

Investigating Linearity Association between Teacher Demographic Characteristics and Corporal Punishment in Primary Schools in Eldoret Municipality

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is on the use of corporal punishment in schools that has persisted in spite of the prohibition ban that is entrenched in the Kenyan laws. Consequently, this paper examines the association between demographic teacher characteristics and corporal punishment. Three objectives were utilized; to find out the primary teachers' demographic characteristics in Eldoret Municipality, to examine the extent to which corporal punishment is being used by primary school teachers and to determine the association of teachers' demographic characteristics and corporal punishment. Target population was drawn from 250 primary schools in Eldoret Municipality. Descriptive survey design was used. Findings revealed that corporal punishment was in use with the often used form of punishments being spanking (Mean = 4.1875), pinching (Mean = 3.8250) and pulling (Mean = 3.7750). Amongst the least used forms included slapping (Mean = 1.7500) and weeding (Mean = 1.7500). Other forms of corporal punishment include confinement (Mean = 2.8125), excessive exercise (Mean = 2.5) and longer fixed posture (2.6250). The sample data support the notion that as teachers age increases corporal punishment reduces ($r = -.280, p < 0.001$). Further finding indicated that as teachers experience increases corporal punishment reduces ($r = -.316, p < 0.001$). Lastly and importantly is that teachers of Mathematics had a weak, positive and significant association with corporal punishment ($r = .231, p < 0.001$). The study recommends an urgent stakeholders consultative forum to be spearheaded by the Ministry of Education, Teachers Service Commissions and Teachers Unions to come up with forms of punishment that should be legitimized in law. More sensitization on corporal punishment to be initiated at the school, sub county, county, regional and nationally level. Great emphasis to be put on teachers below the age of 30 years. Highly experienced teachers who have worked for more than 10 years should mentor less experienced teachers on how to manage students' discipline.

Key Words: Association, Teacher Demographic Characteristics, Corporal Punishment

Background Information

According to Le & Nguyen (2019), the issue of corporal punishment is a contentious one not only in Kenya but also all over the world. Prof. George Magoha, who was Cabinet Secretary for Education at the time, recently voiced his opinion on the issue, pondering

the issue of returning the cane and stating that the police should arrest the disruptive students. In 2001, the Kenyan government enacted the Children's Act (Government of Kenya, 2001), which guarantees children protection from all forms of abuse and violence (Nyamu & Wamahiu, 2022). This debate caught the public's attention in Kenya. Despite the fact that Kenya is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1990), which states that violence-based discipline is unacceptable, numerous reports of child abuse in schools prompted this. Despite this, corporal punishment is still used in schools in Kenya. The majority of students have expressed dissatisfaction with their schools' use of corporal punishment. Additionally, some parents lament the way their children are punished. According to Mendenhall, Cha, Falk, Bergin, & Bowden (2002), teachers' main motivation for using corporal punishment in schools is their belief that it is the most effective method of discipline. As a result, the purpose of this paper is to determine whether or not the use of corporal punishment is correlated with various demographic characteristics of teachers.

A number of issues serve as the foundation for the debate regarding whether or not to lift the ban on corporal punishment. One of them is that corporal punishment is frequently viewed in Kenya as a sign of love and concern for the child rather than as a form of violence against them (Pinquart, 2021). This explains why eight out of ten participants from the low-resource urban neighborhood and eight out of ten participants from the middle-class sample reported that at least one parent used physical punishment.

In addition, there has been an increase in indiscipline in many schools, leading educators to speculate that the prohibition on corporal punishment may have taken away teachers' authority, allowing students to take advantage of it (Aswani & Anika, 2020). Kenyans are left perplexed as to what is going on in the lives of the children following recent reports of student disobedience and unrest. The number of incidents in which students assault teachers and set fire to school property has increased.

However, the most important factor is that numerous strategies to curb students' lack of discipline have been tried, but it does not appear to be working. Although many of these methods have not been documented, recent emphasis has been placed on the necessity of equipping and empowering the guidance and counseling department as an alternative to vice prevention in schools.

