

Analyzing Students' Behavior: Before and After Banning Corporal Punishment

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ABSTRACT

Corporal punishment is a form of physical punishment given to a child. It can happen at the school or at home and it is used by the teachers or parents, respectively. The reason on using corporal punishment is to bring discomfort to a child in order to lessen his or her bad behavior. In short, it is utilized in both school and at home in order to correct the misbehaviors of a child, and prepare them for their future. It is based on behaviorism approach, in which it believes that a child would lessen a behavior if it receives a constant punishment. The opinions in using corporal punishment as a tool to educate a child is divided. Some people believe that corporal punishment is still effective as it is before to correct the bad behaviors and wrongdoings of a child, and doing so will benefit a child in the future. On the other hand, there are arguments which sees corporal punishment as a negative tool imposing to a child. For social-cognitive approach, a child tends to copy the physical punishments he or she experienced during his or her childhood and imposed it to other child or playmates. And these children tend to become abusive or bullies. Corporal punishment is said to be negative when it turns to be a child abuse. And this happens when a child received constant punishment which is not aligned to his or her offense.

Keywords: Grit, Self-Regulation, Attitude Towards Research, Path Analysis, Short Grit Scale, Revised Attitude Towards Research Scale (R-ATR), Self-Regulated Online Learning Questionnaire (SOL-Q).

Keywords:

corporal
punishment,
discipline,
child abuse

Introduction

“The purpose of education is not about punishment; it is about being tolerant of the wrongdoings of a student and leading them to be on a right track.” (Jeehyun, 2022)

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child defined corporal punishment as a type of physical punishment that is done to

bring pain or discomfort to a child, but it should only be light. It is recognized as a pay for the offenses done by a child.

Corporal punishment can be experienced by a child at home or school. To discipline their misbehaving children, parents and guardians habitually use physical punishments.

This type of punishment is also common at school, in which, teachers who stand as second parents of the students impose corporal punishments whenever a learner commits a mistake inside the classroom or fails to comply with the school and teacher's rules and regulations. An article from the National Library of Medicine which was published by Gershoff in the year 2010 stated that there were two outcomes in using corporal punishment against a child, namely; the intended and unintended effects. Short-term goals and long-term goals are under the intended effects. In a short-term goal, corporal punishment is used against a child to stop their unacceptable behavior, to comply with their guardians' command, and/or to get their attention. An example of this is when a child does not want to eat his/her food, a parent will be worried about their child's nutrition and health. As a solution, they may use corporal punishment to bring some fear to a child and stop their unacceptable behavior. On the other hand, the long-term goal is used when a parent intends to reduce the unacceptable behavior of a child and increase the socially acceptable behavior. From the article, it is reported that parents usually use corporal punishment when their children are engaged in unsafe behavior such as playing with matchsticks, hurting others, and doing socially unacceptable activities, such as stealing money or things. However, it is also noted in the article that parents who usually use corporal punishment are the ones who tend to be abusive parents. In contrast to the positive effect, corporal punishment also has its negative side. It is the unintended outcomes, Gershoff (2010) defined it as the outcomes in which a parent is not aware of its existence. Gershoff (2010) provided examples such as physical injury and abuse, mental health problems, eroded quality of children's relationship with their parents, reduced cognitive ability, and increased adult behavior and antisocial behavior.

The ways of imposing corporal punishment vary from country to country. In the Philippines, some examples of this punishment include the following: hitting, pinching, cutting hair for males, making the student stand up, running, cleaning a classroom, and many others. Filipino teachers used to hit their students with an object such as a ruler or book, in their palms or buttocks. One of the reasons behind doing this is due to the student forgot his/her book/assignment. There are also instances when a teacher throws a board eraser at the students who are being noisy which causes the interruption of the discussion. And pinching students' skin in whatever part of their body because they fail to read, write, or use mathematical operations correctly. At elementary and high school levels, there are teachers that you might encounter whose focus is to teach learners the cleanliness of themselves and to build good character. That is why, when they see a male student having long hair, they would cut it with no direction or in an ugly way for you to have it done in a barbershop. The most popular is checking students' nails, if it's too long then a student will receive a punishment which is commonly in the form of hand hitting. These are just examples of many types of corporal punishments used by the teachers, to discipline their student's behavior.

