

Parents' coercion and violent discipline mechanisms influence children's attitude and health in Perak Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of parents' coercion and violent discipline mechanisms on children's attitudes and health. The universe of the study was Perak, Malaysia. The nature of the research was quantitative, with a sample size of (n= 386). Data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. In the context of the impacts of violent discipline mechanisms, the findings showed that attitude and coercion against children are violent discipline mechanisms. The use of coercive behavior was present among parents to discipline their children and makes them aggressive. It is recommended that policies and initiatives are advised to inform parents about the adverse effects of coercion on children's health. Educating people (parents) about proactive and healthy disciplinary measures is necessary.

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Introduction

The study explains the pivotal importance of violence against children and coercion in Perak, Malaysia. Even though Perak is a state of Malaysia, it is the biggest hub of challenges faced by children. Such as, Barrech and Din (2019) discussed the grave situation of child rights in Baluchistan and said that there are vulnerable circumstances of too many forms of violence, physical and psychological. The current study on this issue focuses on the following aspects, which are based on coercion and corporal punishment within the institution of the family. The context of corporal punishment Shafiq, Munir and Aziz (2021) defined it as a violation of children's fundamental rights. Despite its devastating effects, the social acceptability of corporal punishment is a severe social problem that needs to be addressed to provide enabling and healthy surroundings for kids in their home setting.

Parenting strategies, especially parental discipline techniques, have recently attracted much attention and the most contentious issue in parental control is corporal punishment, a kind of punishment using physical force. The debate is on whether physical punishment is always detrimental or whether it might be effective in weight and length of the body (Nazirullah, Rahman and Imran 2023). Worldwide awareness of the detrimental effects of corporal punishment is emerging, as seen by the actions of various governments to prohibit its use, despite some experts and laypersons advocating for its efficacy under certain circumstances (De Zoysa 2011).

A significant amount of research is concerned with child development and violence against children in different areas of academia. For instance, Munir and Hussain (2019) found that corporal punishment has other implications on the child's psychological and mental health. Furthermore, family plays a crucial in a young child's development, but there is also a relationship between effective parenting and a healthy child-parent relationship (Nazirullah, Ahmad, and Al Qassem 2023). Further the study found that lack of food develops psycho-social well-being and guides the child in a good direction (Nazirullah, Ullah, and Mustafa 2023). It helps prevent deep psychological behavior problems among children. On the contrary, it is found that harsh discipline strategies and low parental skills develop negative impacts on children and parents, and vice versa, such as aggression, chronic stress, trauma, and emotional imbalance (Tariq, Asif, and Nazirullah

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2023). Corporal punishment is often termed an effective and easy method of discipline mechanism for children. It has been an integral method throughout how parents discipline their children (Parker 2022).

There has been increasing research effort, and specialization and different schools of thought have linked violence against children with interaction patterns. Family relationships' interaction patterns and nature influence children and contribute to their personality development (Howe et al. 2022). The symbolic interactionist paradigm thought that social interaction is integral to society and its shared life experiences are subjective in nature. It illustrates that the members of the community perceive social reality in their own way (Macionis 2010). Violence against children has been practiced in different cultures in distinct ways, but its prevalence may vary from society to society. Some societies have physical, emotional, psychological and sexual violence, neglecting behavior toward the children's personality development. Similarly, Hashim et al. (2023) found that children's violence is present in every social setting. As a result, the current research tried to explore and explain the violence against children concerning discipline mechanisms within the family institution, which is the form of social institution in the broader sociological perspective.

It is essential to conceptualize the term violence and its different forms. Esper and da Silva Gherardi-Donato (2020) argued that UNICEF had categorized violence against children into four types. Physical violence stands for the aggression upon the human body that may include torture, beating, slapping and any other maltreated actions. Psychological violence is based upon power and its link with abusive authority, sexual violence shows to impose any sexual act upon a child, and negligence is the absence of a child's basic needs, whether physical, psychological, or emotional conditions.

Research Objectives

This study will be carried out with the following objectives, as given below:

- To measure parents' perception of violent disciplinary mechanism on children's health in Perak, Malaysia.
- To examine the effects of violent discipline mechanism on children's attitude in Perak, Malaysia.

