

# On the relationship between teachers' behavior and corporal punishment: Lessons, implications, and recommendations

Naseer Muhammad (1)  
Musarrat Shaheen (2)  
Muhammad Khalil Ur Rahman (3)  
Faiza Rahman (4)  
Fazal Haleem (5)

(1) Ms Scholar, Mohammad Ali Jinnah University Islamabad, Pakistan  
(2) Master of Education, University of Malakand, Pakistan  
(3) PhD Scholar, University of Malakand, Pakistan  
(4) Master of Education, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad, Pakistan  
(5) PhD Scholar, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan, Pakistan

## Corresponding author:

Fazal Haleem  
PhD Scholar, Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan,  
Pakistan  
**Email:** haleemfazal@gmail.com

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## Abstract

The current study investigates gender differences between teachers with respect to their behavior towards corporal punishment in government primary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Quantitative methodology has been employed for the analysis of the research problem. Consistent with quantitative methodology, survey strategy and random sampling technique was employed. Data was collected through structured questionnaires from respondents. Descriptive analysis was conducted on collected data. The findings reveal that male and female teachers both show positive behavior towards corporal punishment at government primary schools. However, male teachers show more positive behavior than female teachers towards corporal punishment which implies that female teachers should be appointed at the primary school level in preference to men who engage in corporal punishment, in order to provide a healthy and free from corporal punishment learning environment for students.

**Key Words:** Corporal punishment, teacher behavior, Male and female teachers, primary schools, Pakistan

## Introduction

Education plays a very important role in the development of new nations. The purpose of education is not to domesticate but to liberate the human mind. Notably, all the developed nations in the world have initially developed their educational systems and social security. It is essential for a successful educational system to develop policies, practices, and procedures aligned to each other from top to bottom. In terms of policies in the contemporary world, the primary concern of every nation is the economic development followed by respective ideology such as, regional, national, and international interests. The underlying policies correspond to structures controlling and regulating educational practices in a given society. Educational practices are often imposed by administrative and academic representatives in a specific educational institution. The perceptions of both learners and teachers regarding policies and practices have been a subject matter of research across the domain of educational psychology in the recent years.

The aim of this research is to investigate the perception of learners regarding the behavior of male and female teachers towards corporal punishment in government primary schools at district Mardan, KPK, Pakistan. This research is important in highlighting the level, type, and extent of corporal punishment in the government schools in the targeted population of the learners in their respective area. The research is important in bringing into

consideration such inhumane and outdated practices in a remote and economically underprivileged area coping with the existing deteriorating educational condition of the common people. This research is also important in describing the lack of professional education and training of the teachers towards awareness of psychological developments in students.

The researcher employed quantitative research methodology to present the result of the present study. In this regard, quantitative data is collected from the respondents through structured questionnaire and the respective data is analyzed in terms of means, variance, and standard deviation via SPSS software.

## Literature review

This section is divided into three sub-sections i.e. review of related literature on corporal punishment in the world and review of literature related to corporal punishment in Pakistan, and conceptual framework.

### Corporal Punishment

The review of literature on corporal punishment suggests that violence ultimately generates violence. According to Nasr (2004), victims of corporal punishment exhibit violence towards teachers and other students. Specifically, he notes that 58% of students open to corporal punishment are those who show more violence in schools than other students. These violent acts include damage to school property, writing on walls and beating other fellows. The proponents of corporal punishment argue that it is used to control the behavior and maintain discipline in the schools. Similarly, Shehab (2004) argues that the majority of students fail their subjects and drop out from schools due to corporal punishment. Apart from that physically punishing students out of the class also make the students escape from school before the due time (Zayed & Nasr, 2004).

According to a report of UNICEF (2002), an increasing number of school children experience corporal punishment. Zayed (2007) in his study confirms that 90% of his study sample experienced beatings at home and 42% of his study samples confirmed corporal punishment in their respective schools in Egypt. Moreover, El Wady (2010) reveals that no positive actions are taken against teachers who practice corporal punishment in schools by the administration. In addition, Jehle (2004) states that on an international level parents and teacher who had previously received corporal punishment are highly likely to approve the use of it on other children. According to National Criminal Magazine (2007, Asian students experience more violence than students in central Europe.

### Corporal Punishment in Pakistan

On corporal punishment in Pakistan, the study of Shaukat (2013) reveals that 20% of teachers and 40 % of parents showed strong approval for mild corporal punishment in the school. However, the practice of mild corporal punishment has been partially approved by 40% of teachers and

38% of parents respectively. Similarly, strong support for justification of corporal punishment has been exhibited as evidence by 75% of teachers and 84% of parents. In the same vein, 85% of parents and 65% of teachers suggested corporal punishment for stealing and violations of school's rules and regulations respectively. Moreover, no harmful effects of corporal punishment on students, is believed by 20% of teachers strongly and 31% partially agreed. From the students' perspective, 24% and 22% of students admitted having received corporal punishment via stick or ruler, and slaps in the face or head respectively.

