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# **Analyzing the Relationship between Corporal Punishment and Student Motivation in Public Secondary Schools of District Muzaffargarh, Punjab**

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## **Abstract**

The current study attempted to map the relationship between corporal punishment and student motivation in public secondary schools of District Muzaffargarh, Punjab, Pakistan. This study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between corporal punishment and student motivation in public secondary schools. It was also hypothesized that there is no significant difference between urban and rural secondary schools' students as to facing the corporal punishment and their level of motivation. For this purpose, a correlational research design was adopted to conduct a quantitative survey. Two self-developed questionnaires were used to collect data from students selected via simple random sampling. The reliability of both questionnaires was acceptable according to the prescribed benchmarks. Simple linear regression and independent sample t-test were applied to analyze the collected data. The findings suggested that there is no relationship between corporal punishment and the motivation level of students. The finding of this study further suggested that students of rural secondary schools were facing more corporal punishment in contrast to the urban students, and consequently, their level of motivation was low. On the basis of the findings, it is recommended that strong measures should be taken by the concerned school to avoid corporal punishment, especially in rural schools.

**Keywords:** Corporal punishment, independent sample t-test, linear regression, motivation, reliability.

## **Introduction**

Effective teaching and learning is the ultimate purpose of schools (Mupa, & Chinooneka, [2019](#)). Effective teaching would take place if teachers have their own strong teaching philosophy and related teaching skills followed by strategies (Delvin et al., [2012](#)). Teachers need to focus on their students

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to engage them in learning and provide them with knowledge and skills. This would create a positive and conducive learning environment. In contrast to this, ineffective and untrained teachers usually do not have any teaching philosophy and teach their students with one-way teaching methodology (Lacina & Block, [2011](#)). Such teachers try to control their students' behaviors through punishments and sometimes through corporal punishment. The students who face corporal punishment often lose their motivation in class which ultimately leads to drop-outs. These teachers face misbehavior by students, disturbance, disorderliness in class, and related challenges in managing their classrooms. They are unable to develop the knowledge, skills, and mastery in students and may not achieve the desired learning outcomes (Hunt et al., [2009](#)).

Corporal punishment of children has been the focus of many researches and policymakers around the world (Gershoff, [2017](#)). The impacts of corporal punishment on students are generally serious lasting which affect their health, behavior, attention, learning, performance, and motivation. Above all, such punishments lead to sickness and disorders (Devries et al., [2014](#)). Research proved that such punishments in class affect the degree of motivation of students (Gracia & Herrero, [2006](#)). Likewise, teachers' behavior, self-efficacy, and attitude also influence students' motivation towards learning (Whiten, [2007](#)). In order to study this global phenomenon, the current research was conducted to analyze the relationship between corporal punishment and the level of student motivation, studying at public secondary schools in Pakistan.

## **Theoretical Background**

### ***Corporal Punishment***

The use of physical force that causes pain to stop the disruptive or negative behavior is called corporal punishment (Straus, [2009](#)). This type of punishment is quite common in schools and at home too. Research proved that corporal punishment discouraged students to learn and attend school. Moreover, physical punishment also develops aggression in students, it intimidates the learners, and renders them unable to make decisions due to low confidence level. Schools usually justify physical punishment to maintain discipline. School policies are designed on these principles in order to control negative behaviors and maintain discipline. However, once these punishments become part of the school policy and

school culture it becomes necessary to maintain discipline in school (Cohen, [1996](#)).

Disruptive and disorderly classrooms remain a major challenge in schools. Teachers use a variety of strategies to control such behaviors in the classroom, to fix students' disruptions, and to manage an organized classroom. Sometimes, they use positive and negative reinforcement to control these students and they often remain successful in doing so. Negative punishment is seen as a very useful strategy to correct these behaviors, however, usually they do not repeat their bad or unwanted behaviors. When teachers are not able to control their students through these reinforcements or when the consequences of such behaviors result in serious violation of rules and discipline with hurting other students, teachers ultimately use corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is a form of violence that teachers use to fix negative behaviors in class (UNICEF, 2014). Corporal punishment involves physical acts, such as kicking, hitting, slapping, pushing, shaking, and punching (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, [2016](#)). However, physical violence is not the only form of violence which children face, they also face violent psychological disciplines which includes, threats, ridicule, taunts, humiliation, and intimidation (UNICEF, 2014).

