

The Use of Physical Activities as Punishment and its Effects on Student's Performance in Physical Education.

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Abstract: *The purpose of the study was to investigate the use of physical activities as punishment and its effect on the academic performance in physical education in Odoben Senior High School in the AsikumaOdoben-Brakwa District in the Central Region of Ghana. It adopted a descriptive survey design by collecting quantitative data for analysis. Using the simple random sampling technique, 120 participants were selected for the study. Data were collected with the use of structured questionnaire; and the descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that fighting with other students ($M=3.46$, $SD=1.57$), followed by refusing to obey orders ($M=3.30$, $SD=1.55$), escaping from school before day ends ($M=3.28$, $SD=1.55$), scratching on the walls, boards and desks ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.40$), challenging the teacher ($M=3.04$, $SD=1.34$), not doing homework ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.39$), were the major prevalent physical activities used as punishment. It was discovered that weeding ($M=3.13$, $SD=1.30$), than caning of the students ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.19$), kneeling down in the classroom or in school compound ($M=2.75$, $SD=1.30$), verbal assault and yelling ($M=2.27$, $SD=1.14$), making the students to stand or raise their hands for a long time ($M=2.12$, $SD=1.23$), dismissal from classroom ($M=2.03$, $SD=1.11$), making the students squatting for a long time ($M=2.00$, $SD=1.10$), pinching the ear or nose ($M=1.77$, $SD=1.11$), were the major forms of punishment administered to the students. Besides, the study also disclosed that the use of physical activities as punishment affects the interest of students in the study of physical education thereby affecting their performance in the study of the subject. Based on these results, it was recommended that the Ghana Education Service through the AsikumaOdoben-Brakwa Education Directorate should organize in-service training for the teachers in senior high schools to enable them improve on the guidance and counselling services in their schools. This will encourage students to put up a good behavior and adhere to school rules and regulations.*

Keywords: *Physical Activities, Punishment, Students' Performance, AsikumaOdoben-Brakwa, Caning*

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I. Introduction

The argument on the role and significance of education in the socio-economic advancement of countries has long been resolved. Evidence in literature has endorsed the view that education is the pillar on which a nation's progress is anchored. Scholars like Afful-Broni, & Ziggah, (2007) have theorized that education is a mainstay and agent of national development. Understandably, socio-economic and political progress of a nation is guaranteed to repress if extant system of education is inappropriate. Schools are therefore intended to serve as agents for developing individual citizens within a country (Onyesom & Ashibogwu, 2013). In essence, schools are institutions where children are groomed to appreciate what the society in which they live stand for and are equipped in order for them to contribute to the advancement of their society.

Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to direct students to exhibit acceptable attitude and behavior within and outside the school so as to realize the aim and goals of education. In an attempt to achieve an organized and peaceful school environment and maintain law and order, school management specifies rules and regulations to guide the activities of members of the educational organization. Mekdim (2012) maintain that, universally, student's discipline is one of the basic requirements to successful teaching and learning and plays a critical role in students' learning and overall success of the school. However, reports suggest that the rate of indiscipline among students in school is worrying across the globe (Ehiane, 2014; Umezina, & Elendu, 2012; Leach & Humphreys, 2007). Stakeholders in education have employed different strategies in an attempt to address the various disciplinary issues of students and one of such strategies is the use of punishments.

Punishment refers to the practice of discipline in which, something unpleasant is present or positive reinforces are removed following behaviour so that it happens less often in future (Nakpodia, 2012). According to Umezina & Elendu (2012), punishing means subjecting a penalty for an offense and usually includes

inflicting some kind of hurt. It could be inferred that punishment is a practice used in reducing the incidence of one's behaviour either by deterring the potential offenders or by incapacitating and preventing them from repeating the offence or by reforming them into law-abiding student. The American Academy of Pediatrics (1998) defines punishment as the application of a negative stimulus to reduce or eliminate a behavior. They further classified punishment for students into verbal reprimands and the use of physical activities (corporal punishments). Physical activities or corporal punishment refers to the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behaviour (Straus, 2001).

Studies have revealed that the most common physical activities used by teachers as punishment include painful body postures (such as placing in closed spaces), use of excessive exercise drills, kneeling down or standing for a long time, cutting grasses, fetching water, pulling of ears, sweeping and tidying of the school environment, and running round the school field, (Alhassan, 2014; Umezina&Elendu, 2012; Gershoff & Bitensky, 2007; McClure & May, 2008). Even though some scholars have touted the use of physical activities as punishment to instill good morals and a means to restore student discipline (Essuman, 2007, Feltham, & Horton, 2006), other practitioners have maintained that, the use of physical activities as punishment in schools is an ineffective, dangerous and an unacceptable method of instilling discipline (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights [NCPCR] (2010). Umezina&Elendu (2012) corroborates this assertion when they argued that the academic success, health, and fitness of a punished student may be affected as he or she may lose interest and withdraw from the teacher and school activities including sports due to the psycho-social effects associated with physical activities as punishment.

