

Effectiveness of Training on the Primary School Teachers' Attitude towards Corporal Punishment in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the attitude of primary school teachers (PSTs) towards corporal punishment (CP) and effectiveness of training for changing attitude towards corporal punishment and implementation of alternatives in Pakistan. Data collected through questionnaire delineated that 36 out of 141 teachers had attitude towards punishment. Training on alternatives to corporal showed significant effect on the attitude of teachers towards CP; lack of knowledge, overcrowded classroom, home environment, beliefs of teachers and parents are big hindrances to using alternatives. The study recommends training, changing beliefs of teachers and conducive environment for teaching and learning.

Keywords: Corporal punishment; primary school teachers; Change in attitude; Training Effects.

Introduction

Corporal punishment is the use of physical force to cause a child to experience pain, but not injury, for purposes of correction or control of the child's behavior (Straus, 2001). It is a teacher's act which causes discomfort to a child by hitting with an object/hand, spanking, beating with a whip or belt, cane, shoe, rod, kicking, pulling hair, pinching the student, winding ears or arms, forcing the student to stand in a painful position, or to take extreme physical exercise (UNICEF,2005).

Students' corporal punishment has negative effects on the personalities of children. Therefore, a safe and loving environment should be provided to them (UNICEF, 2016).

The international law of human rights recommends eliminating of any type of corporal punishment and accepts education as a legal right for all children (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishments, 2013). Corporal punishment can disable children for whole life, because punishment has long-lasting negative psychological and emotional impacts on students (Rajkoomar, 2012, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2011). Corporal punishment has also been associated with several negative mental health outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, suicide, or alcohol abuse (Straus & Kantor, 1994; Turner & Muller, 2004).

Corporal punishment is practiced in one form or another all over the world. It is a prevailing practice in Pakistan as Save the Children and UNICEF (2005) surveyed 3852 students, and concluded that all were corporally punished, and out of this number, 7 percent had been seriously injured. Cheema (2007) pointed out that 26 cases of corporal punishment were reported in police stations wherein two children were found dead and the others were seriously injured. Dunya TV News unveiled on November 24, 2015, a case of six-year-old second grade's female student of a public school had been beaten by a teacher, with a nail covered rod on her hands, and had kept her lonely in a room without food and water during school hours. The Daily Mashriq (22 April 2019) reported a case from Dir in Pakistan where a boy became unconscious due to corporal punishment and his parents stated that they would not send their kid to school. The Daily Mashriq (14 April, 2019) reported that a female student was severely punished and 2 teachers were penalized for their act of violence. Corporal punishment is a part of culture in Pakistan as Muhammad and Ismail (2001) reported that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 41.3 percent of the principals/headmaster did not approve corporal punishment while 57.3 percent thought that corporal punishment was essential at schools. They further said that 78 percent of parents had been informed that physical punishment was inflicted on their children in schools. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 40.6 percent of parents thought that corporal punishment should be inflicted on their children because they thought it essential for disciplining children, while 29.5 percent thought it inappropriate. Daily Mashriq, on 14th April, 2019 reported that the government

showed grave concern on the continuity of corporal punishment despite the ban on it. Islamabad high court also banned corporal punishment in response to a petition against corporal punishment in schools (The News, February 28, 2020). However, only legislative measures are not sufficient. It is a very common phenomenon in schools even after a lot of opposition by NGOs and ban by government' legislative measures. So, this needs something more than mere legislation and slogans. (UNICEF, 2005) assert that teachers should be trained for using alternatives disciplinary techniques.

Purpose of the Study

Corporal punishment is a menace that destroys students' psychological, physical and emotional health. Despite the ban by Government of Pakistan of corporal punishment in schools, it is widely practiced by teachers. Therefore, this study focused on teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment, the effectiveness of training on alternatives to corporal punishment on the teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment, perceptions about possible causes of corporal punishment in primary schools and possible hindrances in the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment in elementary schools in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Corporal punishment is recommended nowhere in the world, but still, the infliction of corporal punishment on students is the most common phenomenon of daily life (Gebrezgabiher and Hailu, 2017). The frequency of corporal punishment varies from place to place, but it is still practiced in both developed and developing countries. Students face a lot of corporal punishment and abuse in schools (Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports, 2017). Similarly, the students of South Asia face corporal punishment in their daily lives as a routine matter. Students are considered immature and weak, and teachers have to guide them by using corporal punishment on them (UNICEF, 2001). Children are physically punished by their parents, for instance, a couple, David and Louise Turpin, physically torture their children in California, USA in January, 2018. The couple was awarded life imprisonment. Later on, their children forgave their parents. The mother said that she did all this out of love, not hate (BBC Urdu, 20th April, 2019).

