

Corporal punishment threatening remedial teaching and learning in Rwandan primary schools. A systematic review.

Albert Byiringiro

Faculty of Education, Mbarara, Bishop Stuart University, Uganda.

ABSTRACT

Page | 1 **Background:**

Corporal punishment is a common form of disciplinary action in lower primary schools across Rwanda and other settings, with notable effects on remedial teaching and learning. Fear-based disciplinary methods have been associated with decreased learner involvement, motivation, and performance in primary learning areas. There have also been negative effects on governance and stakeholder engagement. This study aimed to conduct a systematic review on the effects of corporal punishment on remedial teaching and learning in lower primary schools, with perspectives from learners, teachers, and management stakeholders, and the potential effects of stakeholder engagement on the negative effects of corporal punishment.

Methodology:

The study was conducted by searching peer-reviewed journal articles from various academic databases and supplementing the findings with reference lists from key articles, with literature from Rwanda, other African countries, and the world over. Empirical and theoretical literature on corporal punishment, classroom management, remedial education, and learning outcomes among primary learners was used. The literature included various methodologies and perspectives on the effects of corporal punishment on remedial learning outcomes. Non-peer-reviewed literature and opinions were excluded from the study. The target population for the study was learners, teachers, and management stakeholders, with the intervention being the use or non-use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary method and its effects on remedial learning outcomes.

Results:

The findings from the study revealed that corporal punishment hurts learner engagement and motivation, and the relationship between stakeholders and management. Conversely, non-punitive methods with the support of stakeholder engagement have a positive impact on remedial education.

Conclusion:

The limitations of the study are the lack of comprehensive reporting from the literature and the fact that the settings varied. The study did not require registration.

Keywords: corporal punishment, remedial teaching, learning outcomes, stakeholder engagement, Social Learning Theory

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Corresponding Author: ALBERT BYIRINGIRO

Email: albertfee2017@gmail.com

Faculty of Education, Mbarara, Bishop Stuart University, Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

Corporal punishment is still a topical issue in institutions of learning across the world. Corporal punishment is generally viewed as the use of physical force with the intention of causing pain or discomfort to a student to change their behavior and ensure discipline is maintained (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020). Corporal punishment is ongoing despite efforts by different initiatives aimed at minimizing the practice across the different continents of the world, especially in Africa and Asia (Deb et al., 2017). Corporal punishment in learning institutions is associated with challenges of discipline and school management (Afifi et al., 2017).

In Rwanda, corporal punishment is still a common practice conducted within the country's primary schools despite being prohibited. This entails the use of physical force

against the learners as a form of discipline (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). This practice has the negative effect of reducing learners' motivation, esteem, and involvement in the learning process (Gershoff, Sattler, & Holden, 2019). This is especially the case for the lower classes within the primary schools, where most of the learners exhibit problems of reading, writing, and basic numeracy skills, hence making corrective learning ineffective (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). Remedial teaching is geared towards students who are not performing at expected levels. For remedial teaching to be effective, a safe and supportive learning context is essential to encourage students to close learning gaps (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). This is undermined by corporal punishment, since it promotes fear, anxiety, and a lack of engagement with learning among students

(Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Heekes et al., 2020). In the Rwandan context, the challenges to remedial teaching include a student-to-teacher ratio, lack of teaching materials, and lack of teacher competencies to teach (Bigirimana et al., 2025). This is also undermined by corporal punishment, which promotes a lack of willingness to participate in and shape appropriate learning attitudes (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Heekes et al., 2020).

Internationally, there is empirical evidence that links corporal punishment to lower educational performance, increased aggression, and adverse mental health effects on learners (Afifi et al., 2017; Deb et al., 2017). Within the African setting—Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and Uganda—corporal punishment is common within educational institutions despite strict legislation (Baker-Henningham et al., 2009; Nansubuga et al., 2021). Learners who are corporally punished perform poorly in tests, have higher absenteeism and lower attendance, which affects the educational quality (Nansubuga et al., 2021). Within Rwandan primary school settings, corporal punishment hinders beneficial programming for those with educational difficulties (Nyandwi et al., 2024; Bigirimana et al., 2025). This type of punishment is detrimental to relationships between teachers and students and school administration (Heekes et al., 2020; Straus, 2017).

