Teachers meet with unwanted behavior when they are acting as facilitators of the learning process and they resort to certain tactics to deal with them. One of these tactics is punishment. This study aimed to identify the views held by Turkish primary school pupils on punishment. According to the results of the study, pupils were punished for different reasons by their teachers, who used different types of punishment in response to this unwanted behavior. Not being able to accept the situation, pupils experienced negative emotions toward the teacher and the lesson. Some of the punitive methods applied changed pupil behavior, some did not. Pupils expected different reactions in place of ineffective teacher punishments.

Key words: Punishment, unwanted behaviors, primary school pupils.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers try to help their pupils to learn in the classroom; however, they can meet with a number of unwanted behaviors while doing so. They try out several methods to overcome this type of behavior, one of them being punishment. Punishment is defined in the Merriam-Webster Online dictionary (2009) as “suffering pain or loss that serves as retribution”. While in everyday language, punishment is understood to mean shouting at a child, scolding or hitting; in the behavioral sciences, punishment is taken to be the reduction of the probability of the behavior being repeated in the future. It takes on many forms in schools: criticism, scolding, shouting, giving extra work, detention, slapping and beating.

There are two types of punishment: in the first, an unpleasant stimulus, such as spanking or scolding, is given; in the second, a pleasant stimulus is removed, as in denying love to a child, denying break time privileges and separating from friends (Erden and Akman, 1995). The first type of punishment is closely related to the concept of violence. According to Gözütok (2008), violence is the cause of pain by one individual to another, either knowingly or unknowingly. Examples of violent behavior include bursts of temper, hitting, kicking, pushing, pinching, slapping, fighting, wounding, threatening, insulting, shouting, abusing, bullying, limiting freedom, confiscating possessions and withholding what should be given. Violence can be divided into two types: emotional and psychological violence, and physical violence. The first type include actions that damage a human being’s emotional and psychological state, such as shouting, frightening, insulting, humiliating, not approving of an individual and what he/she has done, making humiliating pranks, humiliation, comparing with others, threatening, and deprivation of affection. The second type, on the other hand, consists of actions that damage a human being’s body, such as slapping, kicking, thumping, beating, treating roughly, pinching, pulling hair and pushing around.

Özen (2001) classified punishments under the heading of the following disciplinary methods: 1. corporal punishment, which is punishments or sanctions given by force and includes beating, imprisonment in an enclosed space, or giving detention; 2. verbal negative discipline methods used by an adult to control a child’s behavior, such as scolding, shouting, threatening, cursing, verbal insults and denying affection.

There are differing opinions on the use of punishment in education. Some researchers state the punishment can be used in education, saying that it changes behavior; while others express that it should not be used, stating that punishment does not change behavior, but that it can lead to the emergence of new problems. In extreme cases, when a child’s behavior becomes dangerous or interferes with the course of the lesson, punishment may be necessary to put a stop to the behavior in the short term (Cooper, 1994). Similarly, Skinner states that...
punishment can only be used to change behavior in the rare situations where an individual’s learning is made very difficult (Charles, 1996). Özyürek (2001) states that punishment can be administered to reduce the problematic behavior; however, punishment causing bodily pain or including verbal insults reduces the unwanted behavior for a short period, but does not bring about the adoption of appropriate behavior.

Punishment should be applied in proportion to the behavior in order to inhibit it; thus, it is necessary that the pupil knows why s/he is being punished. Examples of such punishment include assigning difficult or unpleasant tasks; not carrying out the pupil’s requests; separating the pupil from the group, game or lesson; making him/her sit with his/her back turned to his/her friends; or detention (Başar, 1999). According to the applied behavior analysis approach, if a reaction is punished, the probability of it being repeated is reduced. When this principle is applied correctly, it works in 95% of children, and their behavior is easily affected by reward and results. However, clinicians accept that the behavior of children with attention disorders who are oppositional and defiant by nature is not affected by the systematic application of reward and punishment (Hall, 2003). When administering a punishment, it is necessary to take into account the child’s age, personality and the context in which s/he is found. The child must be told why s/he is being punished, the punishment should be in proportion to the undesired behavior and based on valid reasons and it should be the final resort. Punishment by denying affection to a child, or threatening to do so should be avoided, because an extremely oppressive attitude in a child’s education can cause the child to be intimidated, develop a weak character and can bring about emotional unbalance (Köknel, 1999). According to Glasser, in quality education, teachers do not scold, punish or oppress. Instead, they encourage the pupils and show that they are always willing to help them. Ginott states that punishment never corrects a pupil’s behavior; and since punishment should never be used to control unwanted behavior, alternative methods to do so should be applied. Gordon believes that effective discipline cannot be achieved by pressure or by reward and punishment (Charles, 1996).

