ASSESSING EDUCATORS' KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE TOOLKIT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN SCHOOLS

MICHAEL ASARE

Department of Education, Christ Apostolic University College, Kumasi, Ghana
Tel: +233243133765

WILLIAMS BOAKYE-BAAFI

Ahafo Regional Manager of Catholic Schools, Goaso, Ghana
Tel: +233208825287

FELIX SENYAMETOR (PhD)

Faculty of Educational Foundations, Department of Education and Psychology,
University of Cape Coast, Ghana
+233242210991

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the knowledge and usage of the positive discipline toolkit among heads, teachers, and guidance and counselling coordinators an education service in some schools in a sub-Saharan African country like Ghana. The positive discipline toolkit, designed as an alternative to corporal punishment, aims to promote non-violent and constructive student behaviour management. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed, involving 377 participants selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics, multiple linear regression and one-way ANOVA tests. Findings revealed that a majority of respondents were aware of the existence of the positive discipline toolkit, with guidance and counselling coordinators demonstrating the highest level of awareness. Descriptive statistics further indicated high levels of knowledge across key components of the toolkit. A multiple linear regression analysis showed that knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit, years of service, and professional role significantly predicted its usage, and that higher knowledge increases usage, while longer years of service reduce it. However, no statistically significant differences were found among the three professional groups in terms of toolkit usage. The study highlights the need for targeted professional development to ensure consistent application of positive discipline practices across all educational roles.

Keywords: Positive Discipline, Positive Discipline Toolkit, Corporal Punishment, Knowledge, Usage, Teachers, Heads, Guidance and Counselling.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Education is widely acknowledged as a powerful tool for personal and societal transformation (Asiyai, 2012). In recognition of this, governments across the globe continue to develop and implement policies aimed at enhancing educational outcomes. However, the realisation of these goals is increasingly hindered by a pervasive challenge called indiscipline. Acts of indiscipline, especially in schools, have become commonplace, transcending political, economic,

geographical, racial, and gender boundaries (Karanja & Bowen, 2012). This trend is alarming as school indiscipline not only disrupts academic activities but also threatens the broader objectives of national development, such as economic recovery and industrialization (Amarh, 2017).

Indiscipline in schools is often characterised by behaviours such as truancy, dishonesty, defiance of authority, and other forms of deviance (Kipropo, 2012). These behaviours not only compromise the learning environment but also hinder students' academic and personal development. Discipline and learning are deeply interrelated, and as such, ensuring that learners cultivate acceptable behaviour is crucial to their educational success. Teachers and school authorities, therefore, play a pivotal role in managing student discipline. However, the methods employed in enforcing discipline have historically relied heavily on punitive measures, particularly corporal punishment.

In a sub-Saharan African country like Ghana, corporal punishment has long been an entrenched disciplinary practice within the educational system. Used as a deterrent to undesirable behaviour, it often involves physical punishment and, in many cases, harsh and degrading treatment. Responding to growing concerns about its adverse effects, including physical injury, psychological trauma, and the perpetuation of violent behaviour, the Ghana Education Service (GES) introduced reforms to promote non-violent disciplinary practices. Notably, the revised Head Teachers' Handbook (2010) and subsequent policy directives, such as those in the GES (2016) framework, advocate for positive, participatory approaches to discipline. These reforms culminated in the introduction of the positive discipline toolkit, a comprehensive guide designed to promote respectful teacher-student relationships, shared value-setting, and constructive, non-violent responses to misconduct (Mabuza, Makondo, & Bhebhe, 2017).

Despite these progressive policies, the practice of corporal punishment remains widespread in some Ghanaian schools. Research suggests that many teachers and administrators continue to favour corporal punishment, viewing it as a traditional and effective method of maintaining discipline. This resistance is often attributed to a lack of awareness, inadequate training, and scepticism about the effectiveness of non-violent approaches. Moreover, anecdotal evidence indicates that school heads, teachers, and guidance and counselling coordinators who are key stakeholders in school discipline may lack the necessary knowledge and competencies to effectively implement the positive discipline toolkit.

