

The Intergenerational Transmission of Attitudes Towards Corporal  
Punishment

by


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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of past corporal punishment experiences in moderating current attitudes towards corporal punishment among 399 university students. Support was found for the intergenerational transmission of attitudes towards corporal punishment: experiencing past corporal punishment as a child and viewing one's parent's use of corporal punishment as justified were related to greater acceptance of corporal punishment. Participant demographics were also relevant: males and Asian students (versus females and other ethnic groups) were more accepting of corporal punishment. Students who are parents and students who worked with children were less accepting of corporal punishment than those who had no such experience.

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## Introduction

For centuries, numerous societies have provided parents with the right to use hitting, slapping, spanking and other types of physical force against their children. Such behaviours are commonly referred to as corporal punishment. Corporal punishment has been defined as the application of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for purposes of correction or control of the child's behaviour (Straus & Donnelly, 1993, p. 420).

The use of corporal punishment against children continues to be legally sanctioned within North America. Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada states, "Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstance (Greenspan, 1993: CC/81)."

Many critics have argued that this type of legislation is ambiguous thus leaving individual judges and juries to decide what is reasonable. In a recent Canadian case, a father was arrested after he laid his daughter on the trunk of the car, pulled down her pants and spanked her because she had shut the car door on her brother's fingers. The judge ruled that the parents were responsible, reasonable, and caring and that the spanking of the child was not excessive (Chidley, 1995). The ruling generated a considerable amount of discussion and debate regarding the issue of corporal punishment.

Corporal punishment is an issue that has also produced many studies within a variety of academic fields. In an attempt to determine the factors that influence the use

of corporal punishment, many researchers have explored the intergenerational transmission hypothesis (Hemenway, Solnick, & Carter, 1994; Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, & Toedter, 1983; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Widom, 1989). This theory posits that individuals who had experiences of physical punishment in their own childhood would be more likely to use corporal punishment with their own children. Numerous studies have concluded that experiencing corporal punishment as a child is correlated with greater approval of the use of physical punishment as adults (Hemenway et al., 1994; Muller, Hunter & Sollak, 1995).

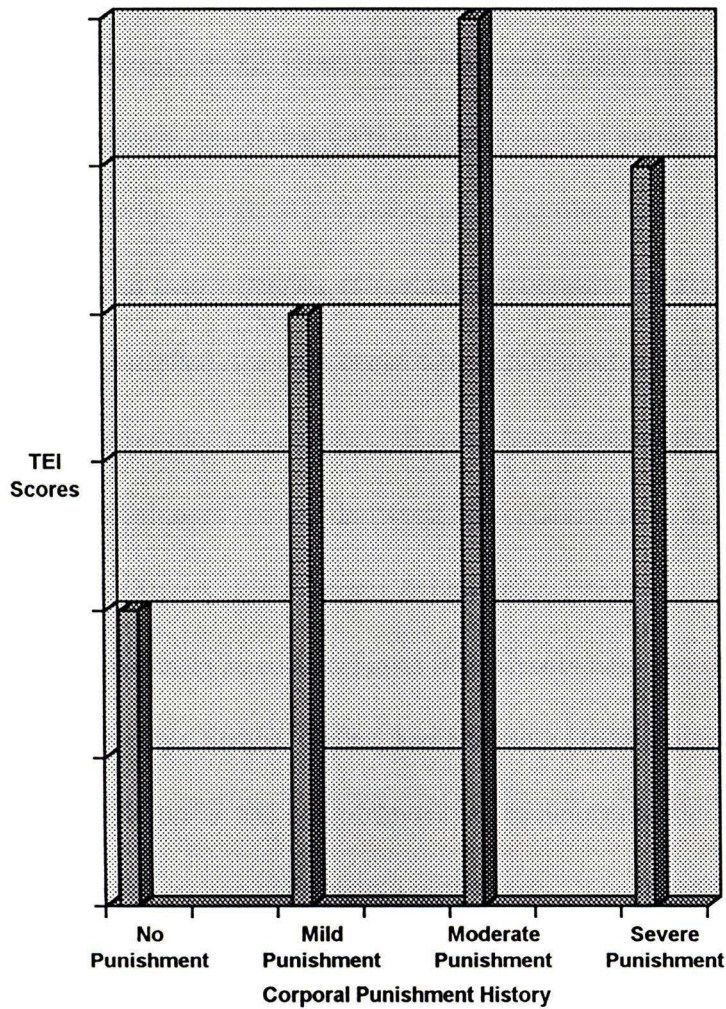
The intergenerational transmission theory has also been applied to the study of child abuse. In this context, the theory suggests that experiencing child abuse is a risk factor for becoming an abusive parent. Support for this model has come from a variety of studies (Gelles, 1973; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Kaufman & Zigler, 1989). For example, a childhood history of abuse has been found to be related to later physical violence toward children (Whipple & Webster-Stratton, 1991).

What has been absent from much of the previous research that has explored the plausibility of an intergenerational transmission hypothesis regarding attitudes towards corporal punishment are studies that include both sub-abusive levels of physical punishment as well as more severe forms of child physical abuse. In the current study, the extent of participants' past experience with corporal punishment and physical abuse will be explored. I predict that there is a relationship between participants' levels of childhood corporal punishment experienced and participants' current acceptance of the use of corporal punishment. For those participants with no corporal punishment history, it is expected that those participants will be the least accepting of corporal punishment. For

those participants with a mild corporal punishment history, it is expected that they will be less accepting of the use of corporal punishment than participants with a severe or moderate history of corporal punishment but more accepting than participants with no corporal punishment history. For those participants who experienced moderate levels of corporal punishment in childhood, they are expected to be the most supportive of the use of corporal punishment in comparison to all other participants with no, mild, or severe corporal punishment histories. In addition, for those participants who experienced very high levels of corporal punishment or abuse, there is an expectation that levels of acceptance for corporal punishment will be lower than for participants who received moderate levels of corporal punishment in childhood. In summary, I predict that a curvilinear relationship will exist between the level of corporal punishment participants received in childhood and their current acceptance of corporal punishment (see Figure 1). There are three factors expected to be associated with less acceptance of corporal punishment: the perception that their own experience of punishment was abusive, the view that their own punishment was unjustified, and having received previous counselling that focused on their experiences of punishment or abuse during childhood. These factors are expected to impact more strongly on the attitudes of individuals in the severe corporal punishment group as it is less likely that those with no, mild, or moderate punishment histories would view their experiences as abusive or would have undergone counselling for such issues.

Figure 1

The Hypothesized Relationship Between Corporal Punishment History and Current Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment as Demonstrated by the Treatment Evaluation Inventory



## Literature Review

### Prevalence of Corporal Punishment

The use of corporal punishment is commonplace in North American society.

Recent estimates suggest that over 90% of children in the United States have experienced corporal punishment inflicted by another individual (Graziano, 1994; Graziano, Lindquist, Kunce, & Munjal, 1992; Graziano & Namaste, 1990; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987). Similarly, a Canadian study found that 88% of adults recalled experiencing physical punishment by a relative (Durrant, 1993-94). Parents are most often cited as the source of corporal punishment of their offspring (Graziano & Namaste, 1990). For many children, being corporally punished does not cease when childhood ends as the use of physical discipline often continues into adolescence. Researchers have suggested rates of occurrence of corporal punishment ranging between 32% (Graziano et al., 1992) and 50% for adolescents (Straus, 1991; Straus & Donnelly, 1993).

Researchers have also found that parents who use physical punishment are likely to do so repeatedly. Straus, Gelles, and Steimetz (1980) interviewed parents who had at least one child under the age of seventeen to determine the forms and frequencies of discipline used on one child within each family. The results indicated that, among those parents who engaged in physical discipline, on average: an object was thrown at the child 4.5 times per year, a beating occurred 5.9 times per year, the child was pushed, grabbed, or shoved 6.6 times per year, and the parents slapped or spanked the child 9.6 times per year. In addition, Straus & Kantor (1994) found that 79.5% of parents who hit their teens did so, on average, 7.9 times. It has been suggested that rates of violence against

children may be even greater than this since perpetrators of punishment may not reveal all incidence of physical punishments on self-report measures (Straus et al., 1980).

### The Intergenerational Transmission Hypothesis

#### Corporal Punishment and the Intergenerational Transmission Hypothesis

There have been considerable attempts to understand and explain the factors that affect the use of corporal punishment in families. Many researchers have postulated that attitudes towards corporal punishment are transmitted intergenerationally. This theory suggests that being physically punished as a child is one factor that will increase the likelihood that the individual will utilize corporal discipline with his or her own children. Numerous studies have found that experiencing corporal punishment as a child is correlated with greater acceptance of physical punishment of children (Covell, Grusec & King, 1995; Hemenway, Solnick & Carter, 1994; Muller, Hunter & Sollak, 1995). Buntain-Ricklefs, Kemper, Bell, and Babonis (1994) found that the strongest risk factor for approving of any type of punishment was having experienced that punishment as a child. They concluded that individuals were approximately 2 to 3 times more accepting of a punishment if they had experienced that specific form of discipline as children.

Similarly, Graziano and Namaste (1990) found that college students who were spanked as children were found to be more accepting of the use of spanking by parents than participants who had not been spanked as children. A large majority of participants who were spanked as children indicated that they also intended to use spanking as a means of punishing their own children in the future. Those participants who had not been spanked as children were significantly less accepting of the practice than those who

had been spanked.

In addition, a study by Graziano et al. (1992) reported that, overall, most participants rated their past punishment "in either a moderate or positive manner" (p. 151). Participants evaluated their punishment as "about the right amount" and that it was generally effective in teaching them something of importance as well as getting them to comply with adult demands (Graziano et al., 1992, p. 151).

Not all of the research examining attitudes towards corporal punishment has consistently found complete support for the intergenerational transmission hypothesis. Kelder, McNamara, Carlson, and Lynn (1991) found only restricted support for the intergenerational transmission of attitudes towards punishment. For individuals who had experienced moderate or no corporal punishment, their attitudes toward corporal punishment matched their own experience. However, participants who reported experiencing the most extreme forms of discipline, including abusive physical punishments, rated punishment as less appropriate than did other participants who did not report extreme experiences.

### Physical Abuse and the Intergenerational Hypothesis

The exploration of an intergenerational transmission hypothesis has not been limited to the study of corporal punishment. Researchers studying child abuse and neglect have generated significant attention toward the intergenerational transmission of abuse hypothesis. Child abuse can be defined as "a physical attack or injury ranging from minimal to fatal injury inflicted on a child by a person having caretaking responsibilities for the child" (Gil, 1970, p. 10). Experiencing physical abuse in childhood appears to put an

individual at risk for being abusive as a parent (Gelles, 1973; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Kaufman & Zigler, 1989). Other researchers have suggested that the age at which physical abuse occurs influences the likelihood of its continuation in the next generation. For example, Milner, Robertson, and Rogers (1990) found that the experience of physical abuse prior to puberty produced a higher abuse potential than the experience of physical abuse after puberty. Overall, Kaufman and Zigler (1987) concluded that the best estimate of the rate of intergenerational transmission of abuse indicates that about one-third of all individuals who were abused as children will subject their offspring to maltreatment. This rate of abuse among individuals with a history of abuse is approximately six times higher than the base rate of 5% of parents being abusive to their children in the general population (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987).

#### Factors Affecting the Use of Physical Punishment

In addition to the research examining the intergenerational transmission of attitudes towards corporal punishment, a large body of knowledge exists detailing other factors that increase the likelihood of the endorsement and utilization of physical discipline and physical abuse as a means of punishing children and adolescents. Previous studies have examined and explored issues including factors that influence the acceptance of the use of both subabusive and abusive levels of physical punishment. Subabusive punishment consists of socially acceptable violent behaviour toward children that is not as severe as abusive behaviour (Graziano, 1994). It includes behaviours such as slapping and spanking where there is no resulting injury for the child. Factors that influence the transmission of attitudes towards corporal punishment and physical abuse can be divided into four main

categories: individual characteristics of the child or adolescent, attributes of the perpetrator of punishment, traits of the family, and aspects of the societal environment.

### Child Characteristics

Some researchers have found that specific characteristics that some children possess place them at a greater risk for experiencing physical punishment. Individual traits including the sex and age of the child play a significant role in the usage of corporal punishment. For example, male children are physically disciplined more often than are female children (Kazdin, 1980; Kennedy, 1995; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger & Chyi-In, 1991) and have been found to be at higher risk for abuse than girls (Bryan & Freed, 1982; Gil, 1970; Straus et al., 1980). In addition, younger children are more likely to be disciplined physically than are older children. Durrant (1993-94) noted that corporal punishment is most frequently used on toddlers and preschoolers, yet high rates of corporal punishment are also found for children up to 10 years of age (Daro & Gelles, 1992).

In regards to physical abuse, the research is equivocal regarding the age at which children are at the highest risk for abuse. Many researchers have suggested that younger children have also been found to be at higher risk for physical abuse than older children (Egley, 1991; Gil, 1970). Egley (1991) found the risk of child physical abuse to peak between the ages of 3 and 8 with a decline in the risk for maltreatment as the child ages beyond 8 years. Others have found that children are most at risk for abuse during the ages of 3 months to 3-5 years (American Association for Protecting Children, 1986; Gelles, 1973/74; Gil, 1970). A variety of reasons have been speculated for the higher incidence

of abuse in younger children. First, physical force is used more often against younger children (Straus et al., 1980). Secondly, younger children spend more time with their caregivers and thus are more dependent upon them. Finally, young children are more physically vulnerable than older children and are therefore more susceptible to injury (Belsky, 1993). In contrast, other studies have found a bimodal pattern in the risk for child abuse with children under age 5 and older teenage children being the most likely to experience violence that was serious enough to be considered child abuse (Straus et al., 1980). Still others have reported a heightened rate of physical abuse among adolescents (Garbarino & Gilliam, 1980; Olsen & Holmes, 1986).

In addition, specific behaviours and beliefs about the child can influence the type and severity of punishment inflicted on the child. Children who are seen as aggressive and "difficult" are more prone to experience physical discipline than are those children who are not viewed in this manner (Straus, 1991). The way in which the child's behaviour is viewed by a parent also plays a role in the parents' usage of corporal punishment. Individuals who felt that a child intentionally violated parental rules were more likely to indicate that physical discipline was an appropriate action (Durrant, 1993-94). Similarly, Dix and Grusec (1985) found that the more responsibility assigned to the child for his or her actions the more anger was felt by the parents followed by a greater tendency to engage in punitive discipline.

