

Perceptions of Teachers Regarding Corporal Punishment and Its Effects on Students' Achievement at Primary School Level

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Abstract

The main objective of the present study was to analyze the perceptions of teachers regarding corporal punishment and its effects on students' academic achievement at primary school level. For this purpose, teachers of all primary school of Multan division were taken as a population. Out of the whole population, 111 primary teachers were selected randomly by using the simple random sampling technique. For need assessment, a questionnaire was developed as a research tool. The tool was validated by pilot study and reliability analysis was done on SPSS by using the Cronbach alpha. The questionnaire comprised 17 restricted response items and two open ended questions. The items were analyzed based on five-point Likert-type scale. The open-ended questions were constructed to find out the positive and the negative effects of corporal punishment on students' achievement and behavior. The data gathered from teachers was entered on excel and then shifted to SPSS. For analysis of the data, statistical techniques like arithmetic mean, percentage, and t-test were used. Overall, it was found from the study that majority of the teachers was in favor that corporal punishment is useful for maintaining discipline. On the other hand, the use of corporal punishment was decreasing the attendance rate and increasing the dropout ratio of students from school. Corporal punishment was also negatively influencing the children' academic performance. Corporal punishment was developing aggressiveness in behavior of the students. It was also found from the study that "Maar nahi Pyar" is acceptable for primary school students. Overall, negative effects of corporal punishment on students were found.

Keywords: Perception of teachers, corporal punishment, students' achievement, primary level.

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Introduction

School is micro form of society in which discipline is supposed to be observed and maintained among members, known as students (Andrade, 2011). Effective teaching and learning process in the school is possible only through effective discipline (Marzano, 2003). Discipline is a practice by which people are trained to follow the rules and orders and punished, if students disobey (Hornby, 2008). Educational systems have been dealing with debates about different types of strategies for maintaining discipline, which teachers and administrators use in schools all over the world. Many research studies have shown that corporal punishment is most widely used among them. Corporal Punishment is an application of physical force on body to correct child's bad behavior (Straus, 2001). The people who are in favor of corporal punishment stress the belief that fear, and pain will promote good behavior (Bitensky, 2007).

Many believe that corporal punishment of children has an educational value and learning cannot take place without punishment (Marzano, 2003). On the other hand, the corporal punishment can also lead to the emotional and psychological problems and also negatively affects the learning environment too (Andrade, 2011). Robinson et al. (2005) explained that drop out, fear of teacher, humiliation, feeling of helplessness, and criminal activities are side effects of physical punishment. Corporal punishment hurts the students, reduces their learning ability, damages self-esteem, and teaches wrong values (UNICEF, 2008). All children must be protected from abuse whether the physical or psychological (Save the children, 2012) because studies have shown that the corporal punishment in the schools is very dangerous, ineffective and an unacceptable method to maintain discipline (Save the Children, 2013).

In Pakistan, corporal punishment is one of the most pervasive forms of violence against children. In 2014, SPARC (the Society for the Protection of the Rights of Child) reported that corporal punishment is most widely used in homes, schools, and places of work. It is noticed that corporal punishment have been banned in most of the countries across the world including the Pakistan and have tried to purify themselves of this curse because the dire effects of the corporal punishment are known to everybody but still it is practiced in many schools. Therefore, researchers conducted this study to scrutinize why despite of knowing its adverse results the teachers are much accustomed of dealing their students with such kind of corporal punishments.

Literature Review

Corporal punishment (CP) is defined as giving physical pain to mold behavior. It can be in form of punching, hitting, slapping, spanking, and pinching using objects such as belts, sticks and paddles (NASN, 2010). Different reasons for the corporal

punishment may focus on family-based factor and school-based factor (Zayed, 2007). A child must face first his family-based factor of punishment. As Zayed (2007) recollects the history of Egyptian families who were habitual of giving punishment to children for reforming their behavior. In the study of Social Research Center (2006), there is an evidence that 81% of children are punished at home prior to joining the school. In case of school-based factors, it is observed in many studies that school has been practicing lot of corporal punishment such as 96% of students are victimized by corporal punishment in school (SRC, 2006).

Every year, physical impairments of children and injuries caused by the corporal punishment have been recorded in a lot of numbers. In research carried out in Cambodia, China (Hong Kong), Fiji, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, The Philippines and Viet Nam, children reported that mostly the students are punished on their heads and face. Children are punished with many kinds of objects like the whips, bats, and chains. Sometimes they are harmed with pinching words and abused immorally (Beazley, 2006). Dobbs (2007) elaborates that the main intention of the physical punishment is to hurt the students for their personal revenge rather to make them good. Aggression in the children after being beaten is the natural phenomenon which cannot be avoided. Their personality becomes deteriorated and damaged because of undue physical punishment. As a result, they become aggressive and impatient (Durrant & Ensom, 2012).

