



Perception Differences in Punishment Methods against Child

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Abstract

Potentially, all children have the risk of encountering with the ill-treatment of adults. In Turkey, discipline oriented punishment behaviors are social problems because of their traditional acceptability. In this study, the comparison of punishment methods both physical and emotional, which parents and teachers state to apply on their children/students and which the children states, assessment of perception differences were presented. By using randomized cluster sampling, it was chosen 4 schools from 27 elementary schools in Cigli, Izmir, Turkey. The questionnaires about punishment methods were applied to students, parents and teachers. Answers of 411 students, 135 parents and 85 teachers are evaluated by statistical program. Results: Statistically significant difference is detected in perception of physical punishment methods among parents (2.6%) and their children (11.4%), and in perception of both physical (respectively 4.9% - 13.7%) and emotional (respectively 65.6% - 35.7%) punishment methods among teachers and their students. A statistically significant difference has not been detected among the emotional and economical punishment methods stated by parents and their children. Emotional punishment methods are detected to be specified to a greater amount by teachers as compared to both children and parents. The physical punishment methods are still applied methods at home and at school in Turkey. Emotional punishment methods are more acceptable by parents and children than teachers. In Turkey, necessary precautions and consciousness raising programs should be applied for especially the physical punishment methods not to be seen as an acceptable behavior both at home and school.

Key Words: Child abuse, punishment, parent, teacher, violence

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Introduction

Violence is a significant problem observed extensively all over the world and at each section of society. Potentially, all children have the risk of encountering with the ill-treatment of adults and older guys [1]. In most cultures physical punishment is a case which is frequent and assessed as normal [1-4]. Conducted studies have shown that more than %90 of American families used a physical punishment method as spanking as a discipline method [4]. According to the information coming from families in some European countries, it is determined that a significant number of parents punish their children physically, in Italy %8 of children, in Rumania %4.6 of children are subjected to physical abuse [5]. In Caribbean Islands and especially in Jamaica physical punishment is seen as a part of iron discipline intended for the child [6]. In a study conducted in Kuwait in 1996 it is stated that %86 of Kuwaiti parents have a positive look on applying physical violence for child's discipline [7]. In a study conducted in India it is detected that %42 of mothers use severe physical punishment while %50 of them use heavy verbal punishment [8]. Also in a study conducted in Yemen it is stated that more than half of the children in rural areas, more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of them in urban areas are subjected to heavy physical punishment [9]. In Turkey, discipline oriented punishment behaviors are significant social problems because of their traditional acceptability and taking for grand [4]. These behaviors take place in society as the behaviors which the persons applying the violence perceive and accept within the scope of decency right. Conservative family structure in Turkey, assessment of violence applied by parents on the child as an intra-familial problem, not perceiving this condition as a social problem and the lack of enough sensitivity in society are the factors which prevent the emerging of violence [10]. In this study, the comparison of punishment methods, which parents and teachers state to apply on their children / students and punishment methods, which the children state, assessment of perception differences are intended.

Material and Methods

This article is the second part of the study about perception differences between children, parents and teachers in violence against child [11]. In this study, it was focused on punishment methods of parents and teachers and how the students respond to these methods. The

punishment methods of parents and teachers were asked and the perception of children in these methods were noted. The answers to the questionnaires of these three groups were analyzed. In addition to that, the information about ages and genders was also taken from the groups.

Izmir is the third biggest metropolitan city of Turkey with a population of approximately 3,500,000. For this study, one of the largest districts of Izmir named Cigli, which has high ratio of immigration and a population mostly having low and middle income levels and is known as an industrial area was chosen for applying questionnaires. The questionnaires were applied to students, parents and teachers after taking approval from Deanery of Medicine Faculty at Ege University and getting necessary permissions from Directorate of Izmir National Education.

By using randomized cluster sampling, it was chosen 4 schools from 27 elementary schools in Cigli, Turkey. By the same method, there had been chosen randomized sampling of students from 7th and 8th grades of these 4 schools. As a result of some statistical calculations, the minimum number of students for representing the population in 95% confidence interval by sampling were determined. In this study, questionnaires completed by 411 students, 135 parents and 85 teachers were evaluated. The data were analyzed by using a statistical program.

