Original Article

Impact of Punishment on Behaviour of Junior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of punishment on the behaviour of Junior High School (JHS) students in the Sissala East Municipality. A descriptive survey design was employed for the study. A total of 291 respondents were sampled from an accessible population of 1,208 JHS Two students using probability sampling techniques. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The data was analysed using Means and Standard Deviations. The study found that JHS students in the Municipality have negative attitudes towards teachers who use punishment in behaviour management. More so, respondents reported that punishment has both positive and negative impacts on the behaviour of students. The study therefore recommended that teachers stop the use of corporal punishment such as caning, insulting, and asking students to kneel. Teachers are also encouraged to use alternatives to corporal punishment to manage disruptive behaviour. Also, the study encourages teachers to take a cue from pitfalls in the application of punishment to avoid rather than reinforcing undesirable behaviours through punishing students to sweep.

INTRODUCTION

Approaches to behaviour management in schools are based on the flexibility of societies. An overview of the history of behaviour management traces to a wide range of approaches, often negative, from corporal punishment to the work of the behavioural theorists of the twentieth century (NSW Institute of Teachers, 2008). The Operant Conditioning theory by B. F. Skinner has been relied on heavily to manage behaviour as it offers effective techniques. This theory advocates reinforcement and punishment as ways of managing behaviour, where desirable and undesirable behaviours are handled by using consequences (Skinner, 2014).

The use of punishment to manage behaviour is supported by *Deterrence theorists* who contend that the fear of punishment makes students choose appropriate behaviour (Losen cited in Ward, 2016). There are different ways of defining behaviour management. It could be defined as the step-by-step use of principles of learning to change the behaviour of animals, including humans, which are substituted with desirable behaviours (Yeboah *et al*., 2020)**.** In this context, behaviour management involves the use of psychological principles by teachers to minimise behaviour excesses, and maximize behaviour deficits. Miltenberger (2008) defined behavioural excess to include undesirable target behaviour whose frequency, duration, or intensity is targeted to be reduced, and also defined a behavioral deficit to be a desirable target behavior whose frequency, duration, or intensity is targeted to be increased.

Ghana was among the countries where punishment was accepted as a useful technique for controlling student behaviour (Yeboah, 2020). A position paper issued by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in 2018 reported that the use of punishment (corporal) is rampant across the globe, and Ghana is no different. For instance, 70% of Ghanaian students reported that they were most likely to experience physical punishment in school

(Twum-Danso, 2010). The paper went further to report that in Ghana, students are punished in the school and other care centres. This placed Ghana first in sub-Saharan Africa and second to Yemen globally. The application of punishment by teachers and other caregivers is frequent and generally approved under as means of nurturing children to adulthood.

Many teachers choose to use punishment because they think it is easy to use, it is appropriate for any situation, and because it has been used for several years (Maag, 2001). This means that teachers' reluctance to stop using punishment is due to varied reasons. Despite the continuous use of punishment, there are a lot of unanswered questions about it (Nelson, 2002) because of the dearth of psychological studies in the use of punishment (Galván-Domínguez *et al.,* 2014). Jeffrey, cited in Morrow and Singh (2014), proposed the need to do further investigations into the extent and nature of punishment in schools, especially in the global South.

Cheng (2013) urged teachers to constantly take into account students' opinions when utilizing various techniques to control their behaviour because the purpose of applying those techniques is to manage and assist students in changing their unwanted behaviours to acceptable ones. Even though teachers may think these children have positive views, it may not be the case, Cheng (2013) predicted. For instance, a study conducted in Singapore revealed that both primary and secondary school students had negative attitudes towards most behaviour management strategies, even though their teachers ranked them as the most effective strategies (Cheng & Tan, 2002)**.**

Statement of the Problem

Punishment is one of the strategies commonly used in every aspect of the world, and its usage in schools is very extensive and cannot be stopped (Dad *et al*., 2010). Most strategies for handling student negative behaviour involve the use of various types of

punishment (Lawrent, 2012), including sacking from the classrooms, penalties, internal and external suspensions, and withdrawals (Maag, 2001).

