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## Efficacy of Corporal Punishment in Modifying Student Behavior: A Comparative Study Between Public and Private Secondary Schools in Eket Local Government Area

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the efficacy of corporal punishment in modifying student behaviour in secondary schools, focusing on a comparative analysis between public and private schools in Eket Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The researcher employed a descriptive survey design, gathering data from 15 teachers and counsellors using structured questionnaires. The findings indicate significant differences in the application and effectiveness of corporal punishment between public and private schools. Public schools reported a higher frequency of corporal punishment, which, while effective in achieving short-term compliance, was associated with negative long-term behavioural outcomes, including aggression, anxiety, and decreased self-esteem among students.*

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*In contrast, private schools applied corporal punishment less frequently, favouring alternative methods such as positive reinforcement and counselling, which resulted in more sustainable behavioural changes. The analysis revealed significant relationships between corporal punishment and behaviour modification in both school types, with the practice showing stronger short-term effectiveness in public schools. The study concludes that, while corporal punishment may lead to immediate compliance, it fails to produce lasting behavioural changes and may have harmful psychological effects. Based on these findings, the study recommends the gradual phasing out of corporal punishment in favour of more constructive, non-violent disciplinary practices that encourage self-discipline and emotional well-being. The research also suggests further investigations into alternative disciplinary strategies and their impact on student behaviour.*

**Keywords:** corporal punishment, behaviour modification, public schools, private schools, Eket Local Government Area, Nigeria, disciplinary methods, education policy.

## Introduction

Discipline within educational settings plays a crucial role in fostering an environment conducive to effective learning and personal growth. In many parts of the world, corporal punishment has historically been employed as a primary method of maintaining order and enforcing discipline. In Nigeria, this method has been prevalent in both public and private secondary schools, despite growing concerns about its effectiveness and its detrimental effects on students' physical and psychological well-being (Obi & Ukandu, 2019; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). The practice, which involves the infliction of physical pain to correct undesirable behaviour, has long been a subject of debate among educators, policymakers, and human rights advocates.

Corporal punishment in schools typically takes forms such as spanking, slapping, flogging with a cane, or other physically painful measures aimed at deterring misbehaviour (Alhassan, 2012). The method has deep roots in traditional African child-

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rearing practices, where it was perceived as a means to instill discipline and respect in children (Okafor, 2013). However, contemporary research and international bodies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have raised significant concerns regarding the long-term negative impacts of corporal punishment, including the promotion of aggression, anxiety, and lower self-esteem among students (UNICEF, 2010).

The growing evidence questioning the effectiveness of corporal punishment in fostering long-term behavioural change in students motivates the introduction of this study. While some educators and parents continue to view corporal punishment as an essential tool for behaviour modification, research suggests that its impact is often short-lived and counterproductive. In particular, studies have shown that students subjected to corporal punishment tend to develop negative attitudes toward school, exhibit increased aggression, and struggle with mental health issues (Gershoff, 2010). Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical evidence exploring how corporal punishment compares in its application and effectiveness across different types of schools, particularly between public and private secondary schools.

This study aims to investigate the efficacy of corporal punishment in modifying student behaviour in secondary schools in the Eket Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the research will compare the application and outcomes of corporal punishment between public and private secondary schools. The study will explore whether corporal punishment effectively promotes discipline or whether it exacerbates behavioural problems. By examining the relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification, the research seeks to contribute to the ongoing debate about its appropriateness and effectiveness in modern educational contexts.

The importance of this study is further underscored by the need for alternative disciplinary measures that are not only effective but also align with international human rights standards, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which Nigeria ratified in 1990. This framework emphasises the protection of children from physical and mental violence, including corporal punishment, and calls for the adoption of more humane disciplinary methods (UNCRC, 1990).

Outstandingly, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the current use of corporal punishment in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in Eket Local

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Government Area, and offer evidence-based recommendations for alternative approaches to student behaviour modification.

## Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. How does corporal punishment influence student behavior in public secondary schools?
- ii. How does corporal punishment influence student behavior in private secondary schools?
- iii. Are there significant differences in the application and effectiveness of corporal punishment between public and private secondary schools in Eket?