This situation raises critical concerns. Are these stakeholders adequately informed about the positive discipline toolkit? Do they possess the skills and resources required to use it effectively? Do stakeholders' knowledge influence the usage of the Positive Discipline Toolkit? And why does corporal punishment persist despite clear policy directives and the availability of humane alternatives?

There is a notable lack of empirical data on the awareness, knowledge, and practical use of the positive discipline toolkit among educational stakeholders in Ghana, particularly within the Ashanti Region. Additionally, there is limited understanding of the specific roles of school heads and guidance and counselling coordinators in leading and supporting the implementation of positive discipline strategies. Most existing studies fail to address these issues within localised contexts, leaving a significant gap in the literature.

Given these concerns, a systematic assessment of the knowledge and usage of the positive discipline toolkit by heads, teachers, and guidance and counselling coordinators in the Ashanti Region of Ghana is urgently needed. Such research will provide valuable insights into the extent of toolkit implementation, and offer evidence-based recommendations to support the transition from punitive to positive disciplinary practices in Ghanaian schools.

1.1 The Concept of Positive Discipline

Positive discipline is meant to replace corporal punishment which is seen as barbaric, violent and inhuman and trains learners to be violent adults and irresponsible citizens. Corporal punishment as a tool for maintaining discipline in schools has been as old as formal education in most countries. The practice relies on the use of harsh punitive measures as a means of establishing a strong deterrence to undesirable behaviour. This is conflicting to the recommended use of positive discipline.

Yusuf (2015) posits that positive discipline has to do with elements of the application of influences that secure or at least try to produce a commitment of being responsible and eager to contribute towards attaining the desired behaviour on the part of the student and the teacher being aware that no force or violence should be used in achieving such. Mugabe and Maposa (2013) point out that positive discipline entails some training which produces a specified character or pattern of behaviour to students or learners. They submit that other people view positive discipline differently. They view it as punishment intended to correct or train a human being. Thus, positive discipline is an educative order to reach appropriate standards and follow rules for engaging in valuable educational activity.

Positive discipline is a different way of guiding children. It is about guiding children's behaviour by paying attention to their emotional and psychological needs (Naker & Sekitoleko, 2009). According to Durrant (2016) positive discipline helps children take responsibility for making good decisions and understand why those decisions were in their best interests. Positive discipline helps children learn self-discipline without fear. It involves giving children clear guidelines for what behaviour is acceptable and then supporting them as they learn to abide by these guidelines. In the views of Durrant (2016), positive discipline approach is child-centric, placing at the heart of every interaction the best interests of the child. In the centre of this approach is the relationship between the teacher and the learner; the tone, its nature and the compassion and respect within it. Naker and Sekitoleko (2009) argues that teachers create these relationships based on basic knowledge of children's developmental needs and frame their responses to children with the aim of helping them learn and grow. Positive discipline depends on the teacher's role as mentor and guide. It involves providing positive reinforcement for good choices as well as consequences for poor choices. A positive discipline approach rejects the use of violence as a tool for maintaining discipline. It's about making a long-term investment in a child's development, rather than grasping for immediate compliance by coercive means. Against this background and relevance of the concept, the researcher will like to assess teachers' knowledge and usage of positive discipline tool as a substitute measure in managing indiscipline in Ghanaian schools.

1.2 Positive Discipline in Ghanaian Schools

In Ghana, positive discipline toolkit has been accepted to be used as an alternative tool for corporal punishment in schools by the Ghana Education Service (GES), an agency of the Ministry of Education. The Guidance and Counselling Unit of GES has provided four levels of application of the positive discipline toolkit. According to GES (2016), level one of the toolkit involves creating a disciplined environment. This entails using preventive measures such as clearly spelling out rules and setting expectations from students, expressing approval of and encouraging good behaviour, setting an environment of mutual respect that recognizes the authority of the teacher. This should also be part of the orientation given to students at the beginning of every academic year and reinforced at the start of each school term. This is to be done in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders (i.e., GES, guidance and counselling personnel, school administration, etc.).