In Ghana, stakeholders allege that some teachers continue to discipline pupils in schools by; caning, asking them to weed, asking culprits to kneel, escorting students out of the classroom, and suspending them from school; despite efforts to completely eradicate the use of punishment (Yeboah, 2020; Yeboah *et al*., 2020). The practice has compelled the National Schools Inspectorate Authority (NaSIA) to issue a letter on 21st June, 2021, cautioning all proprietors against corporal punishment malpractices in pre-tertiary schools. Soon after that, on 20th September, 2021, the Ghana Education Service issued a similar letter complaining about an increase in corporal punishment in schools, and cautioning all directors and stakeholders in education against the use of corporal and other forms of inhumane punishments. The use of punishment in schools has consequences for the country in terms of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4.

The continued use of punishment in teaching and learning is an issue that requires thorough research (Pehlivan & Köseoğlu, 2017). Mansfield (2007) indicated that understanding how students perceive and respond to punishment types is very necessary to help improve good behaviour. However, a careful analysis of literature on behaviour management reveals that much focus is put on rewards and reinforcement, and in most cases, only teachers' views are measured (Cheng, 2013). Little consideration has been given to how children perceive school in underdeveloped nations from the perspectives of corporal punishment (Morrow & Singh, 2014).

Opoku_Adusei (2021) carried out a study on the topic, but he focused on senior high school students in the Ejisu-Juaben Municipality. It seems no study has been conducted on the impact of punishment on the behaviour of Junior High School (JHS) students in the Sissala East Municipality, hence this study.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the attitude of JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality towards teachers who use punishment in behaviour management?

- What is the impact of punishment on the behaviour of JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classical Conditioning

Russian Psychologist Ivan Pavlov was studying digestion and placed meat powder (unconditioned stimulus) on a dog's tongue. Pavlov noticed that the dog was salivating (unconditioned response) even before the food reached its mouth (Coon & Mitterer, 2007). This happened after repeated exposure of the dog to the meat. The theorist further discovered that neutral stimuli, including seeing the one who usually brought the meat, were able to initiate salivary reflex in his dogs (Gleitman, 1991). Accordingly, the dog began to salivate when Pavlov entered the room at a point in the experiment. Pavlov termed this principle of learning through conditioning as *stimulus generalization.* According to Baron *et al.* (2009), the first stimulus becomes a signal for the second when a stimulus with the potential of eliciting a positive or negative response (the unconditioned stimulus) routinely appears before the second stimulus (the conditioned stimulus). In this procedure, an attitude is evoked by associating an unconditional stimulus with a neutral or conditioned stimulus, which is a fundamental psychological premise.

According to Coon and Mitterer (2007), emotional conditioning takes place when people make the common mistake of hitting (punishing) their pets if they do not respond to their calls, which then makes calling the animal a conditioned stimulus for fear and withdrawal. It is not a surprise that the pet disobeys when called on future occasions. In the

same manner, teachers who punish their students by screaming at them, belittling, and or physically abusing them commit the same mistake of conditioning fear for the act, and the person executing the act, according to Coon and Mitterer.

Undoubtedly, people acquire many of their likes and dislikes as conditioned emotional responses (Chance, 1994; Coon & Mitterer, 2007). Coon and Mitterer concluded that all attitudes are learned through conditioning. Therefore, Gray (2007) points out that classical conditioning can be applied toward understanding unique human characteristics such as attitudes. Several studies, including Staats and Staats (1957), have explored how attitudes are established through Classical Conditioning. In this current study, punishment (unconditioned stimuli) is the independent variable that elicits attitudes of like and dislike (unconditioned response) towards the teacher (conditioned stimuli) who uses the punishment types. This theory is suitable for this study because students' responses to various stimuli (punishment types) can be conditioned to include those (teachers) who are exacting these punishments, the same way Pavlov's dog was conditioned to salivate even at the sight of the experimenter.

Punishment

Punishment eludes a single definition. There are different definitions given by various authorities. Nairne (2003) claims that the term "punishment" describes outcomes that reduce the probability of responding. According to Kazdin (2001), punishment involves the giving or removing of a stimulus or event following a response, which lowers the likelihood that reaction will occur again. The Psychological Science of Applied Behaviour Analysis defines punishment as any action taken in response to a behaviour that lowers the possibility that it will happen again in the future (Cathcart *et al.,* 2015).

