



# Teachers' Knowledge Base in Disciplinary Toolkits in the Senior High School of Ghana

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## Abstract

This was a quantitative study which tried to investigate the effectiveness of Disciplinary Toolkits in maintaining discipline after disregarding biblical injunction in the book of proverbs of Senior High Schools in Mamprusi Municipal. The research design adopted to investigate the study was descriptive survey. The main instruments used to collect data were questionnaire. The population for the study was all Senior High School students and District Directorate officers. The targeted population was students in three selected Senior High Schools in the Municipality. The sample size for the study was one and sixty-four (164). Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the one hundred and seven (107) students. From the findings, it was realized that headmasters and teachers of Senior High Schools in the West Mamprusi Municipality have moderate knowledge level of the “Ghana Education Service Disciplinary Toolkits” introduced in schools in Ghana, the new Disciplinary Toolkits is a better alternative in promoting discipline in our schools as it promotes a safe environment for students' learning. It was recommended that in-Service training should be organized by the Ministry of Education through Ghana Education Service for teachers to continue to update themselves with the new trend of discipline in Ghana. It was also recommended that schools should organize orientation for students on the rules of schools and consequences for breaking them at least every year and provide them student's handbook which govern the behaviour of students.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Disciplinary, Toolkits, Punishment

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of discipline in schools globally is and has been of major concern for educators, educational authorities, policymakers, and of course the general public. Cohen and Cohen (1987) have reechoed the growing concern of the general public about many reported disruptive behaviour in pre-tertiary schools. It is against this backdrop that corporal punishment is being practiced in many schools as a way of instilling discipline in students. Save the Children, Sweden (2005) postulated that “the issue of Corporal Punishment (CP) is not only used by teachers in schools but also by parents or guardians at home or at work places”. In England for example, CP was generally used later the

Middle Ages while waiting for the 19th Century. It was experienced in criminal custodial, at household, in society, in the army, and in schools. The prohibition on physical chastisement in England has been working on progressively and it was debarred in 1999 (Lambert, 2010). In the United States, the use of corporal punishments such as spanking and whipping school children as an intervention of ensuring discipline in schools was allowed. Educators and policymakers including parents considered corporal punishment the most effective practice to castigate students and make them very studious. This presupposes that corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure is as old as the history of man and is very prevalent in almost every country.

The Ministry of Education in Ghana through Ghana Education Service (GES) placed a ban on caning in all pre-tertiary schools. It was argued that the cane was being indiscriminately applied in schools and this has psychological and physical repercussions on children. This ban which came into effect in 2017; making it an offense for a teacher to cane a student and parent can take legal actions against any teacher who canes a student. Others argue that the ban contravenes the provision of the Criminal Offences Act, 1960 (Act 29) in Section 31(i), which affords that, coercion or maltreatment may be vindicated on the confidence of an authority to correct a child, servant or other similar persons for misconduct. The strength harnessed in the character rectification of kids in Ghana over the decades has often included corporal punishment parallel to caning. The ban on canning for many Ghanaians is a step in the wrong direction as teachers will be disarmed to maintain discipline in schools. The ban on canning in Ghanaian pre-tertiary schools is seen by many as a choice to protect the rights of the child by withdrawing the cane or to maintain a disciplined society where defiance is corporally punished.

Teachers perform a crucial part as coaches and mentors or disciplinarians, and in order to fulfill these roles, they sometimes have a different alternative to use Physical Punishment (Youssef et al, 1998). Corporal Punishment serves as a tool with which teachers maintain discipline among students. Corporal Punishment is an imperative part of the educational practices for countless learners in institutions for many years. The act has often been known to be an uncontroversial and widely accepted way of sustaining discipline. Usually, physical chastisement is metered out to make the learners disciplined and internalized socially desirable behavior (Turner, 2006). Corporal punishment of children globally has become a growing concern for child growth and development. “Debates about its acceptance, definition, forms, and patterns, and reactions to punishers are not settled” (Dereje, Nega & Amenti, 2014).

