

Effects of Mild Corporal Punishment on the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Kohat Division, Pakistan

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Abstract

This study was designed to explore the effects of mild corporal punishment on the academic achievement of students at secondary school level. Fifty students from the 9th class were selected as sample through simple random sampling technique. The study was experimental in nature, mild corporal punishment was given to the students of experimental group on showing poor performance but students of control group were not subjected to any type of corporal punishment during the experiment. Data was collected through pre-test and post-test technique. The results indicated that there is significant positive effect of mild corporal punishment on the academic achievement of students. It is very effective and useful in strengthening students' academic achievement. The findings of the study revealed that mild corporal punishment has a significant positive effect on the academic achievement of students.

Keywords: Mild Corporal Punishment; Academic Achievement, Secondary School Students

Introduction

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the use of corporal punishment in primary and secondary schools is a prevalent practice. Recently the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa published a statement in various daily newspapers regarding prohibition of corporal punishment in schools as the press exposed some incidents of corporal punishment in schools. Indeed, severe corporal punishment is an ineffective way for correcting student's behaviour and it should be banned but without mild corporal punishment, it is not possible to manage students' disruptive behaviours. Consequently, their academic achievement is disturbed and negatively affected by their disruptive behaviours. It means that mild corporal punishment is indirectly an effective and useful practice for the enhancement of student's academic achievement. But this topic is controversial among all stakeholders and educationists. Unfortunately, majority of the students do not receive proper training and discipline at home. That's why they are often disobedient and non-compliant which leads to disturbing and distracting behaviours that keep them away from learning what they have to learn in the classroom. Therefore, teachers often use corporal punishment to correct their disruptive behaviours in order to improve their academic performance. Corporal punishment refers to the use of physical punishment to correct student's behaviour. The term has been derived from the Latin word "corpus", which means "body". According to Straus & Mouradian (1998) "corporal punishment refers to intentional application of physical pain as a technique for the modification of behaviors". The application of physical force planned to cause pain, but not injury in order to correct or control the behaviour of a child (Straus and Donnelly, 2005).

Background of study

Mild corporal punishment refers to the normal physical force which is applied to produce slight pain without making any injury in order to control the classroom disruptive behaviour. Corporal punishment has been defined in different ways by different scholars. According to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2001), any punishment in which physical force is applied planned to produce some degree of pain or discomfort". Physical or corporal punishment is the application of force to produce pain without making injury to correct or control behaviours (Straus & Stewart, 1999). Corporal punishment is a type of physical punishment that is practiced deliberately to cause pain as retribution for an offence, or to control or reform an offender, or to discourage unacceptable and offensive behaviours. The term usually refers to systematically striking the wrongdoer with the

open hand or with an implement, whether in judicial, household, or educational situations (Online Free Wikipedia). Corporal punishment is those behaviors which do not cause significant physical injury (e.g., spank, slap) are regarded as corporal punishment. On the other hand, behaviors that cause to make injury (e.g., punching, kicking, burning) are regarded as physical abuse (Gershoff, 2002). It consists of variety of techniques or methods i.e., slapping, kicking, hitting, spanking, pinching, punching, choking, shaking, shoving, use of various things i.e., belts, sticks, wooden paddles, pins etc, painful body postures such as placing in closed spaces, use of electric shock, application of excessive exercise drills, or prevention of urine or removal of bench. Most of the children have experienced corporeal punishment by the time they reach adolescence (Gershoff & Bitensky, 2007; McClure & May, 2008).