Coon (1995) and Skinner (2014) see punishment as the most common technique of control in modern life. Skinner contended that education has not completely abandoned the use of the birch rod. He went further to say that behaviour is commonly controlled through spanking, snubbing, censure, disapproval, and banishment, and that all these actions are exerted to lessen the propensities of an organism to act in particular ways. According to Skinner, punishment is intended to break down a person's propensity to act in a particular way. Tuckman and Monetti (2011), including Dad *et al*. (2010), identified two types of punishment as *presentation punishment* (which involves the presentation of an aversive stimulus or a painful event, such as scolding) and *removal punishments* (which involve taking away a positive reinforcer).

McSweeney and Murphy (2014) uphold that a stimulus must follow a behaviour and lessen the likelihood that it will occur for it to count as a positive punisher. A rat, for instance, might receive a shock after each lever press. If the rate of pressing the lever lowers, the shock acts as a positive punishment. Positive punishment is used in applied psychology to reduce self-harming behaviour. For instance, Todd R. Risley shocked a girl with autism briefly with electricity in 1968 when she climbed high items like chairs. After some time, the rate of risky climbing dropped to zero, while the rate of acceptable behaviour increased. In their 2014 study, McSweeney and Murphy stressed how commonplace positive punishment is in daily life. Contrary, negative punishment involves the contingent elimination of a stimulus that lowers the rate of a behaviour. According to McSweeney and Murphy (2014), examples of negative punishment in practice include bank fees for late credit card payments and traffic fines.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was employed for this study. The descriptive survey design is appropriate for studies of educational issues since it allows for evaluation or assessment of phenomena, attitudes,

views, demographic data, conditions, and processes (Gay, 1992). Additionally, it makes it possible to provide the most precise and thorough description of variables and processes. Descriptive research focuses on existing situations or interactions, such as identifying the nature of the activities, attitudes, and conditions that are currently in use (Best & Khan, 2014). Descriptive research is particularly suitable in the behavioural sciences, as clarified by Best and Khan. The main benefit of this kind of design, according to Murphy (2009), is that it offers a variety of sources for data collection, which presents various advantages. A survey, for instance, can show facts on an event while also showing how individuals perceive it. He reiterated that the descriptive research method provides a special way to collect data.

Population

The target population for this study comprised all JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The accessible population for the study was all JHS Two students in the municipality. JHS Two students were included in the study because that grade is at the midpoint of JHS education, and learners in that class were likely to have been exposed to the various forms of punishments used to manage behaviour. JHS One and Three students were excluded from the study because JHS One students were expected to undergo a new curriculum, whose schedule was not yet certain, which could have affected data collection. Moreover, JHS One students were still fresh students at the JHS level, and at the time of data collection, they probably would not have been exposed to the various forms of punishment applied to manage the behaviour of JHS students in the municipality, if any. JHS Three students were also excluded from the study because they were preparing to write their Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E), and it would not have been appropriate to involve them in the study, considering the psychological risk participants could have been exposed to.

The total enrolment of JHS students in the municipality, per the Ghana Education Service, Sissala East Municipal Education Office records (2022), was estimated at 3,647, comprising 1,837 males and 1,810 females. This population was spread among fifty-four JHSs, which were clustered into nine circuits.

Sample Size

The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling determination table was used to decide on a sample size of 291 respondents out of an accessible population of 1,208.

Sampling Procedure

The study made use of the probability sampling method. The probability sampling was used because it allows generalizations, and has less risk of bias because it seeks representativeness of the wider population (Cohen & Manion, 2007). A total of fifty-four Junior High Schools were in the municipality, which were grouped into nine circuits. Each of these circuits was identified as a cluster. A proportionate number of JHS students were selected from each of the nine circuits using the simple random sampling technique. Respondents were sampled from each of the nine circuits because of varied student characteristics and practices in the schools across the circuits. This created heterogeneous factors and the need for every circuit to be sampled and represented in the study.

The simple random sampling technique was used to allow for fairness and to give each student in each circuit the same chance of being selected for the study. First, three schools were sampled from each of the nine circuits using the simple random technique. Names of all Junior High Schools in a particular circuit were written on slips of paper. These names were put in a container, and one slip was removed at a time. The name on the slip was recorded with replacement. This procedure was used to get three schools for each of the nine circuits in the municipality. A total of twenty-seven out of the fifty-four schools, making 50% of JHSs in the

municipality, were sampled for the study. The 291 respondents were sampled from the schools. According to Amedahe and Gyimah (2013), in most quantitative studies, a sample size of 5% to 20% of the population size is significant for generalizations.

