

SPARE THE ROD? THE COLLEGE STUDENT PERCEPTION

ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

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ABSTRACT

The current study explores college students' perceptions of corporal punishment with a specific focus on how religious affiliation influences attitudes towards corporal punishment. The data is based on a convenience sample of 318 students attending a southern university. All subjects were administered the same IRB-approved survey instrument on-site. The survey included a wide variety of measures including items assessing participants' religious affiliation, attitudes toward corporal punishment, and demographics. Multivariate logistic regression models were estimated to test the relationship between the independent variables and each dependent variable. The odds of males, non-Whites, Republicans, Protestants, and those previously corporally punished and raised outside the United States believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children under 2, 2-12, and/or 13-17, intending to use corporal punishment, and/or believing corporal punishment is emotionally harmful are greater than the odds of their counterparts.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Despite controversy, corporal punishment as a means of discipline remains prevalent in American homes. Finkelhor, Turner, Wormuth, Vanderminden, and Hamby (2019) report that 37% of children in the United States were spanked in 2014, with children ages 0-9 experiencing the highest rate of corporal punishment (49%). Although many parents appear to endorse spanking and other forms of corporal punishment in their homes, some scholars are calling for eradication of physical forms of punishment (Cuddy & Reeves, 2014). Resistance to physical discipline is the result of a number of studies that identify a host of harmful effects associated with the use of corporal punishment including, but not limited to, depression, intensification of introversion and aggression, and cognitive injury (Berlin et al., 2009; Gershoff, 2002; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Gershoff et al., 2010; Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997; Kandel, 1990; Pagani et al., 2004; L. Simons, Simons, & Su, 2013; Straus & Paschall, 2009)

Despite a variety of studies examining the effects of corporal punishment, the existing literature on perceptions of corporal punishment is scant and quite dated, with an even smaller body of research exploring the role of religion. Summarily, these studies suggest Protestantism, especially conservative Protestantism, is associated with favorable attitudes toward corporal punishment (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993; Grasmick, Bursick, & Kimpel, 1991; Grasmick, Morgan, & Kennedy, 1992; J. P. Hoffman, Ellison, & Bartkowski, 2017; Wiehe, 1990). Research recognizing who favors corporal punishment and discerning why they

favor spanking and similar discipline is integral in understanding the processes underlying corporal punishment; such studies identify, firstly, who needs to be made aware of the consequences of corporal punishment and, secondly, the reason(s) why certain groups employ physical discipline. In an effort to add to this literature, the current study explores college students' perceptions of corporal punishment with a specific focus on how religious affiliation influences attitudes towards corporal punishment. Specifically, the current study will rely on a college student sample to examine how religious affiliation influences students' perceptions of corporal punishment.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Harms of Corporal Punishment

Most of the literature regarding corporal punishment has investigated the harm associated with spanking and other types of physical discipline. For instance, L. Simons et al. (2013) that corporal punishment can lead to unexpected negative results including depression and delinquency. Moreover, Straus and Paschall (2009) found that children's cognitive development is hindered by spanking and slapping. Studies further suggest that corporal punishment might even contribute to the behavior it is meant to deter (Berlin et al., 2009; Boutwell, Franklin, Barnes, & Beaver, 2011; Eisenberg, Chang, Ma, & Huang, 2009; Gershoff, 2002; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; Gershoff et al., 2010; Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997; Kandel, 1990; J. T. Lau et al., 2005; Pagani et al., 2004). More specifically, Gershoff (2002) asserts that:

Parental corporal punishment is associated with the following undesirable behaviors and experiences: decreased moral internalization, increased child aggression, increased child delinquent and antisocial behavior...increased adult aggression, increased adult criminal and antisocial behavior,...and increased risk of abusing [one's] own child or spouse (p. 544).

Despite highlighting the significant consequences of spanking, the extant literature has not sufficiently investigated contemporary perceptions of corporal punishment. However, the few attitudinal studies that do exist identify several demographic characteristics, which influence the use and perceptions of corporal punishment.

Religious Affiliation and Corporal Punishment

Over the years, research has found religious affiliation to be related to attitudes about various social issues including divorce, nonmarital sex, sex education, abortion, and patriarchy (Cochran & Beeghley, 1991; Grasmick et al., 1991; Wald, Owen, & Hill, 1988; Woodrum, 1988). Similarly, scholars have found that religious beliefs influence views on the acceptability of corporal punishment. Specifically, Protestantism, especially conservative Protestantism, is associated with favorable attitudes toward corporal punishment (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993; Grasmick et al., 1991; Grasmick et al., 1992; J. P. Hoffman et al., 2017; Wiehe, 1990). There are a number of reasons that Protestantism may be linked to attitudes about physical punishment. Firstly, many Protestants believe the Bible is inerrant, dictates how its followers should live, and should be read literally (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Wiehe, 1990). Regarding its attitude toward corporal punishment, the Bible – for example, Proverbs 23:13-14 (NIV), which reads “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death.” – praises and demands parents to employ physical punishment when disciplining their children (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009). In summary, some Protestants may favor corporal punishment because the Bible approves of corporal punishment (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Wiehe, 1990).

Secondly, central to Protestantism is the belief in the original sinfulness of its believers which can and must be corrected by fellow believers (Bartkowski, 1995; Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993). In elaboration, original sinfulness, as defined by Dobson (1976) and LaHaye (1977), is the concept that humans are born into sin, that is, selfishness and rebellion against worldly as well as divine authority. It is dangerous because it hinders people in becoming productive members of society and/or results in spiritual punishment (Bartkowski, 1995; Ellison

& Bradshaw, 2009; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993). In pertinence to corporal punishment, some Protestants may believe spanking and similar discipline classically conditions their children out of sin (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009) Not surprisingly, Flynn (1996b) reports Protestants employ corporal punishment more often than Catholics. Of course, not all Protestants agree regarding how the Bible should be interpreted and the impact of original sinfulness. For instance, Wiehe (1990) reports that Southern and Independent Baptist, Church of God, Holiness, Nazarene, and Pentecostal followers more often literally interpret the Bible than Disciples of Christ, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists.

Likewise, some studies suggest that conservative/fundamentalist Protestants are more likely to favor corporal punishment than liberal/moderate Protestants and Catholics (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993; Grasmick et al., 1991; Grasmick et al., 1992; J. P. Hoffman et al., 2017; Wiehe, 1990). More specifically, Ellison and Sherkat (1993), J. P. Hoffman et al. (2017), and Wiehe (1990) report that Southern, Missionary, Primitive, and Independent Baptist, Church of God, Pentecostal/Holiness (e.g., Sanctified, Church of God in Christ, Full Gospel, Apostolic), Nazarene, Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventist, Alliance, Church of Christ, Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran, and Jehovah's Witness followers more often favor corporal punishment than Disciples of Christ, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists. In contrast, Ellison and Bradshaw (2009) state denomination does not affect attitudes toward corporal punishment. This may be due to a number of factors, including post-World War II socioeconomic and geographical mobility (i.e., denominations no longer “belong” to specific social classes or regions) and interdenominational marriage, which “have increased the internal heterogeneity of denominations” and eliminated any historical denominational differences in the interpretation of the Bible (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009, p. 334).

