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Cameroonian Parent and Teacher Perspectives of Corporal Punishment and its Psychological Effects on Children

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

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Abstract

This study was conducted to understand the varying perspectives on corporal punishment among teachers and parents in Cameroon and its perceived impact on children's psychological well-being. The study addressed two research questions, including the teachers' and parents' perspectives of corporal punishment as a form of discipline and the teachers' and parents' thoughts about the impact of corporal punishment on children's psychological, emotional, and behavioral development. Semi structured interviews with 14 questions were used to gather opinions of five parents and seven teachers across southwest Cameroon. The theoretical framework included social control theory and deterrence theory. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to determine major themes of the participants' experiences with corporal punishment and its psychological impacts on children. The results indicated that there were diverse disciplinary methods among Cameroonian teachers and parents and varied perspectives on corporal punishment's effectiveness and its emotional impact. However, there was a clear preference for non-violent disciplinary approaches to build positive relationships and avoid potential negative long-term effects. The results of this study support positive social change through additional mixed methods and quantitative studies. The study suggests that the participants' perspectives are at variance with current Cameroonian educational policy that supports the use of corporal punishment.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to all the sons and daughters of Martha and Martin Bakia of Ashum Village, Upper Bayang Sub-Division, and all others in Southwest Region of Cameroon, who received corporal punishment as a form of discipline.

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I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their tremendous support and understanding during this most difficult journey of my life. To the members of my dissertation committee for their invaluable support and guidance throughout the entire research process I also express gratitude. Their expertise and insights have been instrumental in shaping the development and completion of this dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force resulting in pain and discomfort with the purpose of controlling unfavorable behavior patterns (Cuartas et al., 2021). Corporal punishment in schools includes a range of behaviors used in correcting unacceptable behavior such as slapping, pulling, pinching, hitting objects, or forcing someone to engage in behavior that would cause them pain or discomfort (Lokol et al., 2020). Despite being the subject of varied controversies (Penev, 2021), corporal punishment remains a widely used discipline technique for children in the world. Its use is largely founded on the lex talionis principle, which asserts that criminals ought to receive as punishment precisely those injuries and damages they inflicted upon others (Burnette-Bletsch, 2018). It is estimated that 35% of children across the world experience some form of corporal punishment at least once a year. In the United States alone, research showed that up to 94% of parents had spanked their children by the time of their fifth birthday (Rush, 2018). The same study identified that 52% of parents across the world continued to employ corporal punishment when their children were teenagers and 20% up until their children were the age of 17. Across the world, 26% of men between the ages of 18 and 59 report having been spanked or slapped as children by their parents (Burlaka, 2021).

The growth of humanitarian ideals during the era of enlightenment and afterward has led to the questioning of the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline for children (Durrant, 2022). Over the past two decades, there has been an international shift in perspectives concerning physical punishment in children. However, existing literature

on perspectives and the use of corporal punishment is limited. Corporal punishment has not been investigated widely, especially in developing countries, despite its negative implications (Cuartas et al., 2019) such as antisocial behavior in adulthood (Afifi et al., 2019). Adding to the body of literature, the current study was conducted to explore teachers' and parents' perceptions of corporal punishment and the psychological impact of corporal punishment across Cameroon. The study is intended to provide an in-depth understanding of corporal punishment and its implications for children. The study has social change potential for informing policy makers in Cameroon regarding stakeholders' perspectives as they consider pathways forward.

Background

Cameroon, just like all nations of the world, is facing different social and economic difficulties that must be resolved to secure a promising future (Lawyer, 2019). Central to this task is the need to produce a well-educated, mentally competent, and healthy adult population that is well-skilled to participate in the global economy. But the quality of parenting and public education policies has been questioned regarding their value in preparing the nation's future workforce (Lyonga, 2020). At the core of this preparation is healthy child development. Current debates about child development in Cameroon focus almost entirely on educational objectives, ignoring the need to strengthen the foundations of physical and mental health (Lyonga, 2020).

One issue affecting child development is that corporal punishment remains legal in Cameroon despite the country's commitment to child rights as described by the United Nations which discourages the use of corporal punishment (Gershoff, 2017). Corporal

punishment has been regarded as a common root for health, learning, and behavioral deficiencies, deterring socially perceived wrongs (Gershoff, 2017). The common rationale for the use of corporal punishment has been that the inflicted pain, injury, humiliation, and degradation, would deter the offender from committing similar offenses in the future (Pratt, 2017). However, it causes direct physical harm, and it can sometimes result in long-term disability or death (Heekes et al., 2022). This type of punishment also results in fear, anger, shame, and guilt (Wenjing et al., 2021). Children who have undergone corporal punishment are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and self-harm tendencies.

Different cultures may have varied perceptions or norms about the use of corporal punishment as a way of disciplining children. Some societies believe that it is unacceptable for adults to inflict physical pain on one another, teachers, and educators to hit students, or those within the criminal justice system to impose physical harm on the adjudicated (Straus, 2017). However, many individuals believe that it is acceptable for adults to inflict physical punishment on children as a form of discipline. The significant variation between social norms and social ideals is thought to be the greatest reason for varied perspectives on the use of corporal punishment (Lokot et al., 2020). On one hand, law is deemed to be formulated by society and that it ought to reflect social needs. On the other hand, law is deemed as a guide that sets precedence on best social norms and practices (Cotterrell, 2017).

Although corporal punishment no longer exists in the legal systems of most developed nations, it remains condoned in some societal spheres, including educational

fields and parenting in many places (Font, 2018). In the United States, recent research showed corporal punishment as legal in private schools in every state excluding Iowa and New Jersey. It was also legal in public schools in 19 states, with up to 15 states actively practicing it (Vaughan-Eden et al., 2019). Calls for reinstatement of corporal punishment within social institutions have also been increased following increases in crime rates and deviant behaviors (Finkelhor, 2019).

In Cameroon, the main form of corporal punishment is illegal. In 2006, the Committee on the Rights of the Child implemented General Comment No. 8 which stated that each child has a right to be protected from corporal punishment and other forms of degrading punishment. Cameroon's legal system is based on French civil law and English common law, and corporal punishment of minors, including in the home, is permitted. The Penal Code (1967) and the Constitution (1996) provisions against violence and abuse are not regarded as forbidding all corporal punishment of children. In Cameroon's criminal justice system, corporal punishment as a penalty for a crime is illegal, but criminal law makes no provision for judicial corporal punishment. According to a 2010 analysis by UNICEF, 93% of 2–14-year-olds in Cameroon experienced violent discipline involving physical punishment and/or psychological violence in the home, and 28% received severe physical punishment. In the same year, a comparative survey of young women reported that in Cameroon, 43% had been hit during infancy, 66% had been beaten, 21% had been kicked, 31% had been denied food, 7% had been choked or burned, and 18% were made to do hard labor. As a disciplinary mechanism in correctional institutions, corporal punishment appears to be prohibited. Further, corporal

punishment in schools is unlawful under article 35 of the Law of Cameroon National Guidelines. Nonetheless, corporal punishment is still widely practiced throughout the country (Amin, 2018), and schools continue to practice it as a way of deterring unacceptable behavior (Nkwetta et al., 2021).

Physical punishment can be perceived as an effective approach to setting boundaries on actions and behaviors (Font, 2018). This may be seen as encouraging children to exercise and enhance their self-control in ways that meet social expectations of decency and rationality (Finkelhor, 2019). However, constant exposure to corporal punishment can have long-lasting impacts on children and young adults (Cuartas, 2021). Corporal punishment produces harmful effects including, but not limited to, poor school performance, aggression, depression, intensification of introversion, and cognitive injuries, among children (Goodman, 2020; Lokot et al., 2020). Corporal punishment can also limit children in their perceptions of avenues of influence to primarily being use of physical force and they may start viewing corporal punishment as the only effective way to achieve conformity to social rules (Ferrara, 2019). And when they get to positions of authority, they may start using physical force with subordinates to enhance compliance (Clemens et al., 2020).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child asserts that member nations, of which Cameroon is one, must protect all children from forms of violence, including physical violence (Freeman, 2021). Allowing adults to inflict physical punishment on children is a clear violation of international convention. Therefore, amid concerns within Cameroon's social and educational spheres, this study was significant in

exploring parents' and teachers' perspectives on corporal punishment, a contentious issue affecting child welfare (Lyonga, 2020). This investigation aimed to grasp their viewpoints, bridging cultural norms, societal expectations, and global child rights conventions (Gershoff, 2017).

Problem Statement

Despite the high prevalence of corporal punishment and unattended psychological effects on children 18 years and below in Cameroon (Godiya et al., 2021), the available literature is limited on this topic. A search into the APA Psychinfo, EMBASE, PubMed, and ScienceDirect databases revealed that corporal punishment is a severe social problem in Cameroon, among other low-income countries in Africa. Studies identified the adverse effects on brain development, poor cognitive development, unreached cognitive capabilities and overall life fulfillment, as potential psychological effects of corporal punishment on children. The varying cultural perspectives on social problems, non-functional policies, and the detrimental effects, call for evidence-based research to address the problem (Cuartas, 2021).

Purpose of Study

The study was conducted to examine teacher and parent perspectives of corporal punishment with the aim of establishing the perceived impact of corporal punishment on the children's psychological well-being and to understand teacher and parent perspectives of corporal punishment across Cameroon. The study included semi structured interviews to gather opinions of parents and teachers across southwest Cameroon.

Research Questions

RQ 1: What are teachers' and parents' conceptions of corporal punishment as a form of discipline?

RQ 2: What are teachers' and parents' thoughts about the impact of corporal punishment on children's psychological, emotional, and behavioral development?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework supporting the research includes social control theory and deterrence theory. The two frameworks offer insight into the methodologies that encourage parents and teachers to embrace a variety of concepts related to the management of deviant behavior. Since the theories are anchored in socialization, they offer insight into existing social norms on deterrence and how they may influence in-group conceptions.

Deterrence Theory

Deterrence theory is based on the work of classical philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and Jeremy Bentham. Thomas Hobbes initially founded the theory, which states that people are neither good nor bad but that they pursue their selfish interests without giving much thought to whom they harm in the process. Bentham expounded on the theory, indicating that human nature is governed by two masters known as pain and pleasure (Tiwari, 2022). According to this theory, the threat of punishment is thought to deter people from committing crime (Hati, 2019). It is seen as sufficient in reducing the probability that an individual will violate social norms and rules.

This theory provides more insight into parents' and teachers' perspectives of

corporal punishment in Cameroon. The outcomes of corporal punishment can be assessed based on children being dissuaded from committing socially unacceptable behaviors. For example, deterrence theory was applied by Ngubane et al. (2019) to study the relationship between physical punishment and a child's psychological well-being. They indicated that corporal punishment influences learners to avoid a particular behavior if they observe their peers being punished for the same behavior.

Social Control Theory

Social control theory was proposed by Ivan Nye, whose theories aligned with the functional theories of crime. Nye was a psychologist who suggested that the constraints implemented by parents influenced a child's probability of engaging in delinquent behavior (Nye, 1978). He noted that there were three ways of gaining control, including direct, indirect, and internal control. Direct control involves the use of punishment and rewards to ensure conformity with model behavior. Indirect control involves identifying with those who influence behavior, and internal control involved influencing behavior through one's conscience or superego (Rahman, 2022). The sole purpose of corporal punishment is social control. According to the social control theory, people's relationships, commitments, values, beliefs, and norms encourage them not to break the law. As such, the internalization and binding of individuals to moral codes limits their propensity to engage in deviant behaviors. The theory offers a basis upon which other behavior control mechanisms are considered over corporal punishment. It also influences the consideration of alternative deterrence measures among teachers and parents.