#### Attributes of the Perpetrator of the Punishment

There are many perpetrator characteristics that are related to the use of abusive levels of punishment. For individuals who have a personal history of child abuse their

current feelings and understanding of their abuse experiences play a significant role in their approach to childrearing (Main & Goldwyn, 1984). A parent who was unable to resolve feelings regarding his/her own childhood treatment had a higher risk of being an abusive parent (Hemenway et al., 1994). Kaufman and Zigler (1987) found that individuals who had experienced child abuse were less likely to support the use of corporal punishment if they were more openly angry about their abuse and if the abuse experiences were perpetrated by only one of their parents. Similarly, Hunter and Kilstrom (1979) reported that more detailed recollections and open anger about early maltreatment acted as a protective factor for individuals against the continuation of maltreatment with their own children. Moreover, additional research has found that people who were able to gain perspective on their relationship with their own abusive parent and forgive that parent were less likely to re-enact their abusive past than people who did not (Main & Goldwyn, 1984). Furthermore, mothers who had been abused as children and had undergone therapy were less likely to abuse their offspring than mothers who had not received treatment (Egeland, Jacobvitz, & Sroufe, 1988). Thus, an individual's present perception and handling of previous abuse experiences significantly impacts on attitudes and behaviours regarding the use of physical punishments.

Additionally, there are a large number of components that can impact on an individual's willingness to use corporal punishment. Past experience with physical violence can impact on attitudes and the use of corporal discipline. Individuals with high levels of aggressiveness were found to use physical punishment to a greater degree than individuals with low levels of aggressiveness (Straus, 1991). Furthermore, those who initiated more

physical fights in the home were found to be more likely to rate corporal punishment as appropriate (Kelder et al., 1991).

Sex of the discipliner plays a role in the individual's willingness to use corporal punishment. Many studies have found that men are more approving than women of physical discipline (Buntain-Ricklefs, Kemper, Bell, & Babonis, 1994; Graziano et al., 1992). Moreover, men tend to be more accepting of less common types of severe punishments such as hair pulling (Buntain-Ricklefs et al., 1994). Additionally, fathers have been found to be more likely to spank their sons while mothers are more likely to spank their daughters (Joubert, 1991). In contrast, Graziano and Namaste (1990) found mothers to spank their children more frequently than fathers did; however, this result may be due to the fact that mothers typically spend more time with their children.

Education is also seen to play an important role in the use and acceptance of corporal punishment. Individuals with less formal education were found to be more willing to use physical discipline (Kennedy, 1995; Simons et al., 1991). In addition, in studies that utilized student samples, education majors were found to be less approving of severe forms of punishment than did students from other disciplines (Kennedy, 1995). Similarly, individuals in introductory psychology courses (Blampied & Kahan, 1992) were found to give lower ratings of acceptability towards corporal punishment than did the general public.

An additional factor that plays a role in the acceptance of corporal punishment is an individual's level of experience with and attitude toward children. Participants with fewer encounters with children were more likely to be supportive of the use of physical

discipline (Kennedy, 1995). Fry (1993) found that participants who felt children should be well-behaved, within control, and capable of a certain level of responsibility were more tolerant toward the use of physical discipline than were individuals who believed that a fair amount of disobedience is natural for young children and that youngsters are mischievous, somewhat uncontrollable and not yet responsible for their behaviour.

### Family Characteristics

Influences in the use of corporal punishment at both subabusive and abusive levels extend beyond the individual child and parent. Many factors related to the family have been found to increase the likelihood of child abuse. Isolation (Berger, Knutson, Mehm, & Perkins, 1988), lack of a support network (Hemenway et al., 1994), the absence of community involvement (Berger et al., 1988), and economic stress (Berger et al., 1988) have all been found to be risk factors for the occurrence of child abuse. Another component that plays a role in the level of corporal punishment in families is family size. Researchers found that large families used corporal punishment more frequently than small families (Hemenway et al., 1994). However, it was noted that the frequency of physical discipline declines after a certain number of children. Moreover, Straus (1991) detailed other family characteristics that influenced rates of abuse including spousal violence, youthfulness of parents, support for the utilization of spanking, poor parenting skills, low socio-economic status and an authoritarian attitude.

### Societal and Cultural Characteristics

Societal characteristics, such as social structures, norms, and values, can have an impact on levels of corporal punishment within families. Overall, research has concluded

that widely held societal beliefs can make a significant contribution to attitudes and use of corporal punishment. However, when exploring the role of culture, consideration must be given to the fact that differences within any given cultural group are at least as broad as the differences generally found between such cultural groups (Axelson, 1985). Thus, the following discussion of the use of corporal punishment may be applicable to many of the members within a given culture without reflecting of the entire range of attitudes and behaviours about corporal punishment.

Societal acceptance for the use of corporal punishment can be viewed along a continuum from a lack of tolerance for the use of corporal punishment to widespread support for its usage. At one extreme are countries which have enacted legislation banning corporal punishment. Currently Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Poland, Norway, Cyprus, and Austria all have a legal prohibition against corporal punishment (Hyman, 1995; Murray, 1996). Many of these laws carry no penalties for infractions, rather they are meant to educate parents about the risks associated with corporal punishment and to encourage the use of alternative childrearing approaches (Durrant, 1993-94). In addition, other nations, including Germany, Switzerland, Australia and Canada have considered similar legislation (Kinkead, 1994). It cannot be concluded that those nations which have proposed a legal ban on the use of corporal punishment have actually reduced acceptance and use of corporal punishment. It is plausible that these countries have not adopted such legislation due to a general acceptance of the use of corporal punishment within the population or a strong enough vocal opposition to the idea. Arguments against the

banning of corporal punishment often include an emphasis on the sanctity of the family which stress the parent's right to discipline a child without interference from the state.

Towards the opposite end of the continuum of support for corporal punishment, there are many other cultures which have widespread acceptance and usage of corporal punishment. Although the use of corporal punishment has not been studied in many regions, a limited amount of research does exist for many nations. For example, historical reviews of West Indian societies have highlighted the extensive use of corporal punishment from an early age (Payne, 1989). In a recent sample of Barbadian school children, 84.1% reported that they had been flogged or caned at home on at least one occasion (Anderson & Payne, 1994). In addition, Payne (1989) reports that there is widespread support in Barbados for the use of corporal punishment in child rearing. Payne (1989) reports that corporal punishment is regularly used for inappropriate requests for food, fighting, disobedience, breaking things, and taking too long to complete errands.

In Nigeria, harsh disciplinary measures are generally recognized as common and normative (Durojaiye, 1976). Within this nation, the most common forms of corporal punishment are administered by hand or with aid of sticks or whips (Wilson-Oyelaran, 1989). Moreover, research has found that harsh physical punishment and aggression against children are among the most common forms of child maltreatment in Nigeria (Jinadu, 1986).

Physical punishment is commonly used in child rearing in India and Sri Lanka (DeSilva, 1982). Graziano and his colleagues (1992) found that 88% of Indian university students had experienced corporal punishment with the most frequent type of punishment

being slapping. In regards to the current attitudes of the Indian student sample, they showed more agreement than disagreement with the statements that “physical punishment is helpful to children” and “I would not support a law against physical punishment” (Graziano et al., 1992). Overall, the researchers concluded that acceptance of the practice of corporal punishment was the rule for the Indian culture (Graziano et al., 1992).

In a study of Taiwanese college students, Wu (1981) found that 72.5% of students approved of spanking for children under age 3 and 85% of students approved of spanking for children age 5 to 10. When asked about observing incidences of corporal punishment for children under age 3: 62.5% of students had observed a child being spanked; 32.5% of the sample had observed the twisting of an ear or pinching of the face; 20% of participants had seen a child been kicked and beaten; and 27.5% of the students had witnessed a child being hit on the head. For observations of children being corporally punished between the ages of 5 and 10 years old the rates were even higher: 62.5% of the sample had observed a child being spanked; 52.5% of the participants had witnessed the twisting of a child’s ear or the pinching of a child’s face; 42.5% of the students had seen a child being kicked or beaten; and finally 42.5% of the sample had witnessed a child being hit on the head. Some of the common reasons given for the use of punishment include disobedience, arguing with parents, and a refusal to yield or stubbornness (Wu, 1981).

In Britain, a study found that 90% of the general public approved of spanking children (Murray, 1996). However, there have been recent court challenges as to the legality of certain acts of corporal punishment. For example, after a 12 year old boy was caned so severely by his stepfather that he required hospital treatment for his injuries, the

boy and his biological father proceeded with legal actions. The jury concluded that the stepfather had been disciplining not abusing the child. As a result, the father and son have filed a complaint with the European Commission on Human Rights, claiming the caning violated a commission article prohibiting inhuman or degrading punishment (Murray, 1996).

Within North America, research has found widespread use of corporal punishment. A survey of Canadians revealed that 12% of participants had never been corporally punished, 72% of respondents recalled being occasionally corporally punished, and 16% of participants experienced frequent corporal punishment (Durrant, 1993-94). Similarly, recent American studies have found that over 90% of children in the United States have experienced corporal punishment (Graziano, 1994; Graziano, Lindquist, Kuncce, & Munjal, 1992; Graziano & Namaste, 1990; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987).

In addition to studying the attitudes and usage of corporal punishment within a given nation, some researchers have examined the use of corporal punishment within specific immigrant and ethnic/racial populations in the United States. For example, Guyanese immigrants to the United States reported higher incidences of physical punishment than did Caucasian American parents (Deyoung & Zigler, 1994). Blacks and Hispanics were found to rely on physical discipline more so than individuals from other ethnic backgrounds (Daro & Gelles, 1992; Kennedy, 1995). Daro and Gelles (1992) also found that Hispanics engaged in the most serious and potentially harmful forms of discipline including kicking, biting, and punching as compared to individuals from other cultural groups. However, it is possible that these findings may be confounded by socio-

economic status and education levels rather than simply explained by the ethnic background of the participants.

Researchers have also sought to explain some of the underlying cultural beliefs that support the use of corporal punishment within a given society. Payne (1989) suggests that many cultures continue to view the experience of corporal punishment as vital to the development of strength, endurance, and cultural allegiance. Deyoung and Zigler (1994) report that cultures, such as traditional Hispanic, that are associated with strong adherence to machismo attitudes and beliefs, have punitive child-rearing styles. In addition, widespread acceptance of corporal punishment has been found to exist due to a lack of confidence in alternatives and a fundamental belief that it is beneficial (Payne, 1989). For example, Straus and his colleagues (1980) found support for the notion that sons must be “toughened up” through physical punishment. Moreover, researchers have found that cultures that place value on conformity have a greater acceptance of corporal punishment compared to cultures that stress the importance of self-reliance (Ellis & Petersen, 1992; Petersen, Lee, & Ellis, 1982).

Overall, it appears that widespread support for corporal punishment results in a perpetuation of its usage. For example, research has found that societal support for the use of physical discipline can have a “normalizing” effect on its usage (Durrant, 1993-94). Moreover, for those individuals from a culture in which there is widespread support for corporal punishment, there can be social sanctions for those parents who choose alternative discipline methods. For example, Carson (1986) found that parents who did

not use spanking as a form of discipline tended to receive politely expressed doubts about the consequences for their child.

### Theoretical Frameworks

Despite the wide range of literature concerning the use and acceptance of corporal punishment, there is a paucity of research that explores the intergenerational transmission of attitudes towards corporal punishment that includes and distinguishes between subabusive and abusive levels of punishment. *Social learning theory* has been utilized extensively as an explanatory model concerning the intergenerational transmission of attitudes towards corporal punishment. Social learning theory applies learning theory to the problems of personal and social behaviour. With regard to aggression, social learning theory posits that aggression can be learned through observation or imitation, and the more frequently it is reinforced, the greater the likelihood of repeated occurrence (Bandura, 1977). In applying social learning theory to physical discipline, the framework indicates that the use of corporal punishment by one's parents leads to a lifetime of aggressive behaviour in the child which manifests in the individual's later willingness to utilize corporal punishment as a disciplinary technique. However, the research in this area has focused almost exclusively on subabusive levels of punishment.

In contrast, investigations concerning abusive parenting have led to a host of theoretical models that examine and explore factors that lead to the continuation of child abuse. The *social psychological theory of child abuse* discussed by Gelles (1973) examines factors including socialization experiences, social characteristics such as age, gender, and social status, and personal stress of the abusive parent and family. In addition,

the *compensatory and risk factors model* presented by Kaufman & Zigler (1989) suggests that an individual's awareness of his/her own past abuse may play a role in the lack or presence of abusive treatment of his/her own children. Nonetheless, these frameworks often completely exclude any mention of punishment that is subabusive. Consequently, there is a need to explore the factors that affect the transmission of attitudes towards corporal punishment with individuals who have encountered a wide array of punishment experiences ranging from having no direct encounters with corporal punishment to regularly receiving abusive discipline.

### Hypotheses

Additional research is needed to clarify the factors that influence attitudes towards corporal punishment. In exploring the intergenerational transmission hypothesis, punishment histories need to be examined. Consideration must be given to participants' previous experiences including frequency of corporal punishment, types of punishment, subjective evaluation of punishment, and perceived utility of the punishment. Given these aforementioned variables, the following results are expected:

#### Hypothesis 1

As found in past research exploring corporal punishment history, I predict that there will be a relationship between participants' levels of childhood corporal punishment experienced and participants' current acceptance of the use of corporal punishment. It is expected that those participants who did not experience corporal punishment will be the least accepting of corporal punishment. For those participants who experienced mild corporal punishment, it is expected that they will be less accepting of the use of corporal

punishment than participants with a severe or moderate history of corporal punishment but more accepting than participants with no corporal punishment history. For those participants who experienced moderate levels of corporal punishment in childhood, they are expected to be the most supportive of the use of corporal punishment in comparison to all other participants. In addition, for those participants who experienced very high levels of corporal punishment or abuse, there is an expectation that mean levels of acceptance for corporal punishment will be lower than for participants who received moderate levels of corporal punishment in childhood. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that three factors are expected to be associated with less acceptance of corporal punishment: the perception that their own experiences of punishment were abusive, the view that their own punishment was unjustified, and having received previous counselling that focused on their experiences of punishment or abuse in childhood. These factors are expected to impact more strongly on attitudes of individuals in the severe corporal punishment group as it is less likely that those with no, mild or moderate severe punishment history would view their experiences as abusive or would have undergone counselling for such issues. In summary, I predict that a curvilinear relationship will exist between participants' the level of corporal punishment received in childhood and their current acceptance of corporal punishment.

### Hypothesis 2

Current feelings and understanding of childhood abuse experiences have been found to play a significant role in individuals' approach to childrearing (Main & Goldwyn, 1984). Researchers have found that individuals who believed they were abused appeared

less likely to discipline their own children frequently compared to those who did not consider themselves abused (Hemenway et al., 1994). Similarly, I expect to find that viewing oneself as being abused as a child by parental use of corporal punishment will significantly impact on participants' current acceptance of corporal punishment. Thus, participants who view their past punishment as physical abuse are expected to view corporal punishment less positively than participants who do not.

### Hypothesis 3

Previous research has found that individuals generally evaluate their past punishment in either a moderate or positive manner (Graziano et al., 1992). I expect that participants' evaluation of their past corporal punishment will affect their current attitudes towards the use of corporal punishment. Participants who evaluate their past punishment as unjustified are expected to be less positive in their evaluations of corporal punishment than participants who do not report unjustified punishment.

### Hypothesis 4

Given the finding that mothers who had been abused as children and had undergone therapy were less likely to abuse their offspring than mothers who had not received treatment (Egeland et al., 1988), I expect to find that participants who have engaged in counselling where issues of past punishment and/or abuse experiences were discussed will rate the use of corporal punishment more negatively than other participants who did not undergo counselling for such issues.

