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Corporal Punishment in Eastern Nigeria

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CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN EASTERN NIGERIA

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Educational Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Gerald N. Nwafor

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The Designated Dissertation Committee Approves the Dissertation Titled

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN EASTERN NIGERIA

By

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EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN EASTERN NIGERIA

by Gerald N. Nwafor

In Nigeria, corporal punishment is used widely in Nigeria's judicial system, the home, and the classroom. The prevalent opinion in the education community is that corporal punishment helps students learn better and faster, keeps order in the classroom, and promotes a high student performance level. Reliance on corporal punishment is embedded in the religious, cultural, social, and moral beliefs and understanding of life. Corporal punishment takes many forms, but the most common in the school system is caning or flogging, which is the forceful and severe striking of the student's body, using a stick of wood, usually on the back, buttocks, legs, or hands. This dissertation investigates corporal punishment's impacts in Eastern Nigerian learning environments using the documentary exploratory research method. The researcher used observation and direct interviews with administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members to document supporting and dissenting attitudes toward corporal punishment, as well as possible alternative disciplinary methods and ways to change the system. *The Body Listens More Than the Ear* is the documentary film that represents the findings from the study.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, the prevailing opinion in the education community is that corporal punishment helps students learn better and faster, keeps order in the classroom, and motivates them to perform well (Eniola, 2018, Belo-Osagie, Olugbamila, Adeleye, & Unamka, 2016). Corporal punishment is used widely in Nigeria's judicial system, the home, and the classroom.

There is considerable flexibility in psychological literature over the definition of corporal punishment. For this study, corporal punishment refers to any act of physical violence by a person in authority, causing deliberate discomfort, pain, or injury, as a corrective response to an unwanted attitude or behavior, either perceived or real.

Common methods of corporal punishment, according to the Council of Europe Commissioner of Human Rights, are caning or flogging, punching, kicking, slapping, and knocks on the head (a strike on the head from above, with the knuckles of a fisted hand) (2008, p. 4). It may also include holding uncomfortable positions such as a seated position without a chair or kneeling while holding a heavy rock or chair above the head. Caning or flogging involves hitting the student on the legs, feet, back, buttocks, or hands with an object such as a belt, rattan cane, wooden paddle or stick, or a leather strap or whip.

Statement of the Problem

This dissertation examines corporal punishment in schools in Eastern Nigeria, specifically the practice of caning, and its effects on the teaching and learning experience, with the goal that the society reevaluate the practice.

In Nigeria, corporal punishment is used to make students conform to a written or unwritten list of behaviors, including paying respect to the teacher, being on time, being quiet in the classroom, turning in assignments on time, being obedient, and knowing the correct answer (Abrifor, 2008). These behaviors are all oriented toward controlling the children. And, in Nigeria, most believe that the end justifies the means.

Background

Geography. Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states make up the area called Eastern Nigeria.

Igbo culture. A brief history of Eastern Nigeria's people and their relationship with western education helps to clarify why corporal punishment is popular there. The people populating this area are of the Igbo extraction (Onwubiko, 1991). They are the most educated in the country. They were the first group of people to embrace the western civilization in Nigeria (Onwubiko, 1991). The number of schools in Eastern Nigeria outnumbers schools in the rest of the country. There are more than fifty tertiary learning institutions and more than 2,000 primary and secondary schools (Nigeria Social Statistics Atlas, 2014).

The educational success that Eastern Nigeria has achieved can be linked to their saying "Oyibo bu agbara." [White men are geniuses.] Nigerians also believe that with

education, one can conquer the world. In primary school, Nigerians are taught a song, “Akwukwo na ato uto ma ona afiaru na muta onye welu nkasi obi oga amuta akwukwo ma obulu na nne gi nanna gi nwe ego.” [Education is sweet but hard to learn, but with patience, you can succeed if your parents have the white man’s money.] These are some of the ingrained influences that helped education to flourish in Eastern Nigeria.

The use of corporal punishment, which is seriously affecting the progress of education, is also embedded in the people's culture (Onwubiko, 1991). The tradition follows the saying “Agbaro uzo owole mgba oda echi.” [No pain, no gain.] All achievements require sacrifice and effort, which one may also define as pain. However, in the minds of some, there is a permanent connection between learning and pain, formed through their own learning experiences; therefore, many parents have interpreted pain to be an integral and necessary part of the learning process (Duru, 2018).

Culture is inseparable from its people and exerts tremendous influence on how children are raised. Some cultures accept corporal punishment as a good norm, while some others loathe it. According to Smith and Mosby (2003), “Culture guides parents’ beliefs about child discipline, behavior management, and control” (p. 360).

The culture of human beings differs from country to country, town to town, and group to group. If corporal punishment does not work in one area, that does not mean it will not work in other areas. No technique will work for the whole universe simultaneously. One community may adopt the corporal punishment approach, and it will be a perfect fit; some others will embrace it and find it disrupts its community rules and norms. The only

way to understand corporal punishment is to study it and evaluate it within the context of a given community.

Family structure. The Nigerian culture is very hierarchical and allows for the delegation of authority within the family from adults to children (Onwubiko, 1991). So, the children's birth order puts older brothers and sisters, and even cousins, as authority figures over the younger children. A student may be designated as head boy or head girl in the classroom, with authority over other students. Therefore, children are subject to corporal punishment by the adult authorities and by their classmates and siblings.

Law. Articles 295(1), (4), and (5) of the Criminal Code of Nigeria codify the use of blows or other force on children under the age of sixteen, by a father or mother, guardian; or a delegate of any of those; or by default (unless permission is expressly withheld), to any schoolmaster or person acting in that role. The punishment should not wound or give grievous harm, nor, in 295(6), be “unreasonable in kind or in degree, regard being had to the age and physical and mental condition of the person on whom it is inflicted; and no correction can be justified in the case of a person who, by reason of tender years or otherwise, is incapable of understanding the purpose for which it is inflicted” (Criminal Code Act of 1990). Since a schoolmaster or teacher acts in the stead of the parent for the children in his care, in loco parentis, the law gives him legal authority to correct those students, and he is free to use corporal punishment (Igbinedion, Nwogu, & Nath, 2016).

The Significance of the Practice of Caning in Eastern Nigerian Schools

Caning or flogging means the forceful and severe striking or lashing using a stick of wood on a student's body, usually on the back, buttocks, legs, arms, and hands, but could

be applied anywhere on the body, ranging from the head to the feet. It is used to impart pain to the recipient, who is expected to cry. Flogging is a common corrective measure in Nigerian schools (Nwosu, Amanze & Oladosu, 2017, p. 201).

According to Nigerian Social Statistics (2014), the Nigerian population in 2012 was 166.2 million. Ages six to fourteen represent 26.7% of the population. The Eastern Nigerian states' population totals 19.8 million, and the annual population growth rate is 2% (Nigeria Social Statistics Atlas, 2014). Based on this population, ages fifteen to eighteen account for another 11.6%, for an estimated total of 39.2% school-aged children. Assuming an equal distribution of ages across all states and extended for the population growth rate, that means that in 2019, about 8.9 million school children in Eastern Nigeria are school-aged. The author's experience indicates that 90% of students have been flogged. That means that about 8.0 million Eastern Nigerian children have been or will be beaten by their educators, and many of them repeatedly over time.

Significance of the Problem of Corporal Punishment

Reliance on corporal punishment is embedded in the religious, social, and moral beliefs and understanding of life. "He that spares the rod hates his son: but he that loves him corrects him always. Withhold not correction from a child: for if you strike him with the rod, he shall not die. You shall beat him with the rod and deliver his soul from hell," (Proverbs 13:24, Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition).

"The most pervasive and often cited explanations point back to heritage, history, tradition, and socialization" (Smith & Mosby, 2003, p. 373). To condemn or support corporal punishment, one must look at the factors of tradition, history, and heritage.

Today's societies have varying opinions on the use of corporal punishment: some have banned it outright, while others allow it. In the United States, Secretary of Education John King urged governors and Chief State School Officers to end the use of corporal punishment in schools, "a practice linked to harmful short-term and long-term outcomes for students" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, para. 1). While some countries are banning corporal punishment, others are upholding it. This tension between acceptance and rejection has its effects on our different institutions. A case in point is Canada, as set forth in its Criminal Code.

Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances. (Criminal Code of Canada, section 43)

Purpose of the study. This dissertation will document the effects of corporal punishment on the students of Eastern Nigeria. The study focuses on identifying and describing students, teachers, parents, and administrators' attitudes and experiences of corporal punishment and how they have helped or harmed the students' learning experience.

The documentary film medium has been selected for this study in the hope that it will expose the effects of caning on the teaching and learning experience, the broad-based acceptance of the practice, the severity or leniency of the punishment, the fairness or unfairness of the process, any physical damage to the students, and any emotional trauma or benefit that is incurred.

Some solutions and alternatives will be identified and captured during the study to support teachers in implementing the most effective discipline form. It is very important

to conduct a study that will reveal the abuses in the school systems' discipline methods and lead to the eventual diminishing and even elimination of corporal punishment abuse.

Justification for the study. Despite overwhelming evidence that corporal punishment is a practice that damages its intended beneficiaries, it will be challenging to sway the culture to move away from corporal punishment. But change begins in recognizing and defining the problem. This study will capture the attitudes of the various constituencies involved in corporal punishment and then juxtapose those attitudes and arguments against the backdrop of actual video recordings of the punishment events themselves.

It is said that one photo changed the course of slavery in the United States. ("Gordon (Slave)," n.d., refer to Figure 1.). Pictures of Gordon (Slave) appeared in Harper's Weekly in 1863 and inspired enlistment into the Union Army. Many believe this picture accelerated the course of the Civil War.



Figure 1. Gordon (Slave).

Importance of the study. The significance of this study can be demonstrated, in part, by the anecdote below.

The first boy I ever knew who died was a sixth grader. I was in third grade. When we were all kneeling to accept our knuckles-to-the-head as punishment for some minor infraction, Jideoffor ran away instead. The teacher said, okay, he will get a harder punishment when he comes back. The rest of us took our hard knocks to our heads.

Jideoffor came back the same day, and the teacher was so angry. He didn't let him come into the classroom. He made him kneel outside, and he kicked Jideoffor powerfully in the chest. Jideoffor was crying as he stayed in class the rest of the day, but he did not come back the next day. Jideoffor had died.

There is no autopsy performed on ordinary people in Nigeria to discern their cause of death, even in unusual circumstances like this one. Until now, I wonder if Jideoffor died from the teacher's kick (Nwafor, 2017).

Corporal punishment is an accepted way of discipline in Nigerian schools and homes. Not every case is as severe as Jideoffor's, but every year children die or are maimed from corporal punishment (Oluwakemi & Kayode, 2007).

The Effects of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment produces both physical and psychological trauma, and it may result in poor academic performance.

Physical injury and death. Children in Africa die every year from corporal punishment (Wambede, 2019, Okello, 2019, Ojwang, 2019, Jaafar, 2018, BBC, 2019, Ochunge, 2018, Europa, 2016, Dachen, 2015, "Teacher Flogs," 2012). Table 1 details nine deaths reported in the media since 2012. The reported reason for these punishments resulting in death range from allegedly stealing a purse, coming to school late, not turning in an assignment, and failing to do the assigned chore of sweeping the classroom. For

these offenses, these children received the death penalty, and many more deaths go unreported.