Causes of Corporal Punishment

There may be different causes of corporal punishment in schools. Save the Children and UNICEF (2005) identified causes of corporal punishment as non-compliance by students in schools, rude behavior, not taking interest in school work, quarreling, stealing, not saying prayers, going outside of students without approval and so on. Culture and lack of proper laws perpetuate punishment. Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) reported that 76 percent of parents had authorized corporal punishment in schools (Daily Dawn, Nov. 6, 2011). Another reason might be the misunderstood Hadiths of the prophet (P.B.U.H) by the people (Save the Children, UNICEF, 2015). Besides societal attitude, teachers' stress and burden of work could lead to corporal punishment (Shah, 2006). Children also Children face verbal and physical abuse of mother, disputes amongst parents, and the abuser's destruction of property (Anderson, 2017).

Impacts of Corporal Punishment

Children learn by observing others, therefore, corporal punishment gives birth to violence in children later in life (Bandura, 1971; Plotnik, 1989; Feldman, 1992; Straus 1996; Niolon, 2004; Karen & Cheng, 2005, Save the Children & UNICEF,2005; SPARC, 2006; Donnel, Reeve & Smith, 2007). Psychologists and educationists are of the view that corporal punishment is not effective in maintaining disciplining as it does not elicit desirable behavior (Leprancois, 1985; Myers, 1990; Feldman, 1992; Rathus, 1993; Cohen, 1996, Gershoff, 2002,Chenoweth & Just, 2000, UNICEF 2001,Shah, 2006). Corporal punishment damages children's emotional health and child has emotional problems in adulthood (SPARC,1999).Corporal punishment also produces anxiety, stress and depression (Kagan & Segel (1988) ,Hyman,1997, Turner & Finkelhor, 1996, SPARC 1999,Chenoweth & Just, 2000,Runyon and Haber, 1986, Chenoweth & Just,2000.Ali,.Malik & Khan,2019; Rodrenguiz,2003; Smith,2006; Simon,2012; Knox, Sarwar,Mangewala & Klag, 2015; Robleinsiville, 2017; Gabbatiss, 2017; Schwartz, 2018). The victims have a higher probability of becoming future perpetrators (Paulo, 2006). CP may badly affect the image of students, school achievement and it may lead to disruptive and violent students' behavior (Committee on School Health, 1991). Paolucci and Violato, 2004) research

suggests small negative behavioral and emotional effects of corporal punishment and almost no effect of such punishment on cognition. Ygulama (2007) carried out an experimental study in Pakistan and it was found that the students who were awarded corporal punishment on creating a source of friction and showing lack of interest in their academic work began to show negative behavior and their academic progress showed a gradual regression, whereas the students who were managed with psychological treatment developed their interest in learning, reflected friendly behavior and improved their long-term scholastic performance. Afifi (2012) found that harsh physical punishment was associated with increased odds of mood disorders, anxiety disorders, alcohol and drug abuse/dependence, and several personality disorders. As studies have found that corporal punishment affects self-esteem and many studies have found that self-esteem is directly related to the academic achievements of students (Khan, Mahmood & Zaib, 2019; Bankston & Zhou, (2002); Lockett & Harrell, (2003; Schmidt and Padilla (2003a))

Initiatives of Pakistan Curbing Physical Punishment

Pakistan signed the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) on 6th January 1990 and later ratified on 14 September 1990. The CRC made it binding on the member countries to eradicate child violence (UNICEF, 2016). Consequently, Pakistan took many measures for curbing corporal punishment in schools. For instance, a bill was drafted by the Ministry of Human Rights against corporal punishment, especially that of children and women (Ministry of Human Rights, 2019). Universal Children Day is celebrated by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) on 20th November each year in Pakistan. According to Save the Children and UNICEF (2005), in December 2003, the Government of Pakistan has banned corporal punishment, and school staff was directed to treat children with love and use alternative methods. Similarly, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government banned physical torture in schools and stressed on using nonviolent alternatives to corporal punishment for maintaining discipline. On December 13, 2003, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government issued a letter to all government schools and directed the teachers to use nonviolent methods of handling children. The letter directed teachers to use other methods for dealing with children (Khan, 2004). A slogan '*Maar Nahin Piar*' which means 'Love, not beating' was adopted in public schools, and the Government of Punjab banned corporal punishment too (SPARC 2011). However, the Government was not successful in