### Hypothesis 5

Given the finding that corporal punishment has been found to occur less frequently in adolescence than childhood (Graziano & Namaste, 1990), it is expected that participants will view corporal punishment as a less acceptable form of discipline for adolescents than for children.

### Hypothesis 6

Similar to the findings of Durrant (1993-94), it is expected that participants will be more accepting of the use of corporal punishment when the child's act was intentional rather than when unintentional.

### Hypothesis 7

As found in past research (Buntain-Ricklefs et al., 1994; Graziano et al, 1992), it is expected that male participants will be more accepting of the use of corporal punishment than female participants.

### Hypothesis 8

Overall, similar to the findings of Buntain-Ricklefs et al. (1994), it is expected that participants will rate mild punishments as more acceptable than severe punishments.

## Methods

### Participants

A total of 399 participants (73.1% females and 26.9% males, mean age 19.72) were recruited for this study. Participants consisted of volunteers from the University of Victoria enrolled in an introductory undergraduate psychology course during the 1997 fall session. In return for their participation in the study, students received partial course credit. The participants were predominately Caucasian (80.6%) although participants from other ethnic groups also participated (Asian 15.2%, Aboriginal 1.8%, Indian 1.5%, and Biracial .8%). The vast majority of participants were single (96.5%) and most had no children (98%). The mean income of participants' family of origin was between \$45,000-\$59,999. In regards to the employment status of participants' mothers, 77% were involved in paid employment, 15.3% were homemakers, 5.7% were not employed, and 2% were students. Of the mothers engaged in paid employment, their mean score on the Blishen and McRoberts' (1976) Revised Socio-economic Index for Occupations in Canada was 53.55. For fathers, 93.2% were employed and had a mean score of 56.32 on the Blishen and McRoberts' Revised Socio-economic Index for Occupations in Canada. Thus, the sample involved participants from a predominately middle to upper-middle class population.

### Measures

Each participant completed a questionnaire containing several measures administered to groups of between 15 to 37 individuals. When participants arrived at a group-testing session, they were given a 33-page packet of materials that included

informed-consent material, instructions, and questionnaires. In addition, a standard set of oral instructions was presented to all participants. To assure anonymity of respondents and to enhance openness in responding, no identifying information was attached to the questionnaire booklets and participants were informed that their responses could in no way be linked to their identity. All participants who attended a testing session at least partially completed the questionnaire with the majority (81.2%) completing all items on the questionnaire. Participants took between 25 minutes and 55 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

#### Demographic Information

Participants were asked to provide demographic information including: age, sex, marital status, racial affiliation, citizenship, “mother-tongue”, current living arrangements, number of children, enrolment year in university, university major, number of previous courses in child development, parental education and occupation, family yearly income, number of siblings and amount of previous contact with children (see Appendix A).

#### Vignettes and the Context of the Punishment

Participants were given 8 brief vignettes designed specifically for this study for the purpose of assessing participants' views on parental use of corporal punishment. The vignettes varied on three dimensions hypothesized to influence participants' evaluation of corporal punishment including the age of the child (young child or adolescent), type of transgression (intentional or unintentional), and severity of punishment (mild or severe) (See Appendix B). Each vignette described either a child or adolescent hitting a friend or accidentally breaking a valuable piece of china. The vignettes concluded with the child

being corporally punished by the parent with either a spanking with no visible sign of injury or being struck by a belt resulting in bruising of the skin.

### Treatment Evaluation Inventory

In order for participants to render an opinion of the appropriateness of the discipline portrayed in the vignettes, each participant completed a modified version of The Treatment Evaluation Inventory (TEI; Kazdin, 1980; See Appendix C). Kazdin developed the TEI as a quantitative measure for determining university students' views of the acceptability of alternative treatments used to control children's behaviours including time-out from reinforcement, locked seclusion, medication, and electric shock. The TEI has been used to assess the acceptability of treatments from a wide variety of groups including university students (Kalfus & Burk, 1989; Kazdin, 1980, 1981; Singh & Katz, 1985), mothers (Frentz & Kelley, 1986; Heffer & Kelley, 1987; Singh, Watson, & Winton, 1987), and mothers, fathers, and children (Kazdin, 1984; Kazdin, French, & Sherick, 1981).

The TEI consists of 15 items with a Likert-type scale (7-point scale: 1="not at all," to 7="very much") indicating level of acceptance of parental behaviors. Participants rated the suitability of the treatment on dimensions including acceptability, cruelty, likelihood of risk, and efficacy. Items selected for the TEI were based on a principal components factor analysis which indicated that the items represented a single underlying factor that assessed an overall evaluative reaction of the students (Kazdin, 1980). The measure was also found to discriminate among alternative treatments. For example, parents in one experiment rated time-out as the most acceptable alternative, with medication and seclusion as significantly less acceptable (Kazdin, 1984).

The original measure was modified to increase its compatibility with the vignettes that were used in this study. In the original TEI, the word "procedure" was used to describe any treatment used with the child. In the modified version, the word "punishment" was substituted for "procedure" in all questions in order to increase clarity for participants and to be more applicable to the scenarios utilized in this study.

In addition, three items were omitted from the original scale. The questions "If children had to be assigned to treatment without their consent, how bad would it be to give them this treatment?" and "Would it be acceptable to apply this procedure to institutionalized children, the mentally retarded, or individuals who are not given an opportunity to choose treatment for themselves?" were omitted. In the original study, the participants had to rate each type of treatment only once; however, in this study participants rated the same type of punishment over a variety of scenarios making the questions unsuitable for the current research objectives.

The question "How much discomfort is the child likely to experience during the course of treatment?" was omitted as I expected that it may not discriminate between levels of acceptability. The question is based on the assumption that experiencing very much discomfort is indicative of a lack of acceptance; however, this may not hold true for all individuals. For example, a participant may feel that the punishment causes considerable discomfort but is still approving of it. The aforementioned illustration would inappropriately reduce the participants' score on the TEI indicating a lower level of acceptance than is accurate.

Finally, the phrase "for this child" was added at the end of two questions ("How

much do you like the procedures used in this treatment?" and "Overall, what is your general reaction to this form of treatment?"). This was done because the participants rated the same form of punishments across different scenarios and the item was needed to discriminate acceptability between the scenarios.

As a result of the changes, the final measure consisted of 12 items in which punishments were appraised on dimensions including acceptability, generalizability, cruelty, level of risk, effectiveness, likelihood of undesirable side effects, likelihood of creating an improvement in the child, and participants' personal willingness to use the punishment.

The 12 items were rated with the original Likert-type scale provided with the TEI. In the original scale, the potential minimum score was 15 and the maximum was 105. Due to the omission of three items, the range of possible scores for the modified version was a minimum of 12 (least acceptance) and a maximum of 84 (most acceptance) for each individual scenario rated. In addition, a total score was derived by summing the TEI scores across all eight vignettes with a possible range of between 96 and 672. Furthermore, ratings were derived for each punishment type regardless of the age of the child and transgression used in the scenario. A TEI score was calculated for both the severe and mild punishments as a measure of the level of acceptance for the punishment type. A similar separate score was calculated based on both age of the child and transgression. These scores provided a measure of the acceptance based on age of the child and type of transgression only.

### Rating of Specific Forms of Punishment

As an alternative measure of attitudes towards corporal punishment, participants were asked to respond to an additional eight statements about corporal punishment created for this study. Participants rated the acceptability of three forms of corporal punishment (e.g., spanking, slapping, and hitting a child with a belt or other similar object) for children of varying ages on a 5-point Likert-type scale (see Appendix D). Participants were also asked to indicate the likelihood of personally using spanking as a parent.

### The Assessing Environments III Questionnaire (AEIII) Physical Punishment (PP) Scale

The Assessing Environments III Physical Punishment Questionnaire was utilized to evaluate participants' previous punishment history (Berger et al., 1988) (See Appendix E). The AEIII is a standardized instrument for eliciting information from adults about their childhood disciplinary experiences (Berger et al., 1988). The questionnaire was created to assess the report of punitive and potentially abusive experiences in a population of college students comprised of young adults of child-rearing age from a nonclinical population (Berger et al., 1988). The AEIII is a 164-item questionnaire with 13 scales including the Physical Punishment (PP) Scale. The PP scale consists of 12 items assessing the occurrence of specific events of physical discipline ranging from mild to severe physical punishments, such as "my parents use to spank me" and "my parents used to punch me when they got angry with me."

Internal consistency reliability of the scales of the AEIII was assessed resulting in KR-20 coefficients ranging from .65 to .79 for 9 scales and .48 to .52 for the remaining three scales (Berger et al., 1988). *The test-retest reliability coefficients of the scales*

ranged from .61 to .89, with only four scales below .75 (Berger et al., 1988).

For the purpose of this study, one change was made to the original scale. In addition to asking whether or not the participants received a specific form of punishment, participants were also asked whether each incident occurred with their mother, father, or both parents.

The scale was used to group participants into categories of physical punishment experiences. Past research on this scale has used the following criteria: Individuals responding affirmatively to four or more of the 12 scale items were classified as having experienced severe physical punishment; individuals with scores of three were classified in the moderate physical punishment group; individuals with scores of one or two were classified in the mild physical punishment group; and participants who do not endorse any items were classified as belonging in the no physical punishment group (Bower & Knutson, 1996; Zaidi, Knutson, & Mehm, 1989). The original classification criteria were used in the present study.

#### Subjective Evaluation of the Influence of Disciplinary Experiences on own Child-rearing

In addition to having participants indicate which types of corporal punishment they had personally experienced, participants were also asked if felt their own punishment experiences have or will influence how they raised or will raise their children. For the participants who felt their experiences were of influence, they were asked to respond to four additional questions. Participants were asked if they feel more likely to use spanking with their own child, if they feel more likely to use physical discipline with their child, if they would make a conscious effort to use non-physical means of discipline with their

child and if they worry they might have difficulties in setting limits with their child (See Appendix F). All items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" indicating agreement and "5" indicating disagreement.

#### Evaluation of Past Physical Punishment Scale

In order to assess and measure how participants feel regarding the appropriateness of the corporal punishment they received from their parents, they were asked to complete the Evaluation of Past Physical Punishment Scale (Graziano et al., 1992)(see Appendix G). The Evaluation of Past Physical Punishment Scale asks participants to rate how justified they feel their parents were in their usage of physical punishment on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) "completely unjustified" to (5) "completely justified." Test-retest reliability over 3 to 4 weeks is good ( $r=.70$ ) and internal consistency reliability has been demonstrated to be adequate ( $\alpha=.62$ ) (Graziano et al., 1992).

One slight modification was made to the Evaluation of Physical Punishments Scale. Rather than rating the justification of both parents' use of physical punishments together, participants completed a separate scale for each parent.

#### Subjective Evaluation of Personal Corporal Punishment Experiences

For the purpose of measuring participants' evaluation of their own experiences of corporal punishment, participants were asked to respond to the question, "Do you feel that you were physically abused as a child or adolescent?" Participants were asked to respond to the question by checking yes or no in the space provided on the questionnaire (see Appendix H).

### Counselling History

In order to assess the effects of past counselling on attitudes towards the use of corporal punishment, participants were asked about previous counselling experiences. Specifically, participants were asked to respond to the question, "Have you participated in counselling or therapy which addressed your punishment or abuse experiences?" A yes/no response format directly followed the question (see Appendix I).

### Social Desirability Scale

In order to assess whether social desirability influenced the way participants responded to the rating of the vignettes, a short form of the Crowne and Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972) was included in the present study (see Appendix J).

The short form version of the Crowne and Marlowe Social Desirability Scale was designed to assess the degree to which self-report measures might be impacted by a social desirability response bias. The scale consists of 20 statements concerning personal attitudes such as, "I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake". A true/false response format was used in this measure. The internal consistency reliability for the scale was calculated to range from .73 to .87 (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972).

### Questionnaire Ordering

In order to evaluate the influence of the ordering of measures within the questionnaire, two versions of the questionnaire were used. Version 1 had the measures in the following order: Demographic information, Context of the Punishment measured by the Treatment Evaluation Inventory, Rating of Specific Forms of Punishment, AEIII

Physical Punishment Scale, Subjective Evaluation of the Influence of Disciplinary Experiences on own Child-rearing, Evaluation of Past Physical Punishment Scale, Subjective Evaluation of Corporal Punishment, Counselling History, and Crowne and Marlowe Social Desirability Scale. In Version 2, the ordering was as follows: Demographic information, Crowne and Marlowe Social Desirability Scale, AEIII Physical Punishment Scale, Subjective Evaluation of the Influence of Disciplinary Experiences on own Child-rearing, Evaluation of Past Physical Punishment Scale, Subjective Evaluation of Corporal Punishment, Counselling History, Rating of Specific Forms of Punishment, and the Context of the Punishment measured by the Treatment Evaluation Inventory. In addition, version 1 had a blue cover page while version 2 had a green cover page. The two versions were identical in all other features.

## Results

### Social Desirability and Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

In order to explore the effects of social desirability on current attitudes towards corporal punishment, a Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated using TEI scores and scores on the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale. The results indicate that social desirability was not significantly related to participants' TEI scores ( $r = -.04$ ).

### Questionnaire Ordering

The ordering of the items within the two versions of the questionnaires was not found to have a significant effect on attitudes towards corporal punishment as measured by scores on the TEI,  $F(1,375)=0.02$ ,  $p = .90$ .

### Corporal Punishment Classification

In order to classify participants into groups based on corporal punishment history, the original scoring of the AEIII was used (Berger et al., 1988). Participants who did not endorse any items were classified as belonging in the no corporal punishment group; participants with scores of one or two were classified in the mild corporal punishment group; participants with scores of three were classified in the moderate corporal punishment group; and participants with scores of four or more were classified in the severe corporal punishment group. Based on these criteria, 89 individuals (22.3%) were classified as having experienced no corporal punishment, 171 individuals (42.8%) were classified as having experienced mild corporal punishment, 73 individuals (18.3%) were classified as having experienced moderate corporal punishment, and 66 individuals (16.5%) were classified as having experienced severe corporal punishment. The internal

consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for this scale was .70.

