Teachers' Attitude towards Corporal Punishment: Elementary Schools of the Central Zone of Tigray Region in Ethiopia in Focus

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Abstract

Despite the plethora of policy and legal instruments banning corporal punishment (CP) in schools and the sea of knowledge about the negative consequences of CP in children, CP occupies a significant place in the scheme of affairs of schools across the globe. Ethiopia too is not an exception. Teachers' attitude towards CP can predict their application of it. This investigation thus was designed to assess the magnitude and nature of teachers' attitude towards CP and its association with various teacher variables. Data were collected through an individually administered instrument pack with three sections including a CorpAtt Scale from a sample of 199 first cycle government elementary school teachers of the Central Zone of Tigray Region in Ethiopia drawn using multistage cluster sampling procedure. The results revealed that teachers hold predominantly positive attitude towards CP. Teacher variables such as duration of service, perceived knowledge about problem behavior and its school based management, confidence in managing problem behavior with and without applying CP and the locale of schools are found to be associated with their attitude towards CP. Gender, age and status of training in special needs education were found not to be associated

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with their attitudes. Implications of the revelations are discussed against teacher education and training and policy management in the Ethiopian context.

Keywords: *attitude, behavior management, corporal punishment, elementary school, Ethiopia*

Introduction

Nullifying the envisioned impacts of the multidimensional legal and psycho-educational efforts and initiatives on curbing corporal punishment (CP), CP still occupies a vital place in education in schools across the globe. Despite its ban in schools, it still remains among the commonly used strategies to deal with indiscipline of students (Centre for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA 2008; Cicognani 2004; Kimani, Kara and Ogetange 2012).Students are corporally punished for various reasons such as tardiness, not doing assigned works, talking during class, coming to school late, poorly performing in academics, failing in examinations, skipping classes, disrupting classroom order and routine or violating teachers' expectations regarding school work and standards of conduct(Agbenyega2006; Angellar, Stephen and Ottilia 2011; Ayalew 1996; Kumar and Fiseha manuscript submitted for publication; Simiyu 2003). While all the school actors, even the school guards, punish students corporally for various reasons, teachers account for the lion's share of CP meted out on students.

CP is meted out in a variety of ways; many of them are, indeed, inhuman and utter violation of human and child rights. Hitting, pinching, kicking, shaking, shoving, chocking, inflict pain using wooden paddles, belts, sticks, or others, painful body positions, kneeling down, standing in bright sun, use of electric shocks, use of excessive exercise drills, or prevention of urine or stool elimination, pulling hair, etc. (see Kumar and Fiseha manuscript submitted for publication; Save the Children 2003; Seleshi 2001; Society for Adolescent Medicine 2003) are found in the array of CP used in schools.

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On its positive and negative effects on children, CP has been a subject of debate time and again. Defenders of CP contended that the threat of physical force is needed to keep order in schools (Marsh 2011). They also highlight that CP leads to immediate compliance to discipline demands (Nakpodia 2012). The opponents of CP, on the other hand, chiefly emphasize its negative physical, psychological, and educational consequences, though they do not deny the role of discipline in developing a positive educational environment. But, they argue that CP has more harm than benefit (Kilimci 2009); and it does not teach students acceptable replacement behaviors (Kilimci 2009; Solomon and Assegedetch 2007). Students' lowed self-esteem; feelings of sadness, shame, depression, etc.; physical injuries to the level that require medical attention (Human Rights Watch 2009; Save the Children 2003; UNICEF 2001); negative attitude towards school, school personnel and teachers (Centre for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA 2008) and dropping out of school (Cicognani 2004; Human Rights Watch 2009) resulting from CP are vociferously voiced by the opponents of it. Further, Gershoff (2002) in her seminal work identified some more problems associated with CP such as lower levels of self-control, more problems with compliance and poor relations with parents, sleep disturbance, bed-wetting, tension, depression, and anxiety. Further, they argue that CP sends a message to the mind of a child that violence is acceptable behavior that it is allowed for the stronger person to use force to surrender the weaker one leading to a sustained cycle of violence in the school, family, and society at large (Save the Children 2003). Despite the support CP enjoys from some corners, its negative impacts have been widely recognized and very many measures have been initiated to curb CP from the schools across the globe.

