

# “Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child”: The Ban of Corporal Punishment Fueling Indiscipline among Students

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**Abstract:** Ghana is a signatory to all International and Regional Conventions and Declarations which protect the child from abuse, meanness and callous treatments. To institutionalize child rights, Ghana through the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education enacted legislations which prohibited the use of corporal punishment in all first and second cycle institutions. However, upon its implementation, there has been an upsurge of students' unrest in first and second cycle schools in the country. This has become a major source of worry to key stakeholders in education including school heads, school administrators, teachers, parents and even some students. This indeed has ignited the need to explore how the ban of corporal punishment has fueled indiscipline among students. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The target population was 5089 comprising eight schools in the Sekyere South and Sekyere Central Districts in the Ashanti region of Ghana. A sample of 975 students, assistant headmasters (domestic), teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators was arrived via mixed sampling techniques. The study established that the ban of corporal punishment in senior high schools in Ghana has fueled indiscipline acts among students. Also, the study found that there are lots of negative consequences such as vandalism and cheating in exams due to the ban of corporal punishment in schools. Again, the study ascertained that teachers have a negative attitude unlike students who showed a positive attitude towards the ban of corporal punishment. The study therefore submits that to effectively resolve indiscipline problems in schools, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service must involve relevant stakeholders such as head teachers, teachers, students and parents on alternative disciplinary measures that can effectively deal with indiscipline acts in schools.

**Key words:** Ban, Corporal punishment, Indiscipline and Senior High School.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Unique and profound obligation of educational establishments is to guarantee that learners are imparted in a way that makes them develop behaviours that conform to societally acceptable norms (Gudyanga, Mbengo, & Wadesango 2014). The school as an instrument of socialization is tasked, in addition to training children to acquire skills for them to be gainfully employed for the development of the nation, to inculcate in students moral values and discipline that would ensure that individuals who have gone through the educational system develop values that

make them fit into the society as responsible citizens. The chief tool through which school inculcates discipline and ensures that students cultivate the requisite characters that make them responsible citizens is corporal punishment. In simple terms, school authorities and classroom teachers use corporal punishment to deal with deviant behaviours (Gudyanga et al., 2014).

Corporal punishment is one of the oldest methods used to instil discipline across the world (Glaser, 2019). Its proponents have religiously embraced the biblical adage, “spare the rod and spoil the child”. Corporal punishment refers to the intentional application of physical pain as a method to change behaviour and includes a wide variety of methods such as hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pinching, shaking and shoving, among others (Wolkins, 2020). According to McClure and May (2008), corporal punishment is explained as the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for purposes of correcting or controlling the child's behaviour. Maree (2004) defines corporal punishment as “physical punishment as distinguished from pecuniary punishment or a fine; any kind of punishment of or inflicted on the body” or “the intention of pain by a teacher or other educational official upon the body of a student as a penalty for doing something which has been disapproved of by the punisher”. This definition is very relevant to schools as the punisher (teacher) inflicts some kind of pain on the person perceived to have done something wrong or unacceptable.

Many educators who subscribe to corporal punishment as a measure to control learners' behaviour assume that corporal punishment has the potency to mend a child's misbehaviour (Lawer, 2019). These educators believe that corporal punishment is effective, quick and relatively easy; achieves compliance, makes people feel powerful, and contributes to rapid reduction or elimination of unwanted behavioural patterns (Porteus, Vally & Ruth, 2001; Ali, 2019; Musa & Martha 2020). Teachers who indulge in the usage of corporal punishment regard corporal punishment as harmless, inducing respect and it is the only language that children understand. Biblically, the ideal of morality and character development laid a foundation for the justification of corporal punishment (Maree, 2004). Indeed, the fact that corporal punishment still

