The Impact of Ethnicity and Social Class on the Practice of Corporal Punishment

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The Impact of Ethnicity and Social Class on the Practice of Corporal Punishment

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore disciplinary practices employed by families from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. In history, corporal punishment, (CP; also known as flagellation) was a practice widely used in religious settings during the eighth century. The social norm was to whip for punishment but also for pleasure. For some, CP is one way of disciplining children in home and in school settings. There are signs that are present in determining whether a parent may practice CP in the home that include certain parenting behaviors, socioeconomic status (SES), parent mood, and discipline responses. It has been seen that the risk of a child being physically abused increases when his or her parent(s) practice CP. The parental SES and ethnicity are determinants for the practice of corporal punishment. The use of CP negatively impacts the child due to the physical abuse that can occur by using CP. When a child has been physically abused, he or she has a greater chance of becoming violent into adulthood, having mental health issues, and engaging in criminal antisocial behaviors. The design of this study was experimental and had a quantitative method component. There were 74 participants randomly selected from the Concordia University campus to participate in a 17-question survey, which assessed CP experience of the student, parents’ income, and race. The hypothesis of this study is Caucasian students from upper-class backgrounds will report a higher number of CP experiences than non-Caucasian students from lower and middle class backgrounds. The results of this study indicated there is no significances or differences between CP experiences, income levels, and race.

Keywords: corporal punishment, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, physical abuse
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The focus of this study was to explore whether parents of specific racial backgrounds and SES use CP as a form of discipline more than other racial backgrounds and class backgrounds. Corporal punishment (CP) is a practice that has been used for centuries and historically was a normal part of life. For the purpose of this study, corporal punishment, physical abuse, and social class need to be conceptualized. CP is defined as, “the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child’s behavior” (Straus, 1994a, p.4). The definition of corporal punishment appeared to be similar throughout the literature reviewed. The parents’ or caretakers’ primary goal of using CP is to punish their child, reduce undesirable behavior and increase desirable behaviors in the near future (Gershoff, 2013). Although CP violates the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 19), CP is still widely practiced today (Holden & Ashraf, 2016). The characteristics of someone who has been physically abused include redness to the body when someone has caused pain to the body by using physical force (Lansford, Wager, Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 2012).

The social class of a family will be based on the family income (e.g., lower, middle, and upper-classes). The low-income family makes between $0-$23,000; middle-class families make $32,000-$62,000, and the upper-class income is $100,000 and above. Throughout history, nunneries, monasteries and worshipers often used CP (i.e., whipping self and others) as a way to punish people, either for pleasure or religious objectives (Scott, 1968). Parents (or caregivers of children) may choose to use objects to hit, kick and punch children as a way of shaping that
child’s behavior. CP is a controversial public and political topic. People often share the belief that the negative outcome to using this discipline practice outweighs the positives. Meanwhile, others strongly believe that CP is an effective and even necessary form of discipline because it helps shape immediate negative behaviors (Gershoff & Bitensky 2007).

Some research suggests there is a high percentage of parents who practice CP as a form of discipline. Gershoff (2010) claimed that approximately 65% to 68% of parents of preschoolers’ use corporal punishment in the United States as a form of discipline. However, Aucoin, Frick, and Bodine (2006) report that 94% of parents of toddlers practice some form of CP and that 75% of a college student sample reported experiencing some form of CP in their childhood.

There are multiple studies that indicate that the socioeconomic status (SES) and ethnicity of a parent influences whether the parent employs CP. Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit and Zelli (2000) found in their sample that the SES of the parent was an indicator: if the parent has a lower SES (e.g., low-income) he or she has higher stress levels and a greater likelihood of using CP. The parent's ethnicity was found to be another contributing factor in the use of CP. Pinderhughes et al. (2000) found that in their sample the African American participants used this form of discipline more frequently than other populations.

Similar results were found in Bradely & Corwyn's (2005) study when they measured factors such as family environment, parental responsiveness, discipline practices, and exposure to stimulating materials and experiences. Zussman (1978) found that measures of SES, family size and sex of the child are also strong predictors of the parental discipline practices in the home. Contrary to the studies that demonstrate ethnicity and SES as primary determinants of CP
practice, Wissow (2001) concluded the parent's mood has a greater influence on whether the parent uses CP as a form of discipline.

If the use of CP eventually leads to physical abuse the outcome not only affects the family structure but also has a negative impact on a country's economy. When child maltreatment occurs, there is a greater need for child health care, adult medical care, criminal justice, child welfare, and special education due to the emotional, physical, sexual, or mental abuse (Brown, Florence, & Mercy 2012). Dodge, Pettit, & Bates (1994) reported there are negative outcomes for the child if CP is the form of discipline used in the household. The child can become more aggressive and violent in adulthood in addition to having antisocial behavior issues. Likewise, according to Gershoff (2010), the child who experienced CP had a greater risk of having mental health issues such as depression and anxiety later in life.

Some countries (e.g. Spain, Germany and Sweden) decided to ban CP, which led to a decline in violence in these countries. Sweden had specific objectives to ban the practice of using CP by changing the attitudes towards the use of physical force towards children, setting clear guidelines for professionals, parents, as well as providing early intervention to reduce abuse (Durrant, 1999).

Being that this study explores whether a parent of a specific racial or class background uses CP more than other racial or class backgrounds: the hypothesis of this study contends that Caucasian students from upper-class backgrounds will report a higher number of CP experiences than non-Caucasian students from lower and middle-class backgrounds. The primary rationale for this hypothesis is that people from upper-class backgrounds might experience the type of societal pressures (e.g., positive image and role modeling) that make disclosure of behaviors like
CP more challenging. This is my personal belief and why I chose to challenge what the literature reports. The SES of a parent is based in this study on their annual income, but can also be determined by a person’s assets, occupation, and education level (Beeghley, 2015).

The parent who is considered to be lower-class would make $0-$23,000, the working class income is $32,000-$62,000, and upper-class income is $100,000 or more for total household income. The median is reported by the United States Census Bureau of being 50,521.00 in 2014. The use of CP was assessed by a Likert-scale that asked questions pertaining to the way their parent disciplined the participant as a child (e.g. being spanked, slapped, kicked, objects being thrown at him/her and being bruised from impact of being hit). If there is a correlation between the Caucasian race, the privileged class and CP experiences more research needs to be conducted in these areas, since it is lacking.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

History of Corporal Punishment

Flagellation and religion. A review of the literature suggests that CP, once referred to as flagellation, has a long history. Flagellation (e.g., the act of beating, whipping, and hitting) was seen as punishment, but also was embraced at times for pleasure, sexual ecstasy, heightened hallucinations, and to appease gods (Scott, 1968). Flagellation appears in the Old Testament; people felt it was a way to serve: by sacrificing oneself, or others (viz. women, infants, and animals), God would be appeased and forgive the one who committed the offense (Scott, 1968).

