

Effectiveness of Training Program in Changing Teachers' Attitude towards Students' Corporal Punishment

¹ *Munawar S. Mirza*, ² *Asghar Ali*

¹ *Pro-Vice Chancellor Lahore Leads University*

The study was aimed at developing and conducting a training program for studying its effectiveness in changing the teachers' attitude towards students' corporal punishment. In the first phase a survey was conducted to collect data about the attitude of teachers towards students' corporal punishment; the second phase consisted of an experiment using a pre-test post-test design for measuring change in the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment by conducting a training workshop. An Attitude Scale of Corporal Punishment (ASCP) for measuring teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment was developed. All the mathematics teachers of government boys' high/higher secondary schools in District Swabi and District Nowshera teaching secondary classes were taken as sample. However, only 94 of them returned the questionnaire making a response rate of 65%. Sixty-one of the ninety-four teachers were identified as having positive attitude. A total number of 51 teachers participated in the fourteen days training program. On the last day the post- test was administered and focus group discussion was conducted with the teachers taking their views on the training program. It was concluded that majority teachers believe in the use of corporal punishment and that the training was significantly effective in changing the attitude of teachers towards its use.

Key Words: *Corporal punishment, Teachers' attitude, Attitude Scale of Corporal Punishment, Training*

Introduction

Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 12th November 1990 with a reservation to make its provisions according to the principles of Islamic Laws and values. In 1997 Pakistan decided to withdraw its reservation and World Organization against Torture (hereinafter OMCT) warmly welcomed this decision since it showed the intention to unconditionally implement children's rights in Pakistan (Berti, 2003). Article 37a of the Convention states that no child shall be caused to undergo torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2003). The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has stressed the use of alternatives to cruel punishment in the form of positive discipline in schools. It has advised on October 2003 that Pakistan should completely forbid all forms of corporal punishment; begin an awareness campaign among the people on the negative impacts of corporal punishment on children, and provide teachers and parents with training on non-violent forms of discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment (UNICEF, 2001

& Save the Children 2005). It is important to train prospective teachers and retrain in-service teachers for the minimization of discipline problems in a positive manner. If we do not provide acceptable alternatives to the banned behaviour, it causes anger and frustration among teachers and thus creates further problems for students, parents and school (Hyman & Ronald 1993; Richardson, Rita, Evans & Elizabeth, 1994). As Pakistan has signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 2001 & Save the Children, 2005), the government of Pakistan has banned corporal punishment in December, 2003 and the teachers have been ordered to avoid harsh treatment of students. Similarly, the Government of North West Frontier Province (now KPK) has also banned corporal punishment in schools and directed them to use alternative methods for disciplining students. Even after a complete ban by the provincial education department in the NWFP (now KPK) of Pakistan on corporal punishment in schools in 2003, teachers have continued to inflict corporal punishment (UNICEF & Save the Children, 2005; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2005). Society for the Protection of Rights of the Child (SPARC, 2012) reported that not only the

practice of inflicting corporal punishment is continued; the nature of student reaction is becoming severer. It states “It is shocking that earlier children used to runaway or dropout of school due to corporal punishment, they are resorting to more serious reactions like committing suicide”. Only the ban on corporal punishment is not sufficient to stop this practice, especially in schools. The SPARC recommended that violent treatment must be punished from stopping increment to compulsory retirement of such teachers. But some educationists such as Shah (2006) believe that corporal punishment is strongly interwoven in people’s social attitudes and attitudes must change that the child can be disciplined without the rod. This may be possible through creating awareness among teachers and other educationists about the adverse effects of corporal punishment on children. Specially designed training of teachers can also be effective for changing teachers’ attitude towards disciplining children through alternative modes and not through corporal punishment.

Objectives of the Study

1. Identify teachers having positive attitude towards corporal punishment.
2. Prepare and conduct training program for the modification of teacher’s positive attitude towards corporal punishment.

3. Study the effectiveness of training in changing teachers’ attitude towards corporal punishment.

Methodology

The study was conducted to modify schoolteachers’ attitude and behaviour towards corporal punishment using pre-test post-test research design.