In a study conducted in UK, it was found that children who got punishment start acting naughty behavior and hurt people and if the children are very little, they think that being got punished and giving punishment to someone are the right ways to get the things balance (Dobbs, 2005). Instead of getting the desirable results from children, the corporal punishment makes them demoralize and increase antisocial behavior in their personality (Talwar, 2011). A great philosopher, Imam Ghazali was in the favor of motivation as a tool to mold students' behavior towards education. He believed that corporal punishment was a great restriction for education instead of inclining students towards it. Admiration is a great device for creating enthusiasm among students for learning. So, they should be praised and rewarded for their achievements and encouraged to avoid displeasures of failure. Teachers should be allowed for only 3 lashes when necessary (Al-Ghazali, 1997).

Presently, huge literature present discuss negative effects of corporal punishment on children but Talwar (2011) suggests 6 advantages for corporal punishment, cheap and easy to administer, affective deterrent, affective reformer, adjustable pain, fair because of similar dislike of pain and no permanent damage. There are some societies where there is little or no corporal punishment, this result in healthy and developing societies. In these societies, children' social skills are developed, they become self-confident and mature ones (Diamond, 2012). Some people believe that an old notion of "spare the rod, spoil the

child” is valuable and for making the children disciplined, paddling and beating are good approaches but the scientific evidence proved that this notion is not valuable, it creates mental and physical disorder in children (Robinson, 2005).

Strategies for Eliminating Corporal Punishment

All over the world, many countries have taken serious steps to eliminate corporal punishment and have developed many strategies. First, the UNICEF (2002) has raised the slogan of child protection and played a significant role in raising awareness in public about harsh consequences of corporal punishment. The main country is Jordan which has successfully participated in raising awareness among the people by developing channel of communication between children and the adults. In this communication, they have been successful in developing good relationships between adults and children. They have also used media to develop awareness about corporal punishment, held meetings and adopted new violent disciplinary techniques to stop this corporal punishment (UNICEF, 2007).

Role of civil society and coordination of efforts is also important. Civil society can also play a major role in stopping corporal punishment. The UNICEF implemented a model of child friendly school in Australia, where students are now treated and taught in a healthy and protected environment (UNICEF, 2009). In Eastern Caribbean, the corporal punishment was accepted morally but after UNICEF trained the teachers in the school, their behavior was totally changed and they successfully created healthy and convenient atmosphere (UNICEF, 2009).

The enforcement of policies to eliminate corporal punishment is very important step. Formulation of a policy is not enough because policy comes to action only through enforcing it. Policy implementation is directly connected to policy makers’ seriousness about resolving the issue. For example, in Sweden, ban of corporal punishment in school and homes has been adapted in 1979 by law (UNICEF, 2007). In some other countries, many other strategies are being used for eliminating the corporal punishment.

Corporal Punishment in Pakistan

In 2014, the Society for the Protection of Rights of Child (SPARC) found that the corporal punishment in Pakistan is widely applied in schools, in places of work and in homes. The SPARC also reported that there is large number of incidents which are not in record and remained unreported that is why the actual figure of the corporal punishment cannot be attained (SPARC, 2014). SPARC conducted a survey between October 2013 to March 2014 by consulting the students aged 12-17 years, found that 44% students have been victimized by corporal punishment in last 6 months and 30% have been locked in toilets by teachers and parents. In the survey, teachers and parents who were consulted

reported that corporal punishment is being eliminated in Pakistan, but students revealed that there is still corporal punishment prevalent in the schools and homes. The teachers expressed that corporal punishment is good device for getting good academic result and maintaining discipline in schools (ICRW, 2014).

In 2013, again in another study, few teachers said that some amount of corporal punishment is necessary for maintaining discipline, but the students found it cruel way of behavior. They said, they were beaten on the palms of hand with stick and rulers. They were slapped on the faces by hand and sometimes being kicked with foot (Plan, 2013). According to 2010 survey by SPARC, approximately 35000 students were dropped out from school because of the corporal punishment (Child Rights Movement Punjab, 2013). According to 2012 report, in Pakistan, corporal punishment is practiced for disciplinary measure (Shehan&Randel, 2012). In another report by Plan International (2012), several Pakistanis believe that corporal punishment is allowed in religion Islam for making the students good religious person and citizens. In survey carried out by SPARC in 2011, it was found that nearly 76% of parents in KPK found corporal punishment a legal way for disciplining children (Plan, 2012). Corporal punishment must be banned because it has no place in system of educating children. Many leading professional associations oppose all forms of corporal punishment because they feel that it causes irreparable emotional damage to young ones (Binghalib, 2011).