Nature of Study

The study employed semi structured interview questions to assess teacher and parent perspectives of corporal punishment and its psychological impacts. The methodology is appropriate for identifying and investigating the range of perceptions held by the study participants. It also allows for exploration of experiences on the use of corporal punishment within a target population. For this study, I used semi structured interview questions to gain the opinions of teachers and parents from eight schools across southwest Cameroon. Using theme analysis, data were analyzed based on the review of participant responses and patterns found among participants description of their experiences with corporal punishment and its psychological impacts.

Definitions

Corporal punishment: The use of physical punishment with the intention of correcting unacceptable behavior (Bassam, 2018).

Deterrence: The act of discouraging children from certain actions and events through instilling doubt and fear of consequences using corporal punishment (Hati et al., 2019).

Psychological disruption: Behavior that chronically threatens and intimidates others or violates social norms (Derella, 2019).

Rehabilitative assistance: Use of psychological interventions to manage psychological effects of corporal punishment (Derella, 2019).

Toxic stress: Emotional and physical tension manifesting when a child experiences strong, frequent, and prolonged adversities of corporal punishment (Beal, 2019).

Assumptions

The first assumption was that all teachers and parents selected for this study had adequate knowledge and experience of corporal punishment in home and school settings necessary to respond to the interview. The second assumption was that the responses were honest and reflective of the realities within the Cameroonian society. I assumed that the participants understood the semi structured interview questions and offered honest perspectives.

Scope and Delimitations

The research set the scope of the study on the perceptions and experiences of teachers and parents with the use of corporal punishment in Cameroon. Statistics by African Stringers (2023) indicate that more than 50% of children in state schools in Cameroon reported receiving corporal punishment, even though the practice is illegal. The practice is widespread, and children report undergoing corporal punishment for the slightest of errors. Since teachers and parents spend considerable time with children of 16 years and below, their perceptions of corporal punishment and its impacts were of interest to this study. The scope aids in addressing the research gap between perceived implications of corporal punishment in school and home settings and the policies that allow for its institutionalization in Cameroonian society. As such, the study was limited to teacher and parent perceptions and not school administrators, psychologists, or

government bodies.

      In my research, I limited the study's population to a convenience sample within southwest Cameroon, comprising a small sample from four selected schools within a specific timeframe. This approach aimed to provide a comprehensive description of results that might facilitate transferability to other contexts. Transferability is concerned with how study results will be applicable in other contexts and settings and use of quantitative data is preferred for transferability (FitzPatrick, 2019).

Limitations

      Three sampling limitations found in qualitative research potentially impacted the study. These are the limitations related to situation, time, and the selection of the study sample. The survey was situation-limited in that it focused on parent and teacher perceptions of corporal punishment within their respective jurisdictions at home and at school. Since semi structured interview data were collected within a narrow band of time, it was difficult to trace changes in perception unless future surveys are conducted. This also guaranteed use of a smaller sample. The sample of teachers and parents from six schools was a limitation for the study with convenience sampling of selected areas. The outcome may not be a true reflection of the overall perspectives of the entire teacher and parent populations across Cameroon. Nonetheless, the sample was sufficient to provide an in-depth exploration of corporal punishment. Additionally, the study's goal is not generalizability but rather a small and purposeful sample that offers in-depth analysis of the study phenomenon.

      The study also had the risk of bias. When conducting qualitative research,

researchers are prone to the risk of bias, where the researcher's subjectivity may impact research design, selection of the research sample, participant recruitment, data collection, and data interpretation (Taherdoost, 2022). The risk of bias was managed by reviewing all aspects of the study with peers and seeking their opinion on the objectivity of the process as well as through oversight by the research committee.

Significance

The study expanded existing literature on the impacts of corporal punishment in schools or home settings. The expansion was based on the inclusion of teacher and parent perspectives on corporal punishment. Inclusion of these voices added to the international and cultural literature on attitudes and perspectives towards corporal punishment of children. An understanding of these stakeholders' perceptions of corporal punishment can inform state, local, and national policy formulation of disciplinary initiatives, which can benefit children and students in Cameroon.

Summary and Transition

This chapter explained the importance of addressing corporal punishment in schools in Cameroon. There is limited literature concerning corporal punishment in developing nations. Yet there is a high prevalence rate of corporal punishment in Cameroon, where up to 50% of children report being subjected to corporate punishment for the slightest mistakes. Corporal punishment is illegal in Cameroon, yet the practice is widespread in most parts of the country. Social norms promote corporal punishment, as most children are subject to physical punishment as a form of discipline. Studies have identified adverse effects of corporal punishment on brain development, poor cognitive

development, unreached cognitive capabilities, and overall life fulfillment. The study addressed research questions involving the teachers' and parents' perspectives of corporal punishment as a form of discipline and the impact of corporal punishment on children's psychological, emotional, and behavioral development. Chapter 2 offers a review of the current research on the phenomenon of corporal punishment and how it is perceived both in Cameroon and internationally.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Corporal punishment remains legal and acceptable within various world jurisdictions, including Cameroon. It is estimated that 60% of children around the world are corporally punished by their parents (World Health Organization, 2021). Corporal punishment is more prevalent in societies that normalize violence (Wang, 2021). This not only involves unintentional physical and emotional hurting of children but also the use of pain to correct children's misbehavior. The United Nations has stated through its past resolutions that corporal punishment is a form of violence that is inconsistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Cappa & Petrowski, 2020).

Although Cameroon educational providers have improved educational policies by ensuring quality service provision, equitable distribution of learning opportunities, and incentives for effective learner experience, the use of corporal punishment has been cited as one of the greatest factors impeding the realization of these policies (Gershoff, 2017). It is estimated that 87% of children between the ages of 2–14 across Cameroon experience physical victimization and other types of violence (Wang, 2021). Children are frequently insulted and shouted at by their teachers and parents during their childhood. This violence has been exacerbated by the ongoing armed conflict between the government and separatist groups in two English-speaking regions of the country (Akame, 2021). School children constitute a bulk of the displaced persons, and with institutionalized corporal punishment, this population is subject to structural violence that impacts child behavior and health (Safotso, 2020).

Despite the Cameroonian government's acceptance of recommendations made during the 2009 UPR to improve the harmonization of national legislation to meet the Convention of the Rights of the Child, corporal punishment remains lawful in the country. Although Article 35 of the Law of Cameroon National Education Guidelines No. 98/004 of 1998 exclusively prohibits all forms of violence within educational settings, the penal system does not enumerate the punishments to be dispensed to violators (Trinity, 2021). While the Cameroonian government has accepted children's rights under the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the government has done little to ensure its implementation. Cameroon lacks enforcing mechanisms to ensure schools change their discipline systems. Corporal punishment is widespread in most schools in the country, but the government has not taken an effective approach in addressing the issue (Orok, 2023). As such, the frequency and magnitude to which corporal punishment are used is left to the discretion of parents and teachers.

The use of corporal punishment has remained a subject of controversy, with some teachers and parents backing its use, while others argue against it. Teachers and parents who support corporal punishment swear by its effectiveness in instilling discipline, compared to non-physical methods of discipline. On the other hand, teachers and parents against the use of corporal punishment stated that it has negative impacts on the children's development (Gershoff, 2017). Teacher and parent perspectives on the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline can be interpreted as a social perspective on the use of violence in deterrence of behaviors.

This chapter discusses existing literature on teacher and parent perspectives of corporal punishment and its psychological impacts on Cameroonian children. The next sections include a literature search strategy, theoretical framework, literature review of key variables, and summary and conclusion. The literature search strategy lists the library databases and search engines used in the literature search, the key search terms, and alternative search processes used to identify existing literature about study. The theoretical framework offers peer-reviewed theoretical models used to explore teacher and parent perspectives of corporal punishment and its psychological impacts. The literature review related to key variables and concepts describes studies related to the construct of interest and the selected methodology. This literature review includes articles with different perspectives of the impact of corporal punishment on children's psychological well-being.

Literature Search Strategy

Online databases and search engines were used to seek existing literature on corporal punishment and its psychological impacts. These search engines and databases included Google, Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, Elsevier, and ResearchGate. The selected databases and search engines offered numerous peer-reviewed articles for the study. All the articles selected for literature assessment were published within the last 5 years, including seminal work. Different key words and search terms were used to identify relevant literature for the study, including *corporal punishment*, *deviant behavior*, *social learning*, *social control theory*, *psychology of punishment*, *self-esteem*, *learner motivation*, *slapping*, *spanking*, *manual labor*, *whipping*, *paddling*, and *hitting*.

The Boolean Operation tool was used to combine the search words for better search outcomes (Urick, 2019). Truncation and wildcard searches were used to establish variations in the selected search terms. This helped establish the singular and plural forms of words and variant endings. Identified sources were filtered based on the credentials of the author and influence on policy. To balance the research and reduce bias, views supporting and opposing the use of corporal punishment were assessed.

<div align="center">**Theoretical Framework**</div>

This section discusses the theoretical models used to explain the phenomena driving the research: deterrence theory and social control theory. The theoretical models embody both scientific and humanistic elements of corporal punishment. This helped extend the generalization of various perspectives of corporal punishment from simply describing them and identifying their limits. By validating and challenging existing theoretical assumptions, the section facilitates the understanding of the research variables and terms as per the established definitions.

Deterrence Theory

This theory forms the basis for the assessment of existing perspectives and the impact of corporal punishment preferred for this study. It was first introduced by utilitarian philosophers Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham to explain crime management (Beccaria, 1963; bell, 1948). The theory proposes that the threat of punishment will deter people from committing a crime. According to deterrence theory, the fear of an external sanction is an important incentive in crime deterrence (Bates & Anderson, 2021). It comprises incapacitation, rehabilitation, and retribution. Those

committing indiscipline are first incapacitated to prevent them from further continuing their indiscipline. They are then subjected to retribution for their actions before they are rehabilitated to required disciplinary standards. The theory is often critiqued for its inapplicability in certain cases such as when the threat of corporal punishment is too high or severe. However, it offers a broader picture of deviance, suggesting that individuals commit crimes after evaluating the benefits and consequences of their deviant behaviors (Curren, 2020).

Deterrence theory has been applied to instill discipline in children. Deterrence theory, when applied to children's discipline provides a relationship between punishment and children's behavior. The deterrence theory justifies corporal punishment as it holds that the institution of criminal punishment is morally justified since it serves to deter crime (Abbas, 2022). Many educators hold the belief that corporal punishment is an effective tool in controlling student behavior, encouraging adherence to school rules, and solidifying the teacher's role as an authoritative figure who imparts knowledge. These teachers' experiences with corporal punishment have reinforced their view that it is a valuable means of establishing discipline and asserting their position as educators (Abbas, 2022). Deterrence theory is closely associated with Abraham Maslow's early theories of behaviorism (Weatherby, 2020), which states that human behavior can be adjusted through conditioning (Maslow, 1937). As a result, human beings are less likely to demonstrate certain behavior if negative reinforcements are introduced. Similarly, when children are punished for displaying certain behavior, they are less likely to engage in similar behavior as they want to avoid the punishment.