Even while the negative aftermaths of CP and the legality surrounding it are well understood by school actors, why is it still preferred by schools alarmingly, especially by teachers? The faith and practice of CP is very much imbibed in culture (Ayalew1996; Save the Children Sweden and Alebel 2005); the cultural fabric in which a particular school finds itself can, to a great extent, predict the use of CP in it. The attitude teachers hold

towards CP and its effects can predict teachers' use and nonuse of it (see Simiyu2003). Simiyu found a positive correlation between teachers' attitude and their use of CP and argued that the kind of attitude teachers hold towards the use of CP had a tremendous impact on its practice. Such sentiments as, "*CP is the most effective disciplinary measure*" (Basci and Dilekmen 2009); "*it quickly ends any negative behaviors from students*" (Mamatey 2010) indicate teachers' appreciation of CP and there is no earthly reason to believe that a teacher who holds such an attitude does not use it.

Reviewing the prevailing teachers' attitude toward CP might help to further ponder into the intricacies involved in its widespread use in schools. Teachers hold attitudes such as CP is the best way of motivating students to behave well and maintain school discipline (BasciandDilekmen2009; Kimani, KaraandOgetange2012) and it will reduce specific problems of behavior and consequently maintain the general level of school discipline (Bowd 1987). Further, teachers see other methods of discipline as time consuming and difficult to administer whereas CP as the most convenient, quickest and more effective form of discipline and is feared by students. They argue that without CP, discipline could not be maintained and it is indispensable to their work (Damien 2012; Morrell 2001; Nakpodia 2012). However, studies also reported the unacceptability of CP by teachers (see UmezinwaandElendu2012).

In addition to using it as a safeguard to protect the school environment from chaos created by misbehaving students, teachers use CP to maintain their own respect because they believe that students cannot learn unless they respect their teachers (Wasef 2011). Ironically, 50% of the students, in the same study, asserted that they never respected teachers who beat them. Teachers believed that pupils looked down upon their teachers in the absence of CP (Kimani, Kara and Ogetange 2012). A study conducted in South Korean schools indicated that teachers use CP because they hold the following attitudes on the benefit of using it; (a) it quickly ends any negative behaviors from student, (b) it quickly sends a message to other students of how not to behave in the classroom, (c) it creates an atmosphere

that allowed all students to focus on the class material, and (d) it creates an atmosphere that allowed the teacher to complete the designated material so that students could earn high scores on their exams (Mamatey 2010).Karaj (2009) further summarized the prevailing teachers' attitudes as (a) a good child is always to obey, (b) who punishes a child does it for his/her best, (c) it is more appropriate to punish young children because they do not understand when spoken to, (d) teachers have the same right as parents to punish a child, (e) CP is not completely harmful for the child, (f) the child cannot be educated if he/she is not afraid, and (g) if a child is not punished, he/she will be without control. The teachers in Mamatey's (2010) study felt that CP's benefits were more important than potential negative effects.

Several studies stand testimony to teachers' awareness of the disadvantages of CP but their continued use of it. For example, Karaj (2009) found that teachers believed that CP had very little disciplining and educative values and had a harmful consequence on children, but they still believed that when the child could not be disciplined using other means, CP was the best alternative.

As to the variables predicting teachers' attitude towards CP, though divided, such teacher variables as sex, age, seniority, and educational level and student factors like, age, sex, academic performance, school area, and grade levels are implicated (see Agbenyega 2006; BasciandDilekmen2009;Canter 1989; UmezinwaandElendu2012; Karaj 2009).Teachers' status in training on Special Needs Education (SNE), perceived knowledge of problem behaviors and their school based management, level of confidence in managing problem behavior with and without applying CP are assumed to be of great value in predicting their attitudes. But such inquiries are not reported in literature. Taking this as paucity, this study also aimed at investigating the association between these variables and teachers' attitude towards CP.