Also, level two of the toolkit being used in the pre-tertiary education sector involves identifying minor or first-time offences. According to the GES (2016), this involves early detection and intervention responses such as non-punitive actions intended to remind students of laid down standards of behaviour and expectations as well as the importance of conforming to them. The teacher would also need to, at this level, investigate the reasons behind the identified misbehaviour or the conditions that encouraged it in order to address them. Again, students who continuously exhibit serious offences or other form of misbehaviour are taken through the level three which has to do with corrective measures. These measures involve drawing the culprit attention to the severity of the offence and the fact that it has been repeated several times. The teacher at this level must combine deterrent measures with counselling, agreements and consistent follow ups on the student's response to the actions taken. GES (2016) further stressed on the level four which deals with chronic, dangerous and disruptive behaviour. Some rehabilitative measures used at this level involves inviting other members of the school administration and the child's family to support in the assessment of the child's behaviour and determination of an appropriate response. Intensive counselling and monitoring must be undertaken at this level.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study was influenced by Social Cognitive Theory (Albert Bandura, 1986). Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) emphasises the dynamic and reciprocal interaction between personal factors, behaviour, and the environment in shaping human learning and action. This theory posits that individuals acquire knowledge and new behaviours not only through direct experience but also through observation, imitation, and modelling. Bandura (1986) argues that behaviour change is influenced by cognitive processes such as self-efficacy (belief in one's capability to perform a task), outcome expectations, and goal setting. In the context of education, SCT applies and suggests that teachers, school heads, and guidance and counselling coordinators learn and adopt new disciplinary strategies such as those outlined in the positive discipline toolkit, through a combination of training, observation of best practices, peer influence, and institutional support.

This theory supports the current study in several ways such as knowledge acquisition. SCT posits that knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit is influenced by prior exposure, training, and modelling within the educational environment (Perry et al., 2020). For example, if school leaders model the use of positive discipline, teachers and counsellors are more likely to adopt

it. Again, the current study is aligning with SCT by usage and implementation. According to SCT, usage of the toolkit is mediated by self-efficacy. That is whether the educators believe they can effectively use the strategies in real-life classroom settings (Bandura, 1997). Educators who feel confident and supported are more likely to implement non-punitive discipline strategies. Aligning this study with SCT the environment and support Systems are paramount. The institutional context, including the GES policies, professional development programmes, and peer support, forms the environmental backdrop that influences behaviour adoption (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020).

In summary, SCT provides a comprehensive lens for examining how heads, teachers, and guidance and counselling coordinators gain knowledge of and use the positive discipline toolkit. Their behaviours are shaped not only by individual knowledge and beliefs but also by institutional practices, role modelling, and available support structures.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The study aims at assessing heads, teachers, and guidance and counselling coordinators' knowledge and usage of positive discipline tool kits in Ghana, a sub-Saharan African Country. Specifically, the study sought to

1. find out whether heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators were aware of the existence of positive discipline toolkit as an alternative to corporal punishment.
2. determine heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators' knowledge of positive discipline toolkit.
3. determine whether knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit, years of teaching experience, and professional role (Head, teacher, or guidance and counselling coordinator) predict usage of the positive discipline toolkit?
4. determine whether there is statistically significance difference in the use of Positive discipline toolkit among heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators.

1.5 Research Questions

In other to fulfill the purpose of the study the following research questions guided the study:

1. Do heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators have awareness of existence of the positive discipline toolkit as an alternative to corporal punishment?
2. What are heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators knowledge of positive discipline tool kits?
3. Does knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit, years of teaching experience, and professional role (Head, Teacher, or Guidance and Counselling Coordinators) predict usage of the positive discipline toolkit?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no statistically significance difference in the use of positive discipline toolkit in among Heads, Teachers and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators.

Ha1: There is a statistically significance difference in the use of Positive Discipline among Heads, Teachers and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

Cross-sectional survey method was employed in the study. In cross-sectional studies, measures of variables are taken at the same time or in practice over a relatively short period of time (Robson, 2002).