In a survey conducted on students between the ages of 12 to 17 years during October, 2013 and March, 2014, it has been reported that 44% of students have witnessed corporal punishment at the hands of their teachers in the last six months. It has been also be reported that out of all such incidents of corporal punishment reported to 20% of parents and 18% of teachers, no action has been taken in 66% of cases. The teachers and parents in the survey reported that corporal punishment is on the decline in Pakistan. Nevertheless, the students reported that it is still in practice against those who commit mistakes. Furthermore, the teachers exhibited belief in corporal punishment for academic achievement amongst the students (Plan International, 2014)

Shaukat (2013) addresses the issues of high school dropouts in Pakistan. She states in the light of the report of the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) that 35,000 students approximately drop out of high schools due to corporal punishment in Pakistan. Bari (2012) comments on the results of a study published in a report (Child Rights Movement Punjab, 2013). According to her, 89% of public and private schools in Punjab province are practicing corporal punishment against the students through their teaching staff. The frequency of corporal punishment was highest in public schools, followed by private schools and then religious madrasas. Similarly, Kundi (2012) reports a survey conducted in KPK province by Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (2011), it is reported that 76% parents in districts Peshawar, Swabi, Nowshera, Charsada and Mardan districts strongly agreed on corporal punishment.

### Corporal punishment in KPK Pakistan

Despite a ban on corporal punishment by the KP government, it still prevails in the practice in the schools. Study conducted by Muhammad & Ismail (2001) reveals that the corporal punishment inclination among school heads is still high as evidenced by 57.3% heads of school who showed approval for corporal punishment. However, 41.3% of head of teachers considered corporal punishment unnecessary. On the part of parents, 40.6% and 29.5% parents approved corporal punishment for facilitating learning, and maintaining discipline respectively. On the other hand, 26.8% think corporal punishment as a wrong practice but inevitable. Although 78.1% of parents reported corporal punishment in school that is confirmed by a mere 40% of heads of school. This implies a deliberate attempt of under-reporting of corporal punishment.

Muhammad & Ismail (2001) report that school discipline, learning facilitation, disobedience, and character building motives induce teachers to inflict corporal punishment. Similarly, disinterest in studies, use of abusive language, misbehavior, fighting, and skipping classes are identified as reasons for infliction of corporal punishment (Save the Children & UNICEF, 2005). Moreover, it reports other factors responsible for inflicting corporal punishment include lack of facilities, culture, vague law, and abiding by sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The practice of corporal punishment is induced to discipline and correct the behavior of children. It is considered as accepted practice by parents, children and adults provided it is done for a good purpose. The support for corporal punishment of some religious scholars make parents teach their children to believe that corporal punishment is aimed at their betterment therefore should be accepted (Save the Children & UNICEF, 2005). Even the prior report of UNICEF (2001) revealed the prevalence and acceptance of corporal punishment in Pakistan. Many religious scholars, particularly at religious schools, have been reported to misquote some sayings of Muhammad (PBUH), for instance, forgiving the use of violence against children. On the contrary, they forget other related sayings of Muhammad (PBUH), for instance, the sayings that call for treatment of children with love and care.

Overload of teaching could be one possible reason that induces corporal punishment. This is evidenced by the state of under-staffed schools and increased strength of class size, with sometimes more than 100 students per class (Save the Children & UNICEF, 2005). Some shocking incidents have been reported by Muhammad & Ismail (2001) about the extreme corporal punishment. For instance, rendering unconscious, receiving stitches on severe cuts, fractured hands, and broken teeth etc. Overall, they noted 74 out of 630 parents reported incidents of severe corporal punishments. Similarly, Save the Children & UNICEF (2005) report that 3,582 students complained/ admitted that they had been punished severely resulting in serious injuries. More to the point, Cheema (2007) reported that two students died and eighteen received serious injuries due to corporal punishment in school.

## Conceptual framework

In this section, the variable of the framework and related context are defined and discussed. These concepts are as under:

### Primary School Level

Primary schooling in Pakistan corresponds to the first five grades of the child learners. A successful completion of primary education leads to a middle school (6th - 8th grade), or high school (6th-10th grade). The age of students in primary school varies between 5-8 years in the start and 10-13 years in Pakistan. Boys' primary schools are exclusively for boys and they are administrated by male staff whereas girls primary schools are solely for girls and these schools are run by female staff in the public sector in Pakistan.