Social Control Theory

According to the social control theory, criminal activity manifests following the weakening of an individual's attachment to society. The theory, as developed by Hirsch (1997), identifies the key elements of social control as attachment, social bond, involvement, commitment, and beliefs about lawful order (see Table 1). The theory is used to explain ways in which it is possible to reduce the likelihood of criminality developing among individuals within society (Bernasiewicz, 2020). Social control theory posits that human relationships, commitments, values, norms, and beliefs, encourage conformity with societal values and inhibit social deviance. As such, the internalization of moral codes and tying of individuals to the wider community is necessary in limiting their propensity to engage in deviant behaviors.

Table 1

Hirch's Social Control Theory

Attachment	Involvement	Commitment	Beliefs
Attachment to parents	Time taken with conforming activities.	Rational element in theory, though only indirectly.	Law-abiding and conforming beliefs.
Attachment to schools		Non-consideration of rewards for deviance.	Religious beliefs not exclusively included but are by implication
Attachment to peers	Engrossment importance	Cost of deviance loss and the amount of investment in conformity.	Conventional morality and values.

The theory is derived from functionalist theories of crime control. The theory proposes that there are three types of control: direct control, indirect control, and internal

control. Under direct control, punishment is threatened and applied on wrongful or deviant behavior acts while compliance is rewarded by societal members, including family, parents, and authority figures such as teachers. Indirect control, on the other hand, involves identification with social influences of behavior. Based on this precept, children's behavior may be based on their identification with those who influence behavior. They, for example, are likely not to engage in delinquent acts due to the pain and disappointment to teachers, parents, or those with whom they share close relationships. Internal control involves children refraining from prohibited behaviors.

According to the theory, deviant behaviors among children are a result of parent or teacher deficits. Deviant behavior refers to actions that contravene acceptable values and norms in society. Parents' and teachers' disciplining tactics affect the children's propensity to get involved with deviant behavior. When parents and teachers use unnecessary force on children, they tend to become immune to the impact of corporal punishment with time (Costello, 2020). When children's behaviors are controlled using corporal punishment, they tend to utilize similar social control tactics even as adults (Klevens et al., 2019). Students require love and direction, aspects which are considered lacking in the use of corporal punishment (Kennedy et al., 2017). Students with absentee parents who are separated or have work obligations are more likely to manifest non-compliance and other forms of misbehavior. Children with absentee parents lack family stability, leading to frustrations that are expressed through engaging in non-compliant behavior (Chen et al., 2019).

Cameroonian children's relationships, commitment, beliefs, norms, and values encourage them not to break social norms. The common elements constituting a child's societal bond include attachment to other individuals, involvement by typical social behavior, commitment to following rules, and belief in a basic value system involving respect, tolerance, and good behavior (Neba, 2021). These elements may underpin perspectives offered by some participants in the current study.

<div align="center">**Literature Review Related to Key Concepts and Variables**</div>

This section discusses the study's variables with support from literature for the discussion of each variable. It not only offers existing perspectives of corporal punishment but also the expected behavioral, emotional, and health outcomes of its use. The section discusses the severity of corporal punishment within Cameroon and policies and procedures endorsed at state and ministerial levels for educators within the republic.

Corporal Punishment

The definition of corporal punishment encompasses all types of violence and covers a wide range of acts of commission, and omission that constitute violence and egregious outcomes inclusive of even injury or death (Gershoff, 2017). This perspective presents corporal punishment to threaten compliance while risking the possibilities of injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, and deprivation (Tiwari, 2019). Corporal punishment is also presented as a deterrence measure, whose sole objective is to correct behavior rather than inflict harm (Wilner, 2020). Those supporting corporal punishment have often argued that it has been part of human development over the ages and has been the sole reinforcement factor for human culture and behavior (Motz et al.,

2020).

In the past, corporal punishment was regarded as an acceptable way of behavior control (Bloomer, 2015). However, social norms have been changing gradually, and society has become more aware of the benefit of intrinsic motivation to control behavior (Andrighetto & Vriens, 2022). Although corporal punishment produces short-term results, it creates or exacerbates the probability of deviance over the longer term. For example, corporal punishment has interfered with learning, affecting performance in mathematics, reading, and writing (Gershoff, 2017). Further, corporal punishment is an avoidable impairment in the meeting of fundamental human needs (Hirshi et al., 2017). Children could be deterred or disciplined with other non-impairing disciplinary measures such as positive reinforcement, time-out, taking away of privileges, and physical punishment. Becoming a perpetrator or victim of corporal punishment could occur in any place, including neighborhoods, schools, and families. It was primarily initiated and progressed by parents and teachers and although it may have been intended to achieve positive outcomes, it often resulted in oppression, child exploitation, and failure to recognize child rights (Hirschi, 2017).

Generational Dynamics of Corporal Punishment

According to Narayan et al. (2017), generational theories imply that parents and teachers discipline their children based upon methods used by their parents or the preceding generation. People, when asked to score whether a certain action such as hitting or slapping was abusive or non-abusive, were less likely to score them as abusive if they were subjected to similar disciplinary actions in the past (Narayan et al., 2017). As

such, parents and teachers who were disciplined using corporal punishment as children were less likely to consider corporal punishment as wrong. This factor likely rationalizes teacher and parent responses as to whether corporal punishment is a valid form of discipline. Hitting or slapping, for example, may be viewed as non-abusive because parents and teachers at the current school-age group were disciplined in this manner (Narayan et al., 2017).

Legal Perspectives

In *Ingraham v. Wright* and *Garcia v. Miera*, brutality was a legal measure of the use of corporal punishment (Menon, 2017). However, reasonableness has grown to become a legal measure of reference with the use of corporal punishment within parental or school realms. Educators and parents are expected to impose reasonable but not excessive force to discipline children. However, quantifying the scope of reasonableness has been a challenge. Traditionally, it was determined by assessing a child's age, maturity, past behavior, nature of the offense, and the amount or nature of harm inflicted on the child. It was also determined by the instrument used to administer punishment and the amount of motivation realized from its use. Factors that legally bind corporal punishment to crime include injuries inflicted and whether it is applied in good faith to maintain and restore discipline (Jewell, 2017). The substantive due process in determining corporal punishment cases included whether the force applied caused severe injury or was inhumane. Teachers were more likely to adopt a legal perspective of corporal punishment than parents.

Authoritarian Perspectives

Attitudes towards corporal punishment are significant predictors of reporting behaviors. Authoritarian-centered perspectives have often driven the use of corporal punishment within school and parenting fields A study by Lavrič and Naterer (2020) was conducted to evaluate the association between authoritarianism, right-wing attitudes, and approval of CP. The study used a cross-sectional survey to collect data from a representative sample of 2,524 German participants aged 14 and above. The results indicated that authoritarian aggression, submission, and conventionalism, as well as right-wing self-assessment, were linked to a higher likelihood of endorsing various forms of corporal punishment. Further analyses suggested that individuals with a history of corporal punishment who held authoritarian attitudes and positions were more likely to support corporal punishment. The findings highlighted the significant role of sociopolitical attitudes in the affirmation of corporal punishment and its intergenerational transmission. This would indicate that sociopolitical ideology could serve as an important tool for identifying risk groups and implementing preventive interventions aimed at ending the cycle of violence in families and mitigating the dire consequences of corporal punishment.

Efficacy of Corporal Punishment in Deterrence

Gebrezgabiher and Hailu's 2017 study on the rights-based approach to corporal punishment of children in primary schools in eastern zone of Tigray, Ethiopia, acknowledged the positive influence of corporal punishment in managing deviant behavior and negating aggression among children. The study looked at the steps taken by

the local government and other key actors to modify instructors' and students' attitudes toward corporal punishment. Furthermore, this study investigated the major limits of government and other key actors' initiatives to reduce corporal punishment, as well as their responses to these measures.

A qualitative study technique was used to collect data from the selected schools' students and teachers, as well as school officials, parents, and community representatives (Gebrezgabiher, 2017). Children who were difficult to correct could be coerced into reconsidering their behaviors, using corporal punishment. According to the study, young people reporting exposure to harsh treatment during childhood demonstrated a better understanding of social wrongs, offenses, and consequences of deviance.

A study by Wilson et al. (2017) on the use of corporal punishment in Maine schools established that corporal punishment was effective in setting clear boundaries and motivating children to behave in school. Learners exposed to corporal punishment were able to make better decisions about their behavior, exercise self-control, and were accountable for their actions.

Vitelli's 2017 systematic literature review of consequences of corporal punishment for toddlers established that corporal punishment was effective if used in moderation. The negative consequences often cited against the use of corporal punishment were frequently attached to its prolonged and excessive use. Occasional and appropriate use was seen to allow for the management of behaviors among children who were inclined to push their limits behaviorally. The study also showed that, when given a choice, most students preferred corporal punishment over other forms of discipline such

as suspension or detention. Parents viewed corporal punishment as their traditional duty. Most parents who practiced corporal punishments were in traditional cultures that advocate for the mode of punishment.

Despite these positive reports, most studies reported negative impacts of the use of corporal punishment. Elizabeth and Gershoff's 2017 assessment of disparities in the use of corporal punishment established that corporal punishment inflicts long-lasting physical and mental harm on children (Gershoff, 2017). Children who were physically punished were more likely to report problems controlling their aggression and attention span. The study also linked corporal punishment to higher risks for anxiety, depression, substance abuse, stress, and mental health problems. Students and children exposed to corporal punishment related forms of violence with power and were therefore more likely to be bullies or abusive partners.

According to Kooij et al. (2018), the limited nature of public knowledge on the psychological impacts of corporal punishment was the reason for limited public efforts to manage the use of corporal punishment. However, parents and teachers are in a good position to provide information about the impact of corporal punishment as they closely interact with children. Teachers have interacted with children over many years, and they can provide information into whether corporal punishment is effective, and its potential impacts on a child's development. Parents can provide information about corporal punishment and whether they have witnessed any change in their children's behavior after administering it. Although the Convention on Rights of the Child (2019) guarantees child protection from any form of violence, corporal punishment remains a dominant

element of deterrence and discipline.

Support for Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment can be used in moderation to achieve expected results. Detention or taking away toys, for example, are not always successful strategies with rambunctious children. Chung et al. (2022) in their assessment of attitudes towards corporal punishment, explored the role of experience and dark tetrad traits that include narcissism, psychopathy, sadism, and anger rumination. According to this study, some children found fun in pushing social limits to understand what structures were appropriate. These children responded well to physical punishment compared to other forms of discipline (Chung, 2022). Corporal punishment set clear boundaries that motivated children to behave well both at home and in school (Beller et al., 2021). Students also preferred corporal punishment over other forms of discipline such as suspensions (Chung, 2022). The use of corporal punishment follows precise rules when well implemented (Shafiq et al., 2021). It mandates parents and teachers to follow up after the consequence is administered.

Opposition for Corporal Punishment

Deontological arguments refer to the claim that some actions are either moral or immoral regardless of their consequences. According to one study, corporal punishment was a form of child abuse, the effects of which not only influenced a child's health but also their psychological wellbeing (Heekes et al., 2022). There is a fine line between discipline and abuse with the use of corporal punishment.

In a systematic review of the laws, changes in attitudes and behaviors established that corporal punishment inflicted long-term harm both physically and mentally on children. The reviewers argued that corporal punishment provided an unsafe environment for learning or growth since it disrupted behavior development among learners (Heilmann et al., 2021). This harmed the educational process for children. Although it may induce immediate change of behavior, its positive influence was short-lasting. It was hard to quantify the boundaries between fair admission of corporal punishment and child abuse (Gershoff, 2017). As such, those administering corporal punishment are left to determine the extent of its applicability. Although it can be administered with moderation, there is the potential to administer it incorrectly (Heekes et al., 2022). This creates an environment of fear among children and creates uncertainty about its use.

