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Perceptions and Practices Regarding the Enforcement of School Policies on Corporal Punishment

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ABSTRACT

Present research investigates the enforcement of corporal punishment ban policies in Punjab. The main objective of study is to explore how corporal punishment can be eliminated from educational settings. In view of this objective, it investigated the perceptions and practices of teachers, parents and students related to implementation of corporal punishment policies. Basic concern was to understand why in presence of legal policies corporal punishment continues in many schools. The study employed a quantitative research design with a structured questionnaire. Data were collected from different areas of Punjab from where cases were reported and 100 participants were selected including teachers, parents and students. A purposive sampling technique was employed and data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings of study revealed a significant association between awareness of emotional consequences of corporal punishment and enforcement of school policies for ban of corporal punishment. Results show a noticeable gap between policy provision and their implementation in practice. Findings indicate that legislation alone is not the solution of this issue unless it is supported by greater awareness of its harmful emotional effects on child emotional and psychological development. The study suggested that positive changes in disciplinary belief system should be the first step followed by active support system from all stakeholders. It also suggested teachers training, parental guidance and community engagement. These measures can contribute to the development of secure, supportive and healthy learning environment of schools.



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1. Introduction

The best school is where child feels safe and inspired to grow. A child learning and healthy development of personality depends on school environment. If school provides secure and supportive school environment children will not only progress in academics but will be confident personas of society. It has been reported that corporal punishment continues in many Pakistani schools in spite of constant efforts to support child protection and maintain children's rights (End Corporal Punishment, 2024). Research has constantly related this practice with adverse outcomes with psychological distress, lower academic achievement and adverse effects on children overall development (Gershof, 2017; Saeed et al., 2023). As a matter of fact, Pakistan has taken legislative step to stop corporal punishment but implementation of these laws is not effective. Comprehensive legal bans have been adopted in the Islamabad Capital Territory and Sindh. But other provinces have yet to establish complete legal protection for children. Section 89 of the Pakistan Penal Code still allows "reasonable punishments" in many parts of the country (Islamabad Capital Territory Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act, 2021; Sindh Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act, 2016; End Corporal Punishment, 2024).

Many Teachers and parents still believe that physical punishment helps maintain discipline (Ashraf & Holden, 2022; Daily Times, 2025). Recent cases of serious injuries and student deaths show the need for stronger policy enforcement and better child protection (UNICEF, 2025; Express Tribune, 2025). Love Jr et al., (2025) found that 70% of 271 university students had experienced spanking during childhood. Corporal Punishment is also linked to wider child protection issues in Pakistan. Jabeen and Abbas (2025) found that social, economic and cultural factors increase the risk of child abuse. Their study emphasized the importance of legal protection and child

welfare institutions. Likewise, Younas et al., (2018) stated that children need strong support from families and national institutions to protect their rights.

Effective child protection also requires strong safeguarding policies. The child-centered safeguarding modal proposed by Policy (2021) promotes early interventions, family partnership and shared responsibility for children safety. Pulla et al., (2018) identified child labour, trafficking and exploitations as serious concerns. Although Pakistan is the signatory to the UNCRC, child protection laws still have weak implementation (Akhtar et al., 2024). Corporal punishment is still common in many countries despite global efforts to end it. It still prevails in homes, schools, childcare centers in many parts of the world (End Corporal Punishment, 2022). Dahliwal et al., (2024) found that these practices are often justified in the name of discipline and mainly affect marginalized students.

Family and social beliefs also influence the use of corporal punishment. Gonzalez and Trujillo (2024) stated that parents with high stress and positive beliefs about corporal punishment are more likely to use it. Strong child protection systems are important to reduce violence against children. Leon and Skivenes (2025) found that public trust supports effective child protection system. Brown et al., (2025) also reported that many countries still face legal, cultural and policy challenges in protecting children's rights. Many people wrongly believe that Islam supports corporal punishment. Shafiq et al., (2024) explained that physical punishment is not a core of Islamic teaching. They proved that Islam promotes kindness, compassion and positive parenting. Corporal punishment in Pakistan is often based on cultural and religious misunderstandings. They recommended teacher training legal enforcement and better awareness of Islamic teachings.

Safni (2024) also showed that Islamic education gives priority to advice, guidance and respect for children. Physical punishment is considered only as a last option. Soleyadi (2024) further argued that Islamic teaching encourages rewards, gradual learning and nonviolent discipline. These ideas are consistent with modern psychological principles. Akbar et al., (2024) stated that Hadiths about disciplining children should be understood in their proper context. They emphasized dialogue, empathy and guidance instead of physical punishment. Arman (2025) studied that harsh parenting and physical punishment harm children mental and physical health. Rashid (2025) also linked childhood corporal punishment to PTSD, anxiety, depression, attention deficit and other long term mental health problems. Similarly, Dadi (2025) reported that fear of punishment caused school absenteeism, emotional distress and poor learning. Parenting beliefs also influence the corporal punishment. Gul et al., (2025) explored that many mothers choose discipline based on their child emotions and age. Their parenting style was also influenced by their cultural values.