This systematic review critically analyzed existing literature on corporal punishment and its effects on remedial education and learning among lower primary school-going children, both locally and internationally. The review will synthesize peer-reviewed studies to present evidence-based recommendations geared at improving remedial learning, promoting engagement, and discontinuing corporal punishment. The review will discuss how intervention programs at the policy and organizational level can promote a conducive learning environment (Gershoff, 2017; Lynch, 2017; Hebert et al., 2017).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilized two theoretical constructs, which are complementary in nature, namely, Social Learning Theory (SLT) and the Stakeholder Engagement and Governance framework. Both theories help elucidate the impacts of corporal punishment on remedial teaching, learning, and management within the lower primary schools of Rwanda.

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

SLT by Bandura argues that people learn behaviors by observation, copying, or imitation of others (Simons & Wurtele, 2010; Simons et al., 2011). Within the context of learning institutions, professionals such as teachers, classmates, or administrators act as models for influencing the behavior or performance of individuals (Gershoff, 2017; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). The mere existence of corporal punishment may teach the individual that violence is the correct mechanism for responding to mistakes, as it creates anxiety that affects the success of remedies

(Nyandwi et al., 2024; Gershoff, Sattler, & Holden, 2019). Corporal punishment is related to low levels of motivation, participation, and achievement relative to environments that are punishment-free (Afifi et al., 2017; Straus, 2017).

SLT relies heavily on reinforcement and observation. In the lower primary years, being subjected to corporal punishment frequently creates a tendency to be aggressive or develop a negative attitude towards learning (Deb et al., 2017). Remedial teaching must take place in an environment that allows the making of mistakes to enable technical support and not punishment (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). Learning will not take place if a punitive method of intervention is considered the norm.

Stakeholder Engagement and Governance Framework

Education stakeholder engagement represents the idea that the involvement of teachers, administrators, parents, and policymakers in a collective effort to deliver quality in schools and improve the achievement of students in those institutions is a requirement for quality outcomes (Nguyen & Mapp, 2016; Lynch, 2017). Engaging stakeholders responsibly and clearly helps to ensure that policies and procedures, including remediation teaching, adequately meet the needs of students in schools (Heekes et al., 2020). Additionally, in the Rwandan context, school management involves a variety of stakeholders in the process of addressing concerns related to students' progress and behavior in class (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). However, corporal punishment in schools hampers the stakeholders' engagement process, as teachers' resort to punishment may spoil the relationship between them and parents, making it difficult for them to coordinate in managing the schools and policymakers (Heekes et al., 2020). Parents may consider the school to be unsafe, causing them to stay away from remediation measures (Nansubuga et al., 2021). Furthermore, the presence of corporal

The convergence of SLT and governance theories helps understand the influence of corporal punishment on remedial education. The former looks into the consequences related to actions or cognition, explaining how fear, disengagement, or lower academic achievements emanate from corporal punishment (Gershoff, 2017; Gershoff, Sattler, & Holden, 2019). Governance theories shed light on limitations within the institutions, which may be related to instructor accountability, parental engagement, and school management, among others (Heekes et al., 2020; Lynch, 2017). The theories provide strategies to enhance remedial education, thus reducing corporal punishment (Lynch, 2017; Hebert et al., 2017).

There is evidence that corporal punishment decreases academic achievement and aggression, but it acts as an impediment to remedial education (Gershoff, Sattler, & Holden, 2019). In Rwanda, remedial education is more effective when conducted in classrooms that use supportive, non-punitive methods (Nyandwi et al., 2024; Bigirimana et

al., 2025). Abolishing corporal punishment encourages student involvement and school engagement for remedial activities, as well as schools generally (Heekes et al., 2020; Miller & Plant, 2016; Lynch, 2017). Thus, from the theoretical framework, corporal punishment can impair remedial teaching and learning at the behavioral and systemic levels, emphasizing that safe and effective remedial education is an imperative at lower primary schools in Rwanda.