A corpus of literature theoretically and empirically discovered that the use of physical activities as punishment not only affect the academic performance of students but have serious repercussions on the life of students. In their study, Greydanus, Pratt, Spates, Blake-Dreher & Greydanus-Gershoff (2003) averred that most students who are punished through physical activities often times get hurt and medical complications to prevent them from returning to school for days, weeks, or even longer. Reported medical findings of students punished through physical activities include abrasions, severe muscle injury, extensive hematomas, whiplash damage, life-threatening fat hemorrhage, and others including death (Poole, Ushokow, & Nader, 1991; Hyman, 1996).

Many researchers believe that the using the use of physical activities as punishment has the potential to cause students to become more rebellious and are more likely to demonstrate vindictive behavior, seeking retribution against school officials and others in society (Gitome, Katola&Nyabwri, 2013). Besides, studies have established that victims who are made to go through physical activities as punishment can have difficulty sleeping, fatigue, feelings of sadness and worthlessness, suicidal thoughts, anxiety episodes, increased anger with feelings of resentment and outbursts of aggression, deteriorating peer relationships, difficulty with concentration, lowered school achievement, antisocial behavior, intense dislike of authority, somatic complaints, tendency for school avoidance, school drop-out, and other evidence of negative high-risk adolescent behavior (Dubanoski, Inaba, & Gerkewicz, 1998; Reinholz, 2005; Malott & Trojan, 2000).

The reports of previous studies elsewhere consistently confirmed that the use of physical activities as punishment does not only affect the academic performance of students in physical education and the entire success of the school. However, the issue is "To what extent do the use of physical activities as punishment influence students' performance in physical education in the Breman Asikuma Senior High School in the Central Region of Ghana?" Even though research has consistently underscored the contribution of students discipline to academic performance and school success, it appears research into these issues is sparse especially in Public Senior Schools in Ghana. This study is therefore conducted to throw more light on the link between these variables in the Senior High Schools in the Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District in the Central Region of Ghana. Therefore, the thrust of the work is to study the use of physical activities as punishment on students' academic performance in physical education.

II. Materials and Methods

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. The design was used to obtain information about the occurrence, distribution, and interrelations of variables within a population where data are usually gathered through self-reporting (Polit & Beck, 2010). Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) support the use of the descriptive survey design in education research when they observe that it is arguably the best method available to social scientists and other educators who are interested in collecting data for the purpose of describing a population which is too large to observe directly.

Population of the Study

The population for this study included all Senior High School students in Breman-Asikuma Senior High School. However, the target population of whom the researcher solicited for information from were form two and three

students of Breman-Asikuma Senior High School whose academic result were accessible. 750 boys and 550 girls, totaling 1310 students answered the research questions.

Sample and Sampling procedures

A sample size of 120 participants was used for the study. This sample size was appropriate for the study based on the suggestion of Asamoah-Gyimah and Duodu (2007) that a sample size of 10% to 30% of the population is representative in quantitative studies.

An instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The items in the questionnaire were structured questions since they are close-ended questions which require the respondents to choose between appropriate options (Shiu, Hair, Bush & Ortinau, 2009). Therefore, the respondents were limited to choose from the options provided in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was made up of two parts. The first part collected information on the personal characteristics of the students such as sex, age. The second part was the various forms of punishment which contained items on a 5-point Likert scale such that 5=Always, 4=usually, 3=Sometimes, 2=Once a while, and 1=never. The respondents were required to circle only option of each item to reflect their perception. The third part of the questionnaire collected data on the effects of punishment on the academic performance of the students measured on such that 5=Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Disagree, and 1=Strongly Disagree.

Validity

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation. Face validity was ensured by giving the questionnaire to some colleague students and my supervisor to examine whether the items in the questionnaire were in line with what the study sought to find. Their views were considered in improving the items in the questionnaire. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) suggest that the content validity of an instrument is guaranteed through expert judgment. Content validity was ensured by giving the instrument to my supervisor for scrutiny and his suggestions were incorporated in reshaping the instrument. The pilot study helped to improve the face and content validity of the instruments.

Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was approached as the internal consistency of the questionnaire items where Cronbach alpha was computed to determine the reliability based on data collected in the pre-test. The choice of Cronbach alpha (α) co-efficient was made on the merit of views of Berg (2009) who contended that Cronbach alpha is used when measures have multi-scored items. The reliability co-efficient obtained from the analysis of the pre-test was 0.79 (standardized item alpha) which falls within the accepted range of more or equal to 0.70 (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).

Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection, the researchers had an introductory letter from the Department of the Physical Education Recreation and Sport, University of Education, Winneba. Thereafter, the researcher sought permission from the headmaster and the teachers. The purpose of the study was to explain to the respondents and outlined as well as an explanation on how the questionnaire would be responded to. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The researchers personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents who filled and return them immediately. The presence of the researcher in the schools during data collection helped to clarify any issues that arose. The researchers also used the opportunity to translate the questionnaire items into the first language of the pupils to ensure better understanding. The completed questionnaires were placed in envelopes and sealed.

Data Analysis Procedure

Prior to the analysis, the data were screened and entered into the SPSS and explored to identify missing data and outliers. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Borg and Gall (2003) argue that descriptive statistics not only allows the researcher to use numbers but also provides the researcher with data that allow for inferences on the population and directions for answering research questions.

III. Results and Discussion

Response Rate

One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, and a hundred (100) were retrieved and used for the analysis, representing a response rate of about 83.3%. Twenty (20) of the questionnaires returned were not used in the analysis because they contained many missing data whilst others

too were not answered at all. Nevertheless, this response rate was considered adequate based on the suggestion of Saunder, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007) that an average response rate of 30% to 40% is acceptable in surveys.

Data Presentation and Analysis of Research Questions

The first research question examined the perception of the participants on the underlying reasons for being punished in school. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4. 1.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics on the use of Physical Activities as Punishment

| Statements | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| 1. Fighting with other students | 100 | 1 | 5 | 3.46 | 1.57 |
| 2. Refusing to obey orders | 100 | 1 | 5 | 3.30 | 1.55 |
| 3. Escaping from school before the day ends | 100 | 1 | 5 | 3.28 | 1.54 |
| 4. Scratching on the walls, boards and desks | 100 | 1 | 5 | 3.15 | 1.40 |
| 5. Challenging the teacher | 100 | 1 | 5 | 3.04 | 1.36 |
| 6. Not doing homework | 100 | 1 | 5 | 3.01 | 1.39 |
| 7. Forgetting books or any of the class materials | 100 | 1 | 5 | 2.35 | 1.37 |
| 8. Low grades in exams | 100 | 1 | 5 | 2.21 | 1.36 |
| 9. Talking behind the teacher's back | 100 | 1 | 5 | 2.07 | 1.29 |
| 10. Giving the wrong answer to a question | 100 | 1 | 5 | 1.56 | 0.96 |

The information in Table 4.1 revealed that the participants perceived all the reasons highlighted in this study to be the underlying causes of punishments in school. However, the participants rated highest on fighting with other students ($M=3.46$, $SD=1.57$), followed by refusing to obey orders ($M=3.30$, $SD=1.55$), escaping from school before day ends ($M=3.28$, $SD=1.55$), scratching on the walls, boards and desks ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.40$), challenging the teacher ($M=3.04$, $SD=1.34$), not doing homework ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.39$), forgetting books or any materials ($M=2.35$, $SD=1.37$), low grades in exams ($M=2.21$, $SD=1.36$), talking behind the teacher's back ($M=2.07$, $SD=1.29$) while giving of wrong answers ($M=1.56$, $SD=0.96$) was the least among the reasons. Based on the 5-point Likert scale used for the data where the mean is 3.0, it could be noticed that all the components of culture, as well as the overall culture, were above the mean which implies that most of the physical activities as punishment were common in the school. From these results, it could be observed that fighting with other students, refusing to obey orders, escaping from school before the day ends, scratching on the walls, boards, and desks, challenging the teacher and not doing homework were the most reasons unveiled by students to be the major causes of punishments in the school. According to Alhassan (2013) school, corporal punishment is administered within schools, when pupils'/students are punished by teachers or school administrators for the wrong done against rules and regulations or, in the past, apprentices by master craftsmen. he conceived that corporal punishment comes in the form of canning, using hands in beating the student, denying them from the break and making them kneeling down in front of the classroom. The researchers further sought to investigate respondents' views on the forms of punishments administered in school. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics on the Forms of Punishments