The Ethiopian Context

Studies on CP in the Ethiopian context are too scanty. The available few, which investigated its various dimensions directly or indirectly, undisputedly assert that though CP has been prohibited some 18 years ago in the schools of Ethiopia, it is still meted out in varying intensities and forms in its schools (c.f., Ayalew 1996; Kumar and Fiseha manuscript submitted for publication; Save the Children SwedenandAlebel2005; Save the Children Norway, Elias, Tibebu and Fassikawit 2004; Seleshi2001). Using CP to correct children in Ethiopia is conceived as a means to expressing concern, ensuring care and attention and for good upbringing of children (Plan Ethiopia 2008; Ayalew 1996). Teachers as part of the community are experiencing and witnessing such punishments and share the general belief system held by the community. Most teachers here too are aware of the shortcomings of CP, but they find it difficult to detach themselves from old beliefs (Save the Children SwedenandAlebel2005). Teachers' practice of using CP was the result of the cumulative effects of their experiences as members of the Ethiopian community (Save the Children Norway, Elias, Tibebu,andFassikawit2004).The knowledge we have about the cause, course and consequences of CP in the schools of Ethiopia is too minimal. While considering teachers' attitudes as a strong determinant of the use of CP, nothing is known about it in the Ethiopian context.

Objectives and Method

This study predominantly aimed at investigating the nature and correlates of teachers' attitudes towards CP in Ethiopian schools. Specifically, this inquiry was conceived to explore the nature of the attitude towards CP among the teachers in the elementary schools of the Central Zone of Tigray Region in Ethiopia. Also to explore the associations and differences among such teacher variables as gender, experience, age, the location of schools they work with, status of training in SNE, knowledge about problem

behaviors and their school based management, level of confidence in managing problem behavior with and without applying CP and teachers' attitude towards CP.

This study is correlational research that aimed to explore and describe the nature and level of teachers' attitude towards CP and its use as a disciplinary measure in the elementary schools of the Central Zone of Tigray Region in Ethiopia. It also aimed at analyzing the correlation between various teacher variables and their attitude towards CP.

The teachers working in exclusive government first cycle primary schools (grade 1-4)in the Central Zone of Tigray Region of Ethiopia comprise the population of the study. Multi-stage cluster sampling method was employed to draw the sample. The Central Zone of Tigray Region is divided into 12 *Woredas (districts)*. There were 200 exclusive first cycle primary schools in this region and they were almost equally distributed across the 12 *Woredas*. Eight hundred and fifty-seven teachers were working in the 12 *Woredas*, of which 545 (63.59%) were males and the rest 312 (36.41%) were females (Tigray Region State Education Bureau 2009). Being the first stage of the sampling procedure, four *Woredas* (33% representation) were randomly selected. Four schools from each selected *Woreda* were randomly selected in the second stage. Two hundred and forty-three teachers (approximately 28% of the total population) were working in the selected 16 schools and they all were targeted to be drawn into the sample. Excluding the teachers who were absent from school for several reasons and those who provided incomplete responses, the effective sample comprised of 199 teachers (103maleand 96 female) with a mean age of 44 years (SD = 9.79).

The instrument pack developed and used in this study contained three sections. The first section included seven items on teachers' demographic information. The second section had five items measuring teachers' perceived level of knowledge about problem behavior management, their confidence in managing problem behavior with and without using corporal punishment, etc. There were one Likert scale type item, one 'yes or no' type item and two four point scale items in this section. Each of these items was

designed to be individually scored and analyzed. The third section of the pack was a 26item attitude scale, namely *CorpAtt Scale*. The items were written as a five-point scale having response categories ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" with corresponding values from five to one. Scores were summed up to obtain a total score, with higher scores indicative of positive attitude towards CP and their use in schools.