Population and Sample

All the mathematics teachers teaching 9th grade of boys’ government secondary and higher secondary schools in Districts Nowshera and Swabi constituted the population I. District wise number of schools, teachers, and students are given in table 1. These two districts were selected because of their adjacent geographical location and frequent availability of transportation for teachers. All the teachers of both the districts were able to come to the town ‘Tordher’ where the training workshop was conducted.

Lists of schools were obtained from Executive District Officers (Education) of District Nowshera and Swabi. The list of teachers teaching Mathematics in secondary and higher secondary government schools of both districts was prepared with the help of Principal or Head teacher of each school. Number of teachers of each district is given in the table.

Table 1
By district Number of Schools, Teachers

District	Number of Schools	Number of Mathematics’ Teachers
Nowshera	65	69
Swabi	72	76
Total	137	145

Instrumentation

Attitude Scale towards Corporal Punishment

An attitude scale to measure the intensity and direction of the teacher’s attitude towards

corporal punishment, Attitude Scale of Corporal Punishment (ASCP), was developed on the basis of review of related literature and consultations with different teachers and principals or head teachers. The Cronbach alpha for 57 statements of the scale

was .964, which shows a high reliability for the scale (Hogan, 2003).

Development of the Training Program

Total number of teachers identified having positive attitude towards corporal punishment, scoring above the Median on ASCP, were 61 out of 94 (64.89%). Moreover, to enlarge the sample two more teachers having negative attitude but scoring (168) close to the Median were also selected for the training workshop because the researchers thought that they should also go towards more negative attitude thus making a total sample of 63. A training manual was developed for the resource person after thorough study of the research on corporal punishment, material regarding students' control, alternatives to corporal punishment and strategies of attitude change. Permission for the conduct of training workshop was obtained from the Secretary of Education, Government of NWFP. These 63 teachers were sent call letters through their Executive District Officer. However, 51 teachers were present on the first day of the workshop but after one month and twenty days, post-test could be administered to only 48 teachers because one teacher had retired and another two teachers were transferred to some other schools.

Conduct of Training Program

A resource person, lecturer in education, gave training to the teachers for changing their positive attitude towards corporal punishment into negative. The researcher trained the resource person for ten days. It was a fourteen days training programme. Training sessions were divided into activities that comprised on participatory method taking their views on different negative effects of corporal punishment and alternatives of corporal punishment based on their experiences. Different steps of the program were as follows:

- On the first day the teachers were familiarized with the UN Convention on Child Rights, ban on corporal punishment by the government in NWFP, and detrimental effects of corporal punishment on children i.e. depression, anxiety, decreased self-esteem, dejection of studies, poor academic performance.
- On the second day they were again persuaded for the detrimental effects of

corporal punishment i.e. drop out of children; anxiety, stress, violence and crime.

- During the remaining eleven days they were delivered sessions on alternatives of corporal punishment in which some were preventive approaches and other were corrective approaches. The sessions were on class control and management, motivation of students, theories of motivation, reflective listening, assertive discipline, logical consequences, reality therapy, and strategies of dealing with conflict and essential characteristics of an effective disciplinary program, moral development, tips for handling disruptive behaviour and gaining students' cooperation.

On the last day focus group discussion was conducted with the teachers taking their views on the program.

Focus Group Discussion

Total teachers on the last day of training were 48. Some of them were running short of time on that day. Only 32 teachers in four groups of eight each participated in the focus group discussion. Another day was offered for the remaining teachers but they regretted to come.

Focus group discussion was conducted on the following issues:

- Usefulness of the training in familiarizing with alternative of corporal punishment.
- Degree of practicality of the alternative approaches
- Relevance of these activities and lessons to the needs of the students.
- Comprehensiveness of the alternative approaches for student behavior modification.
- Effectiveness and relevance of the training in changing teachers' behavior and attitude towards corporal punishment?
- Conduct and methodology of the training program.

Participants were also asked if they would continue punishing their students or would abandon

such practices. The moderator was a lecturer in education and the researcher recorded data.

Recorded data of focus group discussion were translated into English language from the local language by the researcher with the help of one of his Ph. D class fellow, who was lecturer at Institute of Education and Research, University of the Peshawar. He was a native person with an excellent facility of local language, along with Urdu and English. The discussion was coded and analysed.