It also varies from the perspective of the punisher and the victim. A study of Ramiro & Madrid (2022) was conducted which aims to analyze the socio-cultural perspectives of child discipline and child abuse in the Philippines. The result showed that parents, teachers, and children are aware of the differences between child discipline and child abuse. Child discipline uses physical punishments to teach children good moral values, shape their characters, and give a sense of right and wrong. On the other hand, a child abuse occurs when the use of physical punishments results in physical injuries and traumas.

Additionally, it is said to be a child abuse, if the type of punishment is not aligned to a child's gender and it is too much for what a child did.

With the positive intention of teachers and parents/guardians in using corporal punishments, some laws allow and support the use of it. As summarized in a website for ending violence against children which was published in the year 2017, these laws include the Family Code of 1987. It is stated that a person with parental authority over the child has the right to impose discipline whenever it is necessary. Child and Youth Welfare Code under Article 45, recognizes the right of every parent to discipline their children to build a good character. Article 74 of the Code of Muslim Personal Law states that in a parent-child relationship, a parent has the right to correct their children's misbehavior, to discipline, and to punish their child moderately. Another right given to a parent can be seen under section 2 of Rules and Regulations on the Reporting and Investigation of Child Abuse Cases, it states that the way of discipline made by a parent to his/her child that does not result in a physical or psychological injury would not be considered as cruelty if the intention is for the goodness of the child's behavior or attitude.

In the Iloilo, Philippines setting, 270 grade six pupils as respondents of the dissertation study were used in analyzing the efficacy of corporal punishment. It was found out that a majority of students (61.1 %) experienced physical punishment as a way to correct their misbehaviors (Sanapo & Nakamura, 2010). Two major types of punishment are identified; pinching and beating. Additionally, it was also found that their mother was the one to implement corporal punishment. And it varies to the gender of a student, and as expected – boys were reported to experience a more severe punishment. It is believed that this type of

parenting occurs based on the Filipino culture. Boys are expected to be the leaders of society; thus, they are trained to be strong.

Corporal punishment has been widely used across the world for a long time. It helps teachers in disciplining their students, it helps parents and guardians in disciplining their children, and it also helps other members of society like for example the prison guards, they also used the concept of corporal punishment to discipline multiple prisons. However, despite its effectiveness, various countries started to ban the use of this punishment both in schools and at home. The first country to ban corporal punishment at home was Sweden in the year 1979, followed by Finland (1983), Norway (1987), Austria (1989), and Cyprus (1994) as the fifth country to ban this kind of punishment. It is then followed by many countries. Meanwhile, Lambert (2021) listed the first two countries that banned corporal punishment at school. Poland was the first one, in the year 1738, then followed by Luxembourg in the year 1845. Then many schools across the world followed. In the Philippines, according to Geronimo (2015), there is no certain law that prohibits teachers and parents from incorporating corporal punishment as a way of disciplining a child. However, there is a bill passed by the House of Representatives in which the content aims to prohibit corporal punishment inside the house, classroom, in alternative care systems, workplace, and in other settings. Also, Senate Bill No. 1348 also known as The Anti-Corporal Punishment Act of 2017, aims to protect children from the said kind of punishment. But, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte vetoed a bill in which banning corporal punishment in the country. The said bill prohibits a child from being subject to any form of physical punishment that intends to bring pain or any kind of nonverbal act in

which a child will feel belittled, threatened, or ridiculed. The president believed that children should be protected from humiliating forms of punishment, however, he also believed that disciplining a child can be done responsibly (Parrocha, 2019).

Negativity of Corporal Punishment as Disciplining Measure

Various researches across the world focus on identifying factors and problems regarding corporal punishment. Published literature provides arguments which convinced as to why the use of physical punishment should be banned. The study made by Gershoff was further developed and analyzed by Smith (n.d.) and emphasized the negative effects of the use of physical punishment. One of the problems seen by Smith is the cognitive effects on the learners. Vygotsky's theory sees the importance of society to a learner during the process of development. He believes that the people in a child's environment would help him or her in obtaining knowledge. The concept of Zone Proximal Development (ZPD) tells that with the help of the "more knowledgeable other," a child would be able to do things that are impossible for him to do alone. Some researchers found out that social support is directly proportional to the academic performance of a learner, and it also contributes to the building of a student's self-efficacy. It may result in decreased self-confidence and perhaps limit their social growth making (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024). Looking back on the study of Smith, she found out that corporal punishment lessens the good interaction between the victim and the punisher. The outcome weakens social interaction and thus affects the academic performance of learners in a negative way.

