

**EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON LEARNING  
BEHAVIOUR AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE  
IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IBARAPA EAST  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OYO STATE**

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**Abstract**

*Corporal punishment is described as one of the dangerous issues that are threatening to vacate the roots of personality development in the academic life of students. This paper studied the effects of corporal punishment on learning behaviour and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Ibarapa East Local Government of Oyo State. Data were collected from 300 respondents from secondary schools using stratified random sampling technique. The data were analyzed using T-test statistical tool and discussions were made on the basis of findings and results. The result shows that corporal punishment has great effects on students' academic performance creating a sort of friction and making them show lack of interest in their work. Students exhibit negative behaviour and their academic progress showed a gradual regression, whereas the students who were managed with different learning behaviour developed their long-term scholastic performance. It is therefore recommended that there should be introduction and passing of federal legislation prohibiting the use of corporal punishment in public secondary schools.*

**Keywords:** *Corporal punishment, Learning, Behaviour, Students, Academic Performance.*

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Corporal punishment refers to intentional application of physical pain as a method of behavioural change. Corporal punishment can also be defined as “the use of physical force intended to cause pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correcting or controlling a child’s behaviour” (Straus and Donnelly, 2005). Gershoff (2002) further discussed corporal punishment as behaviours which do not result in significant physical injury e.g. hitting, slapping, spanking, punching, kicking, pinching and shaking. Pandey (2001) said that corporal punishment is being used as a means of disciplining action against children and students worldwide but as catalytic action of education, it needs to be planned meticulously and executed with great sensitivity.

In Pakistan and other world developed countries, steps have been initiated to discourage the teacher against the use of corporal punishment. The Punjab education department announced that incidents of corporal punishment in schools would not be tolerated and stern action would be taken against teachers who indulge in it under the Punjab Removal from service Ordinance 2000 (Daily Times, 2005). It is assumed that increasing school violence contributes to heavy physical punishment. Despite affirmation of anti-punishment treaties by various countries, including Pakistan, in recent years, school shooting 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); 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 behaviour towards the students and teachers. This led to an assumption that if the teachers had managed his ill behaviour, he would not have caused this killing episode. Among many other such incidents was the shooting rampage at the Virginia Tech University which left 33 people dead including the suspected gunman (BBC, April 17, 2007). The “Cultural Spillover” theory presented by Rohner, Ronald, Kean, Kelvin, Cournoyer and David (1991) proposes that the more a society uses force for socially legitimate ends, the greater the tendency for those who are involved in illegitimate behaviours use force to attain their own ends. Discipline in raising and teaching of children is necessary if they are to become socially productive and responsible adults. Punishment is only a method of disciplining and corporal punishment is only one aspect of punishment (Sanderson, 2003). Arab, Waseem, Umar, Mohammed, and Qaisar (2011) opined that parents, guardians and teachers, who use harsh and punitive practices to discipline their children, may succeed in making the child conform to their standards but resentment will be reflected by the child’s behaviour sooner or later. A frequently punished child will be a problematic person later in life because the child being sensitive reacts to the behaviour and discipline of adults either at school or at home.

Coercive discipline techniques have been associated with decreased confidence and assertiveness in children and increased feelings of humiliation and helplessness (Baumrind and Black, 1967).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There is no gainsaying that children are the hope of any caring nation that wishes to protect their future lives. A nation that cannot give proper attention to children may not likely get the desired and dreamt goals of development as it is known that expected and good development can be gotten through trained people and good quality education.

This research work focuses on the very many effects of corporal punishment on the student. It is obvious that effective results can be achieved about the development of students through combating various factors, which badly affect the students. Corporal punishment, given by the teachers to students in classroom is one of these threatening factors, which affect students in their academic career. Corporal punishment is believed to cause students' mental activities to reduce, predispose them to play truancy, increase in acts against the existing social system and loss of self confidence and boldness. The students who always experience corporal punishment may be experiencing inferiority complex that causes less intelligence. Leader who sees corporal punishment as a means of establishing discipline in the classroom may invite more destruction in the academic settings.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

H1: There is no significant relationship between corporal punishment and students' academic performance.

H2: There is no significant relationship between corporal punishment and students' learning behaviour in secondary schools.

H3: There is no significant difference in the effect of corporal punishment on male and female students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted descriptive survey design of ex-post facto type. This is because the actions (corporal punishment) under investigation already existed and were not manipulated in the course of study.

### **POPULATION AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

The population for this study comprises of 1,250 students of junior school three of public secondary schools in Ibarapa East Local Government area of Oyo State. It is from this population that a sample of three hundred students was drawn. The sampling technique used for the school selection is purposive sampling; while the selection of students is on randomization bases. The instrument used for the study is a twenty multiple choice question items with four options lettered A-D. It is validated by specialist in the field of education.