Dangers of Corporal Punishment

The impacts of corporal punishment vary depending on its severity, context, social perceptions, and outcomes. While support or opposition to corporal punishment may result from different impacts of corporal punishment, the dangers relating to its use largely influence those it is inflicted upon rather than those inflicting corporal punishment (Peney, 2021). This researcher found the common impacts of corporal punishment were negative physical and mental health development, toxic stress on a developing brain, child abuse, depression, attrition rates, and negative child policies.

Healthy Development

Physical punishment influences the contexts within which early roots of physical and mental well-being are nourished. In assessing the long-term effects of father

involvement in childhood on their son's physiological stress regulation system in adulthood, Choi et al. (2021) established that physical punishment destabilized a responsive environment of relationships that offered young children consistency, nurturing, and protective, interactions with adults. The researchers indicated that corporal punishment limited the children's possibilities to develop adaptive capacities that promote well-regulated stress response systems. It prevented them from having a normal responsive environment as they do not demonstrate normal behavior to punishment. Normally, when negative punishment is applied, children tend to avoid the targeted behavior. However, the effectiveness of punishment as a method of modifying behavior deteriorated over time, which also affected how children reacted to other negative stimuli in the environment such as domestic violence, poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage, and abuse and neglect (Choi, 2021).

In a longitudinal study in eight countries about corporal punishment, maternal warmth, and child abuse adjustment, Lansford et al. (2016) found that bans on corporal punishment were associated with decreases in support of corporal punishment as a child discipline technique. It also established that the use of corporal punishment deterred physical and emotional spaces, allowing for fear, toxicity, and limited exploration of environments without risk of harm (Lansford, 2016).

Sound and appropriate nutrition is a key foundation for healthy development. Infliction of physical punishment is thought to distort this foundation by destabilizing patterns of food intake, eating habits, and parental preconceptions of the nutritional status of children (Choi, 2021). Children subjected to punishment tend to be withdrawn, which

impacts their food intake as they tend to avoid eating. This in turn, has a negative impact on their growth and development.

Toxic Stress and the Developing Brain

A 2018 study by Font examining how a range of physical punishment measures were associated with cognitive performance and school adjustment established that the amount of stress produced using corporal punishment could lead to less outwardly visible, yet permanent changes, in brain structure and functioning (Font, 2018). The plasticity of an infant and early childhood brain makes it susceptible to chemical influences from stress hormones. Due to the abundant nature of glucocorticoid receptors in the hippocampus, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex, for example, any exposure to stressful experiences will alter the size and neural architecture of these areas. This may result in functional differences in learning, memory, and executive functioning, among children.

An increase in the frequency of use of corporal punishment is expected to be reflected in increased cases of chronic stress. A 2022 study by McEwen examining the protective and damaging effects of stress mediators established that chronic stress is associated with hypertrophy and overactivity within certain areas of the brain such as the orbitofrontal cortex and amygdala (McEwen, 2022). Comparable levels of adversity can also lead to the loss of neurons and neural connections in the hippocampus and the prefrontal cortex. These structural changes are likely to result in functional consequences in children. Those exposed to corporal punishment are likely to manifest anxiety, impaired memory, inability to control mood, and learning difficulties and may manifest

in lifelong impairments in physical and mental health (World Health Organization, 2021).

Physical and Mental Health

One of the dangers of corporal punishment is its effects on a child's physical and mental health. According to a 2022 systematic review of corporal punishment in schools by Heekes, children exposed to corporal punishment, either at school or at home, were highly likely to exhibit physical impairment such as increased hormonal reactivity in response to stress and changes in cognitive function or mental health problems compared to those who are not exposed to corporal punishment (Heekes, 2022). The common mental health problems described by the author included aggression, extreme introversion, emotional problems, and difficulties in social interactions.

Parenting Styles

One of the dangers of corporal punishment of children lies in its influence on subsequent parenting styles. Corporal punishment has an influence on parenting styles as it shapes how parents interact with their children. Parents who have experienced or witnessed corporal punishment can be inclined to adopt an authoritarian parenting style. They emphasize strict policies and obedience, believing that physical punishment is an effective manner of instilling discipline in their children. While parenting is a critical factor in child development and influences behavior, corporal punishment influences parental assessment of conformity and other disciplinary methods. It is often the primary cause of deviant behaviors and influences a child's choice of conformity (Cuartas, 2022). Common parenting styles include authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved parenting (Simons, 2021). These styles are distinctively defined by the degree of use of

physical punishment, deterring language, and degree of freedom accorded to children. In a 2014 longitudinal study by Lansford on corporal punishment, maternal warmth, and child adjustment in eight countries, authoritarian parenting was associated with the use of harsh behavioral deterrence mechanisms, including caning. According to the study, corporal punishment limited parents' consideration of other forms of discipline (Lansford & Rothenberg, 2021).

Child Abuse

Corporal punishment has been thought to influence perceptions of child abuse. Rather than being an effective method to improve child behavior, it normalized the use of violence among children (Gershoff, 2017). A 2021 study by Burlaka on effects of corporal punishment among Ukrainian college students established that there is a fine line between corporal punishment and child abuse. According to this study, family communication and satisfaction was influenced by corporal punishment, allowing condoning of bullying and victimization (Burlaka, 2021).   The dichotomy between physical abuse and physical punishment was a false one that legitimized violence against children (Burlaka, 2021). The study concluded that the use of corporal punishment is associated with other forms of child violence such as neglect, emotional abuse, and sexual assault.

Children exposed to corporal punishment are likely to experience shock and depression. Adults whose parents hit them as children or adolescents were shown more likely to be depressed than those whose parents did not (Heilmann et al., 2021). In a qualitative design informed by descriptive phenomenological inquiry on the shocks and

aftershocks of corporal punishment, Mwinjuma et al. (2018) established that the effect was proportionate to the severity of corporal punishment and was independent of the effects of poverty and drug abuse. This is likely to be reflected in exposed adults hitting their spouses or forming families riddled with incidences of violence.

Policy and Outcomes of Corporal Punishment in Cameroon

Current health promotion and disease prevention policies across Cameroon fail to consider the health implications resulting from violence. The guidelines, policies, and procedures for the use of corporal punishment were also a key variable for the study. The lawfulness of corporal punishment across Cameroon makes the country one of the leading global abusers of children according to Tangwe (2022). Cameroon's department of education provides regional guidelines and alternatives to punishing students corporally (Trinity, 2021) children believe that their subjection to corporal punishment is a personal affront and a reflection of their character, which results in their continuous disengagement from learning.

The structure of the disciplinary classroom management system across Cameroon relies on corporal punishment implemented by administrators (Trinity, 2021). School disciplinary policies, however, have a profound and lasting impact on learners' ability to remain in school. Emphasis on strict policies and the use of corporal punishment for unwanted behaviors has been linked to not only student suspensions but also increasingly unyielding responses of juvenile justice systems (Kindzeka, 2015).

Research Approach

Due to varied conceptions about punishment as depicted within the literature, the

study embodies qualitative research utilizing semi-structured interviews in an effort to further clarify perspectives of Cameroonians. Although surveys are a traditional way of conducting research, they are useful in non-experimental descriptive designs that seek to describe reality (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). It is also commonly used to collect information on attitudes and behavior. Some issues such as conceptions are best addressed by classical experimental designs where a representative sample of the entire population can be used to deduce information that is complex. The design allowed for exploration of social dynamics in teacher and parent conceptions, the attitudes towards corporal punishment, and the theoretical contexts to which such conceptions take precedence.

Summary and Transition

This chapter explored the research problem and the purpose of the study. The sources of literature were described along with the search technique employed. A review of theories of corporal punishment was offered, including social control theory, and deterrence theory. The literature review included major research themes pertaining to teacher and parent perspectives of corporal punishment and its effects. It explored the generational dynamics of corporal punishment, its history, existing attitudes on corporal punishment, and supporting and opposing views. The dangers of corporal punishment are explored together with the research approach.

The next chapter focuses on the methodology for the study. As part of a strategy to further address the research gaps, the section embodies a research design and rationale, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and a section summary. Although the issue of

corporal punishment offered an important context for the inquiry, the phenomenon of interest focuses on connecting gaps in parent and teacher perspectives of the impacts of its use on children of 16 years and below.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teacher and parent perspectives and experiences with regard to the use of corporal punishment with children across Cameroon. The focus is to identify teacher- and parent-related perspectives, as these influence the use of corporal punishment and public policy. This chapter offers a comprehensive account of the research design and the methodology adopted in analyzing the research questions. The chapter is configured into five major sections including the research design and rationale, the researcher's role, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and a section summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of the study was to understand teacher and parent conceptions of corporal punishment as a form of discipline. A semi structured interview was used to gather data relevant to the research questions:

- RQ 1: What are teachers' and parents' conceptions of corporal punishment as a behavior management, deterrence, and discipline tool?

- RQ 2: What are teachers' and parents' conceptions of the future psychological, emotional, and behavioral impact of corporal punishment?

The semi structured interview consisted of open-ended questions to allow for thick description and generation of rich data from participants. Using interviews to extract data from the study population has a foundation in the lens of interpretive philosophy (Cuthbertson et al., 2020). The research findings will inform future exploration of corporal punishment and teachers' and parents' conception of the phenomena. A

phenomenological approach to data analysis was the research tradition. Phenomenological studies describe rather than explain phenomena and begin with no hypotheses or preconceptions (Prasad, 2021). This makes it suitable for recognition of qualitative teacher and parent views in developing predictions about the psychological impacts of corporal punishment.

Role of the Researcher

I was tasked with recruiting the research population, designing the research, conducting semi structured interviews with respondents, collecting, and analyzing the responses, and synthesizing them to develop a conclusion which addresses the research questions of the study. I also developed survey instruments; planning, writing, and proofreading the semi structured interview questions based on the relevant literature. Similar to other qualitative researchers, I was the primary instrument of data analysis. Since I have personal predispositions on the topic of corporal punishment as a form of childhood discipline, I was tasked with identifying these biases, which can affect recruitment of participants, data collection, or interpretation of the data. I accounted for bias by using bracketing techniques, audit trails, and journaling.

Methodology

The section describes the processes of participant selection, instrumentation, and procedures employed for the study. It also explores the procedures for recruitment, participation, and study and the planned data analysis plan. The participant selection process includes a rationale for the respondent recruitment, criteria for participant selection, the role of saturation, and qualitative tradition in the determination of sample

size.

Participant Selection

Population

The study addresses teachers' and parents' perspectives and experiences of corporal punishment in southwest Cameroon. Up to 50% of school going children in Cameroon have reported being subjected to corporal punishment at school (African Stringers, 2023). The choice of this target population is informed by the fact that they are the primary custodians of child welfare and interact with children more than other populations. According to national and global statistics, the use of corporal punishment is prevalent among parents and teachers in southwest Cameroon, making it the ideal population for the study (African Stringers, 2023). The definition of parents, in this case, includes fathers, mothers, guardians, caregivers, or immediate family members, who are custodians of children within the targeted schools. In the 2015 census, the Southwest region had a population of 1.553 million people (GeoHive, 2015).

Sampling Strategy

The identified target population is parents and teachers due to their interaction with children and learners in childhood stages. An accessible population is identified from southwest Cameroon. Volunteer participants were screened for eligibility parameters that are described in the following section. School administrators were targeted to introduce the research to their teacher and parent population. Each element of the population had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the research if they met the selection criteria.

