

Research Proposal on "Impact of Violent Punishment on Children's Behaviors and Social Development"

Introduction

Violent punishment or much commonly called as corporal punishment among children is one of the many issues that school institutions, family related organizations and even most governments around the world have been dealing with. As it happens, all sides have their own perspective why violent punishments are necessary for the children's growth and development.

For the teachers and other educational facilitators, they view violent punishments (such as spanking) as a way to correct the bad behaviors of the children-students. Teachers reveal that it should only be in special occasions when corporal punishment should be imposed to children-students, and when it does it should be in a way that will motivate the students to do better and learn what is right and what is not.

As for the family members, particularly the parents, violent punishments are seen to be part of the normal family life. Most parents believe that spanking and sometimes hitting their children is needed especially if their children are naughty and hyperactive. They need to do that so that they will learn to behave and act properly with or without them around. Bad words, as part of violent punishments, are not necessary but sometimes most parents could not help giving it to their children particularly during the times that they could not control their emotions anymore (as caused by extreme anger, tiredness and/or depression).

With these differences in point of views, the impact of such violent punishments to children has then become worth studying. This paper will hope to answer the general problem statement which is:

What are the effects of violent punishments to children's overall behavior and social development?

Specifically, this paper will be intended to answer the following questions:

1. What is the real definition of violent and/or corporal punishment and its relation to deviant acts?
2. What are the different forms of violent punishments that are normally given to children?
3. How can one categorize the various psychological and behavioral effects of such punishments to children?
4. What are the perceptions of some people who have experienced being punished when they were still young?

Objectives, Hypothesis and Significance of the Study

This paper will be aimed at studying the effects of violent punishments to children's overall behavior and social development. Specifically, this paper will be intended for:

1. Defining violent and/or corporal punishment
2. Analyzing the different forms of violent punishments that are normally given to children

3. Categorizing the different psychological and behavioral effects of such punishments to children
4. Recognizing the different point of views of some people who have experienced being punished when they were still young

This paper hypothesized that violent punishments, though sometimes necessary, are only preventing the children to grow positively thus negatively affecting their behavior and social development. More so, it is part of the hypothesis that the more the children receives violent punishment – may it be in action or in words – the more that he/she becomes deviant and rebellious. Lastly, it is also hypothesized that people who has seen and received excessive amount of violent punishments while they were children tend to do the same to their own children in a way that violent punishments also become part of their ways of behaving their kids.

The results of this study will play a significant role to parents and would-be parents, teachers and future researchers. This conclusion that will be derived in this study, when disclosed and disseminated to family oriented groups and family members, will initiate the necessary action from the parents on whether they should or should not impose violent punishments to their kids. This will help the parents and the expecting parents understand the value of understanding, emphasizing and proper ways of teaching their kids some valuable lessons.

This paper could be helpful to school institutions for they, too, will understand the possible impacts of giving and not giving violent or corporal punishments to their children-students. Teachers' and other educational facilitators' minds will be broaden

by the concepts and issues that will be presented in this study, particularly on topics that pertain to disciplining the children-students.

Lastly, this paper will prove to be beneficial to other and future researchers who will study on issues or concepts related to children's behavior and social development or to topics like children punishments. The result that will be derived from this study will serve as their basis and/or guide and even as a reference material for their own research undertaking.

Review of Related Literature

Corporal or violent punishment, as the word implies, is imposing a punishment once a child or a person committed a serious mistakes. In the classroom setting and home setting, violent punishments are usually in the form of spanking the child on his/her buttocks and some are spanking the hands. Normally the teachers' or parents' bare hands or sometimes a small stick is being used to facilitate the said form of punishment – the action form of violent punishment. Meanwhile, it is usually in the homes where the verbal form of punishment takes place. Bad words and shouting at the child are the most common forms of punishments by most mothers who find it hard to control their emotions.

Such forms of punishments are aimed at not merely punishing the child because he/she has committed a mistake but also to instill to the child's mind that what he/she has done is wrong and that it should not be done again.

Based on varied peer reviewed journals, violent punishments are proven methods of disciplining the children, especially when at school. In countries where

corporal or violent punishment is banned in schools, many teachers have been complaining about the hardships and ordeals they have to deal with everyday with the students.