Here, it is not possible to provide a one-to-one correspondence between parents and their children since identity information were not taken for the aim of gathering intimate answers to the questions. Because of this, to determine the significance of statistical values, comparison between the frequencies of the answers given by students, parents and teachers groups were done by using Fisher's exact test and significance of the data was calculated [12].

Results

Table 1. The distribution of the children (n=411), parents (n=135) and teachers (n=85) according to their socio-demographic data.

			Children	Parents	Teachers
Range of Age (years)			12 – 16	29 – 65	22 – 55
Mean of Age (years)			13.3 ± 0.8	38.6 ± 5.5	37.9 ± 8.1
Sex	Male	(n,%)	188, %45.7	29, %21.5	24, %28.2
	Female	(n,%)	223, %54.3	106, %78.5	61, %71.8

In this study, which is about aspects of children, their parents and their teachers about punishment methods, descriptive statistics about three groups were shown in Table 1.

Both children and parents stated that emotional punishment methods were the most commonly used punishment method. Children stated that they were subjected to physical punishment methods more than their parents stated (Table 2, Table 3, Table 4).

Table 2. Punishment methods of parents stated by children.

Punishment Methods			n	%*	Total (n,%*)
Emotional Punishment Methods	Deprivation of rights (not putting into touch with his/her friends, not watching TV, not playing computer games or other games, not going out, not using phone)		141	27.1	271 (%52.1)
	Yelling loudly, being angry		78	15.0	
	Get him/her done something that he/she doesn't want	Making him/her read book or study lesson	20	3.9	
		Prohibition to leave the room	8	1.5	
		Making him/her do housework	5	0.9	
		Making him/her get bed earlier	3	0.6	
	Behaving uninterested, sulking, not speaking with him/her		15	2.9	
	Looking at angrily		1	0.2	
Physical Punishment Methods	Beating		22	4.2	59 (%11.4)
	Pulling ear		15	2.9	
	Slapping		13	2.5	
	Hitting his/her hand		6	1.2	
	Throwing slipper, baton, etc.		3	0.6	
Economic Punishment Methods	Not to buy things that he/she wanted			12 (%2.3)	
Warning					106 (%20.4)
They never punish me. / They didn't punish me.					48 (%9.2)
Missing value					24 (%4.6)
TOTAL					520* (%100.0*)

* As children answered the question that "How do your parents punish you?" with more than one answer; total answers (520) are more than children number (411). Percentages were calculated on the total answers (520).

Table 3. Punishment methods stated by parents.

Punishment Methods				n	%*	Total (n,%*)
Emotional Punishment Methods	Deprivation of rights (not putting into touch with his/her friends, not watching TV, not playing computer games or other games, not going out, not using phone)			71	45.2	95 (%60.5)
	Yelling loudly, being angry			12	7.6	
	Get him/her done something that he/she doesn't want	Making him/her read book or study lesson		4	2.6	
		Making him/her do house work		1	0.6	
	Behaving uninterested, sulking, not speaking with him/her			7	4.5	
Economic Punishment Methods	Not to buy things that he/she wanted			8	5.1	9 (%5.7)
	Not to give allowance			1	0.6	
Physical Punishment Methods	Beating			2	1.3	4 (%2.6)
	Slapping			2	1.3	
Warning						29 (%18.5)
I never punish him or her./I didn't punish him or her.						9 (%5.7)
Missing value						11 (%7.0)
TOTAL						157*(%100.0*)

* Since parents answered the question that "How do you punish your children when you are angry with him/her?" with more than one answer; total answers (157) are more than number of parents (135). Percentages were calculated on the total answers (157).

Table 4. Comparison of children's and parents' answers about parents' punishment methods.

