

An Analysis on Classroom Teachers' Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment from the Aspects of Several Variables

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Abstract: Corporal Punishment still keeps up-to-date in education field on the verge of 21st century. In this study, it is aimed to analyze attitudes of primary school classroom teachers towards the corporal punishment fact in terms of different variables. The population of the research consists of the primary school teachers at the first stage of the primary schools bound to the Ministry of National Education, Erzurum in Turkey, in 2006–2007 education years. The sample of the study consists of the 200 primary school teachers employed at 12 different schools selected randomly and unproportionally (3 schools from each group to be more precise) from low, middle and high socio-economical level environment and private schools. In this study, the scale adapted by Gözütok (1993) to measure the attitudes of teachers towards corporal punishment was used. In addition, a Personal Information Form was used to get information about the primary school teachers. Statistical analyses were done by using t test and one way ANOVA for the independent groups. According to the findings, a significant difference was found out between the attitudes of the primary school teachers to corporal punishment according to the socio-economical levels of the schools they work and their years of experience in teaching (seniority). However, there was no significant difference found between teachers' attitudes to corporal punishment according to the variables such as the programmes they graduated from, having or not having children, the numbers of their children, the number of the students in classrooms and their working at public or private schools. Some suggestions were provided on the basis of data available.

Key words: Punishment • Discipline • Corporal Punishment • Teachers' Attitudes

INTRODUCTION

School experience has remarkable effect on emotional and personel development of children. Overall development of a country depends on social and individual developments. Intended development can be obtained through qualified education. At this point teachers seem to have utmost importance. Regarding this reality, it is quite a challenging fact that corporal punishment is still being discussed in the verge of the 21st century.

Effective instructions could be achieved by effective classroom management. Still there are those teachers who see corporal punishment as a means of establishing discipline in classroom management. Unfortunately, they ignore the destructive effects of corporal punishment on child' mental health [1,2].

Corporal punishment is harming part of a body and inflicting pain to a person or exciding him because of the offense he has committed. Most teachers think they do well by punishing students. They also believe that it is the best way to motivate students in order to behave more properly. However, they get mistaken by thinking of doing the right thing by punishing them as the improper act is prevented for a while only. As a matter of fact, long term results of this kind of punishment is to react against or to surrender [3].

Corporal punishment causes students' mental activities to reduce, playing truant from school, increase in reacting against, several personality problems and loss of self-confidence [4-6].

Corporal punishment has been regarded with tolerance. It is perceived as one part of traditional culture. Some proverbs such as "It blossoms rose where

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¹This study was submitted as an announcement in the XVI.National Education Congress that took place in Education Faculty of Gaziosmanpaşa University, Turkey, between 05-07 September 2007. Authors got the permission from the interested authority dated as 02-04-2008 to publish it in an international journal.

the teacher hits”, “Physical punishment is endowed from heaven” etc. expresses the justification of corporal punishment throughout society [1]. As being the extreme form of physical punishments, corporal punishment is the means of humiliation for the students who are exposed to it. Children who are exposed to this kind of punishment tend to exhibit the two extreme behaviors of cowardness or aggression [7].

Result of some studies conducted have revealed that there are some teachers who are still considering corporal punishment as a means of establishing discipline in schools of Turkey [8-12]. Studies conducted have revealed that corporal punishment is commonly resorted to in throughout the world as well [13-17].

Greydanus, Pratt ve Hoffman (2002) emphasized that use of corporal punishment in schools might cause an increase in dangerous and mistaken thought of its being tolerable in society not to mention its leading our children into unexpected direction of violence [18].

Purpose of The Study: The study was conducted in order to determine the significance of difference between classroom teachers’ attitudes towards corporal punishment and some variables such as; socio-economical level of the school environment, seniority, gender, the branch they graduated from, their having child or not, number of their children, class size and school’s being public or private.

METHOD

Research Model: This study is general review model descriptive study that was conducted to determine the attitudes of classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in primary schools from the aspects of several variables.

Population and Sampling: Population of the study comprises classroom teachers teaching in the first stage of the public primary schools of Erzurum province within the 2006-2007 educational year. Public schools from each socio-economical level was chosen randomly irrational out of the population as well as three private schools from each socio-economical level to make 200 classroom teachers teaching in a total of 12 schools.

