Perceptions of West African Teachers toward the Role of Principals in the Prevention of

School Violence

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Abstract

School violence is a global phenomenon that impedes students' academic achievement. Globally, several studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of school violence over the years, describing the devastating effect it has on teaching and learning. Students experience violence at school, especially in the USA and in Asian and African countries (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). The rates of physical violence at school are generally higher in low and middle-income countries (Barna & Barna, 2014). The present study was designed to explore teachers' perceptions towards the role that principals can use in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment in West African schools. A qualitative research design was used, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten teachers from West Africa. This study revealed that school violence is common in West African schools and it negatively impacts students' academic achievements. The findings of this study also indicated that corporal punishment is still used in preventing school violence. This study revealed that non-punitive ways such as positive reinforcement, restorative justice and mediation, guidance and counselling in preventing school violence are more effective than using corporal punishment. The role of the principal in preventing school violence identified in this study includes effective leadership, distribution of leadership support, appropriate training for teachers, and strategic policies on school violence prevention. Further research needs to be conducted in order to explore the use of non-violent ways for teachers to prevent school violence.

Keywords: school violence, corporal punishment, prevention, principals

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of Study

The negative impact of school violence and aggression in schools not only makes our school environment a vulnerable place for students and staff members to discharge their duties peacefully but it also affects the quality of education that is given to the students (Amedahe & Owusu-Banahene, 2007). I developed an interest in researching school violence for many reasons. School violence is a global phenomenon, and it negatively affects the quality of education. In my days as a student in Ghana, bullying was a daily occurrence, but I had little knowledge of it. I got to know a lot about school violence as I started teaching in South Africa. The situation in South Africa was terrible, as teachers and principals spend a lot of instruction time dealing with violent students. In most cases, school violence had been dealt with by caning, spanking, suspension, and other forms of corporal punishment to discipline the violent student. Principals in African schools are less likely to apply a preventive measure that does not involve the use of punishment. After taking a course in School Violence: Policy and Implications at Memorial University, I got to know about restorative practices and other non-punitive ways to prevent school violence. I am hoping my research will offer a better alternative to principals to play their role in the prevention of school violence without using corporal punishment.

Several studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of school-based violence over the years, describing the adverse effects it has on teaching and learning globally (Amedahe & Owusu-Banahene, 2007; Jacobs, 2012; Mncube & Harber, 2013). According to the 2008 Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS), 40.1% of students reported being bullied one or more times during the past 30 days. Among students who were bullied, 24.1% were bullied most often by being hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors. Students and educators are

susceptible to school violence. School violence still compromises quality education, and role-players must face it and take steps to prevent it (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010; Amedahe & Owusu-Banahene, 2007; Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015; Jacobs, 2012; Uzunboylu et al., 2017). It is the right of every child to receive an education, and so nothing should impede any student from obtaining it. Violence impedes education by producing environmental conditions that pose threats to safe learning (Barna & Barna, 2014).

While in some parts of the world, the debate around the place of corporal punishment may now be a tired one, it remains 'alive and kicking' in many schools in the developing world in general, and some West African schools in particular. This is the case even after the banning of this practice, making the use of corporal punishment in schools a controversial issue (Makhasane, 2016). Traditionally, schools in West Africa have used corporal punishment in preventing school violence. Additionally, there are many countries in which corporal punishment is still legal. Research reports have documented unusually high prevalence rates of extreme punishment in sub-Saharan Africa. In total, 27 countries do not entirely forbid physical and emotional violence by teachers, which increases the likelihood of students experiencing violence at school. One study conducted among 42 primary schools in Ghana, Kenya, and Mozambique revealed that 80–90% of students experienced physical violence at school in the past year (Govender & Sookrajh, 2014). More than 52% of students experienced violence at school in West and Central African countries including Benin, Senegal, the Central African Republic, and the Gambia (Dunne & Leach 2007; Makhasane, 2016; Mweru, 2010; Ogando Portela & Pells, 2015).

Violence occurs in every country of the world and happens across class, education, income, age and ethnicity; it manifests multi-dimensional, culturally defined, and context-

specific behaviours (Leach & Humphreys, 2007). Violence against students has been widely

researched, and sadly it occurs in places where the students should be the most protected, that is,

in their homes, foster institutions, and schools (UN, 2005). "Violence is the intentional use of

physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group

or community that either result in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death,

psychological harm, ill-development, or deprivation" (WHO, 1999).

Research indicates that violence may be carried out by teachers, other staff members, and

students on students through bullying, other forms of punishment, sexual violence, and teasing

(Dunne et al., 2005; UN, 2005; Leach and Mitchell, 2006). The 1999 Columbine High School

attack in the USA, which included the massacre of 13 people, the injury of 23 others, and suicide

by the two SHS assailants was revealed to be related to their feelings of isolation resulting from

being teased by their peers. School violence will most likely reflect the problems experienced by

society at large (Mncube & Harber, 2013). As such, addressing school violence is essential for

social transformation. Govender and Sookrajh (2014) view schools as occupying a central

position in educational change. In the face of the international pressure for safe learning

environments, the reality for many students is entirely different.

Problem Statement

Worldwide, several studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of school-based

violence over the years, detailing the adverse effect it has on teaching and learning. Students and

educators are susceptible to school violence. School violence still compromises quality

education, and educators and policy makers must take steps to prevent it (Jacobs, 2012). It is the

right of every child to receive an education, and so nothing should impede any student from

obtaining it. Violence impedes education by producing environmental conditions that pose

threats to safe learning. The escalation of violence in African schools has led researchers to conclude that schools are rapidly becoming arenas for violence, not only between pupils but also between teachers and pupils, interschool rivalries, and gang conflict (Van Jaarsveld, 2008). In his study of school violence in South African schools, Burton (2008) found that about 1.8 million of all pupils between Grade 3 and Grade 12 (15.3%) had experienced violence in one form or another.

The role of principals in creating a safe learning environment for students is vital for the success of students' academic achievements. Despite the valuable role that principals play in the prevention of school violence without corporal punishment, it is an under-investigated area. Much of the literature that deals with school violence prevention is limited to Europe and North America. The few studies that focused on school violence prevention in West Africa are limited to the use of corporal punishment and suspensions, mostly examining principals, teachers, and students. Several notable studies in the field of school violence prevention revolve around the use of corporal punishment and suspensions (Akbaba and Erdur, 2010; Amedahe & Owusu-Banahene, 2007; Apipalakul and Ngang, 2015; Uzunboylu et al., 2017).

This study examines the perceptions of teachers towards the role of principals in the prevention of school violence.

Purpose of the Study

Violence is one of the most significant issues of contemporary society. Media, both written and audio-visual, provide information concerning different manifestations of this phenomenon (Barna & Barna, 2014). School principals worldwide have been recognized as essential components contributing to the overall achievement of schools, but they are under pressure to deal with many unique local situations typical of their communities (Chan, Jiang, &

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Rębisz, 2018). School violence creates unsafe learning environments for students and also affects academic achievements negatively. Traditionally, teachers and principals have used corporal punishment to prevent any form of violence in West African schools. Corporal punishment seems not to be an effective way of preventing school violence due to the negative impacts it has on student health and academic achievement.

If schools are to curb the menace of school violence effectively, teachers and principals need to find effective non-punitive ways of preventing school violence. The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore teachers' perceptions towards the role that principals can use in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment in Anglophone West African schools.

Research Questions

The broad objective of this study is to explore the role of principals toward the prevention of school violence in Anglophone West African schools using a phenomenological case study. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of school violence?
2. What are the conventional ways of preventing school violence in West African schools?
3. How can principals in West African schools prevent school violence without using corporal punishment?

Significance of the Study

The primary responsibility of a principal is quite simple: to provide a safe, nurturing, and accepting environment in which students can make effective academic, emotional, and social progress (Chan et al., 2018). This study will help contribute to school violence prevention strategies in West African schools by making principals aware of their role in school violence

prevention. As such, this research can inform educational policy makers on effective school violence preventive measures. Furthermore, this study serves as a basis for future studies on school violence prevention in West African schools.

Limitations

As with all research, limitations exist. These limitations do not necessarily highlight any short-comings of the work but must be highlighted in the spirit of transparency. The potential weaknesses of the study include:

1. The reliance on the perspective of participants as indicated in the interviews;

2. The use of only one approach to collect data;

3. The skills and the knowledge of the researcher in conducting an interview.

Assumptions

The development of research questions and research designs require certain assumptions to be made by the researcher. The following assumptions were made within this study:

1. Participants who had taught in West African schools had developed perspectives on school violence within West African schools;

2. Participants were truthful during interviews and were willing to share their views with the researcher.

Structure of the Study

This thesis has five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research problem and discusses the background of the study. The chapter presents the purpose of the study and states its significance for research and practice. The specific objectives, as well as the research questions, are established in this chapter. The chapter also outlines the limitations and assumptions of the study. Chapter 2 reviews and discusses previous studies and literature on the

topic. The study's theoretical approach is presented. Chapter 3 discusses the research methods

and designs used in data collection and analysis. The chapter offers justifications for the research

methods and designs used in the study. Chapter 4 presents the research findings. Chapter 5

discusses the research findings and identifies opportunities for future research. The section also

provides recommendations for future research. The chapter ends with the conclusion of the

study.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

Introduction

School violence has become an increasingly difficult global problem over the past several decades. This global phenomenon has attracted the attention of governmental and non-governmental organizations all over the world (Farmer, 2011). Bullying at schools is as old as humanity; almost everyone may have been bullied at one time or another (Antiri, 2016). Antiri further indicated that various forms of physical bullying always bombard homes, schools, and workplaces. The school environment, as an academic setting, is supposed to be a safe and harmonious place where teaching and learning take place. It is also a place where students can socialize and develop healthy relations among themselves and with relevant others irrespective of social class, sex, creed, ethnic background, and age (Amedahe & Owusu-Banahene, 2007). Unfortunately, this may often not be the case.

The negative impact of school violence and aggression in schools not only makes our school environment a vulnerable place for the students and staff to discharge their duties peacefully but also decreases the quality of education that is given to the learners (Amedahe & Owusu-Banahene, 2007). Educators are reporting that violence amongst school children is increasing and are complaining about the violent behaviour and destructive habits of many of the children they are assigned to work with…school violence is so prevalent of late that it can be described as a typical feature of everyday life (Antiri, 2016). (Vusi, Harber, Maphalala, Kuzvinetsa, Mabunda, Madikizela-Madiya, Manyike, Maphalala, Maseko, Matlabe, Mohapi, Mudau, Ramorola, Ranko-Ramaili, Tabane, and Taole (2012) confirmed that there are high levels of violence, physical and sexual abuse, and gang-related violence in our schools. Possessing knives, guns, and other weapons has become an element of everyday school life.

These incidents emphasize the extent of violence and crime we experience in communities, which generally affects education negatively and what happens in the school in particular. The World Health Organization defines violence as:

> "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation" (WHO, 2002).

School violence is, therefore, any willful and illegal violent act within the school context. Olweus and Limber (2010) also define bullying as an intentional, repeated, physical, verbal, social, or electronically aggressive act by an individual or group aimed at a person without the power to defend themselves.

Theoretical Framework

Olweus conceptualized bullying as "any unwanted aggressive behaviour (s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that include (s) an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly probable to be repeated" (Gladden et al. 2014 as cited by Brion-Meisels & Garnett, 2016).

One explanation for violence lies in how the social system maintains itself (Rich, 1975). A social system is organized through a consistent set of norms and values that foster orderly and predictable social interaction among its members. As disorganization grows, deviance and violence increase (Rich). Social disorganization is expressed in inadequate institutionalization of goals, inappropriate procedures for achieving goals, weakened social control, and deficient socialization practices. Thus, this approach predicts that school violence would probably erupt whenever disorganization and anomie are sufficient to precipitate disequilibrium in the school

system. However, violence will decrease if school personnel can create a normative consensus, develop compelling goals and consistent procedures for achieving them, and institute effective socialization practices (Rich, 1975).

Deviance is mostly a matter of whose values will prevail. Conflict and possibly violence-develops whenever groups holding different values live in the same community and laws and norms of the dominant group are extended to cover the other groups. The educational implication of the Conflict Approach is that to reduce conflict and alienation, groups, where such tensions are likely to be found, should be identified, and students and parents should be allowed to participate in the development of student codes. If a person associates more with deviant groups or violent groups in early life, or with higher frequency and intensity, then he or she will be more likely to become deviant or violence-prone. Educators who utilize this approach would want to make sure that students associate with law-abiding persons. Primary group relations would need to be regulated, student subcultures more carefully supervised, and sound role models supplied (Rich, 1975).

Nature of School Violence

Teachers and other staff members may perpetrate school violence on other staff and schoolmates through corporal punishment, other forms of punishment, sexual aggression and bullying, vandalism, gangsterism, indiscipline, intolerance (Dunne, Sabates, Bosumtwi-Sam, & Owusu, 2013; Vusumzi & Almon, 2013). The various types of school violence going on in schools are; physical, social, verbal, cyber and psychological…physical and verbal bullying were rampant in the different schools in the country (Antiri, 2016; Okoth, 2014). School-based violence constitutes the perpetration of abuse and violence victimization and is caused by factors such as antisocial behaviours, poor school culture and climate, overcrowded classes, and other

behavioural issues (Eke, 2018; Okoth, 2014). "Children's social environment, diversity, the human rights culture, poorly qualified teachers, unprofessional conduct by teachers and the climate of the school and the classroom are some of the most common factors that contribute to school-based violence and other forms of misconduct" (Reyneke, 2015).