### **METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Hypotheses are answered through the use of descriptive statistical design. Frequency count, mean score and standard deviation are used for analysis. The research hypotheses utilize the T-test value to determine its significance at 0.05 level of confidence.

**Result and Discussions:**

**Table 1:** Means and standard deviation of students on significant relationship between corporal punishment and student academic performance:

| Variable                | N   | (X)<br>Mean | S.D. | T-value | Df  | T-crit | Remarks |
|-------------------------|-----|-------------|------|---------|-----|--------|---------|
| Corporal Punishment     | 150 | 12.51       | 3.47 | 5.38    | 298 | 1.96   | *S      |
| Non-corporal Punishment | 150 | 16.83       | 6.35 |         |     |        |         |

Table 1 above showed the difference between the usage of corporal punishment and normal correction; the calculated which was greater than critical value of 1.96 was gotten. Thus, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference between corporal punishment and students' academic performance is not held.

**Table 2:** T-test of students with corporal punishment and learning behaviour in secondary schools:

| Corporal Punishment | Variable (Sex) | Students Population | Mean (X) | S.D. | S.E. | T-value | D.F. | T-Crit | Remark |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------|------|------|---------|------|--------|--------|
| Concept of learning | Male           | 160                 | 17.38    | 3.42 | .321 | 6.69    | 298  | 1.96   | *S     |
|                     | Female         | 140                 | 14.16    | 3.79 | .379 |         |      |        |        |
| Students Behaviour  | Male           | 160                 | 17.12    | 4.31 | .411 | 3.27    | 298  | 1.96   | *S     |
|                     | Female         | 140                 | 14.98    | 4.52 | .448 |         |      |        |        |
| Students Relations  | Male           | 160                 | 15.92    | 2.38 | .225 | 2.06    | 298  | 1.96   | *S     |
|                     | Female         | 140                 | 15.28    | 2.41 | .235 |         |      |        |        |
| Performance         | Male           | 160                 | 11.18    | 5.91 | .561 | 2.97    | 298  | 1.96   | *S     |
|                     | Female         | 140                 | 9.14     | 5.94 | .589 |         |      |        |        |

The table above compares the effects of corporal punishment on students via concept of learning, students' behaviour and students' relations. This corroborates Sauderson (2003) who said that discipline in raising and teaching of children is necessary if they are to become socially productive and responsible adults. Kaur (2005) opined that parents, guardians and teachers who use harsh and punitive practice to discipline their children, may succeed in making the child conform to their standards but resentment will be reflected by the child's behaviour sooner or later. A frequently punished child will be a problematic person later in life because the child will be sensitive to the behaviour and disciplinary practice of adults either at school or at home. Baumrind (1967) also identified the process by which corporal punishment may affect learning behaviour in which coercive discipline techniques have been associated with decreased confidence and assertiveness in children and increased feelings of humiliation and helplessness.

**Table 3:** T-test for Male and Female students on relationship to the use of corporal punishment:

| Variable Sex | Subject cases | Mean (x) | Standard Deviation(S.D) |
|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Total        | 300           | 57.81    | 11.98                   |
| Male         | 160           | 71.53    | 11.26                   |
| Female       | 140           | 53.86    | 11.72                   |

The data above reveals that corporal punishment has impact on the achievement of students. This corroborates the Punjab's education department (2005) which announced that incidents of corporal punishment would not be tolerated and stern action would be taken against teachers who indulge in it.

### CONCLUSION

This paper analyzed the effects of corporal punishment on students' learning and behaviour. It agreed that corporal punishment strengthens ill behaviour, this tends to promote school violence in the long run. It indicates that children who are subjected to corporal punishment are more likely to utilize violence in their family and society in the future whereas teachers' adequate care streamlines the students' behaviour for a long period of time. Thus, it opens the opportunity for learning, and improves students' scholastic performance. Many students in Ibarapa East Local Government of Oyo State fear attending school and many of these who seek admission later leave school due to physical punishment. It is assumed that later they consent to enter the criminal world (that is; they become offenders) to empower themselves in the hands of things. If the teachers (who are obviously a catalyst for change) are stopped from using corporal punishment, it will bring a healthy change, contributing to a healthy society free from crime and terrorism.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to prevent the continued usage of corporal punishment against children in the schools, this study recommends that:

- There should be introduction and passing of federal legislation prohibiting the use of corporal punishment in public secondary schools.
- Promoting the use of positive behavioural support and providing of teachers and school administrators with lots of resources necessary to develop safe and effective methods for encouraging positive students' behaviour.
- Provide students and their families with a private right of action and be free from physical punishment.
- Repair all schools and report all instances where corporal punishment is used.
- Provide fund to those states which implements free corporal punishment so that teachers will be effectively trained to create safe environment.

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