Corporal punishment is an integral part of schools for the majority of teachers and learners in spite of international legislation (Heekes et al., [2020](#)). All physical methods to maintain discipline in schools are termed as corporal punishment, which are banned in most of the world. However, it still prevail in third world countries (Gershoff, [2017](#)). The use of corporal punishment in schools ranges between 13% to 97% of students who reported their experience of corporal punishment in spite of its prohibited use (Gershoff, [2017](#); Heekes et al., [2020](#)). There are serious consequences for those teachers who administer corporal punishment in schools. They would be considered guilty of an offense and would be rendered accountable for their act that might lead to a sentence for this assault (Spaull, [2013](#)).

Researchers are investigating the underlying reasons for the use of corporal punishment in schools in third world countries. They identified minor to major reasons for its usage, for instance, non-compliance of classroom rules, discipline, not doing homework, being absent from class, hitting, and ridiculing classmates (Maphosa & Shumba, [2010](#)). In some

cases, it also included carrying harmful weapons at schools (O'Neil et al., [2009](#)). In such cases, teachers found corporal punishment a useful strategy to handle them and control deviant behaviors (Mayeza & Bhana, [2017](#); Ngubane et al., [2019](#)).

Corporal punishment may have serious and lasting consequences for children in view of their physical health, mental health, studies, and well-being. Health consequences may require serious medical and psychological attention (Child et al., [2014](#)). Ani and Grantham-McGregor ([1998](#)) suggested that the usage of corporal punishment as a strategy to eliminate such behaviors may aggravate the negative behavior in students. It may also affect school performance and may undermine the ability to achieve the school's desired outcomes (Devries et al., [2014](#)).

Generally, those students who perform poorly and do not focus on their studies face physical punishments at schools by their teachers, parents, and others who are responsible for performance at school (Hassan & Bali, [2013](#)). However, corporal punishment often leaves negative effects on students instead of positive effects. It triggers students' aggression, reduces the degree of motivation, and enhances misbehavior in school (Morris & Gibson, [2011](#); Mulvaney & Mebert, [2007](#)). It is also pertinent to mention that the teachers who are surrounded by their personal problems are likely to administer corporal punishment against their students (Kılımcı, [2009](#)). The literature further revealed that many contextual factors, such as socio-economic status of students, vicinity of school, family background, lack of affection, and love from teachers, parents and caregivers, ethnicity, food security and threats, and race of students are also associated with experience of corporal punishment at school (Font & Gershoff, [2017](#)).

### ***Motivation***

Motivation is a state through which a learner enjoys his/her learning through focused attention and interest to meet their educational objectives (Hancock, [2004](#)). Students are considered as academically motivated when they show their interests, abilities, and competence in their work. Hohn ([1995](#)) focused on the positive classroom practices that enhance students' interest and motivation. Teachers appreciate them and give them rewards for their good performance. There are two types of motivations, namely intrinsic and extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is based on external rewards in the form of appreciation and incentives, while intrinsic motivation is linked

with the person's inner self that leads to interest and enjoyment (Deci & Ryan, [1985](#)).

Motivation may also be increased through certain teaching strategies and the classroom environment (Shihusa & Keraro, [2009](#)). However, the role of discipline is also important in learning processes. It directly contributes to the students' academic achievement. If students fail to maintain discipline in their class, the classroom environment would be ruined and ultimately affect the students' performances. If teachers and students fail to solve discipline issues in class, it would lead to corporal punishment. Lytton ([1997](#)) stated that corporal punishment is likely to control the disruptive behaviors of students in class, however, it should not be the sole strategy to maintain discipline and enhance motivation of students towards their studies. Instead, it often enhances students' behavioral problems. The consequences of corporal punishment may lead to negative emotions, lack of interest and motivation, fear, and anger in students. Above all, their learning performance at school also gets disturbed. This is considered as a very poor motivational technique (Ahmad et al., [2013](#)).

### **Corporal Punishment and Motivation of Students in Pakistani Context**

It is an established fact that the school dropout rate increases due to corporal punishment. Ahmadl et al. ([2014](#)) conducted their study in Pakistani public schools and reported that the main reason of school dropout was corporal punishment. Those students who experience physical punishment generally commit violence in their families and society (Arif & Rafi, [2007](#)). Similarly, physical punishment also leads to low self-esteem, fear, anxiety, and poor performance in students (Naz et al., [2011](#)). The United Nations ([2008](#)) survey report also confirmed that Pakistan is among those countries where the cause of school dropout rate is corporal punishment. Physical punishment discourages children to attend school, and consequently these children are more likely to leave school in early age. Furthermore, cognitive abilities and foundation of learning in students who face corporal punishment is not so developed to motivate them for learning. Such students who get physical punishment are unable to interact socially which also hinders the extension of their cognitive skills (Straus, [2001](#)). Moreover, corporal punishment also affects the self-esteem and students' motivation.