Data Collection: ‘Opinions About Corporal Punishment’ survey, which was developed with Likert method and consists of 47 postulates, was used to determine teachers’ attitudes towards corporal punishment. For the survey

Table 1: Avarage And Standard Deviation Values of Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Socio-Economical Level (SEL) of The School

| Groups | n | \bar{x} | sd |
|----------------|-----|-----------|------|
| Low SEL | 44 | 35.70 | 7.48 |
| Medium SEL | 55 | 34.16 | 9.95 |
| High SEL | 61 | 37.56 | 6.69 |
| Private School | 40 | 35.75 | 8.30 |
| Total | 200 | 35.86 | 8.23 |

Table 2: One-Way Variance Analysis Results Regarding The Significance of The Difference Between Classroom Teachers’ Attitude Towards Corporal Punishment And Socio-Economical Level of The School Environment

| School SEL | Sum of Squares | sd | Mean of Squares | F | p |
|--------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|--------|
| Inter groups | 335.559 | 3 | 111.853 | 2.669 | 0.049* |
| In-groups | 13133.236 | 196 | 67.006 | | |
| Total | 13468.795 | 199 | - | | |

p<0.05

that was translated into turkish by Gözütok (1993), alfa realibility coefficient was found 0.96 and Kronbach-alfa realibility coefficient was found 0.90 [1].

Data Analysis: SPSS 10,0 packaged software was used in statistical analysis of data and independent groups t-test and one way variance analysis was applied.

Findings and interpretations: Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Socio-Economical Level of The School:

Avarage and standard deviation of attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with socio-economical level of the school they teach in are given in Table 1 below:

The findings of one way variance analysis in order to determine significance of the difference between classroom teachers’ attitudes towards corporal punishment and socio-economical level of the school environment are given in table 2 below:

As is seen in Table 2, there was found significant difference between classroom teachers’ attitude towards corporal punishment and socio-economical level of the school environment (F= 2.669, p=.049). LSD test was applied to determine which group was this difference caused by. According to findings obtained, there was found a significant difference between medium and high SEL schools regarding classroom teachers’ attitude towards corporal punishment on behalf of the high SEL schools.

Table 3: t Values, Avarage And Standard Deviation Of Attitude Scores Of Participant Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Their Gender

| Gender | n | \bar{x} | sd | t | p |
|--------|-----|-----------|------|-------|-------|
| Female | 135 | 36.31 | 7.96 | 1.131 | 0.260 |
| Male | 65 | 34.91 | 8.75 | | |

sd:198 p>0.05

Table 4: Avarage And Standard Deviation Values Of Attitude Scores Of Participant Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Their Ages

| Ages | n | \bar{x} | sd |
|-------|-----|-----------|------|
| 20-29 | 33 | 35.79 | 6.59 |
| 30-39 | 82 | 35.75 | 8.71 |
| 40-49 | 61 | 36.67 | 7.77 |
| 50-59 | 24 | 34.25 | 9.80 |
| Total | 200 | 35.86 | 8.23 |

This result is thought to be obtained through mostly senior teachers' existence and their remarkable professional experiences on applying more preventive discipline issues in high SEL schools. Furthermore, it can also be said that parents' being opposed to use of corporal punishment may affect teachers' attitudes towards this kind of punishment in high SEL environment. Results of Gözütok (1993)'s research is also confirming this finding [1].

Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Their Gender:

t and p values of attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with gender are given in table 3 below:

There was found insignificant difference between male and female classroom teachers considering their attitudes towards corporal punishment ($t_{198} = 1.131$; $p = .260$). This result demonstrates that the gender factor is not significant from the aspect of teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment. According to a study conducted by Gözütok (1993) there was found significant difference between male and female teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment on behalf of female teachers [1]. This makes somebody think that male teachers have developed positive attitudes towards corporal punishment since 14 years ago.

Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Their Ages:

Avarage and standard deviation of attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with their ages are given in table 4 below:

Table 5: Variance Analysis On The Difference Between Classroom Teachers' Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment And Their Ages

| Source of the variance | Sum of Squares | sd | Avarage of Squares | F | p |
|------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Inter-groups | 103.715 | 3 | 34.572 | 0.507 | 0.678 |
| In-groups | 13365.080 | 196 | 68.189 | | |
| Total | 13468.795 | 199 | | | |

p> 0.05

Table 6: t Values, Avarage And Standard Deviation Of Attitude Scores Of Participant Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With The Branches They Graduated From

| Branch | n | \bar{x} | sd | t | p |
|-------------------|-----|-----------|------|-------|-------|
| Classroom Teacher | 90 | 36.22 | 7.61 | 0.570 | 0.229 |
| Other Branches | 110 | 35.55 | 8.72 | | |

sd:198 p>0.05

The results of variance analysis applied in order to determine significance of the difference between classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and their ages are shown at Table 5 below:

There found no significant difference between groups regarding classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and their ages ($F = .507$, $p = .678$). This result demonstrates that teachers' ages don't have any effect on their attitudes towards corporal punishment.

Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With The Branch They Graduated From:

Attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with the branches they got graduated from are given in Table 6 below:

There was found no significant difference between groups regarding classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and the branches they graduated from ($t_{198} = 0.570$; $p = .229$). Despite being graduated from different branches of education faculty, it might be the result of in-service training, guidance and counseling programs and seminars teachers go through that have made the inconvenient state of corporal punishment in education system prevail among teachers.

Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Seniority:

Avarage and standard deviation of attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with seniority are given in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Avarage And Standard Deviation Values Of Attitude Scores Of Participant Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Seniority

| Seniority | n | \bar{x} | sd |
|-------------------|-----|-----------|------|
| 1-5 year | 21 | 35.95 | 7.17 |
| 6-10 year | 46 | 34.61 | 9.42 |
| 11-15 year | 48 | 36.25 | 8.33 |
| 16-20 year | 25 | 37.28 | 5.77 |
| 21-25 year | 13 | 40.77 | 2.74 |
| 26 year and above | 47 | 34.51 | 9.05 |
| Total | 200 | 35.86 | 8.23 |

Table 8: Variance Analysis On The Difference Between Classroom Teachers' Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment And Seniority

| Source of variance | Sum of Squares | sd | Avarage of Squares | F | p |
|--------------------|----------------|-----|--------------------|-------|--------|
| Inter-groups | 528.794 | 5 | 105.759 | 2.586 | 0.048* |
| In-groups | 12940.001 | 194 | 66.701 | | |
| Total | 13468.795 | 199 | - | | |

p<0.05

Table 9: t Values, Avarage And Standard Deviation of Attitude Scores of Participant Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Their Having Child or Not

| Groups | n | \bar{x} | sd | t | p |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|--------|-------|-------|
| With Child(ren) | 160 | 35.9438 | 8.4528 | 0.304 | 0.765 |
| Without Child | 40 | 35.5000 | 7.3415 | | |

sd:198 p>0.05

The results of variance analysis applied in order to determine significance of the difference between classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and seniority are shown at Table 8 below;

There was observed a significant difference between groups regarding classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and seniority ($F=2.589$, $p=.048$). LSD test was applied to determine which group was this difference caused by. According to findings obtained, there was found a significant difference between teacher groups of 6-10 year seniority, 21-25 year of seniority and 26 and above seniority regarding classroom teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment on behalf of the 21-25 year of seniority group. Moore ve Cooper (1984)'s, Gözütok (1993)'s and Çiçekdemir (2003)'s research findings support this result [1,14,19].

Despite their being the most senior group, the result was not on behalf of the teachers of 26 and above seniority. This can be explained by their loss of strength and thus their becoming noncompetent in classroom management to change their attitudes towards resorting to corporal punishment.

Table 10: t values, the avarage and standard deviation of attitude scores of classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with the number of children they have

| Number of Children | n | \bar{x} | sd | t | p |
|--------------------|-----|-----------|------|-------|-------|
| 1-2 | 119 | 36.45 | 8.33 | 1.060 | 0.621 |
| 3-4 | 41 | 34.83 | 8.69 | | |

sd:158 p>0.05

Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Their Having Child or Not:

t and p values, the avarage and standard deviation of attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with their having child or not are given in table 9 below:

As is seen in tablo 9 above, there was found no significant difference between groups regarding classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and their having child or not ($t_{198}=0.304$; $p=.765$). This result can be interpreted that teachers having child or not doesn't have any effect on the difference of their attitudes towards corporal punishment. A study conducted by Çiçekdemir (2003) revealed that teachers' having child or not doesn't have any significant effect on the difference of their attitudes towards corporal punishment which also supports the result of this study [19].

Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With The Number of Children They Have:

t values, the avarage and standard deviation of attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with the number of children they have are given in table 10 below:

There was found no significant difference between attitude scores of classroom teachers with 1-2 children and attitude scores of classroom teachers with 3-4 children towards corporal punishment ($t_{198}=1.060$; $p=.621$). This result demonstrates that classroom teachers' having more or fewer children doesn't have any effect on their attitudes towards corporal punishment. Areserach done by Çiçekdemir (2003) pointed out the same result to support this finding [19].

Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Class Size

Table 11: Avarage And Standard Deviation Values of Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Class Size

| Class Size | n | \bar{x} | sd |
|-------------|-----|-----------|------|
| 20 and less | 43 | 36.23 | 7.28 |
| 21-30 | 94 | 34.50 | 9.16 |
| 31-40 | 37 | 37.71 | 7.18 |
| 41-50 | 12 | 37.25 | 6.69 |
| Total | 186 | 35.86 | 8.23 |

Table 12: Variance Analysis On The Difference Between Classroom Teachers' Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment And Class Size

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | sd | Avarage of Squares | F | p |
|--------------------|----------------|-----|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Inter-groups | 376.782 | 3 | 125.594 | 1.880 | 0.134 |
| In-groups | 13092.013 | 196 | 66.796 | | |
| Total | 13468.795 | 199 | | | |

Table 13: Avarage, Standard Deviation And t Values of Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Their Teaching In Public or Private Schools

| Groups | n | \bar{x} | sd | t | p |
|-----------------|-----|-----------|--------|-------|-------|
| Public Schools | 160 | 35.8813 | 8.2335 | 0.090 | 0.969 |
| Private Schools | 40 | 35.7500 | 8.3043 | | |

sd:198 p>0.05

Avarage and standard deviation values of attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with class size is given in Table 11 below:

The results of variance analysis applied in order to determine significance of the difference between classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and class size are shown at table 8 below;

There was observed no significant difference between groups regarding classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and class size ($F=1.880$; $p=.134$). This result demonstrates that class size is not a determinant of classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment.

Findings And Interpretations Regarding Attitude Scores of Classroom Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment In Accordance With Their Teaching In Public or Private Schools

t and p values as well as the avarage and standard deviation values of attitude scores of participant classroom teachers towards corporal punishment in accordance with their teaching in public or private schools are given in table 13 below;

As is seen in Table 13 above, there was found no significant difference between classroom teachers' attitudes towards corporal punishment and their teaching in public or private schools ($t_{198}=0.090$; $p=.969$). This result demonstrates that teachers teaching in public or private schools doesn't have any effect on the difference of their attitudes towards corporal punishment.

The lowest score is (0) and the highest score is (47) for the attitude scale pertaining to corporal punishment. A general view of results obtained from this study reveals that there is an avarage of 35 attitude score pertaining corporal punishment. This result can be interpreted as teachers' achieving remarkable attainments despite their being a little far away from the ideal point considering the highest score of 47.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the results obtained from this study there was found significant diference between classroom teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment and socio-economical level of the school environment and seniority whereas no significant difference was observed from the aspects of gender, the branch graduated from, having child or not, number of children had, class size and the type of the school. The highest score is (47) for the attitude scale pertaining to corporal punishment. Avarage attitude score of this study pertaining corporal punishment is 35.86. This result can be interpreted as teachers' achieving remarkable attainments despite their being a little far away from the ideal point considering the highest score of 47. Study results have also revealed that there are still considerable number of teachers who see corporal punishment as a means of establishing discipline regardless of the school type they teach in.

Studies conducted on this issue have revealed that corporal punishment causes reduction in mental activities, increase in playing truant from school and in reacting against, several personality problems and loss of self-confidence for the students who are exposed to it [4-6]. In the light of this study as well as the related previus ones it can be inferred that students will have to deal with some important issues caused by this kind of punishments in the future.

Recommendations:

- Inservice training seminars on improving teachers' knowledge and skills about classroom management, effective discipline methods and children rights should be given weight to.

- Guidance counselors in schools should be given the task on giving seminars and conferences about corporal punishment and the destruction caused by.
- Legal regulations and implementations should be allowed for getting rid of any kind of physical punishment.
- Pedagogical efficiencies of prospective teachers should be reviewed during education process.
- If there are still some teachers of violence prone despite all the precaution steps taken, then, they should be assigned to different duties other than tutoring.

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