) (2) of the Act and Article 41 of the Criminal Offences Act 1960 give some form of justification and sensibleness in the use of corporal punishment. These justifications were defended by the government in the Universal Periodic Review of Ghana in 2008 (Human Rights Council, 2008). It holds, therefore, that corporal punishment as a corrective or preventive measure is permitted in Ghanaian homes if reasonably necessary. To this effect, a number of reports point to the existence of corporal punishment in Ghanaian homes. For instance, a report by UNICEF cited by Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (2018) indicates that 93% of children in Ghana have ever received corporal punishment. The report, therefore, ranked Ghana second to Yemen in terms of countries with a high corporal punishment rate in the world. Though this finding may be disputable, it is still an undeniable fact that the use of corporal punishment is still prevalent in Ghanaian homes as testified by further studies and reports (Addae & Tang, 2021; Dodi, 2019; Sasu, 2021).

Secondly, End Corporal Punishment (2020) alludes that corporal punishment is lawful in alternative care and day care centres in Ghana. This emanates from the permission for one to use reasonable and justifiable forms of punishment as contained in the Children's Act 1998 and the Criminal Offences Act 1960. The report further stipulated that as of 2019, Ghana had prohibited corporal punishment of children in the draft Children's Act 2019. This act, however, is yet to come into force.

Thirdly, in schools, the report stipulated that corporal punishment is lawful even though there was a ministerial policy banning the use of it. Thus, despite the ban, corporal punishment continues to be used by teachers and other staff in schools. Caning, the report stated, was the commonest form of corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools but other forms like weeding, kneeling and weight carrying were also used.

Additionally, in a positive light, the report indicated that corporal punishment is unlawful in prisons based on the Prison Service Decree of 1972 and it is also unlawful as a form of sentence for crime (End Corporal Punishment, 2020). This is based on Article 15(2) of the 1992 Constitution which bars any form of cruel treatment and torture as a form of punishment.

The overall picture of the foregoing discussion is that corporal punishment is still widely used in Ghanaian society and, specifically, in Ghanaian schools even after the ministerial policy directive banning it. Several factors, according to the situational report by Ministry of Gender and Social Protection (2018), account for its use in the country. First, the use of corporal punishment is rooted in the cultural beliefs of Ghanaian people. Ghanaians see childhood as a period for proper upbringing of children and, hence, requires control of the ways of the children in order for them to chart the right course of life. This control, they believe, can best be ensured through the use of corporal punishment. Second, the use of corporal punishment, according to the report, is rooted in

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the religious beliefs of the people. With many Ghanaians being religious (Christians and Muslims), certain quotations in the bible like “Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them” (Proverbs 13:24) and “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with a rod, they will not die” (Proverbs 23:13) are used to justify the use of corporal punishment. Hence, it is highly subscribed to by parents as a religious requirement for the proper upbringing of children. To this end, a number of children have received one form of corporal punishment or the other on religious grounds. Third, corporal punishment is rampant in Ghana, the report states, as a result of a legal permission granted in the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 to which effect its use is seen as permissible. For instance, Article 29 of the Act denotes that parents can correct a child with some form of reasonable punishment like blow or other force commensurate with the age of the child. These three factors, to a large extent, have fueled the incessant use of corporal punishment in the Ghanaian society.

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 (2006), 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 (2022) 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 (2019) 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.

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From this discussion, therefore, it can be seen that a lot of reasons propel people to use corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure and they believe that it yields positive results for them. These reasons have supported the use of corporal punishment in several places. Notwithstanding these supporting reasons, several people argue that corporal punishment has a number of negative effects and that the bad side of the use of corporal punishment outweighs its positive effects. These negative effects of corporal punishment are discussed next.