Like for example in New Zealand where teachers are instructed not to practice any form of corporal punishment with the students. Now, teachers are complaining that they feel abused and harassed with the young students. The students tend to become abusive. They do not respect the teachers. They swear and shout at the teachers. They throw things at the teachers and in some instances, the students physically assault the teachers. This is the reason why most teachers feel threatened and would want to resign from their works.

Thus, without the corporal punishment, the students do not learn the real value of discipline and they do not maintain proper conduct. The students who did not receive any corporal punishment when they were still on their younger years tend to have deviant behaviors as they grow older.

Meanwhile, there are also studies which have proven that corporal punishment offers nothing but negative effects to both the psychological and emotional aspects of a child. Some of the proven negative impacts of corporal punishment are:

1. The corporal punishment in the form of physical punishment enhances various deviant behavior of the student like "lying, stealing, cheating, bullying, assaulting a sibling or peers, and lack of remorse for wrongdoing". This is particularly evident when corporal or violent punishment is done in a regular basis (Lombardo and Polonko, 2000).

It should be noted that children would of course fear being “punished”. If they consistently receive corporal punishment, their tendency is to prevent the parents or their teachers from having any reason of punishing them. Part of their prevention technique is to hide and or lie about the misconducts that they have done, or stop anybody who will act as the “witness” of such misconduct, thus the bullying behavior.

2. Corporal punishment increases the risk of child abuse (Lombardo and Polonko, 2000).

Teachers and parents who will not be prevented to do any form of corporal or violent punishment will have the tendency to “enjoy” punishing the children even if it is not necessary. This is the very reason why there are reports of child abuse committed either in the homes or school premises.

3. Teachers and parents impose violent or corporal punishment are not serving a good example for the children, instead they are serving as the models for “aggressive behavior and for inappropriate ways of dealing with conflict” (Lombardo and Polonko, 2000).

The idea of “an eye for an eye” will be instilled in the young minds of the children. There will be heightened tendency for the children to think that asking for forgiveness or sorry will never be enough to amend things.

4. Corporal punishments are ways of “eroding trust” between a child and a teacher or parent (Lombardo and Polonko, 2000).

The children will have the tendency of not entrusting their lives with their own parents or teachers. They will be hiding information that they think will only result from

punishing them. At the same time, children who have been given corporal punishments for more than once will be tagged as the 'trouble initiator' and will result from the parent not trusting the child anymore. The parent or teacher will always think that whenever there will be chaos in the area, that particular child caused it or has great participation for it.

5. It is believed that corporal or violent punishment affects the cognitive development of the children (Lombardo and Polonko, 2000).

Spanking the student's buttocks and/or hands and doing other forms of punishments can of course hurt the children's body. If this is done more than once or twice a week, the child's growth physically, emotionally and intellectually may be slowed down.

6. It is believed that children who have regularly received corporal punishment will grow as an adult who suffer "from depression and other negative social and mental health outcomes" (Lombardo and Polonko, 2000).

This is the long term effect of violent or corporal punishment. The impact can be felt even until the adult years of the child. He/she will be continuously suffering from "lowered self esteem, anxiety, depression and other forms of mental problems" (Lombardo and Polonko, 2000).

Other important concepts related to violent punishments on children include:

- a. Parents who are used to giving corporal punishment to their children for the sole purpose of controlling the children's "antisocial behavior" show more antisocial behavior themselves over a long period of time, regardless of race and

socioeconomic status, and regardless of whether the mother provides cognitive stimulation and emotional support” (Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997)

The harder the parents push their children not to become anti-social, the more they have become. This is because the approach of the parents in pursuing it is not proper because it only triggers shame and emotional disturbance among children. They have become too afraid to be with other people for the fear that they may be punished or shouted at.

- b. The higher the frequency that a child is hit, the more he/she will likely to hit his or her own children, spouse, or friends (Julian & McKenry, 1993)

As it has become a habit that a child was hit or being shouted at by his/her parents or teachers, he/she will then think that the kind of punishment that he/she has been receiving is just normal and thus he/she should also be doing that to his/her own family in the future. This is just like operant conditioning. Parents and teachers who impose violent punishments are only conditioning the child's mind that hitting or spanking is needed response anytime the child displeases them. Thus, when that particular child grows old and gain his/her own family, he/she will just normally hurt his/her wife/husband and children every time they disappoint or displease him/her.