2.2 Population

The target population for the study were all licensed teachers in the Ashanti region of Ghana. According to the National Teaching Council (NTC) (2022) they were 62300 in number within the 42 metro/municipal/district in the region. These numbers comprise of heads, teachers, and teachers who doubled as school guidance and counselling coordinators in the Ashanti Regional Directorate of Education. The accessible population is 20035 from Nine metro/municipal/district in the region.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample for the study was 377 respondents made of 225 males and 152 females. This was based on Krejcie and Morgan table of sample selection. The stratified and lottery method of simple random sampling was used to select Nine metro/municipal/district in the region and the respondents. The simple random sampling technique was used to give equal chance to participants (heads, teachers and school guidance and counselling coordinators) to participate in the study.

2.4 Data Collection Instrument

A closed-ended questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.74 was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of three sections (A, B and C). The first section (A) dealt with items on the background characteristics of respondents. The rest of the sections (B and C) touched on responses to issues based on the phenomenon captured in the research questions. These issues include whether participants have knowledge of positive discipline toolkit and thus are making use of it. The items were measured on a unilinear four-point Likert scale, which ranged from strongly agree (4) through agree (3) and disagree (2) to strongly disagree (1).

2.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using the questionnaire from one school to the other by the researchers. The questionnaire was administered at the end of the normal school contact hours. This lasted for four weeks.

2.6 Data Processing and Analysis

The data was carefully edited, coded and entered into the computer and analysed using the Predictive Analytics Software (PASW) version 22 software. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentages counts were used to analyse the background data of the respondents. Also, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse research questions two. Research question three was analysed using multiple linear regression. The research hypothesis was analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Background of Respondents

Background data collected from respondents covered issues regarding their professional role in the Ghana Education Service (GES) and their knowledge of existence of the positive discipline toolkit as alternative to corporal punishment. Data regarding the issues were analysed using frequency and percentage counts and were presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Table 1 shows the professional role of respondents in the GES

Table 1: Professional Role of Respondents in the GES

Status	Frequency	Percent (%)
Head	119	31.6
Teacher	183	48.5
Guidance and Counselling Coordinators	75	19.9
Total	**377**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 1 depicts the professional role of respondents in the GES. It shows that, out of the 377 respondents selected for the study, 119 (31.6%) were Heads, 183 (48.5%) were Teachers and 75 (19.9%) were Guidance and Counselling Coordinators.

Table 2 displays the number of years' respondents have been in the GES.

Table 2: Number of Years in the Service

Years of Service	Frequency	Percent (%)
1-5 years	56	14.9
6 -10 years	71	18.8
11-15 years	96	25.5
16 + years	154	40.8
Total	**377**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 2 shows that a total of 377 participants were surveyed regarding their years of service in GES. The majority of respondents (n = 154, 40.8%) had served for more than 16 years. This was followed by those with 11–15 years of service (n = 96, 25.5%), 6–10 years (n = 71, 18.8%),

and 1–5 years (n = 56, 14.9%). These results indicate that a significant proportion of the sample comprised experienced personnel with over a decade of service.

Research Question One: Do heads, teachers and school guidance counsellors have awareness of the existence of positive discipline toolkit as an alternative to corporal punishment?

Research question one sought to find out whether Heads, Teachers and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators in the GES have knowledge of existence of positive discipline toolkit as alternative to corporal punishment. Frequency and percentage were used to analyse the question and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Status of Respondents in the GES * Awareness of existence of the Positive Discipline Toolkit Cross-tabulation

			Awareness of existence of the Positive Discipline Tool Kit		
			Yes	**No**	**Total**
Status of Respondents in the GES	Head	Count	77	42	119
		% within Status of Respondents in the GES	64.7%	35.3%	100.0%
	Teacher	Count	135	48	183
		% within Status of Respondents in the GES	73.8%	26.2%	100.0%
	Guidance and Counselling Coordinator	Count	63	12	75
		% within Status of Respondents in the GES	84.0%	16.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	275	102	377
		% within Status of Respondents in the GES	72.9%	27.1%	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 3 shows participants' awareness of the existence of the positive discipline toolkit, which is intended as an alternative to corporal punishment. A cross-tabulation was conducted to examine awareness levels among different categories of personnel within the Ghana Education Service (GES): Heads, Teachers, and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators. The results indicated varying levels of awareness across groups. Of the 377 respondents, 275 (72.9%) indicated that they were aware of the Positive Discipline Toolkit. Specifically, 64.7% (n = 77) of Heads reported being aware of the toolkit, compared to 73.8% (n = 135) of Teachers and 84.0% (n = 63) of Guidance and Counselling Coordinators. Overall, 27.1% of respondents reported a lack of awareness.