The aforementioned scoring criteria are based solely upon the quantity of different acts of corporal punishment experienced without considering the level of severity or frequency of each individual act. As a result, an additional classification was calculated based on the severity implied by the items of the corporal punishment scale. Previous research (e.g., the Conflict Tactics Scale by Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980) was used as a guide to classify each punishment item as either mild, moderate, or severe. As a result, individuals who responded affirmatively to one or more of items 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, or 12 (e.g., "My parent(s) used to punch me when they got angry with me"; "I required medical attention (at least once) for injuries caused by my parent(s) during discipline") of the AEIII were classified as experiencing severe corporal punishment, individuals who responded affirmatively to items 3 ("My parent(s) used to hit me with something other than their hands when I did something wrong") or 9 ("When I was bad, my parent(s) used to lock me in a closet") were classified as experiencing moderate corporal punishment, individuals who indicated that they had experienced items 1, 2, or 4, (e.g., "My parents used to spank me") were classified as experiencing mild corporal punishment, and finally individuals who did not respond affirmatively to any items were classified as experiencing no corporal punishment (see Appendix 5 for complete item listings). All individuals who met the criteria for more than one classification group (e.g., a participant who experienced both mild and moderate acts of corporal punishment) were classified according to the most severe type of corporal punishment that occurred. Based on these criteria, 89 individuals (22.3%) were classified as experiencing no corporal punishment, 182

individuals (45.6%) were classified as experiencing mild corporal punishment, 72 individuals (18.0%) were classified as experiencing moderate corporal punishment, and 56 individuals (14.0%) were classified as experiencing severe corporal punishment. A Pearson product-moment correlation revealed that the two scoring methods were very strongly correlated ( $r=.91$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Given the very high degree of similarity in the two scoring methods, only data from the AEIII scoring system will be reported in all subsequent analyses in which discipline history is considered.<sup>1</sup>

#### Corporal Punishment History and Participant Sex

The relationship between corporal punishment classification and participant sex was also explored (see Table 1). Females had a higher proportion of their population in the no punishment group compared to males (25.1% vs. 15.0% respectively). In addition, females had a lower proportion of their population percentage in the moderate and severe punishment categories compared to males (moderate punishment: 17.5% vs. 20.6% respectively; severe punishment: 15.1% vs. 20.6% respectively). However, this trend towards females being overrepresented in the no punishment group and underrepresented in the moderate and severe punishment groups compared to males did not reach statistical significance ( $\chi^2_{(1)}=5.43$ ,  $p=.143$ ).

In regard to each specific form of corporal punishment experienced, there were some differences between male and female participants (see Table 2). For six of the corporal punishment experiences (including being punched, choked, beaten severely, tied

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<sup>1</sup> In 28 out of 32 subsequent analyses using both scoring methods, there was agreement regarding statistical significance. In the 4 analyses that had different results, all were significant using the AEIII method of scoring but were not significant using the alternative scoring method.

Table 1

AEIII Corporal Punishment Classification and Participant Sex

Corporal Punishment Classification	Females		Males	
	<u>n</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>P</u>
None	73	25.1%	16	15.0%
Mild	123	42.3%	47	43.9%
Moderate	51	17.5%	22	20.6%
Severe	44	15.1%	22	20.6%

Table 2

AEIII Corporal Punishment Experiences and Participant Sex

Type of Punishment	Females		Males	
	<u>n</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>P</u>
Physical Discipline	177	60.8%	68	63.6%
Spank*	204	70.1%	87	81.3%
Hit with something other than hands	73	25.1%	37	34.6%
Hit with hands other than spanking	60	20.6%	27	25.2%
Punch	11	3.8%	4	3.7%
Kick*	7	2.4%	8	7.5%
Choke	7	2.4%	3	2.8%
Beaten Severely	6	2.1%	3	2.8%
Locked in Closet	2	0.7%	0	0%
Tied Up	1	0.3%	1	0.9%
Received Injury	25	8.6%	14	13.1%
Received Medical Attention for Injury	4	1.4%	1	0.9%

\* corporal punishment experienced by significantly more males than females

up, locked in a closet, and receiving medical attention for injury), there was less than 1% difference in the percentage of males and females who had experienced these forms of corporal punishment. It is important to note that these types of experiences were very infrequent with each occurring in less than 4% of the sample and many occurring in less than 1% of the sample. The majority of the forms of corporal punishment were experienced more by males than females. More males than females experienced physical discipline, spanking, hitting with something other than hands, hitting with hands other than spanking, kicking, and receiving injury from discipline; however, the differences in frequency of these forms of corporal punishment did not reach statistical significance. Being spanked or kicked was more common among males ( $\chi^2_{(1)}=5.00$ ,  $p=.03$ ;  $\chi^2_{(1)}=5.55$ ,  $p=.02$ ); being hit with something other than hands was close to being more common among males, although it was not significant ( $\chi^2_{(1)}=3.53$ ,  $p=.06$ ). There were no forms of corporal punishment that were experienced by significantly more females than males.

### Perpetrators of Corporal Punishment

#### Number of Perpetrators

Participants were asked to indicate which of their parents inflicted the punishments they received. As shown in table 3, all but two forms of corporal punishments were more likely to have been perpetrated by one parent rather than both parents, i.e., physical discipline and spanking were more likely to be inflicted by both parents rather than just one parent. In contrast, hitting with something other than hands, punching, kicking, and receiving an injury from discipline occurred significantly more often by one parent as opposed to both parents.

Table 3

AEIII Corporal Punishment Experiences and the Number of Perpetrators of Punishment

Type of Punishment	<u>N</u>	Perpetrated by:		$\chi^2$	p
		Both Parents	One Parent		
Physical Discipline	244	67.6%	32.4%	30.31	.0005
Spank	285	61.1%	38.9%	13.93	.0005
Hit with something other than hands	108	40.7%	59.3%	3.70	.054
Hit with hands other than spanking	86	43.0%	57.0%	1.67	ns
Punch	15	13.3%	86.7%	8.07	.005
Kick	15	13.3%	86.7%	8.07	.005
Choke	10	20.0%	80.0%	3.60	ns
Beaten Severely	9	22.2%	77.8%	2.78	ns
Locked in Closet	2	0%	100%		ns
Tied Up	2	0%	100%		ns
Received Injury	37	13.5%	86.5%	19.70	.0005
Received Medical Attention for Injury	2	0%	100%		ns

### Sex of Perpetrator

Some differences were found between participants' mothers' and fathers' use of corporal punishment (see Table 4). A paired samples t-test revealed that fathers were more likely to use spanking as a form of corporal punishment than were mothers ( $t[398]=2.58, p<.01$ ). In addition, significantly more fathers than mothers inflicted corporal punishment that resulted in an injury ( $t[398]=2.13, p<.03$ ). There was only one form of corporal punishment that was used by significantly more mothers than fathers. Mothers used hitting with something other than hands significantly more than did fathers ( $t[398]=2.77, p<.006$ ). For all other forms of corporal punishment, there were no significant differences in use by mothers and fathers.

### Demographic Characteristics and Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

#### Participant Characteristics

A series of analyses were performed in order to evaluate the influence of a variety of demographic factors on current attitudes towards corporal punishment. Several variables were found to be significantly related to attitudes towards corporal punishment (see Table 5). In order to explore the role of ethnic group status on attitudes towards corporal punishment, participants were categorized into one of three groups: Asian (Asian  $n=57$ , East Indian  $n=5$ ), Caucasian ( $n=302$ ), and all other ethnic groups (Aboriginal  $n=7$ , biracial  $n=2$ ). The resulting groups may include individuals with distinctive cultural histories within the same group; however, given the sample size, any finer distinctions in ethnic group status was not feasible. A One-way ANOVA revealed significant differences among the ethnic groups on TEI scores ( $F[2, 370]=26.27, p<.0005$ ) with a small effect

Table 4

AEIII Corporal Punishment Experiences and the Perpetrator of Punishment

Type of Punishment	Number of Parents Using Punishment	Perpetrated By	
		Father	Mother
Physical Discipline	409	51.6%	48.4%
Spank*	459	52.9%	47.1%
Hit with something other than hands**	152	42.8%	57.2%
Hit with hands other than spanking	123	51.2%	48.8%
Punch	9	52.9%	47.1%
Kick	17	58.8%	41.2%
Choke	12	41.7%	58.3%
Beaten Severely	6	54.5%	45.5%
Locked in Closet	2	50.0%	50.0%
Tied Up	2	100%	0%
Received Injury*	42	64.3%	35.7%
Received Medical Attention for Injury	2	100%	0%

Note:

\* corporal punishment perpetrated by significantly more fathers than mothers

\*\*corporal punishment perpetrated by significantly more mothers than fathers

Table 5

Demographic Characteristics And Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment (TEI)

Variable	n	TEI Scores		
		(P)	M	SD
Ethnic Group Status	$F(2, 370)=26.27, p<.000$			
Asian	62	(17%)	226.31 *	90.20
Caucasian	302	(81%)	165.64	53.88
Other	9	(2%)	145.89	48.97
University Major	$F(5,368)=7.88, p<.0005$			
Business	52	(14%)	220.19 *	80.84
Natural Science	103	(28%)	180.43	61.18
Applied Social Science	26	(7%)	176.81 **	76.63
Social Science	86	(23%)	161.27	61.67
Unknown/Undeclared	63	(17%)	160.73	52.74
Fine Arts	44	(12%)	156.20	43.04
Sex	$t(374)=3.00, p<.000$			
Males	103	(27%)	201.68 *	79.06
Females	273	(73%)	165.10	56.26
Living Arrangement	$F(2,374)=10.03, p<.0005$			
Alone	40	(11%)	217.40 *	100.50
With Family Members	123	(33%)	172.46	59.88
With Non-Family	212	(57%)	168.49	56.92
Parental Status	$t(347)=2.55, p<.01$			
Non-Parents	368	(98%)	176.38 *	65.32
Parents	8	(2%)	117.38	26.97
Work Experience with Children	$t(373)=2.08, p<.04$			
No	98	(26%)	187.01 *	72.75
Yes	277	(74%)	171.08	62.10

Note:

\* item is significantly greater than all items within each analysis except for items with \*\*

\*\* item is not significantly less than items with \*

size ( $\eta^2=.124$ ). A post-hoc Scheffé test ( $p<.05$ ) indicated that the TEI scores were significantly higher for Asian individuals ( $M=226.31$ ,  $SD=90.20$ ) than for Caucasians ( $M=165.64$ ,  $SD=53.88$ ) and others ( $M=145.89$ ,  $SD=48.97$ ).

Participants were asked to indicate their university major. University majors were then categorized into six groups including: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Fine Arts, Applied Social Sciences, Business, and Unknown/Undeclared. A One-way ANOVA found that there were significant differences among the groups ( $F[5,368]=7.88$ ,  $p<.0005$ ), with a small effect size ( $\eta^2=.096$ ). A post-hoc Scheffé test ( $p<.05$ ) revealed that Business majors ( $M=220.19$ ,  $SD=80.84$ ) had significantly higher TEI scores than Fine Arts majors ( $M=156.20$ ,  $SD=43.04$ ), Unknown/undeclared majors ( $M=160.73$ ,  $SD=52.74$ ), Social Science majors ( $M=161.27$ ,  $SD=61.67$ ), and Natural Science majors ( $M=180.43$ ,  $SD=61.18$ ). Applied Social Science majors ( $M=176.81$ ,  $SD=76.68$ ) were not significantly different in their TEI scores than any other groups.

An independent samples t-test was used to compare TEI scores for women and men. Males ( $M=201.68$ ,  $SD=79.06$ ) were found to have significantly higher TEI scores than females ( $M=165.10$ ,  $SD=56.26$ ) ( $t[374]=3.00$ ,  $p<.0005$ ), although the effect size was small ( $\eta^2=.062$ ).

Participants were asked to indicate their current living arrangements. Three groups emerged including: Living alone, Living with family members, and Living with non-family. A one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences among the groups ( $F[2,374]=10.03$ ,  $p<.0005$ ), with a small effect size ( $\eta^2=.051$ ). A post-hoc Scheffé test ( $p<.05$ ) showed that participants living alone ( $M=217.40$ ,  $SD=100.50$ ) had significantly

higher TEI scores than participants living with family members ( $\underline{M}=172.46$ ,  $\underline{SD}=59.88$ ) and participants living with non-family ( $\underline{M}=168.49$ ,  $\underline{SD}=56.92$ ).

An independent samples T-test was used to compare TEI scores for participants who have children and participants who do not have children. Those individuals with children had significantly lower TEI scores ( $\underline{M}=117.38$ ,  $\underline{SD}=26.97$ ) than those individuals without children ( $\underline{M}=176.38$ ,  $\underline{SD}=65.32$ ;  $t[347]=2.55$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Again, the effect size was small ( $\eta^2=.017$ ).

An independent samples T-test was used to compare TEI scores for participants who have had employment or volunteer experiences that involved working with children and those who have not had work experience involving children. Participants who had work experience involving children ( $\underline{M}=171.08$ ;  $\underline{SD}=62.10$ ) had significantly lower TEI scores than participants who had not had work experience involving children ( $\underline{M}=187.01$ ;  $\underline{SD}=72.75$ ;  $t[373]=2.08$ ,  $p<.04$ ), with a small effect size ( $\eta^2=.012$ ).

A variety of other participant demographic variables were found to be unrelated to TEI scores. Age, marital status, previous courses in child development, and having had care-taking responsibilities for siblings were not found to have a significant effect on participants' current attitudes towards corporal punishment.

### Family Characteristics

A series of analyses were performed in order to evaluate the influence of a variety of family characteristics on participants' current attitudes towards corporal punishment. None of the family characteristics variables, including parental education level, family income, family living situation (e.g., residing with both biological parents prior to age 18,

or residing in a single parent family prior to age 18), and family size (number of siblings) were found to have a significant effect on participants' current attitudes towards corporal punishment.

### The Context of Punishment and Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

A Repeated Measures ANOVA was performed to evaluate the effects of the age of the child, type of transgression, and punishment severity described in the vignettes on TEI scores. A three-way interaction was found,  $F(1,376)=61.60$ ,  $p<.0005$ ; see Figure 2; see Appendix K). The Cronbach's alpha for the TEI ranged from .87 to .95 for the eight scenarios with an average alpha of .92.

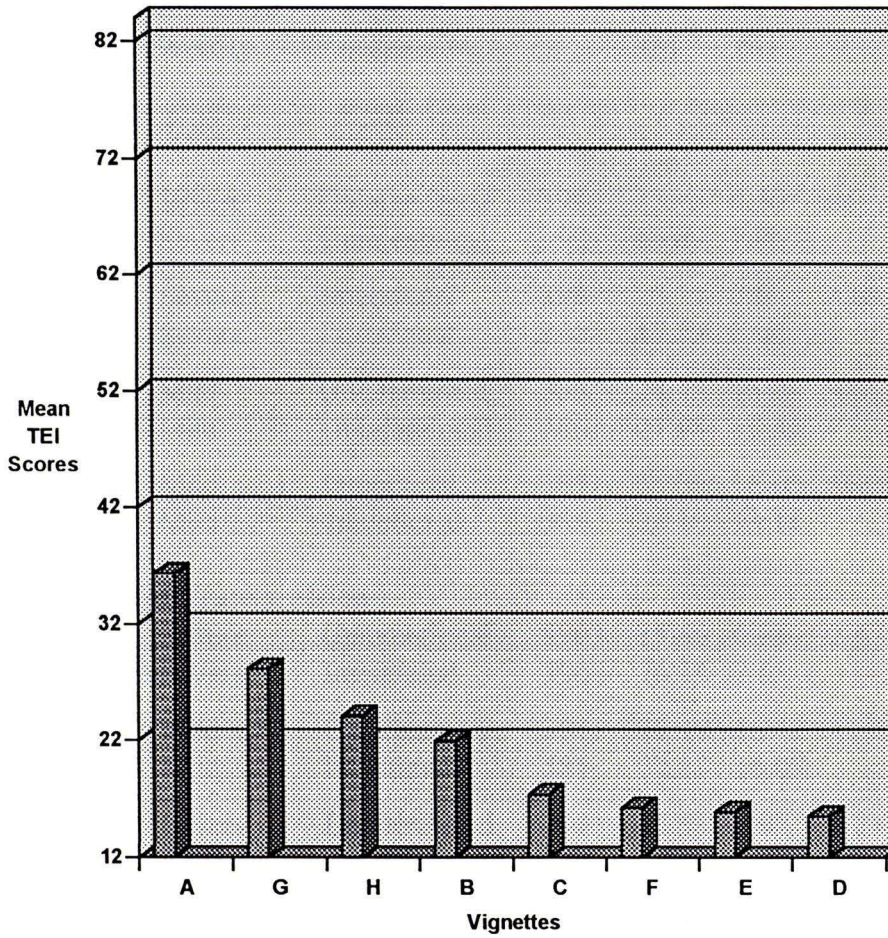
### Age of Child

In order to explore the effects of the interactions between the age of the child described in the vignettes and punishment severity and type of transgression a series of paired samples T-tests were performed (see Table 6). Participants were more supportive of the use of a mild punishment with a child than for an adolescent regardless of whether or not the transgression was intentional or unintentional. Participants were more supportive of corporal punishment use with an adolescent rather than a child only when the punishment was severe and the transgression was intentional; however the effect size was very small. For all of the scenarios, participants were, on average, less supportive of the use of corporal punishment than they were supportive of its use.

