



EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT ON STUDENTS' LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR

BEDENSEL CEZA VE PSİKOLOJİK UYGULAMALARIN ÖĞRENCİLERİN
ÖĞRENME VE DAVRANIŞLARI ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to test the effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment on students' learning and on their behavior. A pilot study, followed with experimental test, was framed in a demographically controlled environment on homogeneous variables at Punjab University Laboratory School, Pakistan over the period of six months. Thirty-two students of grade X were grouped into a Corporal Punishment Group (CPG) and a Psychological Treatment Group (PTG). 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.

Keywords: Corporal punishment, psychological treatment, behavior, learning.

ÖZ

Bu makale ile bedensel cezalandırmanın ve psikolojik uygulamaların öğrencilerin öğrenme ve davranışları üzerindeki etkisini test etmek amaçlanmıştır. Pakistan'ın Punjab Üniversitesi Laboratuvar Okulu'nda, demografik açıdan kontrollü bir çevrede homojen değişkenler ile altı ayı aşkın bir sürede öncelikle bir pilot çalışma ve ardından deneysel bir çalışma yürütülmüştür. X düzeyinde 32 öğrenci 'Bedensel Ceza Grubu' (BCG) ve 'Psikolojik Uygulamalar Grubu' (PUG) olmak üzere 2 ayrı grupta sınıflandırılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları ortaya koymuştur ki sürtüşme veya akademik ilgisizlik sonrasında bedensel cezaya maruz kalan öğrenciler, negatif davranış sergilemekle kalmayıp aynı zamanda akademik düzeylerinde de gerilemeler gözlenmiştir. Diğer taraftan psikolojik uygulama gören öğrenciler ise öğrenmeye karşı ilgilerini arttırmışlar, daha sıcak davranışlar sergilemişler ve okulla ilgili uzun süreli performanslarında iyileşme sergilemişlerdir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Bedensel Ceza, Psikolojik uygulama, davranış, öğrenme.

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INTRODUCTION

The paper investigates the effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment on students' learning and their behavior. Corporal punishment is a punitive act that inflicts pain. This includes hitting, slapping, spanking, or forcing a child to maintain an uncomfortable position.

According to Graziano (1992), a frequent punishment has more to do with a teacher's frustration level than with the child's misbehavior. Many cases of child abuse result from an escalation of what starts off as "low level" hitting or spanking. Most child welfare organizations have policies opposing the use of corporal punishment. Many educationists are against corporal punishment because of the affront to the child's dignity. Graziano (1990) stated, "If we are legally prohibited from striking other adults, why is it okay to strike a child?" The previous researches indicate that there are more reasons to oppose the use of corporal punishment and to support alternative disciplinary methods. In the long run, spanking does not work; it carries with it many negative effects. The long-term use of corporal punishment tends to increase the probability of deviant and antisocial behaviors, such as aggression; adolescent delinquency and violent acts inside and outside the school (Straus, 1991). One explanation is that after living with violence that is considered 'legitimate', people expand this to accept violence that is not considered legitimate. For example, violent acts that are considered legitimate include maintaining order in schools by punishing children, deterring criminals and defending one's country against foreign enemies. The "Cultural Spillover" theory presented by Rohner (1991) proposes that the more a society uses force for socially legitimate ends, the greater the tendency for those who are involved in illegitimate behaviors to use force to attain their own ends. Corporal punishment has been associated with a variety of psychological and behavioral disorders in children and adults, including anxiety, depression, withdrawal, low self-esteem, impulsiveness, delinquency and substance abuse (McCord, 1991).