School violence victimization is associated with lower academic, loss of concentration, poor academic performance, skipping classes, and depression performance for individual students, higher levels of absenteeism (Dunne et al., 2013; Lacey & Cornell, 2016; Vusumzi, & Almon, 2013). It also negatively impacts students all over the world. It not only symbolizes a violation of the rights of a child but also acts as a significant obstruction to the achievement of international goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) objectives (Pereznieto, Harper, Clench, & Coarasa, 2010).

School Violence in Global Perspective

School-based violence is a complex phenomenon, which cannot be viewed through a single lens to elucidate the logic behind why learners behave the way they do at home and how that leads to school-based violence in schools (Dunne et al., 2013). These researchers indicated that the global extent of bullying in schools had been explicitly acknowledged in the international declarations and treaties aimed at protecting children from all forms of violence. It is a worldwide phenomenon that affects one of the core institutions of modern society to some degree in virtually all nation-states (Dunne et al., 2013). For instance, the rise in school-related violence globally, such as the violence in Columbine (1999), Red Lake Reservation (2006), Virginia Tech (2008), Connecticut (2012), and the Krugersdorp samurai sword killing (2008), generate great concern. Dunne et al. further state that violence occurs in every nation of the world and cuts across class, education, income, age and ethnicity; it is manifestly multi-

dimensional, culturally defined, and context specific. Internationally, several studies have been conducted on the phenomenon of school-based violence over the years and the devastating consequence it has on teaching and learning (Dunne et al. 2013; Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). According to a 2005 U.S. national survey of students in Grades 6-10, about 38% of males and 41% of females were estimated to have been victims of bullying (Dunne et al., 2013). Today, all over the world, at every level of school, peer bullying and violence, draws the interest of researchers (Dunne et al., 2013).

School Violence in African Perspective

Surveys with students and teachers in Africa show that 60 percent of students in schools indicated being bullied at least once in every month (Okoth, 2014). A study conducted in Free State Province, South Africa established a high prevalence of bullying behaviour in schools where 84 percent of the learners and 95 percent of the educators felt bullying was a big problem. South African girls reported experiencing acts of aggression like beating and slapping by male peers demanding sex. An alarming 30 percent of the girls stated that they were 'forced' to have sex the first time (Vusi Mncube et al., 2012). Other research carried out in Southern African countries like Botswana, South Africa, and Zambia schools reported that females were raped in school toilets, empty classrooms, dormitories, and in hostels (Human Rights Watch, 2001). The general violent context in South Africa spills into the schooling system, where learners are often victims and perpetrators of violence. School management is continuously looking for ways to prevent violence (Eke, 2018).

In West and Central Africa, the prevalence of sexual violence in schools has been recorded as contributing to females dropping out of school either due to unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS (UN, 2005). This is because they could not

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bear the aggression or degradation they face. Sexual harassment is quite common in secondary schools in The Gambia with some victims becoming perpetrators themselves, and Idoko and Sn (2015) state that there is a need for more open discussion of sexual harassment in schools to combat the menace. A Nigerian study by Egbochuku (2007), as cited by Okoth (2014), of some students in Benin City showed that almost 4 in every 5 participants (78%) reported being bullied and 85% of the children admitted bullying others at least once (Okoth, 2014).

In Ghana and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa studies illustrate some hostile learning environments in which acts of violence and or bullying impact negatively on students (Dunne et al., 2013). In Ghana, students' aggression on campus is on the increase and has caught the attention of and raised much concern from the Ministry of Education, school authorities, the media, civil society, and the general public. Some of the reported incidences of students' aggression in Ghanaian secondary schools include six students arrested for carrying weapons to school. Kumasi Academy closed down after a violent clash between students and staff; a bloody confrontation took place between students of St. Thomas Aquinas and Labone Secondary School; Cape Coast Technical School students destroyed school property; and a student was arrested for the possession of an automatic pistol, with one round of ammunition. In most of these reported cases, male students are seen at the forefront of such violent acts, making one wonder whether female students on campus also express their aggression in the same form (Amedahe & Owusu-Banahene, 2007). Of the 59 cases of youth suicides reported in Ghana between 2000 and 2008, 26 were connected to bullying at school (Dunne et al., 2013). Indeed, Bosomtwi, Sabates, Owusu, and Dunne (2010) confirmed that bullying was prevalent in the Ghanaian schools and teachers in the schools in Ghana were still not considering bullying as a severe problem concerning students' well-being or academic achievement. Violence in the senior

high schools in Ghana is rampant especially among freshman students or juniors; they are subjected to all forms of inhumane treatments by their seniors. Antiri (2016) says that it has even made some victims have hatred for school, become dropouts, have low self-esteem that could induce timidity, nervousness, and lack of assertiveness. Some students even have poorer academic performance as a result.

The Use of Corporal Punishment

Schools are supposed to have policies and a learner codes of conduct in place to deter violent behaviour. These school policies and the learner codes of conduct are meant, among other things, to obstruct the use of drugs or any intoxicating substance. They are also intended to discourage carrying of weapons or any sharp objects, the use of violent, or vulgar language, and even threats against persons or their property (Vusi Mncube et al., 2012). Programs intending to reduce and prevent school violence are seen as penalty-based approaches. They point out that teachers are verbally, physically, and psychologically violent towards learners, including using corporal punishment which is illegal. Teachers whose statuses are vested in power and hierarchy contribute to violence by being violent, by condoning violence, and by aiding a school ethos intolerant of difference and insistent of conformity. In many schools, the strict teacher or the iron man is seen as the ideal (Reyneke, 2015). It is suggested that where teachers experienced corporal punishment while they were learners, they may also use corporal punishment to discipline their learners (Makhasane, 2016).

International evidence shows that corporal punishment increases, not decreases, the risk of anti-social behaviour in and outside the classroom. Representative data from the recent National School Violence Study in South Africa show that schools, where corporal punishment is not used in the school, are at no higher risk of violence; in fact, the research shows the

opposite. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Ogando Portela, and Pells (2015) described a grave picture of the predominance of corporal punishment in schools in four countries Ethiopia, India, Vietnam, and Peru, even though such practice was abolished. Disregarding the ban on corporal punishment is also a concern in Kenya, as some educators reportedly continue to administer it even though it was prohibited as far back as in 2001(Mweru, 2010). In Botswana and Ghana, Dunne and Leach (2007) found that corporal punishment is applied in most schools, and more frequently to boys than girls. In Botswana, corporal punishment is at times extremely violent, with boys being subjected to punishment including their heads being hit against the wall, as well as being beaten with broomsticks as well as electric cords.

In Ghana and Nigeria, various forms of violence were not uncommon and were frequently experienced by students through formal discipline and corporal punishment (Dunne et al., 2005; Popoola, 2005). An incident on 16 March 2008 in Adisadel College (a leading SHS in Ghana) starkly illustrates the use of corporal punishment and the consequent anxiety and hostility it can generate in students. A student was asserted to have jumped to his death from the fourth floor of a classroom block to escape from corporal punishment from the Senior Housemaster of the school (Joy online, 2008 as cited by Dunne et al., 2013).

The Role of Principals in School Violence Prevention

The primary responsibility of the school principal is to see that the school runs efficiently. The safety of the students and staff is also a priority. A United States principal noted: "The primary responsibility of a school leader is quite simple: to provide a safe, conducive, and accepting environment in which students can make adequate academic, emotional, and social progress" (Chan, Jiang, & Rębisz, 2018). Ultimately it is the principal and school board who are

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responsible for the day-to-day prevention of violence in schools, and there is ample evidence that schools are not being managed competently to reduce violence (Vusi Mncube et al., 2012).

Schools need to improve the socialization of students through the cooperative efforts of administrators, teachers, guidance counsellors, and parents (Rich, 1975). Teachers need to stress greater respect for authority and the values of our cultural heritage. Students must become acquainted with local police in a friendly, informal atmosphere and should be informed about school security personnel and their functions.

Another approach that prevents school violence is to support community control of schools. In that way, those minority groups who believe that schools are centralized bureaucratic systems unresponsive to the demands of parents and local citizens would be able to formulate their norms and sanctions so that they no longer would be considered deviant. Members of groups deemed deviant may experience alienation and a feeling of illegitimate control and exploitation. Though some groups may be more tolerant of violence than others, under a community control plan violence would be reduced because the conflict and imposition of alien norms would be eliminated (Rich, 1975). Since the Differential Association problem extends beyond the school, administrators could establish after-school programs in high crime neighbourhoods to get students off the street and to provide them with healthy recreational and learning activities. Educators should encourage and support government programs for neighbourhood improvement and renewal and encourage greater parental and community involvement in schools (Rich).

Punishment does more harm than good; unfortunately, when it comes to troubled students, punishment only suppresses negative behaviour temporarily but does not necessarily alter it in the long run (Reyneke, 2015). Reyneke stressed that punishment also has a

compounding effect on children who are dealing with high-stress levels and trauma. Such punishment will add to their stress and will contribute to their feelings of anger; rage punishment could further accentuate patterns of failure and broken relationships, continuing negative pathways that disrupt positive youth development. Many schools and school districts have taken the precaution of establishing zero-tolerance policies. Critics say that these policies lead to overcorrection, pointing to such cases as suspending a child may lead to the right of the child been trampled upon (Gorton & Alston, 2013). Today's headlines are rife with stories of bullying and, unfortunately, too many stories of teachers and administrators not addressing the situation. They emphasized that school administrators should show commitment to address school violence and learn about a good bullying prevention program (Gorton & Alston).

The administrators, who are most successful in their efforts to fight violent activities, are those who develop a specific approach to the problem (Ndifor & Administration, 2016). They must believe that nothing is more important than providing a safe school environment and they should be willing to take the necessary measures to accomplish this goal (Martinez, 2009). There is a need for a crisis team to prepare for unexpected violence, to prepare a schoolwide discipline plan, and to develop a favourable school climate and culture (Barna & Barna, 2014). A constructed and establishment technique should be in place by the school in order to reward those students who behave well (Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015). School administrators who have implemented schoolwide positive behaviour supports have experienced positive outcomes regarding discipline (Martinez, 2009). On the individual classroom level, there are social-emotional curriculums and interventions that teachers can implement, programmes that result in the use of non-punitive measures. Additional preventative measures that principals can take are the following: focus on anti-bullying, anger management, peer mediation, and conflict

resolution; (Martinez, 2009). It is through making safety common knowledge that choosing to act safely is also put in the realm of common sense. Utilizing the services of some prominent citizens, senior students, alumni, and school personnel expose the students to life alternatives outside of the bounds of their communities. This exposure should help violent students to focus or and have a vision for their future so that they will refrain from school violence. Distribution of leadership can strengthen management and succession planning and thus help in the fight against school violence. Distributing leadership across different people within organizational structures can help to meet the challenges facing contemporary schools and to improve school effectiveness. This can be done in formal ways through team structures and other bodies or more informally by developing ad hoc groups based on expertise and current needs. Involving violent students in school activities helps them to behave appropriately. In so doing, the students should develop a bond or sense of ownership or care for their school and those therein. Examples of possible involvement include requiring participation in a school clean-up day, and activities in student organizations or assigning them roles such as form monitors, prefects (class leaders), and teacher assistants. Family involvement plays a role in preventing and reducing bullying behaviours at school (Peterson et al., 2014), and the teachers indicated that there should be more cooperation between parents and schools and that they need to work to increase awareness among families so that parents could take more active roles in preventing and reducing bullying behaviours among students (Uzunboylu et al., 2017).

Employees' creativity is essential for the survival and continuing competitiveness of organizations. Employees' creativity is an inevitable part of innovation that not only includes producing new ideas, but also includes performing new ideas (Harris & Gronn, 2008). There is a growing recognition of the positive correlation between decisive and sustained school

improvement and distributed leadership (Harris, 2011; Harris & Gronn, 2008; Hulpia & Devos, 2010; Hulpia & Devos, 2011).

In the West African perspective, even though there has been some research on school violence prevention, little is known about the role of school principals in the prevention of school violence without using corporal punishment. The present research will specifically use phenomenological case study methodology to explore teachers' perceptions toward the role of principals in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment in Anglophone (English) West African countries. This research will also seek to answer the following questions

a. What is the nature of school violence from the perspective of teachers?

b. What are the conventional ways of preventing school violence in West African schools?

c. How can principals in West African schools play their role in school violence prevention without using corporal punishment?

The significance of the research for West African School Principals will be trying to develop new approaches to prevent school violence without resorting to the use of punishment. As well, this study will contribute to the educational policy and practice debates on approaches to discipline that aim to show that troubled learners need to be disciplined in a psychologically healthier way.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Introduction

Chapter Three describes the methodology of this study. A description of qualitative research is provided, followed by the main characteristics of phenomenological case study methodology that I selected for the study. I will then discuss participants, sample size, data collection, and data analysis. The last part of this section focuses on trustworthiness, limitation and scope of the study, confidentiality and privacy, relevant ethical considerations, and role of the researcher. The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What is the nature of school violence in West African schools?

2. What are the conventional ways of preventing school violence in West African schools?

3. How can principals in West African schools prevent school violence without using corporal punishment?

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions towards the nature of violence in West African schools and the role that principals can use in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment in Anglophone West African schools. A qualitative research approach was employed.

Methodology

The purposes of the research determine the methodology and design of a study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). A methodology is a plan for assembling, organizing, and integrating information (data), and it results in specific research findings. I employed a qualitative research methodology to gain insight into the perceptions of West African teachers toward the role of principals in school violence prevention. Qualitative research focuses on an in-depth probing of

people's beliefs, assumptions understandings, opinions, actions, or interactions (Doyle, 2018). Creswell (2016) described a qualitative approach as the best way to investigate a problem in which one does not know the variables and needs to explore it further. Qualitative methods can be used to gather the intricate details about a phenomenon like school violence. This would allow participants to express their feelings, thoughts, emotions, and experiences that are difficult to learn about through more conventional methods.