As it is discussed, parents and teachers are both responsible for motivating the children not only to maintaining achievements but also to maintaining good values and right conduct. It has become one of the strategies of teachers and parents to use various forms of corporal punishment to ensure that the children will learn how to behave well by not doing and redoing deviant acts.

Corporal punishments may be serving as one of the most effective way of disciplining the children, but there are also negative impacts that such kind of punishment brings to children. Now the question is, is it not advisable to impose corporal punishment to children-students? Is corporal punishment the only way to motivate and intervene with the children?

Because of the above-stated information, it can be safely assumed that violent or corporal punishments can be the intervening factors why some children show deviant behaviors as they grow old.

Deviance is defined as the recognized violation of cultural norms. One familiar type of deviance is crime, or the violation of norms a society formally enacts into criminal law. Meanwhile, juvenile delinquency is under the sub category of deviance. Deviance encompasses a wide range of other acts of nonconformity, from variations in hairstyles to murder (What is Deviance?, 2004). It should always be remembered that deviance started from the family affecting the whole society. What we have in each family, what we see in our society, what we see in our environment is a clear reflection of the kind of people a certain society is bringing up – whether it is a deviance to the society or not.

Freud's theory or the so-called the psychological theory of personality is commonly used in the studies such as this. Freud believed that much of the unconscious content that affects humans is made up of inherited primal fantasies based on phylogenic experiences that are fantasies that are species based, not individual based. Freud's main interests lay in understanding how personal experience shaped and formed the unconscious mind. It was his assertion that this formative pressure

occurred through a process known as repression. Freud's "hedonic hypothesis" stipulated that people seek pleasure and avoid pain (Bethel, 2004).

The said theory plays a significant role in understanding the personality and characteristics of children, adolescents and even adults and the very reasons why they have been committing such deviant behaviors. Explanations of deviance are concentrated on individual abnormalities involving personality.

Thus, motivating and intervening with the children can be done in many different ways and means without negatively affecting the psychological and emotional state of the child. It should be noted that the teachers' and parents' real responsibility is to nurture and provide positive learning to the children. With the proven negative impacts of corporal or violent punishments, it is now clear that this is not the proper and positive way of motivating and intervening with the children.

There are a number of reports comparing violent or corporal punishments to domestic violence. Child abuse and domestic violence are two of the most highlighted cruelty in the Catholics' point of view. These are household-related violence that the big victims are always the children. The hodgepodge of domestic violence and child abuse in different countries today is really disturbing. It seems that the only way to survive is to have a strong self-encouragement to outwit the oppressor. But is this really effective for protection against any violence happening around?

With today's generation of people's fascination with movie heroes like superman, batman and spiderman to save the land from tyranny increases, the thirst for justice about it also go sky-high. Man's admiration for those superheroes was uncontrolled that the only thing that can be done is to hope and expect for some leaders who can solve

these kinds of problems. Some people think that dilapidation of great leaders today will surely go along with the increase of domestic violence and child abuse because they think that the rules and law that governs each nation will not be implemented properly if without the efforts of their own leaders.

C.J. Newton (2001) defines domestic violence as "isn't just hitting, or fighting, or an occasional mean argument. It's a chronic abuse of power. The abuser tortures and controls the victim by calculated threats, intimidation, and physical violence. Actual physical violence is often the end result of months or years of intimidation and control."

Creating a cycle of violence, the origin behind the intended actions is the manifestations in the societal conditions such as poverty and greed for power and control. Some experiences like in most countries, violence against women is caused by patriarchal domination of men. Statistic shows that an estimate of 3 million women is physically abused by their husband or boyfriend per year according to the Commonwealth Fund. Others are accounted to childhood problems that was not solved overtime, mental illness and authoritarianism (Commonwealth fund, 1999).