Null Hypothesis

Ho. There is no relationship between coercion against children and their health.

H1. There is a relationship between coercion against children and their health.

Research Methodology

The research quantitative design to understand the perception, attitude and practices of coercion by the parents as the discipline mechanism for their children. A close-ended questionnaire was constructed to understand the phenomenon at hand in an objective manner. The questionnaires were distributed among the parents of Perak, Malaysia. The tool of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 21), which include frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation.

Study Universe

The universe of study was Perak, Malaysia is a multi-ethnic area with people from different social classes living together. Therefore, the data collected from the area had diversity in terms of interviewing respondents from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of the analysis for the study was the fathers of children residing in Perak, Malaysia. The purpose of excluding the mother as the potential unit of analysis is influenced by the socio-cultural setting of Perak, Malaysia.

Sampling Technique

The research used a basic random sampling approach. Simple random sampling is a probabilistic sampling method whereby every unit in the population has an equal likelihood of selection and examination. The primary rationale for using simple random sampling is to get a representative sample from the population, ensuring that each unit of analysis has an equal opportunity to be included in the research.

Sampling Size

The Taro Yamane Method of calculating the sample size for the study where $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ is used as the major formula for calculating the sample. For example, $n = 12000 / (1 + 12000(e)^2)$ was equal to 386 respondents, which is considered a representative sample for the present study. A total of $n = 386$ respondents were approached at their household and studied to find out the phenomenon of coercion against children.

Tools for Data Collection

According to Mason (2017) that data collection tool is an important component for the research. The researcher employs a close-ended questionnaire to study the parents' perception about, attitude towards, and practices of coercion as the disciplining mechanism of their children. The questionnaire collects quantitative data (Dixon, Singleton and Straits 2016) The questionnaire contains the informed consent, demographic profile, and empirical questions about the coercion against children as the disciplining mechanism. A questionnaire is a series of questions a researcher presents to subjects (Macionis 2006). In the questionnaire there were a number of series of questions which the research administered to the respondents for getting their views and response about the phenomenon for which the researcher investigated and fulfilled all the research protocols.

Demographic Variables Results

To ascertain if the research participants constitute an adequate representation of the target population for abstraction, demographic information about the subjects is necessary. Demographics or characteristics of research participants, serving as independent variables in the study design, are often included in the methods section of the research report. The demographic factors are, by definition, independent variables since they can be altered. This study quantifies the age, education, income, and occupation of the respondents, as seen in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1

Respondents' Age (n=386)

Age level	f	%
18-30	28	7.2
31-43	58	15.0
44-56	117	30.2
57-69	68	17.6
70 and above	115	30.0
Total	386	100.0