It is true that punishment has side effects on pupils; however, these effects differ in degrees according to the type of punishment applied, and the characteristics of the teacher and pupils. The negative effects of punishment can be listed as follows: anxiety, (Fidan, 1985; Aydin, 2000); hate (Fidan, 1985; Charles, 1996; Aydin, 2000); grudge (Fidan, 1985; Charles, 1996); aggressiveness (Fidan, 1985; Ginott, Charles, 1996); opposition (Fidan, 1985); revenge (Charles, 1996); damage to self-identity (Charles, 1996; Aydin, 2000); damage to relations with teachers (Charles, 1996); reduction in probability of self-control/discipline (Charles, 1996; Aydin, 2000); providing a negative model (Charles, 1996; Laslett, 1992); fear (Charles, 1996; Aydin, 2000); increase in retaliation (Charles, 1996; causing anti-social behavior, causing feelings of disdain and animosity, less cooperation with the teacher (Charles, 1996); anger (Charles, 1996; Aydin, 2000); lying (Charles, 1996; Laslett, 1992); decrease in effect due to punishment becoming routine (Korkmaz, 2004; Aydin, 2000); causing permanent behavioral disorders in the pupil (Aydin, 2000); making learning more difficult (Aydin, 2000; Celep, 2000; Mackenzie, 2004); causing emotional harm (Aydin, 2000); development of a school phobia (Dokmen, 2000); rebellion or submission (Nelsen et al., 1999); inability to take on responsibility (Mackenzie, 2004); teaching how not to get caught out (Laslett, 1992); truancy, not initiating positive behavior (Laslett, 1992); not teaching acceptable behavior (McLeod, 2003); anger, rebellion and reclusion (Tauber, 1999); resentment and decrease in willingness to cooperate (Charles, 1996).

Corporal punishment applied in order to correct behavior has the following negative effects: reduction in ability to focus on cognitive activities; turning to harmful habits as refuge; running away from home; truancy or leaving school; deviating from the truth; lying to escape punishment and turning to crime; a low level of identity; lack of courage; the development of an ineffective character; anger; formation of feelings of grudge; physical stimulation at an early age; preparing the ground for sexual disorders; physical harm; permanent incapacitation; nervous disorders that cause incapacitation; suicidal thoughts (Gözütok, 1993); cowardice (Gözütok, 1993); reclusion, hating teachers, fighting with teachers, fighting with friends (Gözütok, 2008); the desire to kill one’s oppressors (Bradley, 1984; Gözütok, 2008); hating oneself and others, a reduction in self-respect (Gözütok, 2008); a decrease in academic success (Gözütok, 2008); learning not to trust others but to fear them, become obsessed as an adult with seeking revenge on those who applied the punishment, a weakening of friendships, behaving appropriately solely to avoid punishment (Gözütok, 2008); keeping away from the teacher and from class, playing truancy, denial and shyness (Özyürek, 2001); rebellion, the desire to seek revenge, hate, fear, guilt (Gözütok, 2008).

The literature shows differing opinions on the use of punishment in education. However, it is the pupil who is punished; thus, the opinions of the pupils take on a great importance in research on punishment.

The aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify the opinions of primary school pupils on punishment, and the answers to the following questions have been sought to this aim.

1. What kind of unwanted behavior are pupils punished for?
2. What kinds of punishment do pupils receive?
Table 1. The behaviors of the pupils’ necessitating punishment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior necessitating punishment</th>
<th>Frequency of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking in class</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not doing homework</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arriving late</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not knowing the teacher’s question</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing other things in class</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pupil’s hair looking inappropriate</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pupil’s clothing looking inappropriate</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting with friends</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher’s misunderstanding</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running (in the classroom or corridor)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not bringing equipment to class</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What feelings emerge in the pupils’ as a result of this punishment?
4. What are the pupils’ thoughts concerning whether or not this punishment has changed their behavior?
5. What reaction do pupils think would be effective in changing their unwanted behavior?

METHOD

The model of the research
This study was based on the survey model and set out to describe the opinions of primary school pupils regarding punishment.