However, due to the rise in school unrest, teachers have been forced to resort to corporal punishment. This has also been observed in other places, such as Singapore, where Braema (Strait Times, 2014) found that more than four out of five teachers from both primary and secondary schools support the use of a cane as a disciplinary tool.

Situational analysis

According to Najoli, Runhare, and Ouda (2019), the ban on corporal punishment in a gazette notice issued on March 13, 2001, led to a variety of disagreements among educators regarding the most effective methods of punishment. One of these is that, despite the fact that the cane ban was in accordance with the Children's Act and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ban has been attributed to the rise in student unrest. During their annual conference, head teachers expressed their agony over the growing trend of indiscipline and slammed the Ministry of Education for removing the cane without first consulting them.

Additionally, it has been reported that some teachers have abused corporal punishment, resulting in students suffering serious injuries or even death (Opere, Kamere, & Wawire, 2019).

Research Approach

The study used descriptive design. This is a type of research design that aims to systematically obtain information to describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. The target population for this study was drawn from 250 schools. Based on the Krejcie

and Morgan formula a sample size of 150 schools was utilized. Individual schools were then stratified as per the educational zones. A total of 5 zones namely; Kibulgeny, Kapyemit, Pioneer, Chepkoilel and Kapsoya were stratified. Stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling was used to select schools. This led to a selection of 43 schools from Kibulgeny Zone, 33 schools from Kapyemit Zone, 26 schools from Pioneer Zone, 21 schools from Chepkoilel Zone and 27 schools from Kapsoya Zone. One teacher was randomly selected from the schools leading to a sample of 150 teachers.

The researcher constructed closed ended questionnaire which were administered to teachers. Harrison, Reilly and Creswell (2020) defines a questionnaire as a tool consisting of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or sets of forms. The questionnaires method was used because it assisted in collecting information over very short period time.

Findings and Discussions

The findings are organized as per the three objectives of the study; to find out the primary teachers' demographic characteristics in Eldoret Municipality; to examine the extent to which corporal punishment is being used by primary school teachers in Eldoret Municipality and to determine the association of teachers' demographic characteristics and corporal punishment among teachers in Eldoret Municipality.

Primary Teachers Demographic Characteristics

The first objective of the study was to find out the primary teachers' demographic characteristics in Eldoret Municipality.

i. Respondents Age

Figure 1 indicates that 29 (36.3%) of the teacher were less than 30 years, 36 (45%) of the teachers were aged 31 – 45 years and lastly 15 (18.8%) of the teachers were aged 46 – 60

years. The findings show that all cadres of the teachers' age were represented with the majority being the teachers between 31 – 45 years.