In Pakistan, steps have been initiated to discourage the teacher against the use of corporal punishment. The Punjab education department announced that incidents of corporal punishment in schools would not be tolerated and stern action would be taken against teachers who indulge in it under the Punjab Removal from Service Ordinance 2000 (Daily Times, 2005). Academicians, psychologists and experts profoundly discourage the use of reprimand in the schools. They endorse psychological treatments — positive and negative reinforcement, time out, ignoring and tension decontamination through humor, token economy, response cost, over correction etc., to correct the negative behavior. It is assumed that increasing school violence contributes to heavy physical punishment. Despite affirmation of anti-punishment treaties by various countries, including Pakistan, in recent years, school shooting events and violence are on the rise. A horrifying school shooting incident in Germany left 14 teachers, 2 students and a security guard dead when an expelled

former pupil went on a shooting spree at his school in the Eastern German city of Erfurt (BBC News, April 26, 2002). Among many other such incidents³, the most recent shooting rampage at the Virginia Tech University left 33 people dead including the suspected gunman (BBC, April 17, 2007). The apparent causes are unknown. It was reported that the killer was an abnormal and depressed person who went on the rampage after having serious arguments with his girl friend. He was reported many times for his behavior towards the students and teachers. This leads us to an assumption that if the teachers had managed his ill behavior with psychological treatment, he would not have caused this killing episode. We further assume that such on-campus shooting incidents are the result of teachers' classroom strategy failure to handle such type of depressed students.

For the current research, thirty-two students of grade X were grouped into CPG and PTG (16 students in each group). The research investigates the question: what are the effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment on students' learning and behavior? The research endeavors to probe a) whether or not corporal punishment improves the students' learning and behavior; b) whether or not psychological treatment improves the students' learning and behavior; c) average scholastic performance of CPG and PTG. The following hypotheses are designed to test these assumptions.

HYPOTHESES

H1: Corporal punishment corrects negative behavior; that is to say, whether or not corporal punishment reinforces positive behavior.

H2: Teachers' classroom-strategies failure is the basic cause of school violence; that is to say, whether or not a wrongful classroom strategy creates a negative attitude among students, which shows itself in violence.

H3: CPG scholastic performance is better than PTG; that is to say, whether or not the Corporal Punishment Group scholastic performance is better than the Psychological Treatment Group.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many countries such as Norway, Denmark and Finland have banned corporal punishment in schools, considering it a source of school violence (Larzelere, 1999).

Previous researches pointed out that adults (parents and teachers) who were physically punished in their childhood are more supportive of corporal punishment than those who were not subjected to physical punishment (Hyman, 1988).

³ A 15 year old schoolboy took one of his fellow classmates hostage in 'Mull the Middle School' USA on January 13, 2006; a 25 year old student of Dawson College, Montreal killed a 20 year old student and left many injured on September 13, 2006; a 16 year schoolboy from Cored Lake High School shot dead his grandparents, 5 other students and a teacher on March 21, 2005, and so on.

According to Gallup Organization (1995), it was noted that the parents hit 74% of children under the age of 5 years. Ninety percent of parents spanked their children under the age of 3 years (Wauchope, 1990). The approval of these parents to physically discipline their own children leads to approval of such measures by school authorities towards their students (Bauman, 1998). In a legal principle derived from English law of 1970, teachers are considered to be authority figures that may act like parents to discipline the child just as their parents do (Conte, 2000).

Children are better controlled, learn more appropriate appreciation for authority, develop better social skills as well as improved moral character, and learn better discipline when they are treated with psychological techniques. Those with this belief often feel that our teachers do not know how to keep proper classroom order and for many teachers physical punishment is the only technique left to preserve academic control (Hyman, 1977). Climinillo (1988) proposed that "If corporal punishment is removed, that will trigger disciplinary difficulty in schools and will reduce teacher security". The current legal / religious opinion suggests that it is acceptable for parents to physically punish their children. It is thus fully acceptable for the teachers to act like parents (Conte, 1998). However, a majority of family physicians and pediatricians argue that corporal punishment does not work to correct negative behavior permanently (Bauman, 1998).

Previous researches discouraged the use of physical punishment to correct ill behavior in the schools, whereas some teachers are still forced to exact the toll of punishment to correct ill behavior in Pakistan.