Punishment Methods of Parents	Stated by children		Stated by parents		p-value
	%	n*	%	n**	
Emotional punishment methods	52.1	271	60.5	95	p>0.05
Physical punishment methods	11.4	59	2.6	4	p=0.0001
Economic punishment methods	2.3	12	5.7	9	p>0.05
Warning	20.4	106	18.5	29	p>0.05
Never punish	9.2	48	5.7	9	p>0.05
Missing value	4.6	24	7.0	11	p>0.05

* Number of answers given by children (520) are higher than number of children (411) for the question "How do your parents punish you?". Percentages were calculated on the total answers (520).

** Number of answers given by parents (157) are higher than number of parents (135) for the question "How do you punish your children when you are angry with him/her?" Percentages were calculated on the total answers (157).

Children and teachers were asked about punishment methods of the teachers (Table 5, Table 6, Table 7). It was noted by both children and teachers that emotional punishment methods were the most used methods.

Table 5. Teachers' punishment methods that are stated by children.

Punishment Methods		n	%*	Total (n,%*)
Emotional Methods	Yelling loudly, being angry	87	17.3	180 (%35.7)
	Giving low and negative grades, reducing grades	20	4.0	
	Getting him/her out of class	19	3.8	
	Vituperating, saying hurtful things	14	2.7	
	Giving difficult or a lot of homeworks	13	2.5	
	Behaving uninterested, not giving permission for participating to lessons	10	2.0	
	Changing his/her place in the classroom	7	1.4	
	Calling parents, complaining him/her to parents	7	1.4	
	Looking at angrily	2	0.4	
	Making him/her to empty the class' trash bin	1	0.2	
Physical Methods	Standing on one foot	42	8.3	69 (%13.7)
	Beating	10	2.0	
	Pulling ear	7	1.4	
	Slapping	6	1.2	
	Hitting his/her hand	3	0.6	
	Throwing book to face	1	0.2	
Warning				84 (%16.7)
I have never been punished by my teachers. / They never punish me.				77 (%15.3)
Imposing disciplinary punishment, sending to the administration of school				55 (%10.9)
Missing value				39 (%7.7)
TOTAL				504* (%100.0*)

* As children answered the question that "How do your teachers punish you when they are angry with you?" with more than one answer; so total answers (504) were more than number of children (411). Percentages were calculated on the total answers (504).

Table 6. Teachers' punishment methods which are stated by teachers.

Punishment Methods		n	%*	Total (n / %*)
Emotional Methods	Deprivation of rights [not giving permission for participating to lessons, excluding something they like (course, play time, etc.)]	29	23.8	80 (%65.6)
	Behaving uninterested, not speaking	14	11.5	
	Yelling loudly, being angry	8	6.6	
	Giving difficult or a lot of homeworks	8	6.6	
	Calling parents, complaining him/her to parents	7	5.7	
	Giving low and negative marks, reducing marks	5	4.1	
	Making the student to write a text in order to punishment	3	2.5	
	Getting student out of class	2	1.6	
	Making the student to clean the class	1	0.8	
	Looking at angrily	1	0.8	
	Not giving reward	1	0.8	
	Forcing the student to choose a penalty for him/herself	1	0.8	
Physical Methods	Standing on one foot	6 (%4.9)		6 (%4.9)
Warning				26 (%21.4)
Imposing disciplinary punishment, sending to the administration of school				2 (%1.6)
Getting help from guidance service				1 (%0.8)
Missing value				7 (%5.7)
TOTAL				122* (%100.0*)

* Since teachers answered the question that "How do you punish your students when you are angry with them?" with more than one answer; total answers (122) were more than number of teachers (85). Percentages were calculated on the total answers (122).

Table 7. Comparison of children's and teachers' answers about teachers' punishment methods.

Punishment methods of teachers	Stated by children		Stated by teachers		p-value
	%	n*	%	n**	
Emotional Punishment Methods	35.7	180	65.6	80	p=0.0001
Physical Punishment Methods	13.7	69	4.9	6	p=0.0202
Warning	16.7	84	21.4	26	p=0.0452
Imposing disciplinary punishment, sending to the administration of school	10.9	55	1.6	2	p=0.0023
Getting help from guidance service	0	0	0.8	1	p>0.05
Never been punished/ never punish	15.3	77	0	0	p=0.0001

* Number of answers given by children (504) are higher than number of children (411) for the question "How do your teachers punish you when they are angry with you?". Percentages were calculated on the total answers (504). 39 of 504 answers are missing.