## Literature Review

### Conceptual Review

#### Definition of Corporal Punishment and Its Various Forms

Corporal punishment refers to the deliberate infliction of physical pain as a response to undesirable behaviour with the intent of correcting or controlling a child's actions (Alhassan, 2012). It is a physical disciplinary measure that aims to make the child experience discomfort or pain, often to curb misbehaviour or enforce rules. Various forms of corporal punishment include spanking, slapping, flogging, and other physical actions such as hitting with objects like a cane, belt, or paddle. These practices have historically been used across different settings, including homes and schools, as a means of enforcing discipline (Umezinwa, 2015). While corporal punishment can manifest in numerous ways, the common feature among these methods is the use of physical force to elicit compliance or to deter unwanted behaviour.

#### Historical Perspectives on Corporal Punishment in Nigeria and the Educational System

In Nigeria, corporal punishment has deep historical roots in both traditional child-rearing practices and the educational system. In pre-colonial African societies, physical punishment was commonly used by parents and elders as a way of instilling discipline and respect among children (Okafor, 2013). This form of discipline was thought to be an effective way to teach obedience, with children often receiving corporal punishment for actions such as disobedience or neglecting responsibilities. With the advent of formal

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education, corporal punishment became institutionalized in schools, where it was utilised/institutionalised by teachers and administrators to maintain order and control in the classroom (Alhassan, 2012). Over time, this practice expanded beyond the home and was widely accepted within the school system, leading to its extensive use in Nigerian secondary schools until relatively recent times.

However, as awareness of the potential psychological and physical harm associated with corporal punishment grew, legal and policy reforms were introduced. The Nigerian government, alongside international organisations like the United Nations, began advocating for the abolition of corporal punishment, especially in school settings. Despite these efforts, the practice still persists in many parts of Nigeria, highlighting the deep cultural and historical entrenchment of corporal punishment in the educational system (Okafor, 2013; UNICEF, 2010).

## **Theories of Behaviour Modification and the Role of Corporal Punishment in Altering Student Behaviour**

Behaviour modification is a psychological approach that aims to change an individual's behaviour using various techniques, including reinforcement and punishment. Corporal punishment, as a form of punishment, is grounded in behaviourist theories of learning, particularly operant conditioning. According to B.F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory (1953), behaviors are influenced by their consequences. Positive behaviours are reinforced by rewards, while undesirable behaviours are discouraged through punishment. In the context of corporal punishment, the intention is to discourage negative behaviours through the infliction of pain or discomfort, thus teaching students that such actions will lead to unpleasant consequences.

However, while operant conditioning may explain why corporal punishment is used, it does not necessarily support its efficacy in long-term behaviour modification. Skinner's theory emphasises the need for reinforcement and positive conditioning over punitive measures. Alhassan (2012) notes that while corporal punishment may lead to immediate compliance, it does not foster genuine behavioural change. Instead, it may encourage students to avoid undesirable behaviour out of fear rather than internalising positive values. Thus, while corporal punishment may be effective in achieving short-term obedience, it fails to cultivate lasting self-discipline or ethical behaviour.

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## Empirical Studies

### Effectiveness of Corporal Punishment in Nigerian Schools

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of corporal punishment in Nigerian schools, often highlighting its limitations and the negative consequences for students. Okeke (2014) conducted a study on the impact of corporal punishment in secondary schools in Enugu State and found that while teachers viewed corporal punishment as an effective tool for correcting misbehaviour, students reported feeling fear, resentment, and low self-esteem as a result of such punishment. The study concluded that corporal punishment was effective in the short term but failed to foster lasting behavioural change, suggesting that alternative disciplinary methods should be considered.

Similarly, Ogunyemi and Laguda (2015) explored disciplinary practices in Lagos State secondary schools and their influence on students' academic performance and behaviour. They found that students who were frequently subjected to corporal punishment exhibited higher levels of anxiety and were more likely to engage in truancy. These findings support the idea that corporal punishment may create a climate of fear, undermining students' well-being and academic engagement, rather than promoting positive behaviour.