METHODOLOGY

Thirty-two students of grade X were grouped into CPG and PTG (16 students in each group) on the basis of pre-test I and pre-test II. Data on targeted behavior were elicited, observed and recorded through the administration of tasks and observation of situations, while the potential influence of other variables was carefully controlled (following Bachman, 1996; J.D.Brown, 1996; Linn, 1989; Popham, 1981; Selinger, 1989). A pilot study, followed by an experimental test, was framed in a demographically controlled environment over homogeneous variables in order to test the effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment on the students' learning and on their behavior at Punjab University Laboratory School, Pakistan over the period of six months. Data are attributed initial construct-relevant meaning by the researcher classifying variations in observed behaviors according to the range of previously identified criterial values; the score is summed from observations in a way that may be clearly linked to intended interpretation (Angoff, 1984; Bachman, 1996; Brindley, 1998; J.D.Brown, 1996; Wright, 1999). Correct or wrong criterion was adopted from Makino (1980:124) and Cazden (1986:227). The reliability of scoring was also evaluated, in

order to establish the extent to which the score summaries represent systematic versus unknown or unintended sources of variability, by estimating classical and other sorts of reliability (Feldt, 1989; Hambleton, 1991; Orwin, 1994; Shavelson, 1991; Traub, 1994). In the pilot study, two students of grade X were studied from a group of 32 students on the basis of their equal grades in a test of English Literature & Grammar. Both of them were awarded physical punishment on creating a continual source of friction and obtaining low grades. One of the students left school, while the other student was given psychological treatment and results showed an improvement in his learning and behavior. Eventually, he developed teacher-friendly behavior and achieved above-average grades over the period of six months. Two resource persons were purposefully selected to teach CPG and PTG. The subject matter - Home Work (HW) and Class Work (CW), was brought under detail discussion to ensure validity. Individual scores and patterns of scores were compared and summarized in the light of various categorical and probabilistic properties. Behavioral predictions from the construct definition stage (e.g., in the form of hypotheses) were evaluated using various techniques (J.D.Brown, 1988, 1996; Hatch, 1991; Tabachnick, 1996; Woods, 1986). Mean, Standard Deviation and Student t-test was applied for the purpose of analysis at $p < .05$ as significance threshold. Any result in which the value of p is less than .05 is taken as statistically significant.

RESULTS

In the Pre-test I, the Mean Score of CPG (25.15) is smaller than PTG (26.15) as given in Table 1 below, whereas the Standard Deviation between the two Group variables is (2.32). In Pre-test II, the Mean Score of CPG (43.10) is smaller than PTG (45.45), whereas the difference of Standard Deviation (5.35) is recorded among the variables. PTG Mean Score (36.91) is greater than CPG Mean Score (25.30). But PTG S.D (1.06) is smaller than CPG Standard Deviation (2.32). The Post-test shows the Mean difference of (11.61) between CPG and PTG scholastic performance, whereas PTG shows (1.06) S.D within the group. This is less than the Standard Deviation of CPG (2.32) within the group. It is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Scholastic Performance of CPG and PTG

<u>TESTS</u>	<i>Group</i>	<i>No. of Subjects</i>	<i>Mean Score</i>	<i>Mean Score Difference</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>S.D Difference</i>
<i>Pre- Test I</i>	CPG	16	25.15	1.00	11.42	2.32
	PTG	16	26.15		13.74	
<i>Pre- Test II</i>	CPG	16	43.10	2.35	14.24	5.35
	PTG	16	45.45		19.59	
<i>Post-Test</i>	CPG	16	25.30	11.61	2.32	1.26
	PTG	16	36.91		1.06	

For convenience, Table 1 is presented in visual form in Figure 1 below.