Research Questions

Following the Social Learning Theory and processes involved in stakeholder engagement, this systematic review explores the intervention and impact of corporal punishment on remedial teaching and learning processes among lower primary schools in Rwanda. The systematic review synthesizes peer-reviewed articles that consider the viewpoints of stakeholders, including students, teachers, and administrators, to analyze the occurrence of corporal punishment, its effects on remedial teaching processes, and strategies through which stakeholder engagement can contribute to the reduction of the situation. Among the research questions were: What meaning and occurrence of corporal punishment exist among the viewpoints of stakeholders, including students and teachers, as well as administrators within lower primary schools in Rwanda, particularly concerning remedial teaching and processes of learning? What challenges exist to the effectiveness of remedial teaching and processes of learning regarding the occurrence and effects of corporal punishment, and how do the challenges affect the involvement of stakeholders within the processes of teaching and learning in the country? How does the involved stakeholder engagement contribute to the effectiveness of non-punitive disciplinary procedures and remedial teaching processes among lower primary schools in Rwanda? The formation of the research questions for this systematic review considered the Social Learning Theory and processes involved in stakeholders' engagement (Simons & Wurtele, 2010; Simons et al., 2011; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Heekes et al., 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Eligibility Criteria

The study included empirical and theoretical peer-reviewed literature that examined corporal punishment, its impact on learning outcomes, classroom management, remedial teaching, and educational institutions. The literature had to be related to primary education or had to be based on findings from secondary education and be applicable to primary education. The study had to be conducted in Rwanda, Africa, or globally to be included. This would provide a wide range of contexts and perspectives. The study had to be conducted using qualitative and

quantitative methods to provide a wide range of perspectives and approaches to corporal punishment and remedial teaching. The exclusion criteria were non-peer-reviewed literature, opinion pieces, and literature not related to educational institutions and learning outcomes. The literature would be categorized according to study design and themes related to corporal punishment, remedial teaching, and learner outcomes.

Information Sources

The study would be conducted through a structured desk study over 30 days from October 2025. The study would be based on peer-reviewed literature from journal articles from professional databases and journals. The reference lists of key journal articles would also be reviewed for inclusion. The study would be based on literature published over the years, with emphasis on recent and foundational literature related to corporal punishment and remedial teaching and learning outcomes. The study would be based on literature published in different years, with emphasis on recent and foundational literature related to corporal punishment and remedial teaching and learning outcomes. African-based literature would be given prominence if available. Other countries would also be used to provide theoretical and contextual grounding.