## 1.2 Review of Related Literature

Kilimci (2011) postulated that schools are preordained to be the one of the nonviolent spaces somewhere trainees justify their enlightening practices. Schools' ought to have a vibrant rule on bullying and punishment; have child protection policies in place; provide safe environments for all students; recognize and worth the triumphs of all students who experience barriers to learning and offer students the opportunity to play a full and active part in their own learning and encourage them to advance reliability and self-advocacy skills. Education is supposed to happened in an intimidation free environment; so that there can be positive in behaviour and development in all dimensions. Every child has the right to be educated and for that matter any form of hindrance must be removed from the way of the child. The future of every child must be well planned by the parents. If canes and spanking will not allow children to realize their full potentials then there is the need to put measures in place to make them achieve those targets in life. The wellbeing of every child depends so much on the adult in the society to teach the norms and traditions of the society. Diminishing privileges e.g., completely peaceful punishments include working long hours after class or skipping class, as well as assigning activities such as writing lines or performing additional obligations. Methodical modification is imperative for completing justifiable and wide-reaching enhancements in teenagers' care. It is as result of this that it is anticipated of instructors to learn different courses to be able to face the challenge of controlling unacceptable behaviours in a friendly manner. Ghana Education Service Disciplinary Toolkits introduced to schools, suggested these as procedures to follow in disciplining a child: Caution, reflection period, writing lines, cleaning, designated seating position, withdrawing a responsibility, letter to parents, parent teacher meeting, counseling, and daily report to school.

Ghana Education Service (GES, 2016) suggest to teachers to use caution as one of the ways of ensuring that things are put in order. Here, the instructor introduces out to novice learner that he/she has gone against mundane to the stipulated rules and prompts the student of conceivable penalties of echoing such lifestyle. Students are supposed to understand that their actions can lead to great havoc in the lives of others. Students reflect on their action. The teacher requires from student to report to a designated room at a particular time for a specified amount of time. In general sense, this time should be used for an activity that will encourage a transformative reflection on the infraction committed.

A paragraph is given to the children to write multiple times. The statement should emphasize the child's need for and capacity to follow the specified behavioural traits. Organizing picking, arranging seats in the classroom are all laudable procedures in disciplining a child. This contains requesting students to perform some arrangement of communal amenity such as dusting tables or scrubbing; but certainly not toilets. Special seats position takes in seating the student right in forward-facing or nearby the teacher to monitor him/her or to interchange the student's position which inspires him/her to engross in unruly behaviour. Meeting with the child's parents to measure the child's behaviour and determine what steps need to be taken to reform his/her behaviour. Psychotherapy is a procedure of networking the schoolchild to the school psychotherapist laterally with circumstantial info on the scholar's behaviour periodically to be counselled. The counsellor will intend help to calm the student down to start thinking about the consequence of their actions which presupposes that they are counselled to desist from such negative behaviours. During the stakeholders meeting, there was a consensus that daily report writing should be employed as a way of driving off bad behaviour in children. It therefore encompasses exhaustive 24-hour care of the child's behaviour. The child would be given a form to be signed by his/her teacher in recapitulation every class and submitted to the school counsellor at the end of the day (GES, 2016). All the above measures are specified in the Ghana Education Service Disciplinary Toolkits for modifying bad behaviour among students. Morin (2020) said per many parents' points of view, spanking can feel like the fastest and most effective way to change a child's behavior". She lingers through her avowal that it repeatedly the whole kit and caboodle in the short-term.