Conceptually defining CP so as to guide the development of the instrument pack, especially the attitude scale was the starting point of instrument development. Though CP has been defined by various organizations and researchers, these definitions share more similarities than differences (cf., Donnelly and Straus 2005; Save the Children SwedenandAlebel2005; Society for Adolescent Medicine 2003). Consolidating from the available definitions, CP, for this inquiry, has been conceptually defined as an intentional application of physical pain and/or discomfort, however light, as a method of managing students' behavior. Such applications can be either by directly applying physical force (beating, pinching, etc.) or by indirect methods such as forcing the child to stay in uncomfortable positions or to engage in excessive physical exercises, etc. Attitude towards CP, being the core construct studied, was operationally defined as the positive or negative evaluation of CP and also its use in schools as a method of managing students' problem behavior as measured by *CorpAtt Scale*: The higher the score on the scale, more positive the attitude towards CP and its use.

All the individual items and the scale items were developed following the rigors of test construction. The processes followed for item development and content validity establishment were the same for all the sections. But, for the individual items in section two, only test-retest reliability on a sample of 46 teachers over a period of two weeks was established as that was the most feasible reliability measure for these items. The reliability coefficients ranged from 0.70 to 0.84 for these items which indicate moderate to high test-retest reliabilities. A detailed description on the development of the third section, which is a full-fledged attitude scale, is presented below.

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Being the first step, a pool of 28 items was developed chiefly based on exhaustive review of literature and consultations with school teachers and experts in the areas of education, special needs education and psychology. In the second stage, each item thus generated was scrutinized for culture fairness, distinctiveness and clarity; leading to 22 items getting qualified for inclusion in the first draft. The draft version was then sent to one psychometrician, one general educationist and three special needs educationists to establish content validity. They were requested to comment chiefly on item sampling, each item's appropriateness to assess the construct, clarity, redundancy, and culture fairness. They were also asked to provide any other suggestions that might help in refining the items. Inputs from the experts by and large were in agreement with the adequacy and appropriateness of the rating scale to assess the construct.

Further, there were suggestions to restate some items and add some other items. Each comment from all the experts was carefully studied and incorporated into the final version of the instrument. As a result, four new items were added to the final version making the total number of items in the scale 26. Thus at the end of this exercise, the instrument can claim good content validity. The test-retest reliability in an interval of two weeks' time on a sample of 46 teachers yielded a coefficient of 0.91indicative of high test-retest reliability. The internal consistency of the items which was estimated using Cronback'salpha on the same 46 teachers yielded a coefficient of 0.74 which is generally acceptable for research purposes (see George and Mallery 2003). When it was re-computed using the data from all the teachers that participated in the final study, the coefficient recorded a tremendous improvement to 0.91, assuring of very high internal consistency of items.

Data were collected towards the beginning of the academic year 2012-13. Being the first step of data collection, the directors of the selected schools were contacted and briefed about the purpose and significance of the study, ethical guarantees like confidentiality, voluntary participation, right to withdraw from the study, etc. and requested for their cooperation in the process of data collection. All the 16 directors volunteered to support

the data collection process by way of distributing the instrument packs to the teachers and collect back the filled-in ones from them. The required number of instrument packs was handed over to the director of each school: A total of 243 packs were handed over to the 16 directors. The teachers were given a week's time to respond to the instruments and return to the school directors. This was done deliberately to enhance the reliability and validity of the responses. Data collection, however, took four weeks as some teachers took close to two weeks to respond and some others were late to collect the pack from their respective directors. Of the 243instrument packs administered individually, 217 were returned (a return rate of 89.30 %), a fairly higher return rate. But 18 of the filled-in instruments were incomplete and hence discarded, making the effective size of the sample used for analysis 199.

