



Corporal punishment: Its effect on school attendance among pupils in primary schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania

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Article Info

Received: 22 Nov 2021,

Received in revised form: 13 Dec 2021,

Accepted: 22 Dec 2021,

Available online: 30 Dec 2021

Keywords— Corporal punishment, effect, school attendance, pupils, primary schools, Temeke Municipality, Tanzania.

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Abstract

For the purpose of changing students' social conduct and behaviours and focusing their attention on academic school-related activities and performance, teachers may employ corporal punishment as a manner or mechanism to manage student performance in primary schools. Public concern over whether the corporal punishment of students affects their attendance at school has been raised. This study assessed the effect of corporal punishment on Pupils' school attendance in Public Primary Schools in Temeke Municipality. Specifically, the study was guided by the following research objectives: to identify the kind of corporal punishment used in public primary schools and to describe the effects of corporal punishment on pupils' attendance in public primary school. The study used a mixed research approach and a descriptive survey design. It used a sample size of 300 participants, including head teachers, teachers and pupils. Both probability and nonprobability sampling techniques were used. The study used questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions as the methods of data collection. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including the mean and frequencies, using the SPSS computer application. Qualitative data were analysed thematically. The study reviewed that corporal punishment causes undesired behavior such as absenteeism, truancy, and dropout and instils fear, anger, anxiety, physical harm or injury and humiliation to the pupils concerned. There is a need to revisit regulations that permit the addimist demonstration of corporal punishment in schools and, where possible, abolish its administration in primary schools in the country.

I. INTRODUCTION

International concern about the harm that the application of corporal punishment poses to the rights and well-being of pupils has long been recognised. The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (GITEACPOC) was started in 2001 (Gwirayi & Shumba, 2011). The campaign also aims to ensure that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other human rights authorities' recommended steps are implemented and that governments move quickly to adopt legislation reform and public education campaigns.

The goal of the campaign is to eliminate all forms of violence against children while they are at school or on their

way to and from school. This includes but is not limited to physical and sexual abuse, bullying, peer-on-peer violence, the use of weapons, and harassment (Ajibola and Hamadi, 2014). The UN human rights treaty monitoring organisations' preessional working groups are routinely updated with briefings from the Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children. A student's right to be treated with dignity and to have their bodies respected is violated when they are subjected to corporal punishment (Muneja, 2013; Yaghambe, 2013). Unlike other forms of interpersonal violence, its legality in practically every state in the world violates the right to equal protection under the law.

Corporal punishment (CP) refers to a deliberate act that inflicts pain or physical discomfort, taken by teachers against pupils as the management approach to certain behaviors. Corporal punishment appears in many ways, including hitting, kicking, shaking, slapping, pinching, forcing a student to stay in uncomfortable, undignified positions and engaging in excessive physical exercise (Lumato & Mwila, 2022). In Tanzania, corporal punishment is the punishment that is supposed to be administered by teachers in schools because it aims to cause deliberate pain or discomfort in response to undesired behaviour shown by pupils. CP has been part and parcel of managing behaviors and disciplinary issues in primary schools in Tanzania to reform pupils towards attaining higher grades and performances (Hakielimu, 2011).

Corporal "punishment in Tanzanian schools is legal and lawful, particularly in public schools, and has been lawfully practised since 1979" (Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment for Children, 2011). "CP is defined in the regulations as the use of a light, flexible stick to strike a student on the hand or buttocks, which are generally covered by clothing, but does not include striking a kid with any other instrument or on any other part of the body." "This suggests that corporal punishment is permitted in elementary schools, but how it affects the performance of primary school pupils has become a source of concern for many stakeholders in Tanzania (Hakielimu, 2011)" According to studies by Odhiambo (2017) and Hakielimu (2011), corporal punishment has become a habit for many pupils, who are beaten for nearly any error or behaviour that does not even warrant the use of CP (Odhiambo, 2017). "Even though physical punishment is now a prevalent practice in public elementary schools, student performance has not improved.