## 1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study anchored on Canter's Assertive Theory (1992). The focus of this theory is the teacher's insistence of the right behaviour from the student. Thus, instructors who are assertive respond confidently and hurriedly to circumstances as they arise. The assertive theory requires the teachers to recognize and support students when they exhibit the desired behaviour and constantly making them aware that you like what they are doing. Assertive teachers teach their students how to behave by establishing clear classroom rules and communicate those rules to the students. Such teachers are characterized by the use of positive reinforcement and praises for students. The significant notions of Canter's theory are that school children have the right and desire for caring school teachers who will deliver friendliness, kindness and assistance. Educators have constitutional rights; they must teach in an environment that is



advantageous to learning and get both parents and learners cooperation. He emphasizes on teachers using rules and consequences which are stated clearly for students to understand. The rules ought to be precise and easily to understand by learners". To encourage pupils, teachers have to utilize influential discipline to set limits and chastisements, implement regular follow-up processes, and seek for both school administrators and parent's cooperation. This discipline is based on the idea that a teacher's mood affects his or her behaviour, which then affects the behaviour of students (Skiba, Chung, Trachok, Baker, , Sheya, & Hughes, 2014). This theory assists teachers in being fair and firm. This theory is significant to this study because it assisted in determining how well teachers understood the rules and restrictions specified in the new Disciplinary Toolkits. It also aided the researcher in determining the extent of compliance with the Disciplinary Toolkits.

### 1.3 Need for the Study

There are a lot of concerns about the rising levels of indiscipline in the pre-tertiary schools in Ghana. Senior High Schools in Ghana have experienced series of violent demonstrations and riots. A typical example is Wulugu Senior High School in the West Mamprusi Municipality in early 2022, where students rioted and destroyed several school properties leading to the closure of the school for few months. Many stakeholders have blamed these institutions for their reluctance to ensure discipline in the schools. Most stakeholders are even calling for corporal punishment in these institutions. But Ghana Education Service has reserved a variety of steps including the institutionalization of Disciplinary Toolkits during the years to make available a safe school environment; excluding the use of physical punishment. This intervention was designed to make all pre-tertiary schools more child-friendly and the thinking that corporal reprimand prone students to physical force or emotional humiliation, low academic achievement, and high dropout rate, among others in Ghana. Several research have been conducted about the need for corporal punishment in institutions and others about the effects of corporal punishment on students' achievements (Leigh, Chenhall & Saunders, 2009; Tozer, 2010), but it seems very little research is conducted on the Ghana Education Service introduced Disciplinary Toolkits for maintaining discipline in pre-tertiary institutions. This study therefore sought to to examine the knowledge of Senior High Schools teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality about the existence of the Disciplinary Toolkits in their schools. The purpose of the study was to examine the knowledge of Senior High Schools teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality about the existence of the Disciplinary Toolkits in their schools.

## 1.4 Objectives of the Study

To ascertain the knowledge of Senior High Schools teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality about the existence of the Disciplinary Toolkits in their schools.

## 1.5 Research Question

What is the knowledge of Senior High Schools teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality in the North East Region of Ghana about the existence of the Disciplinary Toolkits in schools?

## 1.6 Hypothesis of the Study

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The introduction of the Disciplinary Toolkits in Senior High School has no significant impact on students' positive behaviour.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The introduction of the Disciplinary Toolkits in Senior High School has significant impact on students' positive behaviour.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitatively, the study adopted descriptive survey design to investigate the Knowledge base of Senior High School Religious and Moral Education teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality about the existence of the Disciplinary Toolkits in schools. The population of this study consisted of all Religious and Moral Education teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality. Census sampling technique was used to select all the fifth-seven (57) teachers in the three Senior High Schools in the municipality. The main instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire had ten (10) items which sought information on the knowledge of Senior High Schools teachers on existence of the Disciplinary Toolkits in schools. Data collected were identified and keyboarded into 26<sup>th</sup> version in SPSS. All issues that were positive and in line with the new disciplinary toolkit were identified as follows: “Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Agree = 3 and Strongly Agree was coded as 4”. For items that were not in line with the new disciplinary toolkit, the coding was as follows: Strongly Disagree = 4; Disagree = 3; Agree = 2, and Strongly Agree was coded as 1. Expressive statistics encapsulating counting proportion of recurrence, ratios, means, and average deviations reinforced to present answers to the research question and hypothesis. Both “agree” and “strongly agree” were considered an affirmation of the statement and the reverse is true. To determine if there was a significant

difference in the level of discipline amid the use of corporal punishment and that of the new disciplinary toolkits T-