Childhood Corporal Punishment and Perceptions

In addition to religion's influence on perceptions of corporal punishment, studies suggest those who were corporally punished as children are more likely to favor and employ corporal punishment when disciplining children (Deater-Deckard, Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2003; Gagne, Tourigny, Joly, & Pouliot-Lapointe, 2007; D. A. Simons & Wurtele, 2010; R. L. Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Chyi-In, 1991; Witt et al., 2017). For example, D. A. Simons and Wurtele (2010) found 87% of sampled children who were commonly spanked supported corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure for punishing a brother/sister, compared to 20% of children who never experienced corporal punishment. These findings may best be explained by what academics refer to as the "cycle of violence" theory. In general, the cycle of violence theory asserts children who have fallen victim to repetitive violence are at a greater risk of becoming violent themselves (Witt et al., 2017). Regarding corporal punishment in particular, Straus and Donnelly (2001) argue that when parents employ corporal punishment they are teaching their children that spanking, slapping, and/or hitting loved ones (e.g., children) who "do wrong" is appropriate. As will be discussed, certain demographic groups more often experience corporal punishment than others. Therefore, it would make sense that those same groups more often endorse the use of corporal punishment.

Race/Ethnicity, Socioeconomic Status, and Corporal Punishment

Focusing on race/ethnicity, the plurality of studies suggest that Black individuals more often favor corporal punishment than Whites and Hispanics (Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997; Deater-Deckard et al., 2003; Flynn, 1994, 1998; Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 2000; Lorber, O'Leary, & Slep, 2011). Moreover, multiple studies suggest Black individuals are more likely to

employ corporal punishment than White, Hispanic, and Asian individuals (Berlin et al., 2009; Day, Peterson, & McCracken, 1998; Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1996; Deater-Deckard et al., 2003; Dietz, 2000; Finkelhor et al., 2019; Flynn, 1994; Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995; MacKenzie, Nicklas, Brooks-Gunn, & Waldfogel, 2011; Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000; Straus & Stewart, 1999; Wissow, 2001). For instance, Finkelhor et al. (2019) report that 59% of sampled Blacks spanked their 0-9-year-old children in comparison to 46% of Whites and 48% of Hispanics.

Variation in the use of physical discipline across racial/ethnic groups is unlikely due to heredity, rather these differences are likely associated with socioeconomic status and being previously punished with corporal punishment. More specifically, Blacks are disproportionately represented in lower socioeconomic groups (L. W. Hoffman, 2003; Vittrup & Holden, 2010), and various studies contend that individuals who belong to lower socioeconomic groups more often favor and employ corporal punishment when disciplining children compared to higher socioeconomic groups (Dietz, 2000; Flynn, 1994; Friedson, 2016; Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997; Pinderhughes et al., 2000; Straus & Stewart, 1999). Dietz (2000) argues the lower-class' greater inclination to spank is a symptom of increased stress, resulting from financial pressures, that augments parents' sensitivity to even the most trivial of their children's incivilities. Moreover, multiple studies suggest Black children are more likely to experience corporal punishment than their White counterparts (Berlin et al., 2009; Gershoff, Lansford, Sexton, Davis-Kean, & Sameroff, 2012; Hanson et al., 2006; Hawkins et al., 2010; Lorber et al., 2011; MacKenzie et al., 2011; Taillieu, Afifi, Mota, Keyes, & Sareen, 2014).

Regarding non-Black minorities' attitudes toward and employment of corporal punishment, Hispanics report more supportive attitudes toward corporal punishment than European Americans (Cardona, Nicholson, & Fox, 2000; Chaudhuri, Easterbrooks, & Davis, 2009). This may best be explained by the prioritization of obedience, politeness, and proper demeanor distinctive of Latin cultures and/or Hispanics' typically lower socioeconomic status (Chaudhuri et al., 2009; Harwood, 1992; Harwood, Miller, & Lucca Irizarry, 1995; Harwood, Scholmerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, & Wilson, 1996; Leyendecker, Harwood, Lamb, & Scholmerich, 2002). Interestingly, the literature regarding Hispanics' employment of corporal punishment is mixed (Berlin et al., 2009; Hashima & Amato, 1984; Hawkins et al., 2010; Regalado, Sareen, Inkelas, Wissow, & Halfon, 2004; Wissow, 2001). Furthermore, Hong and Hong (1991) and Jambunathan et al. (2000) report Asian American immigrants more often favor corporal punishment than native-born Whites and foreign-born Hispanics. This disparity may best be explained by *filial piety*, a value of Asian culture which will be discussed shortly (Hong & Hong, 1991; A. Lau, Takeuchi, & Alegría, 2006). Finally, Native Americans/Alaskan Natives more often employ corporal punishment than Whites (Hawkins et al., 2010). This difference may be due to Native Americans'/Alaskan Natives' greater likelihood of experiencing corporal punishment (Taillieu et al., 2014). It should be noted that Pinderhughes et al. (2000) report that race and attitudes toward corporal punishment are not related; however, such findings comprise the extreme minority of the literature.

Sex and Corporal Punishment

Day et al. (1998) suggest mothers are more likely than fathers to employ corporal punishment, possibly because mothers have historically raised children and fathers serve as the “back-up.” For example, 8-19% of fathers (depending on the race) in comparison to 25-40% of mothers reported spanking their 5-11-year-old child within the last week (Day et al., 1998). However, men at large are significantly more likely than women to believe children sometimes need a “good, hard spanking” (Child Trends Databank, 2015, paragraph 7; Flynn, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Friedson, 2016). This may be because boys – who are more likely to misbehave and/or expected to be “tough” – have a greater probability of being corporally punished than girls (Day et al., 1998; Dietz, 2000; Douglas & Straus, 2006; Giles-Sims et al., 1995). It should be noted, however, that some scholars suggest being corporally punished as a child and gender may not be significantly related (Deley, 1988; Hanson et al., 2006; Regalado et al., 2004; Taillieu et al., 2014).