Data Collection Instrument

The study used a closed-ended Likert scale questionnaire, which comprised a total of twenty-eight items. A questionnaire is often used by researchers to measure attitudes (Kassin *et al.*, 2008). The use of a questionnaire to gather data relating to hypotheses and research questions is very common in the social sciences because it affords greater economy, reachability, stability, consistency, uniformity, and greater assurance of anonymity (Amedahe & Gyimah, 2013; Sarantakos, 2013).

The questionnaire used for this study was adapted from two separate closed-ended Likert scale questionnaires. One of them is a student questionnaire developed by Ngussa and Mdalingwa (2017) for a study in Tanzania. That instrument has three subscales, which are: Students' Attitude toward Punishment with 8 items and a Cronbach's Alpha of .733; Attitude toward Learning, which has 6 items with a Cronbach's Alpha of .736; and Rate of Corporal Punishment with 7 items and a Cronbach's Alpha of .668.

The second instrument, which the researcher adapted for this study, was developed by Abdulrahman Yakubu Yunisa *et al.* in 2019 for a study in Nigeria. It is a 25-item structured questionnaire titled Questionnaire on students' perception of the use of reward and punishment (QOSPURP), which has a Cronbach's Alpha reliability test of .84.

The research instrument used for this study was organized into three sections (A, B, and C). Section A comprised the background and demographic information of respondents. Section B also comprised 20 items, which required participants to indicate their attitudes towards teachers who used

punishment by choosing from a scale of Strongly Like = 4, Like = 3, Dislike = 2, and Strongly Dislike = 1 for each item. Analysis of responses for this section was interpreted in terms of mean scores under the following range of interpretation: 3.50 - 4.00 = Strongly Like, 2.50 - 3.49 = Like, 1.50 - 2.49 = Dislike, and 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Dislike. For the total mean scores for this subscale, a mean score of 2.50 – 4.00 was interpreted as Like, and a range of 1.00 – 2.49 was also interpreted as Dislike.

Lastly, Section C comprised 8 items where respondents were expected to respond by choosing from a scale of Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, and Strongly Disagree = 1. Analysis of responses was interpreted in terms of mean scores under the following range of interpretation: 3.50 - 4.00 = Strongly Agree, 2.50 - 3.49 = Agree, 1.50 - 2.49 = Disagree, and 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree. For the total mean scores for this subscale, a mean score of 2.50 – 4.00 was interpreted as Agree, and a range of 1.00 – 2.49 was also interpreted as Disagree. This range of interpretation was adapted from Ngussa and Mdalingwa (2017).

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

A Cronbach's alpha was conducted to test the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained two subscales with the following respective Cronbach's Alpha values: Attitude of students towards teachers who use punishment = .859; and Impact of punishment on behaviour of students = .744. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability of the entire questionnaire was .867. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (cited in Opoku-Adusei, 2021), a reliability of .70 is good for statistical purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1

What is the attitude of JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality towards teachers who use punishment in behaviour management? Research question 1 sought to find out the attitude of JHS

students in the Sissala East Municipality of Ghana towards teachers who use various types of punishment to manage their behaviour. The descriptive statistics for the various items are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Attitude of JHS Students towards Teachers Who Use Punishment in the Sissala East Municipality

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers who cane me.	291	2.32	.89
Teachers who slap me.	291	1.95	.79
Teachers who knock me.	291	2.08	.86
Teachers who ask me to weed.	291	2.11	.84
Teachers who ask me to dig a pit.	291	1.58	.74
Teachers who ask me to sweep.	291	2.79	.86
Teachers who ask me to wash toilets/urinals.	291	2.09	.84
Teachers who ask me to kneel.	291	2.30	.82
Teachers who insult me.	291	1.56	.70
Teachers who hoot at me.	291	1.68	.75
Teachers who mock me.	291	1.58	.72
Teachers who laugh at me.	291	1.80	.78
Teachers who punish me by pulling my hair.	291	1.76	.79
Teachers who punish me by pulling my ears.	291	1.88	.79
When the teacher writes bad reports about me to my Parents.	291	1.80	.93
When the teacher asks me to stand at the back of the classroom	291	2.30	.85
When the teacher reduces my marks for wrong behaviour	291	1.64	.78
Teachers who deny me break time.	291	1.91	.79
Teachers who deny me selection for a competition or game.	291	1.89	.82
Teachers who ask me to pay a fine/money for a Destruction.	291	1.74	.83
Total	291	1.85	.57
Valid N (listwise)	291		

From Table 1, the results show that JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality reported a dislike for teachers who use the respective types of punishments, as shown by the Mean scores of each item. On the strength of the data analysis, JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality expressed dislike towards teachers who use punishment to manage their behaviour because the total (M= 1.85, SD= .57) response falls within the range of 1.50-2.49. Therefore, the attitude of JHS students towards teachers who use punishment in behaviour management is negative. Nonetheless, JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality responded positively to the statement "Teachers who ask me to sweep" (M= 2.79, SD= .86).