Similarly, a study identifying the effects of corporal punishment on the academic performance of students was established.

It was found out that CP has a positive impact on the academic success of students and the implementation of classroom management, in the country of Swaziland. The purpose of giving punishments to students is to correct their misbehaviors, engage students in class participation, and help students to do their assigned tasks. However, despite its contributing effect, it was also found out that corporal punishment had a disruptive effect on the child's behavior. The study found that student's participation was impeded by CP, thus allowing learners to drop out of school. In analyzing alternative disciplinary measures such as the concept of modelling by Albert Bandura, teachers' productivity in teaching, the result of educational paradigm shift (learner-centered approach) (Natividad, 2022), parental involvement, understanding the different types of learners, planned ignorance of offenders and giving positive reinforcement, and banning of activities that will engage learners' motivation. Manual works are also included and these include the following: making them sweep the classroom, cleaning of school yard, digging pits, and making students cut grass. But in Swaziland teachers, point of view, corporal punishment is still the quickest method in disciplining learners.

Contributing Effects of Corporal Punishment

In the implementation of banning corporal punishment at schools, teachers and students were both impacted. There is research that tried to analyze the impact of the new law on the disciplinary strategies used by teachers. In Taiwan, there is a literature published by Lwo & Yuan (2010), which addressed the concerns of elementary teachers. The main concern of teachers is that it is hard to discipline students, with the banning of corporal punishment they might ignore a learner's misbehavior to follow the newly implemented rule. It is also important to examine the effects

of banning corporal punishment in schools on the persons who utilize this type of disciplinary style. In the case of South Africa, the effectiveness of alternative disciplinary was tested. After taking away the power of teachers in implementing corporal punishment, data from case study research said that teachers felt disempowered. They observed that students have no fear towards them, which results in showing them no respect for they know that their actions will not have any consequences against them (Maphosa & Sumba, 2010). Educators in the country viewed the alternative discipline measure as an ineffective tool. Banning corporal punishment intends to protect the child from developing physical and psychological injury. Paolucci and Violato (2004) identified the influence of corporal punishment in 47,751 students on the cognitive, affective, and behavior of a child. Further, they found out that CP does not negatively affect the child's development.

Despite the banning of corporal punishment in school, there are still countries that use it for disciplining students. In Kenya, a law that aims to protect students was implemented in the year 2001. It is also a country that supports the Convention on the Rights of a Child, which states that any punishment which involves violence is not acceptable. However, despite having these laws, schools in the country still use corporal punishment. The reason behind this attitude is that Kenyan teachers still believe that physical punishment is the most effective way of disciplining students, and the parents or guardians of the students agree with the utilization of the said punishment (Mweru, 2010). The result implies that teachers are ready to disobey rules implemented by their government if it is good for children. Another study was conducted in the same country, in which it studied the behaviors of both teachers and learners after banning corporal punishment. Results showed that

physical punishment has a positive effect on the discipline of students (Maina & Sindabi, 2016). In visiting students' behavior, students are found to be in discipline, teachers are having a hard time in implementing classroom management, there is poor academic performance in learners, and the teacher-student relationship is low. Also, the suggested alternative discipline measure was found to be very ineffective in disciplining Kenyan students.

Even though the banning of corporal punishment only intends to protect children from violence and abuse, it was found out that it also affects some cultures. It is clear to us that the culture of every country should be respected, no matter what. Zimbabwe is one of the countries in which their culture was affected by the banning of CP. They do not believe that there should be mutual respect between a child and the elder, instead, their culture taught them that children should respect the elders. And a way to do this is the use of corporal punishment. It was also found out that parents in the country did not agree with the implemented law against CP, and they advocated the continuance of using corporal punishment in school. The reason for this is that parents believe that physical punishment has immediate benefits and future benefits for their children (Gomba, 2015). Additionally, Zimbabweans suggested that their country should not just copy laws from other countries and implement them without thinking of their own culture. Instead, they argued that the country should work on the problem of corporal punishment to ensure its usage without harming children.