The data were then entered into the SPSS software in preparation for quantitative analysis. This data was then checked and edited. Statistical procedures such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson-r, independent sample t test, and one way ANOVA followed by LSD post hoc pair wise comparison were employed in describing and analyzing the data. In testing the significance of the results, alpha was set at 0 .05 level in advance.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The mean score of teachers' attitude towards CP was found to be 94.68 (SD = 13.71) which is closer to the maximum possible score, 130 and far above the minimum possible score, i.e., 26. Teachers' attitude towards CP was found to be positively, though weak, correlated with their years of experience (r=.16), perceived knowledge of problem behaviors and their school based management (r=.15), confidence of managing problem behaviors of students using CP (r=.37) *(p<.05* in all cases*).* But a weak negative correlation (r=-.15; *p<.05*) between teachers' confidence of

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managing problem behavior without applying CP and their attitude could be observed. An insignificant correlation resulted at 0.05 level when correlation between teachers' age and attitude towards CP was computed.

Mean Differences between and among Groups

The teachers were categorized based on their sex, status of courses and/or training on SNE, and the location of the schools where they teach. Independent sample t-tests were computed to see if there existed significant mean differences between groups of teachers categorized based on the above variables on their attitude towards CP and its use. Table 1 below presents the data and result of t-test between different sub-groups of teachers:

Table 1*: Data and result of t-test between different sub-groups of teachers on their attitude towards CP and its use

Grouping Variable	Groups	Mean (SD)	t	df
Gender	Male	94.82 (14.46)	0.15	197
	Female	94.53 (12.92)		
Status of training on SNE	With training	93.73 (14.72)	- 0.80	197
	Without training	95.32 (13.0)		
Locale of school	Urban	98.69 (12.14)	6.56**	193
	Semi-urban	86.02 (13.30)		

**p<.01

As it can be read from the table above, male and female teachers did not significantly differ in their attitude towards CP. Also no significant mean difference could be established between teachers who took SNE course and/or training and teachers who did not take any such courses and/or training. Comparison between teachers working in urban schools and semi-

urban schools yielded a statistically significant difference (teachers working in rural schools were excluded from this analysis for want of the minimum required number).

The teachers got divided into three groups based on their responses to the item on their perceived knowledge about problem behavior and its school based management, i.e., 'with rich knowledge', 'with essential knowledge' and 'with inadequate knowledge'.

Table 2*: Descriptive statistics of teachers in different groups based on knowledge about problem behaviors and their school based management

Groups	Rich knowledge	Essential knowledge	Inadequate knowledge
N	50	97	52
M	88.54	98.01	94.365
SD	14.10	12.08	14.34

The result of ANOVA, [$F (2, 196) =8.49, P<.01$] indicated a statistically significant mean difference among the groups compared and signaled post-hoc pair-wise comparisons of groups. LSD post-hoc comparison yielded significant mean difference betweenteachers with rich and essential knowledge and also between teachers with rich and inadequate knowledge ($p < .05$ in each case). But no significant mean difference could be observed between teachers reported to have essential and inadequate knowledge.

Discussion

The Magnitude and Nature of Teachers' Attitude

Teachers in this study hold predominantly positive attitude towards CP and the use of it in schools. Considering the possible score range of *CorpAtt Scale*, i.e., 26 to 130 as a continuum with lowest end denoting negative attitude and the highest indicative of positive attitudes towards CP, the mean score in this study (94.68) falls significantly above the median value of the possible score range, which is 78. This is a finding which warrants a thorough analysis. Why do teachers hold such strong positive attitudes towards CP even when we have strong laws and guidelines prohibiting CP in the schools of Ethiopia? Further, teachers in Ethiopian schools are a trained workforce who is expected to know the plethora of negative consequences of CP and its legal standing in Ethiopia. Is it because of the influence of culture exerted on teachers as hypothesized by Save the Children Sweden and Alebel (2005) and Ayalew (1996) or do teachers find CP the most effective method to discipline students as reported by Basci and Dilekmen (2009)? The possibility that teachers are not equipped with other effective and empirically validated behavior management procedures as reported by Save the Children Sweden and Alebel (2005) cannot also be ruled out. A clearer understanding about the nature of teachers' attitude towards CP became quite imminent as attitudes can predict the use of CP (Simiyu, 2003). A closer scrutiny of the individual items in the *CorpAtt scale*, hence, emerged necessary.