There were two types of flagellation: the superior and inferior discipline. Superior discipline was when a person was whipped from the upper half of the body to the shoulders and inferior was whipping on the stomach and belly. For some, flagellation was a favorable behavior: once a year there was a Feast of Flagellation where boys were whipped for hours and sometimes to death (Scott, 1968). Given the long historical connection between flagellation and religion, religion may have an impact on whether or not a person uses CP. Gershoff (2010) reported that parents affiliated with conservative Protestantism use CP more frequently than non-Christians and Christians who do not identify as conservative Protestants. Monasteries and nunneries used CP to punish those who broke the rules of their religious community: if nuns or monks broke the rules, they were whipped by their superiors (Scott, 1968). Self-flagellation has also been a common practice among worshipers (e.g., Christians and Catholics); whipping worshipers was invited by the worshipers because the worshipers believed there was a religious objective (Scott, 1968).
The intent to physically harm self and others (e.g., CP) was commonly practiced for religious reasons and was not considered to be impacted by ethnicity and SES. Regardless of the physical harm done to individuals, CP was still practiced and was referred to as flagellation in the Old Testament. This history demonstrates the deeply rooted acceptance of using CP as a form of discipline.

**Corporal punishment in schools.** The use of CP on children in schools is not legal in 31 states, but this practice remains legal in Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wyoming. The idea of banning corporal punishment in schools can be traced back to 1977. The Ingraham family attempted to change the practice in a Florida school after their 14-year-old son James Ingraham was spanked by his principle, Mr. Wright, with a wooden paddle to the point of developing a hematoma. The Ingraham family proclaimed that according to the eight amendment, cruel and unusual punishment is prohibited, but the Florida Supreme Court disagreed, and CP in schools continued (Rosenberg, 1978). The historical perspectives of CP may be an indicator as to why CP has not been completely banned in schools.

Children of all races are at risk for being corporally punished in the schools that allow it, but according to McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang (1992), CP was used more towards children of a specific race and gender. McFadden et al. (1992) reported that in the late 1980’s African American students received more CP than white students, and males received over three-fourths of the discipline referrals. Similarly, Okonofua & Eberhardt (2015) reported that African American students in school continue to face racial disparities, being negatively stereo-typed and
disciplined according to their race. The researchers reported that a person's race influences how teachers perceive behavior.

According to Gershoff (2010), based on numbers reported by the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S Department of Education, in 2006 and 2007 there were 223 (2006) and 190 (2007) school children corporally punished. Although CP used in the schools is becoming less common, it still occurs. In the 2004-2005 school years CP was administered to 272, 028 school children across the nation (as cited in Office for Civil Rights, 2007). In the schools that do practice this form of discipline, the teachers reported that CP shapes the child’s behavior. Gershoff (2010) shared that in two national polls (i.e., polls in 2002 and 2003), 72-77% of the Americans polled did not feel the schools should use CP as a form of discipline, but despite these polls, CP continues to be practiced.

**Perspectives on Corporal Punishment**

**Physical Abuse versus Corporal Punishment**

The differences between physical abuse and corporal punishment were reported to be distinguished by the frequency CP is used (e.g., 2-3 spanks versus 20-30 spanks) and having dimensions such as normative and abusive spanking (e.g., Gershoff, 2012). Gershoff (2012) reported that when a child is spanked 2-3 times in one setting this is normative, and when a child is spanked 20-30 times this is abusive. However, when comparing the definition of CP to the physical abuse characteristics there were similarities. The definition of CP was dissected to determine if CP had the same meaning and characteristics as physical abuse. CP is intended to cause a child physical pain to the body with physical force, and physical abuse such as stabbing, choking, and redness of the skin also cause pain to the body with physical force (Lansford,
Wager, Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 2012). That being said, it would make sense to say when children experience CP they are also being abused.

Lansford et al. (2012) conducted a study on mothers and a child's external behaviors to analyze if different forms of spanking (e.g., no spanking, mild spanking, and harsh spanking) and externalizing behaviors (e.g., aggressiveness, mental health issues, and criminality) had a correlation. This study demonstrated a correlation between the two variables (e.g., all forms of CP and external behaviors). Regardless of the form of CP used, the study concluded that when a mother used mild spanking, within a year the relatively mild form became harsher spanking and with both forms external behavior was impacted. The harsher the discipline the more external behaviors existed.

**Acceptance of Corporal Punishment**

Whether a parent feels CP is an acceptable form of discipline is largely influenced by ones attitudes and personal experiences. Gagné, Tourigny, Joly, & Pouliot-Lapointe, (2007) conducted research in Canada to identify whether participants attitudes towards spanking became unfavorable when they were made aware of the negative impact on the child's health. Gagne et al. (2007) collected data from 1,000 adult participants through phone surveys and concluded that regardless of the negative impact that CP has on children, the majority of participants supported spanking children.

The attitudes towards whether CP is an acceptable form of discipline depended on the severity of personal experiences with physical abuse and psychological outcomes. The participants who suffered severe physical and mental negative outcomes from CP were less favorable of the practice. Ironically, the participants who had experienced being spanked, and
witnessed family violence, but were not severely injured, reported that they were in favor of CP. According to this study, the participants’ acceptance of CP depended on the severity of physical and psychological abuse, but even those who experienced some form of CP still accepted the practice. It is uncertain if CP is accepted more due to the societal norm or guided by individual beliefs.

Holden, Brown, Baldwin, and Caderao, (2014) conducted two random assignment studies to test whether or not the parent's attitude towards CP changes after they read about research summaries on the negative outcomes to CP. The first study was of 118 non-parents, and the second was a sample of 520 parents with one intervention group and one control group. This study concluded there was benefit to providing brief education summaries regarding negative impacts of CP. The 188 sample of non-parents exhibited a decrease in favorable attitudes towards spanking after reading the summaries. As for the 520 parents, the control group still favored the CP and intervention groups attitude decreased in favoring CP. This study demonstrated another intervention to help prevent physical abuse by changing ones attitude about CP.

**Family structure.** The National Incidence Study (NIS) reported that the family structure, living arrangements, and size of a family influence current stress levels, therefore increasing the risk of CP being practiced or any other form of maltreatment. The NIS studied reports on data nationwide from professionals and/or agencies. Sedlak et al. (2010) analyzed these reports and defined the family structure and living arrangements as being the number of parents in the household, whether the parents in the household are married, unmarried, biological, step-parents, single parent household or if there is no parent in the household. The children living with their
married biological parents had the lowest rates of overall maltreatment, and those living with a single parent who had a cohabiting partner had higher incidences of child maltreatment. The size of the family was also reported as increasing the stress in the family; the bigger the family (parents with more than 4 children) the higher maltreatment incidence rates in all categories (e.g., physical, mental, verbal and emotional abuse).

**Indicators.** The behavior of a parent may be an indicator of whether that parent will become abusive towards his or her children. Haskett, Neupert, and Okado (2014) reported that abusive parents have specific traits such as being more hostile, critical, and irritable as well as having less positive, supportive, and sensitive traits. The authors examined the stability of abusive parents behaviors which were measured by self-reports from the parent, child reports using a puppet interview, and observations during child and parent interactions. The examination occurred during a three-year period while the children were in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade. Gershoff obtained information pertaining to physical abuse cases in Canada and the United States by reviewing a regional survey and found 65-68% of parents of preschoolers use CP in the United States as a form of discipline. Gershoff (2010) also found from this survey the use of CP is so common that by the time American children reach middle school or high school, 85% have been physically punished by their parents.