Country of Origin and Corporal Punishment

Country of origin and regional location are other key demographic characteristics that researchers have examined when investigating the prevalence of corporal punishment. Regarding the former, most studies have examined variation in the employment of corporal punishment across groups with different nativity statuses rather than attitudes toward corporal punishment. However, attitudes toward corporal punishment are intrinsically linked to its employment, suggesting whoever is more likely to employ corporal punishment is also more likely to favor corporal punishment (Ateah & Durrant, 2005; Chung, Mathew, & Rothkopf, 2009; Durrant, Rose-Krasnor, & Broberg, 2003; Holden, Coleman, & Schmidt, 1995; Vittrup, Holden, & Buck, 2006). That being said, research suggests the culture into which a person is born affects his or

her attitudes toward and employment of corporal punishment (Hong & Hong, 1991; Jambunathan et al., 2000; S. J. Lee & Altschul, 2015; S. J. Lee, Altschul, Shair, & Taylor, 2011). Specifically, foreign-born Hispanic Americans are less likely to favor and employ spanking than their counterparts born on U.S. soil (Jambunathan et al., 2000; S. J. Lee & Altschul, 2015; S. J. Lee et al., 2011). This difference may be attributable to the concept of *familism* distinctive of Latin American countries (S. J. Lee & Altschul, 2015). *Familism* refers to a commitment to cultural values such as closeness and harmony within the family (S. J. Lee & Altschul, 2015). Because corporal punishment could strain family relations, corporal punishment violates *familism*, which may dissuade foreign-born Hispanic Americans from spanking their children (S. J. Lee & Altschul, 2015). Additionally, Asian American immigrants more often favor corporal punishment than native-born Whites and foreign-born Hispanics (Hong & Hong, 1991; Jambunathan et al., 2000). This disparity may best be explained by *filial piety* and similar values distinctive of Asian cultures (Hong & Hong, 1991). *Filial piety* “emphasizes the duty of children to be obedient...[and consequently] promotes absolute control of the parent over the child,” and encourages parent-to-child aggression including corporal punishment (A. Lau et al., 2006, p. 1262).

Regional Location and Corporal Punishment

Regarding regional location, Finkelhor et al. (2019), Flynn (1996b), and Straus and Mathur (1996) suggest that those born in the Southern United States are the most likely to approve of corporal punishment. A southern subculture of violence may best explain this variance. The South has traditionally experienced above-average rates of violence, resulting in decades of research suggesting a subculture of violence may be at least partially responsible

(Doucet, D'antonio-Del Rio, & Chauvin, 2014; Gastil, 1971; Hackney, 1969; M. R. Lee, Bankston, Hayes, & Thomas, 2007; Loftin & Hill, 1974; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Smith & Parker, 1980). The southern subculture of violence is characterized by (1) a frontier spirit, (2) a strong sense of honor, and (3) Protestantism (Doucet et al., 2014; Gastil, 1971; Hackney, 1969; M. R. Lee et al., 2007; Loftin & Hill, 1974; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Smith & Parker, 1980). Following settlement of the Northeast, the South was the new frontier (Doucet et al., 2014; Gastil, 1971). Initially, it lacked the rule of law, leaving disputes to be handled through duels, brawls, and lynchings (Cash, 1941; Doucet et al., 2014; Hackney, 1969; Redfield, 1880). Of course, the South is no longer lawless. Nevertheless, this frontier culture is more recent in Southern history. Furthermore, multiple studies suggest Southerners value honor to such a degree that they will employ violence to maintain it (Doucet et al., 2014; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Reed, 1982). For instance, Nisbett and Cohen (1996) discovered that southern males perceived insults as threats to their reputation and responsively thought about using or used violence. Finally, Protestantism prevails in the South and, as previously stated, is associated with favorable attitudes toward corporal punishment (Doucet et al., 2014; Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993; Grasmick et al., 1991; Grasmick et al., 1992; J. P. Hoffman et al., 2017; Wiehe, 1990).

Additionally, Flynn (1996b) suggests these disparities may stem from the regions' average parental education; more specifically, Flynn (1996b) found higher parental education to be associated with the Northeast in comparison to the South. To briefly touch on education's relationship with corporal punishment, the literature suggests that as education increases, favorable attitudes toward and employment of corporal punishment decreases (Finkelhor et al., 2019; Flynn, 1996b; Jackson et al., 1999; Straus & Mathur, 1996). This may be attributable to

increased familiarity with the consequences of corporal punishment which accompanies higher education (Finkelhor et al., 2019). Finally, disparate racial compositions may partially explain regional differences regarding corporal punishment. In elaboration, Blacks are most highly concentrated in the South, and, as previously discussed, Blacks are more likely than Whites and non-White Hispanics to both favor and employ corporal punishment (Berlin et al., 2009; Brookings, 2019; Day et al., 1998; Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Deater-Deckard et al., 2003; Dietz, 2000; Finkelhor et al., 2019; Flynn, 1994, 1998; Giles-Sims et al., 1995; Jambunathan et al., 2000; Lorber et al., 2011; MacKenzie et al., 2011; Pinderhughes et al., 2000; Straus & Stewart, 1999; Wissow, 2001).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Current Study

Despite a variety of studies examining the effects of corporal punishment, the existing literature on perceptions of corporal punishment is scant and quite dated, with an even smaller body of research exploring the role of religion and employing a sample of college students. Furthermore, the extant literature suggests religious affiliation and multiple other demographic factors influence attitudes toward as well as the employment of corporal punishment, requiring additional studies for corroboration. Research recognizing who favors corporal punishment and discerning why they favor spanking and similar discipline is integral in understanding the processes underlying corporal punishment; such studies identify, firstly, who needs to be made aware of the consequences of corporal punishment and, secondly, the reason(s) why certain groups employ physical discipline. Therefore, the current study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. Do college students believe corporal punishment is acceptable?
2. Do college students intend to use corporal punishment to discipline their own children?
3. Do college students believe corporal punishment causes emotional harm?
4. How does religious affiliation affect these attitudes?

The following sections will describe the data, the sample, and the variables that were used for this study. Further, a description of the plan for analysis will be provided, and then findings from the current analyses will be presented.

Data and Sample

The data for the current research were collected during the fall of 2017. More specifically, the data is based on a convenience sample of 318 students attending a southern university. By limiting the sample to college students, the variable of education – which previous studies suggest negatively influences attitudes toward and employment of corporal punishment – is controlled, supplementing the analyses (Finkelhor et al., 2019; Jackson et al., 1999; Straus & Mathur, 1996). See Table 1 for sample characteristics. All subjects were administered the same IRB-approved survey instrument on-site. The survey included a wide variety of measures including items assessing participants' religious affiliation and attitudes toward corporal punishment. Additionally, demographic information was collected from each participant regarding his or her sex, race, previous experience with corporal punishment, country of origin, political affiliation household of origin setting, and age.

