

ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NSUKKA LGA OF ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

The study was conducted to find out the attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA of Enugu State. Three specific objectives with corresponding three research questions, and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive research design. Population for the study consisted of 1,313 secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA. Sample size for the study consisted of 270 teachers selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. Questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. Mean and t-test statistic was used for data analysis. Results among others indicated that secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA had positive attitude towards corporal punishment, male teachers had more positive attitude towards corporal punishment than the female teachers, and that married teachers indicated more positive attitude than their single colleagues. Also, gender had significant difference in the mean attitude of male and female teachers towards corporal punishment unlike marital status. Based on the findings, the study recommends that corporal punishment should be sustained in secondary schools. However, corporal punishment should not be the order of the day and should not be used to the extreme.

Key words: Attitude, corporal punishment, teachers, secondary school

Introduction

Corporal punishment is an issue that has attracted varying views globally. Some individuals regard corporal punishment as tantamount to violence or abuse, others encourage it as a way of discipline. Corporal punishment exists in every phase of existence such as schools, homes and even work places. Therefore, it has become a controversial issue that has attracted research interest. Frizzle (1998) defined corporal punishment as violation of conduct, which attracts the infliction of pain or harm to the body. Atkinson (2007) defined corporal punishment as the deliberate infliction of pain by using cane or stick intended to change a person's behaviour or to punish them. According to this researcher, corporal punishment is painful and intentionally inflicted on an offender. It is physical penalty administered by a person in authority for disciplinary purposes. Corporal punishments according to Atkinson are in the form of beating, whipping, paddling and flogging. Corporal punishment according to Kumaraswamy and Othman (2011) is a discipline method in which a supervising adult deliberately inflicts pain upon a child in response to a child's unacceptable behaviour and or inappropriate language. This according to these researchers is to halt offence, prevent its reoccurrence and set an example for others. In this study, corporal punishment refers to a form of physical punishment that involves the infliction of pain as retribution for an offence, or for the purpose of disciplining or correcting a wrongdoer, or to deter attitude or behaviour deemed unacceptable. Corporal punishment is usually administered either across the buttocks or on the hands with cane, wooden paddle, and wooden yardstick. Less commonly, it could also include spanking or smacking the student in a deliberate manner on a specific part of the body with the open hand. Corporal punishment is in the forms of flogging, beating, caning, spanking, slapping among others whether in judicial, domestic or educational settings. However, this study focuses on corporal punishment in educational setting such as secondary schools.

Corporal punishment entails physical chastisement of a student in a school. It is a punitive response to students' misbehaviour and even has extensive biblical support (Nakpodia, 2012). Over the years, the infliction of corporal punishment on recalcitrant children in the country has become an accepted method of promoting good behaviour and instilling notion of responsibility and decorum into the heads of mischievous students (Nakpodia, 2011). However, many people have raised serious concern towards the use of corporal punishment in schools. These concerns are resultant effects of their attitude towards corporal punishment.

Attitude is a disposition towards an issue, a person or object which makes an individual to act in a certain way towards that issue, person or object. Attitude includes one's thought towards a person, issue or objects that directs the person's reactions toward that person, issue or object. Attitude according to Simpson and Weiner (2000) is a way of feeling, thinking or behaving. Aitken (2000) posited that attitude is a learned predisposition or tendency on the part of the individual to respond positively or negatively to some objects or situations. Ademuwagun, Ajala, Oke, Moronkola and Jegede (2002) defined attitude as a set of affective reactions towards an object that predisposes the individual to behave in a certain manner towards the object. In this study, attitude refers to the disposition of secondary school teachers towards corporal punishment which directs their reactions towards the use of corporal punishment in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA. Opara (1993) stated that attitudes that are positive are usually encouraged to continue and are reinforced while negative attitudes are usually discouraged. Therefore, attitude can be negative or positive and has greater tendency to direct actions. Teachers appear to have varying attitude towards the use corporal punishment in secondary schools. Basci and Dileken (2009) poisted that most teachers think they do well by punishing students and also believe that corporal punishment is the best way to motivate students to behave more properly. Also. Kumaraswamy and Othman (2011) reported that majority of the teachers who participated in their study had fairly favourable attitude towards corporal punishment. On the contrary, some other teachers view corporal punishment as an act of wickedness and incompetence on the part of the teachers who use corporal punishment. Thus, Nuzhat, Shafqat, Muhammad, and Kamran (2012) in their study, *Attitudes and Opinions of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment*, reported that majority opined that corporal punishment must not be there as it was the greatest negative variable for creating a conducive environment for teaching- learning process.