Qualitative research is "interested in how meaning is constructed, how people make sense of their lives and their worlds" (Merriam, 2009, p. 24). This is particularly relevant to understand the perceptions of teachers on the role of principals toward the prevention of school violence. Since this study aims to explore teachers' perceptions of school violence prevention, a qualitative approach seems the most appropriate research approach.

Phenomenological Case Study

The selection of a particular design is determined by how the problem is shaped, by the questions it raises, and by the type of end product desired. Harvey (2011) sees methodology as the interface between methods, theory, and epistemology…it is the point at which method, philosophy, and epistemology come together in a way that allows the researcher to investigate some educational moment. School violence was viewed as the central phenomenon that requires exploration and understanding from teachers who have experienced it (Creswell, 2015). A phenomenological case study was used for this study. It is focused on the description of a phenomenon through the eyes of people who have experienced it, and their shared experiences in investigating the phenomenon. The phenomenological case study involves "a person's perception of the meaning of an event, as opposed to the event as it exists external to a person" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016, p. 255). Phenomenological case study attempts to understand people's

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perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular situation. Qualitative researchers are interested in exploring human experiences, and some of them seek to understand the nature of the experience itself, in this case, phenomenology is an appropriate methodology (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013 p. 213). The best criteria to determine the use of phenomenology is when the research problem requires a profound understanding of human experiences common to a group of people. (Ponce, 2014). McMillan (2016) also said that the purpose of the phenomenological case study is to describe, clarify, and interpret the everyday experiences of participants to understand the essence of the experience as consciously perceived by and expressed by participants (p.318). It is a traditional, systematic approach to looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting the results, with the end goal of describing the case under investigations fully and accurately as possible (p. 204). This approach gives the researcher a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened as it did, and what might require greater scrutiny in future research (Wilson, 2009). In conducting a case study, a deciding factor is whether a limited system can be identified as the focus of the investigation. That is the case in an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person a person, an institution or a social group (Doyle, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; McMillian & Wergin, 2002). In this study, the phenomenon of school violence was investigated through the eyes of teachers from West Africa who have experienced it at schools.

Participants

Qualitative research not only stands or falls by the suitability of methodology and instrumentation but also by the fitness of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Cohen et al., 2007). The sampling strategy used was a non-probability purposeful method to recruit the participants. I used emails and posters to recruit my participants. I posted my recruitment

document (see Appendix C) on most of the notice boards at the at St. John's and the Marine

Institute campuses of Memorial University. I included my phone number and email address so

that interested participants who meet the inclusion criteria can call or email me to be recruited in

the research. I also advertised the recruitment document on Internationalization Office and

Graduate Students Listservs where interested students contacted me and were recruited for the

study.

Participants had to identify as Anglophone West African teachers currently enrolled in

the Memorial University of Newfoundland before they were considered for inclusion in the

study. Teachers from five different West African countries who are presently studying at

Memorial University of Newfoundland indicated their consent to participate in the study. They

completed an informed consent form which was delivered and returned through our MUN email.

I then emailed each participant to make interview arrangements.

Sample Size

The participants were ten teachers from English speaking West African countries namely,

Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Nigeria who are studying at the Memorial University

of Newfoundland, Canada. They are made up of eight males and two females who have vast

teaching experience in West African schools ranging from two years to thirteen years. Almost all

the participants have held some leadership positions in the schools that they have taught. It is

also interesting to know that nine of the participants have the aspiration of becoming principals

one day except one who emphatically said no, but who wants to be a lecturer at the university.

The sample size of ten participants was ideal for the purposes and agenda of the study as I got

the opportunity to interview them extensively to gather their views, experiences, and

perspectives of school violence. In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be

included in the sample by their judgement of their typicality in this way; they build up sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs" (Cohen et al., 2007 p.103). Leedy and Ormrod (2016) stated that in phenomenology, a purposeful sampling of 5 to 25 individuals are selected for the study. Because most qualitative research depends heavily on just a few individuals for data, the nature of the sample is critical to the findings.

The participants had diverse backgrounds which include language, ethnic, culture, and level of education. There were five primary school teachers and five secondary school teachers. Marcyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) state that in qualitative research methodology the validity of data relies on data gathering skills such as interviewing ability, rather than the sample size. The success of qualitative research is dependent on the saturation of information. Data saturation was achieved in this study by selecting respondents who have adequate and relevant information to answer the research problem and question.

Data Collection

To determine the reliability of the interview questions a pilot study involving three respondents was conducted. The purpose of the pilot study was to identify potential problems in the interview process and ultimately adjust before the actual research. The pilot study addressed various issues like the design of the interview method, interview schedule, and time required to answer and transcribe the recorded responses. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews. Interviews are an excellent research method because it allows the researchers to which McMillian (2016) described as "understand in rich detail participant experiences and events that [they] cannot observe directly" Creswell (2015) also described interviews as "one of the most powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings" (p.45). Face-to-

face interviews with the individual participants occurred at the University library discussion room and participant's homes and lasted from 30 to 60 minutes in duration.

The interview questions, which focused on the nature of school violence, conventional ways of preventing school violence, principals' roles in school violence prevention, and restorative justice practice are provided in the Appendix A. All interviews were recorded with written consent from all participants. Notes were also taken to aid in interpreting the recorded information. Each audio-taped interview was transcribed verbatim to facilitate subsequent data analysis. The ten individual interviews consisted of broad, open-ended questions designed to investigate teachers' perceptions of the role of principals toward school violence prevention. As I interviewed the teachers, I probed for further information, elaboration, or clarification of responses as I deemed appropriate. Semi-structured interviews permitted me to address the issue of school violence prevention while maintaining a feeling of openness (Creswell, 2015). According to McMillan (2016), it is vital that interview questions are "flexible enough for you to follow emergent directions." By asking open-ended questions, I was ensuring that I was getting a response that reflects the views and the opinions of the participant, instead of a prompted or expected response that may come from a less open-ended question. "In qualitative research, you ask open-ended questions so that the participants can best voice their experiences unconstrained by any perspectives of the researcher or past research findings" (Creswell, 2015, p. 216).

Data Analysis

I followed the data analysis and coding procedures suggested by Creswell (2015) and Esterberg (2002). Correctly, I used the open coding process by Esterberg (2002) where "you work intensively with your data, line by line, identifying themes and categories that seem of interest" (p. 158). I also allowed codes to emerge during my analysis as suggested by Creswell

(2015). After extensively examining codes through the open coding process, I reviewed the codes for emerging themes in the data. The findings related to *teachers' perceptions of the role of principals toward school violence prevention* emerged as one of several categories or themes identified as I analyzed my interview data. After the interviews were transcribed, a colleague and I independently identified words, phrases, and events that turn up to be similar and grouped them into open codes (McMillan, 2016). Besides reporting the findings related to overall school violence prevention and the role of principals, I decided to report separately on other emergent themes, such as causes of school violence, effects of school violence, the use of corporal punishment, and restorative justice practice. Once I had analyzed all the interview data and identified the major themes, I then focused more closely on specific themes and developed concept maps that guided my report. The cross-case analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994) cited in Creswell (2015) to study each teacher was employed as well. That is the case as a whole entity, using a line-by-line coding of each teacher's interview responses, followed by comparative analysis of all 10 cases. Each interview was coded line-line, and all codes were entered into NVivo12 software. I met with my supervisor several times to discuss the codes, identify emergent themes, and reached agreement on the development of concepts that represent findings.

I also used a flexible standard of categories, meaning I adjusted my categories as additional data from each case was analyzed in depth. As categories emerged, I used saturation to refine, expand, or delete categories as needed. This type of coding procedure helped me to stay in tune with teachers' perceptions as I continually studied my interview data (Creswell, 2015). I discussed any disagreement I had about new categories; I returned to the verbatim data to again ascertain the participants' viewpoints and continued this process until we agreed on all

the categories. This process of cross-checking coding of the significant categories provided

"thoroughness interrogating the data" (Creswell, 2015, p.46) and allowed for discussion that

enhanced insights of the coding.

Trustworthiness

I used many different methods to ensure trustworthiness for the study. First, I used

triangulation of respondents for the study. Ten different participants from five different countries

in West Africa were interviewed for the study. I also engaged in methods of respondent

validation (Creswell, 2015) and member checking to confirm my findings. To secure respondent

validation, I presented a summary of my results to the interviewees by email, asking them if they

concurred with any or all of the emergent perspectives, that is if they saw their personal aspects

presented in any or all the reported findings. I also conducted member checks as a means of

confirming the results. Through member checking, I asked participants to comment on the

accuracy of verbatim quotes and obtained their approval to use their direct personal quotes in

written or verbal reports of the study. All ten participants confirmed that the summary of findings

adequately and accurately represented their perspectives on school violence and the role of

principals and its prevention. Again, all the teachers whose direct quotes appear in the report

permitted me to cite them.

Participatory modes of research were employed as well. Engaging participants in all phases

of research from conceptualizing the study to writing up the findings was a vital aspect of this

study. Participants were engaged during the entire process of the study from the first days to the

last days when the research findings were ready. Besides member checking, lengthy quotations

to accurately capture teachers' perceptions were used in the findings. Peer examination is also

another strategy that I employed to strengthen the trustworthiness of my study. I did this by asking colleagues to comment on my findings as they emerged.

Limitation and Scope of the study

Although accepted qualitative research methods for this study were used, I recognize that the validity of the findings may be affected by certain restrictions. The first limitation of this study was that I did not establish an extended relationship with the participants. I interviewed each teacher once. Multiple interviews would have been ideal. However, I feel that the initial data and analysis of them provided a strong foundation of in-depth examinations of school violence and the role of principals in school violence prevention. Although these findings are based on the perceptions of only ten teachers from West Africa, these participants reflected ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity. While the findings cannot be generalized to the general population they provide an informed assessment of these participants towards violence in schools and the role of principals in this problem in English West Africa.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Privacy of participants' information is critical in empirical studies (Marcyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005). Maintaining the privacy of participants protects them from potential consequences such as embarrassment, distress, or other psychological harms; social harm such as loss of employment, or damage to one's financial standing. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained by not sharing recorded and transcribed data. The researcher had an ethical duty to ensure confidentiality by protecting information gathered from unauthorized access, disclosure, use, modification, or theft. Before the interviews, participants were informed about the integrity of the exercise.

Ethical Consideration

Ethics approval was obtained from the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics of Human Research (ICEHR) of Memorial University of Newfoundland. Participants who agreed to be interviewed were asked to sign the informed consent form which briefly outlined the objectives, benefits, and risks of the study and ensured them that their names would be kept anonymous by using pseudonyms and unique codes. Also, all the participants were informed of their rights and their option to withdraw from the study at any time before writing up the findings.

The audio recording files as transcription are stored on a password-protected computer. After the research is finished, all the data will be kept on a password-protected USB device. All data (audio, consent forms, and transcripts) will be saved for a minimum of five years and will be stored securely. A copy of the informed consent form, interview protocol, and recruitment documents are provided in Appendix B.

Role of the Researcher

Having worked as a teacher in Ghana and South Africa where school violence is predominant, this research gave me an idea of how principals can prevent school violence. As a teacher, I purposefully included teachers from West Africa in this study, as I assumed they would have in-depth and lived experience of school violence in West African schools. The phenomenological research tradition requires one to refrain from imposing any perspectives other than those of the participants (McMillan, 2016). Given that I am a teacher from West Africa and have experienced a lot of school violence myself, I bracketed my primary assumption that other West African teachers would experience similar school violence the same way I have experienced it.

Summary

A qualitative phenomenological case study research design was chosen as the best way to explore the lived experience and knowledge of the participants. The purpose of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions towards the role that principals can use in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment in Anglophone West African schools. Ten participants were selected using purposeful sampling. This chapter explained the research design, methods, and the steps used in data analysis as well as strategies by the researcher to locate participants, ensure trustworthiness of ethical data considerations.

CHAPTER 4: Results

Pseudonyms were selected randomly by me and are in no particular order: John, Doe, Flora, Todd, Tina, Mark, Rose, Eric, Sly, and Willy.

This section focuses on presenting the results of the interviews. I organized the results based on three main emergent themes with accompanying subthemes. The three dominant themes that surfaced during data analysis are as follows:

1. Teachers Perspectives on School Violence.

2. Preventive Measures.

3. Responsibilities of Principals.

Each theme is presented and analyzed below. First, Teachers' Perspectives on School Violence focus on the meaning, experience, causes, and effects of school violence of participants. Second, Preventive Measures look at some of the common ways used to prevent school violence in West African Schools. Third, the Responsibilities of Principals discuss the role the principals can play in the prevention of school violence.

Theme 1: Teachers' Perspectives on School Violence

This first theme describes the nature and understanding of school violence in West African Schools from the perspective of teachers. Participants were asked about the meaning of school violence, examples of school violence they have experienced as teachers, and causes and effects of school violence. The responses were overwhelmingly detailed about how school violence is a big issue in West African Schools. Consequently, the three subthemes I identified include: (1) Meaning and Examples of School Violence, (2) Causes of School Violence, and (3) Effects of School Violence.