Table 1 Characteristics of Sample

	n	%	\bar{x}	s	Range
Sex					
Male	108	34.2	--	--	--
Female	208	65.8	--	--	--
Race					
White	246	79.6	--	--	--
Non-White	63	20.4	--	--	--
Punished with Corporal Punishment?					
No	42	13.2	--	--	--
Yes	276	86.8	--	--	--
Born in the U.S.? (Country of Origin)					
No	15	4.8	--	--	--
Yes	299	95.2	--	--	--
Political Affiliation					
Republican	130	42.2	--	--	--
Other	178	57.8	--	--	--
Household of Origin Setting					
Rural	41	13.1	--	--	--
Small town	104	33.3	--	--	--
Suburban	134	42.9	--	--	--
Urban	33	10.6	--	--	--
Religious Affiliation					
Protestant	226	71.7	--	--	--
Catholic	36	11.4	--	--	--
Other	53	16.8	--	--	--
Corporal Punishment Acceptable for Kids Under 2 (Very Young Children)?					
No	256	81.3	--	--	--
Yes	59	18.7	--	--	--
Corporal Punishment Acceptable for Kids 2-12 (Young Children)?					
No	54	17.1	--	--	--
Yes	261	82.9	--	--	--
Corporal Punishment Acceptable for Kids 13-17 (Adolescents)?					
No	149	47.2	--	--	--
Yes	167	52.8	--	--	--
Will You Ever Use Corporal Punishment?					
No	79	24.8	--	--	--
Yes	239	75.2	--	--	--
Corporal Punishment Results in Emotional Harm?					
No	199	64.2	--	--	--
Yes	111	35.8	--	--	--
Age	--	--	19.997	3.5473	18-52

Key Independent Variable

Religious Affiliation

Each participant was asked “What is your religious affiliation?” Responses were dummy coded into three different variables: Protestant, Catholic, and Other. For each variable, individuals were coded as “1” if they indicated they associated with that particular religious affiliation and “0” if they did not. Seventy-one and seven tenths percent ($n = 226$) of the sample identified as Protestant, 11.4% ($n = 36$) of the sample identified as Catholic, and 16.8% ($n = 53$) of the sample identified as “Other.”

Control Variables

Sex

Sex was coded as male (0) and female (1). Thirty-four and two tenths percent ($n = 108$) of the sample identified as male and 65.8% ($n = 208$) of the sample identified as female.

Race

Race was coded as White (0) and non-White (1). Seventy-nine and six tenths percent ($n = 246$) of the sample identified as White and 20.4% ($n = 63$) of the sample identified as non-White.

Punished with Corporal Punishment

Individuals were asked “Did your parent(s)/guardian(s) ever use corporal punishment to discipline you when you were growing up?” Individuals who were not punished with corporal punishment were coded as “0,” and individuals who were punished with corporal punishment were coded as “1.” Eighty-six and eight tenths percent ($n = 276$) of the sample were punished with corporal punishment and 13.2% ($n = 42$) of the sample were not punished with corporal punishment.

Country of Origin

Respondents were asked “Were you originally born in the United States?” Individuals who were not born in the United States were coded as “0,” and individuals who were born in the United States were coded as “1.” Ninety-five and two tenths percent ($n = 299$) of the sample were born in the United States and 4.8% ($n = 15$) of the sample were not born in the United States.

Political Affiliation

Participants were asked to identify their primary political affiliation. Responses were dummy coded into two different variables: Republican and Other. For each variable, individuals were coded as “1” if they indicated they associated with that particular political affiliation and “0” if they did not. Forty-two and two tenths percent ($n = 130$) of the sample identified as Republican and 57.8% ($n = 178$) of the sample identified as “Other.”

Household of Origin Setting

Each participant was asked “What type of setting best describes where you grew up?” The setting of one’s household of origin was dummy coded to create variables for suburban, urban, rural, and small-town settings. For each variable, individuals were coded as “1” if they indicated they reported this particular setting for their household of origin and “0” if they did not. Thirteen and one tenth percent (n = 41) of the sample grew up in a rural setting, 33.3% (n = 104) of the sample grew up in a small town setting, 42.9% (n = 134) of the sample grew up in a suburban setting, and 10.6% (n = 33) of the sample grew up in an urban setting.

Age

Age was coded as a scale variable ranging from 18-52. The average age of the sample was 20 years old with a standard deviation of 3.5.

Dependent Variables

Corporal Punishment Acceptability for Children Under 2

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statement: “Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline for very young children (less than 2 years old) who misbehave.” All participants were asked to rate on a four-point Likert scale (1 =strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). For the current study, individuals who strongly disagreed/disagreed were recoded as “0,” and individuals who strongly agreed/agreed were recoded as “1.” Eighteen and seven tenths percent (n = 59) of the sample agreed that corporal punishment was acceptable for very young children and 81.3% (n = 256) of the sample disagreed that corporal punishment was acceptable for very young children.

Corporal Punishment Acceptability for Children 2-12

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement:

“Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline for young children (ages 2-12) who misbehave.” All participants were asked to rate on a four-point Likert scale (1 =strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). For the current study, individuals who strongly disagreed/disagreed were recoded as “0,” and individuals who strongly agreed/agreed were recoded as “1.” Eighty-two and nine tenths percent (n = 261) of the sample agreed that corporal punishment was acceptable for young children and 17.1% (n = 54) of the sample disagreed that corporal punishment was acceptable for young children.

Corporal Punishment Acceptability for Children 13-17

To gauge the acceptability of corporal punishment for adolescents, respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the statement: “Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline for adolescents (ages 13 to 17) who misbehave.” All participants were asked to rate on a four-point Likert scale (1 =strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). For the current study, individuals who strongly disagreed/disagreed were recoded as “0,” and individuals who strongly agreed/agreed were recoded as “1.” Fifty-two and eight tenths percent (n = 167) of the sample agreed that corporal punishment was acceptable for adolescents and 47.2% (n = 149) of the sample disagreed that corporal punishment was acceptable for adolescents.

Intention to Use Corporal Punishment

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: “If you have or were to have children/dependents in the future, would you ever use corporal punishment?” All participants were asked to rate on a four-point Likert scale (1 =strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). For the current study, individuals who strongly disagreed/disagreed were recoded as “0,” and individuals who strongly agreed/agreed were recoded as “1.” Seventy-five and two tenths percent (n = 239) of the sample intended to use corporal punishment and 24.8% (n = 79) of the sample did not intend to use corporal punishment.

Belief That Corporal Punishment Results in Emotional Harm

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate whether they believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm with the following statement: “Corporal punishment results in emotional harm (e.g. low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) to children and adolescents who experience this form of discipline.” All participants were asked to rate on a four-point Likert scale (1 =strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). Responses were recoded so that individuals who strongly disagreed/disagreed were recoded as “0,” and individuals who strongly agreed/agreed were recoded as “1.” Thirty-five and eight tenths percent (n = 111) of the sample agreed that corporal punishment results in emotional harm and 64.2% (n = 199) of the sample disagreed that corporal punishment results in emotional harm.

Plan of Analysis

The analysis for the current study was conducted in stages. First, univariate statistics were estimated to examine the distribution of variables; then bivariate analyses were estimated to examine the relationship between each of the independent variables and the dependent variables. Specifically, chi-square analyses were used to examine the relationships between two dichotomous variables, and t-tests were used to examine the relationship between the ratio level variable (age) and the dichotomous outcomes. Finally, multivariate logistic regression models were estimated to test the relationship between the independent variables and each dependent variable. This model is appropriate because the outcomes for the current study are all dichotomous.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this section, the results of the study are presented. First, findings from the bivariate analyses examining the relationships between the stated independent variables and dependent variables are reported. Secondly, results from a multivariate logistic regression models estimating the effects between the stated independent variables and dependent variables are reported.