Test was used. Results were presented using tables for clarity and simplicity.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Research Question 1: Knowledge of Senior High School teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality about the existence of the Disciplinary Toolkits in schools

The aim of this research question sought from Senior High Schools teachers and headmasters their knowledge level as far as the new disciplinary toolkit is concerned in the West Mamprusi. The opinions of trainees are presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Knowledge Level of Teachers on the New Disciplinary Toolkits (n=57)**

| Statements   | SD (%)   | D (%)    | A (%)    | SA (%)   | Mean | Std  |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|------|------|
| The new GES disciplinary toolkits are meant to promote a safe and protective environment   | 9(15.8)  | 11(19.4) | 27(47.5) | 10(17.7) | 2.67 | 0.95 |
| The toolkits permit the teacher to cane a student when recommended by the parents  | 19(33.3) | 19(33.3) | 16(28.1) | 3(5.3)   | 2.95 | 0.91 |
| The new disciplinary tool kits see heads and teachers as responsible for inspiring their students to abide by disciplinary code. | 5(8.8)   | 12(21.1) | 26(45.6) | 14(24.6) | 2.86 | 0.90 |
| The new toolkit permits heads of schools to log and cane students who go against school rules                                    | 18(31.6) | 13(22.8) | 20(35.1) | 6(10.5)  | 2.75 | 1.02 |

|   |            |             |              |              |   |     |      |
|---|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---|-----|------|
| The toolkit requires schools to organize orientation for students on the rules of the school and consequences for misbehaving at least every year | 3<br>(5.3) | 6<br>(10.5) | 30<br>(52.6) | 18<br>(31.6) | 1 | 3.1 | 0.79 |
|---|------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---|-----|------|

|   |            |              |              |              |    |    |      |
|---|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----|----|------|
| The toolkit provides a rule book which governs the behaviour of both the teacher and students.  | 3<br>(5.3) | 11<br>(19.3) | 31<br>(54.4) | 12<br>(21.1) | 91 | 2. | 0.79 |
| “The toolkit recommends the use of incentives such as periodic public acknowledgement of good behaviour for consistent adherence to rules applied to encourage good behaviour”. | 4<br>(7.0) | 8<br>(14.0)  | 32<br>(56.1) | 13<br>(22.8) | 95 | 2. | 0.81 |
| The toolkit expects teachers to “explain to the child why a certain behaviour exhibited is unacceptable”  | 2<br>(3.5) | 10<br>(17.5) | 31<br>(54.4) | 14<br>(24.6) | 0  | 3. | 0.76 |



The toolkit believes entering infractions into a log book serves a restrictive on the child.

|             |              |              |            |          |      |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------|------|
| 8<br>(14.0) | 15<br>(26.3) | 29<br>(50.9) | 5<br>(8.8) | 2.<br>54 | 0.85 |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------|------|

The toolkit proposes use of writing lines as a disciplinary measure in schools

|             |              |              |            |          |      |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------|------|
| 7<br>(12.3) | 16<br>(28.1) | 29<br>(50.9) | 5<br>(8.8) | 2.<br>56 | 0.82 |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------|------|



**Table 1: continued**

|  |             |              |              |              |          |      |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|------|
| Cleaning<br>toilets is part<br>of the<br>disciplinary m<br>asures<br>contained in<br>the new<br>disciplinary<br>toolkit            | 8<br>(14.0) | 20<br>(35.1) | 21<br>(36.8) | 8<br>(14.0)  | 2.<br>49 | 0.91 |
| Without<br>the consent of<br>parents, one<br>can refer the<br>student to the<br>school<br>counsellor on<br>disciplinary<br>issues. | 6<br>(10.5) | 11<br>(19.3) | 23<br>(40.4) | 17<br>(29.8) | 2.<br>11 | 0.96 |
| Without<br>the consent of<br>parents, one<br>can refer the<br>student to the<br>school<br>counsellor on<br>disciplinary<br>issues. | 6<br>(10.5) | 11<br>(19.3) | 23<br>(40.4) | 17<br>(29.8) | 2.<br>11 | 0.96 |

