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Gender Differences in Corporal Punishment, Academic Self-Efficacy and Drop-Out in Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present research was to find out gender differences in corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students. The research design used for the study was correlation design. By using purposive sampling technique, a sample of 250 (74%) students of 13-18 (M= 15.59, SD= 1.62) years was recruited from 334 public secondary schools of Lahore city, Pakistan. The Demographic information sheet, Physical Punishment Questionnaire (Malik, 2014), Academic Self-efficacy Scale (Gafoor & Ashraf, 2006) and school record for drop-out was used for the assessment of the participants. The data were collected from different public secondary school students and were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Independent sample t-test) through IBM SPSS. The findings of the study revealed that corporal punishment showed a positive relationship with drop-out. Boys were found to expose more to corporal punishment and had higher drop-out than the girls. Moreover, girls were higher in academic self-efficacy than the boys. The outcomes of the study are beneficial for the clinical and counseling psychologists and teachers as well as for the parents to comprehend the problems of the students and to resolve their issues.

Keywords:
Corporal Punishment, Academic Self-Efficacy, Gender Differences, Drop-Out, Secondary School Student

1. Introduction

Education is the main route to success for an individual and a country as well. Without education, the accomplishment of desired goals is not possible. The educational field is facing many problems that are the root cause of the failure of this system especially corporal punishment is at the top. This practice is still being used by the teachers in many countries and many students are being exposed to it (Society for Research in Child Development, 2016). This practice may affect the academic life of the students and may also result in losing interest in studies and quiting the school to avoid corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is defined as "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior" (Straus, 2001), such as "patting, hitting, punching, and spanking or other forms of physical punishment wherein school personnel actually strike the student with a part of the body" (Bogacki, Armstrong, & Weiss, 2005). Moreover, literature differentiates corporal punishment from physical abuse but still, some researchers "see all corporal punishment as abusive" (Hicks-Pass, 2009). Both the boys and girls are beaten in the schools but usually "girls are beaten with less force than boys" (Archambault, 2009). The reason that boys

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are more exposed to punishment is that boys are considered to be stronger than girls and male teachers are also authoritative in nature, therefore, usually, they prefer this practice (Bogacki, Armstrong, & Weiss, 2005). Despite the implementation of many legal laws to stop punishment in democratic South Africa (1996), many students regularly experienced corporal punishment during their schooling as it has been an integral part of the school system (Vally & Ramadiro, 2006). Using punishment as a mode to maintain discipline may lead to many psychological problems i.e., anxiety, low self-esteem and low academic self-efficacy.

The construct of self-efficacy has many dimensions and each dimension vary to the other (Zimmerman, 2000). Academic self- efficacy refers to "students' confidence in their ability to carry out such academic tasks as preparing for exams and writing term exams" (Zajacova, Lynch, & Espenshade, 2005). Self-efficacy is a most important ability of a student that encourages him and leads him to success eventually; it is referred to "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required producing given attainments" (Bandura, 1977). It basically provides self-confidence which develops a sense of mastery in students to succeed in the academic activities and to have better planning to achieve the desired goal. Therefore, academic self-efficacy has been the basic element in explaining the process of learning and motivation. According to Bandura (1986), those individuals who have higher self-efficacy to achieve their goal are more enthusiastically participate in a task while others who possess low self-efficacy usually avoid participation. Self-concept contains academic self-efficacy and these two constructs are interrelated. Students who are confident about their self-image are also confident about their academic skills as compared to those who have a poor self-concept (Dickhauser & Steinmeier-Pelster, 2002).

Low academic self-efficacy may develop educational difficulties among the students. They may have a poor academic performance and attendance record. School drop-out is also the result of low academic self-efficacy. It is found that a large number of students start the academic year in schools but their number decrease at the end of the academic session. The rate of school drop-out is high in developing countries where the income and basic necessities of life are not fulfilled and children have to left the school without the completion of their academic year (Lewin, 2008). There are two main types of school drop-out. If a child starts school but he is not learning anything at the end of compulsory education it is called internal drop-out. Such type of drop-out is common in backbencher students who are attending the school but not learning actually whereas those students who left the school without the completion of their academic session refers to external drop-out (Millet & Thin, 2005).

Multiple factors are responsible for school drop-out. These factors can be subjective i.e., related to the health, diet, financial background and motivation of the student (Hunt, 2008). Some factors belong to the migration and other household matters. The environmental factors of school are equally responsible for drop-out, for example, the teacher's attitude, absentees of the teacher, poor school management, and poor discipline strategies (Alexander, 2008).