Bivariate Results

Cross-tabulations and chi-square analyses were estimated to examine the relationships between the dichotomous independent variables and the dichotomous outcome variables. With regard to religious affiliation, Protestantism was significantly associated with views on acceptability of corporal punishment for children 2 to 12, as well as whether participants believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm. A significantly larger percentage of Protestants versus other religious affiliations indicated they approved of corporal punishment for children ages 2 to 12. In comparison, a significantly smaller percentage of Protestants reported that they believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm compared to other religious groups. Specifically, 87.1% of Protestants compared to 72.4% of participants who identified as another denomination indicated that corporal punishment was acceptable for children 2 to 12

years old ($\chi^2 = 9.611$; $p = 0.002$). Moreover, 32% of Protestants indicated that they believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm while roughly 46% of individuals affiliated with another religious group indicated such ($\chi^2 = 4.969$; $p = 0.026$).

Additionally, “other religions” were significantly associated with views on acceptability of corporal punishment for children 2 to 12 years old as well as whether participants intended to use corporal punishment and believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm. A significantly smaller percentage of those adhering to other religions versus Protestantism and Catholicism indicated they approved of corporal punishment for children ages 2 to 12 and intended to use corporal punishment. In comparison, a significantly larger percentage of those adhering to other religions reported that they believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm compared to Protestants and Catholics. Specifically, 66.7% ($n = 34$) of those adhering to “other” religions in comparison to 86.2% ($n = 225$) of Protestants and Catholics indicated that corporal punishment was acceptable for children 2 to 12 years old ($\chi^2 = 11.552$; $p = 0.001$). Moreover, 60.4% ($n = 32$) of those adhering to “other” religions in comparison to 78.2% ($n = 205$) of Protestants and Catholics intended on using corporal punishment ($\chi^2 = 7.553$; $p = 0.006$). Finally, 48.1% ($n = 25$) of those adhering to “other” religions in comparison to 33.3% ($n = 85$) of Protestants and Catholics believed corporal punishment results in emotional harm ($\chi^2 = 4.083$; $p = 0.043$).

Several of the control variables were also related to the outcome variables. Sex was significantly associated with views on acceptability of corporal punishment for children 13 to 17 years old as well as whether participants intended to use corporal punishment and believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm. A significantly larger percentage of males versus females indicated they approved of corporal punishment for children ages 13 to 17 and

intended to use corporal punishment. In comparison, a significantly smaller percentage of males reported that they believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm compared to females. Specifically, 62.3% (n = 66) of males in comparison to 47.6% (n = 99) of females indicated that corporal punishment was acceptable for children 13 to 17 years old ($\chi^2 = 6.059$; $p = 0.014$). Moreover, 84.3% (n = 91) of males in comparison to 70.2% (n = 146) of females intended on using corporal punishment ($\chi^2 = 7.502$; $p = 0.006$). Finally, 26% (n = 27) of males in comparison to 40.7% (n = 83) of females believed corporal punishment results in emotional harm ($\chi^2 = 6.505$; $p = 0.011$).

In addition, being previously corporally punished was significantly associated with views on acceptability of corporal punishment for children 2 to 12 and 13 to 17 years old as well as whether participants intended to use corporal punishment and believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm. A significantly larger percentage of those who were corporally punished versus those who were not corporally punished indicated they approved of corporal punishment for children ages 2 to 12 and 13 to 17, and intended to use corporal punishment. In comparison, a smaller percentage of those corporally punished reported that they believed corporal punishment resulted in emotional harm compared to those who were not corporally punished. Specifically, 87.6% (n = 240) of those previously corporally punished in comparison to 51.2% (n = 21) of those not previously corporally punished indicated that corporal punishment was acceptable for children 2 to 12 years old ($\chi^2 = 33.215$; $p = 0.000$). Moreover, 55.3% (n = 152) of those previously corporally punished in comparison to 36.6% (n = 15) of those not previously corporally punished indicated that corporal punishment was acceptable for children 13 to 17 years old ($\chi^2 = 5.000$; $p = 0.025$); and 83.7% (n = 231) of those previously corporally punished in comparison to 19% (n = 8) of those not previously corporally punished intended on

using corporal punishment ($\chi^2 = 81.596$; $p = 0.000$). Finally, 31.2% ($n = 84$) of those previously corporally punished in comparison to 65.9% ($n = 27$) of those not previously corporally punished believed corporal punishment results in emotional harm ($\chi^2 = 18.559$; $p = 0.000$).

To conclude the chi-square analyses, household of origin setting was significantly associated with views on acceptability of corporal punishment for children 13 to 17 years old. A significantly smaller percentage of those raised in the suburbs versus those who were not raised in the suburbs indicated they approved of corporal punishment for children ages 13 to 17. Specifically, 44.8% ($n = 60$) of those raised in the suburbs in comparison to 59.7% ($n = 105$) of those raised in a rural, small town, or urban setting indicated that corporal punishment was acceptable for children 13 to 17 years old ($\chi^2 = 6.769$; $p = 0.009$).

In addition to the chi-square analyses, *t*-tests were used to examine the relationship between the ratio level variable (age) and the dichotomous outcomes. These bivariate analyses revealed that intention to use corporal punishment was associated with age ($t = -2.362$; $p = 0.019$). Specifically, participants who reported an intention to use corporal punishment in the future were on average older ($\bar{x} = 20.1841$) than participants who reported that they did not intend to use corporal punishment in the future.

Multivariate Results

As previously discussed, multivariate logistic regression models were estimated to investigate the relationships between the independent variables (religious affiliation, sex, race, previous experience with corporal punishment, country of origin, political affiliation, household of origin setting, and age) and the dependent variables (perceived acceptability of corporal punishment for children under 2, 2-12, and 13-17 years of age, intention to use corporal

punishment, and perceived emotional harm of corporal punishment). The findings of the logistic regression model predicting perceived acceptability of corporal punishment for children under 2 are presented in Table 2, indicating race and political affiliation were significantly related to perceived acceptability of corporal punishment for children under 2. Specifically, the odds of non-Whites believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children under 2 were approximately three times the odds of Whites, holding all else constant in the model. In addition, the odds of non-Republicans indicating corporal punishment is acceptable for children under 2 were 59% lower than the odds of Republicans, holding all else constant in the model.

Table 2 Logistic Regression Predicting Perceived Acceptability of Corporal Punishment for Children Under 2 Years of Age (n = 292)

Variable	Odds Ratio
Sex (Female = 1)	1.253
Race (Non-White=1)	2.934*
Punished with Corporal Punishment? (Yes = 1)	1.846
Born in the U.S.? (Country of Origin; Yes = 1)	3.771
Political Affiliation (Other = 1)	0.411*
Rural ^a	0.809
Small Town ^a	1.291
Urban ^a	1.432
Catholic ^b	1.076
Other Religion ^b	1.320
Age	1.018
Constant	0.024
Nagelkerke Pseudo- r²	0.074
-2 Log-Likelihood	271.690 ^a

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.
^a Referent is suburban.
^b Referent is Protestant.