**Source: Field Data (2021)**

Mean of Means = 2.74      Standard Deviation = 0.28

Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree;      2 = Disagree;  
3 = Agree;      4 = Strongly Agree

Table 1 sought to find out Senior High School Headmasters and teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality knowledge level of the “Ghana Education Service “Disciplinary Toolkits” introduced in schools in Ghana. “A mean of means of 2.74 and an average standard deviation of .28 were recorded. This means that the majority of the students agreed to most of the statements that were posed to them. A mean of standard deviation of .28 indicates that there were variations in the responses that were recorded for the items. Details of the individual items are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs”.

From Table 1, twenty-seven (27) teachers equivalent to (47%) agreed that the new GES disciplinary toolkits are meant to promote a safe and protective environment whiles an additional ten (10) teachers (18%) strongly agreed

to the declaration. This means that (65%) of the teachers agreed that the new GES disciplinary toolkits are meant to promote a safe and protective environment. A mean score of 2.67 with a standard deviation of 0.95 confirms teachers agreeing that the new GES disciplinary toolkits are meant to promote a safe and protective environment. Again, (number) teachers (33%) strongly disagreed to the proclamation that “the toolkits permit the teacher to cane a student when recommended by the parents” whereas Sixteen (16) teachers representing (28.1%) agreed to the assertion. This suggests that two (20) out of every three (3) teachers disagreed that the toolkits permit the teacher to cane a student when recommended by the parents. “A mean score of 2.95 and a standard deviation of 0.91” confirm that most the knowledge level of most teachers on this item conforms to what is contained in the new disciplinary toolkit.

Similarly, “the majority of the respondents agreed to statement that the new disciplinary tool kits see heads and teachers as responsible for inspiring their students to abide by disciplinary code”. This was realized from “a mean of 2.86 and *Standard Deviation of .90*. Again, a mean of 3.11 and *Standard Deviation .79*”. Thus, the teachers agreed with the assertion “the toolkit requires schools to organize orientation for students on the rules of the school and consequences for misbehaviour at least every year. The on average agreed to the expression “the toolkit provides rule book which govern the behaviour of both the teacher and students”. This was deduced from “the mean value of 2.91 a standard deviation of .79”. Moreover, the toolkit recommends the use of incentives such as periodic public acknowledgement of good behaviour for consistent adherence to rules applied to encourage good behaviour and this observe with “a mean of 2.95 equivalent to a standard deviation of .81”. Furthermore, the educators succumbed to the expression “the toolkit expects teachers to explain to the child why a certain behaviour exhibited is unacceptable ( $M = 3.0, SD = 0.76$ )”. The statement “the toolkit believes entering infractions into a log book will serve as a deterrent as the child” has the agreement on the part of the teachers with a mean score of 2.54 and an  $SD = 0.85$ ; and the toolkit proposes the use of writing lines as a disciplinary measure in schools “( $M = 2.56, SD = 0.82$ )”. This infers that a majority of the respondent agreed to the statement above”.

Also, results from table 1 show “an overall mean score of 2.74 out of four with a standard deviation of 0.28. This shows that the level of knowledge of the teachers and headmasters on the new disciplinary toolkit is above average and that most of the teachers have an appreciable knowledge about the new disciplinary toolkit as introduced by the Ghana Education Service in Senior High Schools in the Mamprusi Municipality of Ghana”. From preceding discourse on investigative query one, it sufficed to concede that High School Headmasters and educators sited within

the West Mamprusi Municipality knowledge are to a very high extent of the Ghana Education Service Disciplinary Toolkits introduced in schools in Ghana. It was observed that teachers agreed to most of the statements, for instance, the new GES disciplinary toolkits are meant to promote a safe and protective environment. The toolkits permit the teacher to cane a student when recommended by the parents. The new disciplinary toolkits see heads and teachers as responsible for inspiring their students to abide by disciplinary code. The new toolkit permits heads of schools to flog or cane students who go against school rules.