1.1. Objectives

- To assess the level of corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students.
- To examine out the relationship between corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students.
- To assess the gender difference between corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students.

1.2.Hypotheses

- There would be a negative relationship between corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students.
- There would be gender differences in corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school boys and girls.

2. Method

The purpose of the present research was to examine the relationship between corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students.

2.1. Research Design

To conduct the present study correlation research design was used.

2.2. Population

The 334 public secondary schools of Lahore district was the population of the current study.

2.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of the current study was consisted of adolescents (13-18 years). A total number of 334 public secondary school (School Education Department, 2018) was the population of the study including 154 boys and 180 girls secondary schools. By using purposive sampling technique, a sample (N =250) of 130 boys and 120 girls was recruited from 167 public secondary schools according to inclusion criteria.

2.3.1. Inclusion criteria. Students who had an age range from 13 to 18 years belonging to both genders were included. Students of public schools were recruited. Referred students by the class teacher for poor attendance in the class were included.

2.3.2.Exclusion criteria. Students with physical disabilities were excluded from the sample. Students who had learning problems. The teachers of other subjects of students (except the class in charge).

2.4. Instrumentation and Reliability of the Instruments

Three measures and personal information sheet was used for the assessment of the research participants in random order. These instruments include:

1. Personal information sheet, Informed consent and Ascent
2. Physical Punishment Questionnaire (Malik, 2014)
3. Academic self-efficacy (Gafoor & Ashraf, 2006)
4. School Attendance Record

2.4.1. Demographic Information Sheet. The demographic information sheet of students consisted of basic information of the participants.

2.4.2. Physical Punishment Questionnaire (Malik, 2014). Corporal punishment was assessed by using the indigenously developed measure of physical punishment questionnaire (Malik, 2014). It consists of 40 items which measure the different punishment practices used by the teachers in school. The scale has four response categories from one "for never" to four "for Always". The sum of all the items is considered the final score of the participant. The scale demonstrated excellent reliability of α = .82. Content validity was assured through the judgments of expert for the face validity and inclusion of representative items for the construct.

2.4.3. Academic Self-efficacy Scale (Gafoor & Ashraf, 2006). Academic Self-Efficacy Scale is prepared to assess the academic self-efficacy of secondary school students. The scale has different dimensions. There are 20 positive and 20 negative statements in a total of 40 statements. The scale demonstrated excellent reliability of α = .81. The translated version of the scale was used in the current study. Concurrent validity of the scale was determined against 'General Self-efficacy scale' (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1979) which is. r =.68.

2.4.4. School Attendance Record. The attendance record of the students was obtained from the class teacher and the average attendance of each student was calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{Average Attendance} = \frac{\text{Total no. of days attended the school}}{\text{Total no. of working days}} \times 100$$

The total no. of working days was calculated from the commencement of session till the current day.

3.3. Data Collection

After the approval of the topic, the data were collected after taking permission for the scale use and translations from the related authors via email. After this, approval for data collection was taken from the principals or headmasters of the schools. Consent was taken from the participants. The purpose of the research was informed to the participant prior to the data collection. Instructions regarding the questionnaires were provided and participants were informed that their confidentiality will be maintained. Participants were briefed about their ethical rights. The obtained data were analyzed by using suitable techniques through IBM SPSS version 20.

3.3.1. Ethical Considerations. Following ethical consideration were kept in mind to conduct this research:

- The research synopsis was approved by the AIOU research authorities.
- Approval to use the instruments was obtained from the authors of the scales through email.
- Approval for the data collection was taken from the head of the selected schools.
- The data collection was started after taking approval from the authors and principals. The participants were ensured of the confidentiality of the information provided by them.
- Researcher maintained the anonymity of the participants.
- Results were accurately reported by the researcher.

3.4. Data Analysis

Table 1. Correlation between Demographics, Corporal Punishment, Academic Self-efficacy, and Drop-out (N=250)

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1	**Age**	-	-.03	-.01	-.01	-.12
2	**Gender**		-	-.14*	-.03	-.05
3	**CP**			-	-.35**	.42**
4	**AS**				-	-.52**
5	**DO**					-

Note: CP =Corporal Punishment, ASE = Academic Self-efficacy, DO = Drop-out, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The results showed that gender was negatively associated with corporal punishment. It was also found corporal punishment showed a negative relationship with academic self-efficacy and a positive relationship with drop-out in secondary school students. Moreover, academic self-efficacy was negatively associated with drop-out in secondary school students.