Research Question 2

What is the impact of punishment on the behaviour of JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality?

Research question 2 sought to find out how JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality of Ghana

estimate the impact of punishment when used to manage their behaviour. Items 21 to 28 of the questionnaire were used in answering this research question by asking students to indicate the influence of punishment on their behaviour by indicating the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of those items. The descriptive statistics for the various items are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Impact of Punishment on the Behaviour of JHS Students in the Sissala East Municipality

Item	e	Mean	Std. Deviation
Punishment helps to make students disciplined	291	3.48	.66
Punishment influences students to learn	291	3.29	.82
Punishment motivates students to study	291	3.01	.94
Punishment makes students understand quickly	291	2.65	1.05
Punishment makes students refuse to attend class	291	2.48	1.03
Punishment creates fear in students	291	2.88	.95
Punishment makes students to drop out of school	291	2.74	1.12
Punishment contributes to poor behaviour of students	291	2.24	1.03
Total	291	2.97	.73
Valid N (listwise)	291		

From Table 2, JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality agreed that punishment: helps to make students disciplined, influences students to learn, motivates students to study, makes students understand quickly, creates fear in students, and makes students drop out of school. Contrarily, JHS students in the municipality disagreed that punishment makes students refuse to attend class, and contributes to poor behaviour among students. Generally, JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality agreed that punishment has an impact on their behaviour. Total (M= 2.97, SD= .73) responses from the data fall within the range 2.50-3.49.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Results of the study show that JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality reported a dislike for teachers who punish them. This indicates that JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality have negative attitudes towards teachers who mete out punishment to them as a way of managing their behaviour. Theoretically, this relates to the Classical Conditioning theory, where a neutral stimulus elicits the same response as done by an unconditioned stimulus after repeated pairings. As teachers continue to use punishment on students, which generates negative attitudes from the students, those negative attitudes will automatically be extended to the teachers who administer the corporal punishment. In Ivan Pavlov's experiment with his dogs, the Psychologist observed that his dogs began to salivate on the mere sight of him (Pavlov) entering the room (Coon & Mitterer, 2007). Parents and care givers (including teachers) who belittle, scream at, or physically abuse their children make the mistake of becoming conditioned to complex emotional responses such as dislike (Coon, 1995; Dworetzky, 1988) and hatred (Chance, 1994) from the children. This corroborates other empirical findings (Pinar & Pehlivan, 2017), which indicate that students consider teachers who administer punishment as bad people. Similarly, Lewis *et al.* (2008) submitted that both punishment and aggression were related significantly to the level of students' distraction and negative affect towards the teacher. The same findings were reported by Yunisa *et al.* (2019) that the majority of students would totally dislike the teacher who metes out punishment.

Conversely, JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality reported a liking for teachers who punish them to sweep. This is the only type of punishment reported to elicit a positive attitude

towards teachers who apply it. In the Classical Conditioning theory, responses that are elicited by an unconditioned stimulus are also elicited by the person who presents the unconditioned stimulus. This is true for both painful and pleasurable stimuli. In Pavlov's experiment with his dogs, it was observed at a point that the response (salivation) that was elicited by meat presented to the dog was elicited by the sight of the experimenter (Pavlov). This may justify why JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality reported a likeness for teachers who punish them to sweep simply because sweeping is a normal feature of their daily lives, which they like.