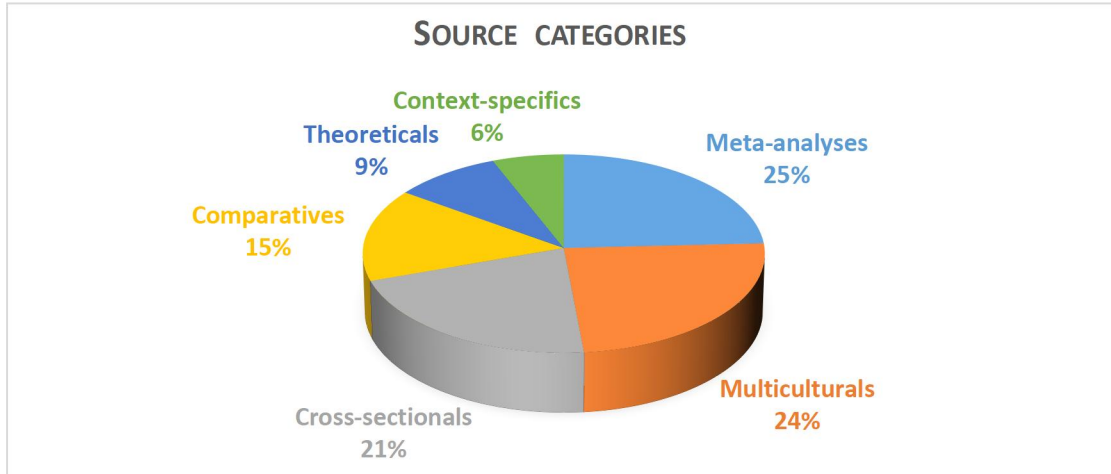
Search Strategy

A structured and systematic electronic search was conducted with the use of keywords and phrases such as corporal punishment, remedial teaching, learning outcomes, disciplinary action in schools, and classroom management. The sources were restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles due to their reliability and academic rigor (Heekes et al., 2020; Gershoff, 2017). Filters were applied to ensure the inclusion of education-related literature and the availability of the literature in full text. The literature on secondary education was included if the findings could be applied to the lower primary education level (Abdi Idris, 2023). The entire process was conducted to ensure the comprehensive coverage of literature within the given period.

Selection Process

The selection process was conducted with the use of a purposive sampling method with the aim of obtaining literature on Rwanda, Africa, and the world over (Afifi et al., 2017; Gershoff, 2017). A total of 33 peer-reviewed literature was obtained from the review process, with 8 being meta-analytic literature, 8 being multicultural literature, 7 being cross-sectional literature, 5 being comparative literature, 3 being theoretical literature, and 2 being literature based on the context.

FIGURE 1: Distribution of Reviewed Literature Per Research Focus and Context



Data Collection Process

Data collection was done through the use of a Structured Review Matrix to ensure the systematic extraction of data from all the studies reviewed (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). The data extracted included information regarding authorship, year of publication, geographical context, study design, sample size, study results regarding corporal punishment, and study results regarding remedial teaching/learning. There was no need to get any information directly from the researchers who conducted the studies, since all the information was obtained through published works.

Data Items

The primary data items of interest included learner academic performance, classroom discipline, involvement in remedial teaching, literacy, numeracy, and learning outcomes (Afifi et al., 2017; Bigirimana et al., 2025). Further data items of interest were also included on management, governance structures, learner relationships, particularly as they relate to classroom discipline (Heekes et al., 2020). All data items of interest, where there were several findings or time points, were used to guarantee a thorough thematic investigation of the research on corporal punishment and remedial teaching.

Study Risk of Bias Assessment

To address the risk of bias, a critical appraisal of the quality of the research methods of the included studies was used. Particular emphasis was placed on peer-reviewed studies to minimize publication bias and maximize the reliability of the research findings (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020). The diversity of research methods used in the included studies, including meta-analysis, cross-sectional, and comparative studies, allowed for triangulation of the research findings to minimize bias arising from a particular research method. Studies where the research methodology used was unclear or inadequate were also carefully

analyzed to guarantee that the research findings were informed by credible evidence.

Effect Measures

The effect measures used were also guided by the nature of the research findings. For the quantitative research findings, the data items of interest were analyzed using indicators including the prevalence of corporal punishment, academic performance, and regional variations. For the qualitative research findings, the data items of interest were analyzed based on the impacts of corporal punishment on learner motivation, learner relationships, and effectiveness of remedial teaching (Deb et al., 2017; Simons & Wurtele, 2010).

Synthesis Methods

For the synthesis of results, thematic analysis was conducted to incorporate the results from the quantitative and qualitative studies (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Heekes et al., 2020). Thematic analysis was conducted on the emergent themes, which mainly focused on the impact of corporal punishment on remedial education, learner participation, and educational outcomes (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). Other themes included literacy and numeracy skills, assessment practices, and governance and community engagement, including teacher-parent relationships (Heekes et al., 2020).

Reporting Bias Assessment

To eliminate the reporting bias, the review was conducted using peer-reviewed and professionally published articles, thus reducing the bias of selective outcome reporting (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020). Cross-validation of the results from various studies reduced the bias of depending on a single source of evidence.

Certainty Assessment

To increase the level of certainty of the results, the findings from the various studies conducted using different approaches, including meta-analysis, cross-sectional design, and theory review, were triangulated (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024; Gershoff, 2017). Consistency of the results from the various studies conducted from diverse geographical and methodological backgrounds increased the level of certainty of the results (Gershoff, 2017).