Severe physical injuries have also been reported, including blindness (Oluwakemi & Kayode, 2007).

Table 1

African Student Flogging Deaths Reported in News Outlets, 2012-2019

Year	Name	Location	Age / Grade	Offense	Citation
2019	Denis Wadeba	Uganda	18	Assignment	(Wambede, 2019)
2019	Doreen Akosi	Uganda	19	Unknown	(Okello, 2019)
2019	Kennedy Nyagashe	Kenya	Form 3	Unknown	(Ojwang, 2019)
2018	Unnamed	Nigeria	Unknown	Unknown	(Jaafar, 2018)
2018	Sperius Eradius	Tanzania	14	Stealing	(BBC, 2019)
2018	Annah Wendy	Kenya	17	Uniform	(Ochunge, 2018)
2016	David Ndung'u	Kenya	14	Test Score	(Europa, 2016)
2015	Unnamed	Nigeria	Secondary	Tardy	(Dachen, 2015)
2012	Chidinma Ukachukwu	Nigeria	12	Assignment	("Teacher Flogs," 2012)

Physical pain. By punishing students physically, the system teaches the student to avoid punishment rather than desire good behavior. Corporal punishment trains the student to avoid the act that causes pain, but it does not encourage joy in doing a job well, getting the correct answer, or taking the risk of being wrong. "Pain motivates a behavior aimed at avoiding pain" (Suubi, 2019).

Psychological trauma. Corporal punishment's goal is to achieve a good behavioral result, but findings contradict the goals. The use of corporal punishment has been linked to negative developmental outcomes (violence and truancy) for children (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). “Parental use of corporal punishment, even on an occasional basis, is associated with greater externalizing behavior for youth while a warm and involving family environment may protect youth from serious problem behaviors. Therefore, findings of this study add to the growing evidence concerning the negative consequences of corporal punishment for youth outcomes” (Ma, Han, Grogan-Kaylor, Delva & Castillo, 2012, p. 481).

Academic performance and behavior. If a child leaves school and does not return, there is no truant officer to pursue him or her. How many students drop out of school due to fear or humiliation? There is no way to know. “This suggests that while adding corporal punishment to responsiveness and demandingness has little impact upon a child’s academic success or emotional wellbeing, it increases the probability of delinquent behavior” (Simons, Simons & Su 2013, p. 1282). When there is pain associated with going to school late, then a typical response might be to skip school that day altogether to avoid the pain. That behavior may compound over a number of days, putting the student further behind, and subject to more caning, eventually leading to the student dropping out.

The culpability of the student. Children’s lives are not their own. They are subject to the commands of their parents and older relatives, and siblings. They may come to school without having eaten (UNICEF, Nutrition, n.d.). They may live in conditions that

do not have adequate clean water or sanitation (UNICEF, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, n.d.). They may encounter obstacles to getting to school on time. In some cases of corporal punishment, the student has done some wrongdoing. However, in many cases, as evidenced by the reporting on the deaths enumerated in Table 1, the teacher is accuser, judge, and executioner, and there is no presumption of innocence (Wambede, 2019, Okello, 2019, Ojwang, 2019, Jaafar, 2018, BBC, 2019, Ochunge, 2018, Europa, 2016, Dachen, 2015, "Teacher Flogs," 2012). For those students who arrive late to class, for instance, there is no inquiry as to why. In one of those deaths, the late student claimed illness as his reason for tardiness (Dachen, 2015). There is no due process for these children. There are no mitigating factors.

Moderation. One problem with the assessment of corporal punishment is defining quality and quantity; knowing when it is moderate and knowing when it is excessive. "Some have suggested that harsh corporal punishment or physically abusive parenting causes children to develop a negative self-concept and emotional problems" (Simons, Johnson & Conger, 1994, p. 593). But what is harsh? The definitions in corporal punishment studies make distinctions between corporal punishment and abuse. The law allows corporal punishment while restricting the flogger to reasonableness and weighing the child's ability to understand the correction (Criminal Code Act of 1990, Article 295(6)). These terms are vague and not easily defined or measured.

There is no standard for what a reasonable punishment is for talking in class, answering incorrectly, failing a test, or mispronouncing a word. There is no measurement for the force of a stroke of the cane.

According to Smith & Mosby (2003), even in moderate use, the effect is harmful. “Studies conducted in a variety of settings and societies, have indicated that physical punishment, used even in moderation, has an adverse effect on psychosocial adjustment and behavior” (p. 374). Hence Smith and Mosby recommend stopping it in any form, be it mild, moderate, or harsh (2003).

Iyabo Lawal (2017), Head of the Education Desk of the Guardian newspaper, claims that unless public and private schools completely prohibit corporal punishment, youths may grow up with psychological and physical scars resulting in a vicious cycle of violence (para. 39).

Reasons and Causes for Corporal Punishment

The elusive factor in the argument of corporal punishment is the “why” factor. Environmental and societal dynamics that account for corporal punishment are varied.

Family. “Less attention has been devoted to why parents spank their children” (Holden, Miller & Harris, 1999, p. 908). One explanation is that the parents think that is effective. “Although spanking may, indeed, be the product of an angry interaction, there is evidence that many parents regard the disciplinary technique as appropriate, effective, and justifiable” (Holden et al., 1999, p. 908).

Implicit in the concept of raising offspring is the presumption that the parents would raise the offspring well. In the Nigerian Igbo culture, there is a maxim, “Omulu zua,” [let the biological parents raise their kids] (Igbo saying). “Parenting practices have more beneficial (or fewer detrimental) effects on children when they occur in a cultural group within which they are normative” (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016a, p. 490).

Parents use a lot of methods to help children internalize the values they cherish. “Methods by which parents ensure child compliance with and eventual internalization of society’s rules have been the subject of considerable study” (Lansford et al., 2009, p. 1385). “Parents in all societies grapple with how to raise their children in a way that prepares them for the complexities of life and equips them to one day become parents themselves” (Smith & Mosby, 2003, p. 369).

In this struggle to raise a noble son or daughter, parents can get it right or wrong, “Both mothers’ and fathers’ use of corporal punishment were [sic] associated with greater youth externalizing behavior” (Ma et al., 2012, p.481). The parents sometimes follow their own parents' childrearing pattern and may believe that what worked for our parents will work for us.

The goal of the parents to implement corporal punishment is to make the child behave positively. “The normativeness perspective hypothesizes that if physical punishment is administered in a cultural context in which spanking is considered normative and acceptable, then the child who is spanked will be more likely to accept and comply with the parents’ disciplinary message, thus reducing negative behavior over time” (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016a, p. 490). That is to say that culture plays a vital role in the use of corporal punishment.

Cultural influences. Some societies condone corporal punishment. “The Jamaican practice of beating children is culturally sanctioned and extends to the larger society” (Smith & Mosby, 2003, p. 371). But even within a given country, it may be allowed in one community, while another community will view it as abuse. “Corporal punishment

has been banned in 28 states and D.C. and has been abandoned by individual districts in many others” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, para. 7).

Corporal punishment's cultural adoption does not align strictly with race. “Research on this issue in the United States has focused on race as a marker of culture, and findings have been mixed” (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016a, p. 490).

Those who want to apply corporal punishment look at society for support, as do those against it. “At a societal level, cultural norms approving violence, legality of corporal punishment in homes and schools and cultural beliefs about the necessity and effectiveness of physical punishment, can contribute to corporal punishment use” (Breen, Daniels, & Tomlinson, 2015, p. 132).

Some cultures use the term physical punishment rather than corporal punishment, but the common denominator is that it causes pain to the receiver or the child in most cases. Physical punishment is defined as “noninjurious, open-handed hitting with the intention of modifying child behavior” (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016b, p. 453). “The use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purpose of correction or control of child’s behavior” (Straus & Donnelly, 2009, p. 4). These definitions and explanations include force, pain, and behavioral control; could corporal punishment be a bad means for a good end?

Corporal punishment can be neither condemned too quickly nor upheld without caution. Suppose the culture upholds corporal punishment, and the schools abolish it. In that case, it will create a conflict, as parents are the primary teachers of their children, and students originate from the family home.

The role of the teacher. Anyone may take on the role of teacher. Nigerian schools are filled with teachers who help us to raise our kids. Should society give them free rein on how to teach our kids, or should they intervene?

Secretary King, addressing the governors and Chief School Officers, stated, “Our schools are bound by a sacred trust to safeguard the well-being, safety, and extraordinary potential of the children and youth within communities they serve” (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, para. 2).

In the U.S., corporal punishment is administered disproportionately in schools by race, sex, and ability or disability.

What’s more alarming is that the CRDC shows that corporal punishment is used overwhelmingly on male students and is much more commonly administered to African-American students of all genders. In nearly all of the states where the practice is permitted, students with disabilities were subjected to corporal punishment at a higher rate than students without disabilities. (U.S. Department of Education, 2016, para. 8)

The reports from both sides of the issue are conflicting and confusing, “Results of descriptive statistics and multivariate regression analyses indicated that schools with corporal punishment may decrease students’ violent behaviors and increase the attendance rate” (Han, 2014, p. 221), which is a good outcome for the school and student behavior. On the other hand, the same report recorded that, “Those schools may have more student insubordination incidents and fewer students with academic aspirations than schools without corporal punishment” (Han, 2014, p. 221).

From a moral perspective, teachers should not be allowed to use corporal punishment, especially given the power imbalance between teacher and student. Students come to school to learn, not to be abused. The primary function of being a teacher is to teach, to

impart knowledge, to encourage a love of learning, to convey good values, and to lead. It is not to impart fear and threat of force.

Research Questions

This dissertation study examines the effects of corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria, particularly the practice of caning in learning institutions. This study endeavors to document corporal punishment's impact on the teaching and learning experience through on-camera interviews and video recordings of corporal punishment events.

The research questions to be explored are as follows:

(1) How does corporal punishment enhance or impair the learning process?

(2) What effects does corporal punishment have on the various participants involved, especially teachers and students? These effects may include physical, psychological, and attitudinal effects.

(3) What cultural attitudes contribute to the disciplinary approach's perpetuation?

What are the root causes for using this method? On what premises and assumptions are these attitudes built?

The study's main focus will include primary and high school teachers and students from Eastern Nigeria (K-12). There has been a lot of research on this topic in developing nations, but none within Eastern Nigeria's geography. "In Nigeria, 84% had been hit during their childhood; 90% beaten; 55% kicked; 71% denied food and 17% choked or burned. Teachers are among the common perpetrators of physical violence in schools" (Lawal, 2017)

Principals, teachers, students, and parents will be surveyed and interviewed. This study's working thesis is that corporal punishment hinders a child's natural thirst for knowledge, engenders fear, incapacitates the child to learn, and should be removed from the school system.

Initial Definitions

Administer. Administer is usually a verb, but in this study, it will be used as a noun to identify a person who is or was doing the caning. This distinction differentiates “administer” from the word administrator, who may be a principal or other functionary in the school system.

Corporal punishment. As mentioned earlier, the psychological community has not settled on a universal definition for corporal punishment.