Participants were also asked to respond to a series of statements regarding the acceptability of spanking for children under the age of 5 years, for children aged 5 to 10 years, for children aged 11 to 15 years, and for children aged 16 to 18 years. A

Figure 2

The Context of Punishment and TEI Scores



Vignettes	Age	Transgression	Severity
A	Child	Intentional	Mild
G	Child	Unintentional	Mild
H	Adolescent	Intentional	Mild
B	Adolescent	Unintentional	Mild
C	Adolescent	Intentional	Severe
F	Child	Intentional	Severe
E	Adolescent	Unintentional	Severe
D	Child	Unintentional	Severe

Table 6

The Context of Punishment and Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment (TEI)

Age of Child	Punishment Severity	Type of Transgression	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>	$\eta^2$
<b>Effect: Age</b>								
Child	Severe	Unintentional	398	15.45	6.30	ns		
Adolescent	Severe	Unintentional	398	15.89	7.06			
Child	Severe	Intentional	390	16.19	7.64	3.69	.0005	.033
Adolescent	Severe	Intentional	390	17.39	8.48			
Child	Mild	Unintentional	386	28.18	15.26	9.62	.0005	.193
Adolescent	Mild	Unintentional	386	21.98	10.45			
Child	Mild	Intentional	385	36.35	16.05	16.95	.0005	.428
Adolescent	Mild	Intentional	385	24.10	13.11			
<b>Effect: Type of Transgression</b>								
Child	Severe	Unintentional	390	15.46	6.33	2.67	.008	.180
Child	Severe	Intentional	390	16.14	7.63			
Child	Mild	Unintentional	384	28.27	15.42	11.35	.0005	.251
Child	Mild	Intentional	384	32.27	16.02			
Adolescent	Severe	Unintentional	393	15.93	7.07	5.11	.0005	.625
Adolescent	Severe	Intentional	393	17.37	8.45			
Adolescent	Mild	Unintentional	388	22.00	10.43	5.03	.0005	.613
Adolescent	Mild	Intentional	388	24.32	13.30			
<b>Effect: Punishment Severity</b>								
Child	Severe	Unintentional	386	15.46	6.35	18.11	.0005	.646
Child	Mild	Unintentional	386	28.20	15.46			
Child	Severe	Intentional	388	16.17	7.66	26.57	.0005	.372
Child	Mild	Intentional	388	36.31	16.00			
Adolescent	Severe	Unintentional	392	15.90	7.07	15.23	.0005	.333
Adolescent	Mild	Unintentional	392	21.99	10.42			
Adolescent	Severe	Intentional	388	17.34	8.47	13.88	.0005	.460
Adolescent	Mild	Intentional	388	24.31	13.30			

Possible range of scores for a scenario is from 12 (least accepting) to 84 (most accepting)

multivariate repeated measures ANOVA revealed that participants' approval of spanking for children up to age 10 ( $M=3.62$ ;  $SD=1.27$ ) was significantly greater than participants' approval of spanking for children over age 11 ( $M=4.74$ ;  $SD=0.58$ ) ( $F[1,398]=327.59$ ,  $p<.0005$ ); however, regardless of the age of the child, participants tended to view the use of spanking as relatively unacceptable.

### Type of Transgression

In the scenarios rated by participants, the child being punished was described as either committing an intentional transgression (hitting a friend) or an unintentional transgression (accidentally breaking a valuable piece of china). A series of paired samples T-tests were used to compare intentional and unintentional transgressions. Regardless of the age of the child or the type of corporal punishment used, participants were significantly more accepting of the use of corporal punishment when the transgression was intentional rather than unintentional (see Table 6). However, the effect sizes for the transgression type were moderate for adolescents and only small for children.

### Punishment Severity

In the scenarios rated by participants, the child being punished was described as either receiving a mild punishment (spanking) with no visible sign of injury or a severe punishment (striking with a belt) which resulted in bruising of the skin. A series of paired samples T-tests were used to compare TEI scores for scenarios which described a mild punishment and those which described a severe punishment (see Table 6). Regardless of the age of the child and the type of transgression, participants were significantly more supportive of the use of mild rather than severe punishment. Moreover, the effect size of

the severity of the punishment was at least moderate in all cases with one reaching a large effect size.

Participants were also asked to respond to a series of statements regarding the acceptability of different forms of corporal punishment including spanking, slapping, and hitting a child with an object. A multivariate repeated measures ANOVA revealed that participants' approval of spanking ( $M=2.93$ ,  $SD=1.58$ ) was significantly greater than participants' approval of slapping ( $M=4.47$ ,  $SD=1.05$ ) or hitting a child with an object ( $M=4.88$ ,  $SD=0.49$ ;  $F[1,397]=522.73$ ,  $p<.0005$ ). Participants were just slightly more accepting of spanking a child under some circumstance than they were unaccepting of spanking a child. In contrast, participants were clearly less accepting of slapping or hitting a child with an object than they were accepting of those forms of discipline.

A repeated measures ANOVA revealed that there was a significant relationship between acceptance of the three forms of discipline and corporal punishment history,  $F(6,788)=15.16$ ,  $p<.0005$ . First, there was a significant effect of corporal punishment history on attitudes towards spanking,  $F(3,394)=25.23$ ,  $p<.0005$ , with a small effect size ( $\eta^2=.16$ ). A post-hoc Scheffé test ( $p<.05$ ) revealed that those participants with no history of corporal punishment were significantly less accepting of spanking ( $M=4.09$ ,  $SD=1.26$ ) than participants with any other corporal punishment history (mild:  $M=2.49$ ,  $SD=1.49$ ; moderate:  $M=2.67$ ,  $SD=1.51$ ; severe:  $M=2.77$ ,  $SD=1.54$ ). Second, there was a significant effect of corporal punishment history on attitudes towards slapping,  $F(3,394)=5.04$ ,  $p<.002$ , with a small effect size ( $\eta^2=.04$ ). A post-hoc Scheffé test ( $p<.05$ ) revealed that participants with no corporal punishment history ( $M=4.81$ ,  $SD=0.60$ ) were significantly

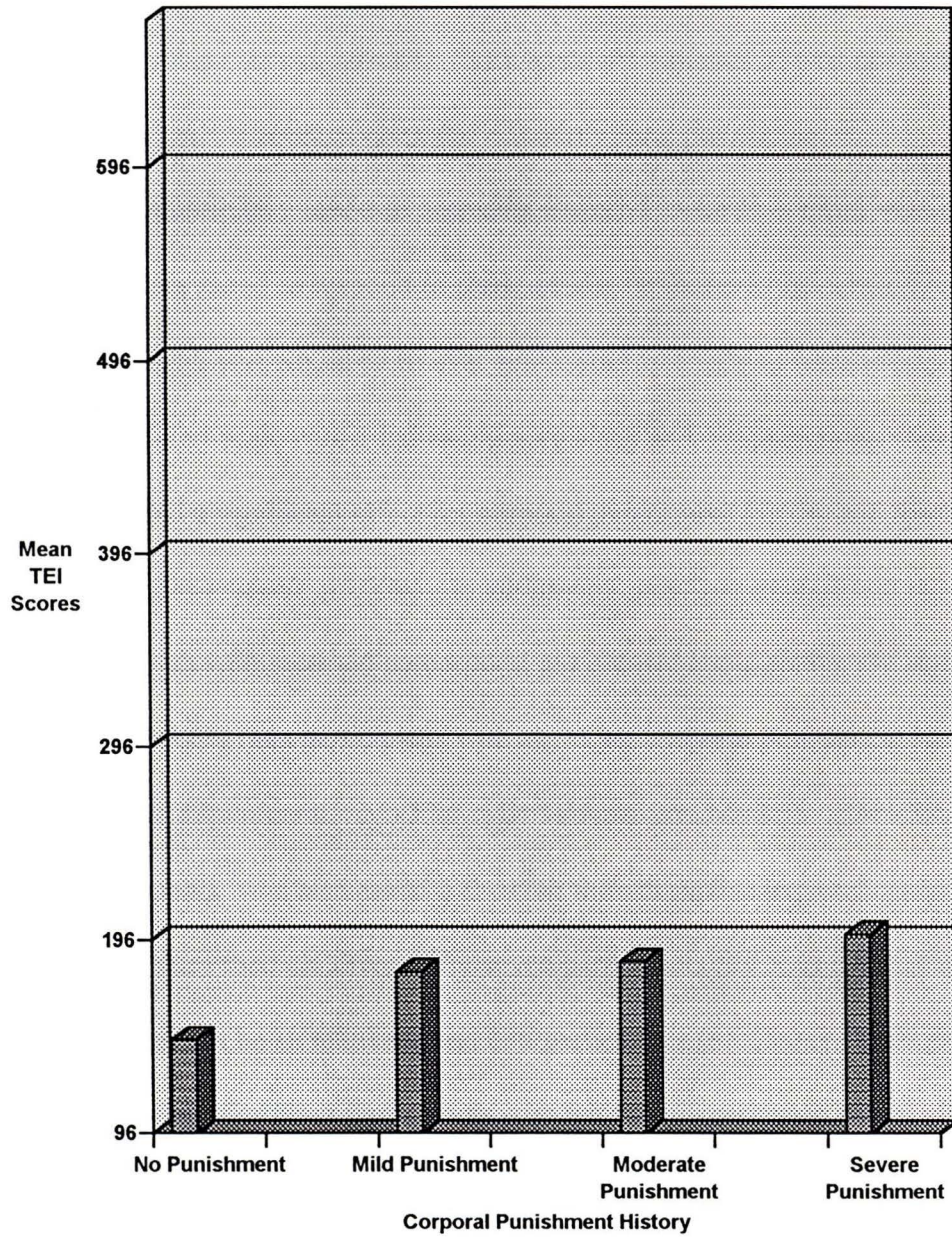
less approving than participants with a moderate ( $\underline{M}=4.27$ ,  $\underline{SD}=1.15$ ) or severe ( $\underline{M}=4.46$ ,  $\underline{SD}=1.25$ ) corporal punishment history, although all disagreed with the use of slapping. Finally, there was a significant effect of corporal punishment history on attitudes toward hitting a child with an object,  $F(3,394)=9.22$ ,  $p<.0005$ , with a small effect size ( $\eta^2=.07$ ). A post-hoc Scheffé test ( $p<.05$ ) revealed that those with a severe punishment history ( $\underline{M}=4.62$ ,  $\underline{SD}=0.49$ ) were significantly less unaccepting of striking a child with an object than were participants from all other corporal punishment groups (none:  $\underline{M}=4.97$ ,  $\underline{SD}=0.32$ ; mild:  $\underline{M}=4.96$ ,  $\underline{SD}=0.27$ ; moderate:  $\underline{M}=4.85$ ,  $\underline{SD}=0.46$ ) although all groups were not accepting of striking a child with an object.

#### Influence of Past Corporal Punishment on Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

A One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine whether past corporal punishment experiences influenced participants' current perceptions of corporal punishment. This yielded a significant effect for corporal punishment history ( $F[3, 373]=10.80$ ,  $p<.0005$ ) with a small effect size ( $\eta^2=.08$ ). Mean total TEI scores, used to rate the appropriateness of the corporal punishment utilized in the scenarios, ranged from 144.13 ( $\underline{SD}=54.99$ ) to 198.93 ( $\underline{SD}=87.11$ ) (out of a possible range from 96 to 672) indicating that most participants perceived the corporal punishment described as less acceptable rather than more acceptable (see Figure 3). A Post-hoc Scheffé analysis revealed that participants who experienced no corporal punishment ( $\underline{M}=144.13$ ,  $\underline{SD}=54.99$ ) had significantly lower TEI scores than participants who had either mild ( $\underline{M}=179.48$ ,  $\underline{SD}=58.36$ ), moderate ( $\underline{M}=184.89$ ,  $\underline{SD}=57.39$ ), or severe ( $\underline{M}=198.93$ ,

Figure 3

Corporal Punishment History and TEI Scores



$SD=87.11$ ) corporal punishment histories ( $p<.001$ ). This was followed up by a series of polynomial contrasts. The results indicated that the linear contrast was significant ( $F[1,373]=26.711, p<.0005$ ), with a small effect size ( $\eta^2=.064$ ). Both the quadratic and cubic contrasts were non-significant. Thus, greater frequency of past corporal punishment was related to greater acceptance of the use of corporal punishment.

As an additional method of assessing attitudes towards corporal punishment, participants were asked to respond to the question, “if you are not currently a parent, how likely do you think you would be to ever spank your child if you were to become a parent” on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 indicating very likely and 5 representing very unlikely. An ANOVA yielded a significant effect for corporal punishment history and likelihood of spanking,  $F(3,388)=24.80, p<.0005$ . In addition, a post hoc Scheffé test revealed that those participants who received no corporal punishment had significantly higher scores ( $M=4.66, SD=0.66$ ) than participants with any other corporal punishment history (mild:  $M=3.42, SD=1.37$ ; moderate:  $M=3.27, SD=1.39$ ; severe:  $M=3.35, SD=1.37, p<.05$ ).

Participants were also asked if they felt their discipline experiences would influence how they will raise their children. Fifty-seven participants (14.5%) felt that their experiences will not be an influence and 336 participants (85.5%) felt their experiences will be influential. For those participants who felt their experiences would affect their childrearing, in general they indicated that they would not be more likely to spank their child ( $M=3.81, SD=1.43$ ). They also tended to disagree with the statement that they would be more likely to use physical discipline ( $M=4.28, SD=1.21$ ). They also agreed with the statement that they would make a conscious effort to use non-physical

means of discipline ( $\underline{M}$ =1.60,  $\underline{SD}$ =1.05). Finally, these individuals disagreed somewhat that they would have difficulties setting limits with their children ( $\underline{M}$ =3.66,  $\underline{SD}$ =1.37). In addition, there was a small but significant correlation between making a conscious effort to use non-physical means of discipline and worries about difficulties setting limits ( $\underline{r}$ =.12,  $\underline{p}$ <.05).