Landa-Blanco et al., (2025) that women and adults with childhood abuse were less likely to support corporal punishment. However, people with traditional gender beliefs were more supportive of it. Earlier studies support similar findings. Mulvaney and Mabert (2010) stated that children who viewed corporal punishment as threatening had poor mental health and weaker relationship with their mothers. In the same way Annemarie (2007) studied corporal punishment as common practice in Peshawar, Pakistan. It was often passed from one generation to next generation. Many teachers and parents believe that corporal punishment improves discipline and academic performance (Agbenyega, 2006). While Goodman (2022) stated that it is often preferred because it gives quick results and needs little effort.

ConnectUs (2019) also reported same that some people believe it reduces misbehavior in short term. Mukki (2025) found that harsh parenting in Pakistan increases children's emotional and psychological problems. Won et al., (2025) investigated that most young adults in Singapore experienced corporal punishment yet many still didn't support banning it. Polini (2025) explored that legal and cultural traditions continue to normalize physical punishment in many countries. Kurt and Yasar (2024) reported that family relationship and parenting style also influences its use.

Corporal punishment remains common in Punjab's schools and homes even though laws prohibit it. Strong cultural and social beliefs continue to weaken policy implementation. This situation harm children mental and emotional well-being. Moreover, little is known about how teachers, parents and students perceive these school policies. It is also unclear whether perceptions differ by age or stakeholder group. Therefore, this study examined this perception to support better policy enforcement and promote nonviolent discipline. This study examined stakeholders' perceptions of school policy enforcement on corporal punishment in Punjab. It also explored the factors affecting effective enforcement. Basic research question was how do teachers, parents and students perceive the enforcement of school policies on corporal punishment in Punjab?

2. Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative research design. It examined the enforcement of school policies on corporal punishment in Punjab. Data were collected to measure stakeholders' perceptions and policy implementations. A purposive sampling technique was used. The sample included 100 teachers, parents and students from different districts of Punjab from those schools which were reported in newspapers related to student injury or some violated

disciplinary action. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire included demographic information and 20 items on perception of corporal punishment and policy enforcement. All items were measured on five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means and standard deviations) were used to summarize the data. Regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive relationship between independent variable and the dependent variables. It determined the extent to which Emotional and Behavioral

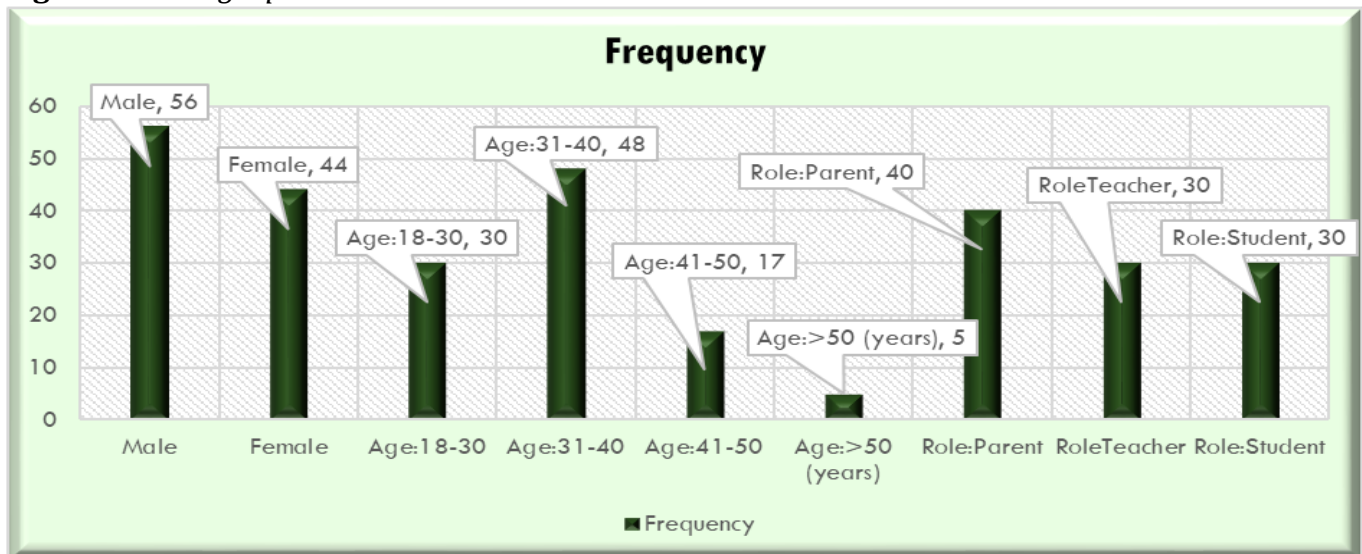
Impact of Corporal Punishment on Children (EBI) and Beliefs about Discipline and non-violent Alternatives (BDA) predict the Institutional Policies and Social Measures to Prevent Corporal Punishment (IPSM).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The sample included 100 participants. Most participants were male (56%) and age was 31- 40 years (48 %). Parents formed the largest stakeholders' group (40%). Teachers were (30%) and students were also (30%).

