

# Physical Punishment and Psychological Treatment on Students' Learning and Behavior

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## Abstract

This research aimed at discussing the side of the effective physical punishment and the psychological treatment on students' learning and behavior. A pilot study, followed with experimental test, was framed in a demographically controlled environment on homogeneous variables at AL-Rai schools in Jordan, over the period of six months. Sixty-three students of grade 5 were grouped into a Physical Punishment Group (PPG) and a Psychological Treatment Group (PTG). It was found that the students who were conducted to physical punishment began to behave negatively 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:** Physical punishment, psychological treatment, behavior.

## 1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment of students' learning and behavior. Corporal punishment is penal act that follows pain, including hitting, slapping, spanking, or forcing a child to maintain an uncomfortable position.

A frequent punishment According to Graziano (1992) has more to do with a teacher's frustration level than with the child's misbehavior. Many cases of child abusing result from development 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 pointed out that there are more reasons opposing the use of corporal punishment and supporting alternative punitive 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 perverse and antisocial attitudes, such as aggression; Teenagers tendency 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. Rohner presents The "Cultural Spillover" theory (1991), proposing that the more society uses force for socially legitimate ends, the greater tendency for those who are involved in illegitimate attitudes 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 Jordan, the teachers have been initiated through steps to discourage against the use of corporal punishment. The Amman private 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 (AL-Dstoor, 2005). Academicians, psychologists and experts profoundly discourage the use of rebuke in the schools. They agree psychological treatments V 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 the reason of increasing school violence is the heavy physical punishment. Despite affirmation of anti-punishment treaties by various countries, including Jordan, 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 incidents, 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, which leads us to a presumption that if the ill behavior had been managed by teacher with psychological

treatment, he would not have caused this killing accident. We further assuming that such on-campus shooting incidents are the result of teachers 'classroom strategy failure to handle such type of depressed students.

## 1.2 Problem of the study

For analyzing the problem of the study, thirty-two students of grade X were grouped into CPG and PTG (16 students in each group). The research investigates the question:

1. What are the effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment on students' learning and behavior?
2. Does corporal punishment improve the students' learning and behavior?
3. Does psychological treatment affects the students' learning and behavior positively?

## 1.3 Study 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 reason of school violence; that is to say, whether or not a Illegal classroom strategy creates a negative behaviors 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.

## 1.4 Literature Review

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

Previous researches pointed out those 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). According to Gallup Organization (1995), it was indicated that the parents hit 74% of children under the age of 5 years, and children under the age of three years spanked by Ninety percent of parents (Wauchope, 1990).

The approval of these parents to physically discipline their own children leads to approval of such measures by school institutions towards their students (Bauman, 1998). In a legal principle derived from English law of 1970, teachers are considered as authority figures that may act like parents disciplining the child just as their parents do (Conte, 2000).

Children are better controlled, learning more appropriate appreciation for authority, developing better social skills as well as improved moral character, and learning better discipline when they 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 use working to correct negative behavior permanently (Bauman, 1998).

Previous researches disagree 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 Jordan.

## 1.5 Study 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 a tentative, 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 AL-Rai schools in Jordan over the period of six months. Data are

attributed initial construct-relevant meaning by the researcher classifying variations in observing behaviors according to the range of previously identified criteria values; the score is summed through observations in a way that may be clearly linked to intended interpretation (Angoff, 1984; Bachman, 1996; Brindley, 1998; J.D.Brown, 1996; Wright, 1999).

Cazden and Makino was adopted Correct or wrong criterion (1980:124) (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 awarded physical punishment on creating a continual source of friction and gaining 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 problem - 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 side of various categorical and probalistic 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.

## 1.6 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

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

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 ( $p < .05$ ) 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%

### 1.7 Discussion

Table 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.

### 1.8 Conclusions

This study analyzed the effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment on students' learning and on their behavior. A significant difference at  $p \leq 0.05$  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 benefit 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 develops scholastic performance of students'. Many students in Jordan fear attending school and many of those who seek admission later leave the school due to physical punishment. It is assumed that later on the 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) stop from using corporal punishment, it will bring a healthy change, contributing to a healthy society free from crime and terrorism.

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