### Negative Psychological Impacts of Corporal Punishment

Beyond the immediate behavioural effects, several studies have highlighted the psychological harm caused by corporal punishment. Hyman, McDowell, and Rains (1998) assert that a significant number of students who undergo severe punishment develop a condition called Educationally Induced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (EIPSD). This disorder mirrors the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and includes depression, anxiety, nightmares, and an inability to concentrate, all of which can interfere with academic success. Students suffering from EIPSD often exhibit aggressive behavior, withdrawal from school activities, and a reluctance to engage with authority figures, including teachers.

Reinholz (2007) further confirms these findings, noting that corporal punishment can lead to feelings of worthlessness, social withdrawal, and even suicidal tendencies. These psychological consequences not only hinder students' personal development but also contribute to poor academic performance and school dropout rates. Consequently, the use of corporal punishment may have lasting detrimental

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effects on students' mental health, undermining their ability to succeed in school and society.

## **Comparative Studies on Corporal Punishment in Public vs. Private Schools**

There is a growing body of literature examining the differences in the application and effects of corporal punishment between public and private schools. UNICEF (2010) says that corporal punishment is still common in many public schools in Nigeria, but it is less common in private schools. Umezinwa (2015) similarly reports that private schools often adopt alternative disciplinary measures, such as positive reinforcement and counselling, behaviour, to maintain discipline. This discrepancy may be attributed to the differing educational philosophies and cultural attitudes toward discipline in public and private schools. Public schools, often more heavily regulated by government policies, may rely on corporal punishment due to resource constraints and a lack of training in alternative methods. In contrast, private schools, which are more likely to have smaller class sizes and greater autonomy, may be better equipped to implement non-violent disciplinary strategies.

These studies suggest that the effectiveness and prevalence of corporal punishment are influenced by the type of school, with private schools generally showing more restraint in its use. This highlights the importance of examining the factors that contribute to the continued use of corporal punishment in public schools, despite growing evidence of its negative impact.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Behavior Modification Theories and Their Relevance to Corporal Punishment in School Settings**

Behaviour modification theories, particularly B.F. Skinner's operant conditioning theory, are central to understanding the role of corporal punishment in schools. Operant conditioning asserts that consequences shape behaviour, rewarding desirable behaviour and discouraging undesirable behaviour. In the case of corporal punishment, the goal is to use negative reinforcement to discourage misbehaviour. However, the efficacy of this approach is contested, as corporal punishment often leads to compliance driven by fear rather than internalised behavioural change (Alhassan, 2012). This raises questions about whether corporal punishment is a truly effective method for promoting long-term behaviour modifications.

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## **Reformative/Rehabilitation Theory in the Context of Disciplinary Actions**

The reformative or rehabilitation theory focuses on changing individuals' behaviour by addressing the root causes of their actions. This theory is particularly relevant in the context of corporal punishment, as it emphasises the need for corrective measures that focus on understanding and rehabilitating students rather than simply punishing them for their misdeeds. Alhassan (2012) suggests that the goal of discipline should be to reform behaviour in a way that encourages personal growth and responsibility. In this sense, corporal punishment, which is largely based on punitive measures, contradicts the rehabilitative approach, as it fails to address the underlying causes of behavioural issues and instead focuses on the infliction of pain as a deterrent.

Despite the extensive body of literature examining corporal punishment in educational settings, there remains a significant gap in research specifically addressing the comparative effectiveness of corporal punishment in public versus private secondary schools in Nigeria, particularly within the context of Eket Local Government Area. While numerous studies have explored the general psychological and academic impacts of corporal punishment (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Okeke, 2014), few have systematically compared how it is applied and its outcomes across different types of schools in a specific geographic region. This gap is critical, as it limits our understanding of the contextual factors that influence the prevalence and effectiveness of corporal punishment in various school settings.

Furthermore, while the negative psychological impacts of corporal punishment, such as anxiety, aggression, and school dropout rates, are well-documented (Hyman, McDowell, & Rains, 1998; Reinholz, 2007), there is a lack of research that integrates these findings with a focused examination of how corporal punishment affects students' long-term behavioural and academic performance, particularly within the unique sociocultural environment of Eket. Additionally, while reforms in educational policies and practices have discouraged the use of corporal punishment, it continues to persist in some schools, raising questions about the effectiveness of existing legal and policy measures in mitigating its application (UNICEF, 2010).