Pre-Test

To collect the data the ASCP was administered personally to 145 teachers teaching the subject of Mathematics to the 9th grades of two districts to measure their attitude towards corporal punishment.

Post -Test

The training was started with 51 teachers but two teachers were transferred out during the

experiment and one had retired leaving 48 teachers available for the post-test conducted on the last day of the workshop.

Results

To find out the change in the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment, the ASCP was administered to 145 teachers, among these 76 were from District Swabi and 69 from District Nowshera. Ninety four of these questionnaires were received back, 55 from District Swabi and 39 from District Nowshera making a response rate of 65%. Out of these respondents, 61 teachers were identified as having positive attitude towards corporal punishment, 36 such teachers were from District Swabi and 25 were from District Nowshera; whose score on ASCP was above the Median of the scale 171. This shows that a majority of teachers have a positive attitude towards corporal punishment and they favour corporal punishment. To increase the sample size two more teachers with negative attitude but scoring close to the Median (score=168 each) were also included in the sample.

Table No.2

Total and by district number and percent of teachers having positive attitude toward corporal punishment.

S.No	District	Total no. of Mathematics Teachers	Respondent Teachers	Teachers with Positive Attitude N	Teachers near to Positive attitude Number Positive N	Total Considered %
1	Swabi	76	55	36		37
2	Nowshera	69	39	25		26
Total		145	94	61		63

Table 2 shows that 63 teachers were considered as having positive attitude towards corporal punishment but 51 of them having positive

attitude were registered for the training workshop. But post-test could be administered to only 48 teachers.

Results

Table No.3

Mean Scores on Attitude Scale of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment before and after the Training

	N	Mean	Range	SD	df	t	Sig. (2 tailed)
Pre test	48	207.02	168-250	26.86			
					94	6.77*	.00
Post test	48	142.38	57-249	60.45			

*Significant at $\alpha=0.01$

Table 3 shows that the mean score of teachers at pre-test on ASCP was 207.02 which decreased to 142.38 at the post-test. The paired sample t-test value = 6.77 was significant at $\alpha = 0.01$. Hence the null hypothesis “There is no

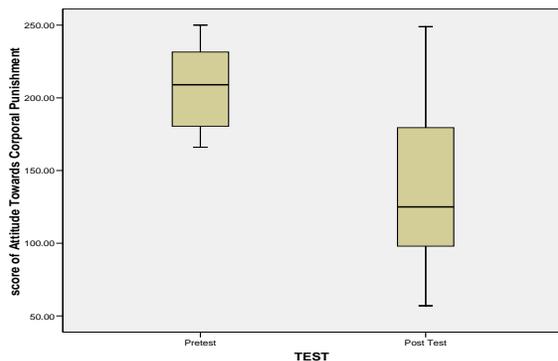
significant difference between the mean scores on ASCP before and after the training” was rejected. It was concluded that teachers’ attitude towards corporal punishment had become negative due to training.

Table No. 4

Other pre-test and post-test Descriptive statistics

Statistics	Pre-test	Post-test
1 st Q	180	98
Median	209	125
3rdQ	232	179
Mean	207.02	142.38
SD	26.86	60.45
Range	84	192

Box Plot showing Range, 1st Quartile, 3rd Quartile and Median at Pre and Post tests



The Box Plot shows that on the pre-test the range of scores and SD was narrow exhibiting similarity in the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment. The wider range and SD in the post-test scores as compared to the pre-test depict the variability in the effectiveness of the training for various teachers. It may be due to the individual differences among the teachers having different age groups, years of service, motivation and mind-set to adopt changes. Comparing quartiles and mean scores of the pre-test and post-test, the 1st quartile in the pre-test was 180 which declined to 98 in post-test. The 3rd quartile was 232 in the pre-test which

dropped to 179 in post-test, median of the pre-test was 209 and it was 125 in post-test. The same pattern of decline was observed in the mean scores

i.e. from 207.02 in the pre-test to 142 in the post-test.