Figure 1: Demographic Variables



3.2 Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Table 1:

Variables	Mean ± SD	EBI	BDA	IPSM
EBI	35.91±3.77	1		
BDA	26.90±2.82	.910**	1	
IPSM	27.03±2.88	.910**	.917**	1

Where EBI= Emotional and Behavioral Impact of Corporal Punishment on Children, BDA= Beliefs about Discipline and non-violent Alternatives, IPSM= Institutional Policies and Social Measures to Prevent Corporal Punishment

Table 1 presents correlations among Emotional and Behavioral Impact (EBI), Beliefs about Discipline and non-violent Alternatives and Institutional Policies and Social Measures (IPSM). The mean scores were 35.91(SD=3.77) for EBI. While for BDA

mean 26.90 (SD = 2.82). For IPSM mean score 27.03 (SD = 2.88). All variables showed strong positive correlation ($p < 0.1$). EBI was strongly correlated with BDA ($r = .910$). BDA also had a strong positive correlation with IPSM ($r = .917$). These findings indicate that

greater awareness of the emotional and behavioral effects of corporal punishment is associated with stronger support for non-violent discipline. It also indicates

institutional measures to prevent corporal punishment.

3.3 ANOVA Results

Table 2:

ANOVA				
Demographic Variables	Dependent Variable	df (Between, within)	F	P
Age	EBI	(3,96)	2.084	.107
	BDA	(3,96)	2.437	.069
	IPSM	(3,96)	2.478	.066
Gender	EBI	(1,98)	3.369	.069
	BDA	(1,98)	2.149	.146
	IPSM	(1,98)	2.551	.113
Role	EBI	(2,97)	0.111	.895
	BDA	(2,97)	0.045	.956
	IPSM	(2,97)	0.257	.774

Where EBI= Emotional and Behavioral Impact of Corporal Punishment on Children, BDA= Beliefs about Discipline and non-violent Alternatives, IPSM= Institutional Policies and Social Measures to Prevent Corporal Punishment

In table 2 the one-way ANOVA results indicate that participants age, gender and role didn't significantly influence on the emotional and behavioral impact of corporal punishment (EBI), beliefs about discipline and non-violent alternatives (BDA), or institutional policies and social measures to prevent corporal punishment (IPSM). Although age and gender showed comparative higher F- values for BDA and

IPSM the associated p- values remained above .05 significance threshold. Similarly, now statistically significant difference among participant with different roles. So. These findings show emotional and behavioral impact of corporal punishment, beliefs about discipline and non-violent alternatives and institutional policies and social measures to prevent corporal punishment across the demographic groups of study.

3.4 Multiple Regression Results

Table 3:

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI
Constant	0.743	1.018	—	0.729	.467	[-1.278,2.763]
EBI	0.333	0.066	0.435	5.009	<.001	[0.201, 0.465]
BDA	0.533	0.089	0.521	5.998	<.001	[0.357,709]

Multiple Regression Analysis revealed that results were statistically significant. F (2,97 = 337.03, p < .001 explaining 87.4% of the variance in IPSM (R² = .874, Adjusted R² =

.872). This showed that independent variables jointly provide substantial explanatory power for IPSM.

EBI had a significant positive on IPSM ($B = 0.333$, $\beta = 0.435$, $t = 5.009$, $p < .001$). It is suggesting that a one-unit increase in EBI is associated with 0.333-unit increase in IPSM. BDA also demonstrates a significant influence on IPSM ($B = 0.533$, $\beta = 0.521$, $t = 5.998$, $p < .001$). It indicates that higher level of BDA is associated with IPSM. Both predictors significantly contribute to explain variations in IPSM but BDA is more influential determinant.