Sample
The population of the research consisted of the 17 primary schools situated in the centre of the city of Bolu in the western Black Sea region of Turkey. The pupils in the 6th and 7th grades of two of these primary schools were selected as the sample. All of these pupils were reached. There were 169 pupils in one of the schools, 50 6th grade and 119 7th grade, 89 of which were male and 80 female. There were 90 pupils in the second school, 44 6th grade and 90 7th grade, 51 of which were male and 39 female. There was a total of 209 pupils from both schools.

Research instruments
The data collection instrument used in this study consisted of a form with open-ended questions designed in accordance with the research questions. There were a total of five questions:

1. Write what behavior made your teacher punish you.
2. What kind of punishment did you receive for this behavior?
3. What were your feelings as a result of this punishment?
4. Did this punishment change your behavior?
5. If your answer is “no”, what should the teacher have done to change your behavior?

The researcher distributed the form to the 6th and 7th grade pupils of the 2 primary schools in downtown Bolu and collected them after they had completed it. Those schools were chosen because of their easy accessibility and convenience. They are representative of middle and upper middle class schools. Some pupils did not answer all the questions. However, the reasons for their refusal to answer some of the questions was not investigated. In order to protect the participants’ privacy and confidentiality, students were not asked to write their names on the questionnaire forms. Students were given one class hour time, approximately 45 minutes, to complete the questionnaire forms by the researcher.

Data analyses
The data was analysed by content analysis. The data were read thoroughly and meaningful chunks were coded. These coded chunks were then brought together to form themes. The numbers of these themes in the whole coding system were marked next to the pupils’ expressions. An answer of “yes” (Y) or “no” (N) was requested in answer to the question of whether or not the punishment administered by the teacher had changed their behavior. All codings and themes in the analysis of the data were implemented by the author.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings related to the behavior of the pupils’ necessitating punishment, the punishment they received, the feelings that emerged as a result of the punishment, whether or not the punishment changed their behavior and what teacher reaction other than punishment could change their behavior are presented here.

Findings related to the behavior of the pupils’ necessitating punishment
The pupils reported a total of 301 behaviors that necessitated punishment. These behaviors and the frequency of occurrence are given in Table 1. The thematic codes appearing under the categories of doing other things in class, inappropriate hair and clothes, the teacher’s misunderstanding, not bringing equipment to class,
playing and others are given in more detail below.

**Doing other things in class:** not listening (5), sending messages on pieces of paper (4), daydreaming (3) joking with friends (3), studying for another lesson (2), turning around (2), playing with bottles (1) and sending messages on a cell phone (1).

**Inappropriate hair:** girls' hair not being tied up (9), boys' hair being long (5), tying hair with colorful hair ties (2), styled hair (2).

**Inappropriate clothes:** wearing jewelry (4), wearing colorful clothes (3), girls not wearing their cardigans (2), not wearing a sweater (2), wearing different clothes (2), not wearing a neckerchief (1), wearing unsuitable shoes (1), not wearing sports shoes (1) and not wearing a tie (1).

**The teacher's misunderstanding:** thinking the pupil was talking (5), thinking the pupil was starting an argument (2), accusing the pupil of cheating (1), wrongly accusing the pupil of swearing (1), thinking the pupil had not done his/her homework (1), thinking the pupil was cheating during an exam by asking to borrow and eraser (1), accusing the pupil of lying when s/he said s/he could not come to class because of a headache (1).

**Not bringing equipment to class:** not bringing a book (6), not bringing a worksheet (2), not bringing a reading book form (1) and not bringing art equipment (1).

**Playing:** playing with play dough (2), playing leapfrog in the classroom (2), playing football in the class during lunch break (1) and playing in the corridor (1).

**Others:** laughing (3), chewing gum (2), playing truant (2), looking from the door when the bell rang (2), writing badly (1), not making up for missed days (1), opposing the teacher (1), waiting at the door for the teacher (1), speaking without putting his/her hand up (1), using a pencil to do homework (1), asking for an eraser (1) and damaging school property (1).