These findings suggest that guidance and counselling coordinators exhibited the highest level of awareness, followed by Teachers, while Heads reported the lowest level of awareness among

the three groups. This pattern may reflect differences in access to training or dissemination of information related to the toolkit and highlights the need for targeted awareness initiatives within specific professional roles.

3.2 Knowledge of Positive Discipline Toolkit

Research Question Two: What are heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators knowledge of positive discipline tool kits?

Research question two sought to find out whether the respondents have knowledge in the various levels of application of the positive discipline toolkit introduced by the Guidance and Counselling Unit of the GES. Heads, Teachers and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators are expected to have knowledge on issues such as provision of options for effectively applying positive discipline for different forms of misbehaviour, creating a disciplined environment such as spelling out rules and setting expectations from students. Again, other levels of the toolkit participants are expected to have knowledge include providing non-punitive actions intended to remind students of laid down standards of behaviour and the need to conform to them; as well as catering for repeated or more serious offences such as drawing pupils' attention to the severity of the offence or the fact that it has been repeated several times. Further, participants are expected to demonstrate knowledge and cater for chronic, dangerous and disruptive behaviour and involves inviting other members of the school administration and the child's family to support in the assessment of the child's behaviour and determination of an appropriate response. Means and standard deviations were used to analyse the question and the results are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Knowledge of Positive Discipline Toolkit

ITEMS	M	SD
a. The offers options for effectively applying positive discipline for different forms of misbehaviour.	3.16	.89
b. The toolkit involves creating a disciplined environment such as spelling out rules and setting expectations from students.	3.34	.90
c. The toolkit takes care of minor/first time offences such as providing non-punitive actions intended to remind students of laid down standards of behaviour and the need to conform to them.	3.21	.91
d. The toolkit takes care of repeated or more serious offences such as drawing pupils' attention to the severity of the offence or the fact that it has been repeated several times.	3.04	1.01
e. The toolkit, caters for chronic, dangerous and disruptive behaviour and involves inviting other members of the school administration and the child's family to support in the assessment of the child's behaviour and determination of an appropriate response.	3.23	.97

Source: Field data, 2024. (N = 272, MS = 3.19, SD = .94)

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for respondents' knowledge of various components of the positive discipline toolkit. The mean scores for the items ranged from 3.04 to 3.34, with standard deviations ranging from 0.89 to 1.01. The item with the lowest mean (M = 3.04, SD = 1.01) asked whether participants were knowledgeable about components of the toolkit that address repeated or more serious offenses, such as drawing pupils' attention to the severity or frequency of such behaviors. Conversely, the item with the highest mean (M = 3.34, SD = 0.90) assessed participants' knowledge of components related to creating a disciplined environment, including establishing rules and setting expectations for student behaviour. Overall, the results suggest that the majority of respondents: Heads, Teachers, and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators agreed that they possess knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit, with relatively high mean scores across all items.

3.3 Predictors of usage of Positive Discipline Toolkit

Research Question Three: Does knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit, years of teaching experience, and professional role (Head, Teacher, or Counsellor) predict usage of the Positive Discipline Toolkit?

Research question three sought to find out whether the respondents' knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit, years of teaching and professional role predicts the usage of positive discipline tool kits. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted on this research question. Tables 6, 7 and 8 show the results.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.515[a]	.265	.257	2.159

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge of PD, Professional role of Respondents in the GES, Number of Years in the Service

Source: Field data, 2024

Table 7: ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	455.540	3	151.847	32.570	.000[b]
	Residual	1263.428	271	4.662		
	Total	1718.967	274			

a. Dependent Variable: Usage of PD

b. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge of PD, Professional role of Respondents in the GES, Number of Years in the Service