3.5. Major Findings of the Study

1. The study included 100 participants comprising 56 males and 44 females. The sample consisted of 40 parents, 30 teachers and 30 students. Most participant aged 31-40 years.
2. The highest mean score is for Emotional and Behavioral Impact (EBI) ($M = 35.91$, $SD = 3.77$) followed by Institutional Policies and Measures (IPSM) ($M = 27.03$, $SD = 2.88$) and Beliefs about Discipline and non-violent Alternatives (BDA) ($M = 26.90$, $SD = 2.82$).
3. Pearson correlation analysis revealed strong positive associations among EBI, BDA and IPSM ($r = .910 - .917$, $p < .01$).
4. One-way ANOVA indicated no significant differences in EBI, BDA and IPSM across age groups ($P > .05$).
5. The regression analysis showed that model significantly predicted IPSM 87.4% of its variance ($R^2 = .874$, $p < .001$). EBI and BDA both had significant positive effects on IPSM.

4. Discussion

The findings indicate that despite legal ban corporal punishment is in practice in Punjab. This suggests legalization is insufficient to eliminate the practice. Cultural beliefs, social norms and weak enforcement continue to sustain its use in homes and schools. These findings support earlier research which argues that traditional beliefs sustain corporal punishment in Pakistan (Jabeen,

2021) Many children experience physical and psychological violence in educational settings same is reported by (Shafiq et al., 2025). Similarly, teachers have reported that overcrowded classrooms, professional stress and inadequate training in positive discipline contribute to the continued use of physical punishment in schools (Saeed et al., 2023).

The study found a strong positive relationship between awareness of the emotional loss of corporal punishment and positive disciplinary beliefs. It also found a strong positive relationship with support for policy enforcement. This finding is consistent with previous studies demonstrating that corporal punishment is associated with anxiety, depression and absenteeism and school dropout among children (The Express Tribune, 2025). Previous Studies also reported that corporal punishment has significant psychological effects (Bangash et al., 2024). Dawn (2025) reported that physical punishment does not improve academic performance. It also has no improving effect on health and emotional development. The present finding extends this evidence.

The study found no statistically significant difference across age groups. Teachers, Parents and students had similar views about corporal punishment. According to previous studies many teachers still believe punishment is necessary for classroom discipline (The Express Tribune, 2025). Teachers who experienced corporal punishment in childhood are more likely to use it themselves (Dawn, 2025). However, the present findings suggest that attitudes are becoming more similar across stakeholders' groups. Slight differences among older participants indicate that traditional disciplinary thought still exists. The findings showed that continued corporal punishment is linked to the lack of practical alternatives. Ahmad and Rashid (2023) found that teachers are more willing to use positive discipline after receiving training. Similar

findings were reported by the “Maar Nahi Paayer” initiative (Dawn, 2025). UNICEF (2025) highlighted the importance teacher training and community awareness.

The findings indicate that improvement in emotional and behavioral are associated with stronger support for policy implementation. Both predictors are influential but EBI role is greater in shaping IPSM.

The study also suggests the effective policy implementation requires more than legislation. Recent initiatives in Pakistan support teachers training, social-emotional learning and child protection systems

(Associated Press of Pakistan, 2026; National Education Foundation, 2026). Lasi et al., (2026) also found that social and emotional learning improved classroom management and student behavior. Overall findings show that corporal punishment is influenced by cultural beliefs, institutional practices and awareness of children’s rights. Consistent with Jabeen (2021), reducing corporal punishment requires stronger law enforcement, teacher training and community engagement.

5. Conclusion

Figure 2:



The findings suggest that corporal punishment continues to be practiced in Punjab it is prohibited

by law. Its continued use appears to be influenced by long standing social and cultural beliefs about discipline. The analysis also shows the participants who were more aware of the emotional harm caused by corporal punishment. Their opinion was supportive for the implementation of school policies against corporal punishment. This specifies that cultivating public understanding about the consequences of corporal punishment can boost greater acceptance of non-violent disciplinary

methods. Consequently, sustainable development will not only depend on legal procedures but also changes in attitudes, educational practices and community contribution. This combination will endorse positive approaches to students’ discipline. The results of regression analysis suggest that EBI and BDA are important determinants of IPSM and BDA playing more influential role in strengthening policy implementation.

6. Recommendations

Based on findings it is recommended that real execution of laws against corporal punishment needs intensive care and clear

accountability mechanisms. Teachers practical training in child psychology seems vital along with positive discipline and non-violent classroom management. Awareness programs for parents and local communities may change the situation. Such programs are also needed to improve understating of harmful effects of corporal punishment and to encourage positive approaches to discipline. Schools should support students by providing counselling services. In addition, a confidential system for reporting incidents will also play an effective role to

reduce this practice. Child rights, empathy and conflict resolution should be added in the school curriculum to encourage respectful learning environments. Educational policies should remain consistent with international standards for child protection. Future research should study the ways attitudes and practices change over time through longitudinal studies. Further investigation is also needed the ways socio-economic, urban-rural differences and cultural factors shape views about corporal punishment.

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