Straus and Donnelly's (2009) definition is often cited: “Corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purposes of correction or control of the child's behavior” (p. 4). This definition excludes injury. In addition, the author specifically excludes striking “with an object such as a hair brush, belt or paddle” and moves those behaviors into the realm of physical abuse (ibid., p. 5). One presumes that injury would include internal organ damage, burns, broken bones, open wounds, and even raised welts. However, this definition includes the problematic qualifier of “intention.” Is it possible to ever know or judge another person's intention? Or even one's own?

Baumrind, Larzelere, and Cowan (2002) stratify physical punishment as being “between legal abuse and corporal punishment,” and “between harsh and punitive but not

legally designated abusive punishment and the more moderate application of normative spanking within the context of a generally supportive parent-child relationship,” (p. 580).

However, while appropriate for academic discussions in the United States, these fine distinctions will not help students suffering in Nigeria. For Nigeria, while there is a spectrum of behavior in practice that extends from mild to severe, corporal punishment incorporates the entire range of severity levels.

Therefore, the working definition of corporal punishment in this study is any act of physical violence causing deliberate discomfort, pain, or injury, in response to an undesired attitude or behavior, either perceived or real. The intentionality of any injury is irrelevant.

Grammar

This work was conducted and written in the United States and Nigeria by a native Nigerian English speaker. Nigerian English is a dialect of English, highly influenced by British English.

The subjects and observers of the study described herein are Igbo speakers and native Nigerian English speakers. While some of the grammar may seem incorrect to American and even British ears, it is acceptable in Nigerian Standard English. As this document will have a global audience, no attempt will be made to reconcile their statements to American English unless needed for clarity when quoting participants in the study.

Site Selection and Sample

The plan is to define a study with principals and staff in 10 schools in Anambra and Enugu states and generate original data. Ten schools will cover the spectrum of working-

class and middle class, and private and public. During a one-month stay in Nigeria, students and teachers will be observed, interviewed, and filmed. The first immersion into the schools will be from 20th December 2019 through 19th January 2020. An observer will note signs of timidity or confidence, fear or lack of fear, and freedom to or inhibition from contributing in class. Students aged 12 through 18 will be interviewed for their self-evaluation of the effects of corporal punishment.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Scope. There are many forms of punishment in Nigerian schools, but this work is limited to the effects of flogging in Eastern Nigerian schools. While other forms of punishment can be used, such as expulsion, referrals, and marginalization, those are not the focus of this study. Eastern Nigeria comprises five states out of thirty-six: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo.

There are over 1,000 schools in this area. In this study, 10 schools will be selected to cover the scope of private, public, primary, and secondary schools. Having been raised in the area, I am sensitive to the local culture and thereby might gain better access to the participants.

The second aspect of the scope is the people involved (students, teachers, administrators, parents, families). Interviews and observations will be among the students, teachers, principals, and parents.

Limitations. The final product of this research is a documentary film. There is a risk that people may be shy to speak in front of a camera, especially when the interview is in a less familiar language. Therefore, I cannot have total control over the language of their

choice. Although I prefer English responses, there is no certainty that they will understand the study's purpose or respond sincerely if vernacular is excluded altogether.

The literature review did not uncover studies with formal data on this topic in Eastern Nigeria.

I have made a conscious decision not to involve students from tertiary institutions in this work because corporal punishment is not applied in Nigerian tertiary institutions. When the threat of punishment is not looming over them, the effects may have receded in the minds of these adult students.

Another limiting factor I am anticipating may be the participants' openness and honesty, but that is out of my control. The participants' state of mind is also an area not under control of the study because people have bad days and good days. Also, people can be abused and not even recognize it.

I cannot deny my biases and assumptions.

I am a Catholic Christian, a priest, a black African, a native of Eastern Nigeria, and a product, victim, and beneficiary of the Eastern Nigerian school system. As a Catholic priest, I hold to a specific philosophy regarding the dignity of the human being. As man is made in the “image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26), God has conferred on the human person an inherent dignity. This teaching is foundational to all Catholic social teaching. Humans are also created to be in communion with one another, to be in community. Therefore, any insult or injury to one human person is an insult and injury to humanity and a sin against God.

I was raised in Eastern Nigeria and was a product of that system of schooling. I have been beaten countless times in my life. And in turn, I have flogged others: brothers, underlings, and students. While an early incident in my life has caused me to wonder about corporal punishment's justice, I have accepted the practice and participated in it as an abused and an abuser. It was not until my seminary years, around 1994, that I seriously started to question its value as an enhancement to the educational process and a deterrent to bad behavior. During my apostolic year (supervised field education), I had the freedom to observe and ponder the practice. At that point, I put down the cane and never picked it up again.

However, as a counterpoint, despite the beatings and other school-sponsored abuse, I still have a love for education. I hold two masters' degrees and am working on my doctorate in education. One could argue that I am both victim and benefactor of my country's education systems, corporal punishment being one of those.

I am firmly against corporal punishment as a discipline method and would like to see it abolished in Eastern Nigeria within the next decade. However, I am determined to produce a fair telling of the data and circumstances that I encounter in the study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In Nigeria, the prevailing opinion in the education community is that corporal punishment helps students learn better and faster. The purpose of this dissertation study is to explore the effects of corporal punishment on the teachers and students of Eastern Nigeria as expressed through the attitudes of the individuals concerned.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does corporal punishment enhance or impair the learning process?
2. What effects does corporal punishment have on the various participants involved, especially teachers and students?
3. What attitudes are in place within the Eastern Nigerian culture that contribute to the perpetuation of this disciplinary approach? What are the root causes for using this method? On what premises and assumptions are these attitudes built?

This literature review will provide insights into prior research in corporal punishment, historical, cultural, religious, and legal contexts for the support and opposition to the practice, and perspectives of the administrators and student recipients of the punishment.

Literature Review Results

Proponents and opponents of corporal punishment. There are supporters on both sides of the corporal punishment issue. The literature documents attitudes and influences from various disciplines and populations, including psychology and sociology, parents and children, educators, law, and religion.

Proponents. Many people in the world believe that corporal punishment is an acceptable means of correcting and disciplining children.

Psychological and sociological communities. Many proponents of corporal punishment distinguish between punishment and abuse. Researchers Baumrind, Larzelere and Cowan (2002) allow for some reasonable-seeming punishments like spanking at a level of intensity that imparts the child with minor and temporary pain; but are against more harsh physical abuses. They support physical correction. “The fact that some parents punish excessively and unwisely is not an argument, however, for counseling all parents not to punish at all” (p. 585).

Simons, Simons, and Su (2013) studied parental corporal punishment among African Americans. They make the case that the often-cited poor outcomes may be mitigated by a parenting style that incorporates high supportive and low hostility activities [responsiveness]; and high involvement and discipline consistency [demandingness] (p. 1278).

Parents and children. Many parents regard spanking, hitting, or slapping as appropriate, effective, and justifiable (Graziano, Hamblen & Plante, 1996). Even children reported “an interesting mix of opposition to corporal punishment and yet acceptance of it, almost as a recognition that it is a parental right and a fact of life” (Graziano et al., 1996, p. 846).

The *General Social Survey* (GSS) is a project of the independent research organization NORC at the University of Chicago. The GSS asks the question, “Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that it is sometimes necessary to

discipline a child with a good, hard spanking?” Results indicate that many parents in the United States support “a good, hard spanking” as a discipline method. Of over 25,000 respondents to the relevant question in 2018, an overwhelming 66% either agreed or strongly agreed that spanking was sometimes necessary (Smith, Davern, Freese, and Morgan, 2018, question 225).

Educators. A school atmosphere of order, control, and calm is conducive to learning. Researchers recognize that “discipline is an essential feature of successful schools” (Arum & Velez, 2012, p. 1). Abrifor (2008) studied teachers’ attitudes toward corporal punishment and reported that surveyed teachers saw physical punishment as an effective disciplinary measure.

Maphosa and Shumba (2010) surveyed 3 South African teachers who taught before and after the legal prohibition against corporal punishment. The study included references to school deaths, gang-related crime, and violent behavior. Teachers expressed that it is an abuse of children to allow them to grow “lawless and undisciplined.” They were concerned that student rights unfairly took precedence over teacher safety and that discipline is harder to maintain without corporal punishment. Finally, they found that corporal punishment alternatives were ineffective and time-consuming (p. 392).

In Mayisela’s (2018) research with 26 active and retired South African teachers, all 26 had been beaten as students and believed corporal punishment motivated higher achievement levels and harder work. Most active teachers still use corporal punishment despite its illegality and express dissatisfaction with its being banned in South Africa.

Scutti (2018) reports that in the U.S. state of Georgia, where corporal punishment in schools is legal, a school board has approved a new policy regarding corporal discipline. A parent must have signed a consent form and must be contacted before the school administering the paddling. The policy further enumerates that corporal punishment is only for repetitive infractions of a serious nature. It must be a third or greater offense, is administered in private, on clothed buttocks, and cannot be more than three strikes. The superintendent sees paddling's potential to be a deterrent to misbehavior and expects it to be used rarely.

Law. In their study of Botswana law concerning child abuse, Shumba and Moorad (2000) conclude that the African culture and tradition places a high value on children's conformance with societal norms. At the time of their writing, the laws of Botswana allowed for corporal punishment of children under 18 but limited caning to four or six strokes. The Botswana Children's Act of 2009 established a parental duty to "respect the child's dignity and refrain from administering discipline which...adversely affects the...well-being of the child." However, the following paragraph continues: "that subsection shall not be construed as prohibiting the corporal punishment of a child" (Botswana Children's Act, 2009, IV § 27 (4)-(5)).

In Nigeria, Criminal Code Act, Chapter 25 covers assault and violent offenses against the person. The law establishes parent and guardian authority to strike a child, which is automatically given to the school unless specifically withheld:

A blow or other force, not in any case extending to a wound or grievous harm, may be justified for the purpose of correction as follows....a father or mother may correct his or her legitimate or illegitimate child, being under sixteen years of age, or any guardian or person acting as a guardian, his ward, being under sixteen years of age,

for misconduct or disobedience to any lawful command...[and] may delegate to any person whom he or she entrusts permanently or temporarily with the governance or custody of his or her child or ward all his or her own authority for correction, including the power to determine in what cases correction ought to be [sic] inflicted; and such a delegation shall be presumed, except in so far as it may be expressly withheld, in the case of a schoolmaster or a person acting as a schoolmaster, in respect of a child or ward (§295 (1), (4)).

Religion. Hackett and McClendon (2017) report that as of 2015, Christianity and Islam make up the religion of over 55% of the world's population. In Sub-Saharan Africa in 2010, Christians and Muslims accounted for over 93% of the population (Pew Research Center, 2015).

The Christian bible includes in Proverbs several references to the rod for correction. "On the lips of him who has understanding wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense" (10:13). "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him" (13:24). "Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him" (22:8). "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. If you beat him with the rod, you will save his life from Sheol" (23:13-14). "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (29:15).

Sharia Law, which also allows for physical correction, guides Muslims.

