



Teachers' Perception of Influence of Corporal Punishment on Pupils' Academic Performance in Ilorin South, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined teachers' perception of influence of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary schools' pupils in Ilorin South Local Government, Nigeria. The researcher used descriptive survey research design. The research population comprised all 995 primary school teachers in Ilorin South Local Government Area. The sample size was 100 primary school teachers. The instrument used for gathering data was a researcher-designed questionnaire. The face and content validity were done on the instrument, while Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability at the index of 0.79. The demographic data were analysed using the percentage; mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the t-test and Analysis of Variance were used to test the hypotheses formulated. The findings revealed a negative perception of the teachers about influence of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils. It was also revealed that there were no significant differences in the perception of teachers based on gender, qualification and experience. It was therefore recommended that in-service teachers and teachers in training should learn to adopt alternative means of instilling discipline in pupils without resorting to corporal punishment.

Keywords: Teachers' perception, Corporal punishment, Academic performance, Primary school

Introduction

Corporal punishment incorporates the following activities: blows to any part of a Child's body, such as beating, kicking, hitting, slapping, lashing, with or without the use of an instrument such as a cane, pinching, pulling ears or hair, shaking, carrying, dragging or throwing a child, verbal abuse, scolding, yelling, swearing, ridiculing or denigrating, forcing a child through the use of power, authority or



threats, to perform physically painful or damaging acts, deliberately neglecting a Child's physical needs where this is intended as punishment, forcing a child to perform hazardous tasks as punishment or for the purpose of discipline, confining a child in a contained or enclosed space, any threat of physical punishment, any other physical act perpetrated on a Child's body, for the purpose of punishment or discipline, intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light, verbally assaulting, threatening or intimidating a child, making a child look or feel foolish in front of their peers or the public and other acts or words belittling, humiliating, blaming, ignoring or isolating the child Ager (2013).

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

A study in 2004 found that corporal punishment, in effect, became a technique for grooming boys and teaching them to act like men by tolerating pain. Though boys may experience more corporal punishment, girls are not immune. Whether perpetrated against girls or



boys, corporal punishment is a frequently used method of maintaining control of students in the educational setting. In Nigeria, teachers who use corporal punishment argue that the power to control learners is taken away from parents and teachers and this has also contributed to the high failure rate as there is a link between discipline and learner achievement (Kilimci, 2009). It is also critical to note that the reluctance of some teachers to accept the ban on corporal punishment could be emanating from their resistance to change as far as conflict resolution is concerned. It may be that they are not prepared to change and learn new skills, and thus, they are frustrated.

In their contribution, Kivulu and Wandai (2009) noted that there is a growing concern that some teachers are preoccupied and even obsessed with corporal punishment as it still persists in homes, but its effectiveness is still debatable. It is also an open secret that teachers and parents are making illegal agreements, that is, some parents come to agreement

with teachers that they may beat their children, and to show their defiance a number of schools speak frankly about their use of corporal punishment, though principals and teachers are aware that it is against the law (Radile, 2007). Christie (2001) confirms that some teachers claim that out of frustration and desperation to maintain discipline in schools, at times, with or without the support and consent of parents, they use corporal punishment, and they, at times, send a note home to the parent, asking the parent to administer corporal punishment on the child for something the child did at school.

The physical damage done to the body can be treated, the emotional and psychological effects can also affect the person deeply (Banda, 2010). Also, corporal punishment demonstrates strong associations between corporal punishment and various negative emotional and psychological outcomes (Soneson & Smith, 2005). The examples of the negative emotional and psychological outcomes are; eroded trust between parent and child, aggression toward siblings, sadness and anger, crying, fear, embarrassment, withdrawal and compliance, bullying and disobedience, poor mental health, weaker internalization of moral values, anti-social behaviour, poor adult



adjustment, depression, withdrawal, sleep disturbances, avoidance of school, learning problems, loss of self-esteem, and delinquency.

In addition, studies show that corporal punishment is not effective as a disciplinary strategy as it does not teach an alternative behaviour because children usually feel resentful, humiliated and helpless after being hit and nevertheless do misbehave, but they learn to master not to get caught. Corporal punishment drastically alleviates guilt feelings; that is, when a child is whipped, he feels he has paid the price and his guilt is gone, and later, especially during the adolescent years, these children will need to be taught the inner controls of conscience and guilt.