Rationale of the Study

A child is considered as a milestone and the future of the nation. Desired goals of development cannot be achieved without giving attention to the children and a school or classroom is regarded as a place where learning takes place in presence of teachers who are expected to produce quality students, learning and that of quality education. Corporal punishment, given by teachers, affects students socially, physically, and psychologically as well as their academic performance. When a teacher slap, pinch and twist the student's ears, he indirectly teaches that anger and violence are the preferable ways to solve each problem (Dobbs, 2005). Thus, keeping in view the above-mentioned reality, the present study was designed to analyze the perceptions of teachers regarding corporal punishment and its effects on students' achievement at primary school level.

Objectives of the Study

The study has been designed to achieve the following objectives.

- To examine teachers' perceptions about corporal punishment and its effects on students' achievement.

- To examine the difference between perceptions of male and female teachers about the effects of corporal punishment.
- To examine the difference between perceptions of urban and rural school teachers about the effects of corporal punishment.
- To explore the positive effects of corporal punishment as perceived by teachers.
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Methodology

The population of the present study included teachers of all primary schools of Multan division. The number of schools selected was 139 in which 11120 teachers were present. A sufficient sample size of 137 primary teachers was recommended by Raosoft (sample size calculator). The survey was completed with 81% response rate. In this way, total sample comprised 111 teachers, who were selected randomly. Regarding gender, 65 male teachers and 46 female teachers were selected. As for school type, 47 urban school teachers and 64 rural school teachers were taken as a sample. To gather the views from teachers about effects of corporal punishment, a questionnaire was designed as a research tool comprising 17 closed ended items and two open ended questions.

For examining the validity of research tool, pilot study was conducted in which questionnaire was distributed among twenty (20) primary school teachers of the Multan division. Based on pilot study result, minor changes were made. Then the questionnaire was improved by consultation of researchers and expert professors present at department. Regarding the reliability of research tool, analysis was done in SPSS by using Cronbach Alpha. The value of Cronbach alpha was .67, greater than .60, which shows that tool is reliable. The data was analyzed by using Excel and SPSS. Statistical techniques of mean and the percentage were used to analyze each item. t- Test was also used to compare any differences on mean of teachers in according to gender and school type. For the analysis of open-ended question, content analysis was used. For this, both themes were identified with percentage of those themes.

Results

To understand the results of the present study, it was important to interpret the perception of teachers about corporal punishment and how it affects the students' achievement and behavior. The mean values for the set of 17 items were calculated to answer the objective of the study. These items were focused on the different aspects of corporal punishment in the primary schools of the district Multan. The results of are given in table 1.

Table 1
Teachers' Perceptions about Corporal Punishment and its Effects

S. N.	Items	Mean
1	Educational system depends upon corporal punishment.	2.36
2	Punishment is useful for maintaining discipline.	3.37
3	Corporal punishment decreases attendance rate of students.	3.51
4	Corporal punishment maintains the respect of teacher.	2.49
5	Children being punished run away from school.	3.66
6	Corporal Punishment improves the creative abilities of children.	2.18
7	Corporal punishment increases the drop out ratio.	3.74
8	3 strokes are enough for punishment.	3.34
9	Spare the rod; spoil the child slogan is true.	3.23
10	Punishment can be reduced if parents take interest in child's study.	4.45
11	Students cannot express their feelings due to corporal punishment.	3.86
12	I believe in "Maar nahi Pyar".	3.55
13	Use of punishment is the solution of every educational problem.	2.13
14	Corporal punishment changes the bad behavior of students.	2.99
15	Child soon becomes spoiled child without punishment.	2.99
16	Students show better performance due to corporal punishment.	2.88
17	Students do the same for which they are punished.	2.77

The analysis of each item showed that primary teachers of Multan division were of the view that our educational system is not dependent on the corporal punishment. The children, who receive corporal punishment run away from school, cannot express their feelings, do not show good academic performance, drop out from schools, and become less creative. The teachers believed that "Maar nahi Pyar" is suitable for primary students because the use of punishment not only negatively affects the students' behavior but also their academic performance. If needed, only three strokes are enough to punish the child. The teachers suggested that parents' interest in study of their child can reduce the use of corporal punishment. Optimistic view about corporal punishment was that it maintains school discipline which is necessary to guide children who misbehave.

