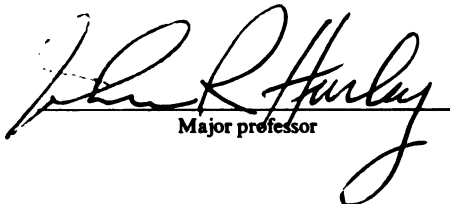




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**PERCEPTIONS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN AFRICAN AMERICAN
AND EUROPEAN AMERICAN SUBCULTURES**

By

Vernita Annette Marsh

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to

**Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Psychology

1995

ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN AMERICAN SUBCULTURES

By

Vernita Annette Marsh

Perceptions of physical discipline by 218 adult participants were analyzed using a retrospective method and cross-cultural comparisons. Although the focus of this study involved African Americans and European Americans, no racial group was excluded.

Four major issues were examined: (a) perceived severity of past physical discipline; (b) reported frequency of past physical discipline; (c) current perceptions of child discipline and physical abuse; (d) the relationship between religious affiliation and endorsing the physical punishment of children. African Americans indicated that they had received more childhood physical discipline than their European American cohorts, yet they perceived this corporal punishment as being less abusive than did the European Americans. African Americans were also more likely to approve of physical punishment for the next generation than European Americans. These results support the idea that receiving much physical discipline as a child was associated with the sanctioning of the future use of corporal punishment. Childhood religious affiliation better predicted one's perceptions of physical discipline than did one's current affiliation. Childhood religious affiliation also interacted with gender in regard to the approval of corporal punishment. Fundamentalist men were much more approving of physical punishment than Fundamentalist women,

while men and women raised in more Liberal religions differed little in this respect. Education also influenced perceptions of physical punishment. Generally, the more educated reported having received less frequent and less severe physical punishment than the less educated. An authoritarian ethic appears to underlie the use of corporal punishment. African Americans and others reared in Fundamentalist religions had more authoritarian attitudes toward child-rearing. One's endorsement of physical discipline for the next generation seems more influenced by childhood than by later experiences, emphasizing the importance of early preventive interventions.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature addressing the plight of abused children has grown markedly. Concerns about child abuse in the U. S. have increased exceptionally since the 1960s (Rossi, 1978; Gelles & Cornell, 1990; Gil, 1983; Jacobsen, 1986; Wright, 1982). Before the early 1900s, child-rearing practices were considered a rather private matter and kept secret by most families (Gelles, 1983; Wright, 1992). Therefore, society values and beliefs about child-rearing as well as child abuse have varied. Historically, adults have shown little concern with the rights of children because they were viewed as the property of their parents (deMause, 1974; Gelles, 1979; Maher, 1987) and sometimes children were subjected to cruel and harsh treatment for the amusement of adults (Pagelow, 1984). Furthermore, children were often physically assaulted as a result of religious beliefs, based on the idea that it was the duty of parents to "beat the devil" out of them (Pagelow, 1984). It was not until the 1920s and 1930s that Child Guidance Clinics were established in the U. S. (Horn, 1989). Prior to this period, children were often ignored and many children were forced to work long hours as "miniature" adults for cheap wages. In fact, the first National Child Labor Law was established in 1916 to abolish the abusive practice of children in the work force (Johnsen, 1925; Markham, Lindsey, & Creel, 1969). Health,

hygiene, and mental health services for children were largely nonexistent. Parents tended to raise their offspring according to their own values and beliefs (Coleman, Ganong, Clark, & Madsen, 1989) with little community interference or concern.

Soon after the establishment of Child Guidance Clinics, mental health professionals began to demand clinical services for children (Horn, 1989). With the increased training of these professionals, research studies of youth were initiated. The U. S. government took a concerted interest in the research of child abuse and neglect by enacting the "Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act" in 1973 and allocating 20 million dollars a year for the purpose of child abuse research and mental health training (Gil, 1983).

Even though all this effort to prevent child maltreatment took place, child abuse remains prevalent. According to Green (1988), 2.25 million incidents of child abuse were reported within the U. S. in 1987. Authorities suggest that the incidents which are not reported exceed those reported by as much as 25 to 1 (Jacobsen, 1986; Burdork, 1980). The vast majority of child abuse cases occur within the family. In a national survey, Gil (1970) found that 87% of child abuse cases involved a parent or parent substitute.

As a response to increased interest in child welfare and nonabusive parenting, national and state laws have been developed to address child abuse (Garrett & Rossi, 1978; Gil, 1983). Such laws provide a general definition of child abuse. The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (1981) defined child abuse as:

a situation in which through purposive acts or marked inattention to a child's basic needs, behavior of a parent/substitute or other adult caretaker caused foreseeable and avoidable injury or impairment to a child or

materially contributed to unreasonable prolongation or worsening of an existing injury or impairment (p. 4).

Typically, these laws serve as broad guidelines for social behavior. However, there are specific problems inherent in the definition of child abuse (Gelles & Cornell, 1990; McGee & Wolfe, 1991; Straus & Gelles, 1989). First, child abuse laws tend to be vague, permitting great latitude in their interpretation (Garrett & Rossi, 1978; Roscoe, 1987). According to many researchers, it is unclear whether physical or corporal punishment constitutes child abuse (Doerner, 1987; Garbarino & Vondra, 1987). In formulating these laws, legislators may be reifying their own social values or the social majorities' beliefs and perceptions (Gil, 1983) and disregarding the perceptions of minority groups. Moreover, it is not known what frequency and/or severity of physical punishment would qualify an act to be considered as abuse from such definitions (Roscoe, 1990; Silver 1968). Ultimately, "the ambiguity of definition precipitates problems and disagreements among . . . professionals . . . " (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979, p. 2) and the general population at large.

Additionally, the majority of legislators who make child abuse laws are European American middle-class, male attorneys and other European American professionals (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). Since minorities and the other social classes have largely been excluded from the creation and interpretation of these laws, whether these laws are representative of all ethnic groups' and social classes' perceptions within the U. S. cannot be determined. Silver (1968) suggested that cultural differences may influence "the differential between parental rights and child abuse" (p. 804). It is likely that ethnic

groups and social classes will differ in what they perceive child abuse to be. This study proposed to examine African American and European American cultural differences in perceptions of child abuse, as well as related differences such as social class, religion, and gender differences.

It has been noted that attitudes toward child abuse influence one's decision of whether or not to report it (Willis & Wells, 1988). Furthermore, values, social class, religion, and environmental factors contribute to the respondents' perceptions of child discipline (Coleman et al., 1989; Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Giovannoni & Billingsley 1970; Grasmick, Bursik, & Kimpel, 1991; Jenkins, Bell, Taylor, & Walker, 1989; Kohn, 1979; Petersen, Lee, & Ellis, 1988; Silver, 1968; Wiehe, 1990). However, little is known about ethnic and cultural differences in the perceptions of child abuse. Given the reality that African Americans and European Americans frequently experience the world differently, it is likely that these racial/ethnic groups will differ in such perceptions.

The present study investigated how African American and European American adult children perceive child physical abuse. Because laws concerning child abusers have tightened and enforcement improved, parents' verbal description of their own conduct may well differ from their actual behavior. Consequently, parents' descriptions were not collected.

Theoretical Model

According to the authoritarian personality structure, obedience and submission to authority are valued moral characteristics (Byrne, 1974). It is also believed to be the basis

for many Fundamentalist religious institutions (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Byrne, 1974). Since the African American family traditionally has a strong and predominately Fundamentalist religious orientation (Blau, 1981; Jones, 1990), it was proposed in this study that the authoritarian theory provides an explanatory model as to why African Americans would report more physical abusive acts while perceiving acts of corporal punishment as less abusive in contrast to European Americans. In fact, several works have documented that authoritarian values concerning child-rearing practices contribute to strict or more punitive discipline (Blau, 1981; Janssens, 1994) and child abuse (Whissell, Lewko, Carriere, & Radford, 1990; Williams-Petersen, Myers, Degen, Knisely, Elswick & Schnoll, 1994). In a racial comparison, other studies have found that African Americans tend to adopt more of an authoritarian style of parenting (Blau, 1981; Durrett, O'Bryant, & Pennebaker, 1975; McLoyd, 1990; Marsh, 1991; Reis, 1993) than Whites, while some investigations have shed light on the importance of Black families' ability to parent primarily by using physical discipline (Blau, 1981; Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Lindholm & Willey, 1986; Payne, 1989).

From an historical perspective, African Americans were often beaten by their slave masters to enforce submission to authority. As a preventive measure, African American mothers would frequently beat their children in an attempt to spare their children from further beatings and cruelty by their slave master (Johnson, 1982; Wright, 1982). Even though slavery has been abolished, values promoting physical punishment and obedience continue to be transmitted to subsequent generations. Coupled with African American's history and their strong religious orientation, they are likely to have authoritarian values

that result in perceptions of their parental discipline as less abusive as compared to European Americans. Also based on this authoritarian model, it was proposed that those ascribing to Fundamentalist religions are more likely to condone corporal punishment than those ascribing to Liberal religions.