**Findings related to the punishments given to pupils by the teachers**

According to the pupils, the teachers administered the following punishments as a result of their misbehavior: shouting (64), getting angry (39), ear pinching (34), slapping (23), giving low grades (15), hair pulling (13), using slang words (9) (‘retarded’ (4), ‘dog’ (1), ‘stupid’ (3), ‘imbecile’ (1)), hitting (12) (with a ruler (3), the pupil's meaningless words (4), giving homework (3) (transcribing a piece of head (3), the board (1), taking by the ear (2), with a stick (1), the back of the neck (1), the pupil's head on the board (1)), sending out of class (9), signing a contract (8), making the pupil stand on one foot (7), beating (5), scolding (5), reducing grades (4), using text from a book (1), assigning 20 questions (2), making the pupil do cleaning (3) (cleaning the corridor (1), cleaning the classroom (1), collecting litter (1)), humiliating (3) (saying 'I would have been surprised if you could have done it' (1), 'you are good for nothing' (1), 'even the lower classes could have answered that' (1)), threatening (2) (with a contract (1), with disciplinary action (1)), staring (2) sending to the vice principal (2), not allowing the pupil to participate in Physical Education class (2), throwing a pen (1), spitting (1), face pinching (1), making the pupil stand up until the end of the lesson (1), throwing a book (1), telling parents (1), humiliating in front of classmates (1), marking as absent (1), throwing a book on the ground (1), swearing (1), confiscating earrings (1) not allowing the pupil to speak (1), and calling out the pupil's name in front of the class (1).

**Findings related to the pupils' feelings as a result of the punishments**

**Internally-directed feelings** (219): getting upset (67), irritation (33), feeling embarrassed (32), anger (22), crying (15), humiliation (12), feeling bad (6), feeling hurt (4), swearing inside (4), hurt pride (3), fear (3), resentment (3), wanting to leave the classroom and slam the door (1), feeling heart broken (2), loss of morale (2), wanting to cry (3), thinking oneself to be thoughtless (1), getting emotional (1), feeling as if one might lose one's mind (1), wanting to go far away (1), feeling lonely (1), wanting to misbehave again after school (1) and going red in the face (1).

**Feelings directed toward the teacher** (17): losing love for the teacher (6), wanting to hit the teacher (4), bearing a grudge against the teacher (2), feeling hurt by the teacher (2), to take a stance against the teacher (1), wanting to throttle the teacher (1), and hating the teacher (1).

**Feelings toward the lesson** (6): unwillingness to study or go to class (1) not giving importance to that lesson (1), not concentrating on the lesson (1), starting not to attend the lesson (1), being afraid to answer (1), and hating the lesson (1).

Feelings of acceptance (15): learning one's lesson (3), stopping talking (2), understanding the necessity of doing homework (2), acceptance of guilt (2), regret (2), not talking (2), doing what was asked for (1), and keeping quiet (1).

**Other feelings** (9): (nothing (4), not being bothered (2), not being affected (2), not being upset (1)).

**Findings related to whether or not the pupils changed their behavior due to the punishment they received**

142 pupils reported that they had changed some of their behavior, while 123 reported that they had not changed their behavior as a result of the punishment they received.

**Findings related to the pupils' opinions about teacher reactions other than punishment that might change their behavior**

The pupils stated that they would have changed their behavior had the teacher: warned them nicely (45), spoken nicely (22), not shouted (5), asked for the reason for the behavior (5), not hit them (5), not got angry (4), listened (4), been understanding (3), not made hurtful comments (1), acted calmly (2), behaved nicely (2), been tolerant (2), deducted marks (3), not pinched his/her ear (2), been polite (1), given extra time for the homework (1), not only spent time teaching the lesson (1), taught the lesson nicely (1), given questions (1), dismissed him/her from the class in an appropriate way (1), not thrown him/her out of the class (1), not taken disciplinary action (1), not hurt him/her in front of the class (1), not humiliated him/her (1), not insulted him/her (1), not bothered about the behavior (1), not treated him/her badly (1), not made him/her pick up litter (1) and not made him/her sign a contract (1).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Pupils reported being punished for talking in class, not doing homework, arriving late, not being able to answer the teacher's questions, doing other things in class, inappropriate hair or clothing, fighting with friends, being misunderstood by the teacher, running in the classroom
or the corridor, not bringing equipment to class and playing games. Similar misbehavior has been reported by other researchers in the literature. For example, talking in class (Gözütok, 2008; Türnüklü et al., 2001; Tulley and Chiu, 1998), not doing homework (Gözütok, 2008; Mahiroğlu and Buluç, 2003; Karakaş, 2005; Keskin, 2002; Gökduman, 2007), arriving late (Gözütok, 2008; Mahiroğlu and Buluç, 2003; Karakaş, 2005; Gökduman, 2007), not being able to answer the teacher’s question (Gözütok, 2008), doing other things in class (Gözütok, 2008; Gökduman, 2007), inappropriate hair or clothing (Gözütok, 2008; Karakaş, 2005), fighting with friends (Gözütok, 2008; Türnüklü and Şahin, 2002; Mahiroğlu and Buluç, 2003; Karakaş, 2005; Keskin, 2002), being misunderstood by the teacher (Gözütok, 2008), not bringing equipment to class (Keskin, 2002).