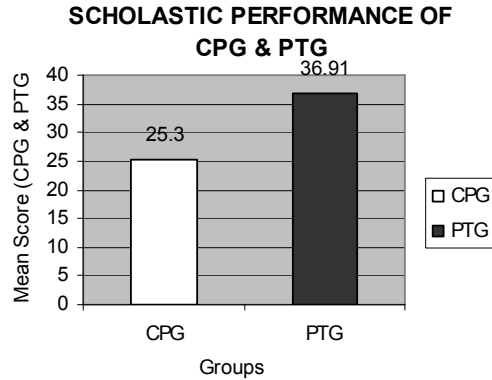


Figure 1: Scholastic Performance of CPG & PTG

Table 2 below shows that the percentage of CPG classroom participation is less than PTG. It also shows 95% PTG written tasks performance as compared with CPG 90%. The difference ($p \leq .05$) of PTG is of borderline significance with the CPG. The difference is due to the result of punishment fear whereas PTG showed overwhelming interest to complete its written assignments.

Table 2: Percentage of CPG & PTG Written Work and Class Participation

Group	Percentage of Written Performance	Percentage of Classroom Participation
CPG	90%	10%
PTG	95%	90%

Table 2 is presented in Figure 2 below.

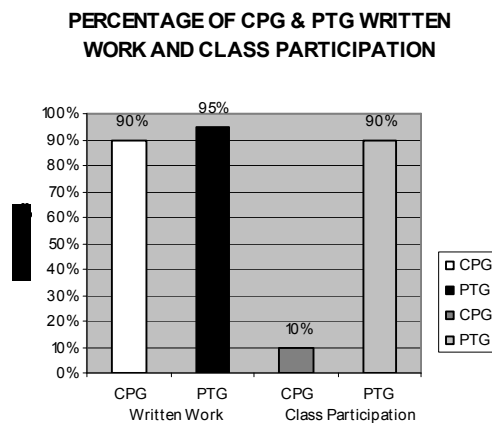


Figure 2: Percentage of CPG & PTG Written Work and Class Participation

DISCUSSION

Table 1, Figure 1 shows 11.61 mean score difference between CPG and PTG post test scholastic performance. It signifies that the Psychological Treatment Group's scholastic performance is better than the Corporal Punishment Group. The first hypothesis (Corporal punishment corrects negative behavior) of the study was rejected. It explains that psychological treatments correct the students' ill behavior. The second hypothesis (Teachers' classroom-strategies failure is the basic cause of school violence.) was accepted. It can be interpreted as meaning that on-campus shooting incidents are the result of teachers' classroom-strategies failure to handle disturbed students. The third hypothesis (CPG scholastic performance is better than PTG scholastic performance) was rejected. PTG was found to be filled with motivation for learning and producing its written assignments. CPG showed lack of interest in teacher's deliberate mistakes whereas PTG consciously pinpointed those mistakes. CPG did not show the courage to ask for permission to go to the washroom, get drinking water, or borrow ink, notebooks, pencils, and so on. CPG was unaware of its teacher's personal history while PTG showed curiosity to learn it. CPG was found to be planning to rebel against its teacher while PTG was observed to be seeking the opportunity to admire its teacher.

CONCLUSION

This paper analyzed the effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment on students' learning and on their behavior. A significant difference at $p \leq 0.05$ was found between the Corporal Punishment Group and the Psychological Treatment Group's scholastic performance. Corporal punishment strengthens ill behavior; this tends to school violence in the long run. It indicates that children who are subjected to corporal punishment are more likely to utilize violence in their family and society in future whereas psychological treatment streamlines the students' behavior for a longer period of time. Thus it opens the opportunity for learning, and it improves students' scholastic performance. Many students in Pakistan fear attending school and many of those who seek admission later leave the school due to physical punishment. It is assumed that later on they consent to enter the criminal world (that is; they become extremists, terrorists and offenders) to empower themselves in the hands of terrorism. If the teachers (who are obviously a catalyst for change) are stopped from using corporal punishment, it will bring a healthy change, contributing to a healthy society free from crime and terrorism.

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