Criteria for Selection

In addressing the research questions, the overall selected criteria included:

- Participants must be 18 years old or older.

- Participants fluent in English and have access to online media (Facebook).

- Participants must have received corporal punishment as a child.

- Teacher participants must be government-employed.

- Teachers who have children at the school are excluded from the study.

- Parent participants would have children 16 years of age and below.

Saturation and Sample Size

Saturation occurs when there is a lack of new themes, ideas, or patterns being offered by participants (Sebele-Mpofu, 2020). For the sample size to reach saturation, use of consistent questions is necessary. When saturation has been attained, the addition of other participants may not add anything valuable to the study.

Instrumentation

I designed a questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument for this study. The data were gathered using a researcher-constructed qualitative semi structured interview (see Appendix). The instrument contains both demographic and qualitative perspective questions. The construction of the interview was based on questions linked to the relevant literature. The interview questions were well-connected to the research questions and to preceding questions by themes. The questions were also reviewed for bias in language to ensure that views were not imposed on the study participants through the wording of any of the questions. The interview was collected using a HIPPA

compliant secure platform on the internet.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection for the Study

The study was conducted in Manyu and Ndian divisions of southwest Cameroon. The population is English-speaking and similar in cultural practices. This region is easily accessible and has similar access rates to education. These schools were government owned institutions. Four schools were selected from Manyu and Ndian divisions, and the administrators of the schools were contacted about the research. The schools were selected based on administrator's response and accessibility to me. Participating administrators helped to forward flyers to parents and teachers. The first teachers and parents volunteering from each of the four schools were eligible to participate in the study.

The study anticipated approximately 12 participants to facilitate in-depth follow up questions. The administrators were asked to contact their teacher and parent population to request them to take part in the study. The volunteer participants completed the interview at times convenient to them. The study was conducted during unofficial hours, so teachers were required to take time away from their duties in the classroom. Participants were informed about the research and offered my contact information so that those willing to participate could reach out to me. The flyer to the administrators stated the requirements for teacher and parent participation. All the volunteer participants accepted to participate in the study by given a written consent.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis was used to answer the study's research questions relevant to parent and teacher experiences and perspectives on corporal punishment. Thematic analysis was used to deduce patterns within participant responses. Unlike many qualitative analyses, thematic analysis is not tied to a particular theoretical perspective (Maguire, 2017). This makes it a flexible method for deducing the diverse nature of responses expected from the study population (Maguire, 2017). NVivo software was used to organize interview data. The software was also assisted in data organization, storage, and analysis, and management of incoming information.

Data were analyzed based on Braun and Clarke's (2012) six-phase framework:

1. Familiarization with the semi structured interview response through reading through the text and taking initial notes.

2. Coding the responses to generate short meaningful labels for important aspects of the responses that were meaningful to the research questions.

3. Searching for common themes across each response to construct coherent and meaningful patterns.

4. Theme reviews were conducted to determine if they are convincing or compelling in analyzing the responses.

5. Naming and defining the themes identified was conducted to develop succinct and easily understandable names for each theme.

6. A write-up of analysis of the data is conducted. (Maguire, 2017)

I first familiarized myself with the data before generating initial codes. A search of initial

themes was then conducted on all the interviews. The aggregate of each semi structured interview question was also assessed for common themes and opinions. An analysis of participants' perspectives and experiences was performed according to how they are articulated during the interview. Discrepancies were analyzed along with other regular cases and according to the data they presented.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The study relied more on the richness of the information gathered from the respondents rather than the number of interviews completed. To address credibility concerns, the study population was clearly defined (Amankwaa, 2016). The questions were also made available to study participants and remained open for a 2-week duration. The data collected formed the basis of the study's conclusion. Summarized results from the sample were compared from other interview responses to assess if they varied, as well as the degree of their variation (Kyngäs, 2020). Results included verbatim responses from the selected sample to offer insights that supported the findings.

Transferability

Thick description of the participants' responses was used to promote transferability (Cohen, 2017). Qualitative data may not have similar themes or patterns because the sample population has different characteristics from the general population. Cameroon may have a different culture compared to other societies. Therefore, transferring the findings to other contexts might be problematic due to participant characteristics or population cultural differences.

Dependability

Audit trails and theme coding were used to ensure dependability. Audit trails involved a detailed description of how data were collected, while theme coding analyzed how themes were developed from the different study population's responses. The detailed description was a reflective appraisal of the study in the form of evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry taken (Connelly, 2016). The processes within the study were reported in detail.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the research study's conclusions could be confirmed and replicated by other researchers. Confirmability demonstrates that the data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination, but are clearly drawn from the data (Nassaji, 2020). For the findings to have confirmability, they must be objective and free from researcher bias. Objectivity in scientific research is often associated with the use of instruments that are less dependent on human skill and perception (Levitt et al., 2020). As a result, the findings were more reliable as they were not impacted by my subjectivity.

Ethical Procedures

Study participants were treated according to the Institutional Review Board's guidelines. I sought their informed consent for participation and their information and responses remained confidential. Informed consent forms describing the purpose of the study, procedures, risks, benefits, and confidentiality rules were given to each participant.

Human Treatment

All identifying information regarding participants and administrators was excluded from the final study to ensure confidentiality. Participants were also treated according to the Institutional Review Board's guidelines for informed content and confidentiality. Participants' data, including demographic information, was stored in a locked file cabinet and on password-protected computers. Information about participants was not disclosed to the administrators. Since the interview was conducted online, participants had the freedom to respond privately and in a place of their choosing. The estimated completion time was 45 minutes, and the 2-week duration offered maximum possible flexibility to the respondents. Participants had the choice to not answer questions or choose not to participate in the research at any point during the study.

Informed Consent

Informed consent forms were distributed to all participants prior to commencement of the research. The forms highlighted the purpose of the study, study procedures, risks involved, benefits, and highlight confidentiality. The forms included a section in which participants who understood the study and wished to confidentially volunteer indicated their consent via email by responding with the words, "I consent."

Ethics Related to Recruitment

To avoid possible coercion to participate by administrators, my contact information were offered for teachers and parents willing to volunteer to independently reach out. Information about participants who were interviewed was not revealed to the administrators. The study was introduced in a manner that allowed participants adequate

time and ability to freely consider whether they were willing to participate. An accurate and clear description of the study was highlighted in the informed consent form to avoid possible recruitment misconceptions.

Data Treatment

All participants' responses and personal details were separated to ensure confidentiality. Codes representing each participant were used in place of their names. The study took into consideration legal compliance for anonymizing personally identifiable information to protect against violations of privacy. All collected data, including questionnaires from interviews, will be stored in a private database for 5 years after which they will be destroyed.

Summary

Chapter 3 demonstrates how the research design has addressed the research questions. It identified the phenomenological research approach as the most appropriate research tradition to apply. The role of the researcher was identified as recruiting the research population, designing the research, conducting semi structured interviews with respondents, collecting, and analyzing the responses, and synthesizing them to develop a conclusion. Participant selection took place in four schools of southwest Cameroon, a region that has high prevalence of corporal punishment. The study included 12 participants who underwent semi structured interviews to provide data addressing the research questions. NVivo software was used for data management, specifically organization, storage, and analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter reports accumulated data for this study and is organized to offer

initial findings based on the research questions, which were designed to gather teachers'

and parents' perspectives on corporal punishment as a behavior management, deterrence,

and discipline tool and the future psychological, emotional, and behavioral impact of

corporal punishment. Results offer insights that may later lead to additional commentary

and additional considerations. Chapter 4 presents the results of the qualitative exploration

of this study of corporal punishment as perceived and experienced by teachers and

parents in Cameroon. Through in-depth semi structured interviews, these key

stakeholders shared their candid insights and perspectives and lived reality. The chapter

begins with describing the research setting, introducing the participants and their

demographics, the data collection process, and then moved to outcomes. Data collection

will also be described including location, frequency, and duration of data collection and

how the data were recorded. Variations in data collection from the plan in Chapter 3 are

also presented. The chapter has an analysis of the evidence of trustworthiness, including

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Setting

The study was conducted in southwest Cameroon among four selected schools.

The four schools were selected from Manyu and Indian divisions, and the administrators

of the schools contacted about the research. The population was English-speaking,

similar in cultural practices, and the region was easily accessible. Teachers and parents

were the participants for this study of corporal punishment perspectives. They were

chosen as the primary population that children grow and interact from their infancy all the way to their adulthood. Teachers and parents are the core stakeholders within the school and home and shape ideas about the use of deterrence to ensure conformity with social norms and values. According to UN Human Rights, the use of corporal punishment and incidences of child-related violence were prevalent within the home and school settings across Cameroon (Gershoff 2017). Resolutions adopted by Cameroon's ministry of education take into consideration parent and teacher input prior to implementation (Trinity, 2021).

Demographics

Participants included seven teachers ($n = 7$) and five ($n = 5$) parents volunteering, making it a total of 12 respondents ($N = 12$). The participants were recruited for the study based on the following criteria:

- They were 18 years old or older.

- They were fluent in English and had access to online media (Facebook).

- They had received corporal punishment as a child.

- Teacher participants were government employed.

- Teachers who had children at the school were excluded from the study.

- Parent participants had children 16 years of age and below.

There were six parents and teachers from Manyu division, and six parents and teachers from Ndian division making a total of 12 participants (see Table 2).

Table 2

Participant Demographics

	Participants	Number	Percentage
Occupation	Teachers	7	58%
	Parents	5	42%
Gender	Male	8	67%
	Female	4	33%
Age	18-30 years	8	67%
	31-50 years	4	33%

Data Collection

The data collection process was initiated following institutional review board approval (approval no. 09-13-23-0630185). The study involved administering semi structured interview questions to participants through an online platform (Facebook; McDowall 2018). First, the participants were offered a consent form that informed them of what they agreed to do and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. They then participated in the study at their convenience. The study was conducted in Manyu and Ndian divisions of southwest Cameroon. Each participant was interviewed once with an estimated time between 40–45 minutes. The study took a duration of 2 weeks with a follow-up interview. The 14 interview questions were conducted at discreet locations chosen by each participant. The data was recorded using a cell phone and uploaded into Microsoft word for transcription, using coded numbers C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10, C11, C12 to ensure confidentiality of the participants. The participants were given an opportunity to listen to their data and offer comments about the accuracy. The audio-recording and transcriptions from the recording were stored in my computer that was password protected to maintain confidentiality. The demographic data collected

included age, gender, and occupation. Participants were reminded that their data is kept

confidential, and all materials will be destroyed at the end of 5 years according to Walden

University IRB policies and guidelines.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to deduce patterns within participant responses.

Unlike many qualitative analyses, thematic analysis is not tied to a particular theoretical

perspective (Maguire, 2017). This makes it a flexible method for deducing the diverse

nature of responses expected from the study population (Maguire, 2017). NVivo software

was used to organize interview data. The software was also assisted in data organization,

storage, and analysis, and management of incoming information.

Data were analyzed based on Braun and Clarke's (2012) six-phase framework:

1.   Familiarization with the semi-structured interview response through

reading through the text and taking initial notes.

2.   Coding the responses to generate short meaningful labels for important

aspects of the responses that were meaningful to the research questions.

3.   Searching for common themes across each response to construct coherent

and meaningful patterns.

4.   Theme reviews were conducted to determine if they are convincing or

compelling in analyzing the responses.