Negative Effects of Corporal Punishment

The literature is replete with the negative effects of corporal punishment. These negative effects are normally put forward by proponents of restorative discipline practices as the bad side of the use of corporal punishment. In an online study covering young adults of 18-23 years from 19 states where corporal punishment was still legal, Gershoff, Sattler & Holden (2019) found that the study participants who had had a previous experience with corporal punishment had lower grade point average in school achievement. They also indicated a high level of depression and were more probable 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. These findings are further confirmed by other studies.

The negative effects of corporal punishment on school achievement are further reiterated by other studies. Le and Nguyen (2019) identified that the exposure to corporal punishment at home was linked to lower class achievements in mathematics and languages among Vietnamese 5th grade students. Maiti (2021), 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 been linked to violence and aggression on the part of people who experience it. This was confirmed by a study by Akhtar & Awan (2018). A study by Elgar et al. (2018) 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. (2022), 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 & Muhammad (2017), 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 development of psychological trauma in students. These negative effects identified agree with most studies on the effects of corporal punishment.

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Gershoff, Purtell and Holas (2015) have enumerated a number of effects of corporal punishment, some of which have been aforementioned in the ongoing discussion. They noted that corporal punishment significantly limits academic outcomes of students. Centre for Effective Discipline, as cited in Gershoff, Purtell and Holas (2015), posits that 90% of schools that allowed corporal punishment were found to have their students' score in American College Test (ACT) below the national average while only 20% of schools that had banned corporal punishment had scores below the national average. This finding, to some extent, gives credence to the fact that school corporal punishment has the effect of limiting academic performance even though this study did not control other factors that could also limit academic performance. Gershoff, Purtell and Holas (2015) further enumerate other effects related to corporal punishment. These are its high linkage with behaviour problems in school, physical injuries and emotional problems. Gershoff (2010) has summed the following as the effects of parents' use of corporal punishment. Its use by parents is associated with increased child aggression, exhibition of undesirable behaviour and a number of unexpected severe side effects like health problems, delinquency and poor parent-child relationship. These effects are not limited to parents' use of corporal punishment alone, but also its use in school.

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 (2017) 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 reduction in truancy, contrary to points previously discussed. This study was a descriptive survey of purposively-selected teachers, parents, head teachers 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 (2017) 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 performance 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. Ombori, Nyakan and Yambo (2016), 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 (2017).

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 (Ghana News Agency, 2021; Sottie, 2016; Twum, 2021; Yeboah, 2020), it is seen by others as associated with several negative consequences. Elliason (2020), 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

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK (2015) also identified that corporal punishment limits the enrolment of girls in Ghanaian schools. Awoniyi (2021), 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.

Gershoff, Purtell and Holas (2015) have offered reasons why corporal punishment is ineffective as a behaviour modification strategy and hence produces negative effects. First, corporal punishment does not meet the three criteria of immediacy, consistency and closeness in the application to the unwanted behaviour recommended by behaviourists for success of behaviour modification or learning. Secondly, corporal punishment teaches children that they should behave appropriately when meted out to them so when not given, they behave inappropriately. Thirdly, because of the physical pain it causes, it makes it difficult for experiencers to internalize disciplinary messages and hence, it leads to the imitation of aggressive behaviour on their part. Because of the negative consequences of corporal punishment, coupled with its ineffectiveness, a number of countries have banned its use.

Ban on corporal punishment

Following from the negative effects of corporal punishment, calls have come from civil and human rights organizations as well as some educationalists for its ban. Goal 16 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which were approved in 2015, calls for the abolition of all kinds of violence against children (Lansford et al., 2017). A number of countries took steps before and after the promulgation of this goal, to ban all types of corporal punishment, which is considered a form of child abuse. Data from End Corporal Punishment (2022), as stipulated in Table 3.1 above, show that as of February 2022, 63 countries and 16 territories, 70 countries and 16 territories and the same 70 countries and 16 territories had banned corporal punishment in homes, alternative care settings and day cares centres, respectively. Furthermore, 144 countries and 36 territories, 169 countries and 39 territories had banned corporal punishment's use in penal institutions and as a sentence for crime, respectively. According to the report from End Corporal Punishment (2022), some countries and territories that had completely banned corporal punishment of all forms at homes, alternative care settings, day care centres, penal institutions and as punishment for crime were the following: Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Aruba, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Columbia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Curacao, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Faroe Island, French Guiana and Germany. The rest were Georgia, Hungary, South Africa, Kenya, Israel, Norway, Seychelles, South Sudan, Spain and Tunisia.