Wissow (2001) claimed the use of physical punishment is not necessarily due to the race, ethnicity, or SES of the parent; it is the parent's mood that influences the rate of using physical punishment. Wissow (2001) measured patterns of nurturing, discipline, and depressive symptoms by the parents self-reporting on a survey given to 2,017 parents. Wissow (2001) found the poor and "well-to-do" (i.e., privileged class) parents had similarly high rates of using
physical punishment. If the parents are using physical punishment as a form of discipline, Wissow (2001) reported there may be other risks to the child's development such as a decrease in nurturing activities, a change in the parent-child dynamic, which results in the need for discipline interventions, and lastly parental mood.

**Intentional harm.** When parents use physical force to discipline their child and severe injury results, one might inquire if this harm was intentional. Gershoff (2010) noted that the use of CP does more harm than good and reviewed physical abuse cases in Canada and the United States, and claimed that with 75% percent of these cases, parents intended to use CP. The events that became physically abusive began with the parent intending to discipline the child to shape behavior, which then escalates to a point that the child becomes injured.

According to a large regional survey in the southeastern United States, parents who spanked their children were twice as likely to severely injure their child compared to those parents who did not practice CP. Those parents who use objects to hit their child are nine times more likely to severely injure their child to a point where medical attention is required. Gershoff (2010) concluded there is a huge correlation between CP and physical abuse. If the parent uses CP to discipline the child, there is high chance the discipline will escalate to physically abusing his or her child. There would be less physical abuse cases yearly if CP was not used.

**SES and discipline responses.** The child rearing practices in a family are partly due to SES, which in turn influences the discipline responses a child receives. Pinderhughes et al. (2000) studied data from 978 parents of different race and ethnicities and 585 kindergarten-aged children. The study’s purpose was to determine how SES, culture, family structure, stress levels, and perception of the child impact discipline response in the parents. Pinderhughes et al. (2000)
analyzed parents’ cognitive-emotional processes, stressors, ethnicity, values and beliefs to see if these factors influence their perception of the child, the child's negative behaviors, and the parents' response. The demographic characteristics, parenting beliefs, family stressed perception of the child and child rearing practices were assessed by providing the parents coded questionnaires. Pinderhuges et al. (2000) concluded culture and context had huge influences on the parents' cognitive-emotional processes, perceptions of the child and parenting beliefs. The higher the stress, the more likely the parents were reactive and the more intense the discipline that was enforced. Pinderhuges et al. (2008) reported that the low-income parents have a greater chance of economic hardship, which increases these stressors.

Bradley and Corwyn (2005) used the HOME (Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment) inventory in Africa to measure culture and discipline practices. HOME measured three areas of the family environment: parental responsiveness, discipline practices and exposure to stimulating materials. The use of HOME in Africa showed culture combined with SES influences parenting behavior and reported 80% of the mothers during the HOME visit said they spanked their children several times a week, but only 10% of mothers were actually seen slapping their children (as cited in Aina et al., 1993). It seemed the act of being “monitored” changed the behaviors of the parents and the number of discipline occurrences. With that in mind, this would imply an influence in the outcomes of studies pertaining to disciplining children.

Zussman (1978) conducted interviews with children and their mothers as a way to measure parental discipline techniques. The aim of this study was to analyze if the sex of the child, family size, and SES had an impact on the discipline practices in the home. Zussman
(1978) found that the measures of SES, family size and sex of the child are strong predictors of the parental discipline practices in the home. Zussman (1978) reported boys received more love from the mother than girls; also, Zussman (1978) found the larger the family, the more control and authority the parents exhibited over the children.

The greater the amount of stress experienced by parents, the greater the likelihood these parents use CP. The literature reported there are indicators that help determine if a family may have an increase of stress, which then increases the chance of that parent using CP. The family structure, size, perception of the child, and social class impact discipline responses in the parents. The traits of a parent that may be good indicators that the parent uses CP are as follows: hostile, critical, and irritable as well as having less positive, supportive, and sensitive traits (Bradley and Corwyn, 2005; Pinderhughes et al., 2000; Zussman, 1978). Wissow (2001) reported that a parents mood had a greater influence than ethnicity and social class, which is contradictory to my hypothesis.

**Differences by Socioeconomic Status**

**Parenting styles.** The low, middle, and privileged classes of people are determined by a person's income, education, and occupation. The higher the education level, income and occupation the higher the SES of the family. Lareau (2003) conducted an observational research study of 12 families and analyzed the working (e.g., low), middle, and upper-class family life to determine differences in family structure. The parenting styles Lareau (2003) described were classified according to working class, middle, and upper class. Lareau (2003) reported that people of Caucasian and African American racial backgrounds who are of the upper-class engaged in a concerted cultivation process, which enabled the children to have a sense of
entitlement, especially in the institutional setting. This childrearing practice provided structure for the child and taught kids things that aren't taught in school, which ultimately helps the child perform better in school. The parent who adopted the "concerted cultivation" child rearing practice was reported to have a better education than the parent who adopted the "accomplishment of natural growth" childrearing practice.

The concerted cultivation parenting style focused on supporting their children to explore talents, incorporate organized activities in the daily lives of their children, encourage accomplishment of natural growth. As a result, these children develop to have a sense of constraint. The "accomplishment of natural growth" is a child rearing practice Lareau (2003) reported that is practiced predominantly by working (e.g., low) and middle-class parents. This practice provides for considerable child autonomy; for example, allowing children to freely play outside for considerable periods of time (Lareau, 2003). When the parents choose to use CP they often fear the consequences of the school (i.e., reporting to state agencies), which negatively impacts the comfort level the parents and children have in the school. Lareau (2003) reported there is a family-school relationship gap between the lower and middle income families.

**Discipline practices.** The following literature suggested that the socioeconomic status of the family impacts parenting using CP. Straus and Stewarts (1999) conducted 991 phone interviews with American parents in order to obtain an estimation of the prevalence, severity, duration, and chronicity of CP toward their children. The authors reported that the SES of the family decreased as the practice of CP increased. Straus and Stewart (1999) examined data on CP that show African Americans and people who are of low SES are more likely to use CP as a form of discipline, especially towards boys in the South.
Trickett, Aber, Carlson, and Cicchetti (1993) reported the SES of non-abusive and abusive families to see if there is a correlation with physical abuse towards their children. Trickett et al. (1991) claimed that there is a report bias, but previous research shows that abuse occurs more frequently in the lower-social class families. Trickett et al. (1991) conducted a study with two samples. The first sample was of a low-income single parent household and the other sample was of a two parent working class family. The authors measured childrearing practices, which were collected in the home, and child developmental measures were collected in the laboratory (Trickett et al., 1991). The authors found in their study the SES of a family impacts child development and childrearing practices. The Trickett et al. (1991) stated, "There are differences in the developmental ecologies of abusive homes besides those attributable to low SES" (p. 155). When the SES is controlled, they found the emotional climate, expectations, and satisfaction with the child are some attributes in present in both abusive and non-abusive families.