### Corporal Punishment

In educational psychology in general and in the context of the present study in particular, corporal punishment is referred to as the utilization of force to inflict discomfort or pain for the correction, discipline, and control of a student. Physical coercion is initiated through various means i.e. hitting the student with an object like a stick or ruler, hitting the student with hand over face or other parts of the body, shaking the students, kicking the students and using all other painful ways.

### Behavior

In the general sense, behavior can be defined as the way a person behaves or functions in a particular situation. In the context of the present study behavior refers to the manner/function of teachers in the affairs of schooling the children such as, correcting, disciplining and improving the academic situation of the students.

## Methodology

This section briefs the design of the study, target population, sample, measurement instrument, and data collection technique followed by validity and reliability of the data.

### Design of the Study

The aim of the present study was to analyze gender differences of the teachers in relation to their behavior towards corporal punishment in public primary schools of district Mardan region, KPK, Pakistan. The present study incorporates quantitative methodology for the analysis of the research problem under consideration. The present study utilizes survey methodology. Through random sampling technique, data is collected through questionnaire and then analyzed statistically in terms of describing means, variance and standard deviation as to describe the frequency of the different variable.

### Population

The population of the current study comprises =learners from government primary schools in Mardan region, KPK, Pakistan. In this regard, five males and five females' primary schools are selected for data collection.

### Sample and Participants

The researcher has utilized random sampling technique for the collection of data from the respondents. The participants for the present study were 200 learners from 5 male and 5 female government primary schools in district Mardan, KPK, Pakistan.

### Instrumentation for measuring behavior of teachers regarding inflicting corporal punishment

For the purpose of data collection about the behavior of teachers regarding infliction of corporal punishment, a standardized scale is used namely scale for measuring behavior of teachers regarding inflicting corporal punishment. This scale has also been used by Ali (2012) for measuring teachers' behavior regarding inflicting corporal punishment at secondary level.

**Data Collection**

Data has been collected from learners through structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section of the questionnaire accounts for the demographic information of the students. The second section of the questionnaire targets the demographic information of the teacher and the school where she/he is teaching. The third section of questionnaire provides the statements regarding the behavior of the teachers towards corporal punishment. The students are asked to tick amongst sometimes, always and never in front of 12 statements/questions.

**Validity**

The scale has been already validated by seven subject experts having qualifications of PhD.

**Reliability**

The Cronbach alpha for this scale is 0.83 that indicates acceptable level of reliability.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher has analyzed the data in terms of percentages, means, variance and standard deviation as to describe the frequency of various items in the questionnaire statistically. The results are then presented for discussion.

## Results and Discussion

**Analysis of Statement 1**

Statement 1 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through slapping.

Table 1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	56	28.0	28.0	28.0
Sometimes	143	71.5	71.5	99.5
Always	1	.5	.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 1 shows that .5% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by slapping while 71.5% were of the view that they were sometimes corporally punished through slapping, while only 28% said that they had always been punished through slapping.

**Analysis of Statement 2**

Statement 2 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through beating with stick.

Table 2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	107	53.5	53.5	53.5
Sometimes	93	46.5	46.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 2 shows that 53.5% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by beating with stick while 46.5% were of the view that they were sometimes corporally punished through beating with a stick.

**Analysis of Statement 3**

Statement 3 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through kicking.

**Table 3**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	199	99.5	99.5	99.5
Sometimes	1	.5	.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 3 shows that 99.5% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by kicking while 0.5% were of the view that they were sometimes corporally punished through kicking.

**Analysis of Statement 4**

Statement 4 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through blowing/punching.

**Table 4**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	196	98.0	98.0	98.0
Sometimes	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 4 shows that 98% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by blowing/punching while 2% were of the view that they were sometimes corporally punished through blowing/punching.

**Analysis of Statement 5**

Statement 5 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through pulling hair

**Table 5**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	198	99.0	99.0	99.0
Sometimes	2	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 5 shows that 99% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by pulling hair while 1% were of view that they were sometimes corporally punished through pulling hair.

**Analysis of Statement 6**

Statement 6 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through pulling ears.

**Table 6**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	132	66.0	66.0	66.0
Sometimes	68	34.0	34.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 6 shows that 66% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by pulling ears while 34% were of view that they were sometimes corporally punished through pulling ears..

**Analysis of Statement 7**

Statement 7 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through "Murgha banana": a stress position, assuming the position of a cock/rooster.

**Table 7**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	114	57.0	57.0	57.0
Sometimes	86	43.0	43.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 7 shows that 57% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by Murgha banana (assuming the position of a cock). While 43% were of view that they were sometimes corporally punished through Murgha banana (assuming the position of a cock).

**Analysis of Statement 8**

Statement 8 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through being made to stand and stretching their arms upwards.

**Table 8**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never	140	70.0	70.0	70.0
Sometimes	60	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 8 shows that 70% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by being made to stand and stretching their arms upwards while 30% were of view that they were sometimes corporally punished through making to stand and stretching their arms upwards.