Source: Field data, 2024

Table 8: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	8.677	.744		11.657	.000	7.211	10.142		
	Professional role of Respondents in the GES	-.111	.183	-.032	-.607	.544	-.472	.249	.997	1.003
	Number of Years in the Service	-.376	.121	-.163	-3.103	.002	-.614	-.137	.981	1.019
	Knowledge of PD	.352	.036	.510	9.703	.000	.281	.423	.983	1.017

a. Dependent Variable: Usage of PD

Source: Field data, 2024

A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine whether knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit, years of service, and professional role predicted its usage among heads, teachers, and guidance and counselling coordinators. Tables 6, 7 and 8 shows the results of multiple linear regression. The overall model was statistically significant, $F_{(3, 271)} = 32.57$, $p < .001$, explaining approximately 26.5% of the variance in toolkit usage ($R^2 = .265$, Adjusted $R^2 = .257$).

Among the predictors, knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit was a significant positive predictor of usage ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$), while years in service showed a significant negative effect ($\beta = -.16$, $p = .002$). Professional role did not significantly predict usage ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .544$).

These findings suggest that educators with greater knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit are more likely to use it, while those with longer years of service tend to use it less frequently. The professional role of the respondent in the Ghana Education Service, however, does not significantly affect usage.

3.4 Usage of Positive Discipline Tool

Ho1: There is no statistically significance difference in the use of Positive Discipline Tool Kits among heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators.

Ha1: There is statistically significance difference in the use of positive discipline tool kits among heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators.

Hypothesis one sought to find out whether there is significance difference in the use of positive discipline tool among heads, teachers and guidance and counselling coordinators. Table 6 show an ANOVA results on the usage of positive discipline tool kits

Table 6: ANOVA results on the usage of Positive Discipline Tool Kits

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.349	2	5.175	.753	.472
Within Groups	1876.723	273	6.874		
Total	**1887.072**	**275**			

Source: Field Data, 2024

Based on the results presented in Tables 6, which include the one-way ANOVA, there was no statistically significant difference in the usage of the positive discipline toolkit among the three groups of respondents: Heads, Teachers, and Guidance and Counselling Coordina-tors. The one-way ANOVA revealed that the variation in usage across the groups was not statistically significant, $F(2, 273) = 0.75$, $p = .472$.

Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_{a1}), which posited a statistically significant differ-ence in the use of the positive discipline toolkit among heads, teachers, and guidance and counselling coordinators in the Ashanti Regional Directorate of Education, is rejected.

4.0 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the knowledge and usage of the positive discipline toolkit among heads, teachers, and guidance and counselling coordinators in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The findings provide valuable insights into how well these key stakehold-ers understand and implement non-violent disciplinary strategies in educational settings, especially within the context of ongoing global and national efforts to abolish corporal pun-ishment in schools.

The results indicated that a substantial proportion (72.9%) of the participants were aware of the existence of the Positive Discipline Toolkit, with Guidance and Counselling Coordina-tors demonstrating the highest level of awareness (84.0%), followed by Teachers (73.8%) and Heads (64.7%). This trend is consistent with existing literature, which suggests that professionals who are directly trained or tasked with student welfare, such as counsellors tend to have greater exposure to behaviour management resources (UNESCO, 2021; Ametepee & Ansong, 2016).

Additionally, the knowledge scores across all respondent groups were relatively high, par-ticularly regarding components of the toolkit that focus on setting clear behavioural expec-tations and establishing a structured classroom environment. This aligns with findings from Simonsen et al. (2008), who assert that effective classroom management begins with proac-tive strategies such as rule-setting and creating predictable routines. However, knowledge appeared to be lower for components dealing with managing repeated or more serious be-havioural issues, suggesting a potential gap in training related to more complex disciplinary challenges.

Despite the relatively high awareness and knowledge levels, the study revealed no statisti-cally significant differences among the three groups in terms of actual usage of the Positive Discipline Toolkit. This suggests that while knowledge may be present, consistent imple-mentation is lacking or uneven across roles. This phenomenon is supported by research showing that knowledge alone does not guarantee behavioural change or application in prac-tice (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Teachers and school leaders often face systemic barriers such as inadequate training, limited resources, time constraints, and entrenched disciplinary cul-tures that hinder the adoption of alternative disciplinary methods (Gershoff & Font, 2016; Boakye, 2019).