5.   Naming and defining the themes identified was conducted to develop

succinct and easily understandable names for each theme.

6.   A write-up of analysis of the data is conducted.

The themes that emerged during the data analysis provided direct and indirect answers to the two research questions. The thematic analysis reveals five themes from the data: (a) diverse disciplinary approaches, (b) corporal punishment, (c) emotional and psychological impact, (d) non-violent alternatives, (e) generational shift and cultural norms.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To address credibility concerns, the study population was clearly defined (Amankwaa, 2016). The questions were also made available to study participants and remained open for a 2-week duration. The data collected formed the basis of the study's conclusion. The study relied more on the richness of the information gathered from the respondents rather than the number of interviews completed. Summarized results from the sample were compared from other interview responses to assess if they varied as well as the degree of their variation (Kyngäs 2020). Results utilized verbatim responses from the selected sample to offer insights and quotations that supported the findings. After 14 days, participants were provided with their interview summaries to check them for accuracy and comprehensibility. Respondents provided their feedback, including information not contained in the interviews that should have been included.

Transferability

Transferability is an approach to definitive trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). A 45-minute duration was offered to the respondents to complete their interview. It was estimated that the time was enough for each participant

to listen, understand, and respond to the interview questions without time pressure. Thick description of the participants' responses was used to promote transferability potential (Cohen, 2017). Qualitative data may not have similar themes or patterns because the sample population has different characteristics from the general population. Cameroon may have a different culture compared to other societies. Therefore, transferring the findings to other contexts might not be possible.

Dependability

Audit trails and theme coding were used to ensure dependability. Audit trails involved a detailed description of how data were collected, while theme coding analyzed how themes were developed from the different study population's responses. The detailed description was a reflective appraisal of the study in the form of evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry taken (Connelly, 2016). The processes within the study were reported in detail.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the research study's conclusions could be confirmed by other researchers. Confirmability demonstrates that the data and interpretations of the findings are clearly drawn from the data (Nassaji, 2020). For the findings to have confirmability, they must be objective and free from researcher bias. Objectivity in scientific research is often associated with the use of instruments that are less dependent on human skill and perception (Levitt et al., 2020). To avoid bias I was able to organize my notes for continued reference and to keep detailed records of the collected data. The use of self-appraisal and bracketing in each stage of the collection and

analysis process also encouraged confirmability and decreased potential for subjectivity.

Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perspectives of teacher and parent use of corporal punishment. Other elements included the perceptions of corporal punishment as a form of discipline, its effectiveness, severity, use in child behavior, and perceptions about emotional or psychological effects. Specifically, the research focused on the following questions.

- What are the emerging perspectives of parents and teachers on corporal punishment as a practice in Cameroon?

- What are the psychological effects of corporal punishment on children 16 years and below as perceived by parents and teachers living in Cameroon?

The results are organized to offer teacher and parent perceptions on each interview question domain and the overall outcomes. To discuss the research questions, the teacher and parent responses to each question presented in the interview were summed based on occupation, and perception of corporal punishment. The 5 themes that emerged included (1) Diverse disciplinary approaches, (2) Effectiveness of Corporal punishment, (3) Emotional and psychological Impact, (4) Non-violent alternatives, (5) Generational shift and cultural norms.

Parent Responses

The responses from parents in the interview tables provide valuable insights into Cameroonian parents' perspectives on corporal punishment and its psychological effects on children. A summary may be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Parent Responses

Code	Diverse Disciplinary Approaches	Effectiveness of Corporal Punishment	Emotional and Psychological Impact	Non-Violent Methods	Impact of Education on preference for Corporal Methods	Persistence of Corporal Punishment in Case of Disobedience and Lies
C1	Time-outs, grounding, communication	Effective in some cases. Temporarily improves behavior.	Have negative emotional effects, fear, and resentment	Prefer non-violent methods	Tradition and family upbringing	Would not recommend
C5	Reward system and dialogue	Ineffective, prefers dialogue.	It damages trust, fear, and shame	Prefer non-violent methods	Educated parents discourage Corporal Punishment	Would not recommend
C6	Time-outs, grounding, and communication	Effective for behavior modification	Guilt, fear, and resentment	Prefer non-violent methods	Tradition and family upbringing	Would use in some instances
C7	Time-outs, grounding, and communication	Effective in some cases. Behavior modification	Negative effects, fear, and shame	Prefer non-violent methods	Professional training, and research on corporal punishment.	Would use in some instances
C9	Time-out and positive reinforcement	Ineffective, prefer positive reinforcement.	Lack of trust, fear, and shame	Prefer non-violent methods	Master's degree holder, read psychological books and research on child upbringing	Would not recommend

Theme 1: Diverse Disciplinary Approaches

The parents' responses 5 of 5 highlighted the diversity of disciplinary methods employed by Cameroonian parents in raising children aged 16 years and below. The methods ranged from communication and time-outs to loss of privileges and verbal correction. The diversity reflected the multifaceted nature of parenting in Cameroon, with parents employing a mix of strategies to instill discipline in their children. The diversity also suggested that 5 of 5 parents are open to alternative discipline approaches, which was crucial for addressing the research question.

C1 stated that "No, as a parent this is seen as the best form of correction, but I prefer a non-violent form of discipline." C6 and C7 also preferred alternative punishment such as "Time-outs, grounding, and communication." C5 indicated that they prefer "discussion, and reward system" while C9 preferred "positive reinforcement, and discussion."

Theme 2: Effectiveness of Corporal Punishment

However, when it came to corporal punishment, the parents' responses revealed mixed perspectives. While three of five (C1, C6, C7) considered it effective in specific cases, they emphasized the importance of using it sparingly. C1 said, "It is effective in some cases." C6 stated, "It is effective when used sparingly." C7 indicated, "It may be useful in some instances to correct behavior."

Two of 5 (C5, C9) considered corporal punishment ineffective. C5 indicated that "corporal punishment is rarely effective." C9 stated that "Corporal punishment should not

be used at all as it is not effective."

Theme 3: Emotional and Psychological Impact

The parents' responses also provided valuable insights into their views on corporal punishment as a practice. All the parent participants acknowledged that it is used in Cameroon but with reservations. C1 said, "I believe corporal punishment can temporarily improve behavior, but at the same time may have negative emotional effects." C5 indicated that "In my community, some people believe in corporal punishment while others don't encourage corporal punishment, these are parents that are educated." C9 indicated that, "In my community, most people are against it, because of its negative effects on children."

They express concerns about its negative effects on trust and relationships with their children. C9 stated, "Corporal punishment produces immediate compliance, but it also causes fear, and resentment among children." C5 indicated that, "I believe corporal punishment can temporarily improve behavior, but at the same time may have negative emotional effects.

Parents did not wholeheartedly endorse corporal punishment and were aware of potential harm it could cause in parent-child relationships. C1 reported "personally, I experienced corporal punishment as a form of discipline. It negatively impacted me because over time I became used to it and became more defiant in behavior." C6 also noted "I encourage other forms of discipline to corporal punishment, because of the resentment I had for my parents and the negative impact like fear and traumatic experiences that I suffered."

Theme 4: Non-Violent Alternatives

The responses of 5 of 5 non- violent alternatives also revealed parents' strong preference for alternatives to corporal punishment. C7 said, "No, I prefer a non-violent form of discipline." C8 reported, "I prefer a non-violent form of discipline. There is no justification to punish a child in such a way that it will cause harm." While C9 indicated, "I would prefer a non-violent form of discipline." They emphasized the importance of communication, dialogue, and positive reinforcement in disciplining their children. This preference for non-violent methods aligned with the broader global discourse on positive parenting and suggests that parents in Cameroon are opened to adopting alternative approaches to discipline.

Theme 5: Impact of Education on preference for Corporal Methods

C9, who is against corporal punishment, indicated that" I received a good education, as a master's degree holder, I have read psychological books and do a lot of research on child upbringing." C7 attributed his opinion on corporal punishment on, "professional training, and research on corporal punishment." C6 stated "In my community, some people believe in corporal punishment while others don't encourage corporal punishment, these are parents that are educated."

Theme 6: Use of Corporal Punishment in Case of Disobedience and Lies

Participants indicated their preference for corporal punishment in cases involving disobedience and lying. C1 stated that, "No, as a parent this is seen as the best form of correction, but I prefer a non-violent form of discipline." C3 said, "No, there is no justification in using corporal punishment against children. It damages trust among

children and adults and strains communication. So, for me, I prefer a non-violent form of

discipline."

Teachers' Responses

The responses from teachers in the interview tables provided valuable insights

into Cameroonian teachers' perspectives on corporal punishment and its psychological

effects on children (see Table 4). These insights contributed significantly to the

understanding of the research question by revealing the complex dynamics surrounding

corporal punishment in educational settings and its potential long-term consequences.

Table 4

Teacher Responses

Teacher	Diverse Disciplinary Approaches	Effectiveness of Corporal Punishment	Emotional and Psychological Impact	Non-Violent Methods	Persistence of Corporal Punishment in Case of Disobedience and Lies
C2	Loss of privileges and dialogue	Effective in some cases. Temporarily improves behavior	Emotional trauma, scared	Prefer non-violent methods	Should be applied at times
C3	Loss of privileges, and time-out	Ineffective, Causes fear and shame.	Emotional harm, fear, and shame	Prefer non-violent methods	Should not be used
C4	Loss of privileges, and time-out	Effective, modify behavior.	Poor self-esteem, lack of trust	Prefer non-violent methods	May be used
C8	Time-out, and positive reinforcement	Ineffective, erodes trust.	Negative effect, erodes trust	Prefer non-violent methods	Should not be used
C10	Loss of privileges and dialogue	Effective but causes fear and resentment.	Fear and resentment	Prefer non-violent methods	Should be used
C11	Time-outs, grounding, and communication	Effective in some cases, Behavior improvement	Lack of trust and communication	Prefer violent if necessary	Should not be used
C12	Time-outs, grounding, and communication	Ineffective, causes low self-esteem and hatred.	Causes low-self-esteem and low self-worth.	Prefer non-violent methods	Should not be used

Theme 1: Diverse Disciplinary Approaches

The teachers' responses highlight the diversity of disciplinary methods employed in Cameroonian schools. These methods ranged from verbal correction and loss of privileges to time-outs and grounding. This diversity indicated that teachers, like parents, utilize a mix of disciplinary strategies to maintain order and discipline in the classroom. C3 indicated, "I will encourage other forms of discipline that are not harmful to children." While C4 stated prefers, "Loss of privileges, time-outs."C11 recommended "Time-outs, grounding, and communication" while C10 preferred "Verbal correction, and loss of privileges."

Theme 2: Effectiveness of Corporal Punishment

When reflecting on their own experiences of discipline as students, teachers' responses vary. C2 stated that "it has positive outcomes" while C10 said, "It is effective for behavior modification." C11 indicated that "It is effective in some cases." C3 reported, "Corporal punishment brings immediate results but can emotionally impact children. That is why I will advocate for other mild forms of discipline such as dialogue or loss of privileges." C8 indicated that "I prefer a non-violent form of discipline. there is no justification to punish a child in such a way that it will cause harm."