Meaning of School Violence. This first subtheme concentrates on teachers' understanding of school violence and some experiences of school violence they have had. Throughout the interview process participants were asked directly to give their explanation of school violence, share their experiences on some school violence they encountered as teachers, and give their views on the causes and effects of school violence. School violence is a broad phenomenon and involves several aspects. It could either be physical, psychological or verbal, and sexual abuse. According to Rose, "School violence is something that is broad and encompasses physical violence which can include students fighting or verbally abusing a classmate." The most common form of school violence is bullying, teasing, and isolation. Eric gave a similar explanation by saying that, "it could be a fight, bullying persons, picking on weaker persons, and as well it can be subtle; it is not something that you can physically see, but it could be in a mental form as well." Todd echoed the explanation of school violence given by the previous teachers and described school violence as "a kind of unwanted behaviour in the school environment. This unwanted behaviour could be physical or emotional and psychological form." School violence can also take place electronically. Some students bully their peers on social media platforms; there has been an increase in cyberbullying in recent times. For instance, John explained that "it can also be in the form of verbal or social media and electronic…Like someone teasing someone electronically."

Almost all participants agreed that school violence is an undesirable behaviour perpetrated by students and teachers in schools. Tina sums everything up by explaining that, "school violence is a kind of unwanted behaviour in the school environment, exhibited by students towards their colleagues or teachers." This unwanted behaviour could be physical, emotional, or electronic.

Experiences from Teachers. Everyone has experienced some form of school violence in his or her life before either as a student or teacher. Teachers who participated in this study shared their experience in school violence that they have encountered in their lives as either teacher or students. They shared some school violence incidents that they have witnessed before. Doe gave his account on school violence like this:

"Mostly, school violence I have encountered is bullying, every form of bullying either verbally, online bullying, physical bullying and all that, that is the major form of violence that I have encountered. I have also encountered violence from teachers to students because my background being a Nigerian, and because of our culture many teachers are too strict. Teachers demand respect from students and in that process brings many squabbles between teachers and students."

Eric also shared his experience by narrating an incident between him and a student:

"I have had one encounter where a student felt he could fight with me and he decided to hold me by the collar. He felt that what I was telling him at the time offended him even though I did not find it offensive, but he did not take it kindly, and he proceeded by holding me by the collar, and I called on another teacher who was right next door, and he came and prevented a fight."

Another participant, Mark gave his experience on school violence:

"As a teacher one violence I quite remember was when I was a housemaster at the school I taught, we had a rule at 7:30 AM all students leave the dormitory to their various classrooms. I used to check on the students assigned to my house to make sure they move to their classes when it is time, but one day to my surprise some of the students in Grade 12 decided not to go to class when it was time. Some of them ganged up and wanted to

beat me. I was alone that day, so I called other teachers to help me drive them to the

class. In the process of chasing them to go to their classrooms, we realized some of the

students had sharp objects including knives on them which they wanted to use against the

teachers."

Sly shared another experience on school violence during his time as a student:

"We organized a massive demonstration, and it was because the students felt the school was not

treating us well. This massive demonstration led to the school being closed down for about two

weeks before we went back to school."

In addition to the experiences shared by the previous participants, Eric again shared another

experience but this time on cyberbullying "There was one instance where a student took

photographs of a fellow student and posted them on social media showing the deformity of the

student. It was one big scene when the victim found out because she felt humiliated."

 These experiences of school violence shared by the participants further confirm how school

violence is common in West African schools.

     Causes and Consequences. The second subtheme examines participants' views on the

causes and consequences of school violence. Throughout their responses, they gave several

causes and also acknowledged the negative impacts of school violence. Students' background

was identified as the most prevalent cause of school violence.

     Students' background identified include cultural differences, learning and physical

disabilities, and socio-economic background of students. Cultural difference is a big issue in

West Africa as there are different tribes and ethnic groups within the same community or school.

Mostly the different tribes do not accept one another. John indicated that ethnic and cultural

background of a student is a significant cause of school violence and explained that "cultural

differences" sometimes lead to school violence because that brings about "teasing…If you do understand someone's culture, sometimes you turn up to tease them." Adding to cultural difference as a cause of school violence, Doe confirms that:

> "There has been sometimes where some students from a family where if they are a Yoruba, their parents do not accept people from Igbos or if they are Igbos they do not accept people from the North (Hausas). Some come from a place where their parents believe, or we are Deeper Life (church), so we do not sit with people from Redeemer (church) I have been in a class where a child told me I could not play with these people because we are different. So that differentiation in terms of religious background, ethnic background causes many factions in schools."

Difference in socio-economic background is another factor that causes school violence. Sly agreed that poverty plays a role in school violence, "Some students come to school with an empty stomach and no money, so when the young ones are eating they feel like they are obliged and try to force them to get food." Similarly, Flora indicated that:

> "Sometimes the students develop their character and everything outside the school (home). Some homes are not peaceful and loving. This makes students develop their behaviour based on what they experience at home. These students tend to be violent and bully other students at the school."

Tina also confirmed that "lack of parental guidance." also causes school violence.

Eric added:

> "It could also be a societal problem as well, maybe what they see at home and in their communities and so they intend to bring it into the school system and their immediate environment and their class and try to act out what they see outside in the society.

Poverty plays a significant role because when some students cannot afford to buy certain things, and others who have these items will tend to show-off, and that will probably intimidate the victim, and it can bring about squabbles.…persons from high-income backgrounds preying on the ones that are not so fortunate."

Doe gave a detailed account of how socioeconomic background can cause school violence by explaining:

"Another cause of violence which is more prevalent is the psychological aspect. Some students also come from homes where they are facing violence from their parents or their elder siblings. Someone coming from a background where they face violence, carry on with violent behaviour, someone coming from a different school where they have been bullied all their lives and when they come to a different school they become automatic bullies. It is mostly psychologically transferred from what the child has experienced."

Some participants also said that adolescence and peer pressure also lead to school violence. Willy said, "Students engage in school violence as a defensive mechanism against their bullies and others do so just to please their peers." Eric supported the view that peer pressure is a cause of school violence by stating that, "peer pressure is one of the factors."

On adolescence, as a factor that increases the rate of school violence Todd shared that, "Like adolescence, you do not want to be treated in a certain way in which the school wants to treat you. They would say they have to be strong and self-dependent and do not want to be controlled by others." In their quest to be independent and strong lead them to become violent. Tina and Sly also added that students who are exposed to the media develop tendencies to bully their peers at school. They said that "One cause could be exposure to the media…the social

media, students watch this violence on social media, and when they come to school they want to impose it on other students."

Ineffective school rules and poor supervision were also identified by participants as causes of school violence. John pointed out that "lack of effective classroom rules brings about bullying." He continued to explain that, "Sometimes teachers set rules themselves without involving the students. They try to set the classroom rules themselves. Once you do not involve the students there are always conflicts. Students will not obey the rules effectively. So lack of effective rules breeds bullying here and there."

Todd and Tina gave a similar account when they emphasized that "inappropriate decisions by the school authorities such as suppression and making decisions without involving the students…You know when school policies are unfavourable to students."

In conclusion, Mark gave a detailed experience of how ineffective school policies can breed school violence, and he reported:

> "I told you that some government policies sometimes cause school violence. In 2010, there was a governor of our state who tried to match schools, the Islamic school and then the Christian schools. He mixed some schools by moving some Islamic students to Christian schools and vice versa to create some diversity. That policy created a lot of school violence (problems), because as Muslims, some Muslim ladies (female students) wearing hijab (veil) to a Christian school and the Christian schools they do not allow that, and this also brings school violence. Some students also want to wear choir robes to school because the muslin students were wearing something similar to school and the school authority allowed them. So, Christians and traditionists will also start wearing all

kinds of clothing to school because the government let all the Muslim students wear hijab (veils) to school."

On the Consequences of School Violence, all participants agreed that school violence brings about negative impacts on students' wellbeing and academics. Victims of school violence may have psychological problems and may even think of committing suicide. Flora expressed that, "sometimes they feel depressed and sad; so lonely they can end up thinking of suicide. Sometimes too, when they overcome the violence, they retaliate later on. Some also drop out of school as a results of being bullied constantly."

Furthermore, Sly made a similar expression on the adverse effect of school violence. He said that "It brings about school dropout, high failure rate, traumatizes victims psychologically." John agreed that the effect of school violence could, "destroy and affect people's interest in learning because once in the classroom they think that their background, that is either their gender or their physical disability or learning disability, is always a problem that people will laugh at them, so it destroys their self-esteem, self-confidence, and it creates a lot of anxiety or trauma or school violence that they can carry on as they grow." He also said that school creates "an environment that is not safe for all students so the students who feel victimized can one day just come to school and hit someone with a stick or anything they lay their hands on that can injure other students as well." Similarly, Tina suggested that, "One other aspect of it is also when you do not feel safe going to school because you think maybe once you are in class with someone who can bully you that in itself can affect you. Lack of learning, poor academic performance, low school attendance, the destruction of school properties. Victims of school violence tend to be introverted, sometimes when they are in class due to bullying they do not

want to contribute in class discussions, they become shy, and sometimes they try to dodge classes and absenteeism and truancy can also be the consequence of school violence."

To conclude, Doe emphasized the points raised previously by saying:

"The first consequences are costly. The number one achievement of the school, it hinders learning, because learning is not about just Math and English, it is about the total development of the child and is hindered, the school will not be able to achieve that. Moreover, some students who will perform high academically will be the ones facing that violence, and it affects their performance negatively. It reduces the number of students in the school. It leads to school drop-out, and also affects the standard of the school. It involves a lot of stigmatization and brings down the reputation of the school as well. It fosters an unhealthy environment where the relationship between students and teacher, or teachers and teachers, or teachers and administrators in terms of the principal and vice principal."

In short, participants shared vividly their experiences of school violence by explaining their understanding of school violence, giving some encounters they have experienced, and also bringing out some of the causes and effects of school violence.

Theme 2: Prevention

This theme specifically looked at the everyday ways used in preventing school violence in West African schools. Throughout the interviews, participants were asked to share their experience in some of the common ways of preventing violence in their schools. Subthemes that emerged from the themes were: (1) Corporal Punishment, (2) Guidance and Counselling, (3) Positive Reinforcement, and (4) Restorative Justice Practice and Mediation.

Corporal Punishment. The first subtheme discusses the use of corporal punishment as a way of preventing school violence. Throughout the interviews, participants shared some of the common forms of corporal punishments meted out to violent students. Views varied on whether corporal punishment should be encouraged as a way of preventing school violence. While some of the teachers insisted that corporal punishment should be abolished entirely as it is not an effective way of preventing school violence, other teachers argued that corporal punishment should at least be used sparingly and not to be eliminated completely. Some of the common forms of corporal punishment mostly used in schools identified by Flora were, "caning, kneeling, weeding, and beating." Rose also shared a similar assertion; she said that "most of the students were being lashed or caned by the use of sticks" when students bully each other. Sometimes, the punishment is not physical; it could be asking the student to leave the classroom or to write several pages of notes to say, "I will not repeat the offence." For instance, Rose added "Most of the students are being asked to leave the classroom and go and see the school authority". There are also some rules that if you fight in school, there is some punishment for you, "like to clean or sweep the classroom" reported by Sly. Another form of corporal punishment was suspension, but it was mostly when students engage in a serious form of violence. Flora said the school authority would suspend a student who engages in severe violent behaviour like the use of weapons on another student. The student can be suspended for some weeks or a month. Willy echoed the use of suspension, "There have been times where we have suspended one or two students for extreme violent behaviour."

On the stance of whether corporal punishment is a good way of preventing school violence, teachers had divergent views. While some teachers supported the use of it, others vehemently

opposed the use of corporal punishment. According to Rose, "In my personal opinion, punishment does typically really work for students." Sly added:

> "Actually, from a personal point of view, a minimum level of corporal punishment is required if we are to get rid of violence in our schools. At times we let them clean, scrub, and on a good day if there is a cane, two strokes of a cane. the child will not be hurt; they are the types of punishment we use at times to curb the issue of violence."

Doe also supported the use of corporal punishment; he stressed that "like I will still use corporal punishment, but it will not be my first point of call, it will be about the third point of call when there is a repetition of the behaviour."

On the other hand, the teachers who opposed the use of corporal punishment as a way of preventing school violence made their arguments based on the harm that corporal punishment brings and the inability to cause any positive change in behaviour. Willy said, "Some students do not care about receiving corporal punishment because they know what is coming so they will do it and face it." It is not an effective way of preventing school violence since it does not change the students; they keep on repeating the same behaviour and offences," said Tina. She further stressed that "punishment will not be part of measures to prevent school violence because it does not help."

John said that "it creates a situation where students begin to hate the teacher who gave out that punishment ...corporal punishment should not be used at all because evidence has shown that it does not help prevent school violence."

Corporal punishment also affects a student's academics. This was also supported by Tina and Eric, who said that "corporal punishment makes them truant." Other teachers also talked about the physical and psychological harm that corporal punishment can bring on victims. Mark

said, "I think corporal punishment inflicts pain on the students. As I was telling you some of the students are made to clear a portion of land with cutlass. Similarly, Eric gave the disadvantages of corporal punishment:

"Corporal punishment has many disadvantages. First, it causes physical injury to students. It can leave scars and when the child grows up he or she can always refer back to that scar and say you know, I got this scar in grade 6 from Teacher XYZ who hit me with a piece of stick; and the injury is there to show." So it leaves a physical scar and also some mental scar because they can live with that experience so corporal punishment we don't encourage any at all. Another effect of corporal punishment would be…studies have shown where it is more harmful because children will grow with this thought in their mind. That it is always good to use physical punishment to settle disputes and so on, so they will be growing to become adults with the same mindset, and then they become maladapted citizens where they will resort to violence. If we are teaching them that in the school, they will later display it in society."