Social-cognitive approach (Bobo Doll experiment) and Revenge Seeking, as a mistaken goal of misbehavior

The concept of modelling by Albert Bandura can also be associated with the problems of corporal punishment.

Bandura as a social cognitivist, believed that individuals are influenced by the environment in which they belong. His experiment called the “BOBO Doll” explained the theory. There are two sets of groups of children, together with their parents participated. In the experiment, parents of children were asked to enter a room that was full of toys, one of these toys is a big doll named BOBO. The parents’ task is to be aggressive to the doll and apply physical punishments such as wrestling, punching, and beating the doll, while they are being watched by their children. The next stage of the experiment is to bring the first set of children in the same that they observed. As Bandura observed and expected the children’s behavior, they modeled what their parents did. Children kicked, punched, and became aggressive in the BOBO Doll. While in the second group of children, they are not exposed to any violence. When they entered the same room, they did not harm the doll, instead, they played with it like their friend or family. It then becomes clear that the environment of a child directly affects his/her behavior. The concept of modelling is true and pretty much observable in our daily activities. There are instances in which your child who has no idea about certain bad words because he or she is not exposed to them, will arrive at your house saying bad words. When you ask him/her where she gets that work, her response would be from her friends, playmates, or school. Another case is when you ask a child what she wants to be when she grows up, she will answer that she wants to be a teacher, because she likes her teacher and she wants to be like her. Or she wants to be a doctor, policewoman, lawyer, etc. just like her mother or father. As Aquino and Natividad (2023) posits, “education is viewed as a lifelong experience and a process of discovery that encourages students or children to welcome different perspectives” (p. 124). The point here is to understand how powerful the influence of individuals on a child’s behavior.

If students are exposed to an environment (school and home) in which corporal punishment is legally used as a disciplinary measure, there is a high chance that these children who experienced pain will, later on, be the punisher themselves.

There is literature that found that individuals who suffered and experienced severe physical punishments tend to be aggressive parents towards their children. They do things similar to what they experienced. The study of Bussman et al. (2019) is one of the literatures that has a conclusion that follows the idea of social-cognitive theory. The result of their study found out that a place in which corporal punishments are banned has a student that is non-violence. In places in which corporal punishment is still used despite the laws implemented against it, there are students who are observed to be violent. Similarly, the literatures published on the internet, implies that developed countries banned the use of corporal punishment in schools, homes, and other institutions. While developing countries still used corporal punishments and viewed it as the most effective way of disciplining students. But we should be mindful that the definition of corporal punishment for these countries is a strategy that is used to correct the misbehaviors of children and to lead them on the right path. Because its definition is often misunderstood by many, there are people who believe that corporal punishment is just a physical punishment given to a child to bring fear and pain.

In relation to the concept of modelling - in the field of education, there are four mistaken goals of misbehavior that a teacher can observe inside the classroom. One of these goals of a student is characterized by being aggressive, bullying, and violent. This attitude of a student is identified as being revenge-seeking. The hidden goal is to hurt others to save themselves from being hurt.

Learners possess this character and are said to experience being bullied, or physically harmed by their parents or guardians at their home, or bullied by their peers or friends before. To save themselves from suffering the same pain, they act tough and bully others so that people around them observe their bad behaviors would develop fear towards them (Kuehn, 2022).

Cognitivism and Operant Conditioning Approach

Despite the huge influence of the environment on a child's behavior, there is a certain field in psychology that explains how the human brain works. Behaviorism is a psychology of choice that states that the child's behavior is the product of his/her environment. However, behaviorism claims were rejected by cognitivism. Due to the lack of process provided by behaviorism, they failed to answer questions regarding the adaptation of behavior. Cognitivists explained that there is a process by which a child's behavior is developed. For them, it is not true that every activity a child observes in his/her environment will directly influence his/her behavior. When a child experience being beaten by his father and it brings so much pain, it is expected by behaviorists that the child would turn to be aggressive toward others or later beat his own children. In the cognitivist view, the child will realize how painful it is to experience corporal punishment; thus, he will not use it against his classmates/friends/playmates, etc. (McLeod, 2023).