It is also an established fact that corporal punishment affects students' motivation negatively (Font & Gershoff, [2017](#)). UNICEF ([2022](#)) identified 43 types of punishments being used in Pakistani schools. These punishments include smacking, kicking, and beating with canes, belts, electric wires, and other objects. Other types of punishments include psychological punishments. The government of Pakistan in 2021 passed a bill to ban corporal punishment in Islamabad, the federal territory of Pakistan. This bill stated, "under no circumstances, corporal punishments, or punishments which relate to the child's physical and mental development or which may affect the child's emotional status are allowed" (Act No. XLIX; section 3(3)).

This act received appreciation from all the stakeholders across the country and demanded the application of this act throughout the country to ban violence against students. However, this is yet to be decided. Meanwhile, teachers have always been discouraged to avoid such punishments. However, due to lack of legislation, there are many incidents of reported corporal punishments across the country, either in madrasas or schools. The Daily Times ([2020](#)) reported a story where a school teacher used a cane to hit students. Another terrible event which became viral on social media during the same year was about an 11-year old student who was spanked in front of the camera. There are plenty of other events in which students lost their lives and also faced severe physical and mental torture.

## Research Objectives

Following research objectives would drive the current research:

- To analyze the relationship between corporal punishment and motivation of students studying at public secondary schools.
- To identify the difference between the urban and rural public secondary schools' students as to facing corporal punishment and their level of motivation.

## Hypotheses

The following two hypotheses corresponding to research objectives were put forward.

H1: There is no relationship between corporal punishment and motivation of students studying at public secondary schools.

H2: There is a significant difference between urban and rural public secondary schools' students as to facing the corporal punishment and their level of motivation.

## **Methodology**

### **Procedure**

The prime objective of the current research was to analyze the relationship between corporal punishment and the motivation of students studying at secondary schools. A correlational research design was adopted to meet the study objectives. A survey was conducted to collect the data from students studying in class 9th and 10th at public secondary schools. Two questionnaires were developed to collect data. Linear regression and One-way-Anova test were applied to analyze the collected data. All the ethical considerations and formalities were ensured before collecting the data. The age of participants ranged between 14-17 years.

### **Population**

The population of the current study comprised Government Secondary Schools located in District Muzaffargarh. There were, in total, 132 secondary schools. Out of these, 90 schools were for boys and 42 schools for girls, with a total of 83293 students.

### **Sampling**

A simple random sampling technique was applied to scrutinize the study sample from rural and urban secondary schools. The data was collected from 17 schools. From these selected schools, 415 students participated in the current research, 188 students participated from urban schools, and 227 students participated from rural schools respectively.

### **Research Instruments**

Many research instruments were reviewed to measure the corporal punishment and motivation of secondary schools' students. However, none of the research instruments were found suitable in relation to Pakistani schools. Considering the nature of research objectives in this research, the researchers developed these instruments by themselves. The available tools and related literature was thoroughly examined in order to design certain items according to the local needs and contexts. Thus, 20 items were developed to measure the corporal punishment and 20 items to measure the



level of motivation in view of facing corporal punishment. Both scales were developed on the five-point Likert scale. The reliability of these scales was also calculated. The Cronbach value for corporal punishment was  $\alpha=.88$  and for students' motivation scale it was  $\alpha=.70$ . Thus, the internal consistency of these scales was according to the required benchmarks.

### Data Collection

The data were collected from students studying at public secondary schools of district Muzaffargarh. The last author of the current research was responsible to collect data for this study. Initially, meetings were arranged with school principals to seek permission to collect data. Later, each class was visited. Researchers asked each student to spare 15 to 20 minutes to fill up the questionnaire. To maximize students' understanding about the questionnaire items, they presented them in Urdu to get their true response. Students were assured the anonymity of their identification.

### Data Analysis

All the collected data were entered into SPSS which was screened and cleared for analysis. After the calculation of mean and standard deviation, linear regression was applied to achieve the objectives. Later, an independent sample t-test was applied to test the proposed hypotheses.

## Results

The current study focused to analyze the relationship between corporal punishment and motivation of secondary schools' students. After calculating the descriptive statistics, a simple linear regression and an independent sample t-test was calculated to analyze the data.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics*

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivation	64.69	9.99
Corporal punishment	52.88	14.65
Rural students	57.49	14.98
Urban students	47.30	12.10

$N = 415$

Table 1 presents the scores of descriptive statistics. Total scores were calculated by performing a linear regression and an independent sample t-

test. Initially, descriptive statistics of all the variables was calculated to understand the data variation. There was a clear variation in the mean scores of motivation and corporal punishment which was suitable to perform linear regression. As to the key demographic variables ‘rural and urban’ students and their level of motivation with facing corporal punishment, the mean score was different for both variables.