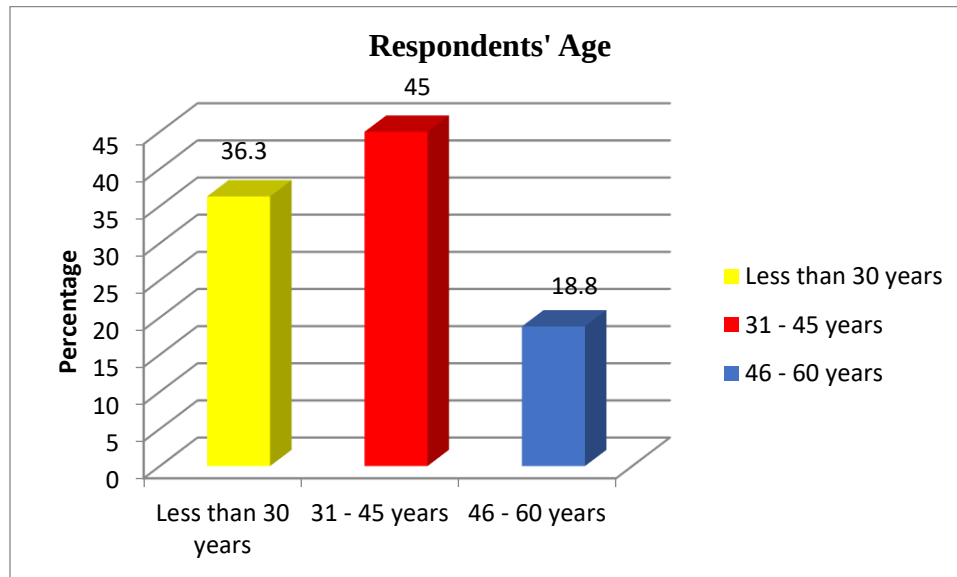


Figure 1: Respondents Age

ii. Respondents Gender

Teachers' demographic characteristics in regard to gender indicated that 36 (45%) of the teachers were males while 44 (55%) of the respondents were females. The gender variable shows that female teachers were the majority.

iii. Respondents Experience

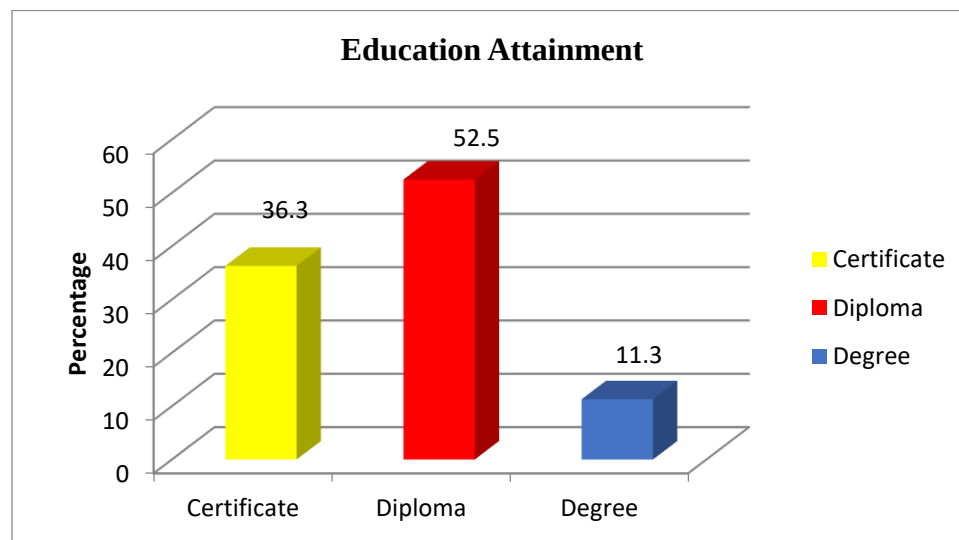
The study found out that 29 (36.3%) of the teachers had an experience of 0 – 5 years, 21 (26.3%) had an experience of 6 – 10 years while 30 (37.5%) of the teachers had an experience of above 11 years. These findings are presented in Table 1. Findings indicate that the teachers selected for the sample started teaching when the ban on corporal punishment had already been instituted.

Table 1: Respondents Experience

	Frequency	Percent
0 - 5 years	29	36.3
6 - 10 years	21	26.3
Above 11 years	30	37.5
Total	80	100.0

iv. Respondents Education Attainment

Figure 2 presents findings on the respondents' education attainment. As indicated 36% of the respondents had attained a certificate, 53% of the teachers had a diploma while 11% had attained a degree.