Teachers in elementary schools in Tanzania utilise a variety of sanctions to address bad student behaviour. In schools, corporal punishment is one of various disciplinary measures used to promote or maintain discipline (Godwin, 2022; Semali & Vumilia, 2016). According to the National Corporal Punishment Regulations of 1979 and section 60 of the National Education Act of 1978, CP is legal in Tanzanian mainland schools. It is also important to note that CP is generally legal in both mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar (Hassan, 2012). Therefore, CP is legally permissible in Tanzanian society as a discipline-related device. The Government Guidelines of 2000 stipulate that only school principals may administer corporal punishment; the number of permissible strokes ranges from four to six; and there are sanctions for regular teachers who violate these restrictions, i.e., use corporal punishment (Muneja 2013; Feinstein & Mwahombela, 2010; Yaghambe & Tshabangu, 2013). Other national standards provide that

pupils' hands or buttocks should be struck and that female pupils should only receive corporal punishment from female teachers. The Ministry of Community Development, Gender, and Children issued directions indicating that parents of CP victims who were improperly administered should approach school officials. These laws suggest acceptance of the fact that CP is a severe punishment whose usage is purposefully limited.

Despite the fact that numerous studies have been carried out, the majority have mainly concentrated on explaining the relationship between corporal punishment and student discipline. The relationship on how corporal punishment affects pupils' school attendance was not explicitly stated, and this has limited the ability to draw a relationship in the literature on how corporal punishment affects school attendance. This study assessed the effect of corporal punishment on pupil school attendance among pupils in public primary schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania. Specifically, the study was guided by the following research objectives:

- i. To identify the kind of corporal punishment used in public primary schools,
- ii. To describe the effects of corporal punishment on pupils' attendance in public primary school.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used a mixed research approach and a descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in the Mbagala ward, Temeke District Dar es salaam region. The study involved head teachers, teachers and pupils. The study sample comprised 300 respondents from four primary schools in Temeke Municipality. This included four (4) head teachers, thirty (30) teachers and two hundred and sixty-six (266) pupils. Both probability and nonprobability sampling techniques were used. Purposive sampling was used to obtain the sample of head teachers and teachers, while random sampling was applied to pupils. The study used questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions as the methods of data collection. Data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics, including the mean and frequencies, using the SPSS computer application. Data from the interview analysis were recorded and analysed after the end of each session. As Denscombe (2007) argues, the data from interviews were transcribed into texts and coded into categories indicating issues and ideas relevant to the study. Data from qualitative sources were merged in the interpretation of findings and were used to produce the research report. However, the discussion of findings and the report was done descriptively.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The kinds of corporal punishment used in primary schools

The study intended to identify the kinds of corporal punishments that are used in primary schools in Temeke

Municipality. Table 1 presents the findings collected from the participants. First, the study was first interested in knowing if pupils had received any corporal punishment from both teachers and their parents. The results are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Received Corporal Punishment

Variables		Teachers	parents
Received Corporal Punishment	Yes	73	28
	No	41	3
Total		114	31

Source researcher 2022.

Table 1 shows that 73 pupils received corporal punishment from teachers, 41 pupils did not receive corporal punishment from teachers, 28 pupils received corporal punishment from parents, and 2 pupils received corporal punishment from both parents and teachers. This is related to reinforcement theory, which says that the external environment of an organisation must be designed to be effective and positive to motivate employees. Punishment theory is very relevant to this study, as it emphasises changing children’s behaviors (Blair and Ernest 2003). The authors that individual behaviors with negative consequences tend not to be repeated also add the punishment is consequence the minimise the negative behavior of the child is truancy, lack of punctuality the use of abusive language. Additionally, Dlamini, Dlamini, & Bhebhe (2017) found that corporal punishment has effects such as poor academic performance and low class participation. Furthermore, Wambura (2010) added that corporal punishment causes pupils to dislike schools and learning activities. The study also indicates that corporal punishment causes pupil absenteeism and withdrawal from school.

The study conducted by Williams (1983) showed that corporal punishment had short and long effects on the development and health of the pupil. In addition, pupils who receive corporal punishment may suffer permanent gastrointestinal, orthopedic, and neurological injuries. Additionally, the study conducted by Gershoff (2002) added that corporal punishment has an effect on pupils such as anxiety, fear, humiliation, depression, isolation and lower self-esteem. The author added that corporal punishment can cause pupils to engage in undesired behaviors such as criminal and sexual abuse. Corporal punishment causes physical harm, emotional problems, psychological effects, spiritual problems and even death, and sometimes mental growth of a child. This shows that corporal punishment was still conducted at the school to maintain school discipline, and it also applied at home from the parents. Therefore, a way to maintain pupils’ discipline is to improve effective communication, respect and positive education change between teachers and pupils. Additionally, the author added that to encourage pupils’ intellectual development will encourage academic performance without the use of corporal punishment. Table 2 presents findings collected from the participants on the kinds of corporal punishments administered in schools.