Regarding the findings of the logistic regression model predicting perceived acceptability of corporal punishment for children aged 2-12 (presented in Table 3), being previously corporally punished and adherence to “other” religions – as with the bivariate analyses – were significantly related to perceived acceptability of corporal punishment for children aged 2-12. Specifically, the odds of the previously corporally punished believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children aged 2-12 were approximately 6.5 times the odds of those not previously corporally punished, holding all else constant in the model. Additionally, the odds of those adhering to “other” religions indicating corporal punishment is acceptable for children aged 2-12 were 80% lower than the odds of Protestants, holding all else constant in the model.

Table 3 Logistic Regression Predicting Perceived Acceptability of Corporal Punishment for Young Children (n = 292)

Variable	Odds Ratio
Sex (Female = 1)	0.629
Race (Non-White=1)	0.940
Punished with Corporal Punishment? (Yes = 1)	6.515***
Born in the U.S.? (Country of Origin; Yes = 1)	0.258
Political Affiliation (Other = 1)	0.998
Rural ^a	0.606
Small Town ^a	0.881
Urban ^a	0.573
Catholic ^b	0.409
Other Religion ^b	0.197***
Age	1.145
Constant	0.699
Nagelkerke Pseudo- r²	0.237
-2 Log-Likelihood	225.360 ^a

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.
^a Referent is suburban.
^b Referent is Protestant.

In pertinence to the findings of the logistic regression model predicting perceived acceptability of corporal punishment for children aged 13-17 (presented in Table 4), sex – as with the bivariate analyses – was significantly related to perceived acceptability of corporal punishment for adolescents. Specifically, the odds of females believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children aged 13-17 were 47% lower than the odds of males, holding all else constant in the model. In addition, the logistic regression model revealed race and being raised in a small town were significantly related to perceived acceptability of corporal punishment for children aged 13-17. Specifically, the odds of non-Whites indicating corporal punishment is acceptable for children aged 13-17 were approximately 2.25 times the odds of Whites, holding all else constant in the model. Furthermore, the odds of those raised in a small town believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children aged 13-17 were approximately two times the odds of those raised in a suburban setting, holding all else constant to the model.

Table 4 Logistic Regression Predicting Perceived Acceptability of Corporal Punishment for Adolescents (n = 293)

Variable	Odds Ratio
Sex (Female = 1)	0.532*
Race (Non-White=1)	2.232*
Punished with Corporal Punishment? (Yes = 1)	1.893
Born in the U.S.? (Country of Origin; Yes = 1)	0.934
Political Affiliation (Other = 1)	0.778
Rural ^a	2.183
Small Town ^a	2.043*
Urban ^a	0.880
Catholic ^b	0.930
Other Religion ^b	0.578
Age	0.992
Constant	0.948
Nagelkerke Pseudo- r²	0.116
-2 Log-Likelihood	378.788 ^a

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.
^a Referent is suburban.
^b Referent is Protestant.

Regarding the findings of the logistic regression model predicting intention to use corporal punishment (presented in Table 5), sex, being previously corporally punished, and adherence to “other” religions – as with the bivariate analyses – were significantly related to intention to use corporal punishment. Specifically, the odds of females intending to use corporal punishment were 60% lower than the odds of males, holding all else constant in the model. Furthermore, the odds of those previously corporally punished intending to use corporal punishment were approximately 33.5 times the odds of those not previously corporally punished, holding all else constant in the model. Finally, the odds of those adhering to “other” religions intending to use corporal punishment were 76% lower than the odds of Protestants, holding all else constant in the model. In addition, the logistic regression model revealed country of origin

was significantly related to intention to use corporal punishment. Specifically, the odds of those who were born in the United States intending to use corporal punishment were 87% lower than the odds of those who were not born in the United States, holding all else constant in the model.

Table 5 Logistic Regression Predicting Intention to Use Corporal Punishment (n = 294)

Variable	Odds Ratio
Sex (Female = 1)	0.395*
Race (Non-White=1)	1.462
Punished with Corporal Punishment? (Yes = 1)	33.471***
Born in the U.S.? (Country of Origin; Yes = 1)	0.132*
Political Affiliation (Other = 1)	0.865
Rural ^a	1.050
Small Town ^a	1.183
Urban ^a	0.497
Catholic ^b	0.855
Other Religion ^b	0.235**
Age	1.181
Constant	0.118
Nagelkerke Pseudo- r²	0.412
-2 Log-Likelihood	232.153 ^a

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.
^a Referent is suburban.
^b Referent is Protestant.

Relating to the findings of the logistic regression model predicting perceived emotional harm of corporal punishment (presented in Table 6), sex and being previously corporally punished – as with the bivariate analyses – were significantly related to perceived emotional harm of corporal punishment. Specifically, the odds of females believing corporal punishment to be emotionally harmful were approximately two times the odds of males, holding all else

constant in the model. In addition, the odds of those previously corporally punished indicating corporal punishment is emotionally harmful were 75% lower than the odds of those not previously corporal punished, holding all else constant in the model.

Table 6 Logistic Regression Predicting Perceived Emotional Harm of Corporal Punishment (n = 287)

Variable	Odds Ratio
Sex (Female = 1)	1.926*
Race (Non-White=1)	0.530
Punished with Corporal Punishment? (Yes = 1)	0.249***
Born in the U.S.? (Country of Origin; Yes = 1)	0.714
Political Affiliation (Other = 1)	1.495
Rural ^a	0.985
Small Town ^a	0.867
Urban ^a	2.050
Catholic ^b	1.390
Other Religion ^b	1.756
Age	0.945
Constant	3.958
Nagelkerke Pseudo- r²	0.156
-2 Log-Likelihood	342.160 ^a

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.
^a Referent is suburban.
^b Referent is Protestant.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine college students' perceptions of corporal punishment with a specific focus on how religious affiliation influences attitudes toward corporal punishment. The multivariate analyses indicated the odds of Protestants (1) believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children 2 to 12 years old and (2) intending to use corporal punishment were greater than the odds of those adhering to "other" religions, contributing to the empirical validity of the literature's previous assertions that Protestantism is associated with favorable attitudes toward corporal punishment (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Ellison & Sherkat, 1993; Grasmick et al., 1991; Grasmick et al., 1992; J. P. Hoffman et al., 2017; Wiehe, 1990). According to Ellison and Bradshaw (2009), this relationship may be rooted in two concepts distinctive of conservative Protestantism: a hierarchical image of God and a belief in Hell. Regarding the former, a hierarchical image of God involves perceiving God as an authority versus advisory figure, a master and judge instead of spouse and lover (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009). Consequently, some Protestants believe His commands, provided by the Bible, should be followed to the letter (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Wiehe, 1990). One such command is Proverbs 23:13-14 (NIV), which reads "Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish them with the rod, they will not die. Punish them with the rod and save them from death." In summary, a hierarchical image of God prompts a literal interpretation of the Bible, which blatantly mandates parents to corporally punish their children (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009).