For an item reflecting the prevailing cultural belief in Ethiopia too that *sparing the rod is spoiling the student,* 56% of teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement highlighting the influence of cultural beliefs. But only 27% of teachers disagreed with this statement. The remaining 17% could not take any stand. Sixty percent of teachers expressed their agreement to a statement that *CP is the easiest method to discipline students and hence its use is unavoidable*. Only 24% of teachers disagreed with this statement while the remaining 16% could not take any definite stand. To another item stating that *CP is the most effective method*

to manage serious behavior problems, 65% of the teachers showed their agreement. Only 25% of teachers disagreed with this statement while the remaining respondents remained undecided. All these eloquently highlight teachers' unflinching faith in the power of CP. This is, indeed, an intricate scenario requiring attention and remedial actions as teachers with such belief system may rampantly resort to CP in their efforts to discipline and educate students. Teacher training at pre and in-service level should have adequate and sound contents on the negative consequences of CP on students and their violating nature of human and child rights. Further, these training should also use the alarming negative consequences of CP to convert the existing positive attitudes to negative. It is safe to argue that as long as teachers hold positive attitudes towards CP, its use on different pretexts on the hapless children by their *in loco parentis* in schools would remain an undeniable reality.

It is worth noting that teachers are also aware of the negative dimensions of CP: for a statement of CP's potency to teach students aggressive behavior and hence to be banned in schools, 76% of teachers expressed their agreement, while just 17% disagreed with this statement. Such other encouraging insights of teachers could also be observed. This can be taken as opportunities to build on so as to translate such beliefs into negative attitudes towards CP contributing to the efforts to curb CP in schools. Overall, the findings on the magnitude and nature of teachers' attitude towards CP can be said to be worrisome and it is undeniable that stronger and effective measures, which are systemic in nature, are put in place to change the prevailing positive attitude to ensure that teachers hold realistic attitudes towards CP which in turn would contribute to atrophy its use in the schools of Ethiopia.

Relationship between Teacher Variables and Attitudes

Though weak, teachers' attitude towards CP is positively correlated with their duration of teaching experience; their perceived knowledge about problem behavior and its school based management; and their level of confidence in managing problem behavior by using CP. It is generally

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expected that over a period of teaching, teachers acquire effective and empirically validated methods to discipline students which in turn would change their negative attitude towards CP and its use in schools. But that has not happened in the case of the teachers of this study. Here, while teachers pass through years of teaching, they become more and more positive towards CP. The reasons can be presumed to be multifaceted: The teachers in Ethiopia may not be undergoing sound in-service trainings to further equip them with, *inter alia*, managing problem behavior of their students. This can make teachers depend more on CP as taught by their culture. CP, as indicated earlier yields immediate compliance of students to teacher demands. Such compliance over time can reinforce teachers' positive attitude towards CP that it is the most effective and easiest method to deal with students' problem behaviors, creating a vicious cycle.

The positive, though weak, correlation between teachers' perceived knowledge about problem behavior and their school based management is another perplexing result. Teachers who believe that they have better knowledge about problem behavior management hold more positive attitude towards CP: a result which does not go well with common sense. A teacher who has empirically founded knowledge about problem behavior management is expected to be negative in attitude towards CP as they are aware of alternative positive behavior management techniques. But that was not the case here. This generates a pertinent question. What is the nature of actual knowledge that the teachers who reported as having good knowledge have? This was not addressed in this inquiry. Further studies are indicated. If teachers' actual knowledge is the reflection of the cultural beliefs, which thrust a lot on CP, of child rearing prevailing in Ethiopia, the finding goes well with it. If teachers are unfamiliar with the most modern knowledge about the management of problem behavior of students, as members of a culture, they have every reason to believe that the knowledge that they inherited from their culture are sound and sufficient. It is commonplace that teachers with this belief system can hold predominantly positive attitudes towards CP and this goes well with the positive association that emerged between their perceived knowledge and attitude. Further studies with the

objectives of assessing teachers' actual knowledge and its association with their attitude towards CP are strongly indicated as knowledge influences attitudes.