Potential Benefits of the Study

This study's main concern was how participants perceived or defined physical child abuse. Another feature concerned how one views others, particularly whether or not these adult respondents perceived their parents' behavior as physically abusive. Information about perceptions of physical child abuse by the general public may be useful as contributions to the formation of laws regarding behaviors that are designated as abusive or nonabusive (O'Toole & Webster, 1988).

Additionally, public views of child abuse may also directly influence the reporting of child abuse. Thus, possible differences in perceptions of physical child abuse needed to be considered when addressing related prevalence and incidence rates, especially given that numerous studies (Cupoli & Sewell, 1988; Daniel, Hampton, & Newberger, 1983; Eckenrode, Munsch, Powers & Eckenrode, 1988; Powers & Doris, 1985; Hampton, 1987) have reported that African Americans are over-represented as victims of child abuse compared to European Americans. Possible differences between these two subcultures may also illuminate existing cultural differences. Certainly, perceptions of physical abuse may provide explanations for actual disciplinary behaviors. Since there are clearly defined

cultural differences, perhaps consideration of what is legally admissible child discipline and what is inadmissible as physical abuse is warranted.

Differential perceptions of African Americans and European Americans may also have an impact on clinical interventions for patients from these different cultures as this relates to abuse. For example, if an African American describes behavior that appears abusive to a clinician, it would seem important to understand how abuse is defined within the client's culture. Furthermore, possible cultural differences may mean that researchers need to account for these differences when constructing tools for assessing child abuse.

Although the child abuse literature is extensive, there is a paucity of scholarly material concerning cultural differences in definitions and perceptions of child abuse (Koski & Mangold, 1988). Much of the pertinent information focuses on the actual reporting of child abuse or the varying incidence or prevalence rates for ethnic groups (Berger, Knutson, Mehm, & Perkins, 1988; Daniel, Hampton, & Newberger, 1983; Hampton, 1987; Jason & Andereck, 1983; Powers & Eckenrode, 1988; Rosenthal, 1988). Other studies have concentrated on determining whether abuse occurred within various ethnic groups (Durrett et al., 1975; Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Lindholm & Willey, 1986). Some of the research have addressed perceptions of child-rearing (Coleman et al., 1989; Durrett et al., 1975; Escovar & Escovar, 1985; Giovannoni & Billingsley, 1970; Marsh, 1991; Payne, 1989). Few studies, however, have directly addressed perceptions of child abuse and even fewer scholarly publications considered the role of ethnic/racial differences. Given a dearth of material concerning the topic of perceptions of physical

child abuse, the following literature review addresses research in both child-rearing and child abuse.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A frequently cited study (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979) compared perceptions of child abuse of various groups of professionals with those of the general public. Findings based on the use of vignettes indicated that professionals rated vignettes depicting child abuse with significantly greater severity than did the general public. Several researchers have adapted this method and found similar findings (Christopherson, 1983; Garrett & Rossi, 1978; Roscoe, 1987).

Another study compared the general public's perceptions of child abuse by using both adolescents and adults (Roscoe, 1990). Adolescents ranked the seriousness of different child-rearing practices which were later contrasted with their parents' perceptions and also with those of other community members' and views of Giovannoni and Becerra's (1979) professionals. Teenagers consistently rated child abuse more severely than did the other community members and professionals, indicating that adolescents seem more critical of child abuse than did parents or mental health professionals within the community.

Trickett and Susman (1988) compared parents' views of child-rearing behaviors in physically abusive and nonabusive families and found that these parents' perceptions of what was considered to be appropriate parenting differed significantly between these two groups. These findings suggested that parents' values about child-rearing influence how

they discipline their children and that abusive parents have less lenient guidelines about child-rearing than nonabusive parents.

Ethnicity

Ethnic and/or racial differences have also been widely reported. This author (Marsh, 1991) has confirmed prior findings of different perceptions of child discipline between European Americans and African Americans (Davis & Havighurst, 1946; Erlanger, 1975). Addressing perceptions of child-rearing practices, Marsh found that African American adult children perceived their parents to be much stricter disciplinarians than did European American adult children.

Cultural differences have also been studied with respect to crime. Perceptions of crimes were examined in three different racial groups: African Americans, Mexican Americans, and other Caucasians (Lampe, 1984). Adults were asked to rank and rate the seriousness of various crimes: murder, rape, arson, robbery, physical violence, theft, and child abuse. As expected, Caucasians ranked child abuse as a significantly more serious crime than did either African Americans or Mexican Americans.

Another study concerning mostly Blacks was conducted in Barbados (Payne, 1989). Although outside the U. S., Payne noted this sample was greatly influenced by American culture. Approval of corporal punishment was assessed using Caribbean adults from Barbados, of which 95% were of African descent; 71% approved of corporal punishment. Indicating widespread support for the use of corporal correction, 77% of those who

endorsed physical punishment, condoned whipping with a belt or strap as the most common method of discipline. It remains unclear whether this method of physical punishment was primarily attributed to race or culture, but it seems likely that both contributed to this widespread approval.

Escovar and Escovar (1985) compared the child-rearing practices of three different cultures: Caucasian, Cuban American, and Latin American. Adults from each culture were asked to rate how they perceived their parents' child-rearing patterns, and, as expected, cultural differences were found. A surprising finding was that Caucasians were perceived as more physically punitive than either Cuban Americans or Latin Americans. However, this finding is consistent with other outcomes indicating significant interethnic and interracial differences in child discipline, as Hispanics tend to be less abusive than some other ethnic groups (Durrett et al., 1975; Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Giovannoni & Billingsley, 1979; Payne, 1989).

In suggesting that racial differences may not contribute to how child abuse is defined, one study (Cazenave & Straus, 1990) appeared to conflict with the previously cited findings. These authors studied differences between Black and White parents' evaluations of child physical abuse based on a survey completed by Black and White parents regarding their degree of approval of certain parental aggressive acts toward 12-year-olds. They found no significant racial differences in what these parents perceived to be physically abusive. No apparent reason was given for this atypical finding and the lack of validation support for their measure makes this work difficult to evaluate.

Social Class

There is evidence that suggests differential perceptions of child-rearing between low-income and middle-income families. A recent study explored whether the type of community had any influence on child-rearing, and implied that there may be social class differences (Coleman et al., 1989). Rural and urban parents' perceptions of child-rearing were compared in the North Central Region of the U. S. Rural and urban parents perceived parenting differently. For instance, urban parents placed a significantly higher importance on teaching social skills to their children than did rural parents. Therefore, based upon the assumption that rural families, on the average, are from lower income households than in urban areas, this finding suggested that low-income households (rural areas) differed from middle-income households (urban areas) in their parenting behaviors. However, this study does not present clear evidence for how child abuse was perceived by these two social classes.

Ethnicity and Social Class

Within the same social class, ethnic groups differed in their views of how parents should rear their children. For example, an early study by Durrett et al., (1975) examined perceptions of child-rearing practices by three ethnic groups. Among low-income African Americans, Caucasians, and Mexican Americans, these authors found that both African American and Caucasian parents were more authoritarian in their child-rearing techniques than Mexican Americans. In addition, African American fathers were found to be more strict in enforcing arbitrary rules than these other groups. While these results weaken the

idea that low-income families are more uniformly strict in parenting styles, this study did not compare these families with those of other income levels and therefore cannot support the idea that social class did not influence one's views about parenting.

Ethnic differences persist despite controlling for social class. Another portion of Giovannoni and Becerra's (1979) work examined both cultural and social class differences in perceptions of child abuse. These authors analyzed community perceptions and compared them to professionals' perceptions of child abuse. The sample of community members included Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanics. Within this sample there were clear social class differences between the "working" and the "middle" classes. When social class was taken into account, the research suggested that the "working" class had more stringent attitudes concerning the severity of physical abuse than did those of the "middle" class. Although lower class Caucasians rated child abuse severely, the minority groups (African Americans and Hispanics) rated their vignettes of child abuse even more severely. As in Payne's (1989) work, Blacks rated spanking a child with a leather strap as significantly less severe than did either Caucasians or Hispanics.

Cultural differences in child-rearing practices remained within each ethnic/racial group after social class was controlled. Another early study (Giovannoni & Billingsley, 1970) addressed social class, as well as ethnic differences, in child-rearing practices. Low-income African American, Caucasian, and Latin American mothers were interviewed concerning their child-rearing behaviors. A significant relationship between how both African American and Caucasian mothers were involved with their relatives was associated with whether or not these mothers were considered adequate. The more these

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mothers were involved with their own mothers, the more likely their parenting was found to be adequate as compared to those mothers less involved with their kin. This relationship was not found, however, among the Latin American mothers.