Table 2
Teachers' Perception about Corporal Punishment and its Effects by Gender

Effects of corporal punishment	Sample	Mean	t-value	Df	Significance
Male	65	53.18	-.619	109	NS
Female	46	53.98			

This table shows that the mean for male teachers is 53.18 and for female teachers 53.98, which shows little difference in their opinion but difference is not statistically

significant. There is no difference between male and female teachers' perception about the corporal punishment and its effects on students' achievement at 0.05 level.

Table 3

Teachers' Perception about Corporal Punishment and Effect on School Type

Effects of corporal punishment	Sample	Mean	t-value	df	Significance
Urban	47	54.70	1.629	109	NS
Rural	64	52.64			

This table shows that the mean for urban school teachers is 54.70 and the for rural 52.64 which shows remarkable difference in their opinion, but the difference is also statistically insignificant. It was thus found that the difference between urban and the rural school teachers' perception about corporal punishment and its effects on students' achievement at 0.05 level is not statistically significant.

Research Question 1: What are the positive effects of corporal punishment?

The analysis of open ended question about the positive effects of the corporal punishment resulted that 30% of teachers stated that punishment maintains discipline, 23% said that student study more, 18% no positive effect, 10% viewed that it improves performance, 9% said that it changes bad behavior, 5% described that lazy students become active and 5% said that it improves creative abilities.

Question 2: What are the negative effects of corporal punishment?

The teachers mentioned different negative effects of corporal punishment such as 27% of the teachers suggested for high dropout ratio, 14% for bad relation between teachers and students, 12% for increase aggression, 10% for hate teachers, 9% for decrease attendance rate, 8% for lack of interest in study, 8% for use of unfair means, 6% for less expressive, 4% for serious injuries and 2% for the lack of confidence as negative effects of corporal punishment.

Conclusions

It was concluded from the study that our educational system does not depend upon the corporal punishment rather it decreases attendance rate of students. Corporal punishment is useful for maintaining discipline but most of the teachers were in favor that corporal punishment does not maintain the respect of teacher and children being punished run away from school. It was also concluded that corporal punishment does not improve the creative abilities of children and they cannot express their feelings due to punishment. It was also concluded that corporal punishment is not solution of every education problem rather it increases the drop out ratio of students. In their view,

corporal punishment can be reduced if parents show interest in study of their child. Teachers accepted that “Maar nahiPyar” is suitable for students because they do not show better academic performance due to fear of punishment.

Discussion

The present study was conducted to analyze perceptions of teachers regarding corporal punishment and its effects on students’ achievement at primary school level. As earlier studies have found that corporal punishment negatively affect the students’ personality, behavior, health, and academic performance. Such as Durrant and Ensom (2012) reported that child personality becomes deteriorated and thus damaged because of undue physical punishment. As a result, they become aggressive and impatient. In Pakistan, government has given the slogan of “Maar nahiPyar” but still corporal punishment is widely used. A survey, conducted by the SPARC (Society for the Protection of Rights of Child) between October 2013 and March 2014, found that the students experience physical punishment by teachers in school which causes injury or death (ICRW, 2014).

In the present study, it was found that severe punishment damages the students physically and psychologically. The teachers reported that use of corporal punishment is reducing the attendance rate and increasing dropout ratio of the students. The children who receive corporal punishment may run away from the school, which badly affects their academic performance and career. Some children become more aggressive and violent in nature that they damage the school property as well as beat their class fellows. So, teacher must keep in mind the worse effects of corporal punishment while implementing it. But it is also fact that lenient discipline is not suitable to run a school because without discipline, the teacher would lose his control over the class and effective learning cannot take place in such kind of environment. So, for purpose of maintaining discipline, the teacher must use punishment but not too harsh.

Recommendations

Because this study found that corporal punishment affects students’ achievement and behavior negatively. So, it is recommended that government must aware the teachers through proper training programs not to corporally punish the students and act upon “Maar nahiPyar”. But it is also fact that lenient discipline is not suitable for students because if they are not forbidden, they break the school law. So, it is recommended that punishment should be given to some or very lighter extent but not so harsh which can cause physical injuries or psychological problems. Joint, effective, and quick efforts should be made for providing all best possible facilities to primary schools.

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