

# Undergraduate's Perception toward Corporal Punishment

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**Abstract.** This study is conducted to find out the undergraduate's perception toward the corporal punishment that may happens in the school. The subjects of the research are sixth semester students of English Department of Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The data were collected through close and open questionnaire and analysed using content analysis. Based on the analysis of the data, it is concluded that most undergraduates experienced corporal punishment in the previous education before studying in the university. The experience of suffering corporal punishment leads the undergraduate's perception toward the corporal punishment.

**Keywords:** Undergraduate, Perception, Corporal Punishment

## 1 Introduction

Discipline is believed as something to be developed in the school. It is very important for the success of the students in education. As mentioned by Rosen [7] discipline is something to develop self-control, behavior, and character. In addition, Eggleton [3] states that discipline is used to make students obey the rules and build good behavior. Corporal punishment is usually related to school discipline even though the term discipline itself needs to be redefined by education actors. [8], [7]. School disciplines with any security methods, school rules, and corporal punishment, are frequently used by the teachers as methods of managing students' conducts in class (Cameron, [2]).

Although discipline is important, but it is necessary for the teacher to avoid punishment in conducting discipline to the students. The use of punishment is irrelevant to the Convention on the Right of the Child. According to the Convention on the Right of the Child, the child should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding, and is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members [9].

In practice, the results of a case study in Tanzania showed that 86% of the teachers preferred Corporal punishment and continue using it as the only alternative punishment strategy although the majority of students agreed that corporal punishment should be eliminated. It is due to the condition that it is harmful and causes students skip classes and absent. The study recommends the appropriate use of harmless strategies of executing corporal punishment [5].

There is also no evidence that corporal punishment promotes children's learning in the classroom. In some cross-sectional study, school children who received one or two types of school corporal punishment scored lower on some subject matter. The other evidence also shows that children who attended a school that allowed corporal punishment (slapping, pinching, hitting with a stick) had lower lower intrinsic motivation than children who attended a school that did not allow corporal punishment [9].

Corporal punishment, however, is still used by teacher in classroom and school activities. In this article, the writer will discuss the perception of some undergraduates toward corporal punishment. This will also discuss their background experiences when they became students and were suffered with corporal punishment.

## **2 Method**

The research was conducted to 53 undergraduates of English Department in Teacher Training and Education of Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The data were collected through close and open questionnaires and was analysed by using content analysis.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

Based on the results of calculations on the questionnaire, there were 92,5% of respondents who had received physical punishment from the teacher. Only 7,5% had never been subjected to physical punishment. The punishment given by the teacher varies from teacher shouting, directing students to push up, ordering students to do scout jumping, pulling ear, hitting student with a ruler, ordering student to run around the school field, hitting student with wood, ordering student to front roll, hitting the student's hand by using thick paper, and ordering student to clean the school environment.

The causes of the corporal punishment also vary including being busy in class, not doing assignments, talking to friends when the teacher explains, and being late to attend the class. Moreover, there were some conditions that need to be clarified before the teacher gives an action. The following are the examples of the cause of punishment: protecting a friend who is on bully, not cutting nails, broken tables, and late. Moreover, one of the resepondents stated that she did not know why she was punished.

From those who were punished, there were 43% of the respondents stated that they were once have been punished by their teacher, 47% stated that they were sometimes punished by the teacher, 6% of the undergradates stated that they were frequently punished by their teachers, while 4% of them had never been punished by the teacher. It indicates that most of the undergraduates were punished when they were students in elementary or secondary level. Based on the questionnaire an undergraduate that has never been punished thought that punishment is needed, while another thought that punishment is not needed. Based on the respons of the undergraduate who has never been punished that agree punishment is needed, the kind of punsihment that must be applied should not be a corporal punsihment. However, most of the students who had ever been punished with corporal punishment agreed that corporal punishment was needed. Based on the description above there was some possibilities that the experience of corporal punishment gives effect to the undergraduate's perception on the punishment.

There were also some perceptions of the undergraduates on the effect of the punishment to their physical and psychological condition. Based on the result of the questionnaire, there were 31% of the undergraduate who stated that the punishment hurt them physically, while 69% stated that it did not hurt them physically. However, the punishment gives worse effect to their psychological condition. Based on the analysis of the questionnaire, it is found that there were 44,2% of the undergraduates that thought punishment gave psychological effect to them. There was higher percentage of the undergraduates who felt that the punishment gave worse psychological effect toward them (44,2%) compared to the physical effect (31%). It is relevant to Robinson that question the effectiveness of corporal punishment and underline the side effects of corporal punishment such as running away, fear of teacher, feelings of helplessness, humiliation, aggression and destruction at home and at school, abuse and criminal activities [6]. Gershoff also attributes corporal punishment to increased aggression and lower levels of moral internalization and mental health and adds that adults who were corporally punished when children are more likely to be criminals, be violent with their sexual partner, and spank their own children [4]. The psychological effects may be more harmful than physical effects. Therefore teacher should examine the reasons for student behavior problems to solve this problem because many factors contribute to student behavior problems apart from the poor school and classroom management.

When they were asked about whether the corporal punishment has positive impact to the students, 56,2% agreed that it has positive impact toward students while 43,8% disagreed that it has positive impact toward students. Although the ratio is almost the same between the number of those who agree that punishment has a positive effect on students and those who disagree that punishment has a positive effect on students, the majority of respondents see punishment as an alternative that has a positive impact on students.

The questions are also given about whether they will give corporal punishment to their students if students commit violations or break the rules. There are 85.7% of undergraduates who stated that they would punish the child, while 14.3% of them stated that they would not give punishment. This description indicates that the majority of the of undergraduates has a potential condition to punish the students when the students break the rules.

The result of the study indicated that there are some corporal punishments that are irrelevant toward the action. As an example of the above findings, there is a child who was punished of defending a bullied friend. A respondent also experienced corporal punishment for not cutting his nails. It is relevant to the result of Agbenyega reports on the practice of corporal punishment in two basic schools in the Greater Accra District in Ghana[1]. The findings reveal that an overwhelming majority of the teachers (94%) use corporal punishment to enforce school discipline. The results further indicate that the majority of the teachers in both school sites administer corporal punishment to students who perform poorly in academic work. This shows that punishment is sometimes considered to be carried out unfairly on children.

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that although many countries have ratified CRC, the case of corporal punishment still happens. The teacher's treatment toward disobedient students and the potential practice of corporal punishment may be caused by the teachers experiences from suffering corporal punishment when they became students. Therefore, it is recommended that there must be socialization of positive discipline as the alternative of building student's character instead of using corporal punishment.

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