Some schools have changed to the boarding section as a way of coping with the increasingly stiff competition among students and schools as well as for national level exams, resulting in students spending more time in schools than with their parents. These children are suspected to get adapted to all various kinds of behaviours such as homosexuality, smoking, abuse of substances, and use of nasty words among other things. There is also concern that indiscipline has taken new forms with increased violence, sale and consumption of drugs, theft, disrespect of school rules and regulations which has resulted into widespread corporal punishments, students' expulsion and suspension from schools, cases of arsons are on the increase in schools, problems which go beyond educational institutions. This has attracted serious attention from scholars, administrators, and education stakeholders about the academic performance of such undisciplined students and, therefore, created a need for this study.

Academic performance is students' satisfactory and superior performance level as they progress through and complete their school experience (Tinto, 1993). Researchers over the year have used a variety of ways to measure academic performance and these include report card grades, grade point averages, standardized test scores, teacher ratings, other cognitive test scores, grade retention and dropout rates (Burns & Darling, 2002; Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006). Thus, student's academic performance is typically assessed by the use of teacher ratings, tests, and exams.



Academic performance refers to excellence in all academic disciplines. Steinberg (2005) posits that academic performance encompasses students' ability and performance; it is multi-dimensional; it is intricately associated with human growth and cognitive, emotional and social-physical development. The pupils' performance plays an important role in producing best quality graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development. (Alos et.al., 2015).

The use of corporal punishment at home and school has been widely debated. Advocates of corporal punishment in schools generally contend that it is an effective form of correcting child misbehaviour. Some believe it is a means of discipline while others call it abuse. The accounts from Holy Writing show that God does punishment, people who go contrary to the rules and regulations, how people relate with their Maker and relate with one another around them to be disciplined and the people to conform. Corporal punishment is the deliberate infliction of pain intended to change (from negative to positive) a person's behaviour or to punish him/her (Shukla & Jyoti, 2013).

Corporal punishment given by teachers to pupils in schools is one of the threatening factors which affect pupils psychologically and socially and, in the long term, their academic performance is affected as well. Corporal punishment reduces pupils' mental activities, self-confidence and boldness. It creates cramming qualities in pupils, overturns aggression, increases in reaction against the existing social system and mal-function of respect towards teachers and elders. Teachers also believe that corporal punishment is the best way to motivate pupils to behave well. Adesope, Ogunwuyi and Olorode (2017) worked on how punishment could impact student learning and academic performance. The finding revealed that punishment has a negative impact on how students learn and how they perform in school academically. Ganira, Ila and Odundo (2019) worked on how teachers and parents perceive the use of punishment in Rwanda. The result showed that the respondents considered punishment necessary to enforce orderliness. none of the previous researchers had worked on teachers perceived psychological effect of corporal punishment in Ilorin



South. Therefore, this present study examines teachers perceived psychological effect of corporal punishment on the academic performance of Primary school pupils in Ilorin South Local Government.

The results of this study are essential to schools and educational policymakers in appropriating the right approach to inculcate discipline in children. It will, however, give direction to all stakeholders' alternative means of disciplining a child in line with achieving educational objectives. The study will suggest other ways to maintain discipline in primary schools without necessarily using corporal punishment, which has been proven ineffective in ensuring discipline among primary school pupils. Finally, the result is vital because it offers useful recommendations on how teachers can instil discipline in the child without corporal punishment so that they can positively impact their pupils.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to:

1. examine teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Nigeria
2. ascertain whether there is a significant difference in the teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on gender.
3. ascertain whether there is a significant difference in the teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on qualification.
4. ascertain whether there is a significant difference in the teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on teaching experience.

Research Question

The study seeks to answer the following question:

1. What is the teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance in Ilorin South LGA, Nigeria?



Research Hypotheses

- H0₁:** There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on gender.
- H0₂:** There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on qualification.
- H0₃:** There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on teaching experience.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey research design where the participants' opinions were sought for the research. The population was all the nine hundred and ninety-five (995) primary school teachers in Ilorin South Local Government Area, Nigeria. The study focused on the teachers across all the primary schools as the study population. A sample of 100 teachers were randomly selected across the primary schools. Thus, a total sample of 100 primary school teachers was selected as the study participants.