**Analysis of Statement 9**

Statement 9 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through standing on the bench and facing the class.

**Table 9**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	199	99.5	99.5	99.5
	Sometimes	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 9 shows that 99.5% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by standing on the bench and facing the class, while 0.5% were of view that they were sometimes corporally punished through Standing on the bench and facing the class.

**Analysis of Statement 10**

Statement 10 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through making sit-stand

**Table 10**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	127	63.5	63.5	63.5
	Sometimes	73	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 10 shows that 63.5% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by making them sit-stand while 36.5% were of view that they were sometimes corporally punished through making them sit-stand.

**Analysis of Statement 11**

Statement 11 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through asking two students to continuously slap each other on face.

**Table 11**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	199	99.5	99.5	99.5
	Sometimes	1	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

**Discussion**

Table 11 shows that 99.5% of the respondents were of the view that they had been never punished by asking two students to continuously slap each other on face. While .5% were of view that they were sometimes corporally punished through asking two students to continuously slap each other on face.

## Analysis of Statement 12

Statement 12 shows the responses of the respondents about punishment through Pushing or shaking.

**Table 12**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid never	200	100.0	100.0	100.0

## Discussion

Table 12 shows that 100% of the respondents were of the view that they had never been punished by Pushing or shaking

## Summary of Findings

The present study focused on the behavior of male and female teachers towards corporal punishment in government primary schools situated in district Mardan, KPK, Pakistan. Following is the summary of findings of the study:

1. 5% percent of the respondents had never been punished by slapping while 71.5% were sometimes corporally punished through slapping. On the other hand, 28% had never been punished through slapping.
2. 53% of the respondents had never been punished by beating with stick while 43.5% were sometimes corporally punished through beating with stick.
3. 99.5% of the respondents had never been punished by kicking while 0.5% were sometimes corporally punished through kicking.
4. 98% of the respondents had never been punished by blowing/punching while 2% were sometimes corporally punished through blowing.
5. 99% of the respondents had never been punished by pulling hair while 1 % were sometimes corporally punished through pulling hair.
6. 66% of the respondents had never been punished by pulling ears while 34% were sometimes corporally punished through pulling ears.
7. 57% of the respondents had never been punished by 'murgha banana' (a stress position assuming the position of a cock) while 43 % were sometimes corporally punished through 'murgha banana'.
8. 70% of the respondents had never been punished by making them stand and stretching their arms up while 30 % were sometimes corporally punished through being made to stand and stretching your arms up.
9. 99.5% of the respondents had never been punished through standing on the bench and facing the class while 0.5% were sometimes corporally punished through standing on the bench and facing the class.
10. 63.5% of the respondents had never been punished by being made to sit-stand while 36.5% were sometimes corporally punished through being made to sit-stand.
11. 99.5% of the respondents had never been punished by asking two of the students to continuously slap each other on face while 0.5% were sometimes corporally punished through, asking two of the students to continuously slap each other on the face.
12. 100% of the respondents had never been punished by pushing or shaking.

## Descriptive Statistics for Measures

	Statement 1	Statement 2	Statement 3	Statement 4	Statement 5	Statement 6	Statement 7	Statement 8	Statement 9	Statement 10	Statement 11	Statement 12
N Valid	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.7250	1.4650	1.0050	1.0200	1.0100	1.3400	1.4300	1.3000	1.0050	1.3650	1.0050	1.0000
Std. Deviation	.45872	.50003	.07071	.14035	.09975	.47490	.49632	.45941	.07071	.48264	.07071	.00000

## Conclusion

The study concludes that irrespective of gender both males and females tend to employ corporal punishment. However, the gender seems to moderate the relationship between male and female teachers' behavior towards corporal punishment as male teachers exhibit more inclination towards corporal punishment. This implies that female teachers should be appointed at the primary school level in preference to men who engage in corporal punishment to foster a healthy and corporal-punishment-free learning environment to school children.

## Recommendations

On the basis of the research findings in the present study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. It is recommended that female teachers should be appointed at primary level as they show little or no tendency towards corporal punishment.
- ii. The education department should devise an explicit policy on corporal punishment and other humiliating treatment of learners.
- iii. The education department should also devise a policy on implementing the legislative laws against corporal punishment in both public and private schools.
- iv. Guidance and counseling committees should be introduced in the primary schools instead of corporal punishment that should give advice and study the psychological problems of students.
- v. The teacher training curriculum should include modules on the negative effects of corporal punishment on the mental and psychological development of children. Teachers should also be trained in alternative method of disciplines.
- vi. The teacher should acquire knowledge about modern teaching methods to provide healthy environment to the students free from corporal punishment.

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