curbing this practice completely because of no mechanism for it. In June 2011, The Pakistan Education Foundation (PEF) and Plan Pakistan set up an anti-punishment system and complaint boxes. They set up committees of parents, teachers, and students in schools to monitor the corporal punishment in partner schools. However, that was a very small initiative because, in Pakistan, the number of schools exceeds 225,000 (Government of Pakistan, 2012). There was a ban on corporal punishment; the provincial governments took necessary actions. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Government (Province in Pakistan) in December 2011 set up a Child Protection Unit (CPU) in eight districts of the province. Similarly, in 2006, the Secretary of Education of Sindh Government circulated a letter for a ban on corporal punishment in the Sindh Province. However, both the directives and the code were ineffective and the practice of corporal punishment is continued. At last, the Government of Sindh, in December 2011, introduced a law to deal with the increasing prevalence of corporal punishment in schools. The Baluchistan government also tried to curb physical punishment in schools, and issued a letter in 2010. Up till now, the government of Baluchistan could not take any legal and executive processes regarding the issue. Activist of Child Rights asked the government of Baluchistan to abolish the occurrences of corporal punishment in the educational institutions (2016 authors blinded).

Pakistan, being a signatory to CRC, has to implement CRC in letter and spirit that is why Pakistan banned corporal punishment in schools. Teachers were punished when they gave corporal punishment. However, only legislative measures might not stop corporal punishment, some additional measures should be taken; the ban on corporal punishment was not only possible by legislative measures, but actually, teachers should know the harms of corporal punishment, and should be equipped with other alternatives to handle children positively. Otherwise, it would end into frustration for the teachers. Save the Children and UNICEF (2005) stressed on the use of positive discipline in the form of alternatives in Pakistani schools. In October 2003, Pakistan directed to stop all forms of corporal punishment, and a campaign for the awareness was launched highlighting its negative impacts. Although, a law was passed against corporal punishment but it did not ensure that punishment would not be inflicted on students (Moulvi, 2018). A question arises as to why do teachers punish students in schools? Do they know

alternatives to punishment or positive disciplinary practices? This needs to be investigated and that's why the current study investigated the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment and the consequent effect of training on the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment.

Statement of the problem

Studies and incidences in the newspaper show that corporal punishment is still a prevailing practice in the schools of KP Pakistan. So this study focuses on changing the attitude of primary school teachers towards corporal punishment. Moreover, it also explores the causes of triggering corporal punishment.

Objective of the Study

1. To investigate the attitude towards corporal punishment.
2. To explore Effectiveness of Training on the Primary School Teachers' Attitude towards Corporal Punishment in Pakistan

Hypothesis of the Study

H01: There is no significant difference in the attitude of primary school teachers before and after the training

Methodology of the Study

Population

The study was conducted in the Tehsil Adenzai, District Malakand, of Pakistan on public primary school teachers of grade 5th students. All teachers teaching to the fifth class at primary schools at Tehsil X, District M, formed the population of the study.

Sampling

All the teachers in primary schools teaching to fifth class' students of the Tehsil Adenzai, District Malakand. There were 195 teachers in schools who taught to grade 5, when the survey was conducted. Moreover, 141 responded to the questionnaire.

Procedure of the Study

The study used both descriptive and experimental approaches. During the 1st phase, a questionnaire was administered for finding out the teacher's attitude that supports physical punishment. In the 2nd phase, an experiment was carried out based on pretest and posttest design to measure the change after training in teachers attitudes towards physical punishment. An attitude scale was used for measuring the severity of teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment. The scale consisted of 41 statements, in which fourteen statements were negatively worded. Initially, the scale was written in English, and it was translated into Urdu by experts of Urdu and English. Some items of the scale were "Corporal Punishment helps in learning", "Students work hard due to corporal punishment", "Corporal punishment deters students from abuse", "Students are dropped out due to corporal punishment", and "It gives birth to lack of confidence in students". This scale was developed on a five-point Likert scale, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A score of 1 was assigned for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for undecided, 4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree. On negative statements, a score of 5 was given for strongly disagree, 4 for disagree, 3 for undecided, 2 for agree and 1 for strongly agree. On a sample of 40 subjects, a pilot study was conducted. Cronbach alpha for this scale was 0.94. The scale was validated by two subject matter experts. Opinions of relevant experts were incorporated for the validity of the research scale. Also, focus group discussions were also conducted at the end of the training, with teachers for finding their opinions about the discussed alternatives and issues involved in the implementation of alternatives in classrooms.