In America alone, there are 6,000 families recorded where men often abused their wives and children (Strauss, Gelles and Smith, 1990). Moreover, the prevalence of this problem is likely to originate in the economic condition of the families. Low-income families are prone to loss control of anger because they are starving and there are no sources of income to buy food. This involves bickering between the husband and wife on where should one can get money for their own sustenance. Eventually, the husband use their own strength and power to control over their wives to maneuver the tension with their own family to seek help either by begging or in some cases women with no

choices are selling their own flesh (coined as “prostitution”). This also involves hitting and sexual harassment of women. Patriarchal domination really coincides with domestic violence. This is usually widely seen in Asian countries where poverty is widespread.

Disturbing and alarming, it cannot be denied that men and women (children and adults) are witnessing an act that is very unfair. People should respond to this problem not only relying to the leaders but also to one’s own effort to eliminate the problem. It will be of great bliss if there are lots of people who are helping the victims to express their long-endured pain. This problem deserves public attention and resources because it can kill everyone and systematically be a cycle to every generation. National and local governments should put an attention to this by forming a special task force. Task force shall constitute a wide array of persons who themselves experienced such agonies and torture. This also includes psychiatrist and psychologist to help the mentally incapacitated.

The long ordeal of every victim is extremely painful unless he or she can break the culture of silence through their own strength and struggle. Domestic violence has different forms and can really obliterate the mental, emotional, physical and social aspect of every human being. In order to defend one’s suffering, there are a lot of institutions that will reach the victims. There are now various websites which can serve as effective ways to seek help, others include 24-hour crisis line, support groups, education program, counseling services, housing program for women and for children to move whenever there are violent and threatening acts, giving livelihood projects to women and to children in order for them to have their own income and boost their own confidence. However, these are impossible if not supported financially by private

institutions and the national and local government, people should act and help reach out for the victims. It's time to put an end and need to think of solutions and possible imaginations to overpower such tendencies of violence. Signature campaigns, online information dissemination, broadcasting, advertisement through media, postings blogs, outreach program, community immersion and education are great answers to step forward for the abolition of this problem.

Now, with domestic and violence continuously occurring, do people really have a choice? Yes, there is a choice by combating and breaking the culture of silence and cycle of violence; this will give immediate relief and proactive services that will move the sufferers or the victims to better, safer and healthy directions.

The list of most common corporal or violent punishments, which is categorized as action form, includes:

1. spanking the child's buttock either by bare hands, a stick or a belt
2. asking the child to kneel, with both arms raised and holding several piles of books
3. hitting the child on the face especially if he/she shouts back at the parents or teachers
4. hitting the child on his/her hands particularly in cases where he/she used his/her hands as act of misdemeanor (such as stealing, hurting other children of his/her age etc.)

Meanwhile, the most common verbal form of violent punishment to children include:

1. shouting at the child
2. name calling
3. talking to the child in a soft voice but in a way that brutally attacks the mind of the child

The above-state list of probable violent punishments may not always be seen as negative or bad or violent by some people, but others will see it that way. So if violent or corporal punishments should be prohibited or minimized, what can the teachers and parents do to ascertain that the child will receive proper guidance and that he/she will grow as a good citizen?

Some of the noted alternatives to corporal punishment include:

1. Setting strong, "consistent, age-appropriate, and acceptable limits" (Gelles & Edfeldt, 1986)

If the parent says no to a child's certain activity or request, he/she should stick to it whatever happens. At the same time, the parents or teachers must ensure that he/she is giving a command or limitation taking into consideration the child's age and mental and emotional status. A limitation for a 12-year old child is entirely different from the limitation of a 5-year old child. Needless to say, both the parents and teachers must be aware that they have to make the child understand why a limit should be set. They have to make the child understand that it is only for his good why the limitation is imposed. Such clear explanation will prevent the child from being confused that will result for him to force what he/she wants even if it is prohibited.

2. Teachers and parents should make the children realize how to resolve conflicts and to use proper mediation skills such as “listening actively, speaking clearly, showing trust and being trustworthy, accepting differences, setting group goals, negotiating, and mediating conflicts” (Gelles & Edfeldt, 1986).

Children are at a most vulnerable time of their lives. The way they are treated by the people in their environment can either make or break them. People will dislike them if they are showing signs of being unlikable. Nobody will befriend them if they have poor socialization skills. By this reason alone, teachers and parents need to motivate the children and intervene to their very actions in a way that their self-esteem and self recognition will be enhanced thereby also developing their socialization skills.