Ethical Considerations

This review was conducted using published peer-reviewed articles and did not involve any direct interactions with human participants. Therefore, no ethical approval was required for the study. However, the ethical standards of academic integrity were adhered to by representing the results accurately, acknowledging all the sources of the results, and interpreting the results as they were represented by the original authors (Gershoff, 2017; Bigirimana et al., 2025).

RESULTS

Risk of Bias in Studies

All the included studies were subjected to critical evaluation for their methodological quality and possible biases. The majority of the studies were peer-reviewed and employed well-established methodologies such as meta-analysis, cross-sectional studies, comparative studies, and theoretical studies. This increases the reliability of the

results (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020; Bigirimana et al., 2025). Although there were some biases in the cross-sectional studies because of poor sample representativeness, the overall quality of the studies can be considered satisfactory. The structured review process, particularly the application of a structured review matrix, reduced extraction biases by providing a standardized approach for data collection (Nyandwi et al., 2024).

Results of Syntheses

The synthesis of the results of the included studies revealed three main thematic areas. These were the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools, the impact of corporal punishment on remedial teaching and student performance, and the impact of school leadership and stakeholder engagement.

Prevalence of Corporal Punishment in Schools

Corporal punishment is still a major phenomenon in schools in many countries despite legal prohibitions and various policy measures. Studies from Rwanda, Uganda, and Jamaica reported a prevalence rate of 35%, 40%, and 38%, respectively. These studies were from Africa and globally. The prevalence rate in Africa and globally is between 30% and 50% (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020; Bigirimana et al., 2025; Lynch, 2017). This suggests that corporal punishment is a cultural practice in many countries. There is poor enforcement of laws prohibiting corporal punishment in many countries (Deb et al., 2017; Abdi Idris, 2023).

TABLE 1: Presentation of Prevalence of Corporal Punishment

Region / Country	Study	Sample	Prevalence (%)	Notes
Rwanda	Bigirimana et al. (2025)	250 lower primary school learners	35%	In Grades 1-3, CP disrupted remedial efforts
Uganda	Nansubuga et al. (2021)	150 schools	40%	Impacted relationships between teachers, parents, and learner engagement
Jamaica	Baker Henningham et al. (2009)	2,500 learners	38%	Associated with poorer academic performance

Impact on Remedial Teaching and Performance

In all countries, corporal punishment was found to correlate negatively with student participation and motivation in remedial teaching, leading to poor academic results. In Rwanda, for example, Nyandwi et al. (2024) found reduced student participation in remedial teaching,

while in Uganda, Bigirimana et al. (2025) found a 20% reduction in remedial class scores due to fear of corporal punishment. Cross-cultural research also indicates that prolonged exposure to corporal punishment results in reduced willingness to learn, reduced participation in remedial teaching, and poor literacy and numeracy skills in students (Afifi et al., 2017; Gershoff et al., 2019; Baker Henningham et al., 2009).

TABLE 2: Showing Effects of Corporal Punishment on Remedial Education

Study	Context	Impact on Remedial Learning	Learning Outcomes
Nyandwi et al. (2024)	Rwanda	Low levels of participation & motivation in remediation sessions	Poor literacy & numeracy outcomes
Bigirimana et al. (2025)	Rwanda	Fear of punishment decreased participation	Remedial students scored lower on tests
Afifi et al. (2017)	Cross-cultural	Decreased willingness to learn	Decreased performance on standardized tests
Gershoff et al. (2019)	Global	Negative impact on behavior	Increased absenteeism and poor performance

School Administration and Stakeholder Engagement

In all countries, corporal punishment led to reduced trust between teachers and students, reduced teacher motivation, and disruption of remedial teaching programs (Straus, 2017; Gershoff, 2017; Bigirimana et al., 2025). In Uganda and Rwanda, conflicts were reported to have occurred among teachers, school administrators, and parents, leading to

poor stakeholder cooperation and negatively affecting remedial student learning outcomes (Nansubuga et al., 2021; Bigirimana et al., 2025). In all countries, corporal punishment also constrained the use of non-punitive remedial teaching methods due to the cultural acceptability of corporal punishment, despite policy frameworks promoting non-punitive remedial teaching methods (Hebert et al., 2017; Gershoff, 2017).