Islamic law permits imposing light physical punishment as a means of educating a child. It states that in certain cases, a light slap or similar degree of physical force is acceptable for educational purposes [23]. This form of corporal punishment is permitted by Sharia law in the school setting as well. The law emphasizes that the only justification for imposing physical punishment is for the purpose of shaping positive and desirable behavior in the child, as well as to enforce the child's adherence to religious Islamic law. The Islamic endorsement of reasonable corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure repeatedly emphasizes the importance of instilling conduct that is compatible with Islamic religious law. (Gith, 2014, p. 558)

The African culture perpetuates this idea further since it is believed that a child is a product of not just the family but also the community. School faculty are an extension of the community and are at minimum implicitly authorized to be an instrument of discipline for the children.

Opponents. There is an increasing awareness in the western developed world that corporal punishment is a practice that should be discontinued. The international organization Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children was started in 2001. According to Alhassan (2013), there is long-standing worldwide concern regarding the dangers of corporal punishment, as it affects children's "right [sic] and well-being" (p. 137).

Psychological and sociological communities. In its *Policy Council Manual of 1975*, the American Psychological Association (APA) adopted a resolution condemning corporal punishment in numerous learning and child-care institutions (APA, 1975).

Morin reports that

corporal punishment models aggressive behavior which teaches children to solve problems with violence...Corporal punishment also damages the relationship between children and their caregivers. Trust, stability, and security[sic] are keys to helping a child develop the skills he needs to manage his own behavior. Corporal punishment erodes the relationship and makes behavior management more difficult. (Morin, 2018, para. 8-10).

Morin (2018) also reports that corporal punishment can cause slow mental development, increased mood, anxiety, personality disorders, substance abuse, and other mental illnesses. Furthermore, Holden (2002) argues that "in some cases, customary corporal punishment carries with it unintended negative baggage that is counterproductive" (p. 593).

Medical practitioners. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, striking a child can cause physical harm, and so spanking is advised against (Sege and Siegel, 2018). The major consequences of corporal punishment include that it is not effective in the long term. It has adverse effects on brain anatomy and IQ. It encourages aggressive behavior and lowers vocabulary scores (Sege and Siegel, 2018).

Ophthalmologists Oluwakemi and Kayode (2007) studied eye injuries in children aged fifteen and below during a four-year period at one teaching hospital and determined that 27 (30%) of the 186 children were injured during a corporal punishment incident. Nine of those 27 injuries resulted in permanent damage ranging from moderate visual impairment to blindness. As a result, they recommend that corporal punishment be eradicated in Nigeria (p. 79).

Educators. Naong (2007) analyzed corporal punishment with a systems' theory framework and recognized that schools' default assumption is that the cause of any child's infraction is the child's responsibility (p. 289). However, an offense must be viewed within the overall context of the child's life, family, and environment.

The public. Increasingly, even the public is intervening in corporal punishment situations. A 2017 story in Punch reports that a passer-by walked into a classroom to stop the beating of a four-year-old, having been drawn from the outside by the sound of the teacher slapping the child (Eniola, 2018). In 2017, Vanguard reported that a teacher was killed by the mother and a student's family member in retaliation for a flogging (Ujumadu, 2017).

News media. Multiple voices in the news media are reporting on severe injuries and deaths originating from corporal punishment, and many are encouraging a ban on physical punishment (Wambede, 2019, Okello, 2019, Ojwang, 2019, Jaafar, 2018, BBC, 2019, Ochunge, 2018, Europa, 2016, Dachen, 2015, "Teacher Flogs," 2012).

Corporal punishment is increasingly seen as a problem, no matter how minimal. Suubi (2019) asks us to consider our reaction as adults if we were to be slapped by our bosses. What would the emotional consequences be? Most research on parenting aims to identify which practices promote positive and adaptive behaviors in children. "Deeper learning [sic] such as developing critical thinking skills that children need to succeed in today's world, requires effort and a safe learning environment, not the threat of physical pain" (para. 6).

United Nations. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) supports eradicating corporal punishment and prohibits the use of physical discipline. Article 37(a) stipulates that "no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." In his book, Alhassan (2013) states that "the prevalence of corporal punishment in Nigeria's schools today is contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child (UNCRC) which Nigeria, as a member nation, ratified and signed in 1990" (p. 141).

Administers and Recipients. In Nigeria, five authorities can dispense corporal punishment to children in their learning environments: parents, the extended family including aunts and uncles, older siblings and cousins, teachers, peers, and community

leaders. This work examines caning concerning the teacher-student relationship but has implications for the other groups as well.

Administers. The perpetrators of corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria range from parents to teachers and school administrators to fellow students. Soyingbe (2014) states that “Nigerian parents do so at the slightest provocation” (p. 1). Shumba, Mpofo, Chireshe, and Mapfumo (2010) cite multiple studies that document the parental attitude that corporal punishment is an African way of bringing up children.

According to Alhassan (2013), teachers use caning to keep order and control anti-social student behavior. Abrifor (2008) reported that teachers saw physical punishment as an effective disciplinary measure. Maphosa and Shumba's (2010) teacher interviews revealed that without corporal punishment, students had become “lawless and undisciplined,” that order is hard to maintain without corporal punishment, and that other means of discipline didn't work and wasted time (p. 392). In Mayisela's (2018) research, teachers believed corporal punishment motivated students to work hard and achieve more.

Recipients. Holden (2002) points out that the viewpoint of the child, the recipient of corporal punishment, is studied very little. Instead, adult responses were most frequently observed, surveyed, interviewed, and studied.

In a recent study, though, Breen (2015) interviewed South African children aged eight to twelve. Breen identified several themes: corporal punishment is a commonplace experience, including the use of objects as the implement, both at home and at school. The children expressed feelings of sadness, fear, and anxiety related to the punishment

incidents. They also reported absorbing corporal punishment as a tool in interpersonal dealings with other children: tattling on a five-year-old sibling, knowing the boy will be beaten; a room monitor blackmailing a playmate with the threat of writing her name on the board; and desiring to become a teacher, in order to beat children.

Gaps in Practice and Research

Quantifying severity, correlation to infraction, and age or comprehension. No studies have been found that quantified the severity of any actual school act of punishment, related the punishment to the infraction, or related the severity to the child's age and comprehension. However, Straus and Hamby (1997) established Conflict Tactics Scales to measure various physical and psychological discipline methods [and beyond, even to assault] in the parent-child relationship.

School policy analysis. To date, no studies have been located that documented and analyzed school policy on corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria or on the effectiveness of published and agreed behavioral standards with parents and students.

Scutti (2018) reports an example of a standard being established in a U.S. school. In Georgia, where corporal punishment in schools is legal, a school board has approved a new corporal punishment policy. Vinter (2012) reports that records found from the 1970s in the U.K. show a list of rules limiting corporal punishment and a *Record of Corporal Punishment* log designed to be completed when the penalty was applied.

Unmeasured consequences. Some consequences of corporal punishment and its atmosphere of fear are hard to document or quantify and therefore have not been studied to date. However, with diligence, it is possible that some studies could be designed.

The following areas have not been measured:

Do students skip school for fear of flogging? There is no mechanism in Nigeria for tracking the number and cause of school dropouts.

Do students choose not to volunteer answers or venture guesses for fear of being flogged, should they give the wrong answer?

Do students leave or graduate from the school system feeling inferior, stupid, or bad? How does that affect the future success of these individuals?

Alternative disciplinary methods. Since teachers require tools to maintain order and assert their authority, alternative forms of discipline must be identified, such as positive reinforcement. The students might also be required to make some commitment to a code of behavior. I am familiar with a memorandum of understanding for student behavior from my seminary education: it contained “the dos and the don’ts” of the school. This memo clarified for both the teacher and the student what the expectations were for each. Therefore, the teacher and the students were both held accountable.

Much more needs to be explored in this area, including how to reconcile such methods to Nigerian culture to provide teachers with a disciplinary toolkit that does not leave them incapacitated and frustrated.

No documentary film. To date, there have been no documentary films made on corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Discipline and Punish by Michel Foucault is the basis for the theoretical framework in this project, comparing and contrasting the origin of punishment, the uses and abuses,

the effects on humans, and the abolishment of punishment on offenders. The book examines medieval French society and its use of corporal and capital punishment on offenders. It also details the origin of prison and the end of corporal punishment. Foucault argued that “It is certainly legitimate to write a history of punishment against the background of moral ideas or legal structures” (Foucault, 1995, p. 24).

Foucault (1995) discusses punishment as torture and how it disappeared as public entertainment in society. “Among so many changes, I shall consider one: the disappearance of torture as a public spectacle” (p. 7). Today, students in Eastern Nigeria are still being flogged in public to shame them. In 1791 punishment was abolished as a spectacle because “public punishment is now seen as a heart in which violence burst again into flame” (Foucault, 1995, p. 8-9). Teachers need to be informed that corporal punishments do not end crime or disobedience in schools but rather increase the culture of violence in society. Foucault (1995) further argues that after the punishment, the physical act leaves the domain of perception and goes into the abstract consciousness. When the teacher abuses the child or uses his cane on a student, the idea that someone can harm human beings in that way infiltrates the consciousness of the rest of the school population.

There is nothing good about corporal punishment; it brings shame and cowardice to the students. “It is ugly to be punishable, but there is no glory in punishing” (Foucault, 1995, p. 10). What do we see during corporal punishment? A child in pain, a child beclouded by shame, a confused student, and a teacher in rage, anger, and vengeance. The pain on the body does not address the mind where the learning happens. Actions start

in the mind, so the solution should not be the punishment of the body. “The torture of the body should be avoided, the theatrical representation of pain excluded from punishment” (Foucault, 1995, p. 14). The punishment, if any, should be focused on the correction of the mind. Moreover, Foucault (1995) argues that any punishment will always concern the body itself since deprivation of freedom, food, or sex is involved. He posits the question, “What would a non-corporal punishment be?” (p. 16) He did not answer the question but firmly stated, “There remains, therefore a trace of torture in all forms of punishment” (p. 16). The teachers in Eastern Nigeria should focus on the correction of the mind, which should avoid the use of punishment in all its forms, corporal and non-corporal.

I am researching not only schools but culture because of Foucault’s (1995) four rules. (p. 23). Punishment has more effects than just repressing the offender’s bad behavior. It should not be discussed in isolation of only the teachers and students alone but as a part of society and the world. Does an act of violence at the micro level engender more violence at the macro level? “As a consequence, regard punishment as a complex social function.” (Foucault, 1995, p. 23). I will interview families, church leaders, village heads in the society to get a comprehensive understanding of caning and corporal punishment. Second, punishment could constitute a “power and a political tactic” (Foucault, 1995, p. 23). Therefore, it is pertinent to ask the particular teachers the true reason they want to hold on to corporal punishment. From my pre-interviews, I discovered that different teachers have different reasons for retaining corporal punishment. Knowing the other reasons would help in proffering different solutions.

Third, I will try to see where “the history of punishment and the history of human knowledge overlapped and find a common ground” (Foucault, 1995, p. 23). I have asked the question several times to the elders in Eastern Nigeria, “At what point did corporal punishment enter Nigeria's school system?” Many people believed that it came with the school system. By examining the culture deeply, I discovered that flogging and caning are even embedded in the fabric of social entertainment. Not only can it be found in the entertainment form of the masquerade, but the religious aspect of the culture also welcomes corporal punishment since the majority of the regional population is Christian. The Bible states, “The rod and reproof give wisdom” (Proverbs 29:15 Douay-Rheims). “Thou shall beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell” (Proverbs 23:14). “Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beat him with the rod he shall not die” (Proverbs 23:13). “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it away” (Proverbs 22:15). In examining these social, political, and religious facets of Eastern Nigeria, I find that corporal punishment has a long history.