Guidance and Counselling. This subtheme explores how guidance and counselling can help in preventing school violence. The participants emphasized the need for Principals to rely on the services of counsellors in preventing school violence. This is what John said about guidance and counselling:

"I think instead of using punishment, the first point of call should be counselling for a child to know that insulting a colleague or bullying in the school is not something that is welcomed in the school. So counselling can help the child understand to say sorry when they wrong their fellow student, okay. So, I believe the first point of call should be counselling. The school counsellor, teacher, or principal can counsel students when they

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go wayward and once counselling is done most children become very sad about their situation because I have used that several times and have seen that it works.

We have two counsellors who move around per month to speak to students about issues bothering them."

Rose also shared a similar opinion on the use of guidance and counselling:

"I would say counselling, those who bully their mates should be taken into counselling because some of them they have cultivated those habits from their home or may be experiencing psychological problems so when they find themselves in school, they tend to resort to that behaviour."

Doe said, "I want to support the child and to have a dialogue with the child and understand why the child does that and try to change the child." Counsellors need to be involved in the child's correction and re-habilitation process. "Peer counselling systems can be implemented where students are taught how to handle their issues by themselves first." Todd shared this, "We established a guidance and counselling department so that students that have any concerns will go to a counsellor and express their concerns." Teachers can serve as mentors to students so that whenever they have any problems at school or home, they can confide in them. This is very helpful as students can share whatever is bothering them and a timely solution can be found for it.

Positive Reinforcement: This subtheme looks at how the use of positive reinforcement can be useful in preventing school violence. Participants shared their views on how the use of positive reinforcement helps to prevent school violence. When students are rewarded for good behaviour, it helps increase those desired behaviours. Sly said, "We use positive reinforcement in trying to combat school violence." Doe also echoed the use of positive reinforcement,

"Rewarding good deeds encourages students to put up good behaviour all the time. Willy pointed out that, "We have also used award schemes to reward good behaviour for serving as a good example for other violent students to desist from their behaviour."

Restorative Justice and Mediation: This subtheme looks at how the application of restorative justice practice and mediation can be used as an effective way of preventing school violence. It is fast becoming the best alternative in terms of preventing school violence. The goal of restorative justice is to make sure the victim and the injured are brought together to settle their differences amicably. Sly indicated that [mediation] "it rehabilitates, by bringing perpetrators and the victims together to solve the issue peacefully." Flora shared her experience on the use of restorative justice and mediation, "There are times that we engaged in mediation. I used it, and it worked." Rose also thinks that restorative justice is "perfect practice." Her reason is that "Using restorative justice will help us find the root cause of the problem between the victim and the offender so that we can find a solution."
Doe also emphasized the importance of using restorative justice, "Yes, I applied it a couple of times and improved students' behaviour." For restorative justice practice to be effective, principals need to be involved; Eric emphasized that

"Restorative justice practices need to be implemented at a top-down approach. The principal has to play a lead role. Of course, one person cannot run the school. The principal alone cannot run the school, so he has to have an agenda where he has an inclusive approach but led by him so that staff meetings would go through different strategies, rules and regulations about peace education. It will be trickled down all the way from the person who is operating the gate." Willy said that,

"there are times that when I see two students fighting in my classroom, I call them to my office after class and try to listen to both parties for their sides of the story as to why they were fighting, I then assess their stories and try to negotiate a solution and reconcile them."

It is by far the most effective measure to build a positive relationship among students which helps to prevent any form of school violence. Students end up loving and accepting themselves when they are exposed to restorative justice. If principals are to make any progress in using non-punitive ways to prevent school violence, then restorative justice should be their number one priority.

Theme 3: Responsibilities of Principals

This theme focuses on the responsibilities of principals in preventing school violence. Participants shared their perceptions on what they think principals can do to prevent school violence. Based on participants' responses, the subthemes I identified as most prominent include: (1) Effective Leadership (2) Distribution of leadership (3) Support and Training for Teachers (4) Strategic Policy on School Prevention.

Effective Leadership. To be able to be on top of issues and prevent school violence, principals must exhibit qualities of effective leadership. Participants suggested that if principals want to prevent school violence, they should provide effective leadership in their schools. Rose said that "The principal should also possess qualities of effective leadership in order to manage students' behaviour." These qualities include honesty, integrity, confidence, good communication, decision-making capabilities, delegation, and empowerment. John also suggested that "Principals have a bigger role in school violence prevention…they need to be able to anticipate situations ahead of time." Flora added that "Principals should be proactive in finding ways to prevent school violence." Tina urged principals to "communicate effectively to

students and faculty and empower teachers to help prevent school violence." Willy said, "Good supervision and monitoring is also a significant way to create a conducive learning environment that is free from any type of violence."

Indeed, effective leadership is the hallmark of any violence-free school. To combat school violence and create safe schools, principals should possess qualities of effective leadership in order to achieve this goal.

Distribution of Leadership. Almost all participants affirmed that if principals support the distribution of leadership in their schools, it will help solve student discipline issues effectively. The distribution of leadership empowers teachers and other staff members to get involved in finding ways to prevent school violence actively. Teachers feel committed to creating safe schools when they are involved in the decision-making process of the school. Participants shared their views on the significance of the distribution of leadership as a way of preventing school violence. John said that "A shared responsibility is needed to tackle the issue of discipline issues." Each teacher needs to be empowered so they can respond to any problem that arises. Involving all stakeholders in decision making concerning school violence prevention should be a priority. Tina also indicated:

> "Principals should always include the students' leaders whenever they are making decisions for the students. They should not try to impose any laws on them; they should try to add at least the student's leaders before they can make any decision. It might not be significant decisions but at least those concerning the students. In making decisions in which students are involved, it reduces violence."

Principals should make it a point to include all staff in decisions about how to reduce school violence. According to Mark, "Principals should not hold on to too much power" Todd, on the other hand, advised that principals should not be too strict on students:

"When the school authorities or principals become too strict on the students and the students are not able to cope, they become so agitated and believe they should fight back because they think they are being bullied by the school authorities who are one of them."

Sly also stressed that "Principals should be more flexible and try to delegate powers and try not to be too power conscious." Willy reiterated that "Principals can also involve all stakeholders such as students, teachers, school boards, and parents in finding ways of preventing school violence."

Support and Training for Teachers. Supporting and training teachers on effective ways of classroom management and new programmes of dealing with disciplinary issues are other ways of preventing school violence. Participants described how the principal could help the teachers by providing training and support to them. Professional development of teachers empowers them to be well equipped to manage students' behaviours. John suggested that the principal should train teachers on programmes that help to improve students' behaviour. "Socio-emotional learning is one programme in which teachers can be trained and supported in order to teach students how to build peaceful and positive relations, so the principal can champion this in their curriculum." Tina, Eric, and Sly suggested that principals should provide and facilitate this:

"Professional development of teachers on restorative justice practice will help them get to know that not only corporal punishment resolves school violence. Using mediation and restorative justice practice can be of good help...supporting teachers to teach students on building healthy relations where they learn hour to love, respect and be empathic towards

one another. In-service training for teachers on how to resolve conflict amicably among students without resorting to any form of punishment helps to reduce school violence." Willy concluded by saying that principals should "provide resources that will equip teachers to carry out their duties effectively."

When teachers are supported and trained on new and effective prevention programmes, it will help eradicate the menace of school violence. There are many school violence prevention programmes that principals can use to organize professional development to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in solving students' discipline issues effectively.

Strategic Policy on School Violence Prevention: This subtheme discusses the significance of formulating and implementing specific policies on preventing school violence. The participants agreed that when principals formulate good policies in their schools, it can help to prevent school violence. Principals who have some form of policy on school violence will be further ahead on school violence prevention than principals who have no policy in place. If we want to solve the school violence issue. "Rules should be set by the principal (headmaster) and his/her administrators," said Flora. She went on to say that "implementation of effective school violence prevention is also important." Rose elaborated the need for the principal to have strategic policies:

"I think there should be proper policy implementation or appropriate policy on school violence should be in place to tackle the issue of school violence and by saying proper policy I mean it can be the use of restorative justice we discussed earlier on."

Tina shared a similar sentiment on the importance of active policies, "Using best practice to help prevent school violence by establishing a school culture that makes everyone safe and accepting." There is also the need for the principal and teacher to apply any policy on school violence

consistently without waiving it for some group of students. Mark stressed the need for consistent

application of school rules:

> "We have the No Zero-Tolerance to bullying and other policies. We do have all of these
>
> things but, like I said, when there is double standards especially when a child identifies
>
> that rules are not applied consistently but waived for some students under certain
>
> circumstances. This could result in chaos, making student act violently. "

In contrast, Willy argued that effective policy on school violence "need not be essentially on Zero-

Tolerance." Most policies have centred on zero tolerance, and so any time students misbehave they

are disciplined using corporal punishment.

These kinds of policies do not adequately help prevent school violence or change students'

behaviour." Strategic policies on school violence prevention should center on non-punitive

measures. Regular consultation with other principals whose schools have less school violence is

also recommended.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has presented and explored the results of the study. Primarily the results

displayed the views and experiences of 10 teachers as they relate to the nature of school violence

and ways of prevention. Three predominant themes were presented with underlying subthemes.

The first theme analyzed participants' perspectives on school violence

and within schools. Introspections provided by participants with regards to encountering and

encountering school violence, causes, and effects were analyzed. In the second theme, I analyzed

the prevention strategies suggested by participants. Common forms of corporal punishment,

teachers stance on corporal punishments as well as other non-punitive ways of preventing school

violence were discussed. Within the third and final theme, I analyzed the responsibilities of

principals in preventing school violence. The next chapter will provide a discussion of these themes.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perceptions towards the nature of violence in West African schools and the role that principals can use in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment in Anglophone West African schools. This chapter includes a discussion of the major findings related to the literature on the nature of school violence, preventive measures, and the responsibilities of principals in school violence prevention. Findings are reviewed to demonstrate connections between the results and previous studies. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the limitation of the study and implications for principals areas of future research and conclusion.

Data in the form of interviews provided qualitative information that addressed the study's research questions:

1. What is the nature of school violence?

2. What are the conventional ways of preventing school violence in West African schools?

3. How can principals in West African schools prevent school violence without using corporal punishment?

Major themes emanating from the findings were, to some extent, consistent with previous findings associated with teachers' perceptions of school violence and the role of principals. This chapter provides an assessment of the significant findings presented in the previous chapter as well as a discussion of the primary research questions.

1. Teachers perspective on School Violence.

2. Preventive Measures.

3. Responsibilities of Principals.

Interpretation of the Findings

Teachers gave their perspectives on school violence, shared their views on the common preventive measures as well as detailing the responsibilities of principals in the prevention of school violence. Each theme was prominent in answering the research questions of the study. Each theme is described critically in the following sections.

Teachers Perspective on School Violence

The participants described their experiences and views on the nature of school violence in West African schools. Participants agreed on the meaning of school and common forms of school violence being experienced as well as the causes and effects of school violence. The following subthemes are considered under the same headings that were used in the presentation of results: (1) Meaning of School Violence; and (2) Causes and Effects of School Violence. Moreover, this theme is mostly related to the sub-question: What is the nature of school violence?

Meaning of School Violence

All participants had a good understanding of what school violence means. Participants explained that school violence is any kind of unwanted behaviour either physical or subtle in the school environment. The findings in this study regarding the prevalence of school violence are consistent with the findings of previous studies. The explanation given to participants on the meaning of examples of school violence was in agreement with other studies by Olweus and Limber (2010) and (Gladden et al. 2014) in which they described school violence as an intentional, repeated, physical, verbal, social, or electronically aggressive act by an individual. Additionally, participants indicated that these unwanted behaviours could be physical, verbal, psychological, electronic, and sexual aggression. The common forms of school violence given by

participants were in line with other similar studies such as Antiri (2016), Brion-Meisels and

Garrett (2016), John (2018), Okoth (2018), and Uzunboylu et al. (2017). The various types of

school violence going on in schools are physical, social, verbal, cyber, and psychological

bullying and these were rampant in many schools. Some common forms of school violence

reported by participants include bullying, shoving, punching, or kicking, damage to school

property, demonstration, cyberbullying, teasing, isolation, and sexual harassment. Apipalakul

and Ngang, (2015) and Akbaba and Erdur, (2010) confirm this in their studies that generally,

conflict issues that they faced are teasing, hurting, sarcasm, nagging on their parents. While all

participants supported that physical violence is the most common form, they also indicated that

cyberbullying is on the increase in school in recent times. The teachers strongly agreed on verbal

and psychological violence types, as well.

Some of the participants reported that there is an increasing trend in cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is regarded as behaviours that harm others through damage to their relationships

or emotions and is carried out by sending cruel, false, or hurtful messages about someone or to

someone through technological devices, such as cell phones (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010).

Participants described that cyberbullying has several unique characteristics that distinguish it

from school bullying. The results of this study show that cyberbullying is on the increase in

recent times in schools. Participants said some students bully their peers on social media

platforms; there has been an increase in cyberbullying. Some students tease their peers

electronically. Electronic communications allow cyberbullying perpetrators to maintain

anonymity and give them the capacity to post messages to a wide audience. Another factor that

makes cyberbullying harmful is the fact that it can be continuous as the bullies can continue to

bully throughout the full day and night.

In terms of sexual violence, only a few of the participants agreed that it existed in their schools. The feedback from the participants in this study indicated that there are strict rules against sexual harassment in schools. Despite the strict rules, some teachers admitted some form of sexual violence takes place in their schools. Previous research shows that sexual violence in schools is common. Research carried out in Southern African countries like Botswana, South Africa, and Zambia reported that females were raped in school toilets, empty classrooms, dormitories, and in hostels (Human Rights Watch, 2001). There have been several incidents of sexual violence in school either between students and students or teachers and students. Almost one in twenty learners are raped or sexually assaulted at school (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). Sexual harassment is quite common in secondary schools in The Gambia with some victims becoming perpetrators themselves, and there is a need for more open discussion of sexual harassment in schools to combat the menace (Idoko & Sn, 2015).