Data Collection

A questionnaire was administered to 195 teachers who taught to grade 5 students. Teachers who tended corporal punishment were explored. Permission was obtained from the provincial secretary of education to survey schools and training. When the teachers having a positive attitude towards punishment were identified, they were informed through District Education Officer (DEO).

Intervention to the Subjects

The DEO facilitated the researchers in conducting training, and provided space in a well-facilitated school. After that, those teachers were subjected to treatment in different phases. The training program was conducted in the next phase. Ten sessions, each of 2 hours, were conducted with the teachers.

Many presentations and discussions were conducted, using collaborative learning methods through trainers. Many topics, like, UN Convention on Children's Rights, ban on corporal punishment in the country, corporal punishment, its negative consequences students, drop out from schools, lack of confidence were thoroughly discussed. Then, alternatives to corporal punishment, assertive discipline, reality therapy, motivation of students, theories of motivation, reflective listening, classroom management tips, and gaining students' cooperation for applying rules or dealing disruptive behaviors were discussed in detail through interactive sessions with the teachers by the trainers. Four focused group discussions were also held to find

out if the discussed alternatives were practicable if they would apply them in class, and what sort of problems they would face in the implementation. After two months of the treatment, a posttest was given to the teachers for finding out the effect of a changed attitude toward the physical punishment of students.

Data Analysis

The first objective of the study was to investigate the attitude towards corporal punishment. There were 195 primary school teachers out of 202 primary schools teaching to the fifth class students. Scale about attitude towards students' corporal punishment was distributed on all these teachers. Of 195, 141 teachers filled and returned the scale. In this way, the response rate was 72% which was acceptable. Other teachers did not fill or return the scale because there is a ban on corporal punishment by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. Therefore, they made excuses for not filling the scale for attitude towards students' corporal punishment. In a total of 141 questionnaires, there were 36 (25.5%) teachers who had a positive attitude towards students' corporal punishment. It means that they favored corporal punishment. It also shows that corporal punishment is still in vogue, and these are the teachers who confess that they inflict corporal punishment due to different reasons.

Table 1

Mean Difference between Pretest and Post Test Scores

H01: There is no significant difference in the attitude of primary school teachers before and after the training

Tests	Mean	SD	t-value	df	Sig. (p-value)
Pre-Test	142.8889	12.68019	11.493	35	.000
Post-test	95.97222	19.476706			

P<.05

The pre-test and post-test analysis showed that attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment decreased (Pre-test Mean=142.88, Post-test Mean=95.97) p=.000. This means that training had a significant effect on the attitude of teachers. The second objective of the study was to find out perceptions about possible causes of corporal punishment in primary schools, investigate the possible hindrances in the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment, and for achieving this objective, focused group discussion was held.

Qualitative Data Analysis of Focused Group Discussion

Three focused groups discussion, 12 participants in each group, were conducted with the trainee teachers. The moderator was one of the researchers, while the researcher recorded the data. It

was found that 95 % of participants agreed that the alternatives, discussed during the training, were applicable. However, there were 3% percent of participants who did not agree. They said that there were certain other steps that must be taken for effective implementation.

Three teachers said, "If you teach 22 classes a day how you will be patient?" (P1, P5, P6). Similarly, some opined that "Parents do not play their role in educating their children" P12, p13, P14). It means that there are fewer teachers and a teacher is compelled to teach classes for the whole day which ultimately leads to fatigue, boredom, and loss of patience, thus he opts for the shortest path of controlling the students and that is punishment. Yet, others said that, "We have 70-80 students in one class. How we will use the alternatives?" (P1, P20, P36). It means that problem lies in the administration of the education system. They need to provide a conducive environment, where a teacher may feel at ease and apply alternatives instead of corporal punishment.