Kotchick and Forehand (2002) examined the contextual factors (e.g., culture, community, and family SES) to determine if these factors influence parenting styles. The authors reported there are few studies that analyze the working and privileged families parenting styles between ethnicity and SES. As presented by Hoff-Gindsberg and Tardif (1995), the mothers of low SES backgrounds tend to be more controlling, restrictive, and disapproving towards their young children, and their interactions are more verbal compared to the mothers of high SES, which are more specific in their language and talk for longer periods of time. Hoff-Gindsberg and Tardif (1995) suggested a mother's income, education, and occupation influence the way she interacts with her child.
Lareua (2003) reported some working class families hit their children or used a belt as a form of discipline, but not all of the working class families in this study did this. However, the upper-class families did not use this form of discipline ever. As a result of the families using CP as a form of discipline, Lareua (2003) noted that the working families who used CP expressed fear of their children being taken away from them; the upper-class families did not express this fear because they did not use CP.

**Differences by ethnicity.** There are some racial backgrounds that practice CP more than others and have specific parenting styles. The following studies focused on the differences in parenting styles according to the parents’ racial background and SES. Weis and Toolis (2010) sampled 1705 mothers of young children to examine two different parenting style and behaviors by using a Parent Behavior Inventory (PBI). This study focused on Latino, European (e.g., Caucasian), African American racial backgrounds, and the S.E.S. of the mother. The authors reported the first dimension of parenting style as being responsive and the second style tended to be more demanding and involved practicing harsh physical discipline. When a parent is responsive, he or she will be affectionate, caring and show warmth. Weis and Toolis, (2010) reported the Latino and African American parent as being more harsh, using physical discipline and showing lower levels of affection towards their children compared to the Caucasian parent.

Additionally, the low SES parents are more likely to use physical punishment, display less warmth, demonstrate authoritative parenting style, discipline inconsistently and exhibit more disapproval towards their children than high SES parents. When examining the African American race, Weis and Toolis, (2010) demonstrated that the African American race used authoritative parenting style and physical punishment. It was also reported when comparing the
high SES mothers of African American and Caucasian racial backgrounds the African American mother exhibited more control, and the Caucasian mother showed more warmth.

In contrast, Duncan and Magnuson (2003) and Hoff et al., (2002) shared that high SES parents adopt authoritarian parenting styles, which means they work with the child, engaged in more discussions to resolve issues, and pay attention to the child's feelings or emotions (as cited in Weis and Toolis 2010). Researchers have found the SES of the family does not necessarily matter, and reported that African American and Mexican American parents were more likely to use physical punishment as a form of discipline than European American families regardless of the SES (Weis and Toolis 2010).

Lovejoy, Weis, O'Hare, and Rubin (1999) measured 1705 mothers of preschool children parenting behavior (i.e., warmth, hostility-coercion and control) by using the parent behavior inventory and compared ethnicity and SES (Weis and Toolis, 2010). The authors found as the SES of a mother increased the more the differences between African American and non-African American dissipated and the less hostile the mothers’ were towards their children.

Straus (2001) introduced previous research that shows CP being unbeneveal to the child, but reported these studies did not mention cause and effect. Straus (2001) examined the long-term benefits of CP on children, society, and parents. Straus (2001) brought to light how legislatures, the mass media, and social science journals defend CP. Straus’ summary of these studies suggests that children who experienced CP became more violent towards parents and dates, developed anti-social behaviors and suffered from poor cognitive development. All of these findings encourage the conclusion that CP should not be used due to these negative impacts on the life of the child and his/her relationships.
The Outcomes of Child Abuse

**Physical violence.** Dodge, Pettit, and Bates (1994) conducted a study of 585 children in preschool to third grade to examine if the SES of a family impacts the children’s aggressiveness and causes problems in behaviors of children as they age. Dodge et al. (1994) examined eight socializing factors that may be practiced by parents: harsh discipline, lack of warmth towards the child, children learn aggressive behaviors from parents, stressors from life, parental isolation and having early interactions with peers who are aggressive. The authors concluded that aggressiveness in a child’s behavior might not solely be due to SES but socializing experiences as well. It seems there is more than one factor that can contribute to a child becoming aggressive.

Gershoff (2010) reported on similar outcomes in a meta-analysis of 27 studies that showed when parents use physical force (i.e., CP) to shape short- or long-term behaviors, the child becomes more aggressive. If the CP becomes severe, the child has a greater chance of engaging in anti-social behaviors.

**Mental health.** The child’s mental health had been reported to be negatively impacted when CP is used. Sugaya et al., (2012) collected data from National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions in 2000-2001 and 2004-2005 (N = 43,093) of the U.S. population to examine the correlation between childhood physical abuse and adulthood mental health outcomes by using logistic regression models. Sugaya et al. (2012) concluded children that experienced physical abuse had at least one of the following psychiatric disorders: PTSD, bipolar disorder, ADHD, panic disorder, drug abuse, generalized anxiety disorder, nicotine dependence, and major depressive disorder.
Aucoin et al. (2006) examined the relationship between CP and a child's behavioral and emotional functioning. The authors were curious to see if a child’s behavioral and emotional functioning is the same if he or she experiences mild and high levels of CP. Aucoin et al. (2006) measured the association between CP and children’s emotional and behavioral function by studying a sample of 98 children from two school systems in the southeastern United States. The authors found the more severe the CP was towards the children, the more emotional and behavioral adjustment were present.

Gershoff (2010) reported similar findings that are documented in the United States, Hungary, Mongolia, Norway and Jamaica; the more frequent a child is spanked, the more likely the child will develop depression and anxiety that will carry over into adulthood. Gershoff (2010) noted that the mothers who spank their children during the first year, develop mental health problems due to the short term stress levels (i.e., elevated levels of cortisol) that occur when getting spanked; this stress continues in early adolescent years. Gershoff (2010) discussed a New Zealand study in which children hinted of long-term emotional stress by describing how it hurts them internally. The mental health issues a child suffers due to being spanked increases the likelihood of that child developing mental health issues into adulthood. Furthermore, the childhood delinquent behaviors, negative parent child relationships and physical aggressiveness tendencies continues into adulthood (Gershoff, 2013). Furthermore, Gershoff (2013) reported the use of CP being ineffective and having long-term negative impacts with most races (e.g., Caucasian, Asian, Latino and African American).

**Antisocial behavior.** Gershoff (2010) noted the more severe the CP administered the higher chance of the child developing antisocial behaviors. The majority of research was
conducted in the United States and also in other countries such as: Canada, Jordan, Hong Kong, Norway, Keyna, Philippines, Norway and United Kingdom (Gershoff 2010). The Gershoff (2010) described most of the research was not longitudinal or experimental, which makes it more difficult to determine if the aggressive and antisocial behaviors actually occurred because of the children experiencing the CP or if it was provoked. Researchers also proclaimed that longitudinal studies are more reliable because the aggressive and antisocial behaviors can be tested throughout childhood (Gershoff, 2010).

Grogan (2004) conducted a non-experimental design to examine whether using CP influences the child to become antisocial and if there are differences between racial and ethnic groups. Grogan (2004) obtained data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and he used fixed-effects analysis. Researchers also found frequency using CP as a form of discipline does not discourage antisocial behavior in children, but it actually increases these behaviors (Grogan, 2004).

