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Effect of Corporal Punishment on Students' Motivation and Classroom Learning

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of corporal punishment on students' motivation and classroom learning. Research has indicated that behavior of teacher profoundly influences students' learning. It has been observed with great concern that teachers in Pakistani schools resort to corporal punishment to motivate students for classroom learning. Over the years this practice has resulted in reduced students' motivation towards learning.This study was purposefully designed to investigate this area of concern. For this purpose, the study attempted to find answer to the question that was there any relationship between corporal punishment and students' motivation and classroom learning. Using a correlation design, the study surveyed attitudes of a randomely sampled 250 teachers from secondary schools in Malakand district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. For data analysis, SPSS was used. This research studied the relationship between the following three main variables: corporal punishment as independent variable and student motivation and classroom learning as dependent variables. To examine correlation between the variables, ANOVA and Regression Analysis were utilized. Results of the study revealed that corporal punshment was significantly negatively correlated with students' motivation and classroom learning.

Keywords: effect, corporal punishment, student motivation, classroom learning

1. Introduction

Students who are physically punished develop negative attitudes towards learning. Even such students when develop into adult possess no empathy for others. Research has shown that children who are beaten up by their teachers learn aggression (Boser, 2001; Friedman & Schonberg, 1996). They develop low self concept and see aggression as a means to solve problems of life. Studies further indicated that corporal punishment intimidates children. They develop low self-esteem and show dejection and hesitation to participate in learning activities (Flynn, 1994; Brezina, 1999; Straus, 2003). This type of behavior has wider implications as it leads to bigger violence later stages of life (Patel, 2003). The use of corporal punishment inculcates a strong belief in the impressionable minds of students that force is justified to control unwanted or undesirable behaviors. Ultimately, this promotes the attitudes of children that use of force or aggression is an acceptable act in the society (Straus, 1991; Baumrind, 1996; Roos, 2003). According to Roussow (2003) students who receive corporal punishment show symptoms of dejection in studies, poor performance in the tests and also do not participate in the teaching and learning process enthusiastically.Morrel (2000) found that use of corporal punishment influences attendance of school children. Students remain absent from school and this situation of longer absenteeism leads to withdrawal from schools. According to Vally (1998) the effects of physical punishment of students develop more severe psychiatric and traumatic conditions in children. Students in such an environment consider schools to be an unsafe place and thus they avoid coming to schools. This type of attitude of students is the direct result of harsh corporal punishment and unsupportive learning environment where physical punishment is the norm (Gershoff, 2002; Kaur, 2005; Tharps, 2003) Attitude of students towards learning depends upon many factors such as classroom environment, teacher attitude, curriculum and resources. According to Daskalogianni and Simpson (2000) attitude towards learning means the pattern of students' beliefs and emotions associated with classroom environment. Hannulla (2002) found that students' performance, efficacy, motivation and achievement in different subjects are essentially related to their attitude towards learning.

Mitchell (1999) argued that students' attitude towards learning is closely connected to their academic success in that particular subject. The role of teacher in providing guidance to students regarding understanding of a subject is highly crucial and it determines the degree of the motivation of students toward learning of that subject. Gracia and Herrero (2006) found that teacher attitude and beliefs deeply influence students' attitude towards learning. In this regard this same writer further elaborates that the clarity of teachers' instruction deeply influences students' understanding of concept and their attitude towards learning in a subject.Swan, Bell, Phillips, and Shannon, (2000) argued that size of the class and its environment also determines students' attitude toward learning. In a friendly and spacious classroom environment, students take interest in the activities. Whereas, in an authoritarian and rigid classroom, student feel dejected and less actively participate in the learning process. Whiten (2007) found that commitment, care and help from teacher's side ensure student's conceptual understanding of a subject. Students who enjoy learning of a subject perform better than those students who do not. In this regard, the factor of enjoyment increases motivation of level of students. Gunnoe & Mariner (1997) articulated that poor attitudes of students in a subject and high anxiety are associated with attitude of teachers towards students and students' own attitude towards the subject.Cater and Norwood (1997) discovered that home environment, educational background of parents and society also some of the factors that influence the attitudes of students toward learning. Earnest (2004) pointed out toward the general public image of mathematics as a subject in the minds of students and teachers alike that it is a dry subject. Students do not take high interest in it.However, despite the difficult nature of the subject of mathematics, many students continue to like it and have relatively positive attitude towards it. In this regard, the role of teacher is highly important (Rice, 1987; Iqbal, 2003). Teachers can promote the interest of students towards learning by creating a friendly, motivating and interesting teaching and learning environment in a classroom, where students feel safe, encouraged and respected (Cohen, 1996; Ma and Kishor, 1997; Richards, 2003).

On the basis of the above literature review, the following framework was deigned to conduct the study.