Negative attitude towards corporal punishment makes some teachers to believe that flogging students has no place in today's education. To them, modernization has necessitated that teachers develop inventive ways of correcting students when they misbehave instead of resorting to corporal punishment. Thus, flogging, as an example of corporal punishment and as a disciplinary measure according to Nakpodia (2012), is fast declining in most Nigerian schools. However, other teachers believe that teaching must necessarily include the use of cane in a world indiscipline has eaten too deep into the moral fabric of the society. These teachers are of the belief that beating corrects erring students and that caning deters students from committing serious offences.

In a study, disciplinary measures in a primary school in South Africa, Kubeka (2004) reported that without corporal punishment, teachers opined that discipline cannot be maintained and that children would be disrespectful to the teacher and fail to develop the discipline to work. Similarly, Nakpodia (2012) posited that corporal punishment tends to prevent students from committing any serious offence; it creates fear in the minds of students and reforms the offender because students generally do not like their names to go into bad books. However, Basci and Dileken (2009) opined that corporal punishment has destructive effect on a child's mental health, thus, effective instructions could be achieved through effective classroom management. Ayogu (2010) posited that single teachers are more likely to use corporal punishment than the married teachers. According to this researcher, single teachers appear to be ignorant of better ways of bringing up a child and so use physical and painful measures in correcting the child. Besides marital influence on the attitude towards corporal punishment, gender is a variable that has attracted research interest in the various areas including corporal punishment. Dawes, Kropiwnicki, Kafaar and Richter (2005) in their study, reported that women use corporal punishment more than men. The result of their study indicated that 70% of women and 30% of men use corporal punishment in correcting their children. On the contrary, Tirosh, Shechter, Cohen and Jaffe (2003) in their study, attitudes towards corporal punishment and reporting abuse among physician, reported that Attitudes towards corporal punishment were not influenced by the physicians' sex. Additionally, Basci and Dileken (2009) found insignificant difference between male and female classroom teachers considering their attitude towards corporal punishment. In a study, gender disparities in the use of corporal punishment in public schools in Nigeria, Okoye (2011) reported that male teachers are more likely to use beating in correcting students unlike their female counterparts and that students tend to fear male teachers' punishment than female teachers' punishment. The study further showed that female teachers use more of flogging and slapping in correcting erring students unlike their male colleagues who mostly spank or beat students.

Literature has shown that corporal punishment exists in our today's secondary schools. Due to the physical injuries associated with corporal punishment, teachers have differing attitude towards corporal punishment. This study therefore was conducted to find out the attitude of teachers in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA of Enugu State. Specifically, the study determined attitude of secondary school teachers towards:

1. corporal punishment;
2. corporal punishment based on gender; and
3. corporal punishment based on marital status.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study

1. What is the attitude of teachers in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment?
2. What is the attitude of teachers in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA towards school corporal punishment based on gender?
3. What is the attitude of teachers in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA towards school corporal punishment based on marital status?

Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were postulated for the study and they were tested at .05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean attitude of male and female teachers in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean attitude of single and married teachers in secondary schools in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment.

Methods

The descriptive survey design was adopted in the study. The study was conducted in Nsukka LGA of Enugu State. The population for the study consisted of 1,313 secondary schools teachers in Nsukka LGA. Records from Post Primary Education Board Nsukka (PPEB), shows that the population of teachers in 30 government secondary schools in Nsukka LGA is 1,313. Records from PPEB show that there are 908 female teachers and 405 male teachers in Nsukka LGA with various academic qualifications. Nsukka LGA has 192 single and 1,121 married secondary school teachers. Among them are 102 single male and 90 single female teachers and 303 married male and 818 married female teachers. Each secondary school has both single and married male and female teachers.

The sample size for the study consisted of 270 secondary schools teachers selected from 1,313 teachers in 30 government secondary schools in Nsukka LGA using multi-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, 15 secondary schools were selected using simple random technique of balloting without replacement. The second stage involved purposive selection of 6 male (2 single and 4 married) teachers and 12 female (3 single and 9 married) teachers from each of the 15 selected schools. Thus, 90 male teachers (30 single and 60 married) and 180 female teachers (45 single and 135 married) were selected. This gave a total of 270 teachers selected for the study.