There were numerous studies that demonstrated the use of CP having long-term negative impacts on the child's mental state, which effects their lives into adulthood. Children become aggressive, violent, develop mental illnesses, engage in criminal activity, become addicted to drugs, and often repeat using CP in adulthood. There have been a few studies that differed in opinion regarding how the SES and ethnicity differ in using CP and how they interact with their children. The parents of low SES exhibit more CP, and the privileged class demonstrated an authoritative style of parenting using less CP. It was also reported when comparing the high SES mothers of African American and Caucasian racial backgrounds the African American mother exhibited more control, and the Caucasian mother showed more warmth.
Societal Interventions

**Parent educational programs and teenagers.** One way to prevent child maltreatment is to incorporate educational programs for parents. Parent educational programs were thought to be effective in the United States during a governmental shift in the 1960s (Britner & Reppucci, 1997). The programs typically involved curriculums to help prevent family violence and child maltreatment or to improve the family functioning (Britner & Reppucci, 1997). Researchers proclaimed parenthood is believed to be stressful enough and teenage parenthood is even more stressful due to a lack of education, support, and an increase in poverty issues that exists for teens (Britner & Reppucci, 1997). Britner and Reppucci (1997) evaluated parent education programs for teen mothers and reported the educational programs were beneficial to the teens because there was a decrease in high school dropout rates, delay in subsequent pregnancies, and an increase in teen mothers attending post high school courses.

**Early childhood intervention programs.** A second intervention to prevent child maltreatment is to incorporate early childhood interventions in the home, clinics, schools and community. Early childhood intervention programs were reported to save millions of dollars on an individual and societal level. Asawa, Hansen and Flood (2008) reported these prevention programs save costs on healthcare, out of home care, child welfare, foster care, judicial system, law enforcement and unemployment. Some examples of early child hood programs mentioned are home-based (e.g., Healthy Start, Healthy Families America and Nurse-Family Partnership), school- based (e.g., Head Start and Family Resource Centers), and clinical-based (e.g., parent-child interaction therapy) and community-based programs (e.g., Prevent Child Abuse America and Triple P-Positive Parenting Program; Asawa et al., 2008)
The banning of corporal punishment. Currently there are 18 European Nations that banned the practice of CP: Sweden, Finland, Norway, Austria, Cyprus, Denamrk, Latvia, Croatia, Germany, Iceland, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Rumania, Hungary, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal and lastly Spain. The first European nation to ban the practice of CP was Sweden in 1979 and the last nation that banned CP was in 2007. Sweden's proposal to ban this practice is as follows: “Children are entitled to care, security and a good upbringing. Children are to be treated with respect for their person and individuality and may not be subjected to physical punishment or other injurious or humiliating treatment” (Durrant, 1999, p. 436).

The objectives to the CP ban were to change the attitude towards the use of physical force towards children, set clear guidelines for professionals and parents and provide an early intervention to reduce abuse. Durant (1999) completed a study to examine the decade trends to determine if the goals assessed were met in the country. He examined recent trends to study the reporting of child physical assault, child abuse mortality, interventions by social authorities, prosecution rates, and public support for CP. Durrant (1999) concluded that the Swedish ban met the goals it aimed to accomplish. Bussmann et al., (2011) reported the banning of CP in Sweden impacted the attitudes and behavior of parents, which reduced the violence in child rearing practices.

Gershoff and Bitensky (2007) reported that the idea of banning CP continues to be a controversial topic, particularly within the United States; some people believe it is beneficial to use this discipline practice and others believe it is more harmful. The United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (2006) reported that in 2004, 422 children died from physical abuse alone and 450 children died from maltreatment (as
cited in Gershoff and Bitensky 2007). Bender et al. (2007) reported that 85% of adolescents have been slapped or spanked, and 51% of these adolescents have been hit with a small object or belt (Gershoff and Bitensky, 2007).

Regardless of the negative impacts on the child and economy, the United States has yet to banish CP. There are current community and home based societal interventions to help prevent CP, but these programs are not enough. People’s attitudes and perspectives would need to change regarding the benefits to CP. Additionally, society needs to be educated on the negative impacts of CP, and objectives similar to Sweden's objectives to ban CP need to be adopted to increase early identification of children at risk for abuse, promote supportive and earlier interventions, and transform public attitudes toward CP (Durrant, 1999). More research needs to be done with the Caucasian privileged class regarding discipline practices they adopt, since there is lack of research in this area and banning CP altogether needs to be considered.
Chapter 3: Methods

Measures and Covariates

There are a few important terms that need to be conceptualized for the purpose of this study: corporal punishment (CP) and social class. Straus (1999) defined CP as, “the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child’s behavior” (as cited in Straus, 1994a, p.4).

The physical abuse (e.g., slapping, kicking, spanking or using objects to hit) will be utilized to mean the intention of causing injury or harm to a person by using physical force. Being that CP is intended to cause a child physical pain to the body with physical force, characteristics from physical abuse such as stabbing, choking, redness of the skin are also cause pain to the body with physical force (Lansford, Wager, Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 2012).

Combining Straus (1994) and Lansford et al. (2012) led to the following operational definition of CP: “the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child’s behavior”.” To measure this variable, eight face-valid Likert-type items were constructed for this study; these are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Likert-item statements to measure the participant’s childhood CP experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Objects were thrown at me when I was disciplined</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I was kicked when I was disciplined</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I was spanked when I was disciplined</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I was slapped when I was disciplined</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to assess the reliability of this measure of CP, a Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated to test internal consistency and reliability of whether or not the scale can be reliable in measuring CP experiences. The alpha coefficient for the eight items is .858, suggesting that the items have high internal consistency. The reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered to be acceptable (Pallant, 2001) indicating that these items likely represent the unidimensional construct of CP experiences.

For the purpose of this study the social class of the family will be operationalized using income only. The participants determined their family income by checking the following on the survey: lower class income is $0-$23,000; middle-class income is $32,000-$62,000, and upper-class income is $100,000-above. These income levels were determined by viewing the United States Census Bureau report of the median of Oregon income in 2014 as 50,521.00. According to an article reported by Feinauer (2015) in the Deseret News the income levels of lower and upper "middle classes" are: $33,501 (i.e. lower) and $100,502 (i.e. upper). The lower class income chosen for this study was too low due to an assumption made that the lower class income (i.e. $0-23,000) should be at least $10,000 lower than the lower-"middle-class" income. This thinking was false and impacted inaccuracy in the income levels reported.
Research Design

The design of the study was ex post facto non-experimental, using random sampling for participant recruitment, and employing a quantitative method explores the CP histories of participants from different SES's, and ethnicities. This experiment is ex post facto because there is no manipulated independent variable; instead, participants were grouped for analyses using the demographic variables of race and childhood family income level to assess the following hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis: The participant CP experiences occur more with the Caucasian ethnicity than the non-Caucasian racial backgrounds.

2. Hypothesis: The second hypothesis is the participant CP experiences occur more frequently with the upper class than either the lower- or middle-class participants, as operationalized by my measure.