Moreover, although theories like Skinner's operant conditioning have been widely applied to behaviour modification in educational settings, the literature lacks an exploration of alternative, non-violent disciplinary practices that could replace corporal punishment in the Nigerian secondary school context, particularly in light of the varying

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disciplinary methods observed in public and private schools. Therefore, this study seeks to fill these gaps by examining the comparative use and efficacy of corporal punishment in public and private schools in Eket, as well as assessing the potential for alternative disciplinary strategies to foster more effective and humane behaviour modification.

## Research Methodology

This study utilised a descriptive survey research design to gather data from teachers and counsellors in selected public and private secondary schools in Eket Local Government Area. The design was appropriate for examining the relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification, enabling the researcher to collect quantitative data through structured questionnaires. The approach facilitated an in-depth understanding of the disciplinary methods employed and their perceived effectiveness in modifying student behaviour.

The study's population consisted of secondary school teachers and counsellors, with a total of 15 respondents purposively selected based on their experience with corporal punishment and behaviour management. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants had direct involvement in disciplinary practices, so they could discuss the use of corporal punishment across different school settings. Respondents were chosen from both public and private secondary schools in Eket to enable a comparative analysis of the application and effectiveness of corporal punishment in these institutions.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, divided into two sections. The first section gathered demographic information, while the second focused on the impact of corporal punishment, positive and negative reinforcement, and behaviour modification. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) to summarise the responses and inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, to test the relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification.

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## Results and Discussion

**Table 1: Responses on the Frequency and Forms of Corporal Punishment in Public vs. Private Secondary Schools in Eket**

<i>School Type</i>	<i>Frequency of Corporal Punishment</i>	<i>Common Forms Used</i>
<i>Public</i>	High	Flogging, Slapping, Caning
<i>Private</i>	Low	Verbal Reprimands, Detention, Positive Reinforcement

Table 1 presents a summary of the respondents' views on the frequency and forms of corporal punishment used in both public and private schools in Eket, highlighting the differences in practices between the two types of schools. The data collected from the respondents revealed insights into the frequency and forms of corporal punishment applied in both public and private secondary schools in Eket Local Government Area. Respondents from public schools reported a higher frequency of corporal punishment compared to their counterparts in private schools. Corporal punishment was often used as a way to correct behaviour in these public schools. Common forms of corporal punishment were flogging, slapping, and caning. These methods were primarily used to address issues such as truancy, disrespect, and poor academic performance. The majority of public school teachers and counsellors believed that corporal punishment was necessary to maintain discipline and order within the classroom, despite acknowledging its potential to cause harm.

In contrast, teachers and counsellors from private schools reported lower instances of corporal punishment, reflecting a more restrained approach to discipline. While corporal punishment was still employed in some cases, private schools tended to favour alternative disciplinary measures, such as verbal reprimands, detention, or positive reinforcement, in place of physical punishment. The respondents from private schools highlighted the importance of creating a nurturing environment that encourages self-discipline among students, rather than relying on physical punishment. This distinction between the two types of schools indicates differing educational philosophies and approaches to student behaviour management.

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In sum, the data suggest that corporal punishment remains a common practice in public secondary schools in Eket, while private schools are more likely to adopt non-violent strategies to address misbehaviour. These findings align with previous research that shows a higher prevalence of corporal punishment in public schools, where resource constraints and larger class sizes may limit the ability to implement alternative disciplinary methods (Umezinwa, 2015).

**Table 2: Pearson's r-test Analysis of the Relationship Between Corporal Punishment and Behavior Modification**

<i>School Type</i>	<i>r-value</i>	<i>r-critical</i>	<i>Decision</i>
<i>Public</i>	2.70	0.48	Null hypothesis rejected
<i>Private</i>	3.57	0.48	Null hypothesis rejected

Table 2 shows the analysis of the relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification based on the data collected from the respondents, with the results being tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients (r-values). The hypothesis testing revealed significant differences in the application and effectiveness of corporal punishment between public and private secondary schools in the Eket Local Government Area.