Theme 3: Emotional and Psychological Impact

Responses from Cameroonian teachers in the interview tables provided a nuanced understanding of corporal punishment and its psychological effects on children in educational settings. 4 of 7 teachers (C2, C4, C10, C11) acknowledged its potential

effectiveness, they were cautioned about its drawbacks and prefer non-violent alternatives. C2 revealed "I don't believe corporal punishment can improve a child's behavior; it has negative effects such as emotional trauma." C4 indicated," It brings quick results but causes emotional harm." C10 indicated that "Corporal punishment produces immediate compliance, but it also causes fear, and resentment among children." C11 stated that, "I believe corporal punishment can temporarily improve behavior, but at the same time may have negative emotional effects such as lack of trust and communication." The responses aligned with the global trend toward positive classroom management and suggested that teachers in Cameroon are opened to exploring alternative disciplinary approaches.

Theme 4: Non-Violent Alternative

The teachers' responses underscore the importance of implementing non-violent alternatives. C8 stated that, "I prefer a non-violent form of discipline. There is no justification to punish a child in such a way that it will cause harm." C4 indicated that, "Yes, when necessary, but I prefer alternative forms of discipline." C10 indicated that, "No, it is not the best form of correction, I prefer alternative forms of discipline." C2 stated that, "No, there is no justification in using corporal punishment against children. It damages trust among children and adults and strains communication."

Theme 5: Persistence of Corporal Punishment in Case of Disobedience and Lies

Interviewees had mixed opinions on the use of corporal punishment in cases of disobedience and lies. C2 revealed, "I experienced corporal punishment as a form of discipline growing up till, I was 15. It negatively impacted me emotionally. I never had

an honest communication with my parents. I must tell lies, to save myself from being beaten." C8 indicated that, "I have administered corporal punishment in cases of Disruption and cheating in class.," while C11 reported that, "I have administered corporal punishment in cases of disobedience and lies telling."

Summary

Cameroonian parents and teachers from two different school district's viewed corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool that can produce immediate compliance in children. In this sense, both groups perceived it as a means of instilling discipline and obedience. Despite acknowledging its immediate effectiveness, both parents and teachers expressed significant concerns about the potential negative effects of corporal punishment on children. Both parents and teachers recognized that corporal punishment could evoke negative emotions such as fear, anger, shame, and guilt in children. They were concerned about the emotional distress it may cause and how it can affect a child's self-esteem and mental well-being, Parents and teachers expressed concern that corporal punishment can erode trust between adults and children. They worried that it may harm the parent-child or teacher-student relationship, potentially leading to strained interactions and communication breakdowns.

Some parents and teachers anticipated long-term consequences of corporal punishment, such as possible aggression in children or the development of negative attitudes toward authority figures. They questioned whether the short-term gains in behavior correction were worth the potential long-term costs. Both parents and teachers expressed a strong preference for alternative disciplinary methods that did not involve

physical punishment. They emphasized the importance of communication, dialogue, positive reinforcement, and discussion as more effective and less harmful ways to manage behavior. This preference aligned with the broader global trend toward positive and non-violent discipline approaches. Parents and teachers also recognized the need for awareness and education regarding alternative disciplinary methods. They highlighted the importance of training, professional development, and access to resources that promote positive discipline practices. Teachers attribute their evolving views on discipline to books and educational materials on parenting and child psychology. Some respondents, particularly among teachers, noted a shift in societal attitudes.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' and parents' perspectives of corporal punishment and its psychological implications. The findings of this study shed light on Cameroonian parents' and teachers' perspectives regarding corporal punishment and its psychological effects on children, answering the research questions on teachers' and parents' perspectives on corporal punishment as a behavior management, deterrence, and discipline tool and the future psychological, emotional, and behavioral impact of corporal punishment.

The overall aim of this section is to draw comparisons between the interview responses and existing literature on the efficacy and implications of corporal punishment. Chapter 5 examines findings from research and considered how they can inform better practices moving forward. The chapter addressed the complexities surrounding corporal punishment in both school and home settings, with the aim to understand the various cultural, social, and psychological factors at play. The following discussion synthesizes the key findings, their implications, and the broader context in which they are situated.

Interpretation of Findings

Theme 1: Diverse Disciplinary Approaches

The responses from both parents and teachers highlighted the diversity of disciplinary approaches that were employed in Cameroon. Both groups utilized a range of strategies, including verbal correction, loss of privileges, time outs, and grounding. This diversity suggested that caregivers and educators in Cameroon were open to employing a mix of disciplinary methods, recognizing that different situations required different

approaches. This finding is in line with research emphasizing the importance of understanding the multifaceted nature of discipline for children's rights in education (Lundy & O'Lynn, 2019). Moreover, the recognition of diverse disciplinary approaches within Cameroon suggested willingness among caregivers and educators to draw from a toolkit of strategies. This adaptability indicated openness to considering alternative disciplinary methods and a departure from rigid adherence to a single approach. It emphasized the importance of fostering an environment where caregivers and educators can access resources and training in a range of discipline techniques to better address the evolving needs of children.

Theme 2: Effectiveness of Corporal Punishment

The responses from Cameroonian parents and teachers in the interview provided a complex view of corporal punishment and its psychological effects on children. While some parents and teachers considered it effective in specific cases, they expressed concerns about its emotional impact and preferred non-violent alternatives. Perceptions about the efficacy of corporal punishment largely remain influenced by their past experiences, ideas about behavior, and intended outcomes. Corporal punishment is considered inhumane by many people, but it has found application in different scenarios, and some have registered positive outcomes. For instance, Malaysian courts, schools, and homes, use corporal punishment as a disciplinary approach, and this has a huge impact on the attitudes of the recipients toward this form of discipline (Chung, 2022). Those who have positive outcomes in life after going through corporal punishment are used by the proponents as a demonstration of the positive impact of the disciplinary approach. They

tend to ignore the negative outcomes and the idea that these results vary across individuals. However, though corporal punishment may achieve positive results among some learners, it may have detrimental outcomes on others.

The responses of participants in this study were found to align with the broader global shift toward positive parenting practices and suggested that parents and teachers in Cameroon are open to exploring alternative disciplinary approaches (see Penev, 2021). Corporal punishment has serious physical and psychological effects on a child and its negative effects outweigh positive effects (Penev, 2021). In this study, the parents' and teachers' reflections on their own experiences and the community response highlighted the influence of cultural norms and generational influences on parenting practices. Participants responded to the research questions of this study indicating a desire to consider alternatives to corporal discipline methods in Cameroon.

Theme 3: Emotional and Psychological Impact

The concern about fear resulting for children and young people as a result of corporal punishment was noted by participants. Many participants voiced their unease over the potential for children to associate adults, including parents and teachers, with fear and intimidation when corporal punishment was used. This association was seen to engender a climate of anxiety and trepidation within the child, making them fearful of authority figures and hindering healthy emotional development. Previous research indicated that fear may inhibit open communication between the child and their caregiver or teacher, as the child may suppress their emotions out of fear of retribution (Henriksen et al., 2021).

Shame and guilt were also frequently cited as potential emotional fallout from corporal punishment. Participants expressed the view that being subjected to physical punishment could induce feelings of shame and guilt in children. They highlighted the emotional burden that children may carry, feeling responsible for their own mistreatment. This internalization of blame could have profound and enduring psychological consequences, potentially impacting self-esteem and self-worth. The erosion of trust also emerged as a significant concern among parents and teachers. The use of corporal punishment was seen as potentially damaging to the trust-based relationships between caregivers, educators, and children. Participants recognized that children might perceive the individuals responsible for their care and education as a source of harm, undermining the fundamental relationships that are vital for healthy child development, both at home and in the educational setting.

The participants' reservations regarding the emotional and psychological toll of corporal punishment persisted despite an acknowledgment of its potential short-term effectiveness in behavior modification. This highlighted a tension within Cameroonian society—an awareness of the potential for immediate behavior correction juxtaposed with a deep-seated concern about the long-term emotional and psychological consequences. This aligned with extensive research that has consistently shown the detrimental effects of corporal punishment on children's psychological well-being (e.g., Heilmann et al., 2021). Despite acknowledging its potential effectiveness, many participants expressed reservations regarding corporal punishment due to these emotional and psychological concerns.

Theme 4: Non-Violent Alternatives

A noteworthy aspect of the findings from this study was the preference among a substantial portion of participants for non-violent alternatives to corporal punishment. Many of this study's participants, both parents and teachers, advocated for disciplinary methods that avoid physical harm and instead emphasize positive reinforcement, open communication, dialogue, and other non-physical approaches. This sentiment aligned with the broader global movement toward the adoption of positive discipline methods, which emphasizes constructing and nurturing relationships between adults and children (Cankaya et al., 2023).

Participants' preference for non-violent alternatives to corporal punishment underscored a fundamental shift in attitudes and approaches to discipline within the Cameroonian context. Rather than relying on punitive measures that inflict pain and fear, parents and teachers were inclined to employ strategies that prioritized constructive engagement and communication. This was not merely a theoretical preference but rather reflected a practical willingness among caregivers and educators to embrace alternative methods that prioritized the holistic well-being and developmental needs of children. One notable aspect of this preference was the emphasis on positive reinforcement. Participants articulated the view that acknowledging and rewarding desired behaviors could be a potent tool for encouraging children to make positive choices. This approach aligned closely with the principles of positive discipline, which emphasize the importance of reinforcing good behavior through encouragement and positive feedback rather than resorting to punitive measures (Cankaya et al., 2023). It signified a recognition among

participants that nurturing a child's sense of self-worth and intrinsic motivation is more effective in the long run than using fear or physical pain as motivators.

Open communication and dialogue also emerged as central elements of non-violent discipline preferences. Participants emphasized the significance of fostering an environment where children felt safe to express themselves and engage in constructive conversations about their behavior. This emphasis on dialogue echoed the principles of positive discipline, which prioritize building healthy, two-way communication channels between adults and children (Cankaya et al., 2023). These authors further established that children with well-developed collaborative skills built on receptive and expressive language have an easier time adapting to different circumstances and therefore lower chances of defiant behavior. It signified an understanding among participants that engaging children in conversations about their actions and consequences can be a powerful means of teaching responsibility and encouraging thoughtful decision-making.

Moreover, the alignment of Cameroonian parents' and teachers' preferences for non-violent alternatives with the global positive discipline movement reflected a growing awareness of the importance of respectful and nurturing relationships in child-rearing and education (Penev, 2021). The global shift towards positive discipline methods emphasizes the role of adults in modeling respectful behavior, fostering empathy, and promoting mutual understanding. (Penev, 2021). This study indicated that communities in Cameroon appreciated the need for treating children with dignity and being mindful of their physical and psychological wellbeing.

Theme 5: Impact of Education on preference for Corporal Methods

To understand the views of Cameroonian parents on corporal punishment and its psychological effects on children, it is essential to consider how education has shaped their preference for using physical discipline. Education has a significant role in shaping what people believe and how they approach discipline. Investigating how parents' educational backgrounds influence their view on corporal punishment provided insights into the cultural and societal factors at play. Educational level has been found to erode support of physical punishment and to have a positive impact on encouraging alternative methods like positive reinforcement (Heilmann et al., 2021).

The challenge of addressing the entrenched cultural norms highlighted the complexities involved in transitioning toward alternative disciplinary methods. It necessitates a delicate balance between honoring cultural traditions and evolving to meet the changing needs and understandings of modern society. The parents and teachers, with their openness to alternative methods, can play a pivotal role in driving change, if they are supported by broader societal awareness and education on the potential harms of corporal punishment. Research conducted by Clemens et al., (2020) aimed at assessing the association of authoritarianism, right-wing attitudes, and affirmation of corporal punishment with focus on the transgenerational transmission of corporal punishment. The researchers established that increased support of different forms of corporal punishment was directly associated with authoritarian aggression and submission as well a close link between social political ideologies and corporal punishment. These findings indicated that corporal punishment in society is a multifaceted vice with many proponents even in

corridors of power and therefore joint efforts would be required to cause change.