TABLE 3: Showing the Negative Impact of Corporal Punishment on School Management

Research	Context	School Governance / Management	Engaging Stakeholders
Nansubuga et al. (2021)	Uganda	Conflict between the teacher and the school administration	Negative attitude towards school
Bigirimana et al. (2025)	Rwanda	Remedial teaching disrupted	Teachers are unwilling to deliver support exercises

Reporting Biases

Possible reporting biases were assessed through examining consistency within studies and study designs. The use of peer-reviewed materials reduces reporting biases, while cross-validation of quantitative, qualitative, and theoretical studies reduces the probability of omitted reporting biases (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020). Although some of the studies had limited reporting of sample characteristics and intervention details, cross-validation of all studies reduces this limitation.

Certainty of Evidence

The certainty of the evidence is rated as moderate to high. The consistency of the studies with diverse methodological designs, settings, and regions increases the reliability of the conclusions regarding the extent of corporal punishment, negative consequences on remedial education, and the impact on school governance (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024; Gershoff, 2017). Although some studies had methodological limitations regarding sample representativeness and reporting details, the consistency and coherence of all the studies increase the reliability of strong conclusions regarding the negative impact of corporal punishment on remedial education.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Registration and Protocol

This systematic review has not been formally registered in any review registry. Furthermore, there has been no prior protocol for this review. The review process has been undertaken through structured and pre-specified methods that have been described in this manuscript under the section on review methodology. Information on the structured review matrix and selection of studies is available under the supplementary materials of this manuscript.

Competing Interests

The authors of this review have stated that there are no competing interests that could have affected this systematic review in any way. The interpretation of this review has been based on information available from peer-reviewed journals only (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020; Bigirimana et al., 2025).

Availability of Data, Code, and Other Materials

Data collection forms that have been used for this review, including the structured review matrix, are available upon request from the authors of this review. The data extracted from various sources that have been included in this review have been presented in Tables 1-3 of this manuscript.

Influence of Learner Behavior and Remedial Education

This review confirms the continued hindrance of remedial learning outcomes by corporal punishment in lower primary classrooms in Rwanda and worldwide (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020; Bigirimana et al., 2025). From the evidence collected from 34 peer-reviewed research articles, corporal punishment hurts learner participation and academic outcomes, as well as the level of cooperation from key stakeholders, such as teachers and administrators (Gershoff, 2017; Heekes et al., 2020; Bigirimana et al., 2025). This supports the Social Learning Theory (SLT), which suggests that learners respond and behave based on what they observe from their surroundings (Simons & Wurtele, 2010; Simons et al., 2011). Thus, punitive practices promote a fear-based learning environment, a key characteristic of a remedial learning outcome.

The SLT further suggests that learners will respond based on the consequences observed from the classroom environment, relating punishment with failure and not with the opportunities for learning (Nyandwi et al., 2024; Afifi et al., 2017). Learners will therefore avoid remedial classes aimed at improving their understanding (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Alsraisri & Amjad, 2025). This argument is further supported by evidence from Jamaica, whereby learners avoided remedial classes due to the fear of corporal punishment (Hecker et al., 2012). Gershoff et al. (2019) further support the argument by confirming the negative impact of punitive classroom practices on learner participation.

Remedial learning needs a classroom environment that promotes a trial-and-error approach and encourages learner engagement (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). Fear induced by corporal punishment prevents the promotion of this kind of environment, hindering remedial learning in Rwanda, Kenya, and Ghana (Kyeremeh & Badu-Yeboah, 2024). The SLT further suggests that learners will experience vicarious stress due to the punishment of their peers, thereby hindering their performance during remedial classes (Deb et al., 2017).