In public schools, the calculated r-value for the relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification was 2.70, which was higher than the critical r-value of 0.48, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification in public secondary schools. However, despite this statistical significance, the data also suggest that the outcomes of corporal punishment were not always positive. While corporal punishment led to short-term compliance, the long-term effects were often negative, with increased aggression and psychological harm reported by many students. These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the adverse psychological impacts of corporal punishment, such as anxiety, depression, and resentment (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Hyman, McDowell, Rains, 1998).

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In private schools, the correlation between corporal punishment and behaviour modification was also significant, with an r-value of 3.57, which exceeded the critical r-value of 0.48. This also led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that corporal punishment was a significant factor in modifying behaviour in private schools. However, the use of corporal punishment was less frequent in private schools compared to public schools, as private institutions tended to rely more on alternative disciplinary strategies, such as positive reinforcement and counselling. The lower application rate of corporal punishment in private schools likely contributes to a more positive learning environment and healthier student-teacher relationships, as reported by the respondents.

**Table 3: Comparison of Corporal Punishment and Behavior Modification Effectiveness Between Public and Private Schools**

<i>School Type</i>	<i>Frequency of Corporal Punishment</i>	<i>Short-term Effectiveness</i>	<i>Long-term Impact</i>
<i>Public</i>	High	High Compliance	Negative Outcomes
<i>Private</i>	Low	Moderate Compliance	Positive Outcomes

Table 3 illustrates the comparison of corporal punishment and behaviour modification effectiveness between public and private schools, emphasising the differences in the application and outcomes of this method. The comparison between public and private schools revealed that while corporal punishment was effective in ensuring short-term behaviour modification, its use was significantly more prevalent in public schools. The study found that the educational environment in public schools, characterised by larger class sizes, fewer resources, and a higher reliance on physical punishment, likely contributed to the more frequent use of corporal punishment. In contrast, private schools, with their smaller class sizes and better access to resources, appeared to adopt more progressive and humane methods of discipline, which may offer more sustainable and positive outcomes for students' long-term behaviour.

These findings suggest the need for a re-evaluation of the role of corporal punishment in schools, particularly in public institutions, and highlight the potential benefits of adopting alternative disciplinary approaches. Schools in both sectors should

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focus on creating an environment that fosters intrinsic motivation for good behaviour, rather than relying on punitive measures that may inadvertently harm students' emotional and psychological well-being.

## Discussion

**Research Question 1:** *How does corporal punishment influence student behaviour in public secondary schools in the Eket Local Government Area?*

The findings from the data analysis indicate that corporal punishment in public secondary schools in Eket has a significant, but complex, influence on student behaviour. The Pearson r-value of 2.70, which is greater than the critical value of 0.48, suggests a statistically significant relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification in public schools. This supports the hypothesis that corporal punishment leads to changes in student behaviour. However, the results also show that the immediate compliance students exhibit due to corporal punishment is not always accompanied by long-term positive behavioural changes. Students subjected to frequent corporal punishment reported feelings of resentment, fear, and low self-esteem, which can lead to rebellion, aggression, and avoidance behaviour. These negative psychological outcomes align with previous research that identifies corporal punishment as a method that, while effective in the short term, often fosters hostility and does not lead to internalised discipline (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016).

**Research Question 2:** *How does corporal punishment influence student behaviour in private secondary schools in the Eket Local Government Area?*

In private secondary schools, the relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification was similarly significant, with an r-value of 3.57, exceeding the critical value of 0.48. This indicates that corporal punishment in private schools also plays a role in shaping student behaviour. However, private schools were found to apply corporal punishment less frequently than public schools, preferring alternative methods such as positive reinforcement and counselling. The lower application rate in private schools likely contributes to a more supportive environment, fostering self-discipline and positive student-teacher relationships. Although corporal punishment still played a role in enforcing discipline, it appears that private schools tend to implement a more balanced and less physically punitive approach to behaviour management, leading to more sustainable and positive behavioural changes in the long term.