Among the 86% who felt that their childhood disciplinary experiences would influence the way they raise their own children, the level of corporal punishment experienced in childhood was significantly related to willingness to use corporal punishment. Thus, 98% of participants who indicated they would be likely to use corporal punishment, and 99% of those who would likely spank their children, had also experienced corporal punishment themselves ( $\chi^2_{(1)}$ =12.9,  $\underline{p}$ <.0003;  $\chi^2_{(1)}$ =30.3,  $\underline{p}$ <.0000). Among those who had experienced corporal punishment, 34% indicated a likelihood to spank and 18% indicated a likelihood of using corporal punishment with their future children (versus 1.4% of subjects with no history of corporal punishment).

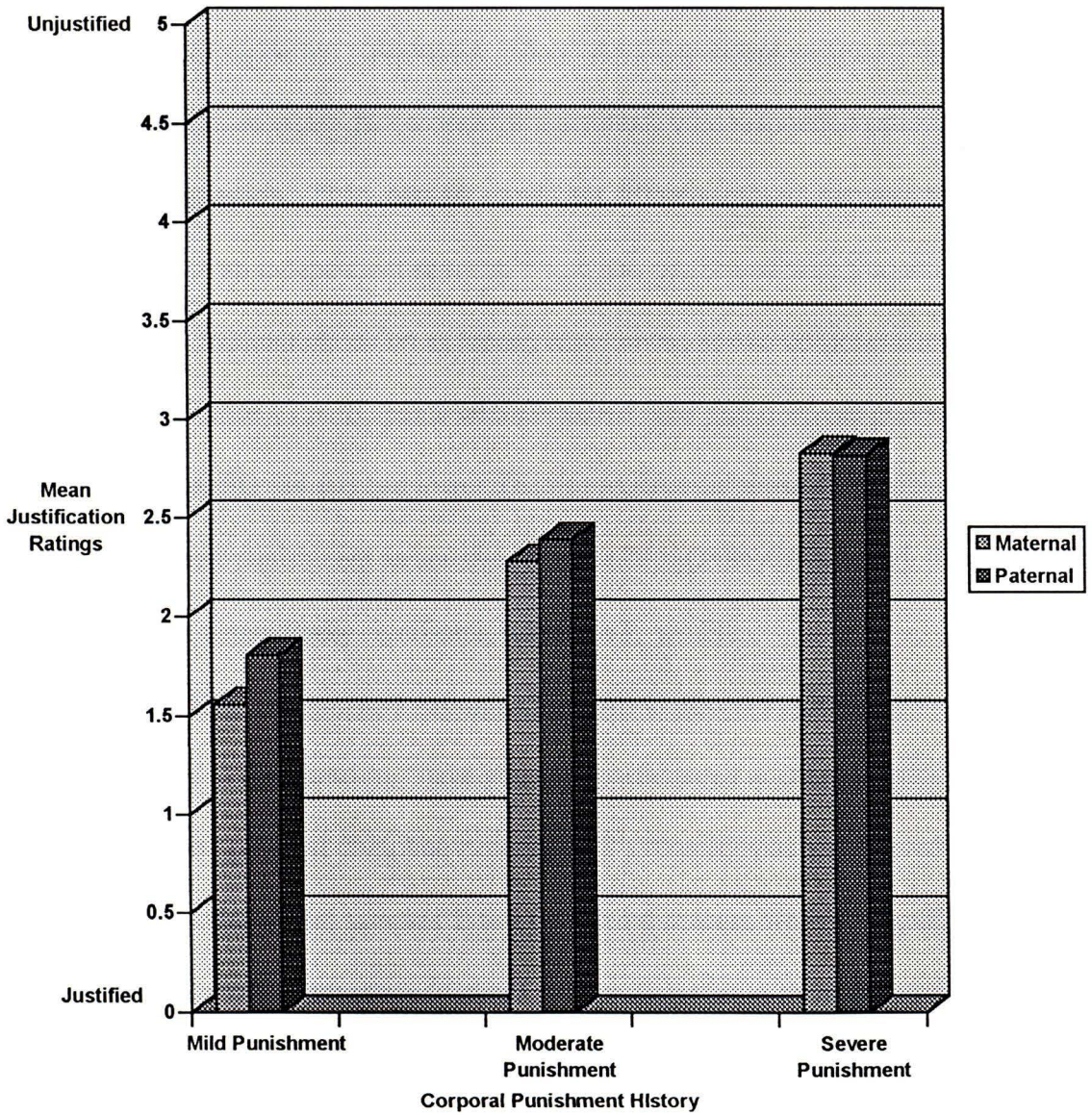
#### Subjective Evaluation of Past Corporal Punishment and Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

A Pearson product-moment correlation was performed in order to evaluate the influence of participants' subjective evaluation of their parents' use of corporal punishment on TEI scores. The results revealed that participants' subjective evaluation of their mothers' and fathers' use of corporal punishment was significantly related to their TEI scores (mothers:  $\underline{r}$ =-.27,  $\underline{p}$ <.01; fathers:  $\underline{r}$ =-.25,  $\underline{p}$ <.01). Thus, participants who rated their parents' use of corporal punishment as less justified were less positive in their

evaluations of the scenarios depicting corporal punishment than participants who felt their parents' use of corporal punishment was more justified. For the 244 participants who received corporal punishment from their mothers and the 265 participants who received corporal punishment from their fathers, the mean rating of the justification of the punishment was 2.06 ( $SD=1.18$ ) and 2.17 ( $SD=2.17$ ) respectively, indicating that most participants felt that their parents' use of corporal punishment was more justified than unjustified (completely justified = 1, completely unjustified = 5). A One-way ANOVA revealed that there were significant differences for participants' ratings of the justification of their parents' use of corporal punishment based on corporal punishment history (mothers:  $F[2,241]=30.53$ ,  $p<.0005$ ; fathers: ( $F[2,262]=17.87$ ,  $p<.0005$ ; see Figure 4). A post-hoc Scheffé test found that those participants with a mild corporal punishment history (mothers:  $M=1.56$ ,  $SD=0.85$ ; fathers:  $M=1.81$ ,  $SD=1.03$ ) rated their parents' use of corporal punishment as significantly more justified than those with moderate (mothers:  $M = 2.28$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ; fathers:  $M=2.39$ ,  $SD=1.18$ ) or severe (mothers:  $M = 2.83$ ,  $SD=1.34$ ; fathers:  $M=2.82$ ,  $SD=1.36$ ) corporal punishment histories ( $p<.05$ ). In addition, the analysis revealed those with moderate corporal punishment histories rated their mother's use of corporal punishment as more justified than those participants with a severe corporal punishment history ( $p<.05$ ). In contrast, there was no significant difference in the justification ratings for fathers between those participants with a moderate or severe corporal punishment history. Overall, individuals' subjective ratings of justification of their mothers' and fathers' use of corporal punishment were significantly correlated ( $r=.688$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

Figure 4

Corporal Punishment History and the Perceived Parental Justification of Corporal Punishment Use



### Subjective Evaluation of Abuse and Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

In response to the question, “do you feel that you were physically abused as a child or adolescent?”, 20 participants responded affirmatively. Of those 20 participants who described themselves as abused, 17 were classified in the severe punishment group and 3 were classified in the moderate punishment group. An independent samples T-test was performed in order to compare TEI scores for individuals who responded positively and negatively to this question. There was no significant difference found between the two groups. In addition, an independent samples T-test was performed with the same variables for the group of individuals classified as having experienced severe corporal punishment. Within this group, those 17 participants who perceived their past corporal punishment as abusive ( $M=170.24$ ,  $SD=84.64$ ) had lower TEI scores than did those 43 participants who did not perceive their punishment as abusive ( $M=210.28$ ,  $SD=86.40$ ) although this relationship was not statistically significant,  $t(58)=1.63$ ,  $p<.11$ .

### Previous Therapy and Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

In response to the question, “have you ever participated in counseling or therapy to address childhood physical discipline experiences?”, 10 participants answered affirmatively. An independent samples T-test revealed that there were no significant differences on TEI scores between individuals who participated in therapy and those who did not. In addition, an independent samples T-test was performed with the same variables for only the group of individuals classified as having experienced severe corporal punishment. Within this group, those 8 participants who participated in counseling ( $M=157.38$ ,  $SD=57.94$ ) had lower mean scores on total scenario ratings than did those 52

participants who did not participate in counseling ( $M=205.38$ ,  $SD=89.47$ ); however, given the small sample size, the relationship was not statistically significant,  $t(58)=1.46$ ,  $p<.15$ .

A stepwise multiple regression was performed to determine the level of unique variance accounted for in TEI scores by demographic factors, corporal punishment history, and subjective evaluation of parental discipline. Only those participant factors that were found to be significantly related to TEI scores were included in the multiple regression (e.g., corporal punishment history, subjective evaluation of justification of maternal use of punishment, subjective evaluation of paternal use of punishment, sex, ethnic group status, university major, parental status, living arrangements, and work experience with children). Four predictors were significantly related to TEI scores (Squared multiple  $R=.23$ ). Participants' subjective justification of their father's use of discipline accounted for the most unique variance ( $F[1,240]=17.57$ ,  $p<.0005$ ), followed by sex of participant ( $F[1, 240]=15.11$ ,  $p<.0005$ ), ethnic group status ( $F[2,240]=20.48$ ,  $p<.0005$ ), and employment experiences involving children ( $F[1,240]=4.17$ ,  $p<.04$ ).

## Discussion

The results of this study did not support the main hypothesis of a curvilinear relationship between the level of corporal punishment received in childhood and current acceptance of corporal punishment. However, a clear relationship between corporal punishment history and current attitudes towards corporal punishment did emerge. Similar to the findings of previous research (e.g., Covell et al., 1995; Hemenway et al., 1994), a linear relationship between the two variables was found. Greater frequency of past corporal punishment was related to greater acceptance of the use of corporal punishment. Participants with no history of corporal punishment were significantly less approving of the use of corporal punishment described in the vignettes than all other participants. In addition, when an alternative method was used to assess attitudes towards corporal punishment, e.g., asking participants their likelihood of using corporal punishment with their own children in the future, a similar pattern emerged. Those participants with no history of corporal punishment had significantly lower scores than all other participants indicating these participants felt less likely to use corporal punishment with their own future offspring than were other participants. Moreover, corporal punishment history was related to willingness to use spanking and corporal punishment for those participants who felt their childhood disciplinary experiences would influence the way they will raise their own children. Almost all of the participants who indicated they would be likely to use corporal punishment and spanking as discipline for their children had themselves experienced corporal punishment. Thus, within these data, a distinct pattern emerged: participants with no history of childhood corporal punishment were

significantly less accepting of the use of corporal punishment for either their own children in the future or for children in general, in comparison to all other participants. These findings provide support for the intergenerational transmission theory in that a corporal punishment history was associated with greater approval of the use of corporal punishment. Given the finding that the main source of information regarding parenting is through viewing one's own parents (Covell et al., 1995), modelling corporal punishment appears to not only impact the parent and child dyad but its future use in subsequent generations.

Other factors were also found to be related to acceptance of corporal punishment. As hypothesized, the degree to which participants felt that their parents' use of corporal punishment was justified significantly impacted upon their attitudes towards corporal punishment. Generally, the more that participants felt that their parents' use of corporal punishment was unjustified, the less they felt that corporal punishment was appropriate. Justification of parental punishment was also related to corporal punishment history with participants with a mild corporal punishment history rating both their mothers' and fathers' use of corporal punishment as more justified than those with moderate or severe corporal punishment histories. Overall, however, participants rated both of their parents' punishment use as more justified than unjustified. This finding is similar to that of past research which concluded that individuals rated their past punishment in either a moderate or positive manner (Graziano et al., 1992). Given this pattern, it appears likely that individuals who experience corporal punishment in their childhood typically view their parents' use of such tactics as acceptable parental behavior.

An alternative explanation for the findings could include attempts to reduce cognitive dissonance which involves the presence of “nonfitting” relations among cognitions which motivates the individual to reduce this negative affective state (Festinger, 1957). When applied to the use of corporal punishment, it could include negative thoughts about the parental use of corporal punishment including fear, anger, and resentment coupled with other positive feelings towards the parent including love and respect. Individuals may change their attitudes regarding their parents’ use of corporal punishment, i.e., view it as justified, in order to reduce this inconsistency. Overall, since the majority of individuals experience some form of corporal punishment in their childhood, viewing these past experiences as justified may contribute to the continuation of corporal punishment with future generations of children.

In contrast to the hypothesized results, viewing oneself as being abused as a child by parental use of corporal punishment was not significantly related to participants’ current acceptance of the use of corporal punishment for both those who experienced severe corporal punishment and the entire sample. However, lack of support for this hypothesis may be due, in part, to the small number of participants who indicated that they were physically abused as a child; this likely reduced the power of the statistical analysis. For those participants within the severe corporal punishment group, those who labelled themselves as physically abused had TEI scores that were almost one half of a standard deviation lower than those within the severe corporal punishment group who did not label themselves as physically abused. Indeed, this difference in TEI scores is even larger than the difference in TEI scores for some variables that were significant (e.g., sex of

participant). Thus, with a larger sample of participants who view their childhood corporal punishment experiences as abusive, this variable may indeed prove to be significantly related to attitudes towards corporal punishment.

Labelling personal experiences of severe corporal punishment as abuse occurs relatively infrequently within this type of sample. Approximately one-quarter of the participants classified in the severe punishment group viewed their experiences with corporal punishment as abuse. Thus, a solid majority of participants in the severe punishment group did not view their personal experiences as being abusive even though many experiences involved punching, kicking, choking, and injuries from corporal punishment. This finding is not particularly surprising given that other research has found that often times individuals are reluctant to label their own disciplinary experiences as abusive. For example, Knutson and Selner (1994) found that only 26% of their sample who were categorized as experiencing severe physical punishment described their childhood physical discipline as abusive. In addition, past research has shown that individuals are twice as likely to label a sibling as being abused compared to themselves and that persons describe their own childhood discipline as “strict,” “harsh,” or “uncompromising” while they describe the identical discipline of others as abusive (Berger et al., 1988). Other possible reasons may include a fear of potential negative consequences such as feelings of discomfort and damage to the current parent-child relationship.

Counselling or therapy that involved issues of past punishment and/or abuse experiences was also found to be unrelated to current attitudes towards corporal

punishment contrary to expected results. However, there were very few participants who had undergone therapy for such issues. The eight participants from the severe punishment group who had experience in therapy had TEI scores 48 points (or .24 standard deviations) lower than participants from the severe punishment group without therapy experiences. Thus, once again, the finding of a non-significant relationship may be due, in part, to the fact that this sample had few participants who had experienced therapy for their corporal punishment experiences rather than due to therapy experiences being unrelated to current attitudes towards corporal punishment.