Fourth, “We should study the metamorphosis of punishment method...which might be read a common history of power relations and object relations.” (Foucault, 1995, p. 24). Administrators and teachers are superior in power in relation to the students, and they are passing the same generational crime and violent culture to the students by using corporal punishment. The first step of stopping this crime culture is by starting with ourselves.

The power structures of Eastern Nigeria, including teachers, church leaders, and society in general, can be helped to recognize the “illusion that punishment is above all a

means of reducing crime” (Foucault, 1995, p. 24). I grew up being flogged in school and at home. I grew up also beating people in school and at home. Today little has changed. The obvious fact is that corporal punishment is not working. First-world countries have banned corporal punishment in schools and at home.

The aim of corporal punishment is not to teach but to create pain. “Corporal punishment, painful to a more or less horrible degree is an inexplicable phenomenon that the extension of man’s imagination creates out of the barbarous and the cruel” (Foucault, 1995, p. 33). We cannot be talking about teaching and at the same time talking about pain and torture. The mere fact that a teacher is thinking about corporal punishment in the classroom is an aberration. It is cruel; it is barbarous. Corporal punishment aims to torture, and “torture rests on a whole quantitative art of pain” (Foucault, 1995, p. 34). Torture places two demands on the victim: first, to scar the body, second, to brand the victim with infamy (Foucault, 1995, p. 34). There is nothing about correction or teaching in torture.

Chapter Three

Methods

The objective of this study is to create an exploratory documentary film on corporal punishment, detailing the attitudes of Eastern Nigerian people on corporal punishment, and its effects on the teacher and student populations and learning processes in schools in Eastern Nigeria. The fundamental questions I explored were: Does corporal punishment enhance or impair the learning process? What effects does corporal punishment have on the various participants involved, especially teachers and students? These may include physical, psychological, and attitudinal effects. What attitudes are in place in the culture that contribute to the perpetuation of the disciplinary approach? What are the root causes for using this method? On what premises and assumptions are these attitudes built? What are alternatives to corporal punishment, and how might they be implemented?

For this study, corporal punishment refers to any act of physical violence by a person in authority, causing intentional discomfort, pain, or injury, as a corrective response to an unwanted attitude or behavior, either perceived or real. Common corporal punishments are caning or flogging, punching, kicking, slapping, and knocks on the head. It may also include holding uncomfortable positions for an extended period, such as holding a seated position without a chair supporting the child or kneeling holding a heavy rock or chair above the head. Caning or flogging involves hitting the student on the legs, feet, back, buttocks, or on the hands, with an object such as a belt, rattan cane, wooden paddle or stick, or a leather strap or whip.

In Nigeria, the prevailing opinion in the education community is that corporal punishment helps the student learn better and faster. It keeps order in the classroom. It

promotes attentiveness and motivates the student to perform well. It is used widely in Nigeria, in the judicial system, the home, and the classroom.

About 8.9 million children in Eastern Nigeria are school-aged, six to eighteen. In an unpublished survey in 2018, the researcher's sample indicated that 90% of students had been flogged in school (Nwafor, 2018). Therefore, about 8.0 million Eastern Nigerian children have been or will be beaten by their educators, and many of them repeatedly over time.

The study focused on identifying and describing corporal punishment incidences and how these experiences have helped or harmed the students' learning experience.

I selected the medium of documentary film for this study in the hope that it will expose the broad-based acceptance of the practice, the severity or leniency of the punishment, the fairness or unfairness of the process, any physical damage to the students, any emotional trauma or benefit that is incurred and possible alternatives.

Methods

This study employed qualitative methods. In each school, an ethnographic study of the learning environment was conducted. It consisted of video recordings of both classroom interactions and interviews with various participants in the corporal punishment system: punished students, student-administers (e.g., senior prefects), teacher-administers, principals, school owners where possible, and parents.

Documentary film as a research methodology. This qualitative study investigating the attitudes and effects of corporal punishment on students of Eastern Nigeria uses documentary film as a visual qualitative research methodology.

I chose the method of documentary film for this work for five reasons. First, there is ample research documenting the harmful effects of corporal punishment. These factual and quantitative studies have not done much to move the culture away from the practice. There is an emotional attachment to the approach that is reinforced by culture and tradition. But emotion is not reasonable – you cannot reason with it. So, by using the documentary film format, I can provide an emotional experience that can appeal in the same mode to the emotional stronghold corporal punishment has on the population (Cravey & Petit, 2014; Kemmitt, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Second, especially with the advent of technologies like Youtube and Vimeo, the documentary can be widely distributed and can effectively draw local and world attention to the practice (Kemmitt, 2007). In this era of social media and internet communication, a film can deliver the effects of corporal punishment to everyone's doorstep, including to those who are illiterate, which may include up to 60% of the Eastern Nigerian parents.

Third, the video documentary helps the audience step into the students' shoes as they are being beaten, allowing for empathy to build for the children. Fourth, the documentary format is a digestible means to convey these students' punishing experiences to parents, educators, policy and law makers, and beyond (Kemmit, 2007; Petrarca & Hughes, 2014). In the 37 minutes of the film, many ideas, ideologies, and events have been distilled to their essence.

Finally, the documentary provided the opportunity for each participant to speak or act for himself on camera. This may have reduced some researcher bias and provided veracity to the conclusions, and provided transparency into the research process. But

most importantly, students who were on the receiving end of corporal punishment had the opportunity to express themselves on camera, to provide student voices which are not often heard, with the potential reach to the whole world.

Context and participants. Today corporal punishment is a ubiquitous means of discipline in Eastern Nigerian schools. Public and private (religious) classrooms in Eastern Nigeria use corporal punishment, like flogging, as a discipline method. Urban areas have both elementary and high schools, but rural areas usually only have elementary schools. Regardless, corporal punishment happens regularly, whether urban or rural.

Preliminary exploration. In planning for this study, the author did a pilot study in December 2018, speaking with teachers, students, principals, and parents. The research questions evolved from these interviews.

Teachers. The teachers generally believed that students who are very naughty should be flogged to curtail their excesses. Some suggested that the principal be the only person to administer the corporal punishment. None of the teachers agreed with the total elimination of corporal punishment. A small number of teachers expressed fear that the male students could fight a female teacher who tries to correct them without the cane.

Students. Most of the students viewed the cane with fear and anxiety because they know that the teacher can use the cane at any provocation. In a revelation surprising to the author, one of the female students pointed out that male students would be more likely to abuse and intimidate female students without the fear of corporal punishment as a preventative measure. There have been cases of abuse and even rape by male students

on female students and teachers. Therefore, some students are comfortable with the cane's presence in the classroom in that it ensures their safety.

As a counterpoint, it should be noted that newspapers reported in 2017 that a female teacher was beaten to death by family members of a student whom she had flogged (Ujumadu, 2017).

Principals. One principal stated that to eliminate the fear being expressed by the female students, boys and girls should be segregated to different schools.

Although some principals expressed a dislike of corporal punishment, fear of losing enrollment prevents them from abolishing the practice. Most parents and teachers believe that corporal punishment is essential to the moral upbringing of their children. Therefore, principals fear that many parents would withdraw their children from a school without corporal punishment.

Parents. Parents were educated with the supposed “benefit” of corporal punishment, and to their thinking, it worked. They frequently attributed the discipline of the cane as the reason that they achieved success in life. The parents I interviewed held tenaciously to the biblical teaching that you will spoil the child if you spare the rod. A mother told me that whenever she reminds her children how fiercely their father will flog them if they go out to play at the wrong time, they calm down and obey. When asked, “Have you ever explained to them why you will not allow them to go out at an odd time to play,” she said it is not her duty but the duty of the teachers at school.

Four-week trial. In addition to the interviews, a four-week trial was subsequently conducted. Four teachers each from St. Anthony Padua High School and

Michael Tansi Memorial College agreed to alternate two weeks with the cane in the classroom and two weeks without and to share their observations with the researcher.

The research. The study took place in Eastern Nigeria. Five states make up the Eastern part of Nigeria: Anambra, Enugu, Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi. The population totals about 20 million, predominantly Christians and of Igbo extraction. The majority of the population speaks the Igbo language and English in various levels of fluency. The researcher traveled to Anambra state, Nigeria, to conduct the study in January of 2020. At that time, classes were resuming after the Christmas holidays.

Ten schools were targeted for analysis. They comprise a mix of both public and private religious schools and elementary and high schools. The high schools are in more urban areas, but the elementary schools are distributed between urban and rural. The student participants ranged from pre-school through twelfth grade, male and female. All participants, whether student or adult, are black African, as there is little ethnic diversity in the area. Still, the religious background may be any of traditional African religions, Christian or Muslim.

In general, rural populations are more poor than urban, but there is also poverty in the city (Nigeria: A Short, 2016, p. 2). The table in Figure 2 shows the discrepancy between poverty in rural versus urban areas. The World Bank states that about 64% of the poor in Nigeria live in rural areas (Nigeria: A Short, 2016, p. 2). Nigeria reports that in 2019, 52.1% of rural population is in poverty (Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics, 2020, p. 5).

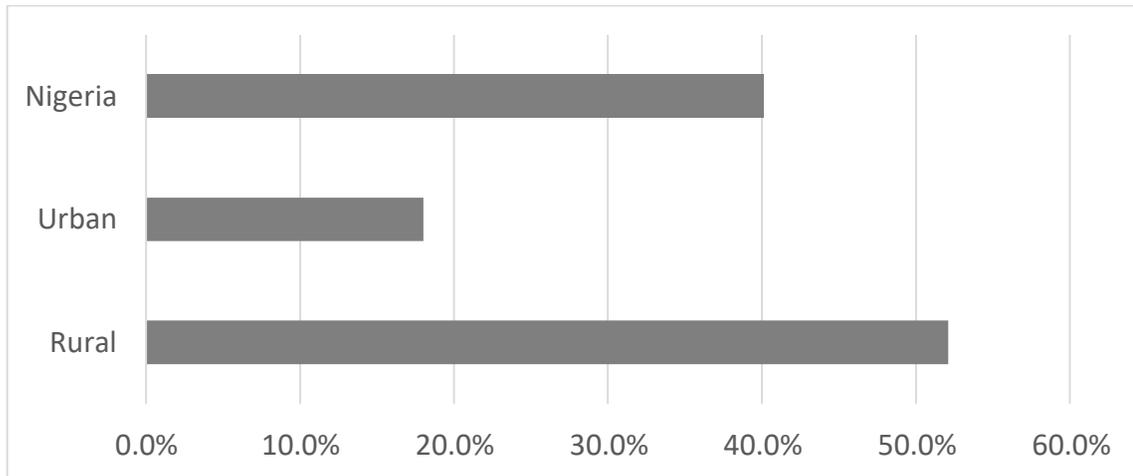


Figure 2. Economic Disparity Between Urban and Rural Populations in Nigeria. This chart shows the poverty and headcount rate as a percent of population in urban versus rural populations. Based on data in the report 2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary (Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics, 2020, p. 5).