Table 2. Independent Sample t-test Comparing Corporal Punishment, Academic Self-efficacy and Drop-out in Secondary School Boys and Girls (N=250)

Variable	Boys (n=130)		Girls (n=120)		t (248)	*p*	95%CL		Cohen's d
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			LL	UL	
CP	6.78	.99	5.63	1.05	8.86	.00	.89	1.40	1.12
ASE	7.38	1.67	7.82	.64	-2.73	.01	-.76	-.12	.35
DO	50.20	11.59	29.31	6.01	17.68	.00	18.56	23.22	2.26

Note: *CP =Corporal Punishment, ASE = Academic Self-efficacy, DO = Drop-out, CL= Confidence Interval, LL, Lower limit, UL, Upper limit,*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001*

The results revealed that boys were more exposed to corporal punishment than girls in public secondary schools. Academic self-efficacy was higher in secondary school girls as compared to secondary school boys. Moreover, the drop-out rate was higher in secondary school boys than secondary school girls.

4. Findings and Discussion

School life has a great impact on an individual's later life. School experiences are also play a vitol role in the development of self-esteem and academic self-efficcay of the students. Use of aversive techniques like corporal punishment is a common practice to maintain discipline and to enhance the academic performance of students which may lead to loss of interest in studies and leaving the school without completing the academic session as well. Therefore, the current study investigated the relationship between corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students. For the present study, it was hypothesized that there would be a negative relationship between corporal punishment and academic self-efficacy whereas a positive association between corporal punishment and drop-out. İt was also hypothesized that there would be gender differences in corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school boys and girls. by using purposive sampling technique, a sample of 250 scondary school girls and boys were recruited. The results of the present research suggested that corporal punishment was positively associated with drop-out while it was negatively associated with academic self-efficacy in secondary school students.

It was also revealed from the findings of the current research that corporal punishment is positively associated with drop-out. Many researches support this finding that violence is the main cause because of which students do not like their schools and later dropped-out from the schools. Violence has different forms mild to severe but it cannot be denied that violence in any form affects a child badly. Each year the school violence report is published and updated from all over the world which is the proof that corporal punishment is still in practice. According to the estimate, every third or fourth child is being punished whether in schools or at home which the main reason for physical and mental sufferings (Ending Violence in Childhood: Global Report, 2017).

Another study conducted by Parr (2013) examined the motivation and performance is the two constructs which play an important role in the educational set up. The study tested that self-efficacy and performance predict drop-out rate of schools. After testing the model it was found that academic performance was a strong predictor of high school drop-out rate than the self-efficacy.

It was also hypothesized that there would be a gender difference in corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students. The findings suggested that boys experienced more corporal punishment than girls in secondary schools. Civil Rights Data Collection (2006) also found that "boys are subjected to corporal punishment at much higher rates than girls: nationwide, boys make up 78.3 percent of those paddled, while girls make up 21.7 percent". Boys are exposed to corporal punishment more than girls in all the states where it is being used. It was also found in the current study that the boys were having higher drop-out rates than girls as consistent with previous findings (Al Ghanboosi & Alqahtani, 2013; Paepe, Zhu & DePryck, 2018; Dupere, Dion, Leventhal, Archambault, Crosnoe & Janosz, 2018). It was also found that girls showed higher academic self-efficacy as compared to boys (Su, Xiang, McBride, Liu & Thornton, 2016; Affuso, Bacchini & Miranda, 2017).

5. Conclusion

It is concluded in the light of the current study that corporal punishment showed a negative relationship with academic self-efficacy while it showed a positive relationship with drop-out in secondary school students. Gender differences were found regarding corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop-out in secondary school students. Girls were higher in academic self-efficacy than the boys while boys were higher in corporal punishment and drop-out than the girls.

6. Limitations and Suggestions

- The sample size of the study was sufficient but not representative so for the future studies the sample size should be large so that results could be valid.

- All the measures were self- reported. Qualitative research can explore more reasons associated with corporal punishment, academic self-efficacy and drop out in secondary school students.
- The school authorities should minimize the use of corporal punishment for the maintenance of discipline and should introduce alternative approaches to deal with problematic behaviors.
- The government should exercise effective rules especially in public schools where the students are exposed to punishment on a daily basis.

7. Implications

- Workshops can be organized by the government in the schools to introduce different methods to resolve the behavioral issues of the students instead of using physical punishment.
- The findings are beneficial for the child and school psychologists to resolve the behavioral problems of the students.
- The findings are also helpful to provide an insight into the reasons for high drop-out rate in schools.

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