Result of focus group discussion

Table No. 5

Respondents’ opinion about the effectiveness and value of the training

Issue	Responses			
	To great extent		to some extent	
	N	%	N	%
Practicability of activities	28	87.5	04	12.5
Orientation to alternatives of corporal punishment	26	81.25	06	18.75
Activities realistic to children needs	24	75	08	25
Conduct in effective manner	32	100	NIL	0
Comprehensiveness of sessions	30	93.75	02	6.25
Effectiveness of activities in changing teachers’ behavior and attitude towards corporal punishment		26 81.25		06 18.75

Table 5 shows that all participants responded in affirmative about the effectiveness of training in changing their attitude towards corporal punishment of students. As weeping majority, 81% to 100%, found it useful to a great extent. Confirming is the fact that none of the respondents found it useless and worthless.

Comments of Respondents

Some of the respondents were highly motivated. They stated that they would not only adopt those alternatives in their own classroom but would ask other colleagues to do so. However, one of the participants said that abandoning corporal punishment and using alternatives required strong will and motivation.

Participants also evaluated various alternatives and considered some alternatives more effective than others such as one participant considered reflective listening as the best behavior modification alternative method. Only one participant said that due to lengthy syllabus they face problems in giving individualized attention.

Two of the participants said that after the 1st day of the workshop they had planned to go back to

their schools to teach their students as the examination was approaching but attractive presentations of the workshop motivated them to continue with it.

One of the participants said that the contents of the workshop were so interesting that in order to attend it he missed the marriage ceremony of his cousin.

Some of the participants said that those lessons were so much interesting that they had not been absent even for a single day.

Seven of the participants said that alternatives to corporal punishment were comprehensive enough to encompass all aspects of children’s behavioral problems.

Another participant said that there were always some children in the class from such backgrounds that could not be managed whatever the method is used.

One of the participants said that he will be able to comment on the effectiveness of the alternative disciplining methods only after practicing those in the classroom.

One of the participant said these activities are so relevant and important for teachers that these should be printed in form of book and distributed to all schools through the Executive District Education Officer.

Discussion

The study reveals that overall a majority of teachers teaching Mathematics to secondary grades favour corporal punishment. This study strengthens the assertion of UNICEF (2001) in Pakistan that corporal punishment is considered necessary to maintain discipline, build character and facilitate learning. It is also accepted as part of the culture and said to be good for the morale of teachers as they feel in command. Similarly, UNICEF & Save the Children (2005) also asserts that its study revealed a strong belief among parents and teachers that corporal punishment is an effective and necessary way to correct the behaviour of children or facilitate the learning process, and that this belief is considered to be socio-culturally acceptable and practice of violence is considered as a normal way to solve routine behavioural problems of children.

The present study showed that the teachers teaching Mathematics to Secondary grades used corporal punishment frequently. It supports the assertion of UNICEF (2001) which says that corporal punishment is a common phenomenon in the daily lives of South Asian children-at home, in schools, in places of work and in their neighbourhood. Although very little research exists, testimonies from students, parents and teachers, as well as incidences reported in the media, suggest that corporal punishment is a common problem in many schools in the region. UNICEF and Save the Children (2005) & Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2005) say that even after a complete ban by the provincial education department in the NWFP of Pakistan on corporal punishment in schools in 2003, teachers have continued to inflict corporal punishment.

Teachers who attended the workshop showed a significant change in their attitude and behavior towards corporal punishment. This study strengthens the assertion of Shah (2006) who stated that corporal punishment is strongly interwoven in people's social attitudes and attitudes must be

changed. Sherif (1976) & Lahey (2001) also say that attitudes are not such things, which cannot be changed. Those can change after they have been formed. Similarly, Davey (2004) says that applied psychologists have undertaken to change the unhealthy behaviours by changing a person's attitude towards that object. So if the teachers are given proper training, their attitude and behaviour towards corporal punishment can be changed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

On the basis of findings of the study it is concluded that corporal punishment is favoured and commonly practiced by school teachers in Pakistan particularly in public schools. It is further concluded that training can mould the attitude of teachers towards the use of corporal punishment for disciplining students in school settings. Therefore, it is recommended that in addition to policies on banning corporal punishment, the provincial and federal governments should take necessary measures to educate teachers about its adverse effects on students and train them in alternative student disciplining strategies.

A wide range in the impact of training on teachers suggests further need to explore the types and characteristics of teachers receptive to trainings and of those who are somewhat robust. Such a research may lead to designing training programs relevant to the teachers of various backgrounds.

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