The toolkit requires schools to organize orientation for students on the rules of the school and consequences for misbehaving at least every year. The toolkit provides a rule book which governs the behaviour of both the teacher and students. The toolkit recommends the usage of inducements such as intermittent civic strap line of good behaviour for consistent adherence to rules functional to hearten virtuous behaviour. Again, the toolkit expects teachers to explicate to the youngster wherefore a certain behaviour exhibited is deplorable. The toolkit believes entering infractions into a log book can attend as a restraining as the child. The toolkit proposes the use of writing lines as a disciplinary measure in schools. On other hand cleaning toilets is part of the disciplinary measures contained in the new disciplinary toolkit. Without the consent of parents, one can transmission the school kid to the school psychotherapist on disciplinary issues. Mwenda (2016) has said that on highest of being acquainted with the regulations overriding edification like children rights, teachers need passable benefits to be able to regulate school discipline and prevent unsettling behavior of students.

**Table 2: Independent Sample T-test on the difference between gender and teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality knowledge level of the “Ghana Education Service “Disciplinary Toolkits**

|   | Group  | N  | Mean  | Std. Dev. | Df | t-value | p-value |
|---|--------|----|-------|-----------|----|---------|---------|
|   |        |    |       |           |    |         |         |
| Teachers’<br>knowledge level of<br>new toolkits | Male   | 43 | 32.37 | 4.36      | 55 | -1.69   | .093    |
|   | Female | 14 | 34.50 | 3.08      |    |         |         |

**\*\* “significant at p=0.093 (2-tailed)”**

The results of the Independent Sample T-test on the difference between gender and teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality knowledge level of the Ghana Education Service Disciplinary Toolkits. From the table, it

was realized that the males had a mean score of ( $M=32.37$ ;  $SD=4.36$ ) while the females had a mean score of ( $M=34.50$ ;  $SD=3.08$ ). This signifies that the mean score of the male was different when compared with the mean of the female teachers. Again, the standard deviation ( $SD=4.36$ ) of the score indicates that the male scores in terms of the standard deviation varied more than that of females' scores after finding out the knowledge level of teachers about the new toolkits ( $SD=3.08$ ). Again, assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and was not violated through Levene's  $t(55) = -1.69$ ,  $p < .093$ , two-tailed.

There is a piece of clear evidence that there is no statistically significant difference between gender of the respondents and their knowledge of the new disciplinary toolkits introduced by Ghana Education service as an alternative of corporal punishment. This can be deduced from an observed mean of 32.37 for male teachers, and a mean of 34.50 for female teachers. Due to the sameness in the means, it can be boldly said that there is no substantial difference in the knowledge of the instructors. Finally, the p-value of .093 gave clear indication that there is no significant difference between gender and their knowledge of the new toolkits. This implies that there was a no noteworthy variation between male and female educators' familiarity in footings of the toolkits. Therefore, the negative supposition flops to be forbidden.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It was found that institutional headmasters and teachers in the West Mamprusi Municipality have moderate knowledge level of the "Ghana Education Service "Disciplinary Toolkits" introduced in schools in Ghana. It was seen "there was no statistically substantial dissimilarity between the gender of a teacher and the familiarity level of the new disciplinary toolkits. Since teachers in Senior High schools in the West Mamprusi Municipality have moderate knowledge level of the "Ghana Education Service Disciplinary Toolkits introduced in schools in Ghana, it is recommended that in-Service training should be organized by the Ministry of Education through Ghana Education Service for teachers to continue to update themselves with the new trend of discipline in Ghana.

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