Operant conditioning is all about giving reinforcement and punishment to a child to increase and decrease behavior, respectively. Punishment has two types in the theory, it can be either positive punishment or negative punishment. Positive punishment is adding something in order to weaken the bad behavior of a

child. Negative punishment is the process of taking a good and desirable thing away from a child with the same intention of decreasing the bad behavior (Ackerman, 2018). Operant conditioning is found to be a successful method in animals, insects, and humans. When B.F. Skinner experimented in a laboratory using rats, he found out that when a rat received pain in a certain area inside a box, the rat would stop walking in that area for some time. However, it will not stop to come in that area again. That was when he concluded that punishments do not stop a behavior, they only weaken a behavior. Applying the concept of operant conditioning in corporal punishment, the bad behaviors of students will be weakened for some time.

Conclusion

Banning corporal punishment aimed to protect children from being harmed by their parents or teachers, not only physically for it also intends to protect their emotional, social, and mental health. It would be hard for an individual to go to a place in which they know that they will be hurt. That is why it is not impossible for students who are physically harmed to quit schooling. Because a school's feature is to be conducive to learners, every student who attends a school should feel physically, emotionally, socially, and culturally secure. How would an individual bring out their best in every assessment provided by their teachers, if they are not feeling secure – that is why some researchers found out that students who experienced physical punishments tend to have low academic success. Lastly, how would we expect our learners to act with autonomy in a student-centered space if they developed a fear to the facilitator of their learning and to the school itself, it is the reason why student participation is being impeded.

However, implementing corporal punishment inside the school has a different purpose, it is not just to harm learners,

bring fear, or disrupt factors affecting the teaching and learning process. The purpose of education is not about punishment; it is being tolerant of the wrongdoings of students and leading them to be on the right track. They say that students who learn from their mistakes, and experiences are the best teachers. But, how would they know if there is a mistake committed or if they violated rules if there is no one would remind them? And how would they stop doing misbehavior if there is no intervention applied by the teachers? Teachers are said to be the second parents of the students - they show care, and love, and help learners reach their dreams. Due to their relationship with their students, it is normal for them to feel angry when the learners engage in wrongdoings. That is the time that our teachers use corporal punishment in order to remind students that there is something wrong on their part. Filipino teachers do not harm their students because they just want to, there are always valid reasons before doing that. There are instances in which teachers fight for their students against their co-teachers when there is a misunderstanding, they will transform into attorneys just to defend the learners whom they consider as their own children. If we are going to observe how Filipino teachers love their students, we can conclude that they are not enforcing corporal punishment just to bring pain, and fear, and invalidate students' human rights. Teachers are forced to use CP to save their students from going down the wrong path, habitually doing unacceptable activities, and maintaining their misbehaviors. The love of teachers for their students is not the type of love and care that are ideal, it is a love that is similar to a parent's love. In which involves the use of disciplined measures such as corporal punishment. Seeing their students achieve their dreams and live the life they wanted would bring so much happiness for the teachers, for they've been part of the process. Looking back to the experiences I had during my high school

years, I have a teacher who enforced corporal punishment. He will deliver the learning instruction with his paddle beside him. Anyone who forgot their assignments and cannot answer recitations will be paddled in their buttocks. He also cuts the male's hair if it is already too long. He is a great teacher, and I am living proof that he is good at explaining concepts. He always makes sure to deliver the instruction in a way that all of his students will understand, maybe he is using corporal punishment to those students who did not pay attention to the discussion and are not able to answer in the recitations. Since we are used to his teaching strategy, I observed that as time goes by, only a few numbers of students are not able to answer his questions – they already pay attention. And with the large number of students who were not doing their assignments during the start of the school year vanished due to the fear of receiving punishment.

The use of corporal punishment by teachers against students should not be viewed as a negative way of disciplining learners. It was successfully used here in the Philippines, and it is sad to see students' behavior towards their teachers after the banning of corporal punishment. How beautiful it is to bring back the time in which you can observe how respectful students are to their teachers inside and outside of the school. They possessed fear towards their teacher, but not in a way that affected their learning. The types of physical punishment used by the teachers vary from country to country. Here in the Philippines, the most common way is hitting students in their buttocks using sticks and pinching students' skin. It is not the same in other countries in which physical punishments experienced by students are spanking, pinching, pulling, slapping, and hitting. My point here is the use of corporal punishment can be a useful tool for disciplining students, and the banning of this discipline measure should only be implemented in countries with

severe types of CP. The same attitude in the people of Zimbabwe, I see the contributing effect of corporal punishment in school.

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