Religion

Religious affiliation also appeared to influence perceptions of physical punishment. Wiehe (1990) assessed adults' parental attitudes using the Adult Adolescent Parental Inventory (AAPI). This work resembled Smith's (1990) religious classification scheme which identified participants' religion as either Literalist or Nonliteralists. All Baptist, Church of God, Holiness, Nazarene, and Pentecostal religions were considered to be Literalists, while Catholic, Disciples of Christ, Episcopal, and Methodist denominations were classified as Nonliteralists. This demarcation of religions is consistent with Greven's (1991) theoretical framework. Those who ascribed to the Literalist religions were found to be significantly more favorable toward corporal punishment than those who ascribed to the Nonliteralist religions. Grasmick et al. (1991) conducted a related study of attitudes toward physical punishment. Confirming Wiehe's findings, the majority of those who favored corporal punishment were found to be affiliated with a Fundamentalist religion. Religious affiliation apparently influenced perceptions of physical discipline in both of these studies. However, Grasmick et al.'s work did not control for either social class or race, leaving it likely that these variables may have contributed to their finding.

Gender

Gender also appears to influence perceptions of violence. In a telephone survey, Koski and Mangold (1988) examined perceptions of family violence. As anticipated, and consistent with both prior and subsequent works (Garrett & Rossi, 1978; Graziano et al., 1992; Gully, Pepping, & Dengerling, 1982; Kelder, McNamara, Carlson, & Lynn, 1991), women perceived family violence as more serious than did men. Also, Kelder, et al. (1991) found that adult men expressed greater approval of physical abusive behaviors than women. The researchers also found that the degree to which an adult had experienced physical punishment as a child influenced the degree of approval: the more one was physically abused as a child, the greater the likelihood of approving physical abuse of own children. Even among those heavily disciplined as children, males continued to favor corporal punishment significantly more than females.

Summary

Most of the relevant research supports the view that ethnic differences contribute to the perceptions of child abuse/child discipline. Also, clear support for religious influence on the views of child abuse/child-rearing is evident. Social class, however, appear to have less than conclusive support as an influence on child abuse/child-rearing, especially if Social Economic Status (SES) was based only on the family's income. While some studies have addressed perceptions of child physical abuse, many considered the aspects of professional versus public views, adolescents versus adults, ethnic differences, religious influence, SES differences, and gender differences. Few investigators examined major

ethnic/racial differences within the U. S. and the religious influence as well as the SES factor that include educational level. This study addressed such variables.

Cultural differences in child-rearing styles (Durrett et al., 1975; Escovar & Escovar, 1985; Lindholm & Willey, 1986) seem well-documented and African Americans have generally been found to perceive child abuse less severely than their European American counterparts. Furthermore, it is proposed that since historically African Americans have had fundamentalist religious leanings which have been predominately authoritarian in nature, that they would perceive physical discipline with less severity as compared to European Americans.. The literature suggests that such perceptions are also influenced by social environment, culture, and religion (Lampe, 1984). Additionally, it is believed that these differences in child-rearing styles will affect how each culture defines child abuse.

It has been established that perceptions influence behavior. Based on African Americans' perceptions, they seem more likely to have experienced physical disciplinary acts that the broader U. S. society defines as more physically abusive than their European American counterparts. For example, Graziano (1992), like Kelder et al. (1991), found that those adults who favored physical punishment typically had received significantly greater amounts of corporal discipline as children. These outcomes are compatible with the intergenerational transmission literature that suggests the abused child is more likely to condone abuse in the next generation either by being the perpetrator or the victim (Cantrell, Carrorico, Franklin, & Grubb, 1990; Dutton, Fehr, & McEwen, 1982; Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, & Toedter, 1983; Kalmus & Straus, 1982; Zaidi, Knutson, & Mehm, 1989). Furthermore, perceptions of violence have been found to vary with both

social class and education (Coleman et al., 1989; Erlanger, 1974; Kohn, 1979; Koski & Mangold, 1988; Petersen et al., 1982). Therefore, this study attempted to include various educational and social classes.

Previous studies have revealed a relationship between conservative religious beliefs and the approval of corporal punishment. In contrast to Liberal religions, prior works have presented an analogous association between affiliation with Fundamentalist religion and the perception of child abuse as an appropriate means of physical punishment. Thus, in this research, respondents ascribing to Fundamentalist precepts were expected to show greater approval of physically abusive behaviors than those ascribing to Liberal religions.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were examined:

- I. African Americans will perceive their parents as significantly less abusive than their European American counterparts.**
- II. African Americans will report having experienced more physical abusive acts than their European American counterparts.**
- III. Those affiliated with Fundamentalist religious beliefs will be more likely to approve physical punishment more than those affiliated with more Liberal religions.**
- IV. Higher levels of social class, as defined by educational status, will be less tolerant of physical discipline than those from lower social class.**

METHOD

Sample

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for all demographic variables by racial groups. A total of 218 participants (141 females and 77 males) with ages ranging from 18 to 76 ($M = 27.17$) were recruited by the author and a research assistant during group administrations for the present study. African Americans ($n = 99$), European Americans ($n = 60$), Asian American Pacific Islanders ($n = 24$), Hispanics ($n = 23$), Native Americans ($n = 6$), and Other races ($n = 6$) were included in this research. The Other category of races are identified as Caribbean, Arab, Thai, and African. The overall sample had three elements. The university participants included two subsamples: undergraduates from the Psychology Department who received extra-credit for their participation and students from a special group who were selected for career and research development. The third subsample was investigator recruited community participants who were offered the opportunity for a summary of the results, once the study was completed.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables by Racial Groups

Variables	Blacks			Whites			Asian Pacific Islanders			Hispanics			Native Americans			Other		
	99			60			24			23			6			6		
	M (n)	SD (%)		M (n)	SD (%)		M (n)	SD (%)		M (n)	SD (%)		M (n)	SD (%)		M (n)	SD (%)	
Age	27.28 (31)	9.50 (31.3%)		30.92 (19)	1.52 (31.7%)		21.21 (15)	3.15 (62.5%)		22.48 (10)	3.74 (43.5%)		26.83 (0)	6.79 (0.0)		21.67 (4)	1.03 (66.7%)	
Male	(68)	(68.7%)		(41)	(68.3%)		(9)	(37.5%)		(13)	(56.5%)		(6)	(100.0%)		(2)	(33.3%)	
Female	(19)	(19.2%)		(8)	(13.3%)		(5)	(20.8%)		(2)	(8.3%)		(1)	(16.7%)		(0)	(0.0%)	
Religion [†]	(53)	(53.3%)		(8)	(13.3%)		(5)	(20.8%)		(3)	(13.4%)		(3)	(50.0%)		(2)	(33.3%)	
Fundamentalist	(27)	(27.3%)		(44)	(73.3%)		(14)	(58.3%)		(18)	(78.3%)		(2)	(33.3%)		(4)	(66.7%)	
Liberal	(7)	(7.0%)		(9)	(15.0%)		(4)	(16.7%)		(3)	(13.0%)		(1)	(16.7%)		(0)	(0.0%)	
Religion Reared [†]	(74)	(74.7%)		(8)	(13.3%)		(3)	(12.5%)		(4)	(17.4%)		(3)	(50.0%)		(2)	(33.3%)	
Fundamentalist	(18)	(18.2%)		(43)	(71.7%)		(17)	(70.8%)		(16)	(69.6%)		(2)	(33.3%)		(4)	(66.7%)	
Liberal	(68)	(68.7%)		(40)	(66.7%)		(23)	(95.8%)		(21)	(92.5%)		(4)	(66.7%)		(6)	(100%)	
Single	(27)	(27.3%)		(16)	(26.7%)		(1)	(4.2%)		(2)	(7.5%)		(2)	(33.3%)		(0)	(0.0%)	
Married	(4)	(4.0%)		(3)	(5.0%)		(0)	(0.0%)		(0)	(0.0%)		(0)	(0.0%)		(0)	(0.0%)	
Divorced	(0)	(0.0%)		(1)	(1.7%)		(0)	(0.0%)		(0)	(0.0%)		(0)	(0.0%)		(0)	(0.0%)	
Widowed	14.64	1.83		14.87	1.52		14.88	1.08		14.81	1.25		15.17	1.83		16.00	1.10	
Education	11.61	5.09		13.57	3.68		15.21	5.01		10.88	5.43		13.00	4.38		10.33	9.14	
Parents Education	10.51	5.96		13.68	4.33		16.54	4.82		11.10	5.14		13.33	7.12		10.00	9.72	
Fathers Education	12.70	4.22		13.46	3.02		13.87	5.19		10.85	5.71		12.67	1.63		10.67	8.55	
Mothers Education																		

Note: [†] refers to no or unknown religion

Measures

Given the paucity of the literature concerning perceptions of child abuse, there are understandably few inventories that attend to cultural perceptions. This work addressed the physical abuse of children because it seemed more readily assessed than other types of child abuse. While only a scant number of measures and inventories that address perceptions of child care or physical discipline have been identified (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979; Graziano & Namaste, 1990; Graziano et al., 1992; Itkin, 1952; Kelder et al., 1991), even fewer address both the adult's current perceptions of physical discipline/physical abuse and the physical discipline that s/he received as a child. One measure that provided such information, Graziano's et al.'s (1992) Discipline Questionnaire (DQ-18), was selected for this research. Giovannoni & Becerra's (1979) vignettes were also chosen, as these were comprehensive in encompassing a wide range of child-rearing behaviors.