Table 2: Kind of Corporal Punishment

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Kinds of corporal punishment	Slapping/stick more than four	17	17.9
	Push up/Kicking	28	29.5
	Kneel down and the sun	17	17.9
	Canning	15	15.8
	Other humiliate	18	18.9
Total		95	100

Source researcher 2022.

Table 2 shows that 25 respondents said yes about school use of corporal punishment, and 9 respondents said no school use of corporal punishment. This shows that schools use corporal punishment for pupils instead of using other positive punishments. Additionally, Table 2 shows that both head teachers and teachers use types of corporal punishment, such as 17.9% slapping/sticking more than four times, 29% pushing up, 17% kneeling down under the sun and 18.9% using other humiliate to maintain pupils' discipline in schools and adding that head teachers follow regulations in conducting punishment for pupils. This was similar to the study conducted by Yaghambe et al. (2013), who argue that corporal punishment, such as slapping, kneeling on land and rough floor, punching, and negative punishment, occurs when the child's behavior is maintained by removing pleasant stimuli, such as removing from classroom, no food, (breath time), and suspension.

William (2009) states that the forms of punishment are pushup, canning, codes of conduct and suspension. The UN Committee (2006) indicates that corporal punishment includes slapping and hitting pupils with sticks, belts, shoes and wooden spoons. This is also what Lumato and Mwila (2022) reported. They reported that corporal punishment in schools involved slapping, kicking, beating and other humiliations.

The head of school D argues,

Sometimes when punishing there are pupils who are hurt or harmed whether they are given first aid, this is because when you give him punishment, for instance, whipping him with sticks on his buttocks, he runs to put his hand, or even when he is whipped with a hand stick arm, he will do different instructions, which is what happens when he gets hurt.

(Interview 26/07/2022)

Reinforcement theory contends that an individual's behaviors are a function of its consequences, and skinner-developed reinforcement means that behavior has a desire effect and punishment means that behavior has a negative effect (Morris & Maisto 2001). This shows that the majority of teachers still use stick more than four, push up/kick as well as kneel down under the sun to maintain the discipline of the pupils. Some teachers said that "she need to use corporal punishment because of some pupils, of they use simple punishment some of pupils, repeat their behavior. This is similar to the study conducted by Blair and Ernest (2003), who identified the use of appropriate language as a punishment to pupils, and Bell (2013), who added that, currently, local school districts still practice spanking to maintain pupils' discipline. Table 3 shows pupils' responses on the kinds of corporal punishments administered to them.

Table 3: pupils' responses on Kind of Corporal Punishment

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Kinds of corporal punishment	Slapping/stick more than four	103	30.4
	Push up/Kicking	72	21.2
	Kneel down and the sun	74	21.8
	Canning	25	7.4
	Other humiliate	65	19.2
Total		339	100

Source researcher 2022.

Table 3 shows that 30.4% of pupils slapped/sticked more than four times, 21.2% pushed up, 21.8% kneel down under the sun, 7.4% canning and 19.2% other humiliate. This shows that corporal punishment is still conducted in primary schools and at home. Some pupils said that "she took money from her mother and got punishment of burned her fingers" and other pupils said "he was late at home, and punished 10 stick from his father "and the other said "he was punished to make push up from teacher and it make difficult to walk for two days. The implication of the findings was that even though the "respondents had varying views on the process through which corporal punishments" are implemented, the

majority of the respondents agreed that they use a process in implementing corporal punishments in public primary school.

Naker and Deborah (2009) state that canning, slapping, kneeling under the sun, and other humiliate are kinds of corporal punishment apart from that UNICEF (2011) added that standing in the sun, pulling hairs, beaten by use objects such as sticks, rulers, and belts are a kind of corporal punishment. This relates to social discipline theory, which states that discipline is not a punishment but a way of helping pupils to improve themselves and that teachers

never use punishment and avoid using praise (Harlan 1996). The theory helps to understand the behavior pupils teachers and parents have both automatic and learner responses to the environment (Redmond 2010). It has also been detected that the most strictly disciplined children often have grades that are well below average and are the most likely to be elaborate in gangs. This confirms that the idea that retribution alone is not effective in bettering the most severe

crimes and does little to re-educate those who most regularly display problem manners. Therefore, the study found that pupils who received slapping, beaten by sticks more than four, push up, kneel down under the sun, canning and other humiliate, such as the use of harsh language, are more used as a kind of corporal punishment in schools to maintain pupils' discipline.