**Figure 2: Respondents Education Attainment**

v. Respondents Marital Status

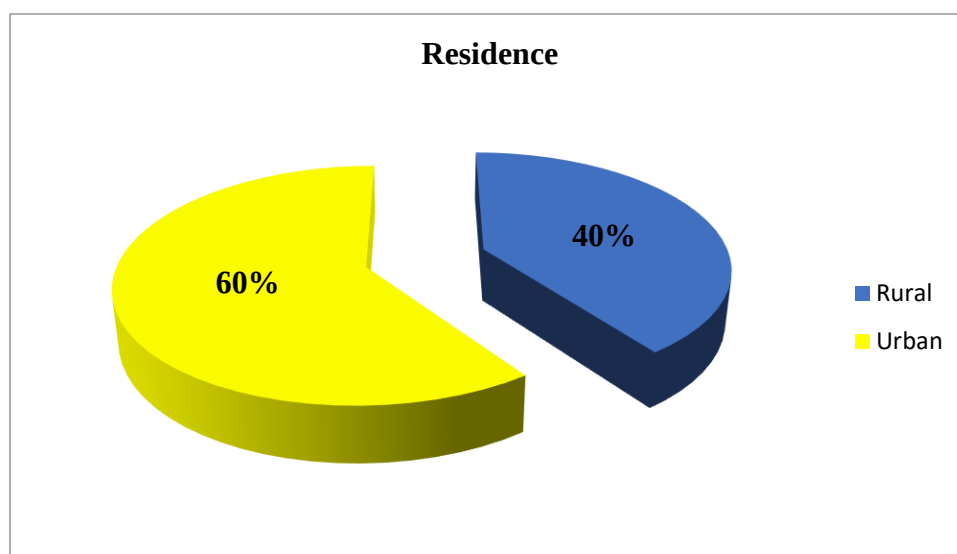
Table 2 indicates that 10 (12.5%) of the teachers were single, 60 (75%) were married, 2 (2.5%) were widows, 3 (3.8%) were widowers and 3 (3.8%) of the respondents had separated from their spouses. Majority of the teachers were married.

Table 2: Respondents Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent
Single	10	12.5
Married	60	75.0
Widow	2	2.5
Widower	3	3.8
Separated	3	3.8
Total	80	100.0

vi. Respondents Residence

Figure 3 presents finding on the place of residence. As presented 40% of the teachers were living in a rural set up while 48 % were living in an urban set up. The findings indicated that majority of the teachers' residence was urban.

**Figure 3: Respondents Residence**

vii. Respondents Subject Specialization

In conclusion objective one sought to find out the teachers' subject specialization. The findings indicate that 14 (17.5%) of the respondents sampled were teachers of language,

39 (48.8%) were teachers of sciences, 18 (22.5%) were teaching Mathematics while 9 (11.3%) of the teachers were teaching Social Studies.

Extent of Corporal Punishment

The second objective of the study was to examine the extent to which corporal punishment is being used by primary school teachers in Eldoret Municipality. Findings show that there were several forms of corporal punishment being used in schools. These forms were being used at varied proportions. Spanking was the most commonly used form of punishment in the schools. The second most used corporal punishment was pinching. Amongst the least used forms included slapping and weeding. Other forms of corporal punishment include confinement.

Association of Teachers' Demographic Characteristics and Corporal Punishment

The third objective of the study was to determine the association of teachers' demographic characteristics and corporal punishment among teachers in Eldoret Municipality. In order to determine the association a Pearson Correlation was carried out to test the association.

Findings indicate that teachers age had a weak, negative and significant association with corporal punishment amongst the selected primary schools. The sample data support the notion that as teachers age increases corporal punishment reduces implying that teachers aged less than 30 years of age were likely to be using corporal punishment more than teachers who were 46 – 60 years in age. Most importantly however is that, correlation does not imply causation but indicate that changes in one variable are associated with changes in the other variable.

Further finding indicated that teaching experience had a moderate, negative and significant association with corporal punishment amongst the selected primary schools. This implies that as teachers experience increases corporal punishment reduces. Teachers

of Mathematics had a weak, positive and significant association with corporal punishment. Additional finding did not indicated association of other variables with corporal punishment such as gender, education attainment, marital status, place of residence, teachers of languages, teachers of sciences and teachers of social studies.

Conclusion

The study recommends an urgent stakeholders consultative forum to be spearheaded by the Ministry of Education, Teachers Service Commissions and Teachers Unions to come up with forms of punishment that should be legitimized in law. More sensitization on corporal punishment to be initiated at the school, sub county, county, regional and nationally level. Great emphasis to be but on teachers below the age of 30 years. Highly experienced teachers who have worked for more than 10 years should mentor less experienced teachers on how to manage students' discipline.

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