exists is a testament to the fact that those who believe in its effectiveness use arguments and proofs developed in ancient civilizations (Clabough, 2012). However, Oord (2019) dismisses this argument by stating the fact that Jesus saw children as being close to God and urged love, but not punishment.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, there is a global tendency to abolish corporal punishment as a tool for reforming children's misbehaviour (Global Report, 2008). This tendency is highly supported by contemporary legislations that seek to protect human rights including the right and security of children (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 2000) and child rights to physical protection (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990). Although Ghana has achieved noticeable progress in enacting many articles of the convention since signing it, research denotes a lot of work still needs to be done in the sphere of child protection against violence (UNICEF, 2009). In fact, welfare and rights of the child have become a global issue in recent times. Several International and Regional Conventions and Declarations have been issued to protect the child from brutality, cruelty, inhuman and degrading treatments (Legal Resources Foundation, 2004). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) are key in addressing the welfare of the child (Varadan, 2019). For instance, UNCRC asserts that a child has a right against all forms of discrimination or punishment and in all actions concerning children; the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. Further, it emphasizes the child's right to physical integrity and proposed revision of existing legislation, development of awareness and education campaigns. In furtherance to the protection of the child, ACRWC approaches child's rights from an African perspective and the peculiar position of the African child. This Charter gives children rights and obligations, as it outlaws traditional and customary practices that violate children's rights. As a result, African countries are expected to enhance the protection of child's rights (Varadan, 2019).

In Ghana, corporal punishment dates back to the pre-colonial era (Dery, 2019). Upon attainment of independence, the use of corporal punishment continued to be applied in schools and correctional institutions as a standard tool for instilling discipline. Most communities approved of its usage as they regarded it as educative and instructive without which a child could not learn. The Education Act of 1961 and Ghana Education Service code of discipline for schools provided for canning up to six strokes by the head teacher or an authorized person by the head teacher. The Teachers' Handbook by the Ministry of Education (MoE) stipulates that corporal punishment should be used as the last resort. Indeed, corporal punishment as a tool for disciplinary action against students' misbehaviour needs to be planned meticulously and executed with great sensitivity (Lowanshi, 2019). Though corporal punishment was somewhat legal, however there has been a

frantic effort to banning it by GES.

Ghana Education Service in February, 2017 officially banned corporal punishment in public and private schools across the country after a stakeholder's workshop in 2016. This move by GES was welcomed with commendations from scholars including Prof. Kwesi Yankah, a former Minister of State in charge of tertiary education. However, other renowned educationists remain doubtful of the long term benefits of the ban on corporal punishment on the development of the learners. They contend that the adverse effect of this directive may outweigh the positives. For instance, the former President of National Association of Graduates Teachers (NAGRAT), Mr. Eric Angel Carbonu, advocated for the reintroduction of corporal punishment in our schools. He cited its immediacy and measurability for correcting misbehaviour as reasons why it should be reintroduced. He also noted that guidance and counselling takes a long period of time to reform behaviour and the assumption that every teacher can double as a counselor is fallacious (Dery, 2019). Even though the abolishment of corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools was officially implemented in 2017, it never sparked a social discourse until January 2019 (Lawer, 2019). The argument raised among teachers, parents, educationists and school administrators was that none of the interested parties appeared to understand the evidence upon which the other side was projecting its argument (Yeboah, Dabone & Mensah, 2020). Actually, the discussion of the abolishment was triggered when the then Minister of Education, Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, issued a statement empowering parents to deal with teachers who would administer corporal punishment on their wards as a form of correcting misbehaviour. Some stakeholders in education were of the view that this directive was inconsiderate and the whole idea of eliminating corporal punishment from our schools would breed indiscipline among students and consequently weaken the moral values of the society. They argue that there is no other form of punishment equivalent to caning that serves as a deterrence to misbehaviour (Seisa, 2020). Some even explain that as long as corporal punishment is properly regulated, there should not be any problem with its usage in schools. In fact, they contend that many people who oppose caning as a form of punishment highlight the failures in terms of regulating its administration and not the ineffectiveness of its application (Seisa, 2020).

On the contrary, supporters of the directive also consider the harm caning has done to students. They emphasize that the harm corporal punishment causes to children is far beyond its contribution to modelling good behaviours in students (Burlaka et al., 2020). They argue that caning is a form of abuse against children physically, emotionally and psychologically, and it also sends out the message that violence is socially acceptable. In addition, activists of the ban on corporal punishment maintain that there is no evidence that schools that use corporal punishment as a correctional tool are more disciplined or orderly than school that do not use the cane (Ofori, 2019). Due to the entrenched position of the GES

and MoE on the issue, the various teacher unions, thus Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) and Coalition of Concerned Teachers of Ghana (CCT-GH) implored their members to heed to this unwelcome and acceptable directive in other to save their job and to prevent the trouble of being sent to court or having confrontation with parents.