I did not collect information on the economic situation of any particular participant. However, teachers themselves are poorly paid.

I interviewed students, student administrators (e.g., senior prefects), teacher administrators, principals, school owners where possible, and parents.

Each of the students had received corporal punishment, and some also had administered it, either in school or at home with younger siblings. So, some had the dual perspectives of being on the wielding and the receiving ends of the cane.

Positionality. The researcher is a Catholic Christian, a priest, a black African, a native of Eastern Nigeria, and a product, victim, and beneficiary of the Eastern Nigerian school system.

As a Catholic priest, the author holds to a specific philosophy regarding the dignity of the human being. As man is made in the image and likeness of God, (Genesis 1:27), God has conferred on the human person an inherent dignity. This teaching is foundational to

all Catholic social teaching. Also, humans are created to be in communion with one another, to be in community. Therefore, any insult or injury to one human person is an insult and injury to humanity and a sin against God.

The researcher was raised in Eastern Nigeria and is a product of that system of schooling. While an early incident in his life caused him to wonder about the justice of corporal punishment, he accepted it and participated in it as both the recipient and the administer. He has been beaten countless times in his life. And in his turn, he has flogged others: brothers, underlings, and students. In seminary in his early twenties he started to question caning's value as a deterrent to bad behavior, and as an enhancement to the educational process. During his apostolic year (supervised field education), he had the freedom to observe and ponder the practice. At that point, he put down the cane and never picked it up again.

However, as a counterpoint, despite the beatings and other school-sponsored abuse, he still has a love for education, holds two master's degrees, and is working on his doctorate in education. One could argue that he is both a victim and benefactor of his country's education systems, corporal punishment included.

As much as we need discipline and corrective measures in schools, the application of corporal punishment should not be considered in the environment of learning, more so, on students who left their home to learn and not to be punished or abused. Most of the Eastern Nigerian teachers do not see the evils of corporal punishments because they were products of the process, as the author was. The use of corporal punishment may be

attributed to cultural practices, religious beliefs, social orientation, and colonial-copycat-ism.

The author is firmly against corporal punishment and would like to see it abolished in Eastern Nigeria within the next decade. Nevertheless, he is determined to produce a fair telling of the data and circumstances that he encountered in the study.

Ethics. As a priest, the researcher holds a high status and position of authority in the highly Christian community. This could have biased any behaviors and responses on the part of the participants. On the other hand, his status facilitated the researcher to gain easier access to schools, students, and teachers. To mitigate this factor of authority, he did not wear clerical clothing (Roman collar or soutane).

As a part of the study, the researcher witnessed the beatings of students and filmed those. While some of the canings were severe, none was to the degree that intervention was necessary, and so it did not present an ethical problem for the researcher. It would have been a terrible injustice to stand by while a child was harshly punished or sustaining physical injury.

The researcher edited the final film with caution so that no student was presented in a way that damaged their dignity, nor exposed them to the risk of retaliation by any administer who might be seen in a bad light. Administers were portrayed fairly so that the film audience will understand the pervasiveness of the practice and the entrenchment in the culture.

Actual methods, the documentary process. Documentary filming provides a unique contribution to research projects, as it can illuminate social justice issues and inequities

while it incorporates many of the traditional methods used in qualitative investigations to collect and analyze data (Friend & Caruthers, 2016, pp. 33-34).

Site selection. This study was conducted in two of the Eastern Nigeria states, Anambra and Enugu, visiting both public and private schools, as well as urban and rural schools. Urban schools in Onitsha, Obosi, and Enugu were used, as were rural schools in Ifitedunu. Refer to Table 2 for a list of filming and interview sites. The filming occurred during school hours and during the hour of assembly prior to school. The wide selection of schools was chosen to incorporate the changing demographics of the 21st century Eastern Nigerian population. Most of the filming took place in rural areas where corporal punishment is still at its peak.

Table 2

Interview and Filming Sites

School	Location	Demographics
School 1 - High School	Ifitedunu	Rural
School 2 - High School	Ifitedunu	Rural
School 3 - High School	Ifitedunu	Rural
School 4 - Primary School	Ifitedunu	Rural
School 5 - Primary School	Ifitedunu	Rural
School 6 - Primary School	Ifitedunu	Rural
School 7 - High School	Enugu	Urban
School 8 - Primary School	Onitsha	Urban
School 9 - Primary School	Onitsha	Urban
School 10 - Primary and High School	Obosi	Urban
School 11 - Primary and High School	Obosi	Urban
School 12 - Primary School	Onitsha	Urban
School 13 - Primary School	Onitsha	Urban

Primary schools. The participants in the primary schools were from rural areas. Logistically, this eased navigation because the parents are rural farmers who live close by. The proximity of the schools in the rural areas made it possible to cover more schools during the short filming period. All the participants in the primary schools were found in the same environment since it is not a busy place. The survey, interview, filming, ethnographic study, and observation were all going on concurrently.

Secondary schools. Most of the secondary schools in Eastern Nigeria are in urban areas, and that is where you can find both private and public schools competing. Before the interviews, a detailed explanation was provided to the students, teachers, administrators, and parents. The majority of the student interviews were conducted in the secondary schools because these students do get caned, and at the secondary level, have enough verbal skills to be interviewed. This is also where we encountered prefects (students who were given authority over fellow students and the ability and permission to cane their contemporaries.) The parents of the high school students were mainly working-class, and they gave useful insight into how corporal punishment has helped or harmed their children over the past ten to twelve years.

Purposeful Sampling. Purposeful sampling was applied for the study of corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria. In other words, the schools and the administrators, teachers, students, and parents were selected based on their willingness to engage on the topic of corporal punishment and to provide a broad demographic sample. The one segment not covered in the sample is schools for the ultra-rich, owned by foreign operators. All three of those schools contacted declined to be filmed or interviewed.

The purpose of the study was to explore various stakeholders' perspectives on corporal punishment in the school system. The selected locations for filming included urban and rural sites, public, quasi-public, and private schools, all-girl, all-boy, and mixed-gender high schools, and primary and secondary grades. Administrators, teachers, and parents were selected from these sites for interviews. Student interviews were limited to grades 6 to 12. Younger children were excluded due to their lesser communication skills.

Pre-arrangements. Permission to observe and film in the schools was obtained from each principal during an in-person visit. The ethnographic observation took place on that same first day at each school. The researcher wandered the halls, visited classrooms, watched the kids at play, and generally observed the school's functioning. Some filming also took place on the first day to record impressions and provide B-roll (background scenes.) The researcher and videographer returned to the school on the subsequent day that had been arranged with the principal.

Duration. The participants were interviewed in January of 2020. The filming of interviews themselves was limited to one full school day at any given school. In all, the filming took two weeks.

Permission to interview. Each interviewee gave his or her verbal consent to be filmed and included in the documentary. Everyone interviewed had 24 hours of advance notice that the interviews would be taking place.

Participant comfort. Every effort was made to make the participant as comfortable as possible.

Student interviews were conducted in the schoolyard and classroom, during breaks, away from teachers and administrators, whose presence might have inhibited them from sharing their true thoughts.

Teachers were interviewed in or near their classrooms, where they are the “boss” and feel at home. Principals were interviewed in their offices. Both teacher and principal interviews required an up-front investment of time in a “getting to know you” process to relax the interview participants. It was helpful to put them at ease by finding common ground, telling funny stories, or fond remembrances of being in school. Once a level of comfort was established, the interviewer was then able to probe the deeper topic of corporal punishment.

Filming. School filming took place in the classroom, the schoolyard, and in the principal’s office. Parent interviews were filmed either in the schoolyard or in the family home.

The researcher employed three videographers to accompany him to capture the interviews and incidents. Clip-on microphones and shotgun microphones were used to enhance the audios captured on cameras. The researcher’s cell phone provided secondary camera angles and backup where possible. Some amateur photography was included as B-roll, providing cultural background.

Manual focusing was used to help in framing the shots. It was essential to record the face and voice of the interviewee during the interview. In the process of zooming in and out, panning from left to right, tilting up and down, dollying in and out, the camera

captured non-verbal expressions and emotions. These non-verbal expressions help to communicate to the general audience more clearly some real-life situations.

Editing in Premiere Pro. Over 55 hours of interviews, classroom environments, school compounds, and village settings were captured. They were imported into Adobe Premiere Pro and organized into bins according to themes for easy access. From the bins, over 55 hours of recording were reviewed, and clips and sub-clips were developed. From there, the individual sequences in the film were laid down on the timeline, narration developed, and voice-overs overlaid. Finally, the graphical elements, like the title and credits, were put in.

Inquiry. Interview questions on attitudes on corporal punishment were formulated to help the interviewer and the interviewee to have a clear understanding and fruitful discussion of corporal punishment.

Data analysis. The author edited the video with a goal of a less-than-sixty-minute film. The data was sequenced to make the documentary meaningful and to tell a story. The dissertation paper was written to support the video. The resulting video will be posted to the internet, and the dissertation defended as a part of the doctoral candidate's coursework.

Limitations

According to Simon and Goes, limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher's control (2013, p. 1). This author could not agree more. In planning for this work, a number of potential limitations were possible.

Political impasse. The political situation in Nigeria is always tense. During political turmoil, schools can be closed down; and teachers go on strike from time to time because of their poor salaries. However, this did not occur during the filming.

Language. This research was done in a community where English is not fluently spoken or written. Though efforts were made to explain to the teachers and the students in vernacular what the research is all about, there is always a lacuna in translation. The Italian adage states that every translator is a traitor (*traduttore, traditore*). The early Bible translators (scripture scholars) said that every translation is a corruption of the original. A lot of translation was required for this film. Moreover, the Igbo culture has a proverb that states, pejoratively, that “translations are like women: when they are beautiful, they are not faithful, and when they are faithful, they are not beautiful.” The author made every effort to translate as close to the meaning as possible.

Out of scope punishments. There are many other forms of punishment in Eastern Nigeria that hinder learning, but this research was limited to flogging, beating, hitting, paddling, sticking, kicking, punching, and smacking. Other types of punishment occurred during the course of the ethnographic and observation methods. They were recorded in on film but are only incidental to the main data. We observed other types of punishments: students holding a squatting position, students scrubbing the school steps and sidewalk; students fetching water; and teachers berating and making derogatory remarks to the students.

Time and sample. The author had only two years to carry out this research, and he is based in the United States, while the subjects are in Nigeria. Time and budget prohibited extended stays in Nigeria.

Cultural biases. Culturally, most of the people in Eastern Nigeria are camera shy. They don't like to speak on camera. Some of them who chose to speak on camera tried to appear good or smart, so it is possible that several of the interviewees incorporated some positioning or spin. The culture is always suspicious of the documentary process because of their encounter with colonialism. Some may perceive the documentary as an exploitation of their culture, so the author thought he might encounter stonewalling, but no one obstructed the project.

Lack of secondary data. The author has not identified any established secondary data. No documentary has been found in this area of study in Eastern Nigeria; therefore, there is no secondary evidence to support the author's premises.

Biases of primary data. Since the author generated the data in this work, his biases may influence his conclusions. Subjectivism is always a risk.

Chapter Four

Findings

Refer to the documentary film *The Body Listens Better Than the Ear*.