The association between teachers' attitudes and their level of confidence in managing problem behavior with and without applying CP goes well with our hypotheses. The moderate positive correlation between their attitudes and confidence in managing problem behavior using CP is the clear indication that those teachers who believe in the power of CP would be confident in dealing with students' problematic behavior by resorting to its application. And it is quite natural that such teachers would have positive attitudes towards CP. Corroborating with this finding, teachers' attitude towards CP is negatively, though weak, correlated with their confidence in managing problem behavior without applying CP. A clear pattern of association emerges here: If teachers are confident in managing problem behavior of students without applying CP, their attitude towards CP would correspondingly be negative. The vice versa is true if they are confident with CP. This is, indeed, an encouraging finding. That is, if teachers' confidence can be raised to deal with students' problem behavior without applying CP and by using other classroom management and behavioral intervention techniques, their attitude towards CP can be turned negative which in turn can be expected to reduce the use of CP in schools.

How can this be accomplished? Teacher training at pre and in-service level becomes the first bet. Cutting edge trainings with strong components to change attitudes, develop knowledge and master skills in relation to problem behavior management and CP would go a long way in making teachers confident in managing problem behavior without resorting to CP. Mass media can play a role in it by addressing the culturally imbibed belief system about CP; teachers as the members of the community too are not immune to such cultural influences. This becomes all the more important in Ethiopia as Ethiopians strongly hold cultural beliefs close to their chests.

Age of teachers does not associate significantly to their attitudes. Though it is common to expect younger people to be more unorthodox and

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hence discard many traditional beliefs of the culture, it was found not working in the case of the teachers of this study in terms of their attitudes towards CP. Longer years of exposure and experience with children have also not made older teachers to believe that students' problem behaviors can be managed more positively with compassion: disregarding the age brackets in which teachers find themselves, they hold predominantly positive attitude towards CP.

Differences between and among Groups

Gender of the teachers does not influence their attitude towards CP as there is no significant difference between the mean scores of female and male teachers. This is not an unexpected result as both males and females within a cultural context are expected to share the same attitude towards a particular phenomenon, CP being the case here. The bottom line is that male and female teachers in the study site hold positive attitude towards CP and its use in schools.

Teachers with some training in SNE or who have taken some courses on it are naturally expected to be better equipped with wider and a well-founded array of behavior management techniques and classroom management strategies. These components find special importance in SNE as teachers with SNE background are expected to support, among others, students with various emotional and behavioral disorders (EBDs) and the regular teachers teaching them. Such a professional background should invariably make teachers with such training negative towards CP. Surprisingly the teachers with SNE training in this study are not different in their attitude towards CP from teachers without any training in SNE. This is a true cause of concern! Why do these teachers do not possess negative attitude, at least in comparison with teachers without any background in SNE? Is it that the SNE training in Ethiopia is not strong enough to effect the minimum attitude change in teachers towards CP? Or the cultural influence is so strong that it overrides the contribution of SNE training. SNE training's no-impact on various aspects of education of students with EBDs in Ethiopian context is well documented (c.f., Kumar and Seleshi in

press; Fiseha and Kumar 2013;Kumar and Fiseha manuscript submitted for publication). Time and again, such findings are swelling and it does not expose the SNE teacher training of Ethiopia in good light. It is high time that a rethinking and revision of the existing SNE teacher training assume priority in the Ethiopian education system.

Teachers of urban schools are significantly different in their attitudes than teachers on the rolls of semi-urban schools: the former group holds more positive attitudes than the latter group. This goes well with the available knowledge and customary expectations: life in urban area is quite faster than in rural or semi-urban settings. Everyone residing in urban habitat runs short of time. They hardly have time to wait. They need everything quicker. Such a mind-set of urban teachers can opt for the so believed faster measures to deal with students' problem behavior and it is natural that their attitude towards CP is more positive than the ones working with semi-urban schools. All the efforts in place to curb CP in schools should have additional components to address the urban teachers as they are more positive towards CP and may be more prone to resort to it in their effort to deal with students' disciplinary issues. Urban school focused attitude change programs and workshops on CP's negative impact can be effective measures to help urban teachers to rid of their positive attitude towards CP.

