Background

- Much has been said about the discipline of children in non-Western societies, yet little is known about parents’ and children’s perceptions of their own experiences, and reactions to the broad array of parental discipline techniques that are used in non-Western countries (Gershoff, 2002; Montgomery, 2009).
- Theories regarding the effectiveness of various discipline techniques in promoting appropriate child behaviour, have largely been developed by researchers in Western countries (e.g., Bornstein, 1995; Dodge & Pettit, 2003; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).
- Much of the literature on child-rearing in Africa points to the fact that parents generally resort to physical punishment as a disciplinary practice (Nsamenang, 1992; Gershoff, 2002; Montgomery, 2009).
- However, in trying to improve children’s lives in developing countries, the current study will examine parents’ and children’s perceptions regarding the normativity of various discipline practices within the social contexts in Winneba, Ghana.

Research Questions

- The central questions that guide the study are:
  1. What are parents’ and children’s perceptions regarding current discipline practices?
  2. What other forms of discipline, apart from corporal punishment, are perceived by participants to be effective?

Methods

- The study is based on the philosophy of the qualitative research paradigm
- The target age group for the study are children aged 8 to 12 years old, and Mothers aged 20 to 59 years from 10 families
- 20 interviews using open-ended questions would be conducted with mothers and children
- Data will be analysed thematically by identifying patterns and categories through open coding (White, 2002).

Expected Significance

- Improving children’s lives is essential for children’s development, hence the study will inform the need to create an orderly and disciplined home environment free of violence.
- Using the study’s findings, childcare professionals and parents, will perhaps be better able to evaluate parental discipline practices and use some of the suggestions from the study’s participants in constructing an effective parental discipline practices in the society.

Limitations

- Parent participants, especially, may be embarrassed to admit their lack of knowledge about specifics regarding parental discipline practices and they may be hesitant to speculate.
- Parents may assume they are perceived as personal failures by acknowledging that discipline problems existed in their homes.
- These factors can influence their responses and therefore skew the results of this study.