A two-section questionnaire served as instrument for data collection. Section A contained two questions inquiring of the gender and marital status of the teachers while section B contained 10 close ended questions on attitude of teachers towards corporal punishment. The section B of the instrument is on four point rating scale as follows: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). Face validity of the instrument was established by three experts from the Department of Health and Physical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts' contributions were built into the final copy of the instrument. A split half method using Spearman's Brown correlation formular was used to correlate the data generated. The reliability index of .82 was obtained, and was considered high enough and reliable to be used for the study.

Data for this study were collected by the researcher with the help of two assistants. A total of 270 copies of the instrument were administered on the respondents by hand. The instrument were collected on the spot for those teachers who were able to fill immediately while 2 days were given to those who were unable to fill immediately to complete theirs and were returned to the researcher through the assistants. A 100 per cent return rate was achieved. However, only 255 copies of the instrument had properly completed responses, and were used for analysis.

Responses from the instrument were analyzed using mean scores. Nominal values of 4, 3, 2, and 1 assigned to rating scales of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagree and Strongly Disagree were used in calculating the criterion mean of 2.50. Items with mean score of 2.5 and above indicated positive attitude while items with mean score of below 2.5 indicated negative attitude. The two null hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested at .05 level of significance using t-test statistics.

Results and Discussion of Findings

The following findings were made and presented in Tables for the purpose of answering the research questions.

Table 1: Mean Responses of Attitude of Secondary School Teachers in Nsukka LGA Towards Corporal Punishment (n=255).

S/N	Attitude indicators of teachers	X	SD	Decision
1.	Flogging is a disciplinary measure	3.96	.69	Positive
2.	Flogging is an act of wickedness	1.06	.04	Negative
3.	Beating corrects erring students	3.19	.61	Positive
4.	Caning deters students from committing serious offences	2.82	.42	Positive
5.	Spanking connotes that the teacher is not creative in correcting students	2.01	.23	Negative
6.	Slapping hardens student	2.21	.31	Negative
	Grand mean	2.54	.38	Positive

Table 1 shows that secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA had positive attitude towards corporal punishment as indicated by the grand mean of 2.54 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. It is noteworthy that the mean score of items 1, 3, and 4 in Table 1 were above the criterion mean of 2.50 which shows positive attitude except for items 2, 5, and 6 that had a mean score below the criterion mean which indicated negative attitudes.

Table 2: Mean Responses on Attitude of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment Based on Gender (n=255).

SN	Attitude indicators of teachers	Male (n=90)			Female (n=165)		
		X	SD	D	X	SD	D
1.	Flogging is a disciplinary measure	3.67	.43	P	3.10	.41	P
2.	Flogging is an act of wickedness	2.12	.19	N	2.18	.29	N
3.	Beating corrects erring students	2.70	.42	P	2.32	.25	N
4.	Caning deter students from committing serious offences	3.84	.78	P	3.54	.69	P
5.	Spanking shows the teacher is not creative in correcting students	2.01	.23	N	2.11	.26	N
6.	Slapping hardens student	2.09	.27	N	2.21	.31	N
	Grand mean	2.74	.39	P	2.58	.37	P

*P = Positive and *N= Negative

Table 2 showed that male and female secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA demonstrated positive attitude towards corporal punishment as shown by a grand mean of 2.74 for males and 2.58

for females. Table 2 further revealed that male teachers had more positive attitude to corporal punishment than female teachers. A closer look at Table 2 revealed that both male and female secondary school teachers demonstrated negative attitude in the items flogging is an act of wickedness (male $x=2.12$, female $=2.18$), spanking shows the teacher is not creative in correcting the students (male $x=2.01$, female $x=2.11$) and slapping hardens students (male $x=2.09$, female $x=2.21$). Also, Table 2 indicated that male had positive attitude in the item beating corrects erring students while females indicated negative attitude in the item beating corrects erring students (male $x=2.70$, female $x=2.32$).

Table 3: Mean Responses of Attitude of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment Based on Marital Status (n=255).