A number of research studies advocate that corporal punishment is an ineffective and unsuccessful method to maintain discipline and has major destructive and damaging effects on the physical and mental health of individuals on whom it is imposed (Straus & Mouradian, 1998; Gershoff & Bitensky, 2007; Lynette, 2001; Greydanus, et al., 2003). Corporal punishment negatively affects the student's personality and academic achievement. Its frequent use creates adverse affects in the behaviour of an individual. According to Pandey (2001), corporal punishment is physiologically and psychologically destroying the lives of children. The use of corporal punishment not only causes physical pain but it also causes mental harassment, worthlessness, shyness, sense of helplessness, depression, inferiority complex, violent behavior, inflexibility, self-doubt, social withdrawal, lowered self-respect, tension and anxiety which result in reducing his self-confidence. Likewise, Pearlin (1989) stated that frequent use of corporal punishment may become a continuous hardship for children and possess greater potential to produce adverse and negative effects. Similarly, according to Straus (1991), the frequent use of corporal punishment increases the possibility of abnormal, disruptive and disturbing behaviors, such as aggression or violence; adolescent criminal behavior and aggressive acts inside and outside the school (Straus, 1991). Corporal punishment has been linked with a number of psychological and behavioral disorders in children and adults i.e., anxiety, depression, withdrawal, low self-respect, impulsiveness, criminal behavior and substance abuse (McCord, 1991). Research studies also reveal that corporal punishment is a factor that creates criminal behaviours i.e., truancy, theft, running away from school and behavior problems. In addition, it also causes anti-social behaviours i.e., dishonesty, cheating, threatening and bullying (Gove & Crutchfield, 1982; Straus, Sugarman, & Giles-Sims, 1997; West & Farrington, 1973).

Research studies also reveal that corporal punishment creates an environment of education that is unproductive, punitive and unfavorable. Children become victims, and anxiety or fear is introduced to all in such a classroom. Severe physical punishment does not enhance the behavior or academic performance of students inside the school. According to Hickman (2008), the states where corporal punishment is frequently practiced, their schools have showed unsatisfactory academic performance as compared to those states where corporal punishment is banned. Stephen et al. (2003) explained that corporal punishment is a destructive and damaging method to maintain discipline and is ineffective in creating an educational atmosphere in which students can flourish. Schools and teachers should be encouraged to develop positive behaviour supports instead of severe and threatening disciplinary strategies, which have verified to be an effective in reducing the need for harsh discipline and in supporting a secure, fruitful and productive learning atmosphere.

Contrary to the above discussion, it is also a fact that without corporal punishment, teaching learning process seems to be unfruitful and unproductive because without this practice, students adopt disruptive behaviours and become disobedient which adversely affect the overall classroom performance. The principal author is a secondary school teacher and has performing his duties for several years and it is his personal experience that normal corporal punishment is an effective and successful way of maintaining discipline and strengthening students' academic achievement. Majority of the students complete their homework and show excellent performance in weekly/monthly tests due to the fear of corporal punishment. That is why it is justified to say that mild corporal punishment should be used. Some research studies also reveal that corporal punishment is a useful method for maintaining discipline and correcting the misbehaviour of children. According to Gershoff & Bitensky (2007), corporal punishment is an effective form of correcting child misbehavior.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

1. to explore the affects of mild corporal punishment on the academic achievement of students at secondary school level; and
2. to suggest valuable recommendations for the enhancement of student's academic achievement at secondary school level.

Hypotheses of the Study

To achieve the above objectives of the research study, the following null hypotheses were developed:

- There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on pre-

test

- There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on post-test
- There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on retention test

Method

Population of the Study

All the students studying at secondary school level of public sector in Kohat Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan) constituted the population of the study.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to the only male secondary school students in Kohat Division. The study was also delimited to the students of Govt. High School Khurram (Karak). The study was further delimited to the students of 09th class. The study was further delimited to the subject of English for the experimentation. This English book is published by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board Peshawar for Class 09. The following 6 lessons were taught during treatment:

S. No	Title of the Lesson	S. No	Title of the Lesson
01	The Voice of God	04	Wandering Entertainers of Pakistan
02	The Holy Prophet (SAW)	05	Honey Bees
03	Hazrat Umar (RA)	06	My Bank Account

Sample & Sampling Technique

For the conduction of experiment, Govt. High School Khurram (Karak) was selected as Research Laboratory because the principal author is already teaching in this school. Fifty students from class 09th of the same school were selected as sample through simple random sampling technique.