Theme 6: Persistence of Corporal Punishment in Case of Disobedience and Lies

Examining why corporal punishment has persisted in cases of lying and disobedience sheds light on the deep-rooted cultural norms and disciplinary traditions in Cameroonian communities. Several participants also attributed the prevalence of corporal punishment in Cameroon to deeply entrenched cultural norms and traditions. This finding resonated with the work of Curran et al. (2019), who emphasized the role of cultural factors in shaping disciplinary practices. Consecutive generations of parents and teachers in Cameroon have perpetuated the acceptance of corporal punishment as an essential and even necessary aspect of discipline.

Exploring why people still resort to physical punishment in specific situations helps uncover the social dynamics that keep these practices alive. It has been found that some parents and teachers may not necessarily support corporal punishment, but they accept the practice of addressing lying and disobedience. It is important to understand why parents and teachers justify the use of corporal punishment despite its acknowledged negative impact on children's wellbeing.

Connection of Results to Theoretical Base

Central to this analysis is the principle of cultural relativism, which underscores the significance of respecting and engaging with the cultural heritage and values that underpin disciplinary practices in this unique setting. The Cameroon scenario provided insights into the larger problem and the impact of corporal punishment across the world and the fact that it is a practice partially protected by culture and beliefs makes it a

delicate situation to navigate. However, embracing the insights of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, it is clear that various factors at different levels, including the individual, family, community, and society, interact to shape attitudes towards corporal punishment (Evans,2020). Study participants noted that adults with more education were less inclined toward corporal punishment, a societal change that has been increasing over time.

Limitations of the Study

Although the interview questions were refined to ensure they could easily be understood, it was almost impossible to establish whether some respondents experienced difficulties answering the questions. There was no definitive way to ensure that the respondents had answered the full intention of the questions. This can be a challenge for reliability, especially in replication of the research. The number of respondents that completed the interview ($n= 12$) was small and may not have been representative of the entire sample. This implies that the summary estimates may not be generalizable for future studies. Considering the qualitative nature of this study, employing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design could offer a comprehensive understanding. Integrating qualitative insights with a quantitative phase might provide a broader scope for generalizability, allowing statistical analysis to complement the qualitative patterns identified in the initial qualitative phase. Additionally, a large-scale qualitative investigation involving diverse regions or populations within Cameroon might offer richer insights that could potentially be more broadly applied within the specified cultural context.

Due to the recent shifts in national legislations about the use of corporal punishment, few literatures have been published on the phenomenon. The limited pool of literature presented a challenge in obtaining high-quality studies that ascertain consensus. It also limited the comparison of the study results with existing literature on the impacts of corporal punishment on Cameroonian children. Specifically, while controversies over the use of corporal punishment were well represented in several studies, there is limited research explicitly examining the impact of corporal punishment on Cameroonian children's psychological wellbeing. It's important to note that the focus of this study primarily centered on understanding participants' perspectives regarding corporal punishment, including their concerns about children's psychological wellbeing and the dynamics of the adult-child relationship.

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Recommendations

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Pathways for Holistic Child Discipline and Advocacy for Cultural Adaptation

The study's insights, though drawn from a limited participant pool, provide a directional path for extensive research using quantitative or mixed-method designs. This further research should involve a diverse and more extensive sample to comprehensively assess prevalent disciplinary practices, including corporal punishment, and their impact on children's well-being. Moreover, this expanded research should delve into the evolving cultural norms shaping discipline approaches, reflecting the nuanced context of Cameroon.

A critical exploration lies in understanding the effectiveness of collaborative efforts among educational institutions, governmental bodies, and child welfare

organizations in promoting non-violent disciplinary methods. By examining the efficacy
of such collaborations, foundational steps can be taken towards nurturing a culture of
discipline that embraces non-violence. Additionally, these investigations should focus on
cultural adaptability, ensuring that strategies respect and integrate diverse cultural norms
prevalent across Cameroon.

Exploration into a larger, more representative sample is crucial to verify if the
perspectives and concerns highlighted by the participants resonate with the broader
population. This larger-scale study, employing a quantitative or mixed-method approach,
could solidify and validate the views expressed in this study, enabling more concrete and
reliable recommendations for future action.

Ultimately, a more comprehensive understanding of prevailing disciplinary
practices, encompassing both traditional and alternative methods, is necessary. By
acknowledging and examining these varied approaches, Cameroon can pave the way for
a holistic and culturally adaptive approach to child discipline. This approach should echo
the sentiments expressed in this study and align with the evolving cultural norms of
society, fostering a safer and more nurturing environment for children's holistic
development.

Recommendations for Practice

Given the diverse disciplinary approaches employed by Cameroonian parents and
teachers, it is imperative to develop and implement comprehensive training programs.
These programs should not only address traditional methods but also emphasize the
importance of non-violent alternatives. Parenting and teacher training should be

culturally sensitive, readily accessible, and encourage a shift towards positive discipline methods. This initiative can foster a shared understanding of effective discipline techniques, ensuring that parents and educators are well-equipped to navigate the complex landscape of child discipline in Cameroon.

Moreover, to address the ambivalence towards corporal punishment and promote non-violent alternatives, there is a need for widespread awareness and education campaigns. Schools, community organizations, and government agencies should collaborate to develop and disseminate resources that emphasize the benefits of open communication, dialogue, and positive reinforcement. These campaigns should also highlight the potential emotional and psychological impacts of corporal punishment, with a focus on rebuilding trust and nurturing healthy parent-child relationships. The content of these campaigns should align with evolving cultural norms and generational shifts, providing parents and teachers with updated information and guidance to support modern expectations while respecting cultural values.

Implications

Positive Social Change

This study may be useful to the promotion of upholding of international law on human rights and a rules-based system. The research reiterated the demand for healthy resolutions to misbehavior among children and indicated the readiness of parents and teachers to engage in these. It also promoted the recognition of the UN Conventions on Child Rights that established the sources of international child rights as based on treaties and conventions, general principles of law, customs, and judicial decisions and teachings.

The study can act as a link between scholarship and practice to develop learners' understanding of ways to manage the psychological impacts of physical punishment. Students can deepen their critical thinking skills, strengthen research abilities, and learn specific techniques in areas such as conflict transformation and social change.

Considering that the study involved analysis of experiences, views, and attitudes, it informed behavior-sensitive programming with relevance to interactions between contexts and interventions. The definition of new behavioral and deterrence parameters through analysis of the impact of corporal punishment may allow for sensitization of acceptable disciplinary measures in existing educational reforms. The study expanded the scope of relevance when assessing the impact of political decisions. This championed the consideration of psychological recommendations and capacity over the reinforcement of rhetoric on physical punishment. The examination of shortfalls of current acceptance of corporal punishment through case study could further inform promotion of healthy teaching and parenting roles.

Theoretical Implications

The study's findings have practical implications for understanding and improving child discipline practices in Cameroon. However, it is essential to recognize that these implications also have theoretical significance, as they challenge and expand existing theories and concepts related to child discipline. While the study primarily focused on the perspectives and practices of parents and teachers, the insights gained can inform broader theoretical debates and discussions within the field of child development and education.

One key theoretical implication is related to the diverse disciplinary approaches

employed by Cameroonian parents and the ambivalence toward corporal punishment. This diversity challenges conventional theories of discipline, deterrence, and behavior management. It raises questions about the applicability of these theories in a cultural context where multiple disciplinary methods are utilized. The study's findings call for a reevaluation of these theories in a global context, acknowledging the need for more inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches.

Furthermore, the study identified discernible generational differences in attitudes and observed the evolution of cultural norms surrounding corporal punishment among the perspectives of teachers and parents. These findings suggest the emergence of potential shifts in theoretical perspectives within the context of this specific study. The observed differences and evolving norms, as perceived by teachers and parents, may challenge traditional psychological and educational theories within the boundaries of the study's focus on corporal punishment and parenting practices. The role of culture, tradition, and societal change in shaping parenting practices challenged traditional psychological and educational theories. This suggested the need for a more dynamic and context-aware theoretical framework that can better account for the complex interplay of cultural values, generational influences, and evolving societal expectations.

In conclusion, while the primary focus of this study was on practical insights and recommendations for practice, the theoretical implications were equally valuable. They encouraged scholars and theorists in the fields of child development, psychology, and education to revisit and refine existing theories to better reflect the diverse and evolving landscape of child discipline in a global context.

Conclusion

The research conducted in this study has shed light on the multifaceted

perspectives of Cameroonian parents and teachers regarding corporal punishment and its

psychological effects on children. The findings unveiled a complex landscape of

attitudes, concerns, and practices surrounding the discipline of children in Cameroon,

providing valuable insights into the broader discourse on child welfare and development

within the nation. One overarching theme that emerged from the research is the diversity

of disciplinary approaches employed by parents and teachers in Cameroon. Both groups

expressed a willingness to utilize a range of non-corporal strategies, including verbal

correction, loss of privileges, time-outs, and grounding. This diversity suggests that

caregivers and educators in Cameroon recognize the need for a multifaceted and non-

corporal approach to discipline, acknowledging that different situations may warrant

different methods. Participants consistently highlighted potential negative outcomes of

corporal punishment such as fear, shame, guilt, and damage to trust. These concerns

mirror extensive research that has consistently shown the detrimental effects of corporal

punishment on children's psychological well-being. It is noteworthy that despite

acknowledging its potential effectiveness, many participants expressed reservations due

to these emotional and psychological concerns. A significant revelation arising from the

research is the growing preference among parents and teachers for non-violent

alternatives to corporal punishment. Many participants advocated for positive

reinforcement, communication, dialogue, and other non-physical disciplinary approaches.

This shift aligns with the global movement toward positive discipline methods,

emphasizing the importance of building constructive relationships between adults and children. The findings emphasize the need for a nuanced and culturally sensitive approach to child discipline, one that recognizes the evolving attitudes toward corporal punishment and the importance of prioritizing the emotional and psychological well-being of children.

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Appendix: Interview Guide

1a. What is your relation to the child or children aged 16years and below (Parent or Teacher)

1b. Are you a Male or Female?_

1c. What is your age?

2. Did you experience corporal punishment as a child and young person?

3. Which forms of discipline do you currently use or consider effective and safe for use on children?

4. What do you conceive corporal punishment's effectiveness to be on student's behavior?

5. Should parents and teachers be allowed to use corporal punishment to discipline children and why?

6. Does corporal punishment improve children's behavior?

7. Based on your knowledge, what, if any, are the good and bad aspects of using corporal punishment? _

8. Sometimes teachers and parents get upset, annoyed, or irritated by things their children do. In your opinion, are parents or teachers justified to hit a child in these situations and why?

9. What sorts of misbehaviors have you administered discipline for within your jurisdiction?_

10. How were you disciplined by your parents and how did it affect or impact your perception of that form of discipline

11. Based on your knowledge, how do a majority of adults in your community respond to witnessing children subjected to corporal punishment?

12. Existing studies on child discipline practices within Cameroon show that a majority of people

in the country prefer the use of corporal punishment. Why do you think this practice is so prevalent or endorsed by a majority population?

13. What do you think are the long-term results of corporal punishment, either positive or negative

14. What do you believe informed your current conceptions of corporal punishment?