In countries of West and Central Africa, End Corporal Punishment (2022) reports that as of January 2021, five (5) countries had achieved a complete ban of corporal punishment of all forms in all settings. These countries were Benin, Cape Verde, Congo Republic, Guinea and Togo. Some countries, including Ghana, Niger and Sierra Leone, had expressed the will in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to come out with laws to ban it in all forms and settings, according to the report. Others, the report indicated, had shown no commitment to eliminating it in homes and other

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK settings. These countries included Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Gabon, Gambia and Liberia.

The forgoing statistics show a mixed perception of corporal punishment. While some countries have shown a clear commitment and, hence, banned it in all settings, others have shown a clear commitment but have not come out with clear laws banning it. Others, however, have shown no clear commitment in abolishing it, seeing it as one of the best forms of maintaining discipline in society. Sadly, though, in some countries with clear laws banning corporal punishment, corporal punishment subtly goes on despite the ban (Gershoff, 2017; Ngubane, 2018).

In Ghana, a report from End Corporal Punishment (2022) indicates that corporal punishment is not banned by law in homes, alternative care settings and day care centres and hence, the practice goes on in those settings. It is, however, prohibited in prisons and banned as a form of sentencing for crime. In schools, it is banned, though not by law but by a policy of the Ministry of Education. This ban had been reiterated over and over by the Ministry as a way preventing the negative effects associated with the use of corporal punishment.

The attitudes of teachers and the public towards the ban of corporal punishment

From a review of the literature, the previous usage of corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools and the present ban have yielded mixed results. In a study conducted to determine teachers' perceptions of the ban on caning in Ghana's basic and senior high schools (SHS), Yeboah (2020) found results that contradicted the ban. The respondents, who were conveniently sampled for the study, indicated their disagreement with the ban on caning in Ghanaian schools. No statistical difference was found between males and females in terms of their perception of the abolition, indicating a lack of support from both gender groups for the ban. This study utilized the convenient sampling technique; hence, the respondents were not selected using a probability sampling technique, which might have influenced the outcome. The findings are highly supported by other studies in Ghana and elsewhere. In this light, Twum (2021) reached a similar conclusion in his study. His study, which had a target population of 5089 drawn from two districts in Ghana (i.e., Sekyere South and Sekyere Central), was to find out the perception of the respondents on whether corporal punishment's ban had increased the rate of indiscipline in schools or not. The accessible population of 975 which was made up of students, assistant school heads, teachers and counselling coordinators revealed that the ban on corporal punishment had increased the rate of indiscipline in schools, resulting in frequent vandalism and cheating in exams as was affirmed by a report of CHASS at their 59th Congress report (Ghana News Agency, 2021). In the study, teachers had a negative view towards the ban, whereas students had a positive attitude towards it. The findings from this study indicate that most teachers are very worried about the ban on corporal punishment and prefer that it is reintroduced to reduce the spate of indiscipline in Ghanaian schools. This is because they see the alternative strategies as ineffective in reducing the spate of indiscipline in Ghanaian schools. In the northern area of Ghana, Dwamena (2021) conducted a descriptive survey of 30 teachers at Northern School of Business about their views on the ban on corporal punishment. He found that the majority of the teachers were opposed to the ban. Majority of the teachers

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK expressed their lack of knowledge of the alternatives to corporal punishment and called for a reintroduction of corporal punishment in schools. Though this study utilized the opinion of a small section of teachers in that metropolis and from just a single senior high school in that area, it brought to the fore the general attitude of most people in that region towards the ban.