The research was conducted by using surveys so participants could self-report information in various areas (e.g., demographics, SES, ethnicity, and CP experiences), then hypotheses were tested using both a Kruskal-Wallis H Test and a Mann-Whiney U Test to determine differences between groups (e.g., race and income) and CP experiences. Data concerning the individuals’ SES, ethnicity, and received discipline practices (i.e., those discipline

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1 There was an oversight in the construction of the questionnaire that resulted in incomplete data collection due to missing income level categories ($23,001 – $31,999 and $62,001 – $99,999).
practices administered to them by their parents or guardians) were obtained through a series of open and closed questions on a paper-pencil survey.

**Sampling Procedures**

The participants were sampled randomly; every other student that walked into the library or cafeteria at Concordia University was asked to participate in taking a survey. There were no students that participated themselves. Each student had to be approached to complete the survey. The targeted enrollment size for students in this study \((N=74)\) was met and 100% of all the students participated. The target enrollment size for this study was calculated by using the total number of student body and assuming 50% of the participants that walk by would enroll in the survey. The target enrollment table is presented in Appendix C.

Prior to entry into the study, participants signed a informed consent and local resources (i.e., crisis hotlines, urgent care centers, and military hotlines) were given to participants. The informed consent provided a description of the research project, the confidentiality of this project and risks that could be involved due to the sensitive questions being asked. There were no arrangements or payments made to the participants. Having signed the inform consent document, participants were enrolled into the study. The number of participants approached are unknown, but it is estimated to be over 100; the number who signed the informed consent was 74, all of which completed the survey.

The survey used for this study consisted of a series of open and closed-ended questions to identify gender, age, parental religious affiliation, childhood family income and race, as well as the CP scale referenced above. This measure is included in Appendix B. After the survey was completed, the participants placed the survey in a box. I reminded them of the resource list they
were provided in case the questions conjured emotions from past trauma. The participants were also reminded that their names are only written on the informed consent, if they chose to write legibly, and would not be written on the survey.
Chapter 4: Results

Participant Characteristics

This study consisted of 74 participants (47 males; 25 females; 1 transgender; 1 gender queer) who were Concordia University students. There were no missing data in this particular study. Three percent \((n=2)\) were American Indian, 67\% \((n=50)\) White, 18\% \((n=13)\) Asian, 5\% \((n=4)\) African American, 3\% \((n=2)\) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and 4\% \((n=3)\) Hispanic.

Of the 74 participants current income, 91\% \((n=68)\), reported of being low-income (e.g., 0-23,000), 6\% \((n=5)\), reported being middle-income (e.g., 32,000-62,000), and 1\% \((n=1)\) reported of being upper-class (e.g., 100,000 and above). The age groups of the participants are as follows: ages 18-22 78\% \((n=58)\); ages 23-27 14\% \((n=11)\); ages 28-32 4\% \((n=3)\); and ages 38-42 2\% \((n=2)\); no respondents reported ages in other categories. The childhood family income are as follows: 19\% \((n=14)\) reported of being low-income (e.g., 0-23,000), 60\% \((n=45)\) reported being middle-income (e.g., 32,000-62,000) and 20\% \((n=15)\) reported of being upper-class (e.g., 100,000 and above). The participant's parents education level is as follows: 31\% \((n=23)\) graduated high school, 32\% \((n=25)\) parents were college undergraduates, 32\% \((n=25)\) were earned graduate degrees and 1\% \((n=1)\) parent did not have any education. Participant characteristics are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Frequencies of Participant Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sample ((N=74))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males ((N=47))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females ((N=25))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Gender Identities ((N = 2))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-22 ((78.4%, n=58))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72%, (n=18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.1%, (n=40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28%, (n=7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5%, (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-27 ((14.9%, n=11))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%, (n=0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3%, (n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.09%, (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.7%, n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian (67.6%, n=50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian (17.6%, n=13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5.4%, n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2.7%, n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4.1%, n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-$23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$32,000-$62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6.8%, n=5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$0-$23,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$32,000-$62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(31.3%, n=23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college undergraduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(33.8%, n=25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned graduate degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(33.8%, n=25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Sample Characteristics: Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child-hood Income</td>
<td>$32,000-$62,000</td>
<td>$32,000-$62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents Education</td>
<td>college undergraduate and graduate college</td>
<td>college undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-22 years</td>
<td>18-22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>females</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants income</td>
<td>$32,000-$62,000</td>
<td>$32,000-$62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the participants reported of never being in protective custody (e.g., 37 out of 74 participants) and 7 out of 74, 9.45%, reported being abused. Of the participants who reported being abused, 29% (n=2) were Asian, 57% (n=4) White, and 14% (n=1) Hispanic. Of the 7 out of 74 participants that reported being abused as a child 71% had parents who were in the middle-class with an income of $32,000-62,000, 14% had parents earning an income of $100,000 or more (i.e., upper-class), and 14% had parents earning an income of $0-23,000 (i.e., low class).

Tests of Hypotheses
**Hypothesis 1.** The participant CP experiences occur more with the Caucasian ethnicity than the non-Caucasian racial backgrounds. To test this hypothesis a Mann-Whitney U test was performed. The Mann-Whitney U test is a non-parametric test that was used to analyze the differences between two categories of the independent variable of race (Caucasian race and all other races combined (e.g., American Native, Asian, African American, and Hispanic)) on the dependent variable of CP experiences. The Mann-Whitney U test was chosen instead of a t-test because measurement of CP experiences was at the ordinal level across two groups. The Mann-Whitney U test analyzed the significance of differences between the groups and provided the mean rank for each of the groups. A Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in CP experiences of other races (Mdn = 44.50, n = 24) and Caucasian race (Mdn = 50, n = 45), U = 477.000, z = -.609, p = .543, r = .07. Thus, the null cannot be rejected and my hypothesis is not supported.

**Hypothesis 2.** The second hypothesis is the participant CP experiences occur more frequently with the upper class than either the lower- or middle-class participants, as operationalized by my measure. To test this hypothesis a Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted. The Kruskal-Wallis H Test is a non-parametric method that was used to test this hypothesis because there were two or more ordinal-level grouping variables (i.e., participants of low, middle, and upper parental economic classes). A Kruskal-Wallis Test revealed of no significantly differences in income levels across three different groups (Low-income Group, n = 14; Middle-income Group, n = 45; Upper-income Group, n = 15; χ² (2, n = 74) = .583; p = .747. Thus, the null cannot be rejected and my hypothesis is not supported.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Summation of Results

In this study, there was no statistically significant relationships between an individual’s race, income, and their CP experiences. This study included 74 participants, located at the Concordia University campus, which affected the results due to the demographics. Because the school's population is primarily of Caucasian students there was a greater chance of the Caucasian population being surveyed. The results regarding racial backgrounds were dissimilar to the Weiss and Toolis (2010) research findings of African American parents engaging in harsher punishment than the Caucasian parents.

Strengths and Weaknesses

This study was limited by the relative lack of diversity in the sample. If the surveys were given to participants who were located in different neighborhoods (i.e., low, middle, and privileged classes), the data may have had more diversity in experiences with CP, ethnicity, and income levels. Additionally, there may have been a greater chance of participants having experiences with CP, and Department of Human Services contact (i.e., child protective custody), and their might have been wider variability of racial backgrounds.