One of the apparent differences in the results of this study, compared to existing studies, was the absence of school shooting violence. Some examples included students arrested for carrying weapons to school, Kumasi Academy closed down after a violent clash between students and staff, a bloody confrontation between students of St Thomas Aquinas and Labone secondary school, Cape Coast Technical School students destroying school property, and a student arrested for the possession of an automatic pistol, with one round of ammunition (Amedahe & Owusu-Banahene, 2007). Study participants agreed in general when ranking violent incidences that they had observed, with the three leading types seen as physical assaults, mental aggression against schoolmates, and cyberbullying.

Causes and Effects of School Violence

The perspectives offered by each participant provide significant insight into the factors that cause school violence as well as the effects of school violence. The significant findings on the causes of school violence were students' backgrounds, poverty, lack of parental guidance, adolescence and peer pressure, ineffective school rules, misunderstanding and anger issues and exposure to social media. Participants indicated that the backgrounds of students such as cultural, tribal, ethnic, religious, language, physical or learning disabilities could cause school violence. The results of the present study agree with previous research suggesting that students display bullying behaviours because of familial problems. Participants stressed that the possibility of students displaying violent behaviour is higher among those who have been exposed to, or experienced, violence in the family or school environment. This is also consistent with the findings of White (2014); he showed that the likelihood of someone who has been bullied increases their likelihood of also bullying. Students' social environment, diversity, and their human rights culture play a role in school violence (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010).

Another major cause of school violence revealed by participants of this study was peer pressure and adolescence. Participants indicated that some students are pressured into joining gangs that are violent in school. Also, most of the participants are Secondary school teachers so their students were in their adolescent stage and they indicated that students are challenging to be controlled at this stage. For instance, adolescents may form gangs to gain a feeling of belonging. Existing research has found that bullying might turn into more severe and planned aggressive behaviours in adolescence as compared to childhood because adolescents tend to rebel against society (Uzunboylu et al., 2017). Adolescents become more prone to developing aggression by

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showing violent behaviours when trying to cope with physical and cognitive development, and may use aggression to achieve their goals. Thus, high school students who are in the adolescent developmental stage are particularly at risk of dealing with anger in an inappropriate way (Uzunboylu et al., 2 17). If a person associates more with deviant groups or violent groups in early life, or with higher frequency and intensity with those groups, then he or she will be more likely to become deviant or violence-prone (Rich, 1975). Risky behaviours increase during adolescence and researchers have suggested that 15 and 16 are the riskiest ages in the emergence of violent behaviours (Dunne et al., 2013).

Other causes of school violence were exposure to social media, ineffective school rules and classroom management, anger issues and shows of power, influence of the mass-media, and inconsistent application of disciplinary rules. It has also been suggested that social media, especially Facebook and other platforms, play an important role in cyberbullying. Poorly qualified teachers, unprofessional conduct by teachers and the climate of the school, and the classroom are some of the most common causes of school-based violence and other forms of misconduct (Reyneke, 2014). Participants detailed the consequences of school violence. They agreed the that major effects of school violence include physical harm, psychological harm, low academic performance, and other long-term impacts on victims and perpetrators. The effects of bullying on the victims varied ranging from feeling angry, feeling powerless, wanting to commit suicide, and dropping out of school. Dunne et al. (2013) confirmed that victims of school violence might suffer from bruises, broken bones, lacerations, head, and neck injuries. Some physical complaints may be due to the emotional nature of bullying. Physical ailments, such as increased sensitivity to pain, stomach upset, nausea, backaches, or stomach-aches are also part of the negative effects of school violence.

The findings also suggest that school violence was a stumbling block to access education for some learners who had to stay at home because they feared bullying at school. School violence victimization is associated with lower academic achievement, loss of concentration, poor academic performance, skipping classes, depression, and low academic performance for individual victims (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010). Indeed, Bosomtwi, Sabates, Owusu, and Dunne (2010) confirmed that bullying was prevalent in Ghanaian schools and teachers in the schools in Ghana were still not considering bullying as a severe problem concerning students' well-being or academic achievement. Violence in schools causes a decrease in students' academic success, a decline in school climate, increased drop-outs and psychological meltdowns (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010). In West and Central Africa, the prevalence of sexual violence in schools has been recorded as contributing to females dropping out of school either due to unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (UN, 2005).

Victims of either form of bullying alone also reported elevated levels of distress (Schneider, Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012). Recent attention to several cases of suicide among youth victims of cyberbullying has raised concerns about its prevalence and psychological impact (Schneider et al., 2012). Victims of school violence have low self-esteem that could induce timidity, nervousness, and lack of assertiveness. Controlled analyses indicated that distress was highest among victims of both cyberbullying and school bullying. Victims of either form of bullying alone also reported elevated levels of distress (Schneider et al., 2012). Of the 59 cases of youth suicides reported in Ghana between 2000 and 2008, 26 were connected to bullying at school (Dunne et al., 2013). Psychologically, victims suffer from feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, insomnia, depression, suicidal thoughts, apathy, and problems with memory and concentration.

Long-term effects can be post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, suicide, and other mental health problems, including schizophrenia. Bullying is a threat to the human body. Bullies also show higher rates of drug abuse, defiance disorders, depression, psychiatric disorders, fighting, weapon carrying, early sexual activity, dating violence, and vandalism.

Preventive Measures

This section discusses corporal punishment and other non-punitive ways of preventing school violence. Participants of this study indicated that along with corporal punishment, school violence can be prevented using guidance and counselling, positive reinforcement, and restorative justice and mediation. Each of the preventive measures will be discussed in detail.

Corporal Punishment.

Programs intending to reduce and prevent school violence are seen as a penalty-based approach. Teachers whose status are vested in power and hierarchy contribute to violence by being violent, by condoning violence, and by aiding a school ethos intolerant of difference and insistent of conformity. The findings in the context of the study reported that corporal punishment is a highly contested phenomenon. From a policy perspective, corporal punishment is banned (Makhasane, 2016). However, from the real school life perspective, there are different schools of thoughts in practice. Throughout the interviews, participants shared some of the common forms of corporal punishments meted out to violent students. Some of the common forms of corporal punishment identified by participants include caning, kneeling, clearing a portion of land, asking students to leave the classroom, sweeping the classroom, and cleaning dining halls. The kinds of corporal punishments identified in this study were similar to what other studies found. Generally, the types of corporal punish that are used in schools include ear twisting; ear pulling; slapping; beating; whipping with a cane or rod; forcing students to stand

outside the classroom, in a corner, with hands up, holding ears, in the sun; and forced sit-ups (Dunne & Leach, 2007; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Makhasane, 2016; Reyneke, 2015; Stader, 2002). Stader revealed that students are sometimes suspended when they engage in extreme forms of school violence. For instance when a student sets fire to school properties or is found using drugs and weapons at school, the student can be suspended and even can be expelled from the school. Suspension decreases student academic achievement because of loss of learning time, but it is still used in some schools to discipline violent students. Advocates of using suspension have suggested that removing disruptive students will create an environment in which teaching and learning can take place smoothly. However, researchers have demonstrated that suspension is not an effective change agent because students return to school displaying the same misbehaviours.

There is a great contestation on whether corporal punishment should be encouraged as a way of preventing school violence or not. While some of the teachers insisted that corporal punishment should be abolished entirely as it not an effective way of preventing school violence, other teachers argued that corporal punishment should at least be used sparingly and not to be eliminated. The divergent views on the use of corporal punishment identified by the findings of this study were consistent with a similar study by Makhasane (2016) where it was revealed that some teachers favoured the use of corporal punishment while others were against it. Teachers who supported the use of corporal punishment made some arguments to support their claim. They claimed that some form of corporal punishment would help get rid of school violence. Making students clean or scrub will not hurt them but rather teach them to demonstrate good behaviour so that next time they would not be cleaning and scrubbing. Corporal punishment can be used as a last resort when students continuosly engage in violent behaviour though there is no

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empirical evidence that some students fear punishment so its use helps to prevent school violence. Some teachers also felt that when they were students they were punished and were disciplined and so it should still be applied to the current generation of students to instill some discipline. It is a paradox that some teachers sought to equate the way they were treated then with how today's students must be handled.

Teachers who argued against the use of corporal punishment as a way of preventing school violence made some strong points as to why corporal punishment should not be encouraged. They pointed out that teachers are verbally, physically, and psychologically violent towards students, including using corporal punishment which is illegal. They contested the notion of corporal punishment as an outdated practice. Based on the harm corporal punishment brings on victims, they feel that it should be discontinued. In their view, corporal punishment can lead to physical injuries on students. There are cases of reported deaths and hospitalization of students who received severe corporal punishment. This finding is consistent with other studies. Corporal punishment is at times extremely violent, with students being subjected to punishment including their heads being hit against the wall, as well as being beaten with broomsticks as well as electric cords and a student jumping to death when trying to escape from a corporal punishment (Dunne & Leach 2007; Dunne et al., 2013). Apart from the physical harm that corporal punishment brings, there is documented evidence that it does not lead to change in behaviour. Some violent students who are subjected to punishment every day keep on repeating their violent acts.

This means that if corporal punishment was effective in stopping the bad behaviour, students would not be continuing their violent behaviours. Participants felt that after applying punishment to a student for the initial stages, students no longer fear it and so it becomes

ineffective. Findings of these studies further suggest that corporal punishment impacts students'

academic performance negatively. Similar findings such as Dunne and Leach (2007), John

(2018), Makhasane (2016), Reyneke (2015), and Vusi Mncube et al. (2012), also found that

corporal punishment had an adverse effect on students' academic achievements. When a student

is suspended, made to leave the class and given a piece of work to do while other students are in

class learning, the student being punished risks the chance of catching up with the peers who are

learning. This will impact the student's academic performance negatively. Suspension also

negatively affects academic achievement (Cheng, 2017). There is a strong indicator that such

students will drop out of school (Edwards & Hinsz, 2014; Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015). When

students get beaten they get physical injuries and humiliation from their peers which can lead to

school drop out. If corporal punishment becomes a daily practice students will find survival

strategies such as skipping lessons (Makhasane, 2016).

     Corporal punishment can lead to hatred between teachers and students as well as teaching

students to be violent. Findings of this study revealed that when students are being punished for

every misbehaviour, they will grow up to be maladapted citizens and will resort to violence even

when they become parents. Corporal punishment is a form of violence perpetrated against

learners, and it leads to violent behaviour. Evidence shows that corporal punishment increases,

not decreases, the risk of anti-social behaviour in and outside the classroom (Digest, 2004).

Representative data from the recent National School Violence Study in South Africa show that

schools where corporal punishment is not used, are at lower risk of violence. Ogando Portela,

and Pells (2015) described a grave picture of the predominance of corporal punishment in

schools in four countries Ethiopia, India, Vietnam, and Peru, although such practice is abolished.

In Ghana and Nigeria, various forms of violence were not uncommon and were frequently

experienced by students through formal discipline and corporal punishment (Dunne et al., 2005; Popoola, 2005). Here, "the right to punish has been shifted from the vengeance of the sovereign to the defence of society" (Jacobson, 2010).

Guidance and Counselling

Findings of this study show that guidance and counselling are key to preventing school violence. Participants urged principals to rely on the services of counsellors and psychologists in helping to prevent school violence. While other studies suggested the use of qualified school counsellors and psychologists, participants acknowledged that their schools lack qualified personnel. The principal, teachers, and sometimes students act as counsellors.

They indicated that school counsellors find out about the early warning signs of school bullying. Previous researchers have provided numerous proactive and preventative interventions that have been effective in curbing violent misbehaviour on campuses when implemented both schoolwide and in individual classrooms. The best interventions take any approach which may include screening and early identification and try to prevent violent behaviour from happening in the first place (Martinez, 2009). To prevent violent behaviour, the school counsellors can recommend group therapy and management for students. There appears to be a need to provide peer and group counselling services for those actions to change misbehaviours such as anger management (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010). School administrators should support and encourage guidance services preventing school violence (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010). Thus, the role of school counsellors in the intervention and prevention of bullying at schools is becoming more important and, consequently, educational psychologists, counsellors, teachers, and school managers have begun to deal with this issue of bullying. On a schoolwide level, school administrators can use personnel such as school resource officers, school psychologists, counsellors, social workers, and

mental health experts (Martinez, 2009). Also, school administrators should collaborate with families, communities, and mental health professionals to assist students who might be going through mental health challenges.

This study revealed one unique aspect of counselling. It showed that peer counselling is an effective way to prevent school violence. Peer counselling is a system that teaches students how to handle issues by themselves. The teachers can serve as mentors to students who are peer counsellors. When teachers serve as mentors to students they confide in them to find appropriate solutions to problems students are facing both at home and school. This is a good intervention in preventing school violence. Previous researchers showed that seminars conducted by guidance service personnel in the schools positively affected the school atmosphere (Martinez, 2009), and that school psychologists, researchers, and policymakers need to work cooperatively to prevent bullying behaviours and keep the school environment safe for students (Uzunboylu et al., 2017).