**Table 2**  
*Linear Regression Analysis*

	df	F	sig.
Regression	1	215.17	.142 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	413	99.59	
Total	414		

\* $p < 0.05$

Table 2 presents the results of linear regression. A simple linear regression was applied to predict the students’ level of motivation for facing corporal punishment at public secondary schools. The following regression equation was found. A very slight amount of variance was identified by the level of motivation as to facing corporal punishment at public secondary schools’  $F(41126.84) = 2.161$ ,  $R^2 = 0.005\%$ ,  $p < .14$ . These results present almost no relationship between these two variables, as the explained amount of variance between both variables is very small. This leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

**Table 3**  
*Regression Coefficient*

Model	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	Sig.
(Constant)	62.08	1.84		33.79	.000
Corporal Punishment	.50	.033	.072	1.470	.142

Table 3 presents the regression coefficients of both variables. These results are also in accordance with the above regression coefficient. This table shows that the coefficients do not significantly contribute to the regression model, which means that one unit added to corporal punishment does not affect students’ level of motivation. Thus, the first research hypothesis of the current study was accepted.

**Table 4**  
*Group Statistics for Independent Sample t-test*

Variable	Area	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Corporal Punishment	Rural	227	57.485	14.9871	.9947
Motivation	Urban	188	47.308	12.1047	.8828

In order to test the other two research hypotheses, an independent sample t-test was applied by selecting the key demographic variable “rural and urban students of secondary schools.” This test was applied on both variables independently. Corporal punishment was entered to measure the difference between rural and urban secondary schools’ students. Results revealed that there was a significant difference between rural and urban students in view of facing corporal punishment and resultantly, their level of motivation  $t(413) = 7.501, p = .001$ . This means that the research hypothesis was accepted. However, as to measuring the level of motivation of both rural and urban students, significant results  $t(413) = 3.287, p = .295$  could not be found.

### Discussion

The main purpose of the current study was to measure the relationship between corporal punishment and motivation of students in public secondary schools. The results of the current study were completely in line with the existing pool of research. It was proved that there was no relationship between corporal punishment and the degree of motivation of students at public secondary schools. The results were in line with the national and available international research. For instance, the study findings of Khan et al. (2014) revealed that corporal punishment failed to provoke motivation in students, which was in accordance with the study findings. Similarly, the findings of Naz et al. (2011) identified that corporal punishment carried a multidimensional impact on students’ performance and related variables, which was also aligned with the study findings. Moreover, Ahmad et al. (2013) conducted research on corporal punishment and its effects on students’ motivation along with classroom learning. They identified a negative correlation between corporal punishment and motivation which was in line with the study findings.

The second hypothesis measured the difference between facing corporal punishment and related level of motivation in rural and urban secondary schools. Significant results were analyzed in view of rural students, which

showed that the rural schools' students face corporal punishment and it also affects their level of motivation, which is in contrast to urban schools. The findings of the current research were somehow comparable with the available research. Han (2014) conducted a study on corporal punishment in rural schools and identified that the rural schools' principals should discontinue corporal punishment practices and adopt alternative discipline policies to enhance students' motivation.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

The current study measured the relationship between corporal punishment and motivation in public secondary schools. In the following section certain limitations would be acknowledged which may be tackled in future research. The first limitation is about the study measures, which raised serious concerns after data analysis in spite of achieving the required reliability bench marks. These research instruments failed to measure the required variance in the data. In order to overcome this shortcoming in future research existing research instruments would prove helpful or to follow the proper validation study before using such instruments. The next limitation is about the sample inclusion. A simple random sampling technique was applied and, due to that, only a few female schools were included from the available population. Future research may select a balanced sampling approach by using cluster sampling technique. The third limitation is study variables. The relationship between corporal punishment and motivation was measured. Other variables could also be studied to map out the real impact of corporal punishment on students' related outcomes for instance, their mental health, performance, efficacy, and confidence etc.

### **Conclusion**

The prime objective of the current research was to map the relationship between corporal punishment and students' motivation in public secondary schools. It was concluded that there was no relationship between corporal punishment and the level of motivation of students. Thus, the first hypothesis was accepted. The other hypothesis were also accepted, which showed that the students of rural secondary schools faced more corporal punishments and, consequently, their level of motivation was low. The result of the independent sample t-test was significant in relation to this hypothesis.

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