Ghana has indeed witnessed an upsurge of indiscipline acts and unrests in both Junior and Senior High Schools after the declaration of the ban (Yeboah et al., 2020). These has become a matter of concern to educationists and parents. Without a doubt, the net effect of students' indiscipline has resulted to the destruction of school properties and even death of students and staff (Musa & Martha, 2020; Kosgei, 2020). Conference of Heads of Senior High Schools during their 2020 annual general conference lamented on the spate of indiscipline in their schools and blamed the GES and MoE for their unilateral decision of abolishing corporal punishment in schools without thorough deliberations with key stakeholders. Undeniably, the abolition of corporal punishment has had a negative impact on school discipline (Yeboah et al., 2020). In fact, educators in Ghana are generally unhappy, demoralised and exhausted due to lack of discipline, unclear policies, and recklessness displayed by learners as a result of the ban on corporal punishment (Yeboah et al., 2020). Musa and Martha (2020) confirm that learners do not respect educators and they carry dangerous weapons to school, endangering everybody's lives.

Prior research shows that cases of learner indiscipline are on the increase in most schools in Africa, particularly in Ghana (Ofori, 2019). Educators generally feel disempowered in their ability to maintain discipline in schools in the absence of corporal punishment. In fact, it has become increasingly difficult for educators to ensure discipline in schools as a result of the banning of corporal punishment (Tadele, (2020). Makapela (2006) points out that learners literally take advantage of educators because they are fully aware that whatever punishment is given, will not equal the pain of corporal punishment. Tadele (2020) reveals that learners neither fear nor respect educators and behave as they pleased. This behaviour, they explain, signals a recipe for chaos in schools. Ghanaian students are out of control because they are well aware that no matter how bad and unbecoming their actions are, they will never face the severe consequences of corporal punishment (Lawer, 2019; Seisa, 2020). Some teachers believe that behavioural problems increase in the absence of corporal punishment (Tiwari, 2019). Educators who previously relied on corporal punishment now have to develop alternative methods of coping with discipline problems (Mulenga, 2019). Amemiya, Fine and Wang (2020) posit that lack of discipline in secondary schools and classrooms is one of the serious problems experienced by educators. This challenging behaviour results in educators feeling helpless and disempowered, and this leads to unsuccessful teaching and learning. According to Lawer,

(2019), from the time learners became aware that corporal punishment had been abolished, their misbehaviour escalated to the extent that currently a state of unruliness prevails in most schools in Ghana. The thrust on children's rights and subsequent banning of corporal punishment has really ushered the entire country into an era of recklessness on the part of learners as they no longer have respect for their educators (Lawer, 2019).

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Research design

Research design is a plan showing the approach and strategy of investigation conceived by a researcher in order to obtain relevant data which fulfils the research objectives (Kothari, 2004). The study therefore adopted descriptive survey design. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) state that survey studies are concerned with assessing attitudes, opinions, preferences, demographic practices and procedures. Orodho (2005) further asserts that this design gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared and determining the relationships that exist between specific events.

### 2.2 The study population

A target population refers to that population or group that a researcher intends to make generalization to (Kothari, 2004). Hence, the target population comprised Senior High School (SHS) students in the Sekyere South and Sekyere Central Districts. However, the accessible population were the mixed public SHSs in the Sekyere South and Sekyere Central Districts. In all, there are eight (8) mixed public SHSs in these two districts. Five and three in Sekyere South and Sekyere Central in that order. At the time of the study, the SHS 1 students were not in school and the SHS 3 students had completed so they were not included in the study. The population was 5089 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Students and teachers' population by school

Schools	District	Population		Total
		Students	Teachers	
Adu Gyamfi SHS	Sekyere South	1298	165	<b>1463</b>
Konadu Yiadom SHS	Sekyere South	463	76	<b>539</b>
Agona STHS	Sekyere South	1705	123	<b>1828</b>
Nsutaman SHS	Sekyere Central	559	100	<b>659</b>
Beposo Islamic SHS	Sekyere Central	513	87	<b>600</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>4538</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>5089</b>

Source: Field Data, 2020.