Research Design

The study was experimental in nature therefore “Pre-test-Post-test Equivalent Groups Design” was used. According to this design, sample subjects are randomly allocated to experimental and control groups. Following is the symbolic representation of the design:

$$\begin{matrix} \mathbf{R} & & \mathbf{E} & = & \mathbf{O1} & & \mathbf{T} & & \mathbf{O2} \\ \mathbf{R} & & \mathbf{C} & = & \mathbf{O3} & & & & \mathbf{O4} \end{matrix}$$

Where

R = Randomly selected
 C = Control Group
 T = The experimental treatment

E = Experimental Group
 O= Observation or Measurement

Research Instrumentation

As the study was experimental in nature, the researchers chose pre-test and post-test technique as research instrument for the collection of data. To compare the performance of control and experimental groups, a question paper was prepared in the six lessons of English and then distributed among the students of both groups before the treatment. Likewise, another paper was prepared which was administered among the students of both groups after treatment. These two question papers were used as research instruments.

Data Collection

In order to collect data, the researchers administered a pre-test and then a post-test to the both groups. For this purpose, two question papers were prepared covering the six lessons of English. In this way data was collected.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, raw scores obtained from both test i.e. pre-test and post-test were presented in tabular form. Statistical tools, i.e., means, standard deviations, and differences of means were computed for each group. Significance of difference between the mean scores of both experimental and control groups on the variable of pre-test and post test scores was tested at 0.05 level by applying t-test. The following formulae were used for the statistical analysis of data:

Mean:

Mean of the data was calculated by the following formula:

$$\text{Mean} = \bar{X} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

Where

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{X} &= \text{Mean} \\ X &= \text{data} \\ f &= \text{Frequencies} \end{aligned}$$

Standard Deviation

Standard Deviation of the data was calculated by applying the following formula:

$$SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N}}{N - 1}}$$

Where N stands for Total no of frequencies/respondents

T-Test

For t-test the following formula was used to find out the value of t:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\left(\frac{SS_1 + SS_2}{n_1 + n_2 - 2}\right)\left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}\right)}}$$

Where

$$SS = \sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N}$$

Appointment of the Teachers for Experimentation

To provide teachers with equal teaching experience and qualification was a painstaking task for researchers. But after great efforts, the researchers succeeded in providing two teachers having equal qualifications and equal teaching experience. They were appointed to teach the both groups. Their qualifications were M.A English and B.Ed.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The purpose of the study was to explore the effects of mild corporal punishment on the academic achievement of secondary school students. The study was experimental type and sample was divided into two groups i.e. control group and experimental group on the basis of pre-test. Two classrooms were arranged for both groups. During the experiment, mild corporal punishment was given to the students of experimental group on showing poor performance but students of control group were not subjected to any type of corporal punishment during the experiment. This experiment was continued for eight weeks. After the completion of the experiment, the principal researcher administered a post-test instantly in order to examine the academic achievement of the both groups. For this purpose the English teachers prepared a question paper in the six lessons of English which were taught during experiment for the both groups. In this way data was collected, organized, tabulated, analyzed and compared. The whole process is described as under:

H₀ 01: There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on pre-test.

Table 01: Showing the significant of difference between the mean scores of control and experimental groups on Pre-Test

Name of Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	p-value
Experimental	25	62.82	1.12	0.31	0.654	0.516
Control	25	62.62	1.04			

Key: N= No. of Respondents
 SE=Standard Error

SD= Standard Deviation
 p = probability

Non-Significant ($p=0.516>0.05$)

df =48

Table Value of t at 0.05 Level = 2.011

Table 2 indicates that the calculated value of t was found to be 0.654 which is statistically non-significant ($p>0.05$) because it is less than the table value of t at 0.05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that “There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on pre-test” is accepted. It shows that the students of both groups performed equally on pre-test. It was further clarified by the following bar graph:

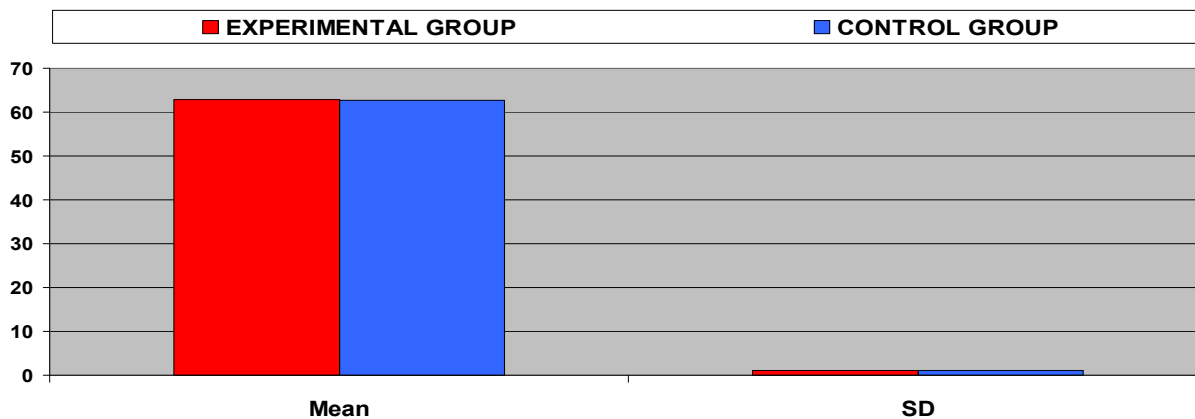


Fig.01: Showing the Mean and SD of Experimental and Control Groups on Pre-test

H₀ 02: There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on Post-test.

Table 02: Showing the significance of difference between the mean scores of control and experimental groups on Post-Test

Name of Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	p-value
Experimental	25	82.06	0.96	0.29	49.364*	0.00
Control	25	67.72	1.09			

Key: N= No. of Respondents
 SE=Standard Error

SD= Standard Deviation
 p = probability

***Significant ($p=0.00<0.05$)**

df = 48

Table Value of t at 0.05 Level = 2.011

Table 3 depicts that the calculated value of t was found to be 49.364 which is statistically significant because it is greater than the table value of t at 0.05 level. So the null hypothesis that “There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on post-test” is rejected. It clearly indicates that the students of experimental group showed much better performance as compared to the students of control group on post-test. It was further explained by the following bar graph:

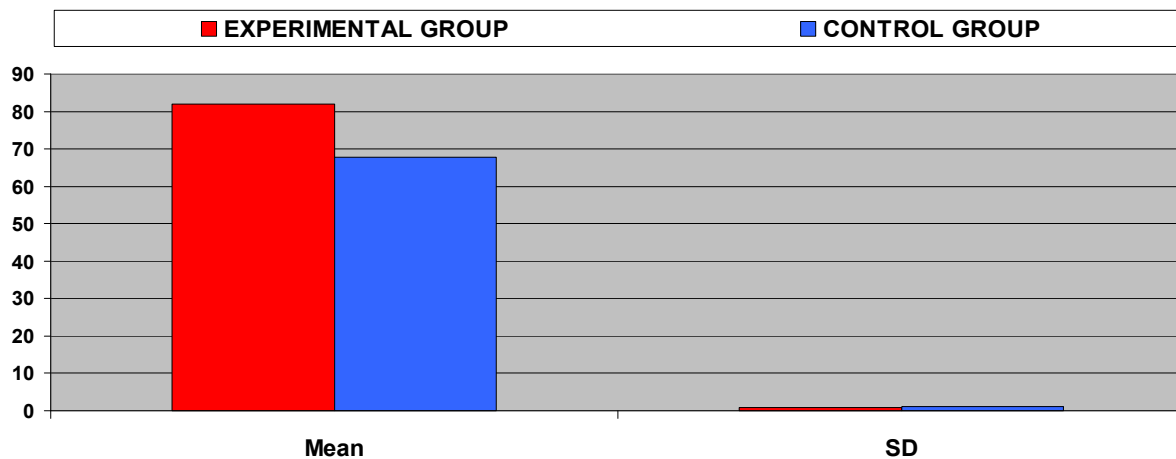


Fig.02: Showing the Mean and SD of Experimental and Control Groups on Post-test

H₀ 03: There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on retention test.