SN	Forms of corporal punishment	Single (n=75)			Married (n=180)		
		X	SD	D	X	SD	D
1.	Flogging is a disciplinary measure	3.29	.63	P	2.98	.37	P
2.	Flogging is an act of wickedness	1.31	.26	N	2.09	.24	N
3.	Beating corrects erring students	2.72	.41	P	3.26	.42	P
4.	Caning deters students from committing serious offences.	3.92	.62	P	3.45	.47	P
5.	Spanking shows the teacher is not creative in correcting students	2.10	.34	N	2.34	.37	N
6.	Slapping hardens students	2.41	.41	N	2.48	.49	N
Grand mean		2.58	.43	P	2.63	.48	P

*-P = Positive *-N= Negative

Table 3 showed that single and married secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA demonstrated positive attitude towards corporal punishment as shown by a grand mean of 2.58 for singles and 2.63 for married. However, the Table shows that married teachers had more positive attitude towards corporal punishment than their single colleagues. Table 3 shows that single and married secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA demonstrated a positive attitude towards flogging is a disciplinary measure (single $x=3.29$, married $x=2.98$), beating corrects erring students (single $x=2.72$, married $x=3.26$), and caning deters students from committing serious offences (single $x=3.92$, married $x=3.45$). Table 3 further shows that respondents indicated a negative attitude towards item flogging is an act of wickedness (single $x=1.31$, married $x=2.09$), spanking shows the teacher is not creative in correcting the students (single $x=2.10$, married $x=2.34$), and slapping hardens students (single $x=2.41$, married $x=2.48$).

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis of no Significant Difference in the Attitude of Teachers Towards Corporal Punishment Based on Gender

Gender	\bar{X}	SD	n	t-cal	df	t-crit.	Sig	Decision
Male	2.74	0.39	90					
Female	2.58	0.17	165	3.960	245	2.091	.05	Rejected

Table 4 shows that the calculated value of t (3.960) was greater than the critical value of t (2.091) at .05 level of significance and 245 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated value of t is greater than the critical value of t, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean attitude of male and female secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment was rejected. This indicated that there was a significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment based on gender.

Table 5: Summary of t-test Analysis of no Significant Difference in the Attitude of Teachers towards Corporal Punishment Based on Marital Status

Marital status	\bar{X}	SD	n	t-cal	df	t-crit.	Sig	Decision
Single	2.58	.28	75					
Married	2.63	.41	180	-10.678	245	3.491	.05	Accepted

Table 5 shows that the calculated value of t (-10.678) was less than the critical value of t (3.491) at .05 level of significance and 245 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated value of t is less than the critical value of t, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean attitude of single and married secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment was accepted. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment based on marital status

Discussion of Findings

Findings in Table 1 show that secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA have positive attitude towards corporal punishment as shown by the grand mean of 2.54. This finding is expected and not surprising because Kumaraswamy and Othman (2011) had reported that majority of the teachers who participated in their study had fairly favourable attitude towards corporal punishment. However, when corporal punishment is excessively used by a teacher, it may attract negative reactions from another teacher because Nuzhat, Shafqat, Muhammad, and Kamran (2012) in their study, attitudes and opinions of teachers towards corporal punishment, reported that majority opined that corporal punishment must not be there as it was the greatest negative variable for creating a conducive environment for teaching learning process. The explanation for this difference could be due to differences in childhood experiences, culture and religion. The finding on flogging is a disciplinary measure negates Nakpodia (2012)'s opinion that many teachers believe flogging students has no place in today's education. According to Nakpodia, some teachers believe that the advancement of technology has made it imperative that teachers develop better ingenious ways of correcting students when they err instead of resorting to corporal punishment. This finding however supports Kubeka (2004) report. Kubeka reported that without corporal punishment, teachers opined that discipline cannot be maintained and that children would be disrespectful to the teacher and fail to develop the discipline to work. The finding on the item, caning deters students from committing serious offence supports Nakpodia (2012)'s view that corporal punishment tends to prevent students from committing any serious offence; it creates fear in the minds of students and reforms the offender because students generally do not like their names to go into bad books.