Chapter Five

Discussion

I grew up in Nigeria, a product of the Nigerian schooling system. During December 2019 and January 2020, I returned to Nigeria to make an exploratory documentary film about corporal punishment as a means of discipline and classroom control in Eastern Nigerian public and private schools.

Through the process of developing the documentary, administrators, teachers, students, and parents were given the opportunity to describe their experiences of corporal punishment as a means of correction in schools and homes. The body of the documentary consists mainly of interviews with principals, teachers, students, and parents. Filming began with Nneamaka Secondary School in Ifitedunu late in 2019. The study was expanded to include interviews with villagers who daily witness the use of corporal punishment on students who come to school late.

The end product of this research is the documentary film *The Body Listens Better Than the Ear*, the title being an Igbo adage.

The research questions addressed by the film are:

Research question 1: Does corporal punishment enhance or impair the learning process?

Research question 2: What effects does corporal punishment have on the various participants involved, especially teachers and students? This may include physical, psychological, attitudinal, and learning outcome effects.

Research question 3: What attitudes are in place in the culture that contribute to the perpetuation of this disciplinary approach? What are the root causes for using this method? On what premises and assumptions are these attitudes built?

Summary of Findings

The literature review pointed to many of the challenges faced by the Eastern Nigerian teachers, students, parents, and administrators in the classroom and home. The teacher-student relationship is heavily enmeshed with the culture of the people, as they see flogging as a necessary aspect of their culture. Culture is inseparable from its people and exerts tremendous influence on how children are raised. Some cultures accept corporal punishment as a good norm, while some others abhor it. According to Smith and Mosby (2003), “Culture guides parents’ beliefs about child discipline, behavior management, and control” (p. 360). The film *The Body Listens Better Than the Ear* documents these challenges faced by students through the voices of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other community members as seen through a purposeful sampling of public and private schools in Eastern Nigeria. Some of the participants describe corporal punishment as a tool to enforce their expectations for good student behavior. Fear of the unknown prevents many of the teachers from trying alternatives to corporal punishment. The interviews revealed that a primary purpose of the cane in the school system is to instill fear into the students by inflicting pain. Corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria is supported by Christian and Muslim believers. Reliance on corporal punishment is ingrained in the religious, social, and moral beliefs and the very understanding of life in Igboland. “He that spares the rod hates his son: but he that loves him corrects him always.

Withhold not correction from a child: for if you strike him with the rod, he shall not die. You shall beat him with the rod and deliver his soul from hell” (Proverbs 13:24).

The findings from the exploratory study were illustrated through the video documentary *The Body Listens Better Than the Ear*, which incorporates footage from participant interviews, teachers’ interactions, classroom observations, parental viewpoints, students’ contributions, associated b-roll, and documentary narration. The film also incorporates feedback gathered from teachers in the preliminary pilot study regarding possible alternatives.

Corporal Punishment in Eastern Nigeria Findings

The Body Listens Better Than the Ear consists of five segments: (1) introduction to corporal punishment, (2) supporters of corporal punishment, (3) cultural influence and family impact, (4) opponents of corporal punishment, (5) and pilot program conclusions.

Summary of research question 1: Does corporal punishment enhance or impair the learning process?

The first research question was put to the principal of Nneamaka High School, Mr. Cyprian Emelife. In his response, he etymologized the Igbo word for teacher, *onye nkuzi*, which was new information to the researcher. The explanation was so apt in explaining how the cane, teaching, and school were intertwined from the inception of schooling in Eastern Nigeria. Mr. Emelife explained:

In our language, a teacher is called *onye nkuzi*. *Onye* means a person, *nku* is a stick, and *zi* means to direct. Therefore, a teacher is a person who directs with a stick or a cane. The school is where you find the teachers, and necessarily by their name and their work, they must use the cane.

The researcher asked Principal Emelife if there were evidence that proved beyond doubt that the cane is no longer necessary for learning, would he be willing to change his philosophy on the use of a cane as a discipline tool? He cataloged the various roles of the cane in school.

...the cane has become a lot of things in the school system. It is not only the object of correction or discipline; it is also a symbol of authority and power. It is also an instructional tool to point out what is written on the blackboard. As of today, no, we cannot do without the cane. The rascality and insubordinate behavior of 21st-century students in Eastern Nigeria is a cause for concern. Therefore, we need the cane for control, correction, and warning.

The principal permitted me to interview Mrs. Etomike, the vice-principal, and Master Charles, the senior prefect, who both support corporal punishment. Mrs. Etomike expressed her fears and concerns:

Cultism [gang-style groups and behavior] is growing in our schools. Students do not want to study hard, but they want to get a good grade, so they threaten the teachers with a gun or knife. The cult members wait for the teachers on the road to school in order to harm them. Corporal punishment is the only way to curtail these excesses. We have spoken for a long time, and they do not listen; now is a time for action with corporal punishment of all sorts. Remember the proverb of our elders, *aru ka nti anu ife*, [the body hears better than the ear]. If you tell a child not to do an action [though his ears], if the child continues to perform the same bad action, you have no other option but to tell the body with beatings.

The researcher discovered that corporal punishment is constitutive of the cultural belief and understanding of the people in the school system. The senior prefect who said he had suffered corporal punishment at the hands of teachers and his parents also supported the use of it. Master Charles said,

I used to be a habitual late-comer, I played truancy and didn't do my homework most of the time, but after one horrible incident where I was caught by a teacher who flogged me and took me to my parents, who in turn flogged me more and threatened to stop me from going to school. That is when I turned over a new leaf. I support corporal punishment because I am a living witness to its positive effects.

The majority of the people I interviewed supported corporal punishment, though they could not answer the question, “At what point does punishment become abuse?” The researcher requested that Principal Emelife work with him to create a pilot program where one classroom would forgo using corporal punishment for 6 months, which he agreed to do. The plan was to commence from January for the remainder of the school year. However, COVID-19 disrupted the plan when the schools were shut down, so that particular experiment was suspended indefinitely.

Summary of research question 2: What effect does corporal punishment have on the various participants involved, especially teachers and students, which may include physical, psychological, attitudinal, and learning effects? When reviewing the teacher-student responses to this research question, cultural consistency played a vital role with all the participants. Most people wanted to adhere to the traditional way. The findings from the study are consistent with literature surrounding the use of corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria, which identifies corporal punishment as a predominant means of discipline. Most teachers and some students believed in the use of corporal punishment to keep the classroom under control. Out of fear of being kicked, flogged, or knocked, the students are quiet, but in the pilot study, teachers discovered that keeping quiet does not equate to paying attention.

In my preliminary study, I conducted a four-week trial in four classrooms each, in two high schools, who agreed to alternate two weeks with the cane in the classroom, and two weeks without, and to share their observations with the researcher. The effect of corporal punishment was an inhibiting fear, not an increased interest in learning. One

teacher noted that there was a free exchange of ideas and questions when the cane was missing from the classroom. When the cane was reintroduced, the former exuberance and participation disappeared. A teacher in the 5th grade observed that the time used in administering corporal punishment could be added to teaching and correcting time with the students. An hour's lecture can be wasted in punishment and pain.

The most adverse effects of corporal punishment are the physical injury and the indelible mark left on the mind of the students. I interviewed adults who dropped out of school because of the use of severe corporal punishment. A former student, Mr. Cletus Akpu related how he quit school because of flogging. Mr. Cletus received corporal punishment both at home and in school. At home, his mother frequently flogged him for playing soccer; at school, for being late, not understanding lessons, and not doing homework. He decided to quit school to cut the flogging by half. The trauma did not leave him, but the most unfortunate thing about the situation today is that Cletus flogs his children with the hope that flogging will make them better people. "Since flogging did not make you a better person, why do you think it will make your kids better citizens?" Cletus has no answer to the question. The intergenerational repetition of tradition is a significant factor in the persistence of corporal punishment, which leads us to the third research question.

Summary of research question 3: What attitudes are in place in the culture that contribute to the perpetuation of this disciplinary approach? What are the root causes for using this method? On what premises and assumptions are these attitudes built?

From the findings, the researcher identified a predominant theme that contributes to perpetrating corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria: the long-standing and very personal belief that, “Since I was raised that way, and I turned out well, it must be a good way.” Almost every administrator, teacher, and parent wanted to replicate what their parents did. Very few wanted to test the methods of their fathers and grandfathers. My research revealed that the people of Eastern Nigeria hold tenaciously to their culture and worldview. Very few wanted to be the solitary dissenter to a culture of corporal punishment. Igbo sayings, proverbs, idioms, and axioms are intrinsic in their way of life and thinking. Those essential thoughts and practices include:

First, the definition of a teacher in the Igbo language translates to “someone who directs with a stick or cane.” “Onye nkuzi” is the word for teacher in Igbo. The behavior extends from the meaning of the word. Mr. Emelife explained further that without the cane, there can be nothing like teaching.

Second, Madam Beatrice, one of the oldest women in the community, expressed a popular axiom, “arụ na-anụkalị ntị ife,” [the body listens better than the ear.] Numerous other interviewees cited variants of this theme, including two student prefects, Miss Chinyere and Master Charles. In their own personal experience administering corporal punishment, the students will obey their orders immediately, leading them to conclude that the body listens very effectively.

Third, the family gives older siblings the power to punish their younger ones with corporal punishment. The culture of corporal punishment is being inculcated into people from the earliest stages of their life, even before they enter into the public domain. Mr.

Augustine Nwafor reflected that in families, parents train their kids using the cane and encourage the older ones to use the cane to correct their younger siblings. Mr. Mathias Ebisi said, “Raising a child without a cane is like an old man trying to climb a sandy hill without help” [Igbo saying for doing something unlikely or impossible].

The perpetuation of corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria is a problem not only in the school system but a problem that permeates the social, moral, religious, and cultural fabric of the Igbo people.

Feedback from Teachers in No-Cane Pilot Study

Some of the teachers who participated in the preliminary pilot study summarized earlier expressed positive opinions on removing corporal punishment from the classroom. Their comments included:

“I think I am the person who gained the most from the experiment because I became so focused on the teaching itself. My focus was on helping the students, not on punishing them. I felt a sense of responsibility, not command.”

“[The classroom without the cane] was like a family. I was so happy with the expression of their freedom to ask questions and their willingness to contribute.”

“In my twenty years in the teaching profession, I have never gotten the kind of response and energy I have gotten in these few days. It occurs to me that maybe the students should be allowed to make mistakes in order for them to grow.”

“[The observer] said that the classroom reminds her of university classrooms where people are allowed to be themselves.”

“[The teacher] concluded that the wealth of knowledge in her class was previously hindered by the presence of the cane. The observer said the class was lively and noisy but allowed for more interesting discourse.”

Challenges to Changing the System

The challenges in eliminating or upholding corporal punishment were also discussed by the participants. Resistance from parents, students, administrators, teachers, and society is a major challenge in eliminating or banning corporal punishment in Igboland. The cultural world view, religious belief, social expectations, and traditions support the use of corporal punishment. Teachers and parents believe that they were well-raised with corporal punishment and therefore are obligated to raise their kids in the same way. The Christian parents believe in the Scripture's words, and some see abandoning “the rod” as a sin in itself. The students reported that they expect their parents and teachers to cane them whenever there is an infraction or misbehavior, even a minor one.