DQ-18 Questionnaire

Recently developed, Graziano et al. adapted the DQ-18 from earlier work by Graziano and Namaste (1990). This 43-item, self-report questionnaire has four parts and takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. It was modified from the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) and research on categories of physical punishment by Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (1980). One section concerned demographic information. The other three

sections included information concerning the participants' "past physical punishment" (PPP scale), "evaluation of past punishment" (EPP scale), and "current attitudes toward physical punishment" (CAPP scale). The DQ-18 questionnaire may be individually or group administered. Graziano (1992) established internal consistency for these measures that yielded alpha values of .80 for Past Punishment, .62 for Evaluation of Past Punishment, .86 for Current Attitudes.

The scoring of DQ-18's three scales are inconsistent. For the PP scale, lower scores, denote higher punishment. With regard to the EPP scale, the higher scores indicate more severe physical punishment, and higher ratings on the CAPP scale represent propunishment views. In the next version, all items will be scaled so that higher scores represent greater punishment across all scales (Graziano, 1993).

Although the DQ-18 was adapted from the Conflict and Tactic Scales (Straus, 1979), the new DQ-18 has yet to be independently validated. Therefore the validation information was based on Straus' (1979) measure. The Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS) revealed content validity by its description of aggressive acts towards family members on all items. The operational definition of family violence used in the CTS explicitly paralleled the nominal definition of violence described by Gelles & Straus (1979).

Documented by Burdorf and Straus (1980), a moderate degree of concurrent validity was established for the CTS scales. This study revealed that college students' report of their parents' volatile behavior (11.4%), as assessed by the CTS, resembled the national incidence rates for intrafamily violence. Although there were gender differences in these

college students' reports of family violence, they were consistent with other studies that suggested that gender differences existed in the report of family violence (Garrett & Rossi, 1978; Graziano et al., 1992; Gully et al., 1982; Kelder et al., 1991; Koski & Mangold, 1988). Women tended to report a higher number of violent acts as compared to men.

Also, there is evidence for construct validity which involved the best indication for validity. The outcome of the CTS showed a high incidence of socially undesirable aggressive behaviors which were congruent with other previous studies (Gelles, 1974). Furthermore, the CTS demonstrated relatively high ratios of agreement between mothers and fathers for overall family violence (Szinovacz, 1983), while differing in the frequency of violent acts by mothers and fathers. In addition, physically abused children, as assessed by the CTS, were shown to have two to three times the amount of behavioral problems than nonabused children (Gelles & Straus, 1990). It was also found that abused children were four times more likely to be arrested for juvenile crimes than nonabused children. These findings are consistent with other studies that suggested that abused children frequently exhibit behavioral and delinquency problems (Garbarino & Vondra, 1987; Green, 1988; Herman, 1981; vanDalen, 1989; Weissberg, 1983). Along these same lines and consistent with prior works (Hilberman, 1980; Mills, 1984) was the finding that the greater the severity of assault that women experienced by their mates, as assessed by the CTS, the more likely they were to encounter significantly greater physical and mental health problems than nonabused women (Stets & Straus, 1990). A common characteristic of abusive parents was that their own mothers and fathers had displayed little or no

affection while growing up which was also consistent with previous studies (Faller, 1981; Finkelhor, 1984; Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, & Toedter, 1983).

There are empirical data indicating that the CTS revealed significant aggression when the power structure was imbalanced between a marital couple, either the husband was significantly more dominant than the wife, or vice versa. In addition, there is significant CTS evidence suggesting that the lower the husband's income relative to that of his spouse, the more likely he is to be violent. These scales have been correlated with the theory of intergenerational violence. Furthermore, the CTS scales have shown high rates of socially unacceptable behaviors of both verbal and physical aggression.

Graziano's measures were also chosen for this study because they address both the participants' perceptions of physical punishment and their current perceptions of physical discipline. These measures appear useful for comparing reports of the amount of punishment received with the respondents' current perceptions concerning physical abuse. All of the DQ-18 scales, PPP, EPP, CAPP, and the demographic information were used in the current study. However, the demographic information section was modified to include additional demographic variables such as religion, living arrangement for most of the participant's child-rearing years, and race (African Americans, European Americans, Asian Pacific Islanders, Hispanics (Latinos, Mexican Americans, Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, etc.), Native Americans, and Others).

Giovannoni & Becerra's (1979) Vignettes

Vignettes have been constructed by several researchers for exploration in this sector (Giovannoni & Becerra, 1979). These vignettes addressed nine categories of child care. Ranging from normal to severe types of child care within each category, these vignettes addressed "drug/alcohol," "emotional neglect," "educational neglect," "fostering delinquency," "medical neglect," "parental sexual mores," "physical abuse," "sexual abuse," and "supervision." Each person was asked to rate the incident described by each vignette on a one (least severe) to nine (most severe) scale.

Initially, 185 vignettes were pretested with undergraduate and graduate students and after pretest 29 vignettes that had received either extremely high or low endorsements were eliminated and 156 were retained. Using Cronbach's alpha, internal consistency was established for all categories, ranging from coefficients of .70 to .98. While validity was not established, several other investigators used minor modifications of this instrument (Lindholm & Willey, 1986; O'Toole & Webster, 1988; Roscoe, 1987; Roscoe, 1990; Doerner, 1987; Willis & Wells, 1988).

The widely used vignettes of Giovannoni and Becerra (1979) were elected for this research because they address a range of child care attitudes, particularly physical abuse. In addition, this measure has been used for both adults and children. For present purposes, it was shortened to include only 16 vignettes addressing physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse.

Smith's (1990) Religious Classification System

Measures adapted from Smith's (1990) religious classification system was used to assess religious values. This classification schema was not administered to this sample, but was used only to classify each participant's stated religious orientation as either Fundamentalist or Liberal. Smith's scheme was developed by utilizing several previous religious classification systems and formulating a consensus across these systems. The various denominations and the religious organizations with which they were associated were identified. These organizations then were categorized as Fundamentalist or Liberal. If there were no consensus of prior religious schemes, then each religion's doctrine was examined and classified as Fundamentalist or Liberal. Finally, to strengthen further this classification scheme, both the clergy's and the laity's beliefs of each domination were analyzed and compared to the prior classification schemes and the religious orientation of the various affiliative organizations. Among 154 denominations considered by Smith, there were only four exceptions in which the consensus of the classification systems or doctrines did not correspond with the beliefs of the laity and clergy.

Smith's classification schema (1990) was selected also since it described comprehensively the wide spectrum of various religions categorized as Fundamentalist or Liberal. This system was used both to designate which religion participants were reared and to which religion they currently ascribe.

Procedure

Participants were largely sought from the Department of Psychology's subject pool ($n = 154$) at Michigan State University (MSU). Others were recruited by the word of mouth through the contacts of several Lansing area church organizations ($n = 64$) in order to supplement the sample in an attempt to diversify the population by involving various levels of SES (various levels of education) and ages. These contacts were solicited through the researcher's affiliations with church organizations. Both African American and European American groups were contacted. Leaders of the various church organizations were approached and asked for the participation of their congregation and/or members. Group administrations were conducted both on MSU's campus classrooms and at the various local churches. All respondents completed a brief form pertaining to their general life history and their parent's marital status, education, economic background, race, gender, childhood religion, and current religion. This history was used to assess participants' SES and other moderating variables that may influence their perceptions. SES was assessed by the level of one's education rather than income. Other information such as age, gender, and economic background appeared useful for the preliminary exploration of variables that might influence the differences of the adult children perceptions.

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the research findings.

RESULTS

Retrospective Perceptions of Severity of Abuse

Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a statistically significant main effect of race ($F[1, 157] = 4.35, p < .04$) for severity of physical discipline. As predicted (Hypothesis I) and shown in Table 2, multiple comparisons from a Duncan test indicated that African American adults perceived their custodial parents to be significantly less physically abusive ($M = 2.9$) by Graziano's Evaluation of Past Punishment scale (EPP) than did their European American ($M = 3.2$) counterparts. When all races were compared, however, the race effect was not statistically significant ($F[5, 210] = 1.51, p < .20$).