** Number of answers given by teachers (122) are higher than number of teachers (85) for the question "How do you punish your students when you are angry with them?" Percentages were calculated on the total answers (122). 7 of 122 answers are missing.

Discussion

Ensuring the order and discipline is necessary to live in peace in a society starts from family and school environment. Parents within the family and school managements and teachers at school have responsibilities regarding to ensure the order. Whenever the rules are disobeyed, the order and discipline are disturbed, various sanctions come into question. Mostly children are affected from this case. Although the acceptability of sanctions and punishments directed towards the children varies according to the values and perceptions of societies, it is recommended to handle this case on the basis of human rights [13].

Although the physical punishment methods included in punishment methods are not accepted today especially by developed countries, it is still an applied method. In this study, the children (11.4%) have stated that they are punished with physical punishment methods to a statistically significant degree according to their parents (2.6%). This fact has given rise to thought that although the physical punishment methods are applied, they are not expressed but hidden since they are accepted as a behavior giving harm to the child by parents. Besides the physical punishment methods, emotional and economical punishment methods are also among the other

applied methods. A statistically significant difference has not been detected among the emotional and economical punishment methods stated by parents and their children included in the study. It is thought that not seeing these methods as more innocent attitudes according to physical punishment methods effect on parents to be clearer.

Emotional punishment methods which are more acceptable in society, even not seen as a punishment method most of the time are detected to be specified to a greater amount by teachers as compared to both their children and parents. This case shows that teachers are highly aware of that physical punishment method should not be preferred especially. Statistically significant differences are obtained among the answers the children and teachers give about punishment methods except “getting help from guidance service”. The children have stated that they are subjected to physical punishment methods approximately at the rate of 3 times (%13.7 - %4.9) of their teachers. Among the punishment methods the teachers state: punishment methods as beating, hitting, slapping based on physical power application are not included. Exclusion of physical punishment methods as a suitable method for disciplining the children in vocational trainings is seen as an efficient factor in teachers’ answers. Existence of severe sanctions for implementers of physical methods with the purpose of punishment is thought as another factor. Ratios stated in studies conducted in Turkey associated with punishment methods applied at school are observed to show regional differences [14,15]. Whatever the rates are, both the studies conducted in the past and this study is valuable since they show the physical punishment has been applied and is still being applied in Turkey at school.

In this study where punishment methods are queried, “warning” and “imposing disciplinary punishment, sending to the administration of school” have not been assessed within the punishment methods but handled separately. Statistically significant difference is detected among children and teachers for both answers. This case has given rise to thought that their children perceive behaviors the teachers assess as warning as a punishment method. In case of “imposing disciplinary punishment, sending to the administration of school”, in proportional difference in between teachers (1.6%) and children (10.9%), no perception of this answer as a punishment method by teachers is seen to be effective.

The rates that the children state they are not punished are higher than both their parents and their teachers. This case as well as has given rise to thought that they may hide the applied punishment methods since they are afraid, is also related with the fact that they have got used to the imposed punishments since they think they deserve them. In a study carried out, it is stated that punishment applications may be effective in a short time in calming down the unwanted behaviors and are easy to apply but shall not cause behavior change [16]. Although not punishing with this point of view may be seen as a correct approach, it is necessary to distinguish discipline and punishment concepts well. It is an essential attitude especially to react suitably, not to remain unresponsive in case of wrong and faulty acts of children for a welfare society and the grow up of individuals respectful to rights and freedoms of others. But, the necessity of selecting the applied methods according to ages of persons and the magnitude of mistakes they make should not be ignored. Otherwise this case shall cause damage on personalities of children and repetition of failures. Consequently, methods used to bring up children should be reviewed and arrangements should be made. Especially necessary precautions and consciousness raising programs should be applied for the physical punishment methods not to be seen as an acceptable behavior both in family and at school.

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