Table 03: Showing the significance of difference between the mean scores of control and experimental groups on Retention Test

Name of Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-value	p-value
Experimental	25	81.24	1.09			
Control	25	65.60	1.24	0.33	47.366*	0.00

Key: N= No. of Respondents
 SE=Standard Error

SD= Standard Deviation
 p = probability

*Significant ($p=0.00<0.05$)

df =48

Table Value of t at 0.05 Level = 2.011

Table 3 illustrates that the calculated value of t was found to be 47.366 which is statistically significant because it is greater than the table value of t at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis that “There is no significant difference between the performance of control and experimental groups on retention test” is rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that the students of experimental group showed better performance as compared to the students of control group on retention test. It was further elaborated by the following bar graph:

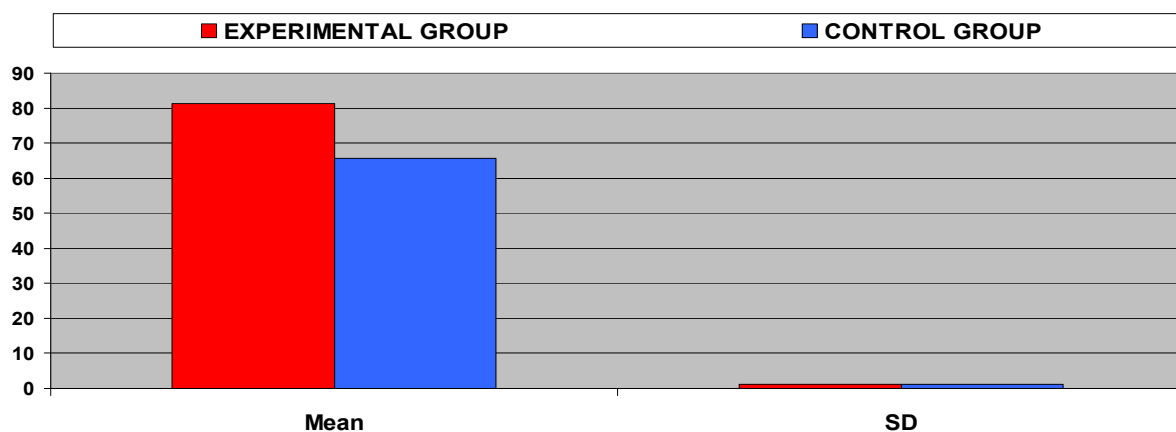


Fig.03: Showing the Mean and SD of Experimental and Control Groups on Retention Test

Conclusions

After statistical analysis of the data, it was concluded that there is significant positive effect of mild corporal punishment on the academic achievement of students which is against the findings of the other research studies. The findings of the study explicitly show that students of experimental group showed unexpected and

astounding better performance as they were subjected to mild corporal punishment on showing poor performance. Conversely, the students of control group showed poor performance as they were not given any kind of corporal punishment during the experiment. The students of experimental group showed significant superiority over the students of control group. In nutshell, it was concluded that mild corporal punishment plays a crucial role in strengthening students' academic achievement at secondary school level.

Recommendations

In the light of above conclusions, the researchers made some practicable recommendations which are explained as under:

1. As the study revealed that mild corporal punishment is very effective and useful in strengthening students' academic achievement therefore it was recommended that mild corporal punishment should not be banned but it should be allowed in secondary schools. Mild corporal punishment should be given to students on showing poor performance in daily, weekly or monthly test. In addition, it was also recommended that severe corporal punishment should be banned in schools.
2. Disruptive behavior of the students is an obstruction in the way of smooth instructional process therefore corporal punishment as a last option should be practiced for disruptive students.
3. Teachers are advised to be careful while giving corporal punishment. They are further advised to practice physical exercise drills as corporal punishment. On one side, physical exercise of the students will take place which plays an important role in their physical and mental development and on the other hand, their disruptive behaviour will also be controlled to some extent.
4. It was also recommended that this type of study should be conducted at elementary level in other districts and provinces of Pakistan.

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