



Violent Disciplinary and Socio-Emotional Development of the Ghanaian Child

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Introduction

- Previous studies have shown that the use of corporal punishment against children ranges from less than 20% to 75% in most countries (Anderson & Payne, 1994). However, limited research conducted in developing countries show that the use of violent disciplinary measures to control children behavior is prevalent both in homes and schools (Hecker, Hermenau, Isele, & Elbert, 2014).
- UNICEF (2010) report on parental acceptance of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measures in 35 countries revealed that in 10 countries, greater than 80% of their children received physical and psychological abuse. 6 out of these 10 countries were in Sub-Saharan Africa including Ghana.
- Proponents for the use of violent measures contended that differences in culture and economic development might favor the use of corporal punishment. However, contemporary research contrasts this theory (Hecker, Hermenau, Isele, & Elbert, 2014).
- Research conducted by the Ministry of Gender, Children & Social Protection across Ghana in 2010 indicated that 41% of children were corporally abused in homes, 83% by teachers and 34 % by head teachers in schools (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2014).



Pictures Above (A) & (B). Teachers corporally punishing children in school. (C) Instrument of corporal punishment in West-Africa called 'cane' in the open market.

Goals

- This study aims at examining the association between violent discipline (maltreatment) and socio-emotional and behavioral problem among children in the Central Region of Ghana.

Hypotheses

- We hypothesize that: a) frequent use of disciplinary measures will affect the child's well being despite being normative in Ghana; b) the exposure to violent disciplinary measures is positively related to children externalities and c) there is negative correlation between violent disciplinary measure and children prosocial behaviour.

Methods

Study design and sampling techniques

- A cross sectional survey will be carried out targeting students from 9 to 12 years in public schools. We will use cluster sampling techniques to randomly select 5 districts from the Central Region of Ghana. The districts will be stratified into urban, semi-urban and rural as clusters for the selection.

Participants

- One hundred (100) students will be selected from public schools in 5 districts across the Central Region of Ghana. Within each selected district, one public school will be randomly selected. 20 students (50% boys & 50% girls) in classes 4, 5, 6 & Junior high School-Form 1 will be stratified by gender and randomly selected. The average age of the students is envisaged to be around 10.5 years.

Measures

Socio-Demography

- Data assessment of students: The first part of the questionnaire for students will consist of socio-demographic information, encompassing gender, grade, age, and living conditions.

Parenting Style

- The Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ): The APQ measures parenting practices that relate to troublesome child behavior (Frick, 1991; Shelton, Frick, & Wootton, 1996).

Corporal Punishment

- Conflict Tactics Scale Parent-Child (CTSPC) version: Violent disciplinary measures will be assessed using the CTSPC. This instrument has 27 items and measures the behavioural management strategies used by parents or guardians in dealing with children's behaviour in the past year (Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore, & Runyan, 1998).

Socio-Emotional Development or Aggressive Behavior

- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ): Socio-emotional problems will be assessed using the SDQ. The SDQ has good psychometric properties and it is used globally (Goodman, Ford, Simmons, Gatward & Meltzer, 2000).

Data Analysis

Data will be analysed using SPSS 23.0 version to generate descriptive statistics for all the variables computed. Variables will be segregated into dependent and independent and Pearson's coefficient analysis will be used to establish the correlation for further multivariate analyses to be conducted and then logistic regression model will likewise be employed.

Conclusions

Strengths

- This study will be the first of its kind in Ghana, exploring the correlation between violent disciplinary measures and socio-emotional development/social problems, and informed program development.

Limitations

- The study is correlational which lacks the ability to make causal inferences. In the future, a randomized control and intervention study will be necessary in order to specify the cause and effect of violent disciplinary measures on the development of children.

References

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