There was an oversight in the construction of the questionnaire that resulted in incomplete data collection due to missing income level categories ($23,001 – $31,999 and $62,001 – $99,999). Because the social class of the family was based on income, this oversight impacted whether or not the data was accurate. If there was not an oversight the results may have been different and/or similar to Weis and Toolis (2010) report of low-income participants as having received harsher punishment than the working and privileged class family. Similar to
THE PRACTICE OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

these findings, Straus and Stewart (1999) also reported that individuals identifying as African American and those from lower income strata use the CP form of discipline the most.

The sampling method was a strength of this research. The participants were chosen randomly at the Concordia University campus because I assumed participants would be more willing to complete a survey. I could have surveyed parents in the local neighborhoods, but participant transparency and a willingness to share if they had used CP might have been constrained given the context. If the parents had used CP and admitted to bruising their child as a result of using CP, they might have feared they would be reported to child welfare or the police. I chose to survey the students and not the parents for two reasons: 1) the sample was easier to get at one location; 2) the parents may not provide accurate information due to fear of backlash or consequences.

The tests used to analyze the data were the Kruskal-Wallis Test and the Mann-Whitney U Test. These were appropriate tests for this study, providing choosing of these tests was a strength since they were appropriately used therefore providing accurate results. Kruskal revealed of no significantly differences in income levels across three different groups (Low-income Group, n=14; Middle-income Group, n=45; Upper-income Group, n=15; $\chi^2 (2, n=74) = .583; p=.747$. A Mann-Whitney U Test revealed no significant difference in CP experiences of other races ($Md_n=44.50, n=24$) and Caucasian race ($Md_n=50, n=45$), $U=477.000, z= -.609, p=.543, r=.07$.

Implications

In analyzing the 74 participant’s responses to the frequency (e.g., always, very frequently, occasionally, rarely, and very rarely) measured on the Likert scale, it was found that 24% (n= 18) of the participants had objects thrown at them, 17% (n= 13) were kicked, 78% (n=...
58) were spanked, 38% (n= 28 ) students were slapped, 9% (n= 7 ) were bruised from the impact of thrown objects, 8% (n=6) were bruised from being kicked, 23% (n=17) had been bruised from the impact of being spanked, and 11% (n=8 ) were bruised from the impact of being slapped.

However, only 9% (n=7 ) of the students reported being abused. According to these responses, each of these students experienced CP, but they reported they hadn't experienced abuse. This is an indication of CP being accepted as a norm in society or their definition of CP differing from the definition in literature. As stated in the literature review, depending on the investigators definition, there are dimensions of CP (e.g., normative and abusive) that constitute CP as being abusive (Gershoff, 2002)

For this study, the CP that was used on all the students are considered to be abusive. If a parent is kicking, throwing objects, spanking, slapping with or without bruising, the intent is to physically hurt the child, to cause pain, and therefore is considered to be abusive. If we were to revisit the sum of the previous analysis, 6 students were bruised from being kicked, 17 were bruised from being spanked, and 8 were bruised from the impact of being slapped. Only 7 participants reported being abused, but yet more than 7 experienced physical force that injured them. My goal was to explore the differences between ethnicity and social classes regarding whether CP was used. I was curious if there were differences between CP experiences with ones’ social class and ethnicity. I found that students who had experienced CP did not consider themselves being abused, which may be partly due to the individual’s severity of CP and their perspective on CP. When manually examining specific racial backgrounds and CP experiences 45 participants reported of having some CP experience (e.g., always, very frequently, occasionally), and 7 participants out of this 45 considered the CP to be abusive. Of the 45
participants, 2% (n=1) were American Native, 11% (n=5) of the Asian participants, 9% (n=4) of the African American or Black participants, 73% (n=33) of the Caucasian participants, and 4% (n=2) of the Hispanic participants.

The literature reviewed had demonstrated the definition of CP being similar to the end result of being physically abused. There is an abundance of research that demonstrate the low, non-Caucasian racial background of using CP, but minimal literature that reported on how the Caucasian racial background and upper classes discipline their children. There were some studies that compared the privileged and low SES families, but the focus definitely seemed to be targeted more on the low SES rather than the privileged.

**Improvements**

The sampling method could have been randomly selected in different socioeconomic neighborhoods, which would have provided the research with more variety of races and income levels. The socioeconomic levels of a neighborhood would be first determined by going to the City Hall to look at records of the neighborhoods demographics and income levels in a particular neighborhood. The demographics of a neighborhood could also be determined by a face to face survey interview.

The definition of corporal punishment and physical abuse would be presented to the participants. After the participants agreed to take the survey, I would tell them what the definition of corporal punishment and physical abuse is. Gagné, Tourigny, Joly, & Pouliot-Lapointe, (2007) reported a parents attitude towards CP is influenced once they are aware of the negative impacts on the child when CP is used. If the participants were aware of what the definition of CP and physical abuse is they may have acknowledged that they were abused and
the percentage of participants who were abused may be higher. The knowledge of what these terms mean may have a huge impact on their perception of acceptance of CP and/or being abused.

The income levels would be changed to measure the socioeconomic groups low, middle, and upper. The participants family income would be considered low class if they made $0-$31,999, middle class $32,000 – $99,999 and upper-class 100,000-above. The lack of missing information would provide valid data regarding the percentages of families who have experienced CP and their income levels.

Conclusion

CP is a controversial topic, which can be defined differently between people. Similarly, the perspectives, acceptance of CP and physical abuse vary between people. Although there are different perspectives on CP it continues to be commonly used in the home and legal in school settings of 19 states. The literature reviewed reported that the African American race and low-income class were reported as having harsher discipline practices than Hispanic and Caucasian races, and other classes (e.g., middle and upper-classes). Most of the research regarding CP pertained to the racial backgrounds and SES of the low and middle classes and African American, Caucasian, Hispanic racial backgrounds. There was minimal research that reported on how the Caucasian upper-class discipline their children. The use of CP can negatively impact a child's behavior and mental health into adulthood, which effects society as a whole.

When using a Mann-Whitney U Test to analyze the data, the results showed no differences in CP experiences of between races. There were 7 participants who reported being physically abused as a child, but 45 participants had reported the frequency of CP experience
being either always, very frequently or occasionally. There was a lack of research to support my hypothesis, however. The results to Hypotheses 1 revealed no significant difference in CP experiences of other races (\(Mdn= 44.50, n=24\)) and Caucasian race (\(Mdn=50, n=45\)), U=477.000, \(z= -0.609, p=.543, r=.07\). Thus, the null cannot be rejected and my hypothesis is not supported.

The results to Hypotheses 2 revealed no significant differences in income levels across three different groups (Low-income Group, \(n=14\); Middle-income Group, \(n=45\); Upper-income Group, \(n=15\); \(\chi^2 (2, n=74) = .583; p=.747\)). Thus, the null cannot be rejected and my hypothesis is not supported. The study would be more significant if the perspectives of CP were clearly defined by participants, and the survey was given to the participants after they were informed of current statistics on negative impacts regarding CP and physical abuse. My study provides readers with insight on how the use of CP can vary between ethnicity, and social class. Additionally, this study provides insight to how one’s definition of CP can be different from physical abuse, although they are quite similar. In order to support my hypothesis, more research is needed in order to clearly identify the impact of race, ethnicity, and class on child disciplinary practices.
References


of child maltreatment (pp. 27-61). Springer Netherlands.