Comparison of sub-groups of teachers based on their perceived knowledge on problem behavior and its school based management yields a greater insight on the association of teachers' attitudes and perceived knowledge reported earlier. As we hypothesized, teachers who reported as having rich knowledge are significantly different on their attitude from teachers believed as having essential and inadequate knowledge. That is, teachers with rich knowledge hold less positive attitude towards CP than teachers with essential and inadequate knowledge. This study did not investigate the nature of actual knowledge of teachers about problem behavior to examine if they go well with empirically validated methods. However, assuming that the knowledge teachers who reported as having rich knowledge have is scientific, it is reasonable to argue that enhancing

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teachers' knowledge about problem behavior is an effective method to bring about positive changes in their attitude towards CP: realistic knowledge is the corner stone on which realistic attitudes are built. Such changes in attitude can be instrumental in reducing the use of CP from schools.

Enhancing knowledge about problem behavior and its management is a task which can be materialized by an appropriate revision of teacher training at all levels. A right blend of inputs on the theory and practice of students' behavior problems and their management while respecting students and their human and child rights in teacher training can go a long way in enhancing the right knowledge of teachers.

However, it should not go unnoticed that teachers reported as having essential knowledge and inadequate knowledge did not differ significantly. To realistically make an inference about this finding, an accurate understanding about teachers' perceived knowledge against the scientific knowledge becomes inevitable. All the discussions made under the weak positive association between teachers' perceived knowledge and attitudes earlier hold good to comprehend the insignificant difference on attitude between groups of teachers with essential and inadequate knowledge, till further studies bring out more clarity as to the nature of the knowledge that teachers have and its association with attitudes.

Conclusions and Implications

The teachers in the government elementary schools of the Central Zone of Tigray Region hold predominantly positive attitude towards CP and its use in schools as a disciplinary measure. While teachers hold culturally held myths about CP and its power, they are also aware of the various negative consequences of CP on children. When years of experience increases, teachers' attitude towards CP becomes more positive. Teachers who are perceived as having rich knowledge in problem behavior and its school based management hold less positive attitude towards CP than teachers reported as having essential and inadequate knowledge. However, a definite trend in the association between perceived knowledge and attitude towards

CP does not exist. Teachers with confidence in managing problem behavior with the application of CP hold more positive attitude towards CP whereas, teachers who are confident in managing problem behavior without administering CP have less positive attitude towards it. Age, training in SNE and sex of teachers do not appear influencing their attitude towards CP. Teachers who are working in urban schools are more positive in their attitude towards CP than those who work in semi-urban schools.

The implications of the revelations of this inquiry are predominantly for teacher training followed by legal organs governing school education. Going by the knowledge on attitude-behavior association in general, assuming that a teacher who holds positive attitude towards CP would invariably administer it with her students more frequently and seriously than a teacher who is negative in her attitude is an educated guess. And hence, inculcating realistic attitude towards CP in teachers is a non-negotiable must. Considering the findings of this study a wakeup call, the planners and executers of teacher education should make sure that teacher education curricula here have the pertinent components such as legal framework in Ethiopia surrounding CP in schools; respect for student and individuality of student; physical, psychological, social and educational after effects of CP on children; and alternative problem behavior management. Such trainings of sufficient duration and intensity would implant right and realistic attitude towards CP in the minds of teachers which in turn would have a tremendous contribution in the efforts to curb CP from the schools of Ethiopia.

The Ministry of Education and Education Bureaus should also make sure that the legal prescriptions on CP are scrupulously followed by attitude formation and attitude change initiatives. The legal governing bodies should join hands with the teacher education actors to make sure that right attitudes are created in the minds of teachers towards CP. A teacher force with negative attitude towards CP and positive attitude towards empirically validated classroom and behavioral management procedures would be the most powerful catalysts in atrophying CP from the schools of Ethiopia!

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