In comparison, Hell refers to the destination in the afterlife where all unsaved persons will suffer, the operative word being “unsaved” (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009). Protestantism at large contends salvation from Hell is possible (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009). Depending upon the denomination, salvation may either require subordination to God’s will or acceptance of his grace signified by subordination to God’s will (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009). In other words, a person’s sinfulness is alterable (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009). This supposed opportunity encourages some Protestants to attempt to erase their children’s sinful tendencies through corporal punishment (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009).

In addition to religious affiliation, the multivariate analyses revealed sex, race, political affiliation, being previously corporally punished, and nativity status are associated with various attitudes toward corporal punishment. Regarding sex, the odds of males (1) believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children 13-17 years old and (2) intending to use corporal punishment were greater than the odds of females. In contrast, the odds of females believing corporal punishment to be emotionally harmful were greater than the odds of males. These findings substantiate the studies contending men are significantly more likely than women to support corporal punishment (Child Trends Databank, 2015; Flynn, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Friedson, 2016). This disparity may be due to a couple of reasons. Firstly, men have more testosterone than women, and testosterone is associated with aggressive behavior (Collias, Barfield, & Tarvyd, 2002; Giammanco, Tabacchi, Giammanco, Di Majo, & La Guardia, 2005; Mehta & Beer, 2009; Oliveira, Almada, & Canario, 1996; Ruiz-de-la-Torre & Manteca, 1999; Sapolsky, 1991; Wingfield, Hegner, Dufty, & Ball, 1990). Secondly, boys, who become men, have a greater probability of being corporally punished than girls, who become women (Day et al., 1998; Dietz, 2000; Douglas & Straus, 2006; Giles-Sims et al., 1995). Being corporally

punished, as previously stated, predicts favorable attitudes toward and employment of corporal punishment, a finding also shared by the current study (Deater-Deckard et al., 2003; Gagne et al., 2007; D. A. Simons & Wurtele, 2010; R. L. Simons et al., 1991; Witt et al., 2017).

Specifically, the odds of those previously corporally punished (1) believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children 2 to 12 years old and (2) intending to use corporal punishment were greater than the odds of those not previously corporally punished. In contrast, the odds of those not previously corporally punished believing corporal punishment to be emotionally harmful were greater than the odds of those previously corporally punished. This relationship may best be explained by the “cycle of violence.” Summarily, this theory postulates experiencing childhood violence (e.g., corporal punishment) normalizes and leads to violence as an adult (Witt et al., 2017). Of course, the perpetuation of the cycle of violence depends on a number of factors. According to Gagne et al. (2007), “adults who were frequently spanked during childhood (but not severely hit)...[and] who have not been (or did not feel) threatened, humiliated, or ridiculed by their parents... [are] the most in favor of spanking” (p. 1298). Moreover, Witt et al. (2017) report those who are female, younger, not divorced, and married and living with their spouse are more likely to disfavor corporal punishment despite being corporally punished as children, breaking the cycle of violence.

Regarding race, the odds of non-Whites believing corporal punishment is acceptable for children (1) under 2 years old and (2) 13 to 17 years old were greater than the odds of Whites, corroborating the literature suggesting members of racial minorities more often favor corporal punishment than Whites (Cardona et al., 2000; Chaudhuri et al., 2009; Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997; Deater-Deckard et al., 2003; Flynn, 1994, 1998; Hong & Hong, 1991; Jambunathan et al., 2000; Lorber et al., 2011). Depending on the racial group, financial deprivation, a greater

likelihood of being corporally punished as children, and cultural differences may best explain these disparities.

In elaboration, Blacks and Hispanics are disproportionately represented in lower socioeconomic groups (Chaudhuri et al., 2009; L. W. Hoffman, 2003; Vittrup & Holden, 2010), and various studies contend that individuals who belong to lower socioeconomic groups more often favor and employ corporal punishment when disciplining children compared to higher socioeconomic groups (Dietz, 2000; Flynn, 1994; Friedson, 2016; Gunnoe & Mariner, 1997; Pinderhughes et al., 2000; Straus & Stewart, 1999). This in turn may be due to increased stress or higher expectations of children to follow the rules which reflect the expectations of the employers overseeing lower-class parents (Curtner-Smith, Bennett, & O'Rear, 1995; Erlanger, 1974; Friedson, 2016; M. Kohn, 1963; M. Kohn, 1969; Lareau, 2011).

Moreover, Black children in particular are more often corporally punished than White children (Berlin et al., 2009; Gershoff et al., 2012; Hanson et al., 2006; Hawkins et al., 2010; Lorber et al., 2011; MacKenzie et al., 2011; Taillieu et al., 2014), and as previously explained, those who were corporally punished as children are more likely to favor and employ corporal punishment when disciplining children (Deater-Deckard et al., 2003; Gagne et al., 2007; D. A. Simons & Wurtele, 2010; R. L. Simons et al., 1991; Witt et al., 2017). According to Patton (2017), this Black cycle of violence is rooted in the slave experience and a parental need to, through immediate physical discipline, protect children from neighborhood crime and race-related violence. Finally, Hispanics and Asians may support corporal punishment more often than Whites because of their corresponding cultures' prioritization of obedience, politeness, and proper demeanor (Chaudhuri et al., 2009; Harwood, 1992; Harwood et al., 1995; Harwood et al., 1996; Leyendecker et al., 2002).

Lastly, the odds of those who were not born in the United States intending to use corporal punishment were greater than the odds of those who were born in the United States, supporting some studies' suggestion that corporal punishment is more so a foreign (specifically Asian) custom than an American custom (Hong & Hong, 1991; Jambunathan et al., 2000). This could be due to some Asian cultures' emphasis on *filial piety* (Hong & Hong, 1991; A. Lau et al., 2006). Rooted in Confucianism, *filial piety* involves placing the parent's needs before the child's (Hong & Hong, 1991; A. Lau et al., 2006). Consequently, "socialization...[in *filial-piety*-oriented cultures focuses] on training children in proper conduct, impulse control, respect for elders, and fulfillment of obligations" through corporal punishment and even child abuse (A. Lau et al., 2006, p. 1262).

Limitations

Limitations for this study include the employment of a convenience sample, which is not necessarily representative of the population of the United States of America (Rennison & Hart, 2018). Those surveyed included only those attending the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga (UTC) on campus. In comparison to the demographic makeup of UTC, the sample appears representative. More specifically, 65.8% of the sample identified as female in comparison to 56.8% of UTC students, and 79.6% of the sample identified as White in comparison to 75.4% of UTC students (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 2020).

Moreover, our independent variable of interest, religious affiliation, lacked in attributes. Various other Non-Christian religions exist, and multiple denominations comprise Protestantism. Moreover, Ellison and Sherkat (1993), J. P. Hoffman et al. (2017), and Wiehe (1990) report that Southern, Missionary, Primitive, and Independent Baptist, Church of God, Pentecostal/Holiness

(e.g., Sanctified, Church of God in Christ, Full Gospel, Apostolic), Nazarene, Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventist, Alliance, Church of Christ, Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran, and Jehovah's Witness followers more often favor corporal punishment than Disciples of Christ, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists. However, respondents in the current study were upon analysis classified as either Protestant, Catholic, or "Other." (Likewise, other control variables' attributes were too general in scope.) If the response rate allows, similar future studies should measure and compare specific Protestant denominations and non-Christian religions of respondents.