3. Learn how to reason and talk with children in age-appropriate ways. “Verbal parent-child interactions enhance children's cognitive ability” (Gelles & Edfeldt, 1986)

Again, this reiterates the need to create age-appropriate limits. Parents and teachers should talk with their students and children in a manner that is understandable to them. It should be noted that there might be age gap parents/teachers-children/student relationship, but this can all be prevented if the older one will know how to stoop and reach down to the level of the child.

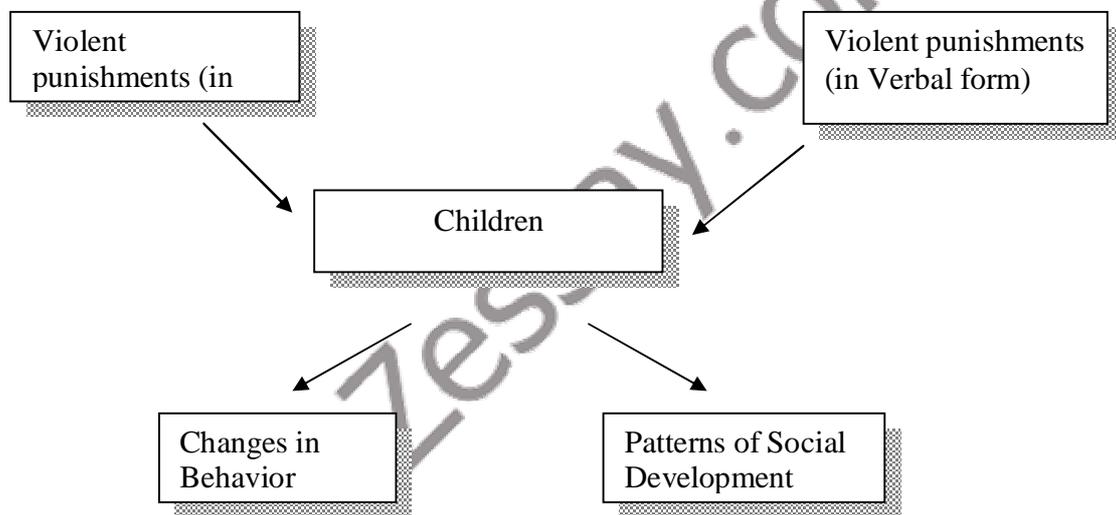
Methodology

Theoretical Framework

Much research has been done in analyzing corporal or violent punishment as a whole. There are also enough studies conducted correlating violent punishment from

various human behaviors. As there are numbers of possible resources available, it is then important to assess the common denominator between these resources, hence this study.

The suggested theoretical framework to successfully analyze the impact of violent punishments to children's behavior and social development is:



Hence, this should then be the focus when analyzing the impacts of violent punishments – of any form – to children. In doing so, the types of punishments imposed normally to children should then be presented one by one and will have to be sought out information (either from available literatures or from professional or experts in psychology and sociology) about the possible psychological and behavioral effects of each.

Research Design

This study will conduct an in-depth literature review and a random survey regarding violent punishments and its impact to children's behavior and social development.

Credible journals, news articles, peer reviewed- journals and/or web references tackling about violent punishments to children will be sourced out, summarized and analyzed. This will be used as an integral part in coming up with the desired conclusion. At the same time, a survey will be conducted to analyze the parents and children's awareness of violent punishments and what they think are the aftermath of such punishments.

Population and Sample

This paper will target peer reviewed journals, articles and web references that are published and/or presented on the years 1985 to present. The researcher believes that the types of violent punishments as well as its impact to children have been changing gradually which makes it important that the most recent updates are the ones that should be reviewed. Human behaviors and line of thinking are also changing considerably fast hence children's behavior and patterns of social development during the olden times may be entirely different from the behavior and social development of children in today's time.