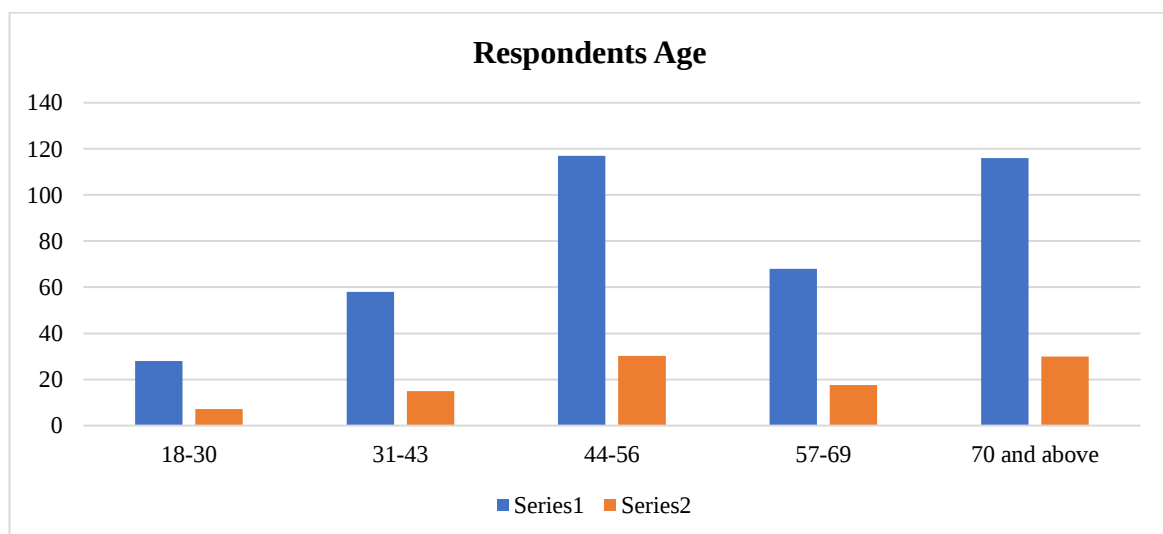


Figure 1: Age Cohort of Respondents

Table 2

Demographic Condition (n=386)

Education	f	%
Bachelor	120	31.0
Master	146	37.7
M.Phil.	109	28.2
PhD	11	3.1
Total	386	100.0
Income	f	%
2000-4000 MYR	135	34.9
4100-6000 MYR	216	55.8
6100-10000 MYR	35	9.3
Total	386	100.0
Occupation	f	%
Managerial Positions	62	16.0
Academicians/ Researchers	66	17.1
Elders of the Area/ Town	62	16.0
School Teachers	55	14.2
Local Citizens	61	16.0
Students	80	20.7
Total	386	100.0

Note: f=frequency and %= percentage

The demographic results revealed that most parents have done masters and bachelor in different subjects. Similarly, the respondents' income level is between 4100 and 6000 per month. Lastly, the occupation level of the respondents was middle class, and 80 respondents were students.

Correlation

The study measured the correlation between attitude, coercion, justification, and perception of violent discipline mechanism effects. Similarly, the results revealed that there was a strong positive relationship among attitude, coercion, justification, perception of violent discipline mechanism effects and children health problems. As a result, violent discipline mechanism has a high correlation with coercion and the value of coefficient level is also high ($r = .784$) (see Table 3).

Table 3

Correlation between Study Variables (N=387)

Variables	Attitude	Coercion	Justification	Perception	VDME
Attitude	1	.680**	.784**	.582**	.533**
Coercion	.680**	1	.540**	.451**	.236**
Justification	.784**	.540**	1	.640**	.588**
Perception	.582**	.451**	.640**	1	.567**
VDME	.533**	.236**	.588**	.567**	1

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, VDME = Violence Discipline Mechanism Effects

Conclusions

In the context of the impacts of violent discipline mechanisms, the findings showed indirect effects of perception and justification of children's health and how justification was shown to be beneficial and impact children's health. The statistical model of perception also contains a positive mediator for the effects of aggressive disciplinary mechanisms. The findings showed that the entire model might affect violent

disciplinary mechanisms. The result revealed that children's health issues were improved due to coercion and the bad attitude of the parents.

Recommendations

The fact that this research may educate social policymakers and program designers of child maltreatment prevention programs on how often parents utilize unpleasant disciplinary techniques is one of its most significant contributions. Policies and initiatives are advised to inform parents about the adverse effects of using physical and psychological coercion while punishing their children. It is also recommended to educate people about proactive and healthy disciplinary measures. The psychosocial correlations found in this research shed light on some significant factors that influence parents' use of physical and psychological coercion. The correlations that have been found align with study results from other parts of the globe. It is crucial to identify these correlations that are peculiar to a particular culture to develop evidence-based, culturally relevant preventative strategies. Primary, secondary, and tertiary preventive strategies are all possible. The current study indicates that the main preventive measure, which seeks to implement basic changes to avoid societal issues, may include eliminating social norms and propaganda that mainstream and promote violence. A family at high risk of violence may be identified as part of secondary prevention, which is the early identification of people with qualities predisposed to violence. Intervention and treatment efforts for families discovered as abusing their children may be included in tertiary prevention, which aims to address the issue after it has arisen. The current research also shows that simple time-limited information-delivery methods, delivered to a broad participant pool, successfully lower parental usage of punitive discipline. This is a beneficial discovery since such programs may be readily copied throughout the nation, swiftly disseminating the idea that unpleasant punishment should be avoided in favor of constructive punishment.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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