Table 2**Descriptive Statistics for Reported Severity of Physical Punishment in Childhood by Race**

Severity			
Races	n	M	SD
Blacks	99	2.9 ^a	1.02
Whites	60	3.2 ^a	.71
Asian Amer.	24	3.1	.73
Hispanics	23	2.9	.20
Native Amer.	6	2.9	1.01
Other	6	3.0	.33

Note: The greater the mean, the more severe was the physical punishment reported.

^aThese means differed significantly ($p < .05$; one-tailed test).

Endorsements of Frequency of Physical Discipline

Also, as anticipated (Hypothesis II), there was a significant racial main effect for the frequency of physical punishment ($F[5, 210] = 7.36, p < .001$) using Graziano's Past Physical Punishment scale (PPP). Despite having rated their parents as less physically abusive than their European American cohorts, Table 3 shows that African Americans ($M = 3.4$) acknowledged having received more physical punishment than their European American counterparts ($M = 4.1$). A broader ethnic group comprised of non-European participants also acknowledged having received physical discipline significantly more frequently ($M = 3.5$) than European Americans. Thus, both African Americans and those respondents born in non-European countries, but not identified in the major category of persons of color, endorsed having received more physical punishment than European Americans. European Americans reported fewer parental acts of physical discipline than any other racial group, although this difference was not statistically significant across all racial groups.

Table 3

Frequency of Reported Childhood Physical Punishment by Race

Frequency			
Races	n	M	SD
Blacks	99	3.4 ^a	.72
Whites	60	4.1 ^a	.68
Asians	24	3.7	.68
Hispanics	23	3.8	.79
Native Amer.	6	3.6	1.03
Other	6	3.5 ^a	.85

Note: *The smaller the mean, the greater the frequency of respondents reported physical punishment.*

^aThese means differed significantly ($p < .001$; one-tailed test).

Current Perceptions of Child-Rearing Physical Discipline by Religion

The religion in which one had been reared had statistically significant main effects by both the Giovannoni & Becerra's vignette measure ($F[1, 192] = 7.30, p < .01$) and Graziano's CAPP scale ($F[1, 192] = 5.29, p < .05$) for current perceptions of physical abuse and punishment respectively, while one's current religious affiliation did not ($F[1, 192] = 1.82, p < .18$; Hypothesis III). By the data provided by the vignette measure, those reared in Fundamentalist religions ($M = 6.5$) as noted above were significantly more likely to approve of physical abuse as compared to those were reared in Liberal religions ($M = 7.0$). Similarly, on the CAPP scale, those raised in Fundamentalist religions ($M = 2.6$) approved the use of physical punishment significantly more than those who were reared in Liberal religions ($M = 2.1$). These findings indicate that child-rearing experiences impacted current perceptions of physical abuse and/or punishment.

Education was not significantly related to respondents' current perceptions of physical discipline, ($F[3, 59] = .58, p < .63$) indicating no support for Hypothesis IV.

Post Hoc Analyses

Analogous to Hypothesis I, a post hoc finding identified a significant main effect of race for current perceptions of physical abuse and physical discipline by two measures, the vignettes and the CAPP scale ($F[1, 157] = 5.1, p < .001$; $F[1, 157] = 27.5, p < .001$) respectively. According to Table 4, multiple comparisons indicated that African

Americans ($M = 6.4$) disapproved of physical abuse/punishment statistically significantly less than European Americans ($M = 6.8$). This outcome indicated that having experienced physical punishment when younger was associated with these adults' approval of physical discipline. Further comparisons showed that both African Americans ($M = 6.4$) and European Americans ($M = 6.9$) approved of physical punishment to a significantly greater degree ($F[5, 210] = 5.1, p < .001$) than the very small sample of Native Americans ($n = 6$; $M = 8.1$).

Table 4

Current Perceptions of Physical Abuse by the Vignette Measure

Current Perceptions Of Physical Abuse			
Races	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Blacks	99	6.4 ^a	1.3
Whites	60	6.8 ^a	1.5
Asians	24	7.5	1.01
Hispanics	23	7.2	.98
Native Amer.	6	8.2 ^a	.81
Other	6	7.3	1.3

Note: The smaller the mean, the greater the approval of the use of physical punishment as rated by the respondent.

^aThese means differed significantly ($p < .001$; one-tailed test).

Similarly to Hypothesis III, another post hoc finding revealed a main effect for religion and frequency of abuse ($F[1, 192] = 28.7$; $p < .001$). Those who were reared in Fundamentalist religious backgrounds ($n = 94$; $M = 3.4$) reported having received physical punishment significantly more frequently than those who were reared in Liberal religious households ($n = 100$; $M = 4.0$).

Post hoc analyses of EPP data revealed that education was associated with respondents' ratings of the severity of abuse that they received as children ($F[5, 21] = 3.09$; $p < .05$). The less educated were more likely to endorse having been reared with severe physical discipline than those more educated. Level of education also had a statistically significant main effect for recall of past physical punishment as noted on the PPP scale, ($F[3, 59] = 3.98$; $p < .01$). Generally, the more education received, the lesser the frequency of physical punishment reported during childhood.

Although gender did not have a statistically significant main effect for current perceptions of physical discipline by either the vignette measure ($F[1, 216] = 2.71$; $p < .10$) or the CAPP scale ($F[1, 216] = 3.05$; $p < .08$), the most dramatic post hoc finding was the significant interaction effect for gender and childhood religion ($F[1, 189] = 2.79$; $p = .04$) by the CAPP scale as illustrated in Figure 1. Although not significant, childhood religious affiliation revealed a larger mean between Fundamentalist and Liberal subsamples than did current religious affiliation. Specifically, within childhood religion, Fundamentalist religion showed more of a significant difference. As shown in Table 5, multiple comparisons indicated that Fundamentalist men ($M = 3.5$) condoned corporal punishment more than did Fundamentalist women ($M = 2.9$).

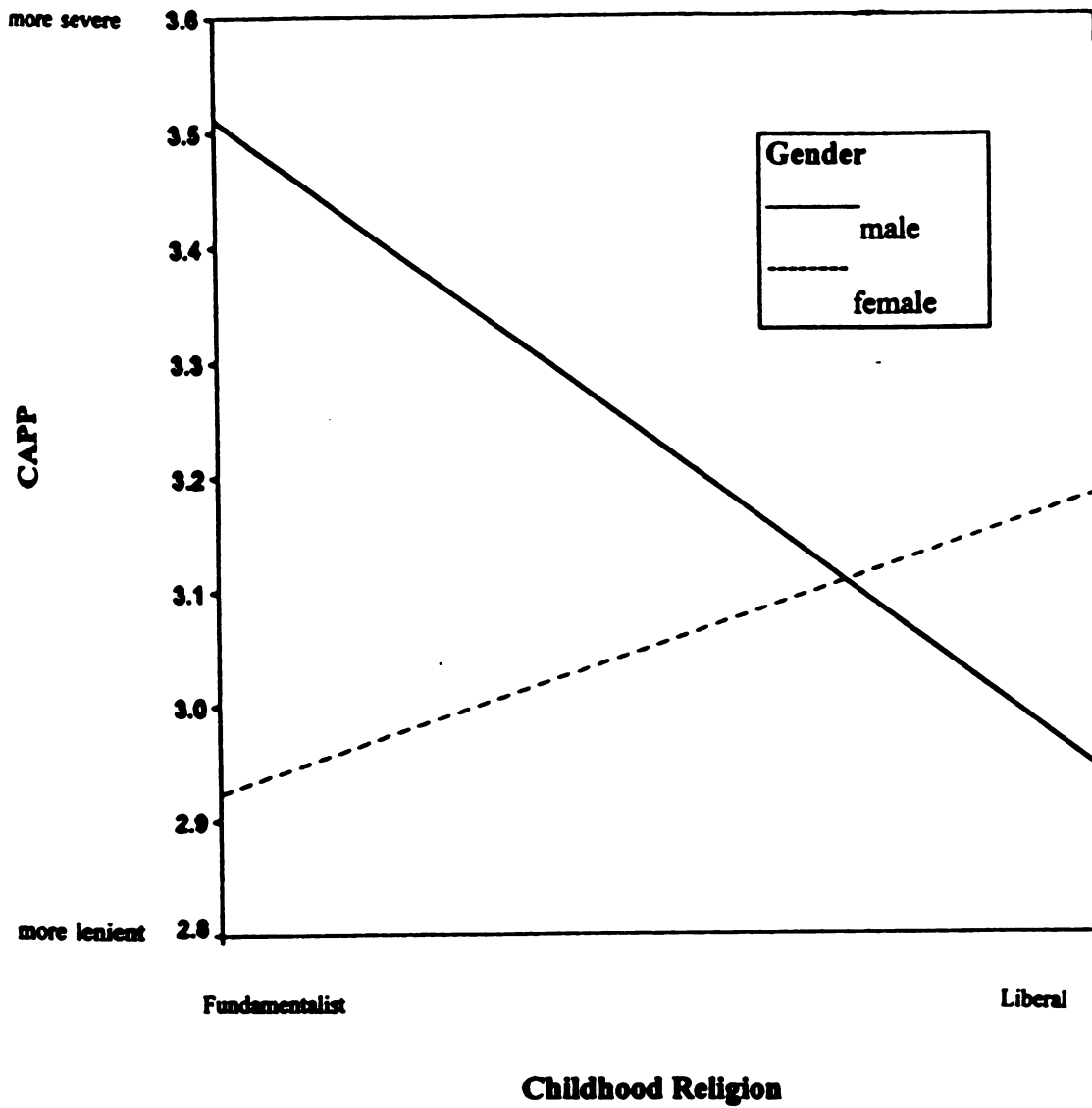


Figure 1 Mean Scores for Current Attitudes of Physical Punishment (CAPP) by Gender and Childhood Religion