The literature reveals similar kinds of punishment to that reported in the current study. For example, getting angry (Türnüklü and Şahin, 2002), scolding (Türnüklü and Şahin, 2002; Dursun, 2007; Gözütok, 2008), shouting (Türnüklü and Şahin, 2002; Dursun, 2007; Gözütok, 2008; Alkan, 2007; Tulley and Chiu, 1998; Hyman cited in Wilson, 2006; Wilson, 2006), beating (Türnüklü and Şahin, 2002; Gözütok, 2008; Önalan Akfirat, 1996; Türnüklü et al., 2001; Alkan, 2007; Tulley and Chiu, 1998), slapping, pulling ears, pulling hair (Mahiroğlu and Buluç, 2003; Dursun, 2007; Gözütok, 2008; Önalan Akfirat, 1996), hitting with a stick (Mahiroğlu and Buluç 2003, Gözütok, 2008; Önalan Akfirat, 1996), hitting with a ruler (Mahiroğlu and Buluç, 2003; Gözütok, 2008; Önalan Akfirat, 1996), hitting the head, hitting the hand with hard objects, using slang (Dursun, 2007), insulting (Dursun, 2007; Gözütok, 2008), throwing chalk, erasers, pens, notebooks and, spitting in the pupil’s face, swearing (Gözütok, 2008), sending out of class (Gözütok, 2008; Türnüklü et al., 2001; Alkan, 2007), threatening (Gözütok, 2008; Türnüklü et al., 2001; Tulley ve Chiu, 1998; Wilson, 2006), maing stand on one leg (Önalän Akfirat, 1996), making the pupil wait in front of the board, not letting the pupil speak until the end of the lesson, assigning extra homework, talking to the pupil’s family (Alkan, 2007).

It can be seen that teachers administer different types of punishments to pupils who misbehave. It is known that punishments such as beating and insulting can damage pupils psychologically. One reason that teachers might administer such physically and emotionally damaging punishments is because of insufficient education on this issue during their teacher education. For this reason, they need to receive sufficient education on dealing with misbehavior during both their pre-service and in-service training. Moreover, school administrators, psychological counselors and class guidance teachers could visit all classes at the beginning of the school year to discuss misbehavior and its possible solutions. Pupils experience negative emotions as a result of punishment by their teachers. These emotions emerge as those which are experienced internally; those which are directed toward the teacher and the particular lesson in which the punishment was received; those which show acceptance of the situation; and other emotions. Emotions such as fear, surprise, embarrassment, anger, a wounded sense of honour (wounded pride, feeling humiliated), negative effects, sadness, hating and bearing a grudge against the teacher, and hating the lesson show similarity to the results of Gözütok’s (2008) study. Furthermore, Hyman et al. (1997) mentioned that punishment has negative effects on student’s academic achievement, attention, motivation, and school attendance (Wilson, 2006).

There were 142 reports that the punishment was ineffective in some cases and 123 expressing that it was effective. While giving a stern look or not allowing a pupil to speak until the end of the lesson may not leave a physical or psychological negative effect; Wilson (2006) reported that negative techniques such as: separation, ridicule in front of peers, yelling/shouting, make a comments (adultism), sarcasm, physical consequences and name calling are less effective than the positive techniques of proximity, praise, with-it-ness, involve parents and token system. On the other hand, Tulley and Chiu (1998) found out thatrote punishment may work effectively in some certain situations. Slapping, pulling ears or verbal insults may damage the pupil both physically and psychologically. The fact that the pupils found these punishments effective may be because they abandoned the behaviour for that moment and because they could not see an alternative solution from their teachers. Generally, it can be concluded that the physical punishments in particular caused pupils’ not to bring about changes in their behavior, suggesting that wrong methods cannot bring about right behavior. This acts as a hindrance in the attempt to achieve the goals of the education system.

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