Table 4. 1: Relation between corporal punishment and student attendance

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	166	83.0
No	34	17.0
Total	200	100.0

Source researcher 2022.

Seventeen percent said corporal punishment did not have any effect on pupils' attendance, and 83% said corporal punishment had an effect on pupils' attendance. Some teachers said that "there is no effect of corporal punishment on pupils' attendance". Through skinner punishment has positive and negative effects. The child that receives an unpleasant stimulus to decrease undesired behavior is a positive punishment. Example corporal punishment, such as slapping, kneeling on land and rough floor, punching, and negative punishment, occurs when the child's behavior is maintained by removing pleasant stimuli, such as removing from classroom, no food, (breath time), and suspension (Yaghambe et al, 2013).

Additionally, the teacher of school B added,

"Corporal punishment is not a reason for students missing a school, but students missing the school because of bud school infrastructure such as no 'fence' this make difficult to control students cause of large number of students" and other said "some class teacher are too harsh for students especially for little children, that make students missing a

school" This creates absenteeism of students, and poor academic performance for students.

(Interview 15/07/2022)

The study conducted by Bauer et al. (1990) believes that both communities and teachers hold four similar myths about corporal punishment: corporal punishment builds character, corporal punishment teaches respect, corporal punishment is the only thing that some children understand, and that without corporal punishment, behavioral problems increase. Some cultures view deliberate harm to children as essential to the development of strength, tolerance and cultural obedience.

Effect of corporal punishment on school attendance

The study was interested in describing the effect of corporal punishment on pupils' school attendance. The results indicated that the effect of corporal punishment could be reflected in absenteeism, truancy, drop out, academic performance and the subtle aspect of awareness. The results are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Effect of corporal punishment

<i>Variables</i>	<i>low percent</i>	<i>average Percent</i>	<i>highest Percent</i>	<i>good Percent</i>	<i>Very good percent</i>
Absenteeism	8.8	55.9	35.3	0	0
Truancy	20.6	55.9	17.6	5.9	0
Drop Out	11.8	11.8	73.5	2.9	0
Awareness	14.7	17.6	52.9	14.7	0
Academic Performance	11.8	38.2	32.4	14.7	2.9
Total	34	100.0	100.0		

Source researcher 2022.

This shows that 34% of respondents said a low effect of corporal punishment on the students, 100% of respondents said average effects of corporal punishment on the students, and 100% of respondents said average effects of corporal punishment on the students. This means that corporal punishment has both average and highest effects on students' absenteeism, truancy, dropout, awareness and academic performance.

Absenteeism

The results indicated that for corporal punishment on absenteeism, 8.8% of respondents showed that corporal punishment had a low effect on the absenteeism of students, 55.9% of respondents showed that corporal punishment had the highest effect on absenteeism, and 35.3% of respondents said corporal punishment had an average effect on absenteeism. This shows that corporal punishment has an effect on absenteeism, and a large number of respondents said there was an increase in students' absenteeism. Kihwili's (1981) study found that corporal punishment has a more negative effect (harmful) than beneficial effect on pupils, and similar to this, Mairo (2003) argues that corporal punishment causes stubborn and destroys desire behavior in pupils and increases absenteeism in pupils.

Truancy

Study found that also there was effect on students truancy, majority of respondents 55% said, the use of corporal punishment has highest effect on truancy of students, 20.6% of respondents said, the use of corporal punishment has low effect on truancy of students, 17.6% of respondents said corporal punishment has average effect on truancy of students and 5.9% of respondents said corporal punishment has good effect of truancy of students "some students after get corporal punishment change their behavior either positive or negative mean increase decrease truancy of students". Reinforcement theory emphasised that students should feel safe and valued and added four types of goals that motivate pupils' behavior: attention getting, power and control, revenge, and helplessness or inadequacy. He states that teachers to discuss the behavior problem with the student and to have the student create goals to improve their behavior.

The head of school A added,

The effects that happen to students because of punishment are not serious in terms of hurting body parts. the student decreases and causes the planned goal to not be fully achieved

(Interview on 08/07/2022)

Therefore, teachers who administer corporal punishment bring a bad association to students, a situation that can disrupt a child's educational development. In some cases, a

student may even drop out from school to avoid the teacher. Studies show that corporal punishment is a direct and indirect reason for children to drop out of school. Mostly, it was noted from the respondents that parents/guardians sometimes contribute to corporal punishment to their children by not giving enough teaching and learning materials, such as buying school requirements such as school uniforms, exercise books, and other school contributions. Another response from the respondents through interviews identified peer pressure influence as one aspect of increasing the corporal punishment of peers by influencing each other not to attend school.