Table 5

Mean CAPP Scores for Current Perceptions of Physical Discipline by Childhood Religion and Gender.

Childhood Religion	Gender		Mean
	Female	Male	
Fundamentalist	2.9	3.5*	3.2
Liberal	3.2	2.9	3.1
Mean	3.1	3.2	3.2

Note:

The greater the mean, the greater the approval of physical punishment as rated by the respondent.

*denotes significant difference by $p < .001$

Another interesting post hoc outcome revealed gender as a significant main effect on current perceptions of emotional abuse ($F[1, 213] = 8.85, p < .001$). By the vignette measure, women ($M = 8.3$) rated emotional abuse as significantly more serious than men ($M = 7.9$). However, no significant differences were found for perceptions of sexual abuse.

DISCUSSION

Sampling Issues

Because many features of this sample makes it unlikely to be representative of the general population, the findings must be interpreted with caution. Distinctive characteristics of this study include the greater number of African Americans ($n = 99$) than European Americans ($n = 60$) and the disproportionate percentage of women (65%) compared to men (35%).

The larger subsample of the university students ($n = 154$) also differed importantly from the smaller community subsample ($n = 64$). The latter contingent included members of several groups from the Methodist, United Church of Christ, Congregationalist, Full Gospel, Church of God in Christ, and Baptist churches. This subsample consisted of persons who likely had experienced strong religious influences that may have impacted their views of both physical punishment and physical abuse. This subsample was also more diverse than the student subsample in terms of both age and marital status. The oldest of the entire sample were two 76-year-olds who were drawn from the community sample. Also, there are more participants who are married or divorced in the community sample than the student sample. Having more married adults in the community sample

increased these adults' chances of rearing their children and they are likely to have different perceptions concerning child-rearing and discipline as opposed to no experience of child-rearing. As suggested by Roscoe (1990) and Graziano and Namaste (1990), younger people may have more idealistic views of child-rearing than adults who are currently child-rearing or have had the opportunity to rear their own children. The student sample was comprised mostly of single college-aged-adults, thus likely reflecting more idealistic perceptions.

A subgroup within the student sample was also uncharacteristic of the general population. These were students of color, largely Black participants in a special career and research development program who were required to have at least a 3.0 (B) grade point average. Their motivation for participating in this study likely differed from the others, and they likely had personal attributes atypical for either the university students or the general population.

Overview of the Findings

Results of this research support the widely accepted notion that there are cultural differences concerning the perceptions of parental discipline. African Americans perceived their parents to be significantly less abusive than European Americans, despite the former group's acknowledgment of having received significantly more physical punishment than did the latter. African Americans also expressed more current approval of both physical punishment and physical abuse than the European Americans.

Participants who were born and reared in other countries outside the African American and European American and the other major classifications also endorsed having received significantly more physical discipline than European Americans. However, this small group ($n = 6$) did not view the discipline that they received as significantly more or less abusive as compared to other racial groups. A possible reason as to why this finding lacked statistical significance is that these participants are more Americanized or acculturated and less likely to be representative of their respective cultures. Regardless, these ethnic members add further support for child discipline being culturally influenced.

Another interesting post hoc finding was that Native Americans were significantly less approving of corporal punishment than both African Americans and European Americans. However, the minuteness of the Native American sample ($n = 6$), precludes reliable inferences. These data also support the view that physical punishment is culturally influenced.

These findings suggested that past physical punishment influenced current perceptions regarding physical punishment, tending to substantiate Graziano and Namaste's (1990), Graziano's et al. (1992), and Kelder's et al. (1991) association between current perceptions of abuse with a history of abuse. That is, those who favor the greater use of physical punishment tend to report having received more frequent corporal punishment as children than others. This outcome also suggested that these African American adults perceived that the physical discipline they had received as children as useful, and had subsequently become proponents of its future use for their own children.

Furthermore, these results identified cultural influences in child-rearing practices which are congruent with earlier reports of ethnic differences in child-rearing styles (Davis & Havighurst, 1946; Durrett et al., 1975; Erlanger, 1975; Escovar & Escovar, 1985; Lindholm & Willey, 1986; Marsh, 1991). Perhaps, if it is the custom for African Americans to be physically punished as children, it then becomes more of an acceptable and expected way to rear their own children. This helps to explain the paradox that those who acknowledge having received more physically abusive acts in childhood, will tend to perceive their physical discipline as less abusive and advocate the use of corporal punishment for the next generation. This notion is consistent with the transgenerational cycle of abuse theory (Cantrell et al., 1990; Dutton, et al., 1982; Herrenkohl, et al., 1983; Kalmus & Straus, 1982; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Chyi-In, 1991; Zadi et al., 1989) that holds that abused children are more likely to condone abuse as adults by becoming a victim or a perpetrator. This transgenerational cycle may also help to explain why there are higher proportions of violent crimes both within (e.g., spouse battery, child abuse, etc.) and outside the homes (e.g., murder, assault and battery, etc.) of the Black community.

Similar to the transgenerational transmission theory, these results are also compatible with the "identification with the aggressor" theory (Freud, 1946). This theory suggests children exposed to violence within the home have minimal opportunity to escape, thus creating conditions that create helplessness and dependency. For some children, this sense of helplessness and dependency develops in identifying with the aggressive parent(s) and

during their adult years, these adult children may begin to enact their aggressive impulses onto their own children as a way to feel more powerful (Bandura, 1973; West, 1993).

Contrary to what was hypothesized, those affiliated with Fundamentalist religions during their childhood, did not condone physical punishment more than those who were reared in Liberal religions. In adulthood, however, those who were reared in Fundamentalist religions approved of more frequent use of physical punishment than those who were reared in Liberal religions. Childhood religion was irrespective of respondents' current affiliative religion, further supporting the view that past child-rearing has more impact on how one chooses to discipline children. Thus, more recent experiences (e.g., new religion) appeared to have little influence on current perceptions of behavior.

Although gender was not significantly associated with current perceptions of physical punishment, there was a statistically significant interaction for current perceptions of physical discipline by gender and childhood religion. This difference was greater among those raised in Fundamentalist than Liberal religions. Men who were raised in Fundamentalist religions were especially likely to condone the use of physical punishment more than women who were reared as Fundamentalist. Additionally, among many Fundamentalist's teachings, there is a clear power differential between women and men (Greven, 1991). Men are considered to be the authority or the ruler of the household, while women and children are taught to be submissive to men. While these Fundamentalist women did not approve of physical punishment as much as the men, this does not mean that these women would not permit the use of physical punishment within

their households, providing further support for the value of authoritarianism underlying Fundamentalist religions.

This is a particularly interesting outcome in view of extensive literature indicating that boys are likely to be hit more frequently and harder than girls (Hegar, Zuravin, & Orme, 1994; Rosenthal, 1988; Simons et al., 1991). This literature also suggests that men are more likely to minimize abusive behavior relative to women (Finkelhor, 1990; Pagelow, 1984). Thus, males are more likely to condone the use of corporal punishment as well. Given their more rigid adherence to traditional sex-roles, this relationship is probably even stronger among members of Fundamentalist religions.

The present women viewed emotional abuse by the vignettes, more seriously than these men. This finding corroborates the gender literature (Alexander, 1989; Chodorow, 1974; Kahn & Leon, 1994) suggesting that women are more concerned about emotional issues than men are. It also fits earlier works that revealed that women view family violence more seriously than men do (Garrett & Rossi, 1978; Graziano et al., 1992; Gully et al., 1982; Kelder, et. al., 1991).