Secondly, this paper will conduct a randomized survey subjecting 25 parents and children (with age ranging from 12-16 years old) to answer a 2-page survey questionnaire. The researcher will go first to one of the biggest school in the area and conduct preliminary interviews on teachers. It is from the teachers where the listing of

parents and children will come from. The twenty-five parents that will be asked to participate in this survey should fall from either one of the categories:

1. a father or a mother of student/s
2. a single father/mother
3. a legal guardian of any of the student

The teachers will also provide the name of the children students whose age range from 12-16 years old. The children-students who will be asked to take part in the survey can either be the sons or daughters of the chosen parents or not. The age bracket is specifically chosen because the researcher assumes that this particular can already read and write properly and at the same time, this specific age bracket also comprise of children who are already showing signs of awareness over him/herself and his/her environment. The researcher will also ensure that legal considerations regarding the rights of these minor will be taken into consideration, such as seeking their guardian's or parent's permission first.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Books, journals and articles will play a significant role especially for the first part of this study (the in-depth literature review) while survey questionnaires will be the most important tool for the survey part.

The questionnaire will consist of a combination of open and close ended questions. The questionnaire will be of 4 parts:

- (a) The demographical information
- (b) Awareness on violent punishments

(c) Understanding of the effects, and

(d) Plans for the future.

With regards to the four categories in the survey form, the contents style of questioning will vary. As for the demographic information category, the respondents will be asked about their age, social status, and range of family income. The respondents will have the option not to disclose their real name, however, their present age, social status (either civil married or de facto) and the average and combined annual family income should be revealed. Such information is important because the researcher assumes that the demographic information of each respondent affects their level of understanding and perception towards violent punishment.

As for the awareness on violent punishments category, the respondents will be asked to tick/check (from the list of choices) the punishments that they have either imposed to children or received from their own parents or teachers.

As for the understanding of the effects, the respondents will be asked to categorize the top 5 most behavioral and social development changes that occur when they give or receive violent punishments (20 choices will be presented in the questionnaire, 10 are positive changes and another 10 will be the negative changes).

Lastly, for the fourth category – the plans for the future – the respondents will be asked to answer whether or not they plan to continue imposing violent punishments in the future and why (for the parents) or if they plan to impose violent punishments once they have their own kids (for the children) and why.

Planned Method of Analysis

For the in-depth literature review, all information that will be gathered will be analyzed summarized and will be used as significant aspect for conclusion and recommendation. Meanwhile, the data that will be gathered in the survey will also be analyzed and summarized through statistical procedures. Means, standard deviation, mode and percentile will be computed. All data will be presented in both tabular and graphical form for easy analysis.

Time Schedule

This paper will consume a minimum of eight weeks to finalize. The first 2 weeks will be attributed to in-depth literature review. From this literature review, the researcher will be able to identify the list of violent punishments that are given to children as well as the list of possible positive and negative impacts of violent punishments to children and thus will be able to incorporate it in the questionnaire.

The next four weeks will be allotted to surveying. The researcher will have to identify parents and children who will be willing to spare 10-15 minutes of their time to answer the survey questionnaires. The researcher may opt to leave the survey questionnaire in the parents' or children's house and just get it back after a day or two.

The last two weeks will be spent for the data tabulation and analysis. Results from the in-depth literature review will be correlated to the results of the survey. Conclusion and recommendation will all be based on the correlated analysis.

Resources Needed

This research will not consume much amount of money as there are very minimal items that need to be bought. The survey questionnaire will need to be printed and that

will only eat \$30-50 USD. The researcher may also opt to find small items to give for the parents and teachers as token of appreciation for taking part in the study, which can amount to a maximum of \$100 for the lot.

Personnel needed are 4-5 members as researchers. Two of the five will be assigned for the literature review. They are to collect ample resources, analyze and summarize it and provide the whole group with the result. The remaining three will conduct the survey. They are the ones to distribute, collect and tabulate the results of the survey questionnaires. They should also analyze the results in comparison with the results from the detailed literature review. All the five members will then consolidated the understandings they have had both from the literature research and survey then come up with the conclusion and recommendation.

Letters from the university may be needed to show to the parents and the children to assure them that this research undertaking is legitimate and will not negatively affect nor harm them in anyway. This letter will also be needed as part of the ethical considerations since that children that will be asked to join the survey are minors which approval of their guidance or parents will have to be sought for.

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