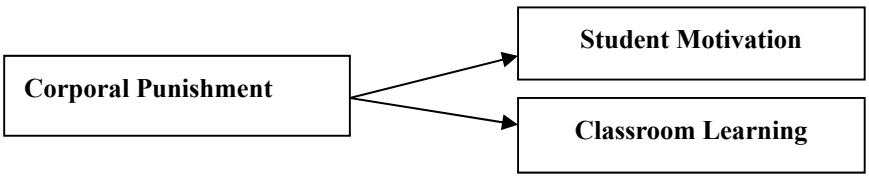

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

This current research framework draws its theoretical foundation from the Maslow theory of motivation. This theory places human needs in a hierarchical form. According to this theory, students cannot reach the highest goals of life until their basic needs are not satisfied. This study is based on the presumption that before preparing students for the classroom learning it is necessary to encourage them so that they are motivated for learning. Bandura (1977) also considers students' motivation necessary for classroom learning.

2. Research Objectives

1. To investigate the relationship between corporal punishment and student's motivation.
2. To investigate the relationship between corporal punishment and student's classroom learning.

3. Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between corporal punishment and student motivation?
2. Is there a relationship between corporal punishment and student classroom learning?

4. Research Hypotheses

H1. There is a relationship between corporal punishment and student motivation.

H2. There is a relationship between corporal punishment and classroom learning.

5. Methodology

Using a correlation design, this study surveyed perceptions of 250 secondary school teachers in Khyber Pakhtukhwa, Pakistan. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Statistical software SPSS was used to analyze the data. The data items consisted of three main variables with corporal punishment as independent variable and student motivation and classroom learning as dependent variables. To examine the relationship between the stated research variables, ANOVA was used along with Regression Analysis.

6. Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of corporal punishment on student motivation and classroom learning.

7. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between independent variable (Corporal Punishment) and the dependent variables (student motivation and classroom learning).

Table 1. Correlation between corporal punishment, student motivation and classroom learning

Variables	Corporal Punishment	Student Motivation	Classroom Learning
Corporal Punishment	1		
Student Motivation	-0.783*	1	
Classroom Learning	-0.674	-0.676	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 show that independent variable (corporal punishment) is negatively correlated with student motivation and significant at p<value of 0.01. Corporal punishment has also a significantly negative correlation with student classroom learning through Pearson correlation values and significant at p<value of 0.01.

8. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was measured by testing the research hypotheses. The results for each variable are discussed as under.

H_1: *There is a relationship between corporal punishment and student motivation*

Table 2. Regression analysis of corporal punishment and student motivation

Variables	R square	t-value	Coefficient	F-value	P value
Corporal punishment	0. 612	14.33	0.71	269.0	0.00

Table 2 shows that the value of coefficient beta is calculated as 0.71 that there is a significant relationship between the variables. The value of R-square is calculated as 0. 612 showing 61.2% variation in the dependant variable (student motivation) is explained by independent variable (corporal punishment). The model's goodness of fit is shown by F-value that is 269.0. Hence, hypothesis 1 was accepted that corporal punishment was significantly negatively correlated with student motivation.

H_2: There is relationship betweencorporal punishment and student classroom learning

Table 3. Regression analysis of corporal punishment

Variables	R square	t-value	Coefficient	F-value	P value
Corporal punishment	0. 641	17.33	0. 67	274.1	0.00

Table 3 shows that the value of coefficient beta is measured as 0.67 that there is a significantly negative relationship between the variables. The value of R-square is calculated as 0.641 showing 64.1% variation in the dependant variable (classroom learning) is explained by independent variable (corporal punishment). The model's goodness of fit is shown by F-value that is 274.1. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was accepted that corporal punishment was significant negatively correlated with student classroom learning.

9. Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of corporal punishment on student motivation and classroom learning. Major findings of the study are as follows;

1. Firstly, the study found that there was a significantly negative correlation between corporal punishment and student motivation.

2. Secondly, the study also discovered that there was a significantly negative correlation between corporal punishment and student classroom learning.

On the basis of the results of this study it can be concluded that students who are subjected to corporal punishment are less motivated toward learning than those who are encouraged and not corporally punished. Students who are punished and discouraged hesitate to actively participate in classroom activities. This greatly decreases their motivation level for learning. It is suggested that teachers should avoid corporal punishment to maintain discipline or to ensure student learning. Instead, teachers may look for other positive alternatives such as student engagement, field work, case study method and project based activities through creating a supportive learning environment. This may help in learning sustainability of students.

10. Recommendations for Future Research

This was a cross-sectional survey research. For this purpose, data were collected only once during the study. It used only questionnaire as a data collection tool. Furthermore, the study had limitedsample size, time and finance. It is suggested that future research may use large sample size and data collection tools. This will help ensure reliability of data and generalization of the findings to other setting.

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