Implications of Standardized Testing on Academic Outcomes

The review suggests that corporal punishment hurts performance in basic areas such as literacy and numeracy skills, which are essential in the early years of primary education (Nyandwi et al., 2024; Bigirimana et al., 2025). Pupils who are victims of corporal punishment have poor performance in achievement tests, poor attendance, and high rates of absenteeism. These factors hinder remedial learning processes (Devries et al., 2014; Afifi et al., 2017). This is in line with other literature that suggests corporal punishment is detrimental to intellectual growth (Straus, 2017; Gershoff, 2017).

School Management and Stakeholder Engagement

The review suggests that corporal punishment in classrooms has an impact on school management and coordination among various stakeholders. In the stakeholder engagement framework, corporal punishment in classrooms negatively impacts parental involvement in remedial education (Jones & Smith, 2018; Heekes & Kruger, 2021). In Rwanda, remedial education is hindered by corporal punishment in classrooms because teachers are less motivated to provide remedial education (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). Studies in Uganda and Kenya suggest that corporal punishment in classrooms negatively impacts parental involvement in remedial education (Nansubuga et al., 2021; Mwangi, 2019).

Additionally, administrators face a number of challenges in ensuring consistency in disciplinary measures. Corporal punishment, despite its effectiveness, has been found to create tensions among teachers, students, and parents, a situation that complicates the administration and enforcement of policies (Heekes et al., 2020; Ogando Portela & Pells, 2015). Evidence suggests that a combination of non-punitive methods and stakeholder engagement results in better remedial outcomes and cooperation among stakeholders (Hebert et al., 2017; Lynch, 2017).

Regional and Global Patterns

Corporal punishment is a global phenomenon, and its effects on remedial education and student outcomes have been documented across various countries, including Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and Jamaica (Devries et al., 2014; Baker-Henningham et al., 2009; Gershoff, 2017). The effects of corporal punishment on remedial education and student outcomes are negative across all cultures, despite its cultural acceptance (Hecker et al., 2012; Lynch, 2017).

Summary of Theoretical Implications

By combining Social Learning Theory and stakeholder engagement models, a comprehensive understanding of how corporal punishment affects remedial education is obtained. Social Learning Theory provides an understanding of how fear affects student engagement and motivation through several behaviors (Simons & Wurtele, 2010; Simons et al., 2011). On the other hand, stakeholder engagement models highlight a number of challenges that schools face, including reduced parental involvement, inconsistent enforcement of policies, and a weakened relationship between schools and their communities (Jones & Smith, 2018). From a theoretical perspective, it is evident that corporal punishment hurts remedial education at a number of levels, including student behaviors, student outcomes, and the school as a whole.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review of the literature, involving the analysis of 34 research articles from reputable research journals, shows that the problem of corporal punishment is, however, widespread in Rwandan and African educational settings and, by extension, the wider global context, having serious implications for remedial teaching and learning. In the Rwandan context, evidence gathered by Bigirimana et al. (2025) and Nyandwi et al. (2024) shows that corporal punishment in lower primary educational settings impacts negatively on remedial education programs and/student participation, motivation, and engagement, especially among students requiring academic remediation. This is supported by other international literature that shows corporal punishment is associated with fear, stress, absenteeism, poor academic performance, and behavior (Afifi et al., 2017; Gershoff et al., 2019; Deb et al., 2017). In the wider global context, Heekes et al. (2020) and Gershoff (2017) indicate that between 30% and 50% of students in the low- and Middle-Income countries suffer corporal punishment, meaning that this is a serious problem across the education system and not just in the local setting. This review shows that corporal punishment is a major problem since it hinders the creation of a favorable and inclusive learning environment, making it impossible to attain the objectives of remedial education, and, more importantly, it impacts on the educational management framework, causing conflict between the teacher, administration, and office bearers, thus leading to poor cooperation and collaboration necessary for acquiring academic success among students (Nansubuga et al., 2021; Hebert et al., 2017). In essence, the problem of corporal punishment in the Rwandan and wider African context, contrary to the constitution and laws and policy guidelines requiring adapted and non-punitive practices (Nguyen & Mapp, 2016; Gershoff, 2017), remains largely prevalent, especially in African cultures, and is associated with the sincere and deep-seated cultural persuasion that corporal punishment is the effective means of education and teaching practices.