Positive Reinforcement

The findings of the current study show that positive reinforcement a good intervention strategy to prevent school violence. When students are rewarded for good behaviour, it helps increase those desired behaviours (Diedrich, 2010). Tell your students when you are pleased with their behaviour. This is a powerful way of encouraging positive behaviour in violent students. There are numerous favourable circumstances to develop pride in all areas, such by publicly recognizing high test score, acts of kindness, positive citizen and sports achievements. Rewarding good deeds encourages students to demonstrate good behaviour (Sareen, 2001). Rewarding students who exhibit good behaviour can serve as motivation and an example for other students to also behave in an accepted manner. Motivation is also a driving force that encourages an action or behaviour to occur. Being specific when you give praise to students

helps create a positive behaviour. Positive reinforcement is the presentation of a reward immediately following a desired behaviour intended to make that behaviour more likely to occur in the future. A classroom behaviour management plan is created to acknowledge the effectiveness of positive reinforcement on influencing students' behaviours. The purpose of behaviour modification is to help change behaviours that have a positive outcome on one's life while improving a specific aspect of that person's life (Praise, Michael, & Study, 2013). The use of positive reinforcement as an effective strategy for improving students' behaviours has been supported by empirical research for a variety of school circumstances for both individual students and groups of students (Diedrich, 2010).

Restorative Justice and Mediation

The application of restorative justice practices and mediation can be used as an effective way of preventing school violence. It is fast becoming the best alternative in terms of preventing school violence. In curbing school violence, there is the need to find the root cause of the problem that brought about the violence. The root cause of school violence can be found using restorative justice. Restorative justice models provide schools with the opportunity to improve school culture by addressing disciplinary standards and creating a forum for peaceful resolution of conflict and misbehaviour. These models seek to determine the impact of the incident and establish a mutual, prescriptive agreement for resolving and repairing the harm caused by the wrong doing (Pavelka, 2013). Restorative justice is a principle-based method of responding to crime and wrongful occurrences.

Participants of this study pointed out that the goal of restorative justice is to make sure the victim and the injured are brought together to settle their differences amicably. One way to decrease the violence, chaos, and problematic behaviour is to teach the students to know how to

solve conflicts when they are still young. In this regard, it is not only to teach problem-solving

skills in the classroom but also to assist students in creating significant and indispensable skills.

Of course in today's school situation, there are disagreements and different points of view with

respect to these conflict issues. Hence, it is crucial to educate our students with respect to how to

solve conflict in peaceful ways by negotiating and compromising methods so that they can apply

the conflict management skills in their real lives in the present and future (Apipalakul & Ngang,

2015). As all life is viewed as interconnected and interdependent, mutual responsibility exists to

ensure well-being (Vaandering, 2011). When well-being is undermined by harm, it is viewed as

an injustice that requires healing. Thus, restorative justice involves healing leading to a state of

healthy balance (Ogilvie & Fuller, 2017; (Pavelka, 2013). Restorative practices have been most

commonly taken up in educational settings as a means to manage student behaviour. This

promotes the perception that restorative principles have an influence on schooling beyond

reducing truancy and violations of appropriate conduct. (Vaandering, 2014; Vaandering, 2010).

Restorative justice provides a framework for addressing violence in a manner that promotes

healing and restores community. The positive outcomes fostered by this approach have led

educational authorities to apply restorative principles to school discipline (Ogilvie & Fuller,

2017; Pavelka, 2013).

Peer Mediation is the most common and broadly accepted restorative justice model

school-wide. With this intervention, students mediate conflicts between two or more disputants.

Using peer mediation requires utilizing conflict resolution skills and social competencies to

reduce the threat of violence and increase peace in schools. The successful outcome of peer

mediation is the resolution of the conflict so all disputants benefit; the relationships are repaired

and more often improved (Pavelka, 2013). Teachers need to assist students who act as mediators

in conflict solutions because students may still lack skills and confidence in considering and judging every violent incidence (Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015).

This study also stressed the need for peace education among students in helping to prevent school violence. This finding was consistent with a recent study by John, (2018), who purports that there is a dire need for peace education. Others skills in conflict resolution and non-violence training in general is also needed to tackle school violence. Therefore, it is essential to teach students problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, communication skills, self-protection, and seeking help, which are the core life skills (Kennedy, Murphy, & Jordan, 2017).

Responsibilities of Principals

This last section discusses the responsibilities of principals in preventing school violence. Key roles of principals identified by participants of this study in the prevention of school violence were: effective leadership, distribution of leadership, support and training of teachers, and strategic policies on school violence. Each of these roles of the principal will be discussed subsequently.

Effective Leadership

Findings of this study show that effective leadership is vital in preventing school violence. Principals should consider student violence as their priority while they are planning for their school activities and programs (Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015). Essential qualities of effective principals include honesty, integrity, confidence, good communication, decision-making capabilities, and empowerment. Primary responsibility of a school leader is quite simple: to provide a safe, conducive, and accepting environment in which students can make adequate academic, emotional, and social progress (Chan, Jiang, & Rębisz, 2018). Ultimately, the principal and school board are responsible for the day-to-day prevention of violence in schools,

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and there is ample evidence that schools are not being managed competently to reduce violence (Vusi et al., 2012). Preventing school violence requires collaboration on the part of all school personnel. The perceptions of teachers concerning school violence are perhaps the most important in terms of creating violence-free schools (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010). This study indicated that principals need to be proactive by communicating effectively to students and by empowering faculty to help prevent school violence. When principals provide a listening, respectful space in which stories can be told and acknowledged they allow the process of individual healing and empowerment to effectively take place and prevent school violence. Principals should work to increase cooperation between school and family and to fortify existing information sharing efforts among principals and school resources that facilitate the monitoring of violent activity. Empowerment in this particular context reinforces the relationship between teachers and students while seeking to redress school violence (Levinsky, 2016).

Distribution of Leadership

Another role of the principal in preventing school violence that this study revealed was the distribution of leadership. Participants of this study were of the view that preventing school violence was a shared responsibility. Involving all stakeholders in the prevention of school violence prevention decision making is key to empowering everyone to fight against school violence. According to Harris (2011) "Distributed leadership provides exciting possibilities for the schools." It promotes the development of collegial norms amongst teachers which contribute to school effectiveness. This study also revealed that principals should not hold onto too much power and therefore should be flexible and delegate some powers to teachers. Principals should not impose laws and rules on students. Principals should involve teachers and student' leaders in the formulation of rules that affect students. When all teachers are involved in the administration

of the school, they are encouraged to be creative in fighting against school violence. Parents, counsellors and school boards should not be left out in the decision making process concerning school violence prevention. Distribution of leadership by principals provided the missing link in creating safe schools (Makhasane, 2016). The findings of the study also revealed that, principals should not be too strict on students as it makes students feel agitated and results in school violence escalation.

Support and Training of Teachers

Several participants expressed views that teachers need training and professional development in antiviolent strategies and programmes to understand and address school violence. This seems to be similar to other findings that advocated that principals should provide a set of guidelines, training of teachers and students, getting students involved, organizing a field trip to the local police station, and conduct follow-up and evaluation (Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015). Every staff should be provided training so that they would be more alert and able to perceive the initial signs of violence among their students. Projects for preventing violence should be organized by every school in order to prevent social problems (Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015). Effective peace education requires trained educators, motivated learners, integration of peace education foci across the curriculum, and a whole-school program that supports a peaceful learning environment. School administrators, teachers, guidance and counsellors, and deans of discipline should be trained to effectively detect early signs of behavioural and mental problems with the aim of resolving these issues in the schools. For example, there should be access to adequate social service and after-school programs and recreational areas to facilitate the monitoring of students after school hours. Strategies need to focus on developing and strengthening skills related to improving school outcomes.

In-service programmes need to be seen in the context of prior learning opportunities for school leadership. Where there are no other initial requirements, basic in-service programmes that encourage development of leadership skills should be provided to teachers. In-service training should also be offered periodically to principals and leadership teams so they can update their skills and keep up with new developments in preventing school violence. Providing career development, supporting and developing teacher quality, defining goals and measuring progress, strategic resource management and collaboration with external partners should also be provided to teachers to equip them prevent school violence. School leadership plays a major role in education reform (John, 2018).

Strategic Policies on School Violence

The findings of this study suggested that formulation and implementation of strategic school violence prevention policies are effective ways of preventing school violence. Just as we say "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." If any principal wants to be ahead of school violence prevention, he or she needs to have some form of policy on school violence prevention. School rules, students' code of conducts, and other antiviolent programmes are some of the policies that teachers of this study identified as essential to be part of any school violence prevention policy. Findings from this study also emphasized that effective school rules need not be essentially on zero-tolerance but rather non-punitive measures. Participants were of the view that zero-tolerance policies are not effective ways of preventing school violence. This finding was consistent with other studies (Dunne & Leach, 2007; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Makhasane, 2016; Reyneke, 2015; Stader, 2002). Principals can consult regularly with other principals whose schools have less violence and learn about some of their policies on school violence. There is also the need for principals and teachers to apply any policy on school

violence consistently without waiving it for any group of students. When policies on school violence are not applied consistently and uniformly, it can disrupt the effect of the policy. These are similar to findings of Gorton and Alston (2013) where they emphasized that school administrators should show commitment to address school violence and learn about a good bullying prevention program.

Implications for Principals, Teachers, and Counsellors

The results from this research show that school violence is predominant in most West African schools; many students in West African schools experience sexual violence similar to the general population. While generalizations cannot be made, principals, teachers, counsellors, and all those working with students should work toward finding effective ways of preventing school violence. The negative effects of school violence as identified by the results of this study mean that something needs to be done about it. Principals, teachers, parents, and counsellors should work collaboratively in finding solutions to the causes of school violence. As it was discussed that corporal punishment is also a form of violence itself and is not effective in helping prevent school violence, it is important that teachers and principals should implement the non-punitive preventive measures identified by participants of this study. Positive reinforcement, restorative justice, and mediation as well as guidance and counselling are some of the positive ways that school violence can be prevented. Stakeholders in education should not relent in their efforts at finding other preventive measures. Teachers should do as much possible to refrain from the use of punishment as it has negative consequence on students' academic, physical and psychological wellbeing.

Principals should endeavour to use the services of qualified school counsellors in helping detect early warning signs of students' violent behaviours and assist them with therapies and ways to prevent them from engaging in forms of school violence. Counsellors should do their best in assisting the principal and teachers in helping the fight against school violence. Principals should also play their role effectively by providing support and training for teachers as well as counsellors. It is also essential that strategic policies on school violence prevention are formulated and implemented by the principals.

In addition, it would be beneficial for those principals, counsellors, teachers, and all people working with students to acquire basic competency training in preventing school violence. This type of professional development should address the importance of non-violent ways of preventing school violence, the responsibilities of teacher and principals and roles, as well as providing a basic understanding of what constitutes school violence. This training should also be on-going and consistent for both old and new staff to ensure confidence among practitioners. This may also reduce the rate of re-victimization among students who had being bullied.

Limitations

The current study does have limitations. While the researchers agree that qualitative research was the right choice for this study, qualitative research tools such as interviews, are not designed to capture hard facts. The study is based on a small sample, consisting of only ten participants. The sampling method limited participation to teachers from English West African countries who were studying at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. Although there was a mixture of experience from urban and rural backgrounds and five different countries, not all countries in West Africa were represented. Therefore, while the perspectives of these ten

participants add much merit and additional knowledge to school violence research, the findings of this research are not generalizable and should be carefully considered in terms of transferability. As school violence is a research topic that continues to grow and develop, the position that teachers hold in regard to school violence is respectable and significant. As such, the current study has offered preliminary research into this issue. The reliance on the perspective of participants as indicated in the interviews, the use of only one approach to collect data, and the skills and knowledge of the researcher in conducting the interviews were some of the potential weaknesses of the study. Also, while I attempted to paraphrase and question certain words or responses provided by participants, it is possible that I interpreted some things differently from their intention. However, this can be seen as a limitation to all personal communication as we each apply our own understandings and explanations to new information.

Another limitation relates to my interpretation of the results. The themes and subthemes that emerged from the data are very much an individualized understanding. How I chose to organize, decide, and analyze the data was based on personal preference and was shaped by my insight and convictions, therefore, it is reasonable to assume that another researcher might have approached and organized the study differently. Therefore, the findings of this study are subjectively influenced and must be received as such.

More credibility could be given to this study if coupled with quantitative research. For example, a survey designed for quantitative research, and subsequent statistical analysis, may offer more evidence to strengthen the data discovered using qualitative research tools.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several areas for future research on targeted demographics could add to the findings in this study. A quantitative study could be developed to find the effectiveness of corporal

punishment in preventing school violence. Another study of the causes of school violence, potentially even using students of different age groups that would be willing to answer survey questions over a 5 to 10 year period might be effective to determine if there are large shifts over time in the factors that cause school violence.

Another quantitative study that would help boost this study's findings would be a study using a larger and more diverse population, potentially comparing the perspectives of principals and students across Africa. With regard to qualitative research, using principal, teachers, and students may better describe the nature of school violence and the role of principals. A broader demographic of participants may give more insight into the nature of school violence and efforts that are made by principals in preventing it.

A broader demographic of participants alone may be an area of future research, noting that only ten participants from Anglophone West African countries took part in this study. Another area that can be studied is cyberbullying and sexual violence in schools. Participants of this study shed some light on cyberbullying and sexual violence in schools but they were not explored in detailed. The effects of cyberbullying and sexual violence are adverse; which can lead students to drop out of school or commit suicides. It will be beneficial if more research is conducted to explore the nature of cyberbullying and sexual violence as it was not explored in detail in this study.

Conclusion

This research explored the perceptions of teachers toward the role of principals in preventing school violence in West African schools. The findings of this study were consistent with several previous studies on school violence (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010; Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015; Dunne et al., 2005; Dunne et al., 2013; Dunne & Leach 2007; Peterson et al., 2014;

Uzunboylu et al., 2017; Vusi et al., 2012). It was evident that school violence is impacting students and schools negatively.