### 2.3 Sample size and sampling procedures

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a portion of a population to represent the entire population (Gall, Gall, &

Borge, 2007). The population gives the sample, and then it takes conclusions from the results obtained from the sample (Springer, 2010). Hence, the sample for this study was 975. Mixed sampling techniques were used to arrive at the sample for the study. Simple random was used to select three and two SHSs from the Sekyere South and Sekyere Central districts respectively. Also, assistant headmasters (domestic) and guidance and counselling coordinators were purposively sampled. Lastly, quota and convenient sampling techniques were used to select students and teachers. Table 2 shows the breakdown.

Table 2: Sample distribution of the five SHSs

Schools	Sampled Population		Total
	Students	Teachers	
Adu Gyamfi SHS	260	17	277
Konadu Yiadom SHS	93	8	101
Agona STHS	341	12	353
Nsutaman SHS	112	10	122
Beposo Islamic SHS	103	9	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>965</b>

Source: Field Data, 2020.

#### 2.4 Sources of data and data collection instruments

The main research instruments used were questionnaire and structured interview guide. The two devices enabled the researchers to triangulate the findings to verify consistency from each of the tools utilised. Bekoe (2006) upheld this view when he expressed that triangulation in research is to test for consistency of findings obtained through different instruments. Primary data for the study was gathered through the administration of structured questionnaires to students and teachers of the five senior high schools. The interview was used to supplement the questionnaire. The researcher also reviewed existing secondary records on acts of indiscipline that had taken place in the five SHSs.

#### 2.5 Data analysis and presentation

The data gathered were quantitatively analysed with the use of descriptive and inferential statistics. The data analysis tools included frequencies, simple percentages, standard deviation, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the strength of relation that exists between ban of corporal punishment and students' indiscipline. The findings were presented in tables.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3 shows the demographic characteristics (Gender, Age and Religion) of respondents. The results show that 47.6% (n = 464) were males while of 52.4% (n = 511) were females. This may be as a result of feminine dominance in most Ghanaian schools. Also, age distribution the respondents depicts that 89.9% (n = 877) were between the ages of 15-25, 5.4% (n = 52) of the respondents were between the ages of

26-35, 3.7% (n = 36) were between 36 – 45 years while 1.0% (n = 10) of the respondents were 46 years and above. The skewness of the age distribution is not of a worry apparently because many SHS students are mainly found within first age bracket (15 – 25). Lastly, on the issue of religion, 75.7% (n = 738) of the respondents indicated that they were Christians as against 24.3% (n = 237) of the respondents who pointed out that they were Muslims.

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	464	47.6
	Female	511	52.4
Age	15 – 25	877	89.9
	26 – 35	52	5.4
	36 – 45	36	3.7
	46 and above	10	1.0
Religion	Christian	738	75.7
	Islam	237	24.3

Source: Field Data, 2020.

#### 3.1 Factors that fuel students participation in indiscipline acts

After extensively reviewing relevant related literature, six (6) factors were identified and the respondents were requested to rate each factor according to their level of agreement or disagreement. The outcomes pointed toward respondents agreeing to each factor identified. Each factor had a mean score which means that all the six factors were indeed the factors that accounted for the acts of indiscipline among students in the schools. The four foremost factors that explained the reason behind students' acts of indiscipline were lack of physical punishment, misapplication of school rules and regulation, undefined school culture and indifferent teachers' attitude towards indiscipline as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Factors that fuel students' participation in indiscipline acts

Variable	Freq.	Mean	Std. D.
Lack of physical punishment	965	5.28	.835
Misapplication of school rules and regulation	965	5.30	.788
Undefined school culture	965	5.39	.749
Indifferent teachers' attitude towards indiscipline	965	5.31	.809
Absence of discipline management method	965	4.71	1.352
Ineffective guidance and counselling	965	4.85	1.269

Source: Field Data, 2020.