This dissatisfaction with the rising tide of indiscipline in schools, in the era of a ban on corporal punishment, has been voiced by many people in various Ghanaian media articles. They are by these media articles calling for the reinstatement of corporal punishment. For instance, Bulmuo (2017) reports that a religious leader in Kumasi, one of the cities in Ghana, expressed disquiet about the ban, saying that corporal punishment is God's intended way of bringing up children and so it should be reintroduced to curb the increasing rate of indiscipline in Ghanaian schools. Similarly, Ibrahim (2017) reports that some teachers expressed being helpless in controlling indiscipline in schools because of corporal punishment ban in schools. 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 (Graphic Online, 2019; Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2018; Modern Ghana, 2021).

Outside Ghana, the ban on corporal punishment has also been met with mixed attitudes. Some are in support of the ban and some are highly against it. Khanyile (2015), in a study in uThungulu District of South Africa to find out the disposition of black educators towards corporal punishment and its alternatives, found expressed support for corporal punishment among the educators even after its ban in South Africa. The educators indicated that they were a bit powerless in the absence of corporal punishment. Consequently, despite the ban, some forms of corporal punishment continue to be used in South African schools. The study reports that the alternatives to corporal punishment were seen by the educators as good but time-consuming and ineffective in their use, so they are not able to totally deal with indiscipline in school. The overall views from these studies point to lack of support for the ban on corporal punishment despite the negative effects of its use. A number of stakeholders still see it as the most effective means of curbing the increasing spate of indiscipline in schools and therefore are calling for its reintroduction in schools.

Gender use and experience of corporal punishment

Some studies which have considered the gender factor in the use and experience of corporal punishment have reported varied findings. In a study conducted in Pakistan, Shamim and Kashif (2019) discovered a link between school dropout and corporal punishment. Boys rather than girls were found in their study to experience more corporal punishment. Other research works back this conclusion (Ellonen et al., 2017; Mendez et al., 2016). This is probably because boys tend to be more aggressive and troublesome in school, relative to girls (Wang et al., 2016; Huesmann, 2016). Shamim and Kashif (2019), again, found that boys experience high drop-out than girls because of corporal punishment. Similarly, in Ghana, Addison (2015), in a study which aimed to ascertain how corporal punishment affects enrollment and retention among girls in school, found that corporal punishment significantly reduces girls' enrollment and retention in school. The bottom

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line of both studies is that corporal punishment significantly reduces enrollment in school. Matofari (2021), in a study conducted in the Eldoret Municipality of Kenya to find out students' and teachers' preference for corporal punishment, though banned in that region, found interesting results. The study used questionnaire to solicit views from 86 teachers and 192 students and found that the support of teachers for corporal punishment was not different by gender, teaching experience and the level of teacher professional qualification. However, the ratio of males to females in support of corporal punishment was higher, indicating a higher preference for corporal punishment on the part of male teachers than female teachers, a finding supported by other studies (Isaiah & Mabel, 2018; Pells & Morrow, 2018). On the side of the students, the male students expressed higher preference for corporal punishment use than their female counterparts. However, overall, the students expressed lower support for it than the teachers, a finding supported by the study of Twum (2021). In another study, Makewa, Myriam and Benson (2017) discovered no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the restriction on corporal punishment based on gender, experience, qualification or age. From the preceding research, male teachers appear to prefer the use of corporal punishment over their female colleagues. Boys rather than girls tend to experience corporal punishment in school.

CONCLUSION

The forgoing discourse shows that enormous literature exists on corporal punishment as a behaviour modification strategy in psychology. This literature can be tapped to help understand the practice of corporal punishment and the arguments for and against the use of it in society. Furthermore, alternatives to the use of it can also be explored to ascertain whether corporal punishment or its alternative produce the best of results.

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