Consistent with previous research findings, other demographic factors emerged as being significantly related to current attitudes towards corporal punishment including participants' ethnic group status, sex, level of previous experience with children, university major, and living arrangement. Participants who were Asian were significantly more supportive of the use of corporal punishment than were participants from all other racial groups. Moreover, when ethnic group status was entered into a multiple regression with other significant variables affecting TEI scores, ethnic group affiliation was still found to contribute to a unique portion of the variance. Thus, higher approval of corporal punishment for Asian individuals cannot be explained solely as an association with greater frequency of corporal punishment in childhood.

For a possible explanation of the findings, parenting styles can be explored. Child development research has found difference between Asian and European parenting styles. Chao (1994) suggests that an important feature of Chinese child rearing involves "training" ideologies in which parental care, concern, and involvement are synonymous

with firm control and governance of the child. She also found that Chinese immigrant mothers were higher than European-American mothers on measures of parental control and authoritarianism. Moreover, researchers studying corporal punishment have found that cultures that place value on conformity have a greater acceptance of corporal punishment compared to cultures that stress the importance of self-reliance (Ellis & Petersen, 1992; Petersen et al., 1982). Similarly, Fry (1993) found that individuals who felt children should be well-behaved, within control, and capable of a certain level of responsibility were more accepting of corporal punishment than those who felt that young children were somewhat uncontrollable and not yet responsible for their behavior. Thus, the possibility exists that an emphasis on firm control in child rearing within some members of Asian cultures may be associated with a greater acceptance of corporal punishment.

In support of the hypothesized results, males were found to be more supportive towards the use of corporal punishment than females. This finding is consistent with results from previous research (Buntain-Ricklefs et al., 1994; Graziano et al., 1992). One reason for the consistent finding of gender differences in attitudes towards corporal punishment may be due to the differing experiences with corporal punishment for males and females. For example, fewer men had no experiences of corporal punishment and men were proportionally overrepresented in the moderate and severe corporal punishment groups. In addition, significantly more males than females experienced spanking and kicking as a form of corporal punishment. There were no forms of corporal punishment that were experienced by significantly more females than males.

Differences were also found in the use of corporal punishment by mothers and fathers. Almost all forms of corporal punishment were more likely to be inflicted by fathers than by mothers. For example, significantly more fathers than mothers were found to use spanking and significantly more fathers than mothers injured their child. Hitting the child with an object was the only form of corporal punishment utilized by significantly more mothers than fathers. A possible explanation for the finding that more mothers than fathers hit their child with something other than hands may be reflective of perceived differences in physical strength. Mothers may be more willing to use objects in the course of punishment because they believe their own strength to be insufficient in the circumstances.

Overall, greater acceptance of corporal punishment, more personal experiences of corporal punishment, and greater use of corporal punishment by fathers may be due, in part, to cultural beliefs and socialization practices. For example, Straus and his colleagues (1980) found support for the belief that sons must be “toughened up” through the use of physical punishment. Perhaps these and similar values teach male children to become reliant on the use of physical force in trying to control the behaviours of others.

In addition, participants who were less experienced with children (i.e., non-parents or no child-related work experience) were significantly more supportive of the use of corporal punishment than were participants with child-related experiences. This result is consistent with past research findings that individuals with fewer encounters with children were more likely to be supportive of the use of physical discipline (Kennedy, 1995). A variety of theories are plausible in explaining this finding. Fry (1993) found that

individuals who felt children should be well-behaved, within control, and capable of a certain level of responsibility were more tolerant towards the use of physical discipline than were individuals who believed that a fair amount of disobedience is natural for young children. Thus, participants with experiences with children may have less demanding expectations for what is considered acceptable behavior for children than those without such experiences. In addition, those participants with child-related experiences may have had more experience with alternative disciplinary techniques which proved successful. They also may have experienced or witnessed some of the negative side effects associated with the use of corporal punishment on children, such as injury or increased negative behavior. Thus, participants with more experience with children may view alternative forms of discipline as more acceptable than those without such experiences.

This finding has important implications both in regard to prevention and education interventions. For example, individuals with little or no experience with children may have inappropriate expectations regarding what is considered acceptable behavior for children. Thus, intervention workers may need to provide information about children's capacities throughout various periods of development in order to help individuals establish reasonable expectations for children's behavior. In addition, intervention workers may need to be particularly sensitive to individuals with limited experiences with children as information regarding discipline may be limited to personal childhood experiences. Thus, information about alternative discipline strategies may need to be explored in intervention programs.

Finally, those participants who are living alone and those who are business majors

are significantly more approving of corporal punishment than participants living with others and all other university majors (with the exception of Applied Social Science majors). However, a multiple regression revealed that these variables did not contribute to any unique variance in TEI scores. Both individuals living on their own and business majors had less experience with children than other individuals which may be a plausible explanation for their greater acceptance of corporal punishment.

Support was found for the hypothesis that participants were more accepting of mild punishments than severe punishments. Participants were more supportive of the use of mild rather than severe punishment regardless of the age of the child and the type of transgression committed. The effect sizes for punishment severity were some of the largest found in the study. Thus, it appears that the severity of the punishment greatly impacts on individuals' willingness to approve of corporal punishment. Participants were very unwilling to support the use severe corporal punishment. In addition, when asked directly about the acceptability of three different forms of corporal punishment, participants were significantly more approving of spanking than slapping or hitting a child with an object. Moreover, participants tended to be accepting of spanking a child under certain circumstances, but they tended to be unaccepting of slapping a child or hitting a child with an object. Participants lack of acceptance for more severe forms of corporal punishment may include both a lack of such experiences in their own childhood which may lead to the belief that such forms of corporal punishment are not "typical" or "normal" coupled with an awareness that such acts may be viewed as child abuse.

Participants' own experiences of corporal punishment were significantly related to

their acceptance of corporal punishment of varying severity levels. Participants with no corporal punishment history were less supportive of spanking than were all other participants and they were less supportive of slapping a child than were those with moderate or severe corporal punishment histories. In addition, those with a severe punishment history were significantly less unaccepting of striking a child with an object than were participants from any other corporal punishment group. Thus, participants' greater approval of specific forms of corporal punishment may be reflective of their own childhood experiences with different forms of corporal punishment (e.g., spanking was experienced by many more participants than were other forms of corporal punishment such as being hit with something other than hands and being hit with hands other than spanking). Past research found that the strongest risk factor for approving of any type of punishment was having experienced that punishment as a child (Buntain-Ricklefs et al., 1994). Thus, it is plausible that experiencing a specific form of corporal punishment in childhood may have a "normalizing" effect on its usage. For example, people who have experienced a specific form of corporal punishment may feel that it is common experience that did not have any adverse effects.

Parental use of corporal punishment also appeared to mirror a distinction between mild and more severe forms of corporal punishment. For example, physical discipline and spanking were used by both parents significantly more often than one parent whereas hitting with something other than hands, punching, kicking, and causing an injury were more frequently perpetrated by one parent rather than both. Thus, mild forms of corporal

punishment may reflect a family value whereas the more severe forms may reflect an individual's loss of control.

Support was found for the hypothesis that participants were less accepting of the use of corporal punishment for adolescents than for children. Participants were more supportive of the use of mild punishment with a child than for an adolescent regardless of whether or not the transgression was intentional or unintentional. Participants were significantly more accepting of the use of corporal punishment for an adolescent than a child in only one scenario: when the punishment was severe and the transgression was intentional. However, it is important to note that there was still a distinct lack of support for the use of corporal punishment and that there was only slightly more support for its use with adolescents than children in this particular scenario. In addition, when asked about the acceptability of spanking children of various ages, participants were significantly more approving of spanking for children up to age 10 than for children over age 10. The change in attitudes towards the use of corporal punishment at this age point provides further support for the hypothesis that individuals are more supportive of the use of corporal punishment for children than for adolescents.

It is possible that the reason for this finding may be due, in part, to individuals' own experiences of corporal punishment. Although this study did not examine participants' age at the time of punishment, other researchers have found that corporal punishment occurs less frequently in adolescence than in childhood (Graziano & Namaste, 1990). Perhaps, because more individuals experience corporal punishment in childhood

than in adolescence, the lack of support for the use of corporal punishment in adolescence may mirror their own disciplinary experiences.

An alternative explanation for the finding involves individuals' expectations regarding children's behaviors and level of understanding. Individuals may feel that young children do not have the cognitive capacity to understand verbal reasoning or alternative forms of discipline and thus feel that corporal punishment is the only viable form of discipline for young children. On the other hand, individuals may feel that adolescents have a greater cognitive capacity to understand verbal reasoning and that corporal punishment is not necessary. In addition, individuals may feel that alternative forms of discipline may be more punishing to adolescents, such as grounding or a loss of privileges.

In regard to the scenario in which participants were more accepting of the use of corporal punishment with adolescents, i.e., an intentional transgression coupled with a severe punishment, a more complex explanation is required. Participants were always more supportive of the use of mild punishments compared to severe punishments. Participants may feel that severe punishment is unreasonable for both children and adolescents but are slightly more supportive of its use with adolescents because they believe adolescents should be more responsible than children and that children may be at greater risk for adverse effects from severe corporal punishment than adolescents.

As expected, participants were more accepting of the use of corporal punishment when a child's act was described as an intentional transgression rather than an unintentional transgression regardless of the severity of the punishment and the age of the child. However, the effect sizes for the transgression type were moderate for adolescents

and only small for children. Thus, it is plausible that participants felt that intentionality was more important in evaluating the transgressions of adolescents than children as greater self-control may be expected for an adolescent. The importance of intentionality in corporal punishment use is also apparent in previous research which demonstrated that individuals who felt that a child intentionally violated parental rules were more likely to indicate that physical discipline was an appropriate action (Durrant, 1993-94). A plausible reason for the distinction between intentional and unintentional transgressions may be the level of responsibility assigned to the child. Dix and Grusec (1985) found that the more responsibility assigned to a child for his or her actions the more anger was felt by the parents; this was seen to lead to a greater tendency to engage in punitive discipline. It is unlikely that the individuals who were responding to a series of vignettes would feel anger towards the described child; however, it is quite probable that the child intentionally committing a transgression would be held more accountable for his or her actions and thus thought of as more deserving of physical discipline than a child committing an unintentional transgression.

Although the present study provided some clarification regarding attitudes towards corporal punishment, further research is necessary. This study was limited to individuals in an introductory psychology course. Past research has found that individuals in introductory psychology courses are less accepting of corporal punishment than are the general public (Blampied & Kahan, 1992). It is plausible that university students may have significantly different experiences with childhood corporal punishment than a non-university sample. It is also possible that they hold more liberal views or have had more

education about alternative forms of discipline. Future research needs to explore this issue within a larger, more representative sample. Such a sample may increase the number of participants who view their own past discipline experiences as abusive along with increasing the number of individuals who have experienced therapy focusing on issues of punishment or abuse in childhood.

This study explored the intergenerational transmission of attitudes towards corporal punishment by studying members of a single generation's experiences and attitudes. It is assumed that current attitudes towards corporal punishment of the participants would closely match their future use of corporal punishment as past research has found that acceptance of spanking is a strong predictor of actual spanking (Holden, Coleman, Schmidt, & O'Dell, 1993). Conversely, it is also assumed that corporal punishment experienced by participants may be reflective of their parents' attitudes towards corporal punishment. Future research exploring the multigenerational experiences and attitudes towards corporal punishment would be valuable.

Culture plays a significant role in how individuals approach child-rearing in general and child discipline specifically; however, there is a limited amount of research exploring attitudes towards corporal punishment from a cross-cultural perspective. Future research that places a greater emphasis on understanding of the role of culture in child discipline would be of value. For example, additional studies may help reveal differences in the use of corporal punishment in various cultures along with cultural beliefs about the use of corporal punishment.

The use of corporal punishment most typically happens behind closed doors hidden

from public view. Thus, the main source of information regarding discipline typically consists of one's own socialization experience by one's parents (Covell et al., 1995). It is through research that we come to understand the attitudes, uses, and effects of corporal punishment beyond one's own experience. For example, professionals in the field of child maltreatment have found many different negative outcomes associated with even mild forms of corporal punishment (Bryan & Freed, 1982; Cryan, 1987). An injury can result from even a mild slap when it lands off target or when a child falls against a sharp edge of an object (Cryan, 1987). There are also known psychological effects associated with corporal punishment including loss of self-esteem (Cryan, 1987), increased anxiety (Bryan & Freed, 1982; Cryan, 1987) and depression (Bryan & Freed, 1982). However, before the use of corporal punishment can be eradicated or even significantly reduced, there must be understanding of the widespread cultural attitudes that support the use of corporal punishment.

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Appendix A

Demographic Information

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you:      Female \_\_\_\_\_                      Male \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your marital status?  
 single/never married                      \_\_\_\_\_                      separated                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 common law (living as married)                      \_\_\_\_\_                      divorced                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 married                      \_\_\_\_\_                      widowed                      \_\_\_\_\_
4. What group best describes your racial affiliation?  
 Aboriginal/First Nations                      \_\_\_\_\_                      Caucasian/White                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 African-Canadian/Black                      \_\_\_\_\_                      Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Asian                      \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your current citizenship?  
 Canadian                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (specify)                      \_\_\_\_\_
6. What language is your "mother-tongue" (the first language you spoke, that you still understand)?  
 English                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 French                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (specify)                      \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you have any children of your own?  
 yes                      \_\_\_\_\_                      no                      \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide a list of the age and sex your child(ren) and whether the child(ren) are currently living primarily with you.