#### 3.2 Effects of the ban of corporal punishment on students' discipline

In determining the effects of the ban of corporal punishment on students' discipline, ten (10) effects were identified, and the participants were asked to show their level of agreement



or disagreement with each consequence. The findings propose that respondents agreed with each effect identified. The leading effects of the ban of corporal punishment on students' discipline, however, were bullying of school mates, absenteeism and lateness to school, disobedience to teachers and school authorities, vandalism, theft, boy/girl relationship, sneaking out of school and cheating in exams as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Effects of the ban of corporal punishment on students' discipline

Effects of the ban of corporal punishment	Freq.	Mean	Std. D.
Bullying of school mates	965	5.35	.781
Absenteeism and lateness to school	965	5.36	.688
Disobedience to teachers and school authorities	965	5.38	.713
Vandalism	965	5.53	.686
Theft	965	5.37	.758
Boy/girl relationship	965	5.64	.682
Sneaking out of school	965	5.23	.768
Cheating in exams	965	5.22	.773
Noise making	965	4.71	1.352
Vulgar language	965	4.67	1.319

Source: Field Data, 2020.

### 3.3 Attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the ban of corporal punishment

To determine the attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the ban of corporal punishment, a set of fifteen items were designed to collect data from respondents. All the items were measured on a 6 point Likert scale (totally agree -6, strongly agree -5, agree - 4, disagree -3, strongly disagree - 2 and totally disagree - 1). The overall score was coded into three ordinal categories (negative, neutral, positive) to distinguish among the attitude teachers and head teachers have towards the ban of corporal punishment. The results, however, indicate an overall negative attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the ban of corporal punishment. This suggests that most teachers and head teachers are discontent with the GES and MoE's directive on the ban of corporal punishment in schools. Table 6 gives a picture of the level of attitude of the teachers and head teachers towards the ban of corporal punishment.

Table 6: Attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the ban of corporal punishment

Level of attitude	Frequency	Percent
Positive	3	5.3
Neutral	1	1.8
Negative	52	92.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2020.

### 3.4 Attitude of students towards the ban of corporal punishment

To ascertain the attitude of students towards the ban of corporal punishment, a set of fifteen items were designed to collect data from respondents. All the items were measured on a 6 point Likert scale (totally agree -6, strongly agree -5, agree - 4, disagree -3, strongly disagree - 2 and totally disagree - 1). The overall score was coded into three ordinal categories (negative, neutral, positive) to distinguish among the attitude students towards the ban of corporal punishment. The results, however indicate a significant majority of students have a positive attitude towards the ban of corporal punishment. This implies that most students are happy with the GES and MoE's directive on the ban of corporal punishment in schools. Table 7 presents the level of attitude of the students towards the ban of corporal punishment.

Table 7: Attitude of students towards the ban of corporal punishment

Level of attitude	Frequency	Percent
Positive	531	58.4
Neutral	12	1.3
Negative	366	40.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2020.

### 3.5 Correlation analysis of the relationship between the ban of corporal punishment ban and the level of students' indiscipline.

The study sought to uncover whether there is no statistically significant relationship between ban of corporal punishment and the level of student indiscipline. In doing so, Pearson zero-order correlation was ran. The coefficient between the ban of corporal punishment and the level of student indiscipline was therefore generated to show the direction and strength of the relationship. The result of the Zero-order correlation coefficients obtained on ban of corporal punishment and the level of students' indiscipline were  $r = -0.745^{**}$  with significance or p-value = 0.001 which is less than  $\alpha = 0.01$ . This implies that there is statistically strong and inverse relationship between the ban of corporal punishment and students' indiscipline, meaning the ban of corporal punishment has increased students' acts of indiscipline. The result is presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Correlation analysis of the relationship between the ban of corporal punishment ban and the level of students' indiscipline

	Students' indiscipline	
Ban of corporal punishment	Pearson Correlation	-.745
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	965