Appendix A: Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT

Research Study Title: Corporal Punishment
Principle Investigator: Jana Weiss
Research Institution: Concordia University
Faculty Advisor: Bryant Carlson

Description of the Research Project:

• The purpose of this research is to explore disciplinary practices employed by families from different socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. This study will contribute to the research literature on the connections between corporal punishment, such as spanking or other punishment that is more aggressive, religion, gender, socio-economic status, and ethnicity.

• The participants will provide data that will be collected by the participant answering questions on a questionnaire (a “survey”). This questionnaire includes questions such as: “What religion do you most identify with?” “Have you ever been physically abused as a child?”

This research data collection is scheduled in February, 2016, at the Concordia University-Portland campus. The only requirement for participation is that the individual is at least 18 years of age and signs this consent form stating they want to participate. There is no incentive, no cost, and/or no grade associated with you participating or not participating.

Confidentiality:

This one page survey does not ask you to write your name or other identifying information on the paper. Therefore, your answers to the questionnaire will be anonymous. The only record of you specifically will be that you gave consent to this study. This consent form will be stored in a locked cabinet, so whether or not you participated will be kept confidential. All documents will be destroyed three years after the study is over.

Risks:

The survey includes sensitive questions, which may remind a participant of trauma. You can skip questions, and you can stop answering the questions at any time. A counselor is available to you at no cost to you if you have negative feelings. You can contact Bryant Carlson, who is in the Psychology Department, and, even without giving your name, he will assist you with support groups or other counselling services. Please call or email Bryant Carlson at telephone: (503) 288-9371. You can take a brochure on support groups (take a brochure that is on this research table).

If you have questions:
If you have questions you can talk to or write the principle investigator, Jana Weiss at email: janaw1978@yahoo.com or at phone: (503)360-3858. If you want to talk with a participant advocate other than the investigator, you can write or call the director of our institutional review board, Dr. OraLee Branch (email obranch@cu-portland.edu or call 503-493-6390).

Your Statement of Consent: Fill this out if you volunteer and what to be handed the questionnaire.

I, _________________________________, have read the above information. I asked questions if I
( Participant’s Name, print please)
had them, and my questions were answered. I have received a copy of this form. I volunteer my
consent for this study.

____________________________  ______________
Participant’s Signature             Date
Appendix B: Survey

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT QUESTIONNAIRE. Please fill this out if and only if you signed your consent form and volunteer to participate. The answers you write here will not be linked to your name or personal identifying information. When done, please fold this paper and put in the drop box “Safe” on the nearby table for completed questionnaires. If you have questions, you can email Jana Weiss at janaw1978@yahoo.com.

BEGIN QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. How does your current age fall in this age grouping? (Circle the age group in the square that has your age)

   | 18-22 | 23-27 | 28-32 | 33-37 | 38-42 | 42 + |

2. What is your gender identity? (circle one)
   (1) Female (2) Male (3) Transgender Female (4) Transgender Male
   (5) Gender queer (6) Gender-nonconforming (7) Other ____________

3. What is your race (as you define it)? (circle all that apply)
   (1) American Indian (2) Alaskan Native (3) Asian (4) Black or African American
   (5) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (6) White

4. What is your current income in US dollars? (circle one)
   (1) $0-23,000 (2) $32,000-62,000 (3) $100,000- above

5. What was your childhood family income in US dollars? (circle the one you most remember)
   (1) $0-23,000 (2) $32,000-62,000 (3) $100,000- above

6. What is the highest level of education you completed? (circle one)
   (1) High school (2) College undergraduate (3) Graduate College (3) none

7. What was the highest level of education one of your parents completed? (circle the one you most remember)
   (1) High school (2) College undergraduate (3) Graduate College (3) none

8. What is your current religion? (“X” the box to right of religion that you best identify with right now)
   This list is based on the Pew Charitable Trust, in alphabetical order, and not meant to bias or provide our perspective.
9. Did you grow up in the home of either your mother or father, or both?  
   (1) Yes (2) No

10. Did you grow up in the home someone who was not one of your parents?  
   (1) Yes (2) No

11. What religion were your parents as a child? ("X" the box to right of religion you best remember [if parent(s) had different religions, "X" the one you remember as being the most influential])

12. Was your mother employed in your childhood?  
   (1) Yes (2) No

13. Was your father employed in your childhood?  
   (1) Yes (2) No
14. If your primary home caretaker was not your parent, was your primary home caretaker employed in your childhood?
   (1) Yes (2) No

15. Have you experienced corporal punishment from a parent or caretaker as a child?
   (Please circle the number in the box that applies best for you on Likert scale, from Always (1) to Never (6))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Very Frequently</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Very Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objects were thrown at me when I was disciplined</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was kicked when I was disciplined</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was spanked when I was disciplined</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was slapped when I was disciplined</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had bruised from the impact of thrown objects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had bruised from the impact of being kicked</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had bruised from the impact of being spanked</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had bruised from the impact of being slapped</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Have you ever been in child protective custody?
    (1) Yes (2) No

17. Have you ever been physically abused as a child?
    (1) Yes (2) No

END QUESTIONNAIRE.
### APPENDIX C: Targeted Enrollment

**Study design investigator descriptions:** The recruitment will target every other undergraduate students that walk into the cafeteria and library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity/Race Self-identifying as:</th>
<th>POPULATION (N)</th>
<th>RECRUIT</th>
<th>EXPECTED ENROLLMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigator notes on categories:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino or Hispanic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPECTED:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,369</strong></td>
<td><strong>136</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>POPULATION (N)</th>
<th>RECRUIT</th>
<th>EXPECTED ENROLLMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigator notes on categories:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 7 years old</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-17 years old</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Expected</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,369</strong></td>
<td><strong>136</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>POPULATION (N)</th>
<th>RECRUIT</th>
<th>EXPECTED ENROLLMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigator notes on categories:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect no bias by gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect no bias by gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>68</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>917</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Expected</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L: Library Permission Form

Permission to store and make available for use my thesis:

I, Jana Weiss, do hereby irrevocably consent to and authorize the Concordia University Library to catalog and file the thesis entitled "The Practice of Corporal Punishment and to make the thesis available in both paper and electronic formats for use, circulation, and limited reproduction by users at the Concordia University Library. I do not, however, relinquish my copyrights.

Jana Weiss  (Signature)

4/28/2016 (Date)
Appendix M

The Impact of Ethnicity and Social Class on the Practice of Corporal Punishment

A thesis submitted to

The Department of Psychology

College of Theology, Arts, & Sciences

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for a Master of Arts degree in Psychology

by

Jana Weiss

Faculty Supervisor ________________________________  ____________

Prof. Bryant Carlson  Date

Department Chair ________________________________  ____________

Dr. Reed Mueller  Date

Dean, College of

Theology, Arts, & Sciences ________________________________  ____________

Dr. David Kluth  Date

Chief Academic Officer ________________________________

Dr. Joe Mannion  Date

Concordia University

Portland, Oregon

May, 2016