The instrument adopted for this research work was researchers designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was closed-ended and comprised sections A and B. Section A comprises demographic information of the respondents, which includes gender, teacher's qualification, and teaching experience, while Section B comprises 15 items. A four Likert scale was used as the response format for the instrument which are SA-Strongly Agree (4 points), A-Agree (3 points), D-Disagree (2 points), and SD-Strongly Disagree (1 point). The research instrument was validated by the experts in the field of Childhood Education at the University of Ilorin, while instrument reliability was established using Cronbach's reliability method, which yielded a value of 0.79. The demographic data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The data collected were analysed using the percentage for bio-data of the respondents; mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses formulated.



Results

Demographic Description of the Respondents

The data presented in Tables 1 to 3 was based on the demographic characteristics of the respondents' frequency counts and percentage. The table was based on respondents' gender, teachers' qualification and teachers' teaching experience.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	39	39.0
Female	61	61.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 1 revealed that out of the 100 respondents that participated in the study, 39 (39.0%) of the respondents were males, while 61 representing (61.0%) of the respondents were females. This implies that majority of the respondents in this study were female.

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
NCE	17	17.0
B.Sc.	20	20.0
B.Sc. (Ed.)	52	52.0
M.Sc.	5	5.0
M.Ed.	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 2 revealed that out of the 100 respondents that participated in the study, 17, representing (17.0%) of the respondents, had an NCE certificate, 20, representing (20.0%) of the respondents, had B.Sc. certificates, 52, representing (52.0%) of the respondents had B.Ed. certificate, 5 representing (5.0%) of the respondents, had an M.Sc. certificate, while 6, representing (6.0%) of the respondents, had an M.Ed. This implies that the majority of the respondents in this study had B.Sc. (Ed.) certificate.

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Years of Teaching Experience**

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	38	38.0
6-10	47	47.0
11-15	11	11.0
16-20	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 3 revealed that out of the 100 respondents that participated in the study, 38, representing (38.0%) of the respondents, had 0-5 years of teaching experience, 47, representing (38.0%) of the respondents had 6 10 years of teaching experience, 11 representing (11.0%) of the respondents had 11-15 years of teaching experience, while 4 representing (4.0%) of the respondents had 16-20 years of teaching experience. This implies that the majority of the respondents in this study had 6 to 10 years of teaching experience.

Answering of Research Questions

One research question was generated, and was answered with the use of mean and standard deviation.

Research Question 1: *What is the teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance in Ilorin South LGA?*

In answering this research question, mean of responses of the teachers' choice to each item on the questionnaire that addressed teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, was calculated using 2.5 as the cut off.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis showing time parents created to educate their children through oral literature (storytelling, poems and songs)

S/N	Items	X	SD
1.	Corporal punishment is an effective means of discipli	2.31	.961
2.	Beating pupils to create conducive teaching and learning environment.	2.11	.886
3.	Corporal punishment help maintain discipline in the class.	2.04	.828



4.	There is enough resources available to them to implement alternative disciplinary methods.	2.24	1.026
5.	Corporal punishment does not make pupils perform poorly in class.	2.89	.963
6.	Corporal punishment makes pupils respect teachers.	2.77	1.024
7.	parents are more likely to prefer the use of corporal punishment.	2.29	1.113
8.	Corporal punishment makes pupils work hard.	2.47	1.167
9.	Corporal punishment brings about positive change in pupils' attitude towards their studies	2.21	1.149
10.	Corporal punishment makes pupils fearful and degraded.	2.44	1.122
11.	Corporal punishment creates feelings of aggression and revenge in children.	2.67	1.138
12.	Corporal punishment makes pupils gets higher marks in tests and exams.	2.41	1.074
13.	Every pupil should be punished when they do what is against school rules.	2.51	1.096
14.	The alternative disciplinary methods are culturally accepted in their community.	2.63	1.143
15.	Corporal punishment makes pupils attentive in class.	2.38	1.033
Grand Mean		2.43	

Table 4 revealed that teachers have a negative perception of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance. It is evident by the mean value of all the items in the table (4) above, in which item 5,6, are all greater than 2.5, while item 1,2,3,4,7,8,9,10, are lesser than 2.5 which served as the cutoff point showing that teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin south. The overall mean of 2.43 also indicated a negative perception.

