

Understanding the Links Between Punishment Practices, Student–Teacher Relationships, and Positive School Climate in Senior High Schools

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ABSTRACT

Disciplinary practices in schools remain a contested issue in Ghana, particularly after the Ghana Education Service banned corporal punishment in 2017. Despite the ban, which actually sought to promote safe learning environments, anecdotal reports suggest that various forms of punishment persist in senior high schools, raising questions about their impact on student–teacher relationships and the overall school climate. However, empirical evidence on the types of punishment currently used and their impact on student-teacher relationships and school climate is limited. Meanwhile, knowledge of these dynamics is crucial for developing context-appropriate policies that will promote discipline and at the same time safeguard positive learning environments. The present study, therefore, seeks to examine the correlates of punishment, school type, student–teacher relationship quality, and positive school climate in senior high schools within the Cape Coast Metropolis. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the types of punishment currently in use, explore differences across school types, and analyze how punishment relates to relational trust and perceptions of a positive school climate. A mixed-methods approach will be employed. Qualitative data will be analyzed thematically, and quantitative data will be analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test hypothesized relationships. The outcome of the study is expected to inform policymakers, educators, and school leaders on sustainable and context-sensitive strategies for promoting discipline while safeguarding positive learning environments in Ghanaian Senior High schools.

Keywords: Punishment, Student-Teacher Relationship, School Climate and Linkage