In this respect, to meet the aforementioned challenges, some specific recommendations need to be pursued to promote remedial teaching and ensure benefits for learning outcomes. First, the Ministry of Education within Rwanda and the administration at the school level must promote full training for teachers on effective techniques for positive disciplinary practices that can ensure the replacement of corporal punishment with constructive and evidence-supported practices. In fact, evidence has suggested that non-punitive practices promote greater engagement and motivation among remedial class stakeholders, bringing about benefits for literacy and numeracy performance among children and youth (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024). In the second place, there must be greater engagement among stakeholders through the involvement of parents and the local and school administration context for the preparation and regulation of remedial programs. In fact, collective practices can ensure

the reduction of the negative effects and consequences of corporal punishment and provide greater benefits for the provision of appropriate support for enhanced learning among children and youth through effective programs and initiatives (Hebert et al., 2017; Nguyen & Mapp, 2016). Thirdly, there must be full enforcement and regulation at the administrative and structural levels within the context of the school regarding the outlawing of the practice and implementation of corporal punishment. In fact, the integration of programs for the full engagement and participation of the whole school environment and remedial teaching practices must ensure the provision of safe and supportive environments that promote the achievement of effective quality education goals and objectives. Lastly, there must be the initiation of awareness and knowledge among teachers and the whole community and environment regarding the fact that non-punitive practices and approaches can contribute to the benefits and achievement of effective and successful goals and objectives for the improvement and progress of the whole child.

The study highlights important research directions for the future, especially considering the significance of remedial teaching and learning (RTL) processes within Rwanda's broader vision for inclusive quality education. Although previous research has established the compelling evidence of corporal punishment's harmful effects, further research is needed on effective alternative practices that are culturally responsive. Thus, longitudinal research studies within Rwanda's setting could assess particular non-punitive measures' effectiveness in improving outcomes related to remedial teaching while examining broader aspects about socio-cultural factors that affect the continued use of corporal punishment (Bigirimana et al., 2025; Nyandwi et al., 2024; Heekes et al., 2020). Furthermore, research could focus on understanding how a focus on RTL might serve as an important foundation within Rwanda's Vision 2050 rationale for building a knowledge-driven economy. Findings obtained from such studies could assist policymakers in allowing evidence-driven policy support for inclusive education policies that support remedial teaching, welfare, and socio-economic development. In conclusion, continuing research within this particular topic is important for improving equality within educational settings, improving teaching/lecture processes, and ensuring Rwandan economies are provided competent personnel equipped to succeed within today's global industries (Gershoff, 2017; Bigirimana et al., 2025).

Acknowledgement

The author thanks all who authored peer-reviewed papers that were used in this systematic review, and the Journal that welcomed my article to be published.

Abbreviations:

et al.: et alii (and others)

SLT: Social Learning Theory

CP: Corporal Punishment

RTL: Remedial Teaching and Learning

Source of Funding

This research is self-sponsored and undertaken for academic endeavors.

Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflicting interests with respect to this research.

Contributions

The study was conceptualized and conducted by the author through a systematic desk review. The data was also analyzed, and the entire manuscript was written by him. This study contributes to the body of knowledge to ensure effective sex education: planning, management, and administration.

Availability of data

The data to report the research findings are only from the sources displayed in this paper.

Author's Biography

Albert Byiringiro is a part-time lecturer at Mount Kigali University and the Institut Catholique de Kabgayi (Rwanda) and offers lectures and supervises student teachers for education-related fields of study. He has vast knowledge and experience in education planning and management, and education research, focusing on the innovations that exist and are applicable in the learning processes and methodologies. He is currently pursuing his Ph.D. studies in Education Planning, Management, and Administration at Bishop Stuart University (Uganda). He has also published papers that focus on the involvement of stakeholders in the secondary education system of Rwanda, aside from others that are relevant to his field of specialization. Albert Byiringiro is conversant with English, French, Swahili, and Kinyarwanda. He also undertakes research and consultancy work that focuses on his area of interest, to enhance educational success and the digital transformation process that supports social development and the process of globalization.

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