Testing Hypotheses

H₀₁: *There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on gender.*

**Table 5: T-test Analysis of Difference in Teachers' Perception of the Influence of Corporal Punishment on Pupils' Academic Performance based on Gender**

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	df	Cal.t-	Sig. (2-)	Decision
Male	39	43.79	9.44	98			H ₀₁
					.42	.67	Not
Female	61	44.52	7.68				Rejected

As shown on Table 5, male respondents had mean score of 43.79 with standard deviation 9.44, while female respondents had mean score of 44.52 with standard deviation of 7.68, the calculated t-value was .42 while its calculated significance value is .67 of df 2/98 at alpha level of 0.05. On this basis, null hypothesis one was therefore not rejected. This means that there was no significant difference in teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, based on gender. The reason was that the calculated significance value (.67) was greater than 0.05 alpha level ($p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on educational qualification.*

Table 6: ANOVA Comparing Respondents on the Difference in Teachers' Perception of the Influence of Corporal Punishment on Pupils' Academic Performance based on Educational Qualification

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	Df	Mean of Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	480.66	4	120.17			H ₀₂
Within Groups	6457.58	95	67.96	1.77	.14	Not
Total	6938.24	99				Rejected

Table 6 shows an F-value 1.77 with calculated significant 0.14 at 0.05 alpha level. Since calculated significance 0.14 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis two is thus not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, based on educational qualification.



Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant difference in teachers' perception of the influence of corporal punishment on pupils' academic performance based on years of teaching experience.*

Table 7: ANOVA Comparing Respondents on the Difference in Teachers' Perception of Corporal Punishment on the Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Ilorin South based on Years of Teaching Experience

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	Df	Mean of Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	96.51	3	32.17	.45	.72	H ₀₃
Within Groups	6841.74	96	71.27			Not
Total	6938.24	99				Rejected

Table 7 shows an F-value .45 with calculated significant .72 at 0.05 alpha level. Since calculated significance .72 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis three is thus not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in the teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, based on years of teaching experience.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South was negative. Teachers may recognize that corporal punishment can have detrimental effects on pupils' psychological well-being, leading to increased anxiety, fear, and stress. These negative emotions can impair pupils' ability to focus, concentrate, and engage in learning activities, ultimately hindering their academic performance. This finding is in line with that of Akhtar and Awan (2018), who reported that the teacher's perceived impact of corporal punishment on students' performance in public schools was negative. Also, Kimani, Kara, and Ogetange (2012) found that teachers' and pupils' views on the persistent use of corporal punishment in managing discipline in primary schools in Starehe Division, Kenya, were negative.

Another finding revealed no significant difference in teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of



primary school pupils in Ilorin South, based on gender. Both male and female teachers may have similar views on the efficacy, appropriateness, and potential consequences of corporal punishment in primary school. This finding is in support of Baraka and Samwel (2017), who found that there was no significant difference in the teachers' perception of corporal punishment and its effect on learning in secondary schools in Babati Rural District, Tanzania, on the basis of gender.

Furthermore, the finding revealed no significant difference in teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, based on educational qualification. Whether a teacher holds a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or other certifications, it doesn't necessarily affect their attitudes towards their perception of corporal punishment on primary school pupils. This finding is consonant with that of Ogbе (2015), who reported no significant difference in the parents'/teachers' perception of the use of corporal punishment in primary schools in Delta and Edo State, Nigeria, on the basis of educational qualification. Also, Arif and Rafi (2007) reported no significant difference in the perceived effects of corporal punishment and psychological treatment on students learning and behaviour on the basis of teachers' qualification.

Finally, findings revealed no significant difference in teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, based on years of teaching experience. Both novices and experienced teachers holds similar views and attitude towards corporal punishment in primary schools. This finding is in line with that of Kilimci (2009) there was no significant difference in the teachers' perceptions on corporal punishment as a method of discipline in elementary schools on the basis of years of teaching experience.

Conclusion

This study showed that teachers' perception of corporal punishment on the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, was negative. There was no significant difference in teachers' perception of the effects of corporal punishment on the



academic performance of primary school pupils in Ilorin South, based on gender, educational qualification and years of teaching experience. However, educators and policy makers must consider alternative approaches that prioritize positive reinforcement and holistic pupil development to ensure a friendly, supportive and conducive learning environment.

Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the findings, it was therefore recommended that:

1. The in-service teachers and teachers in training should learn to adopt alternative means of instilling discipline in pupils without resorting to corporal punishment.
2. The authority should conduct seminars on the alternative means of instilling discipline in pupils without resorting to corporal punishment.
3. The authority should encourage teachers, irrespective of their gender to be active at their pedagogical responsibilities to avoid indiscipline in school.
4. The authority should re awake school guidance and counselling sessions to be headed by experts or experienced teachers to work on pupils' behaviour.

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