Contrary to expectations, education was not found to influence one's current perception of physical discipline or physical abuse, although it was related to participants' evaluations of both the frequency and severity of childhood physical punishment. More educated respondents endorsed significantly fewer and less severe physical punishment than those with less education. Perhaps, the more educated were reared in homes where there were less frequent physical punishment, an atmosphere which may have also contributed to their pursuit of an advanced education. As prior evidence has shown, it is

less likely that children raised in households in which there is a significant degree of physical violence will pursue an advanced education (Blau, 1981; Graziano & Mills, 1992; Kurtz et al., 1993; McLoyd, 1990). As with current religion, new experiences (more education) had little relationship on current perceptions of child discipline than early experiences.

Implications and Recommendations

What is considered as socially acceptable in the use of discipline with children appears related to one's racial identification, religious upbringing, educational status, and gender. Retrospectively, African Americans seemed to perceive the physical discipline that they had received as children as more frequent, but less severe, and a more acceptable form of parental behavior than did European Americans. This perception may have accounted for the over-representation of African Americans in the general population for child abusing families (Cupoli & Sewell, 1988; Daniel, Hampton, & Newberger, 1983; Eckenrode, Munsch, Powers, & Eckenrode, 1988; Hampton, 1987; Jason & Andereck, 1983; Powers & Doris, 1985; Powers & Eckenrode, 1988).

Assuming that values influence behavior, then differential perceptions of physical punishment and physical abuse suggest that varying values are inherent in child-rearing across races. Trickett and Susman's (1988) works suggested that abusive parents follow stricter guidelines about child-rearing than nonabusive parents. This outcome also may reflect the more authoritarian style of Black parents than Whites noted in earlier studies (Blau, 1981; Davis & Havighurst, 1946; Erlanger, 1975; Marsh, 1991).

This research raised another important question for those who acknowledged having been more frequently physically punished, but perceived their corporal punishment as less severe than their comparison groups, while also supporting the use of corporal correction in the next generation. That is whether or not the physical punishment children received shaped their attitudes or values towards authority to the extent that they became adult advocates of physical punishment for the next generation? Did those who were physically punished frequently and severely learn to submit to authority so well that they do not only perceive that the punishment they received as appropriate, but also a necessary form of discipline in the future generation? Clearly the authoritarian theory (Adorno et al., 1950; Byrne, 1974) supports such premises. Future research is needed to explore the effects of physical punishment as it pertains to authoritarianism.

This discrepancy of perceptions has implications for the abuse literature. Such a finding raises an important question as to whether or not African American values of child-rearing are at a disadvantage with the dominant culture. Since African American values seem to be different from mainstream society, does this imply that they are at greater risk to abuse their children? This presupposes that being African American is a high risk factor for becoming an abused child and/or a perpetrator of abuse. These findings suggest that child abuse may be predictable. Those who are prone to endorse physical discipline may have an increased tendency to physically abuse their children regardless of race (Graziano, 1994). Other studies have shown that authoritarian attitudes concerning parenting are predictors of child abuse (Trickett & Susman, 1989; Whissel et al., 1990; Williams et al., 1994).

Results of this research seemed to emphasize the ambiguous nature of how child abuse is defined while substantiating its subjectivity. For example, in defining child abuse, it is important to note that there are no clear guidelines, thus those who are determining the presence of abuse within a family structure utilize a subjective and inherently culturally biased approach. In essence, what may be considered abusive to some may not be considered abusive to another. This ambiguity may well be more true for scenarios involving corporal punishment for those involving blatantly identifiable abusive behaviors.

Clearly, there are multiple values operating concerning physical discipline/abuse both across and within races, but only one dominant value seems to exist which defines child abuse. This dominant value, as defined primarily by European Americans, appeared to be that the application of corporal punishment is frequently viewed as abusive. Given that African Americans will most likely define abuse differently than European Americans, further attention as to what is legally abusive is needed. Anecdotal evidence from one of the present subsamples during a group administration revealed that many Blacks explicitly expressed that they had not been abused. These respondents often seemed offended by questions related to whether or not they had been whipped as children and if so to what extent, insisting that whipping was not abusive behavior. Another subsample, mostly Whites, differed by expressing surprise at the use of parental discipline with physical correction. Regardless of these varied perceptions which may represent a spectrum of "approved" to "inappropriate" corporal punishment, it appears clear that the very use of corporal punishment by either end of the spectrum may be a precursor of cruel types of physical abuse (Graziano, 1994). For example, even the "approved" forms of physical

discipline may lead to more severe types of physical discipline, including clearly defined types of physical abuse.

Although there is a plethora of research on child abuse and child discipline, there seems limited attention to cultural differences. The present finding suggest that it would be useful for researchers to design instruments to address cultural differences in physical abuse by using normative data for various ethnic groups. Measures to quantify abuse based on various ethnic, religious, educational, and gender groups may prove useful, while some existing measures may prove invalid for certain populations.

The present results may also have important implications for psychotherapists which relate to African Americans' denial of their child abuse experience, when this presumed minimization may in fact be attributed to the cultural norms regarding the use of child discipline. The same assumptions may apply to differences in educational level, religions, and other cultural features which need to be explored both within clinical and preventive contexts as they relate to issues and attitudes toward physical abuse. Perhaps special attention to religious background should be given to patients with a abuse history, especially in light of this research's finding concerning the relationship between childhood religion and the approval of physical punishment and a general tendency within the mental health field to neglect one's religious affiliation. It will be important to empathize with the cultural experience as an acceptable one in their upbringing. A possible exception may involve individuals who were reared in Satanic cults. In addition, the impact of abusiveness regardless of its frequency and severity, may also differ by ethnic and religious group. More research is needed to substantiate these possibilities.

Race and childhood religious affiliation seem to importantly influence current perceptions of abuse. Other factors, such as education and changes in religious affiliation, appear to have little influence in changing the perceptions of discipline of adults from those of their childhood. This raises the question as to which factors play a role in mitigating current perceptions of child discipline from past child discipline behaviors? While additional research is needed to identify such factors, the results of this analysis point toward the importance of primary prevention with children at a early age.

Methodological Limitations

A possible limitation of this study was that participants self-identified their race. While some argue that being African American is anyone who was born in America of African descent, others argue that anyone who is a citizen of the United States with African descent is an African American (Phinney, 1989). Given the controversy surrounding the composition of African American category, self-identification may not have been the best way to measure the race category (Larkey, Hecht, & Martin, 1993). Similar arguments are applicable for European Americans and other ethnic groups. Perhaps it would have been better to ask individuals where they were born.

Another methodological limitation was that the retrospective perceptions by adult children of their parental discipline were likely to be biased. Some (Halverston, 1988; Yarrow, Campbell, & Burton, 1970) contend that a retrospective reliance on memory tends to yield findings biased toward more recent experiences. These authors argued further that selective memory is often colored by individuals' most predominant

experiences, thus influencing a tendency toward frequently forgetting less prevalent events. Participants' perceptions of their parents behavior may also be minimized by a desire to present a favorable impression of their parents (McCrae & Costa, 1988a). As McCrae & Costa (1988b) suggested, while specific memory is often biased, the questionnaires in this research may have minimized this problem by assessing memory for broad features of behavior. More importantly, this researcher was more interested in the respondents' perceptions than the actual events.

The current research design also had advantages. Requiring participants to be at least 18-years-old may have reduced attempts to describe their parents' conduct in a favorable light. At the age of 18, respondents were also less suggestible than they would have been during earlier years. Adults' perceptions have been found more stable than those of childhood (Alwin & Kroenick, 1991). The community subsample was recruited in order to diversify these respondents in education and age, rendering the whole sample more representative of the general population.

While this research was exploratory, its extension and replication in a sample that is more representative of the general population is needed. In addition, the theory of authoritarianism that appears to underlie the African American's and the childhood Fundamentalists' perceptions of parental discipline theory requires confirmation as this research only offered this as a proposed model. However, the current work does pose socio-political, cultural, religious, and feminist issues regarding child discipline. As noted earlier, these findings have a number of implications for the abuse literature. Future

studies should also examine which specific acts are considered to be abusive in diverse cultural and religious groups.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Participant I.D. # _____

Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your marital status? _____
2. Age _____ 3. Sex _____
4. Birth Date _____ 5. Highest Grade Completed _____
6. Highest Degree Completed _____
7. Religion (Please specify the type of religion not just Protestant or Catholic) _____
8. Ethnicity: African-American _____ Caucasian _____ Hispanic _____
Native American _____ Asian-Pacific Islander _____ Other _____
9. In what religion were you reared? _____
10. Father's Occupation _____
11. Highest Grade or Educational level Completed by Father _____
12. Mother's Occupation _____
13. Highest Grade or Educational level Completed by Mother _____
14. Please identify your living arrangement for most of your child-rearing years by placing a check or filling in the blank with mother and/or father or type of relative.

 both biological parents__ single biological mother__ single biological father__
 adoptive parent(s) _____ step parent(s) _____
 foster parent(s) _____ relative(s) _____
 other _____
15. Are your custodial parents now living? _____
16. If not which parent is deceased? _____ Date of Death _____

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Participant I.D. # _____

Directions: The following scenes are various ranges of child care. Some are considered very serious acts, while others are considered not so serious. Each item contains a short passage describing various levels of child care. Please rate the incident on a scale from 1 to 9, assigning high numbers to incidents which you believe are very serious and low numbers to incidents which you believe are not so serious.