The results of this study suggested that there are three themes related to teachers' perceptions towards the role that principals can use in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment: (a) teachers' perspectives on school violence, (b) preventive measures, and (c) preventive measures.

The results of the study showed that school violence is rampant in West African schools (Olweus & Limber, 2010; Gladden et al. 2014). The forms of school violence revealed by this study were consistent with other studies (Akbaba & Erdur, 2010; Apipalakul & Ngang, 2015; Antiri, 2016; Brion-Meisels & Garrett, 2016; Burton & Leoschut, 2013; John, 2018; Okoth, 2018; Uzunboylu et al., 2017). Physical, psychological, verbal, cyberbullying, and sexual violence were the major types of school violence. Some common examples of school violence indicated by participants of this study were: bullying, kicking, teasing, sarcasm, isolation, punching, damage to school property, demonstration, cyberbullying and sexual harassment. The study also pointed out the negative effects of school violence and key among the effects were: physical injuries, psychological stress, and low academic performance. If the right of students to access education is to be achieved, then we need to find ways to prevent school violence so that the school environment will be safe to enhance teaching and learning.

Some teachers still use corporal punishment to prevent school violence. From the perspectives of teachers, this study has provided new insight into the various roles that principals can play in the prevention of school violence. It was evident that when principals include teachers and student leaders in decision making it will create safe schools because everyone will be involved the prevention of school violence. Teachers feel committed to creating safe schools

when they are involved in the decision making process of the school. This study also revealed that providing training and support for teachers on effective ways of classroom management and new programmes of dealing with disciplinary issues will also help teachers to prevent school violence. Participants also identified restorative justice, positive reinforcement, mediation, and guidance and counselling as some of the effective non-punitive ways of preventing school violence. This study did not report any school shooting or any deadly use of weapons. Measures should still be in place to control the use of weapons in schools to avert any occurrence of school shooting or stabbing.

Non-probability sampling methods limit this study , and so the results cannot be generalized to all West African schools. However, it does shed some light on the seldom-studied phenomenon of school violence within Africa, specifically within Anglophone West African context. These findings suggest that these experiences likely dominate experiences of school violence, although there are differences attributed to preventive measures and role of the principal. Principals should be aware of these differences, as well as differences between and within groups. Ultimately, more research is needed on prevalence and experience to further understand the complexities of school violence the from students' perspectives. Researchers and education policy makers are encouraged to consult and work with principals in order to bridge this gap in knowledge in the prevention of school violence.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Research Recruitment Document

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Question

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Appendix E: CORE Certificate of Completion

Appendix A: Research Recruitment Document

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Education

Graduate Programs
St. John's, NL Canada A1B 2X9
Tel: 709 864 8553 Fax: 709 864 4379 www.mun.ca

January 3, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Frederick Addae, and I am a student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am conducting a research project called: *Perceptions of West African Teachers toward the Role of Principals in the Prevention of School Violence* for my master's degree under the supervision of Dr. Noel Hurley.

The purpose of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions towards the role that principals can use in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment in Anglophone/English West African schools. The significance of my research for West African school principals will be the possible development of new approaches to prevent school violence without resorting to the use of punishment. As well, I hope to contribute to the educational policy and practice debate on approaches to discipline that aim to show that troubled learners need to be disciplined in psychologically healthier ways.

I am contacting you to invite you to participate in an interview in which you will be asked to answer open-ended questions on school violence prevention. Participation will require about 45 minutes to one hour of your time and will take place at Memorial University. Participants will include only teachers who are from English West Africa.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me to arrange a meeting time and place.

If you have any questions about me or my project, please contact me by email at faddae@mun.ca or by phone at 709-770-6383.

If you know anyone who may be interested in participating in this study, please give them a copy of this information.

Thank you in advance for considering my request.

Frederick Addae

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr.chair@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Title: Perceptions of West African Teachers toward the Role of Principals in the Prevention of School Violence

Researcher(s):	Frederick Addae
	Memorial University of Newfoundland
	Faculty of Education
	Email: faddae@mun.ca
	Cell phone: 709-770-6383
Supervisor(s):	Dr. Noel Hurley
	Memorial University of Newfoundland
	Faculty of Education
	Email: nhurley@mun.ca
	Tel: 709-864-7472

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled *"Perceptions of West African Teachers toward the Role of Principals in the Prevention of School Violence."*

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you a basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand its risks and benefits to enable you to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Frederick Addae, if you have any questions about the study or if you would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether not you take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:
I am a master's student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. As part of my master's thesis, I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Noel Hurley.

Purpose of Study:
The purpose of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions towards the role that principals can use in the prevention of school violence without the use of punishment in Anglophone/English West African schools. The significance of my research for West African school principals will be

the possible development of new approaches to prevent school violence without resorting to the use of punishment. As well, I hope to contribute to the educational policy and practice debate on approaches to discipline that aim to show that troubled learners need to be disciplined in psychologically healthier ways.

What You Will Do in this Study:

If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered and understand the possible effects of your participation. This study involves individual interviews. The interviews will address topics associated with nature of school violence, preventing school violence using corporal punishment, and applying restorative justice practices to prevent school violence. It is anticipated that 8-10 West African teachers studying at Memorial University will participate in the study.

Length of Time:

The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

Withdrawal from the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may withdraw from the study before you review the transcript of your interview. During the process of recruitment and the data collection period, participants can choose to withdraw from the study if they are no longer interested in participating.

Transcribing will commence soon after the completion of data collection. Participants can withdraw their data after they review their transcripts, but not after the transcripts have been approved.

Participants may also choose not to answer specific questions that are asked during the interview. All interview recordings and transcripts will be kept for five years as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

Possible Benefits:

a) You may not get any direct benefit from this study, but the information learned from teachers from this study may help us find new ways of preventing school violence without using corporal punishment.

b) The benefit to the scientific/scholarly community and/or society as a whole will be the advancement of knowledge on school violence prevention using restorative justice practices.

Possible Risks:

It is anticipated that talking about issues related to school violence prevention may create some psychological, or emotional discomfort. Participants are encouraged not to talk about any subjects that they would prefer not to address, and participants can stop the interview if they feel distressed.

I will be asking questions about your knowledge, perceptions, and understanding of incidents of school violence and I do recognize that some of the interview questions may trigger some emotional discomfort /stress. This may cause you to remember certain painful experiences and feel uncomfortable. However, to limit/mitigate this possible discomfort, I will be able to refer you to Memorial University's Student Wellness and Mental Health Crisis Line for your counselling needs, in case you require their services. If you become upset or distressed during the interview, please contact: Memorial University's Student Wellness and Counselling Centre (UC5000) -- (709) 864-8874.

General (NL): Mental Health Crisis Line, 24-hour Toll-Free -- 1-888-737-4668.

Further, you are free to skip/refuse to answer any question, as well you can end the interview at any time if you feel distressed or uncomfortable. To ensure accuracy, I will review with you the transcript of your interview to verify that it reflects your responses in the interview and that the information captured is what you want to convey.

Confidentiality:

The ethical duty of confidentiality includes safeguarding participants' identities, personal information, and data from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure.

Your data will be identified by a unique code and not your actual name and will be stored separately from any contact information that was provided to schedule the interview session. All personal identifying information will be kept in password-protected files. Other records including the transcriptions and contact information will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Electronic files of the interviews will be kept for a period of 5 years as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research. All interviews and transcriptions will be conducted by me, the principal investigator. In transcribing the interviews data, I will use a code for each participant instead of their actual names on the transcripts. A separate password protected file will link the names and contact numbers with those codes. The file with the transcripts and the file with the codes and names will be kept in separate password protected locations on my computer. The audio recordings will also be kept in password protected files on my computer. Only my supervisors and I will be allowed access to the audio recordings and other interview materials such as the typed interview transcripts, and informed consent forms.

I will not tell anyone about the information you provide. Further, your choice to participate will be kept strictly confidential; school principals and district personnel will not ever be informed of your participation.

What we will find from this study may be presented at meetings or published papers, but your name will never be used in these presentations or papers. The interview sessions will be audiotaped, but no names will be recorded. At the beginning of the interviews, you will be asked your first name only so that no full names are recorded. During the transcription process, your first name will be changed to a unique code. The tapes and notes will be stored in a locked file cabinet. After the information from the tape is typed, it will be kept for a period of 5 years as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

Anonymity:

I will do my best to protect and respect your anonymity. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure your anonymity. You will not be identified in publications. Nevertheless, it is important that you are aware that absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed. However, all reasonable measures will be taken to protect the anonymity of the data collected from you.

These measures include using unique codes for participants to make sure that the information they provide cannot be traced back to them in reports, presentations, and publication. This unique code will then be used in the participant interview guide, interview recording, and interview transcript. Likewise, your consent to participate includes your consent for me to include quotations from your interview recordings and transcripts in my final thesis, publications, and public/future presentations. Every reasonable effort will be made to ensure your anonymity. I will urge my participants to respect the anonymity of those they may recommend to participate in my study.

Recording of Data:

Interview sessions will be audio recorded and later transcribed. The transcripts will be given to participants to ensure the accuracy of information.

Use, Access, Ownership, and Storage of Data:
- Electronic data files will be password-protected and stored on password-protected and/or encrypted devices.

- Consent forms and contact information will be stored separately from the data. They will be stored at a secure location such as a locked filing cabinet.

- Only the researcher and supervisor will have access to the data.

- All electronic versions of interview materials (audio recordings, typed transcripts and field notes) will be stored in a secure, password protected file on my computer after each interview. Copies of audio recordings will be burnt onto compact discs (CDs) and these will be kept with other interview materials in a locked cabinet. All copies of audio recordings on CDs and other interview materials will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home which only I will have access to. Also, duplicates of these interview materials will be kept in locked cabinets in my supervisors' offices at Memorial University.

- All electronic documents related to data collection and analysis will be kept for a minimum of five years after the completion of my thesis. Likewise, hard copies of documents related to data collection and analysis will be kept for a minimum of five years after the completion of my thesis in a locked cabinet in my home. Data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as required by Memorial University's policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

Reporting of Results:
Upon completion, my thesis will be available at Memorial University's Queen Elizabeth II library and can be accessed online at: http://collections.mun.ca/cdm/search/collection/theses.

Data will be reported using direct quotations, or personally identifying information (if participants give permission), or only in an aggregated and/or summarized form).

Sharing of Results with Participants:
Information and/or feedback on the study will be available or provided to participants after the project is complete via report, poster presentation, pamphlet.

Questions:
You are welcome to ask questions before, during, or after your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact:

Researcher(s):   Frederick Addae
       Memorial University of Newfoundland
       Faculty of Education
       Email: faddae@mun.ca
       Cell phone: 709-770-6383

Supervisor(s):   Dr. Noel Hurley
       Memorial University of Newfoundland
       Faculty of Education
       Email: nhurley@mun.ca
       Tel:709-683-7472

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 709-864-2861.

Consent:
Your signature on this form means that:
- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.

- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **d**uring data collection, any data collected from you up to that point will be destroyed.
- You understand that your data cannot be removed after your transcript has been approved for accuracy by you.

I agree to be audio-recorded   ☐ Yes
                                                 ☐ No

I agree to the use of direct quotations   ☐ Yes
                                                 ☐ No

By signing this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Your Signature Confirms:

☐ I have read what this study is about and understood the risks and benefits. I have had adequate time to think about this and had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered.

☐ I agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation.

☐ A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____   _____

Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Question

This research is aimed at exploring the perceptions of West African teachers toward the role of principals in the prevention of school violence. Please be as candid as possible in your responses.

Demographics and Socio-Economic Characteristics

1. How old are you?

2. Where have you taught in West Africa?

3. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

4. Have you held a leadership position in a school? If yes what was the position? How long have you held the leadership position?

5. Do you aspire to become a school principal?

Nature of School Violence

7. How do you define school violence?

8. What are some examples of school violence that you have encountered in your life as a teacher?

9. What are the frequent causes of school violence?

10. What are some of the types of school violence that you have encountered?

11. Why do you think students engage in school violence?

12. What are the effects or consequences of bullying?

Conventional ways of preventing school violence in West African schools

13. What are some of the common ways used to prevent violence in your school?

14. What are the common forms of punishment used by teachers and principals to discipline students who engage in school violence?

15. How do students feel and behave when they are disciplined using corporal punishment?

16. Why corporal punishment should not be used as a way of preventing school violence?

17. Would you use corporal punishment or non-punitive ways to prevent school violence if you become a school principal?

Principals roles in school violence prevention without using corporal punishment

19. What are your school's policies on school violence prevention?

20. What are some strategies principals in West African schools can use to prevent school violence without using corporal punishment?

21. Restorative justice practices seem to be the new paradigm shift in school violence prevention. What is your understanding of restorative justice practice?

24. Have you ever applied restorative justice practice to prevent school violence in your life as a teacher? If yes, can you share with me the results of it?

25. How can principals improve their role in school violence prevention by implementing restorative justice practices?

26. Do you think principals should implement restorative justice practice policies in school violence prevention rather than zero-tolerance policies? If yes, what do you think will be the impact of restorative justice policies on school violence prevention? If no, what other non-punitive policies can you suggest preventing school violence?

Conclusion

27. Do you have any questions or comments to be addressed? Or any clarification on the issues discussed?

Appendix D: ICEHR Ethics Approval Letter

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these changes for the Committee's consideration

Appendix E: CORE Certificate of Completion

PANEL ON
RESEARCH ETHICS
Navigating the ethics of human research

TCPS 2: CORE

Certificate of Completion

This document certifies that

Frederick Addae

has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement:
Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)

Date of Issue: **21 October, 2018**