Contrary to the negative attitudes students have towards teachers who use punishment to manage their behaviour, JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality agreed that punishment has both positive and negative impacts on their behaviour. This confirms the revelation by Ngussa and Mdalingwa (2017), where students reported that punishment could help to monitor their discipline in school. A similar conclusion was reached by Amoah *et al.* (2014) that both teachers and students accepted corporal punishments and punitive measures in general as a normal feature of the school system because they believed that corporal punishments helped to establish order and decorum in the classroom. Imoh (2013) also showed that most students emphasized the need for parents and other primary caregivers to use physical punishment on children to ensure they grow up into well-behaved and responsible adults. This finds expression in the submission of Skinner (2014) that punishment, which is a component of Operant Conditioning, moulds human behaviour into a fashion that is desirable, much like a sculptor moulds clay.

In terms of respondents agreeing that punishment motivates students to learn and study quickly or understand, it is consistent with Gwando (2017), who revealed that most pupils accepted that corporal punishment helped them to reach their

academic goals. This also agrees with an earlier finding by Khaliq *et al.* (2016), where responses of participants showed that punishment helped them to learn the English Language. Nonetheless, these assertions by JHS students in the Sissala East Municipality negate the submission of UNICEF (2015) that Corporal punishment is negatively associated with later Mathematics scores at age 12 in India, Peru, and Vietnam. It is also at variance with Ngussa and Mdalingwa (2017), who reported that punishment consequently contributes to poor performance in subjects.

It is important to highlight that this study shows that punishment creates fear among students and leads them to drop out of school. This is similar to the assertion of Ngussa and Mdalingwa (2017), Rafique and Ahmed (2019), and Pajarillo-Aquino (2019), who warned that students perceived punishment as something that could lead them to escape from classrooms, drop out, and instil fear to learn. It also affirms the revelation made by Alhassan (2013) that in Ghana and Nigeria, more pupils are dropping out of school due to fear of punishment. This is supported by learning theories. According to the Classical Conditioning theory when parents and teachers punish students by belittling them, screaming at them, and or physically abusing them the students become conditioned to fear and withdrawal (Coon, 1995; Coon & Mitterer, 2007; Dworetzky, 1988). Classical conditioning plays a special role in the formation of emotions that have to do with fear (Chance, 1994; Coon, 1995; Gleitman, 1991). This could explain why JHS students in the municipality reported that punishment creates fear in them and makes them drop out of school.

The opinion of JHS students on the impact of punishment in the municipality contradicts their general attitude towards teachers who use punishment as a behaviour management approach. This could be explained by the Theory of Reasoned Action, which argues that the level of similarity between attitude measures and behaviour, termed as

correspondence, predicts behaviour. It contends that when attitudes are assessed from general to specific, the specific questions correlate very well with behaviour (Kassin *et al*., 2008). For instance, even though JHS students said they generally have negative attitudes towards teachers who use punishment, they agreed to all specific statements on the positive impact of punishment on their behaviour, whilst also disagreeing with two specific statements on the negative impact of punishment. Specifically, participants agreed that punishment makes them disciplined, motivates them to learn, among others.

Educational Implications

One implication of students disliking teachers who punish them is that such teachers may not have a good rapport with these students, which may consequently affect how the students behave towards them. The attitude of a person towards an issue explains and predicts his or her behaviour towards that issue or the object (Tamanja, cited in Kwapong, 2016; Yunisa *et al.,* 2019). Also, the contradiction between the attitudes of students and the impact of punishment reported by respondents may account for difficulties in attempts by stakeholders to completely eradicate punishment in schools. This is because, according to the concept of Cognitive Dissonance, people tend to reject new information that contradicts ideas they already hold (Coon & Mitterer, 2007). This can also be attributed to the fact that previous learning and behaviour can impede the acceptance of novel facts and ideas (Chance & Heward, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Because learners have a negative attitude towards teachers who use punishment, it is deduced that JHS students in the municipality have a negative attitude towards school, and other teachers who do not use punishment. Also, JHS students in the Sissala East municipality believe punishment helps them to be disciplined, learn, and study. Contrary, respondents reported that punishment creates fear in students

and causes students to drop out of school. The contradictions in these reports poses serious concerns for stakeholders' efforts at eradicating the practice. If students perceive punishment to promote discipline, it is likely that these students might also turn to perpetrate the use of it, especially on younger children in school.

It is recommended that Teachers should completely stop the use of corporal punishment, such as caning, insulting, and asking students to kneel, among others, because students dislike them. Teachers should use alternatives to corporal punishment, such as asking students to sweep. On this score, Teachers need to, however, take a cue from pitfalls in the application of punishment to avoid reinforcing undesirable behaviours through punishing students to sweep.

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