1. A child is severely emotionally disturbed. The parents refuse to accept treatment for themselves or for the child.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious			Very serious		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

2. On one occasion, the parent and the child engaged in mutual masturbation.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious			Very serious		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

3. The parents are constantly screaming at their child and sometimes calling the child names.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious			Very serious		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

4. Parents usually punish their child by spanking her/him with their hand.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious			Very serious		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Participant ID#____

5. The parent repeatedly shows the child pornographic pictures.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

6. The parent immersed the child in a tub of hot water. The child suffers from second-degree burns.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

7. The parents ignore their child most of the time, seldom playing with or listening to her/him.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

8. The parents constantly compare their child with her/his younger siblings, sometimes implying that the child was not planned.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Participant ID#____

9. The parent made one sexual advance to her/his child.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

10. The parents keep their child locked up in their home while failing the child to socialize with other children her/his age.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

11. The parent hit the child in the face, striking the child with their open hand.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

12. On one occasion, the parent fondled the child's genitals.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

13. The parent banged the child against the wall while shaking her/him by the shoulders.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Participant ID#____

14. The parent struck the child with a wooden stick.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

15. A child has severe behavior problems, the parents refuse to seek help for their child.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

16. The parents usually spank their child using their hand.

Not very serious			Somewhat serious				Very serious	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Participant ID.#____

DISCIPLINE QUESTIONNAIRE
FORM 18

This study is about the use of physical punishment in disciplining children. We are interested in your recall of the physical punishment that you received as you were growing up. While there are many forms of physical punishment, we will focus on only a few. We will define physical punishment as occurring when:

"An adult (18 years or older) intentionally disciplines a minor (under 18) and, in the process, causes physical pain to the minor."

The pain felt by the minor may range from very mild and brief (such as a slap on the hand) to much more severe and lasting.

The punishment may be in the following forms: hitting, slapping, spanking, punching, kicking, pinching, twisting, pulling or shaking.

We are not interested in other forms of punishment such as yelling, grounding, restraining, or confining to a room or chair.

If you recall even minor slaps or spankings, these are considered to be physical punishment, and are of interest to us.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

I. YOUR RECALL OF BEING PHYSICALLY PUNISHED WHEN YOU WERE GROWING UP

Please keep in mind our definition of physical punishment as occurring when:

"An adult (18 years or older) intentionally disciplines a minor (under 18) and, in the process, causes physical pain to the minor."

Participant I.D. #_____

1. While growing up how often were you physically punished?

Daily	A few times	A few times	A few times	Never	Don't
	a week	a month	a year	know	
1	2	3	4	5	6

2. How often were other family members physically punished?

Daily	A few times	A few times	A few times	Never	Don't
	a week	a month	a year		know
1	2	3	4	5	6

3. How important was physical punishment as a primary child-rearing procedure in your family?

Very				Not at all
Important				Important
1	2	3	4	5

4. Who physically punished you? (Check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Mother	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult Sister/Brother
<input type="checkbox"/> Father	<input type="checkbox"/> Stepparent
<input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> I was never physically punished	

5. Of the people checked above, who punished you the most _____

Participant I.D.#_____

6. From ages 5-12, about how frequently were you physically punished?

Daily	A few times	A few times	A few times	Never	Don't
	a week	a month	a year	know	
1	2	3	4	5	6

7. From ages 5-12, how severe was most of the physical punishment you received?

☐ caused injury more severe than welts and bruises
☐ caused welts and bruises but no other injury
☐ caused considerable pain but no welts, bruises, or other injury
☐ caused moderate pain
☐ caused mild pain
☐ I was never physically punished

8. From ages 13-17, about how frequently were you physically punished?

Daily	A few times	A few times	A few times	Never	Don't
	a week	a month	a year		know
1	2	3	4	5	6

9. From ages 13-17, how severe was most of the physical punishment you usually received?

☐ caused injury more severe than welts and bruises
☐ caused welts and bruises but no other injury
☐ caused considerable pain but no welts, bruises, or other injury
☐ caused moderate pain

Participant I.D.#_____

- ☐ caused mild pain
☐ I was never physically punished

10. Check all that you received

- ☐ Spanking ☐ Arm-Twisting
☐ Punching ☐ Hair/Ear Pulling
☐ Slapping ☐ Shaking
☐ Kicking ☐ Whipping
☐ Pinching ☐ Other(list)_____
- ☐ I was never physically punished

11. Of the punishments above, which one did you receive the most?_____

12. The most severe physical punishment that you ever received (check one)

- ☐ caused injury more severe than welts and bruises
☐ caused welts and bruises but no other injury
☐ caused considerable pain but no welts, bruises, or other injury
☐ caused moderate pain
☐ caused mild pain
☐ I was never physically punished

13. How old were you when this incident occurred? _____

14. Were objects ever used in the physical punishment?

Never		About half the time		Always
1	2	3	4	5

15. What objects were used (other than hands or feet)? Please list in order of frequency.
16. Usually, how did the person act while punishing you? (Circle the appropriate degree of each of the following)
- a. Extremely Angry Not Angry at all
1 2 3 4 5
- b. Loving Hateful
1 2 3 4 5
- c. Controlled Out of Control
1 2 3 4 5
17. Usually, how justified was the person in punishing you?
- Completely Unjustified Somewhat Unjustified Not Certain Somewhat Justified Completely Justified
1 2 3 4 5
18. How often was the punishment effective in getting you to do what the adult wanted?
- Never Effective About half the time Always Effective
1 2 3 4 5

Participant I.D.#_____

19. How often was the punishment effective in teaching something of importance to you?

Never Effective		About half the time		Always Effective
1	2	3	4	5

20. How much resentment did you usually feel about being punished?

None	A little	Some	Much	A great deal
1	2	3	4	5

21. How often did you deserve the punishment?

Never		About half the time		Always
1	2	3	4	5

22. How much were you punished?

Not Enough		About the right amount		Too much
1	2	3	4	5

Participant ID#_____

II. YOUR CURRENT OPINIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT**HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. Parents should have the right to physically punish their children	1	2	3	4	5
24. Physical punishment is helpful for children	1	2	3	4	5
25. I intend to use physical punishment with my own children	1	2	3	4	5
26. Children need to be physically punished	1	2	3	4	5
27. Physical punishment is harmful	1	2	3	4	5
28. Physical punishment is a proper child-rearing technique	1	2	3	4	5
29. Physical punishment used on children is abusive	1	2	3	4	5
30. Teachers and principals should have the right to physically punish their pupils	1	2	3	4	5

Participant ID# _____

31. I would support a law that says
parents cannot physically punish
their children

1

2

3

4

5

32. Rate each of the following types of discipline on how appropriate you think it is.

	Never Appropriate		Somewhat (Sometimes okay)		Always
Spanking	1	2	3	4	5
Punching	1	2	3	4	5
Slapping	1	2	3	4	5
Kicking	1	2	3	4	5
Pinching	1	2	3	4	5
Arm Twisting	1	2	3	4	5
Hair/Ear Pulling	1	2	3	4	5
Shaking	1	2	3	4	5
Whipping	1	2	3	4	5

33. Of the punishments listed above, which one is the most appropriate?

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

Demographic Characteristics of Descriptive Variables

Variables	<u>M</u> (n)	<u>SD</u> (%)
Age	27.17 yrs	11.8
Males	(77)	35.3
Females	(141)	64.7
Blacks	(99)	(45.4)
Whites	(60)	(27.5)
Hispanics	(23)	(10.5)
Native Amer.	(6)	(2.8)
Asians	(24)	(11.0)
Other	(6)	(2.8)
Religion*	(33)	(15.2)
Fundamental	(76)	(34.9)
Liberal	(109)	(49.9)
Relig Reared*	(24)	(11.0)
Fundamental	(94)	(43.1)
Liberal	(100)	(45.9)
Single	(160)	(73.7)
Married	(48)	(22.1)
Divorced	(8)	(3.7)
Widowed	(2)	(.5)
Education	14.8 yrs	1.6
Parents' Educ	12.3 yrs	5.2
Fathers' Educ	12.1 yrs	5.9
Mothers' Educ	12.7 yrs	4.4

Note: * indicates no or unknown religion.

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