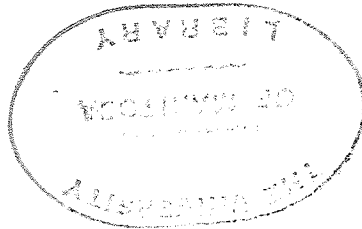


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AT THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

OF ATTITUDE TOWARD CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE FOR THE MEASUREMENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE FOR THE MEASUREMENT
OF ATTITUDE TOWARD CORPORAL PUNISHMENT
AT THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

ABSTRACT

PURPOSE

While modern educationists agree that disciplinary difficulties will arise even in well-run schools they hold to the belief that the end of discipline is not to destroy but to construct. Good discipline maintains proper relationships without repression. It is secured through force of character and personality - not by coercion. Even with this change in viewpoint from previous times, no perfect remedy for stubborn unsocial behaviour that resents the usual methods of guidance has been found. The school must be protected against the misconduct of any of its members who are inclined to ignore the rights and wishes of other members. Where stopping unsocial conduct is not accomplished by suggestion and guidance force may be required.

An important concern of educators today is to measure how far habits of conduct, that are in accordance with modern educational ideas, have been established within the teaching profession. The question of discipline is ever present in most schools and it is within this field that attitudes become increasingly important.

Specifically, then, the problem is the development of an attitude scale toward corporal punishment that may be used for teachers at the Junior High level. This measurement of attitude

PURPOSE-Continued

should be related to the modern concept of discipline in the Junior High School. The attitudes will involve tendencies toward the mode of behaviour, the manner of living and working together, the question of leadership and in general the proper relationship in the school.

The assumptions are as follows:

- (1) That attitudes are measurable;
- (2) That attitudes vary along a linear continuum; and
- (3) That measurable attitudes are common to the group.

SOURCES OF DATA

The data were obtained from three main sources:

1. A list of opinions on corporal punishment from various educationists and current literature.
2. The tabulation arising from the sorting of the opinions.
3. The statistics derived from the tabulation.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The work of Weber, Tschener and Cattell brought out the idea of equally often noticed differences. This idea was used by Thurstone as a method for obtaining equal appearing intervals for the construction of a scale of attitude. The general procedure used here follows Thurstone's work and is as follows:

1. A number of educationists were asked to write out their opinions about corporal punishment.
2. These opinions were edited in order to reduce the number of opinions to one-hundred.
3. These edited opinions were presented to a large number of

Teachers College students to sort into eleven piles.

4. The results of the sorting were tabulated.
5. Scale and Q values were obtained.
6. The temporary scale was subjected to tests for validity and reliability.
7. A final scale was drawn up.

FINDINGS

1. The measurement of general attitudes is subject to the development of a suitable instrument. At the present time this measurement appears to be still in the hypothesis stage. Renner's Generalized Attitude Scales probably come as close to measuring the general field of attitudes as any that have appeared.
2. Problems still exist in the field of scale analysis, particularly, where more than one variable exists.
3. There is some question as to the effect of sub-universes on the development of a scale.
4. Present literature indicates that a scale should be tested on the group that is finally intended to receive it. This scale was sorted and checked for reliability and validity by teachers at the Teacher's College level. Therefore, it should be applied only to teachers with little or no experience.
5. The large Q values obtained would seem to indicate a certain degree of uncertainty in the sample population. This may indicate the present trend of thinking concerning corporal punishment. The seventeenth and part of the eighteenth

FINDINGS-Continued

century was a period of peace in education during which the discipline concept of education prevailed. The Froebelian tendency of the nineteenth century emphasized natural interest as the initial point of all instruction. At the present time there appears to be a combination of psychological, scientific and sociological influences. The trend of thinking today concerning corporal punishment may be indicative of this evolution in educational thought from the certainty of the discipline concept to the reconciliation of opposing viewpoints.

6. This scale, based on the validity criterion, would seem to score on the low side.
7. A score on this scale would indicate only the rank order of a subject among other subjects taking the same test.
8. It is possible that the scale could be revised and norms obtained for more experienced teachers.
9. This technique is extremely laborious. The writer would adopt a voting procedure if further studies were carried on.
10. The criterion of irrelevance was not applied to the scale since it would require a large number of subjects and a vast amount of work. Furthermore it has since been replaced by the method of internal consistency and as noted previously, if this were to be used a different procedure of scaling would be adopted.
11. An interesting and worthwhile study could be done in the application of this scale to a large group of teachers.

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PART I
THE INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

THE HISTORY OF ACCEPTANCE

In the early stages of this work an examination was made of Monroe's Encyclopedia of Educational Research, as well as several theses and term papers.

A search for a thesis topic in the administrative field was made and discussed with a number of educationists. This search was finally resolved by choosing a problem from the field of corporal punishment. This was narrowed down to an examination of attitudes toward corporal punishment and the application of attitude measurement to this problem. The years 1957 and 1958 were used in the collection of data and test material. The specific problem is: the development of a scale for the measurement of attitude toward corporal punishment at the Junior High School level.

THE STATEMENT AND LIMITATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

General Statement

While modern educationists agree that disciplinary difficulties will arise even in well-run schools they hold to the belief that the end of discipline is not to destroy but to construct. Good discipline maintains proper relationships without repression. It is secured through force of character and personality - not by coercion. Even with this