Age	Sex		Currently living primarily with you?	
			Yes	No
_____	Male	Female	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Appendix A Continued

Demographic Information

8. Are there any other children living in your household?  
 yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please provide a list of the age and sex of the child(ren) and your relationship to those child(ren)

Age	Male	Female	Your relationship to those children
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

9. What are your present living arrangements?  
 living alone \_\_\_\_\_ living with common law partner \_\_\_\_\_  
 living with parent(s) \_\_\_\_\_ living with spouse \_\_\_\_\_  
 living with roommate(s) \_\_\_\_\_ other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_  
 living in residence \_\_\_\_\_

10. What year of university are you currently in? \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is your declared or intended major? \_\_\_\_\_

12. What career do you plan to pursue after graduation (eg., social worker, computer programmer etc.,)? \_\_\_\_\_

13. How many university or college courses, if any, have you completed in child development? \_\_\_\_\_

14. For most of the time, prior to age 18, I lived primarily with?  
 both biological parents \_\_\_\_\_ foster parent family \_\_\_\_\_  
 both adoptive parents \_\_\_\_\_ extended family as primary \_\_\_\_\_  
 step family \_\_\_\_\_ caregivers (e.g. grandparent) \_\_\_\_\_  
 single parent family \_\_\_\_\_ other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

15. What is your mother's current occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix A Continued

## Demographic Information

16. What is the highest level of education obtained by your mother?  
 some high school \_\_\_\_\_ completed university \_\_\_\_\_  
 completed high school \_\_\_\_\_ some graduate school \_\_\_\_\_  
 some university \_\_\_\_\_ completed graduate school \_\_\_\_\_
17. What is your father's current occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
18. What is the highest level of education obtained by your father?  
 some high school \_\_\_\_\_ completed university \_\_\_\_\_  
 completed high school \_\_\_\_\_ some graduate school \_\_\_\_\_  
 some university \_\_\_\_\_ completed graduate school \_\_\_\_\_
19. What was your family of origin's estimated yearly income when you were 18?  
 Less than \$15,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$45,000 - \$59,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$15,000 - \$29,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$60,000 - \$74,999 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \$30,000 - \$44,999 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75,000 or above \_\_\_\_\_
20. How many siblings do you have?  
 biological brother(s) \_\_\_\_\_ biological sister(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 adopted brother(s) \_\_\_\_\_ adopted sister(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 step-brother(s) \_\_\_\_\_ step-sister(s) \_\_\_\_\_
21. If you have siblings, do you or did you ever have care-taking responsibilities for them (e.g. baby-sitting during a parent's absence, regular meal preparation etc..)?  
 yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, please give example(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
22. Have you ever been employed or volunteered in a position that involved direct contact with children (e.g., a camp counsellor, swimming instructor etc..)?  
 yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, please provide your job title \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

## Vignettes and the Context of the Punishment

- Variable 1: Age
- young child (age 3)
  - adolescent (age 13)
- Variable 2: Transgression
- striking another person (intentional violation)
  - accidentally breaking a valuable piece of china (unintentional violation)
- Variable 3: Punishment
- strike with a belt (severe)
  - spank (mild)

A three year old became very angered at a classmate. As a result, the child hit the friend. After the parents were informed of the incident, the child was spanked. There was no visible sign of injury apparent.

A three year old became very angered at a classmate. As a result, the child hit the friend. After the parents were informed of the incident, the child was struck with a belt. This resulted in bruising of the skin.

A three year old was playing with friends at home. The child accidentally broke a valuable piece of china. After the parents were informed of the incident, the child was spanked. There was no visible sign of injury apparent.

A three year old was playing with friends at home. The child accidentally broke a valuable piece of china. After the parents were informed of the incident, the child was struck with a belt. This resulted in bruising of the skin.

A thirteen year old became very angered at a classmate. As a result, the adolescent hit the friend. After the parents were informed of the incident, the adolescent was spanked. There was no visible sign of injury apparent.

A thirteen year old became very angered at a classmate. As a result, the adolescent hit the friend. After the parents were informed of the incident, the adolescent was struck with a belt. This resulted in bruising of the skin.

## Appendix B Continued

## Vignettes and the Context of the Punishment

A thirteen year old was playing with friends at home. The adolescent accidentally broke a valuable piece of china. After the parents were informed of the incident, the adolescent was spanked. There was no visible sign of injury apparent.

A thirteen year old was playing with friends at home. The adolescent accidentally broke a valuable piece of china. After the parents were informed of the incident, the adolescent was struck with a belt. This resulted in bruising of the skin.

## Appendix C

## Treatment Evaluation Inventory

Please complete the items listed below. The items should be completed by placing a checkmark on the line under the question that best indicated how you feel about the treatment. Please read the items very carefully because a checkmark accidentally placed on one space rather than another may not represent the rating you intended.

1. How acceptable do you find this punishment to be for the child's problem behaviour?

_____	_____	_____	_____
not at all acceptable	moderately acceptable	very acceptable	

2. How willing would you be to carry out this punishment yourself if you had to change the child's behaviour?

_____	_____	_____
not at all willing	moderately willing	very willing

3. How suitable is this punishment for children who might have other behavioral problems than those described for this child?

_____	_____	_____
not at all suitable	moderately suitable	very suitable

4. How cruel or unfair do you find this treatment?

_____	_____	_____
very cruel	moderately cruel	not cruel at all

## Appendix C Continued

## Treatment Evaluation Inventory

5. How consistent is this punishment with common sense or everyday notions about what punishment should be?

_____	_____	_____
very different or inconsistent	moderately inconsistent	very consistent with everyday notions

6. To what extent does this procedure treat the child humanely?

_____	_____	_____
does not treat humanely at all	treats them moderately humanely	treats them very humanely

7. To what extent do you think there might be risks in undergoing this kind of treatment?

_____	_____	_____
lots of risks are likely	some risks are likely	no risks are likely

8. How much do you like the punishment used in this treatment for this child?

_____	_____	_____
do not like it at all	moderately like it	like it very much

9. How effective is this punishment likely to be?

_____	_____	_____
not effective	moderately effective	very effective



## Appendix D

## Ratings of Specific Forms of Punishment

Please indicate your agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

1. Spanking a child is acceptable under some circumstances.  
**Agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Disagree**
2. Spanking is an acceptable form of discipline for children under the age of 5 years.  
**Agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Disagree**
3. Spanking is an acceptable form of discipline for children aged 5 to 10 years.  
**Agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Disagree**
4. Spanking is an acceptable form of discipline for children aged 11 to 15 years.  
**Agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Disagree**
5. Spanking is an acceptable form of discipline for children aged 16 to 18 years.  
**Agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Disagree**
6. Slapping a child is acceptable under some circumstances.  
**Agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Disagree**
7. Hitting a child with a belt or other similar object is acceptable in some circumstances.  
**Agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Disagree**
8. If you are not currently a parent, how likely do you think you would be to ever spank your child if you were to become a parent?  
**Very Likely** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Very Unlikely**
9. If you are currently a parent, how likely do you think it is that you would ever spank your child?  
**Very Likely** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **Very Unlikely**

## Appendix E

## Assessing Environments III Questionnaire (AEIII) Physical Punishment Scale:

Below are a list of punishment experiences that some adults have had during their childhood and adolescence. Please carefully read the following statements and indicate with a checkmark on the appropriate line how the following statements reflect your punishment experiences.

1. My parent(s) used physical discipline with me.

True     False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father             Mother             Both

2. My parent(s) used to spank me.

True     False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father             Mother             Both

3. My parent(s) used to hit me with something other than their hands when I did something wrong.

True     False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father             Mother             Both

## Appendix E Continued

## Assessing Environments III Questionnaire (AEIII) Physical Punishment Scale:

4. My parent(s) used to hit me with their hands (other than spanking).

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

5. My parent(s) used to punch me when they got angry with me.

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

6. My parent(s) used to kick me when they got angry with me.

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

## Appendix E Continued

## Assessing Environments III Questionnaire (AEIII) Physical Punishment Scale:

7. When my parent(s) were angry, they sometimes grabbed me by the throat and started to choke me.

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

8. I was severely beaten by my parent(s).

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

9. When I was bad, my parent(s) used to lock me in a closet.

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

## Appendix E Continued

## Assessing Environments III Questionnaire (AEIII) Physical Punishment Scale:

10. When I did something wrong, my parent(s) sometimes tied me up.

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

11. I received at least one injury from the discipline used by my parent(s).

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

12. I required medical attention (at least once) for injuries caused by my parent(s).

True  False

If you have indicated experiencing the treatment listed above, please indicate who administered the punishment with a checkmark on the appropriate line:

Father  Mother  Both

## Appendix F

## Subjective Evaluation of the Influence of Disciplinary Experiences on own Child-rearing

A. I feel that I would be (am) more likely to spank my child.

**agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **disagree**

B. I feel that I would be (am) more likely to physically discipline my child.

**agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **disagree**

C. I (would) make a conscious effort to use non-physical means of discipline with my child.

**agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **disagree**

D. I (worry that I might) have difficulty setting limits with my child.

**agree** 1 --- 2 --- 3 --- 4 --- 5 **disagree**

## Appendix G

## Evaluation of Past Physical Punishment Scale

Individuals have a wide range of feeling regarding their past physical punishment experiences. Please indicate how YOU feel about the physical punishment you received from your mother and father by placing a checkmark on the line that best describes your feelings.

**MOTHER:**

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Completely				Completely
Justified				Unjustified

**FATHER:**

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Completely				Completely
Justified				Unjustified

Appendix H

Subjective Evaluation of Corporal Punishment

Do you feel that you were physically abused as a child or adolescent?

Yes

No

Appendix I

Counselling History

Have you participated in counselling or therapy which addressed your punishment or abuse experiences?

Yes

No

## Appendix J

## Crowne and Marlowe Social Desirability Scale

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally.

1. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 true

\_\_\_\_\_   
 false

2. I have never intensely disliked anyone.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 true

\_\_\_\_\_   
 false

3. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 true

\_\_\_\_\_   
 false

4. I like to gossip at times.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 true

\_\_\_\_\_   
 false

5. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 true

\_\_\_\_\_   
 false

6. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 true

\_\_\_\_\_   
 false

7. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.

\_\_\_\_\_   
 true

\_\_\_\_\_   
 false

## Appendix J Continued

## Crowne and Marlowe Social Desirability Scale

8. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.

\_\_\_\_\_

true

\_\_\_\_\_

false

9. I always try to practice what I preach.

\_\_\_\_\_

true

\_\_\_\_\_

false

10. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.

\_\_\_\_\_

true

\_\_\_\_\_

false

11. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.

\_\_\_\_\_

true

\_\_\_\_\_

false

12. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.

\_\_\_\_\_

true

\_\_\_\_\_

false

13. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.

\_\_\_\_\_

true

\_\_\_\_\_

false

14. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.

\_\_\_\_\_

true

\_\_\_\_\_

false

15. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.

\_\_\_\_\_

true

\_\_\_\_\_

false

## Appendix J Continued

## Crowne and Marlowe Social Desirability Scale

16. I never resent being asked to return a favour.

            
true

            
false

17. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.

            
true

            
false

18. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.

            
true

            
false

19. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.

            
true

            
false

20. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

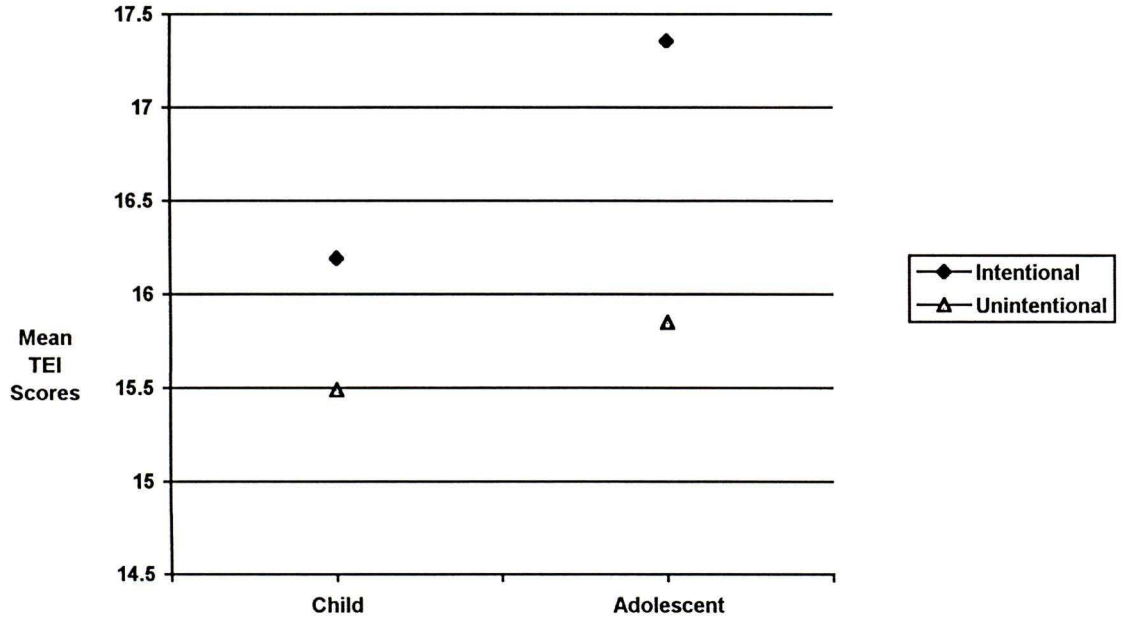
            
true

            
false

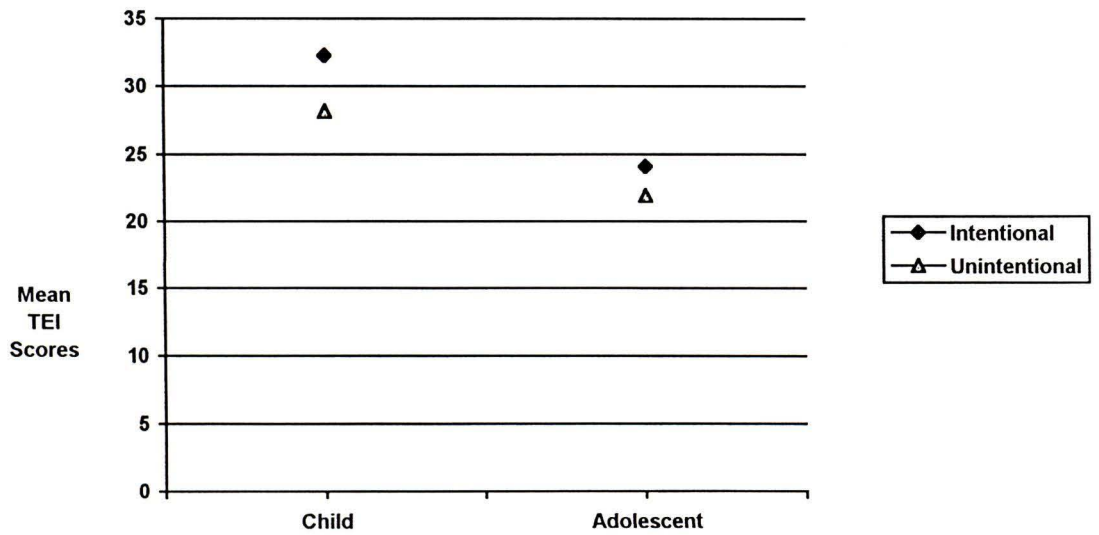
Appendix K

The Context of Punishment and Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

Severe Punishment



Mild Punishment



VITA

Surname: Schwartz

Given Names: Christine Adrienne

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1995 to 1998
York University	1989 to 1994
University of Western Ontario	1988 to 1989

Degrees Awarded:

B.A. (Honours)	York University	1994
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Title of Thesis: The Intergenerational Transmission of Attitudes Towards Corporal Punishment

Author



(Signature)

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'C Schwartz'.

C Schwartz

(Name in Block Letters)

13 August 1998

(Date)

## Appendix B Continued

## Vignettes and the Context of the Punishment

A thirteen year old was playing with friends at home. The adolescent accidentally broke a valuable piece of china. After the parents were informed of the incident, the adolescent was spanked. There was no visible sign of injury apparent.

A thirteen year old was playing with friends at home. The adolescent accidentally broke a valuable piece of china. After the parents were informed of the incident, the adolescent was struck with a belt. This resulted in bruising of the skin.