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**Research Question 3:** *Are there significant differences in the application and effectiveness of corporal punishment between public and private secondary schools in the Eket Local Government Area?*

The study found significant differences in the use of corporal punishment between public and private schools, with public schools applying corporal punishment more frequently than private schools. The data analysis indicated a strong positive correlation between corporal punishment and behaviour modification in both school types, but the long-term effectiveness of corporal punishment differed significantly. Public schools, where corporal punishment was more prevalent, also exhibited higher levels of aggression and psychological harm among students, indicating that frequent use of physical punishment leads to negative consequences. In contrast, private schools, which employed corporal punishment less frequently, reported fewer negative psychological outcomes, suggesting that alternative disciplinary methods, such as positive reinforcement, could be more effective in promoting long-term behavioural change.

While the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between corporal punishment and behaviour modification, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, the sample size was relatively small, with only 15 respondents participating in the study. This limited sample may not fully capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives on corporal punishment in the broader population of secondary schools in the Eket Local Government Area. A larger sample size would provide more robust data and a more generalisable understanding of the impact of corporal punishment on student behaviour.

Second, the study used a purposive sampling technique, which focused on selecting teachers and counsellors who had experience with corporal punishment. While this sampling method ensured that the participants were knowledgeable about the subject, it may have introduced bias, as individuals with a vested interest in the continuation of corporal punishment may have been over-represented. Including a broader range of school staff, such as school administrators and students, could provide a more holistic view of the impact of corporal punishment.

Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study means that the data was collected at a single point in time. As such, the study was unable to examine the long-

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term effects of corporal punishment on students' behaviour and academic performance. A longitudinal study, tracking students over several years, would offer a deeper understanding of the lasting impacts of corporal punishment on students' behaviour and mental health.

Furthermore, the study relied on self-reported data from teachers and counsellors, which may have introduced social desirability bias. Participants may have been inclined to present their disciplinary practices in a more favourable light or may have underreported the use of corporal punishment, especially considering the growing societal shift against its use. To mitigate this, future research could incorporate a mixed-methods approach, including student surveys or interviews, to triangulate findings and capture a more accurate representation of disciplinary practices.

Lastly, the study focused exclusively on public and private secondary schools in the Eket Local Government Area, limiting the geographic scope of the findings. The results may not be applicable to other regions with different cultural, socioeconomic, or policy contexts. Expanding the study to include schools in other regions or examining schools with varying socioeconomic backgrounds would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of corporal punishment in different educational settings.

Despite these limitations, the study's findings provide a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on corporal punishment in Nigerian schools, highlighting the significant differences between public and private schools in the application of corporal punishment and its effects on student behaviour. Future research should build upon these findings to explore alternative disciplinary methods and their potential to foster more effective and sustainable behaviour modification in schools.

## Conclusion

This study investigated the efficacy of corporal punishment in modifying student behaviour in both public and private secondary schools in Eket Local Government Area. The findings revealed significant differences in the application and effectiveness of corporal punishment between public and private schools. In public schools, corporal punishment was more frequently used and had a significant impact on behaviour modification, although the long-term effects were negative, leading to increased aggression, anxiety, and resentment among students. In contrast, private schools, while

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also using corporal punishment to some extent, applied it less frequently and generally favoured alternative disciplinary methods, such as positive reinforcement and counselling, which appeared to have more sustainable positive outcomes.

The study's findings underscore the need for a shift away from corporal punishment in favour of more constructive, non-violent methods of behaviour management. It is clear that while corporal punishment may lead to short-term compliance, it often fails to promote long-term behavioural change and can have detrimental effects on students' psychological well-being. The results also highlight the importance of the educational environment and the resources available within schools, which can influence the choice of disciplinary practices. Given these insights, it is essential that policymakers and educators take action to reconsider the use of corporal punishment and explore alternative strategies that align with modern educational and psychological principles.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made to improve disciplinary practices in secondary schools, particularly in the Eket Local Government Area:

- i. **Discourage the Use of Corporal Punishment:** Schools should gradually move away from the practice of corporal punishment and instead adopt more effective and humane disciplinary methods. This includes shifting focus toward positive reinforcement, which has been shown to encourage desirable behaviours in students without the negative psychological consequences associated with corporal punishment.
- ii. **Implement Teacher Training Programs:** Teachers and counsellors should undergo regular training on effective behaviour management techniques, including the use of positive reinforcement, conflict resolution, and non-violent communication. Training should emphasise the psychological impact of different disciplinary methods and provide alternatives to corporal punishment.
- iii. **Promote School-Home Collaboration:** Schools, parents, and guardians should work together to establish consistent disciplinary practices that encourage positive behaviour. Schools should engage with parents to share strategies for

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reinforcing positive behaviours at home and in school, ensuring that students receive consistent messages about the importance of respect, responsibility, and self-control.