Drop Out

The study found that 11.8% of respondents said that corporal punishment had a low effect on student dropout, 11.8% of respondents said that it had an average effect on student dropout, and 73% of respondents said that corporal punishment had the highest effect on student dropout. Twenty-nine percent of respondents show that corporal punishment has a good effect on student dropout. This shows that a large number of respondents agreed that corporal punishment did not help reduce student dropout, but sometimes it increased student dropout. Another respondent said, "As a head teacher in order to maintain dropout of student's corporal punishment need to be used".

Awareness

The study found that 14.7% of respondents showed that corporal punishment had the highest effects on students' awareness, 17.6% of respondents showed that corporal punishment had average effects on students' awareness, 52.9% of respondents showed that corporal punishment had low effects on students' awareness, and 14.7% of respondents showed that corporal punishment had good effect awareness on students. Kuleana (1999) found that pupils who receive corporal punishment create a number of problems, such as infection biases, wounds, cuts and broken bones, that make pupils hate their teacher and lesson and cause absenteeism and poor performance in class. This shows that the majority of respondents agreed that corporal punishment has very good effects on student awareness in learning. The teacher said, "Students increase more awareness in learning and teaching processes after seeing stickings or being beaten by the teacher, especially young students aged 8 – 11 years."

Academic Performance

The study found that 11.8% of respondents said that corporal punishment has the highest effects on the academic performance of pupils, 38.2% of respondents said corporal punishment has low effects on the academic performance of pupils, 32.4% of respondents said corporal punishment has average effects on the academic performance of pupils,

14.7% of respondents said corporal punishment has good effects on the academic performance of pupils, and 2.9% of respondents said corporal punishment has very good effects on the academic performance of pupils. Some teachers said, “Students improve his/her academic performance by using stick when they fail exams”, and others said, “Some students fail examinations and do not come to school because they are afraid of getting punishment”, and other respondents said, “Because of afraid of getting punishment, other students use cheating to avoid failing and getting punishment that makes students get wrong results”.

This is similar to the student of school C saying,

I advise our teachers to reduce beating us a lot, using bad language, we love school and those naughty students should be called their parents.

(Interview on 21/07/2022)

The study conducted by UNICEF and URT (2013) indicates that corporal punishment causes pupils’ dropout, and Human Right Watch (2010) added that corporal punishment causes pupils to have poor academic achievement, absenteeism, and dropout through problems of depression, fear and anger. Additionally, Gershoff (2002) indicates that corporal punishment causes pupils to engage in undesired behavior, such as criminal behavior, that is not concentrated on their school activities. Therefore, the study found that corporal punishment causes undesired behavior, such as absenteeism, truancy, and dropout, in addition to pupils not concentrating on school activities, leading to poor academic performance and a lack of awareness in learning and teaching processes through fear, anger, anxiety, physical harm or injury and humiliation. This should be a worry to major educational stakeholders such as The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (GITEACPOC), which aims to ensure that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and other human rights authorities’ recommended steps are implemented and that governments move quickly to adopt legislation reform and public education campaigns about the harm that the application of corporal punishment poses to the rights and well-being of pupils.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Good school discipline is the outcome of regulations and moral teachings that build acceptable behavioural techniques for the regulation of students and maintenance of order in schools. The ostensible purpose of school discipline is to establish a safe and conducive learning environment. When a teacher is unable to maintain order and discipline in the classroom, the learning environment suffers. When used excessively, corporal punishment enhances classroom discipline but leads to an inability to

concentrate and consequently retards learning. In addition to causing undesirable behaviours such as absenteeism, truancy, and dropout, it instils fear, anger, anxiety, physical pain or injury, and humiliation in the affected students. In addition, corporal punishment erodes the trust between students and teachers, significantly impacts school attendance, and causes some students to drop out of school. Despite resistance from parents and instructors who support physical punishment as a corrective measure for student discipline, the law on corporal punishment has remained unchanged: only the school principal or an authorised teacher may apply it. If teachers are to follow the principles of controlling student discipline more successfully, it is unclear how they would ensure that insubordination is dealt with immediately when it occurs. There is a need to reexamine regulations that allow the administration of corporal punishments in schools and, if possible, to eliminate their use in primary schools across the nation. As a means of ensuring school discipline among primary school students, it is also necessary for teachers to opt for alternate punishments.

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