| Forms of Punishments | | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------|---|-----|---------|---------|------|----------------|
| 1. | Weeding | 100 | 1 | 5 | 3.13 | 1.30 |
| 2. | Caning on students | 100 | 1 | 5 | 3.01 | 1.19 |
| 3. | Kneeling down in classroom or in school compound | 100 | 1 | 5 | 2.75 | 1.30 |
| 4. | Verbal assault and yelling | 100 | 1 | 5 | 2.27 | 1.14 |
| 5. | Making the student stand or raise their hands for a long time | 100 | 1 | 5 | 2.12 | 1.23 |
| 6. | Dismissal from classroom | 100 | 1 | 5 | 2.03 | 1.11 |
| 7. | Making the student squatting for long time | 100 | 1 | 5 | 2.00 | 1.10 |
| 8. | Pinching the ear or nose | 100 | 1 | 5 | 1.77 | 1.11 |
| 9. | Beating with a ruler, a hose, by hand, or throwing with something | 100 | 1 | 5 | 1.62 | 1.06 |
| 10. | Denying you from enjoying break, using table, chair, textbook or other learning materials | 100 | 1 | 5 | 1.48 | 0.96 |

The results in Table 4.2 revealed that the participant's experience different forms of punishments as applied in the school under study. Nevertheless, the participants rated highest on weeding (M=3.13, SD=1.30), than caning of the students (M=3.01, SD=1.19), kneeling down in the classroom or in school compound (M=2.75, SD=1.30), verbal assault and yelling (M=2.27, SD=1.14), making the students to stand or raise their hands for a long time (M=2.12, SD=1.23), dismissal from classroom (M=2.03, SD=1.11), making the students squatting for a long time (M=2.00, SD=1.10), pinching the ear or nose (M=1.77, SD=1.11), beating the students with a ruler, a hose, by hand, or throwing with something (M=1.62, SD=1.06) with denying the students from enjoying break, using table, chair, textbook or other learning materials (M=1.48, SD=0.96) being the least of the forms of punishment administered to the students in the school under study. From these results, it could be observed that weeding, caning of students, kneeling down in classroom or in the school compound, verbal assault and yelling and the act of making the student stand or raise their hands for a long time were the major forms of punishment that teachers in the school under study used. The findings of this study agrees with that of Kimani, Kara and Ogetange (2012) in primary schools in Kenya who reported canning (96%), weeding (91.2%), kneeling down (90%), pinching (78%), and pulling hair/ears (71.6%) and forced manual work (70.8%) as the most prevalent forms of punishment used at school. kicking (36.8%), being shaken or being thrown around (39.6%) and standing in the sun for long periods (42%) were the various forms of punishment used in schools. Again, the study investigated the effects of the forms of punishment in physical Education among students in Odoben Senior High School in the study area and the results are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents' Responses on the punishment in Physical Education among students

| Effects of Punishments on Physical Education | | Agree | | Undecided | | Disagree | |
|--|--|-------|-----|-----------|-----|----------|-----|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. | The use of physical activities as punishment affects my interest and performance in physical education | 54 | 54% | 9 | 9% | 37 | 37% |
| 2. | The act of asking students to squat in the classroom has made me dislike physical education as a subject | 55 | 54% | 14 | 14% | 31 | 31% |
| 3. | The practice of making students jog around the school compound as punishment has caused me to dislike physical education | 59 | 59% | 4 | 4% | 37 | 37% |
| 4. | The practice of making students run around the school field has caused me to dislike physical education | 51 | 51% | 8 | 8% | 41 | 41% |
| 5. | The use of push-ups as a means of punishing students has caused me to dislike physical education | 45 | 45% | 22 | 22% | 33 | 33% |
| 6. | Asking students to do duck walk whiles holding their ears in the classroom has made me dislike physical education as a subject | 50 | 50% | 10 | 10% | 40 | 40% |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|
| 7. | The practice of making students to push the wall in the classroom as punishment has made me to dislike physical education | 54 | 54% | 12 | 12% | 34 | 34% |
| 8. | Asking students to do the set position while keeping one leg in the air from the back in the classroom has made me dislike physical education as a subject | 53 | 53% | 7 | 7% | 40 | 40% |
| 9. | The act of asking students raising the heels with hands up in the classroom has made me dislike physical education | 57 | 57% | 9 | 9% | 34 | 34% |
| 10. | Asking students to do jumping jacks as punishment in the classroom has made me dislike Physical education | 62 | 62% | 14 | 14% | 24 | 24% |