Keeping in mind that discipline is a collective and collaborative process, reduction or elimination of corporal punishment would require administrators, teachers, parents, and the students to recognize its adverse effects and be ready to work together to change the culture.

Reflections

The film shows how corporal punishment has been sustained by those who believe it is the only effective means of discipline and control. On the other hand, it also revealed that some believe that there are viable alternatives. Listening to both proponents and opponents of corporal punishment would help the administrators to make a balanced

decision to consider the cost and value of the practice. Multiple people, including supporters of corporal punishment, indicated moderation was needed which could provide a foothold for change.

The study revealed how culture and religion can factor into a belief system, for better or worse. The research exposed the extent to which corporal punishment is entrenched into the everyday life of an Igbo person. Corporal punishment is a way of life in Eastern Nigeria. This research has shown that teachers, students, parents, and administrators form a network of support for the use of corporal punishment. Any solution must encompass support from those same people.

If corporal punishment is reduced, a natural place to go would be to revert to current milder forms of punishment, as exemplified in the film, such as picking up garbage in the yard, sweeping and scrubbing, digging pits, fetching water, and cutting grass. However, those activities have the drawback that they deprive the offender of class time, which is a significant harm in itself. Alternative methods of discipline must be devised and offered to teachers and administrators.

The parents should be encouraged to use similar alternatives in punishing their children at home, for example, denying game-time to their children. Student prefects and older siblings should be retrained to use non-violent methods to correct bad behavior. Administrators should put policies and guidelines in place to reduce and then eliminate corporal punishment. And, Nigerian Criminal Code, Article 25 (1990), which condemns corporal punishment of children, should be enforced.

Corporal punishment has many components that hinder learning and growth. The elements of fear, force, anger, intimidation, and shame are the core elements of corporal punishment. None of these elements are congruent with the elements required for effective learning. I was moved by the understanding of some students to see the use of corporal punishment as representing “ignorance” on the part of the teachers. One student recognized that something may be amiss in the late or offending student’s home life and that the teacher can observe that the student is worried about something other than school. Some students perceived that without the cane, their teachers tended to focus more on what to teach, not on whom to cane. Both a student and a teacher observed that the cane is a distraction to the teacher and the students at the same time. The struggles and challenges faced by the students daily in the school system are formidable already. Lack of supplies and textbooks, insufficient quantities of desks and chairs, peeling paint, aging buildings, and collapsing ceilings were all cited by students or observed by the researcher. The ever-present threat of corporal punishment adds unnecessary stress to a fraught environment.

Observations of various activities and conversations carried out in the villages and schools in Igboland also lead me to believe that change is possible. Some grandparents who are the champions of corporal punishment have conceded that showing love to the kids may be better than the use of force and fear. The number of injuries sustained by the students in the name of corporal punishment is a great source of worry to the teachers and the parents. Instances of punishment appearing on social media is also a source of fear to the parents and teachers. Some teachers have seen themselves appearing on social media

without knowing who captured the incident. Phones and watches that serve as cameras can motivate change for the perpetrators of corporal punishment. Nobody wants to be shown to the public as a bad teacher or bad parent. From this worry of teachers and parents, one can infer that they know corporal punishment is not the best way to discipline a child.

As the researcher, I found the entire documentary filmmaking process to be a compelling medium. Many of the participants felt very privileged that they were being filmed and shared many personal stories. The participants were also very touched by the video footage and moved when the footage was shared with them.

Implications for Existing Literature

These results build on existing evidence that even children have mixed reactions to corporal punishment, in that they both oppose it and accept it as inevitable (Graziano et al., 1996, p. 846). Also, most educators interviewed reported that corporal punishment was effective in maintaining control of the class, which they see as necessary for learning (Abrifor, 2008).

The results do not fit with the prevailing theory and practice that the classroom is harder to maintain without corporal punishment, as evidenced by the recognition that time spent being caned, picking up garbage, or digging pits is time the student spends away from the classroom, and not learning at all (Maphosa and Shumba, 2010, p. 392).

This research shows a clear contradiction between corporal punishment and building trust between the teacher and student. Numerous examples were given that the first level of punishment, like picking up garbage, escalated to the next levels of punishment by

caning, even as soon as the very next day. So, punitive practices did not establish the teacher as an authority to be trusted, but one to be feared (Morin, 2018, para. 8-10).

This exploratory study provided new insight into the relationship between teaching and learning. It raised awareness that a quiet classroom does not necessarily equate to a learning classroom. A calm class can be filled with fear and anxiety.

The film contributes a clear understanding of cultural, familial, and institutional pressures to maintain the use of corporal punishment, even though it creates a cycle of violence, with the help of force, intimidation, and fear in the correction and discipline of students in the school environment (Holden, 2002, p. 593).

Implications of the Research

The research revealed some root causes of corporal punishment that can be addressed. It also revealed some alternative methods of discipline that do not hurt the child and can reduce reliance on corporal punishment.

Some causes of corporal punishment were inadequate teacher training, teacher's lack of confidence or self-esteem, or the lack of self-regulation of the teacher's own emotions, resulting in venting anger on the student.

Other systemic problems included low pay, which results in the employment of less-qualified teachers and sometimes leads to venting their frustration out on students; a "zero-tolerance" policy for tardiness or truancy, regardless of the reason; and a lack of books and supplies for the children contributing to inattention, misbehavior, and incomplete homework.

Cultural and homelife problems were identified, such as caring for a sick relative at home, illiterate parents, and impoverished home conditions, making homework challenging to complete. Likewise, hunger, poor nutrition, and poor living conditions were factors affecting the students' performance.

Impact of COVID-19 on this Research

All the recordings were filmed in January 2020. There was a plan to go back in October 2020 for follow-up teacher and student interviews. In March 2020, the whole world was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic. All schools were shut down, and traveling around the world was restricted, and in some cases, completely banned. Though it was a painful experience worldwide, a majority of the students began learning from home through Zoom and other electronic means. As a result, it would be interesting to learn how corporal punishment would be administered within the context of online learning.

Finally, in the long term, the author believes this study could lead to corporal punishment in the schools being replaced, with a few cautions: first, the principals must engage the teachers to do their primary work of teaching responsibly and diligently, and support them in doing so. The teachers must engage the students positively and lovingly. The students should be able to see the school as a family and their second home, a place of correction without punishment. The students should be respectful and obedient when they are in school and inside the classroom. The parents should be encouraged to enact a ban on corporal punishment at home; otherwise, the violence will continue. The school is the extension of the home.

Recommendations for Future Research

The documentary brought out the perspectives of administrators, teachers, students, and parents who are living in Eastern Nigeria. These individuals represent most of the experiences the Igbo people have with corporal punishment. All age groups were represented, from the youngest to the oldest. Likewise, both males and females were interviewed. Students from 5th grade to 12th grade were given the opportunity to air their views in the documentary.

There are some mega-schools owned by individuals who cater to the affluent. They declined to be filmed. It would have been beneficial to hear their views and perspective as well. Such data could have provided a comparison (and contrast) of the treatment of the children of the super-rich vis-à-vis the children of the middle class and poor, served by public schools and private schools. How are the children of wealthy and savvy parents treated compared to the children of indigent or illiterate parents? It would also be beneficial to compare the view of the teachers who are in the mega-schools who are well paid to do the work of teaching with those teaching in less well-off schools. This dichotomy should be explored in subsequent research.

Another promising area of research would be the response of 1st grade to 4th grade students, who are also on the receiving end of corporal punishment. Most of the kids of that age group, 6-10 years, are less articulate, and therefore, usually excluded from interview-based research like this. A well-designed psychological survey and documentary could reveal deeper insights into what they think and how they feel.

Increasing the sample size and expanding the project demographics to include students in higher education institutions who are the teachers of tomorrow, as well as university teachers' use of alternative discipline, may provide new insights and may be a good source for alternative correction methods. Further research in societal norms and religious beliefs is also recommended since the current study only focused on grades 5-12 students and teachers, parents, and administrators rather than a broader community scope.

The research was designed in response to the use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline on the students in the schools in Eastern Nigeria. There are concerns that corporal punishment hinders learning, introduces a senseless circle of violence, and introduces fear and force in the school environment. Further research is required to determine whether corporal punishment is destroying what it claims to uphold, that is, discipline and successful learning outcomes.

The influence of this project is still ongoing, as some teachers who participated in the preliminary pilot study without corporal punishment decided to continue the ban on corporal punishment even after the end of the project. In the early phase of the trial, many teachers and administrators were skeptical about the outcome, but with time it gained acceptance with other teachers who were not even part of the original pilot. As each teacher gains a positive experience with the no-cane approach, the success may be emulated by others. However, there is a risk that if this approach is implemented without support and suitable alternatives, it could lead to failure and thereby slow adoption.

Summary

The study documented the prevalence of corporal punishment in the school system in Eastern Nigeria. The film showcases the need to raise awareness of the adverse effects of corporal punishment in schools in Eastern Nigeria. The documentary speaks for itself, registered in the pain on the faces of the students as caning is administered and the stress on the teachers after flogging or caning. The film leaves room for the viewers to judge for themselves if what they observed is good for a school environment. The opinions of the supporters and opponents are documented for the viewers to reach an unbiased conclusion. The inclusion of the cultural context for corporal punishment can help the viewers and readers to understand the mindset of the participants.

All parents want their children to achieve and aspire for a better future. They are worried that if they agree to eliminate corporal punishment, their children may become failures in life. The fear of the alternative is real and palpable. Nobody wants to raise an unsuccessful child. Most of the supporters of corporal punishment were closed to the alternatives and were adamant that the success of a child depends heavily on caning. Many cited the bible passage, “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him” (Proverbs 13:24). The supporters also have tradition on their side, attested by the adage that “the body is more sensitive than the ear.” Religion and culture were repeated themes in support of corporal punishment.

Most of the opponents of corporal punishment were younger teachers, though their conviction is supported by psychological data, which generally recommends against beating a child. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, striking a child can

cause physical harm, and so spanking is advised against. They cite several major consequences of corporal punishment. It is not effective in the long term; it has negative effects on the brain anatomy and IQ; it encourages aggressive behavior and even lowers vocabulary scores (Sege and Siegel, 2018).

Both sides of the argument want good and disciplined students and children, but the contention is over the means. The opponents said that corporal punishment would destroy the courage and freedom of the students. The proponents argued that without corporal punishment, the students would be wild and reckless. They worried that without corporal punishment, the teachers and the parents would be helpless in the face of the students who do not follow the rules. Since both parties have a common objective, the goal of this research is to present both findings in a virtual form and allow the viewers to make an informed judgment as to the efficacy and legitimacy of the practice.

The study also demonstrates that corporal punishment cannot be eradicated without a concerted effort. An agency with some standing will be needed to support a change effort. It could be the government, the Church, or even world opinion. The proponents for change need help in communicating the adverse effects of corporal punishment and raising cultural awareness. Those who do oppose corporal punishment in Eastern Nigeria are in the minority and need societal, institutional, and government support to make their voices heard. That is one of the main reasons for this documentary. First, to reach a larger audience, and second, to make the information accessible to those who are not literate. A picture, they say, is worth a thousand words.

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