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The study used the descriptive survey design to find out how the ban of corporal punishment is fueling students' indiscipline the Sekyere South and Sekyere Central Districts in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The study established that the four foremost factors that explained the reason behind students' acts of indiscipline were lack of physical punishment, misapplication of school rules and regulation, undefined school culture and indifferent teachers' attitude towards indiscipline. This may be attributed to the fact that most teachers were not in support of the abolition of corporal punishment and since its implementation, these teachers have sat aloof, and are reluctant to administer alternative methods of instilling discipline in students. This finding corroborates that of Noltemeyer, Palmer, James and Petrsek (2019), who say that discipline management methods can only have an effect on student discipline level only if they are fully implemented. In view of the ban of corporal punishment ban in schools, teachers feel that they have been completely deprived of their powers and have no control over their students and they feel they have been given no alternatives and they are completely helpless. According to Lawer (2019), the thrust of children's rights and subsequent banning of corporal punishment has ushered in an era of freedom for learners who no longer have respect or fear for their educators and hence educators generally feel disempowered in their ability to institute discipline in schools in the absence of corporal punishment. Their study also discovered that learners do not fear or respect educators because they know that nothing like corporal punishment will be administered to them which has resulted in an increase in indiscipline in schools.

The study also revealed that the leading effects of the ban of corporal punishment on students' discipline were bullying of school mates, absenteeism and lateness to school, disobedience to teachers and school authorities, vandalism, theft, boy/girl relationship, sneaking out of school and cheating in exams. The present finding is consistent with a number of students. For instance, Tiwari (2019) posits that the effects of the ban on corporal punishment has led to students disregard for all school rules and has in the same vain emboldened them to engage in acts of indiscipline including lateness, absenteeism, bullying, theft, boy/girl relationship, examination malpractices and vulgar speeches. On the attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the ban of corporal punishment, the study again found that an overwhelming negative attitude of teachers and head teachers towards the ban of corporal punishment. This finding is in agreement with Ofori (2019) assertion that teachers had a negative attitude towards corporal punishment ban in schools. Teachers argue that alternative methods of discipline management like guidance and counseling take a lot of time which should be used for learning activities. They argue that such methods are only effective in schools where students have self-discipline (Ofori, 2019).

Furthermore, the current study established that significant majority of students have a positive attitude towards the ban of corporal punishment. Their reason may be that corporal punishment causes more harm to students than contributing to modelling good behaviours in students. In fact, there are recorded incidents of severe tissues damages, lower spine injuries and even sciatic nerve damage attributed to corporal punishment. Burlaka et al. (2020) advocate for a ban on corporal punishment because the act is not helpful; it compels students to resort to other social vices, including lying and being truant as they seek to avoid punishment. They remark that corporal punishment makes students prone to psychological problems such as low self-esteem, and increases their level of anxiety. Finally, the present study ascertained that there is statistically strong and inverse relationship between the ban of corporal punishment and students' indiscipline. According to Yeboah et al. (2020), educators in Ghana are generally unhappy, demoralised and exhausted due to lack of discipline and recklessness displayed by learners as a result of the ban on corporal punishment.

#### V. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

This research study was driven by the rampant increase in students' unrest in public senior high schools in Ghana after the ban of corporal punishment. The study concludes that the level of student discipline after the ban of corporal punishment has increased in senior high schools. The effects of the ban of corporal punishment include increase in indiscipline acts among students. Also, most teachers had a negative attitude towards the ban of corporal punishment in schools because they believed it was the only effective method of maintaining discipline. On the other hand, most students reported a positive level of attitude because, to them, corporal punishment caused them physical and psychological harm. In the light of the conclusions of the study, the researcher is optimistic that these recommendations if implemented, will contribute significantly to minimizing acts of indiscipline among students. To effectively resolve indiscipline problems in schools, the MoE and the GES must involve relevant stakeholders such as head teachers, teachers, students and parents on alternative disciplinary measures that can effectively deal with indiscipline acts in schools. Also, to change teachers' negative attitude towards the ban on corporal punishment, MoE and GES should sensitize teachers on alternative methods of instilling students discipline and also strengthen guidance and counselling units in schools. Again, MoE should organize sensitization programmes for teachers to enable them understand the physical and psychological effects of corporal punishment. Lastly, GES Ghana should streamline appointments and deployment of trained guidance and counselling coordinators and school psychologists in schools.

#### *Availability of data and material*

The datasets used and analysed in the current study are available from the author on reasonable request.

*Competing interests*

The author declare that he has no competing interests.

*Funding*

This work was not supported by any organisation. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the author.

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