Source: Survey Data, 2017

From the data in Table 4.3, it is realized that 54 representing (54%) of the respondents agreed that the use of physical activities as punishment has affected their interest and performance in physical education, 37 representing (37%) disagreed while 9 representing (9%) were undecided to the statement. Fifty-five (55) representing (55%) of the respondents indicated their agreement with the statement that the act of asking students to squat in the classroom has made them dislike physical education as a subject, 31 representing (31%) disagreed while 14 representing (14%) were undecided. Additionally, 59 representing (59%) were of the opinion that the practice of making students jog around the school compound as punishment has caused them to dislike physical education, 37 representing (37%) disagreed while 4 representing (4%) were undecided to the statement. More so, 51 representing (51%) respondents opined that the practice of making students run around the school field has caused them to dislike physical education as a subject, while 41 representing (41%) disagreed with 8 representing (8%) being undecided. Forty-five (45) representing (45%) agreed that the use of push-ups as a means of punishing students has caused them to dislike physical education, 33 representing (33%) disagreed with 22 representing (22%) were undecided. Additionally, 50 representing (50%) indicated their agreement to the statement that asking students to duck walks while holding their ears in the classroom has made them dislike physical education as a subject, 0 representing (0%) disagreed with 10 representing (10%) were undecided.

It is further noted from the data in Table 4.3 that 54 representing (54%) of the respondents agreed that the practice of making students to push the wall in the classroom has made them dislike physical education as a subject, 34 representing (34%) disagreed while 12 (12%) were undecided. Similarly, 53 representing (53%) of the respondents indicated their agreement to the statement that the act of asking students to do the set position while keeping one leg in the air from the back in the classroom has made them dislike physical education as a subject while 40 representing (40%) disagreed to the statement with 7 representing (7%) being undecided. 57 representing (57%) indicated their agreement that the act of asking students to raise their heels with hands up in the classroom has made them dislike physical education while 34 representing (34%) disagreed to the statement with 9 representing (9%) being undecided. Finally, the results further disclosed that 62 representing (62%) agreed to the statement that asking students to do jumping jacks as punishment in the classroom had caused them to dislike physical education while 24 representing (24%) disagreed to the statement with 14 representing (14%) being undecided. From the data in Table 4.3, and also on the basis of the analysis, it is deduced that majority of students in Odoben Senior High School see the act of using various physical activities as punishment as a great hindrance to the study of physical education as a subject. The findings of this study corroborate the findings by Olibie, Uzoehina, and Eziuzor (2015) and Egenu (2002) who revealed in their studies that the use of physical activities as punishment affect their performance in the study of physical education as a subject.

IV. Conclusion

The study investigated the factors responsible for the use of physical activities as punishment and its effects on student performance in physical education in Odoben Senior High School in the Central Region of Ghana. The study has established that the use of physical activities as punishment is one of the underlying causes of students' poor attitudes towards the study of physical education could result in poor academic performance in the subject. It was discovered from the findings that students rated highest on fighting with other students ($M=3.46$, $SD=1.57$), followed by refusing to obey orders ($M=3.30$, $SD=1.55$), escaping from school before day ends ($M=3.28$, $SD=1.55$), scratching on the walls, boards, and desks ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.40$), challenging the teacher ($M=3.04$, $SD=1.34$), not doing homework ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.39$), were the most reasons unveiled by students to be the physical activities used as punishments in the school.

Generally, It was discovered that weeding ($M=3.13$, $SD=1.30$), than caning of the students ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.19$), kneeling down in the classroom or in school compound ($M=2.75$, $SD=1.30$), verbal assault and yelling ($M=2.27$, $SD=1.14$), making the students to stand or raise their hands for a long time ($M=2.12$, $SD=1.23$), dismissal from classroom ($M=2.03$, $SD=1.11$), making the students squatting for a long time

(M=2.00, 1.10), pinching the ear or nose (M=1.77, SD=1.11), were the major forms of punishment administered to the students. Again, squatting, jogging around the school compound, run around the school field, act of asking students to do push-ups, ducking walk whiles holding their ears and among others as a means of punishing the students has affected the students in terms of their behavior and disposition towards the study of physical education as a subject.

To reverse the trend of poor performance in the subject, it is pertinent that all education stakeholders support the use of alternate forms of punishment that does not cause physical pain, and encourage students to actively participate in the subject and develop positive attitudes towards the study of physical education so as to realize the benefits that accrue from participating in the physical education. In essence, participating in physical activities is useful to the maintenance of good health and wellbeing of the students. The Ghana Education Service through the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa Education Directorate should organize in-service training for the teachers in senior high schools to enable them to improve on the guidance and counseling services in their schools. This will encourage students to put up good behavior and adhere to school rules and regulations. The Ghana Education Service through the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa Education Directorate should take steps to educate students on the benefits that accrue from engaging or participating in physical education so that students will enhance student's participation resulting in improved academic performance. In this direction, it is expected that the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service make efforts to put a stop by way of legislation to the use of physical activities as punishment and intensify efforts toward the study of the subject in schools.

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