Findings in Table 2 showed that male and female secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA demonstrated positive attitude towards corporal punishment as shown by a grand mean of 2.74 for males and 2.58 for females. Table 2 further revealed that male teachers had more positive attitude to corporal punishment than female teachers. This finding is surprising and therefore unexpected because Dawes, Kropiwnicki, Kafaar and Richter (2005) had found a significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment with females teachers showing more positive attitude towards corporal punishment than the male teachers. However, the explanation for this result could be because female tends to be more lenient than males which could be linked to their natural make-up and child bearing experiences. The finding that male had positive attitude in the item beating corrects erring students while females indicated negative attitude in the item beating corrects erring students (male $x=2.60$, female $x=2.34$), supports Okoye (2011) that male teachers are more likely to use beating in correcting students unlike their female counterparts and that students tend to fear male teachers' punishment than females.

Findings in Table 3 showed that single and married secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA demonstrated positive attitude towards corporal punishment as shown by a grand mean of 2.58 for singles and 2.63 for married. However, the Table shows that married teachers had more positive attitude towards corporal punishment than their single colleagues. This result is not expected and therefore surprising because it is a common belief that unmarried person tends to punish children more than married persons. However, the explanation for this result may be traced to the issue of rearing children. Most married persons are assumed to have children and they have ways of instilling discipline in their

children such as beating, flogging among others. This may be responsible for their having more positive attitude towards corporal punishment than their single colleagues. Again, this finding negates Ayogu (2010) that single teachers use corporal punishment more often than the married teachers. Table 3 indicated that both married and single teachers show positive attitude towards the item, flogging is a means of discipline. This result agrees with the finding of Kimma (2011) that irrespective of gender and marital status, flogging is the commonest form of corporal punishment used by all teachers to discipline students

Table 4 shows that the calculated value of t (3.960) was greater than the critical value of t (2.091) at .05 level of significance and 245 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated value of t is greater than the critical value of t , the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean attitude of male and female secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment was rejected. This indicated that there was a significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment based on gender. This result agrees with Dawes, Kropiwnicki, Kafaar and Richter (2005) findings that there is a significant difference between male and female teachers' attitude towards corporal punishment. However, this finding disagrees with Tirosh, Shechter, Cohen and Jaffe (2003) report that Attitudes towards corporal punishment were not influenced by the physicians' sex and Basci and Dileken (2009) finding that there is insignificant difference between male and female classroom teachers considering their attitude towards corporal punishment.

Table 5 shows that the calculated value of t (-10.678) was less than the critical value of t (3.491) at .05 level of significance and 245 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated value of t is less than the critical value of t , the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean attitude of single and married secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment was accepted. This indicated that there was no significant difference in the attitude of secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment based on marital status. This finding negates Ayogu (2010) finding that single teachers are more likely to use corporal punishment than the married teachers.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study and discussion, the following conclusions were drawn: secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA had positive attitude towards corporal punishment; there is a significant difference in the mean attitude of male and female secondary school teachers in Nsukka LGA towards corporal punishment; and there is no significant difference in the mean attitude of teachers in Nsukka LGA based on marital status.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the discussion and conclusions herein, the study recommends that:

1. Corporal punishment should be sustained in secondary schools.
2. If possible, a neutral party, specifically identified should administer the punishment, rather than the teacher who was in conflict with the student.

Implication for Education

Corporal punishment is a disciplinary measure and involves the infliction of physical pain to the body. However, the effect of this physical pain has far reaching consequences on the mental, psychological and social development of the students when it is frequent and extreme. These have implication for learning process because when corporal punishment is excessive, it may likely affect the students learning ability. However, when students are allowed to misbehave without a measure of control and discipline, they may grow up to become irresponsible citizens, and may develop poor attitude to life, work and career.

Frequent use of corporal punishment may harden students and cause them to be truants and finally drop-out from school. Inasmuch as corporal punishment should be sustained in schools as a disciplinary measure, the students' total development should be considered. In administering corporal punishment, the issue of teacher-student relationship should be put into cognizance. This is because when the relationship between a teacher and a student is too rough that the student dodges from the teacher and the course (s) taught by the teacher, learning process is hampered. On the other hand, when a teacher is too lenient with students in such as way that the students do not have any regard for the

teacher due to the teacher's complacency, learning is also adversely affected as students will not take the teacher's course (s) seriously or submit assignment when given. Therefore, whatever attitude any teacher has towards corporal punishment, there is need to strike a balance between corporal punishment and overall learning and development of the students.

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