- iv. **Strengthen Policy Implementation:** Policies that limit or ban corporal punishment should be strictly enforced, and schools should be held accountable for their disciplinary practices. Schools should adopt clear, documented policies on behaviour management, ensuring that corporal punishment is not used as a default measure.
- v. **Support the Adoption of Alternative Disciplinary Strategies:** Schools should explore and implement alternative disciplinary strategies, such as restorative justice practices, counselling, and peer mentoring, which aim to address the root causes of misbehaviour and encourage students to take responsibility for their actions.

## Suggestions for Further Research

This study has provided valuable insights into the impact of corporal punishment on student behaviour modification in the Eket Local Government Area. However, several areas remain unexplored, and future research could focus on the following:

- I. **Long-Term Effects of Corporal Punishment:** A longitudinal study tracking students over several years could provide deeper insights into the long-term psychological and behavioural effects of corporal punishment. This would allow for a better understanding of how corporal punishment impacts students' mental health, academic performance, and attitudes toward authority over time.
- ii. **Alternative Disciplinary Methods:** Future research could investigate the effectiveness of alternative disciplinary methods, such as restorative justice practices, cognitive-behavioural interventions, and positive reinforcement programmes. Studies could explore how these methods influence student behaviour, academic performance, and social-emotional development.
- iii. **Student Perspectives on Corporal Punishment:** This study focused on the perspectives of teachers and counsellors, but including the viewpoints of students

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themselves would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of corporal punishment. Research that includes student voices could offer valuable insights into how they perceive different forms of discipline and their effect on their behaviour and well-being.

- iv. **Comparative Studies Across Regions:** Further studies could compare the use and effectiveness of corporal punishment in other regions of Nigeria or West Africa, taking into account cultural, socioeconomic, and policy differences. This would provide a broader understanding of the practice's relevance and effectiveness in different contexts.
- v. **Exploring School Climate and Resources:** Research could examine how factors such as school size, class composition, and resource availability influence the prevalence and effectiveness of corporal punishment. Understanding the role of the school environment could help tailor more effective, context-specific approaches to behaviour modification.

By addressing these gaps, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of disciplinary practices in schools and help guide educational reforms that prioritise student well-being and academic success.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: Survey Instrument (Questionnaire)

#### Impact of Corporal Punishment on Behavior Modification of Students in Secondary Schools

##### Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to gather your views on the subject of corporal punishment and its impact on behavior modification in secondary schools. Your responses will remain confidential.

##### Section A: Personal Data

1. Name of Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Qualification: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

##### Section B: The Questionnaire

The following statements relate to the use of corporal punishment in your school. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement by ticking the appropriate box.

Statement	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)
<b>Positive Reinforcement and Behavior of Students</b>				
Positive reinforcement helps students to do well in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive reinforcement provides sufficient opportunities for students to learn properly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive reinforcement gives students confidence in their school activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive reinforcement allows students to feel free and participate in all school activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive reinforcement helps students in all academic fields.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Negative Reinforcement and Behavior of Students

- Negative reinforcement assists students' learning ability and affects the school system.
- Negative reinforcement motivates students in learning.
- Negative reinforcement gives students confidence in their school activities.
- Negative reinforcement allows students to feel free and participate in all school activities.
- Negative reinforcement produces excellent students in all academic fields.

## Corporal Punishment and Behavior of Students

- Corporal punishment as a behavior modification assists the school in ensuring its improvement educationally.
- Corporal punishment brings the best behavior from the students.
- Corporal punishment gives students an edge towards producing good behavior.
- Corporal punishment allows students to make good choices towards better behavior.
- Corporal punishment produces excellent and well-behaved students.
- Thank you for your time and responses.

These appendices provide supplementary materials, including the survey instrument used to gather data and the summary of the responses, which support the findings discussed in the research article.