Most of the teachers opined that in many cases there was one room for 2 or 3 classes. A teacher endures a lot of pressure in schools which makes him short-tempered. Some of the teachers said that in many schools washrooms and other necessary amenities were missing and all these created extra burdens and worries for teachers. So, in the presence of all these issues, it becomes really difficult to use alternatives and ensures quality teaching and learning.

A few teachers were of the view that these lessons were not 100 percent practicable because of the poor environment of the children at their homes. They further said that children were punished by parents in their homes and sometimes even they recommended punishment for their children. Moreover, the parents of the students were uneducated. Therefore, it was of no use to teach them with love because they were habitual with corporal punishment at their homes.

Findings

The questionnaire was administered to 195 primary school teachers (Those who taught to grade 5), out of these subjects 141 returned the questionnaires. Out of these 141 teachers, 36 were such teachers whose score was at or above the median of the scale, thus they were labeled as having a positive attitude towards students' corporal punishment. There was a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test attitude scores of teachers towards corporal punishment because of training. The pre-test and post-test analysis showed that the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment decreased as indicated by Table 1 (Pre-test Mean=142.88, Post-test Mean=95-97). This revealed that training had a significant effect in changing the attitude of teachers towards students' corporal punishment.

The qualitative data about objective 2 showed that the majority of the teachers agreed that the alternatives are useful. Some of them showed their reservation regarding application in the classroom. They argued that overcrowded classrooms, more than one grade in one room, home environment, and over the burden of teaching load on teachers, lack of basic amenities were some of the reasons which hindered the effective use of alternatives in schools.

Discussions

The purpose of the study was to find out the attitude of primary school teachers towards corporal punishment, and found the effect of alternatives on the attitude of teachers. Thirty-six (25.5%) teachers favored corporal punishment. The current survey confirmed the claim that teachers punish students in schools. Similarly, a critical literature review of Hailu (2017) asserted

that the infliction of corporal punishment on students was the most common phenomenon of daily life. These findings also are in tune with the findings of Muhammad and Ismail (2001) who claimed that corporal punishment was still inflicted in Pakistan even though it had been banned.

This study aimed to find out the effect of training on the attitude of teachers towards students' corporal punishment. The results of the study showed that teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment of students significantly changed as a result of training which is in accordance with (Mirza & Ali,2014) that attitude towards corporal punishment can be changed through training. The findings supported the findings of Pennefather, Hieneman, Raulston, and Caraway (2018) who gave intervention to children suffering from Autism and their parents, and they found that there was the reduction in parental stress, increases in relevant knowledge, increases in child prosocial behavior, (4) decreases in hyperactive behaviors, and high levels of satisfaction with the intervention.

The teachers showed a negative attitude towards corporal punishment as a consequence of the training program as shown in the pre-test and post-test analysis. There was a significant difference in the mean scores of teachers before and after treatment. This showed that training could change the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment. The researchers inquired about the effectiveness of alternatives, it was found that the alternatives would be effective, but the application would need a conducive environment, decrease in workload, cooperation from parents and the availability of basic amenities in schools.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the current study it may be concluded that training can play an important role in changing the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment. There are certain practical issues that minimize or hinder the application of alternatives to corporal punishment, like the overcrowded classroom, lack of separate classrooms for different classes, an uneducated environment in students' homes, and basic amenities in schools.

Recommendations

The results of the current study provided some important implications for policymakers, curriculum development experts, management of schools and teachers. There is a crucial need to conduct periodic trainings for school teachers on the negative aspects of corporal punishment and their alternatives. Although, corporal punishment had been banned in Pakistan, however, there is an extreme need of highlighting the issue of corporal punishment in the policy documents, through media and curriculum implementation. For this purpose, consistent orientations and sensitization programs should be introduced and implemented for changing the beliefs of teachers towards corporal punishment.

This study had been conducted at primary level schools with a limited number of samples in one Tehsil Adenzai of District Malakand. Hence, the results of this study cannot be easily generalized to other parts of Pakistan due to major socio-economic, cultural and regional variations. However, the findings revealed that in spite of all the efforts, there were still many teachers who favored and practiced corporal punishment. Training may be the major source of change in the behavior of teachers towards corporal punishment. Future research is recommended for the replication of the results of this study in other contexts, using more robust methods of data collection and analysis so that more valid and reliable findings could be obtained.

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