Furthermore, the lack of significant group differences in toolkit usage might be attributed to the absence of a well-coordinated and standardized implementation framework across schools in the region. Studies conducted in other Sub-Saharan African contexts, such as Ni-geria and Kenya, have shown that without institutional support, policy guidance, and regular monitoring, the adoption of positive discipline frameworks tends to be sporadic (Wairire et al., 2014; Ajayi, 2017).

The study revealed that knowledge of the Positive Discipline Toolkit significantly predicted its usage among Heads, Teachers, and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators, supporting Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that knowledge influences behav-iour through self-efficacy and learning. This finding aligns with UNICEF (2015), which emphasised that awareness and understanding of positive discipline increase its consistent application in schools. Conversely, years of service negatively predicted usage, suggesting that more experienced educators are less likely to adopt new discipline methods, a trend consistent with Wachira et al. (2021), who observed that veteran teachers often adhere to traditional punitive practices. Professional role did not significantly influence usage, indi-cating that effective implementation depends more on individual knowledge and training than on position (Adu-Gyamfi & Appiah, 2020). Overall, the findings highlight that enhanc-ing educators' knowledge through targeted training and professional development is crucial for promoting the adoption and consistent use of positive discipline practices across all school levels.

These findings underscore the need for the Education Service to intensify its efforts in train-ing and professional development across all staff categories, with a particular focus on prac-tical application and problem-solving using the toolkit. As recommended by UNICEF (2014), integrating positive discipline training into teacher education and continuous pro-fessional development programmes is crucial for sustainable change.

Moreover, heads of schools, who play a strategic leadership role, must be especially equipped and motivated to champion the use of positive discipline toolkit in their schools. Their comparatively lower awareness levels found in this study raise concerns about the top-down dissemination of knowledge and the enforcement of policy compliance. School leadership is a key predictor of school culture, and their involvement is essential for creat-ing a safe, non-violent learning environment (Day et al., 2011).

4.1 Summary of Key Findings

1. A majority of respondents (72.9%) indicated awareness of the Positive Discipline Toolkit and that awareness varied across groups.

- Guidance and Counselling Coordinators had the highest awareness (84.0%)
- Teachers followed (73.8%)
- Heads had the lowest awareness (64.7%)

2. Descriptive statistics revealed generally high levels of knowledge across all groups. Mean scores for knowledge items ranged from 3.04 to 3.34, indicating that respondents mostly agreed they were knowledgeable about key components of the toolkit. The high-est mean was for knowledge related to creating a disciplined environment ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.90$). The lowest mean was for addressing repeated or serious offenses ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.01$).

3. A multiple linear regression analysis showed that knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit, years of service, and professional role significantly predicted its usage, $F_{(3, 271)} = 32.57$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .265$. Knowledge was a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$), years of service was a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.16$, $p = .002$), and professional role was not significant ($p = .544$). These results indicate that higher knowledge increases usage, while longer years of service reduce it.

4. A one-way ANOVA revealed no statistically significant difference in toolkit usage among Heads, Teachers, and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators: $F_{(2, 273)} = 0.75$, $p = .472$. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant difference in the usage of the positive discipline toolkit among the three groups was retained. The alter-native hypothesis (H_1) was rejected, indicating uniformity in usage levels.

4.2 Recommendations

While the study provides useful insights, it is limited to data from the Ashanti Region of Ghana in a sub-Saharan African and may not reflect international trends. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may be subject to social desirability bias. Future research should consider qualitative approaches to explore the contextual barriers to toolkit usage in greater depth and include observational or longitudinal methods to track implementation over time.

4.3 Conclusion

In summary, while awareness and knowledge of the positive discipline toolkit are relatively high among educational personnel, actual usage does not significantly vary among Heads, Teachers, and Guidance and Counselling Coordinators. These findings highlight a critical gap between knowing and doing, emphasising the need for more targeted implementation strategies, leadership training, and system-wide support to foster the consistent application of positive discipline practices in Ghanaian schools.

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