Furthermore, we reduced our dependent measures to dichotomous variables thereby equating individuals who strongly agree with those who agree. We also did not present a "neither agree or disagree" or "it depends" option for those who might feel neutral about the item, restricting the variability of our measure and consequently the conclusions that can be drawn about our sample's attitudes.

Finally, this study lacked a measurement for socioeconomic status. However, this was due to the restriction of the sample to college students. In 2014, 54% of college completers' immediate families earned \$116,466 or more annually superfluous (The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, 2015), substantially surpassing the 2016 median household income of \$59,039 (United States Census Bureau, 2017). This seems to suggest that the wealthy are overrepresented among college students and the incorporation of a socioeconomic status measurement into the present study would have been superfluous. However, incorporation of a socioeconomic status measurement by future studies employing a sample representative of the American population could be informative.

Implications

The present study's findings suggest males, non-Whites, Republicans, Protestants, and those previously corporally punished and raised outside the United States are not as aware and/or do not respect the documented harm of corporal punishment. Of course, cause and effect are not easily discernible in social scientific studies. Though the current findings corroborate the findings of many previous studies, further similar investigations are needed because the extant literature regarding attitudes toward corporal punishment remains mixed. Furthermore, the present study suggests political affiliation and household of origin setting – two variables ignored by the previous literature - influences attitudes toward corporal punishment. Future studies should similarly account for the influence of these variables alongside sex, race, nativity status, etc. Finally, if the current study's findings hold true in future research, males, non-Whites, Republicans, Protestants, and those previously corporally punished and raised outside the United States should be targeted and made aware of the harm associated with corporal punishment.

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APPENDIX A

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ATTITUDES SURVEY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Zachary Rush
Dr. Christina Policastro **IRB # 17-124**

FROM: Lindsay Pardue, Director of Research Integrity
Dr. Amy Doolittle, IRB Committee Chair

DATE: 8/30/2017

SUBJECT: IRB #17-124: College Students' Perceptions of Corporal Punishment

The IRB Committee Chair has reviewed and approved your application and assigned you the IRB number listed above. You must include the following approval statement on research materials seen by participants and used in research reports:

The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 17-124.

Since your project has been deemed exempt, there is no further action needed on this proposal unless there is a significant change in the project that would require a new review. Changes that affect risk to human subjects would necessitate a new application to the IRB committee immediately.

Please remember to contact the IRB Committee immediately and submit a new project proposal for review if significant changes occur in your research design or in any instruments used in conducting the study. You should also contact the IRB Committee immediately if you encounter any adverse effects during your project that pose a risk to your subjects.

For any additional information, please consult our web page <http://www.utc.edu/irb> or email instrb@utc.edu

Best wishes for a successful research project.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Zachary Rush **IRB # 17-124**
Dr. Christina Policastro

FROM: Lindsay Pardue, Director of Research Integrity
Dr. Amy Doolittle, IRB Committee Chair

DATE: 9/22/2017

SUBJECT: IRB #:17-124: College Students' Perceptions of Corporal Punishment

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved the following changes for the IRB project listed below:

- Extra credit was added as an incentive

You must include the following approval statement on research materials seen by participants and used in research reports:

The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 17-124.

Annual Renewal. All approved research is subject to UTC IRB review, at least once a year. Please visit our website (<http://www.utc.edu/research-integrity/institutional-review-board/forms.php>) for the Form B (continuation / change / completion form) that you will need to complete and submit if your project remains active and UTC IRB approval needs to be renewed for another year. Unless your research moves in a new direction or participants have experienced adverse reactions, then renewal is not a major hurdle. You as Principal Investigator are responsible for turning in the Form B on time (2 weeks before one year from now), and for determining whether any changes will affect the current status of the project. When you complete your research, the same change/completion form should be completed indicating project termination. This will allow UTC's Office of Research Integrity to close your project file.

Please remember to contact the IRB immediately and submit a new project proposal for review if significant changes occur in your research design or in any instruments used in conducting the study. You should also contact the IRB immediately if you encounter any adverse effects during your project that pose a risk to your subjects.

For any additional information, please consult our web page <http://www.utc.edu/irb> or email instrb@utc.edu.

Best wishes for a successful research project.

Corporal Punishment Attitudes Survey

Directions: Please fill in the blank or mark the box with an "x" that is appropriate for you. Thank you for your time.

1.) What is your current age? _____ (years)

2.) What is your sex?

_____ Male

_____ Female

_____ Transgender

_____ Other; Please Explain: _____

3.) What is your ethnicity?

_____ Hispanic

_____ Non-Hispanic

4.) What is your race?

_____ White

_____ Black/African American

_____ Asian

_____ Native American/Alaskan Native

_____ Other: _____

5.) What is your sexual orientation?

_____ Heterosexual

_____ Bisexual

_____ Homosexual

_____ Pansexual

_____ Asexual

_____ Other: _____

6.) What is your current class standing?

_____ Freshman

_____ Sophomore

_____ Junior

_____ Senior

7.) What is your major? _____

8.) Do you play an organized campus sport?

- Yes
- No



8a.) If yes, please check which of the following best fits the sport you are involved in:

- NCAA UTC Athletic Team Sport
- Intermural Sport
- Other, Please List: _____

9.) Do you currently belong to a fraternity or sorority?

- Yes
- No



9a.) If yes, what year did you join your Greek organization? _____

10.) What is your political affiliation?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other, Please List: _____

11.) What is your religious affiliation?

- Protestant (e.g. Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist, etc.)
- Catholic
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Agnostic/Atheist
- Other, Please List: _____



11a.) If Protestant, please identify denomination in which you belong:

12.) How often do you attend religious services?


- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

13.) What type of setting best describes where you grew up?

- Rural
- Small town
- Suburban
- Urban

14.) Were you originally born in the United States?


- Yes
- No. *If no, please answer question 14a.*

 14a.) Are you currently a U.S. citizen?

- Yes
- No

15.) For the majority of your childhood, did you reside in the United States?

- Yes. *Please answer question 15a.*
- No. *Please answer question 15b.*


 15a.) If yes, please identify which state you resided in for the majority of your childhood:

15b.) If no, where outside of the United States did you reside for the majority of your childhood?

The next series of questions relate to your experiences and views of corporal punishment. For this survey, "Corporal punishment," is considered to be physical force resulting in pain or discomfort, but not significant injury, and is meant to alter a child's unfavorable behavioral patterns (Straus & Donnelly, 2001, p. 4). For example, punishments such as spanking of the buttocks and legs or a slapping of the hands would be considered corporal punishment. For this survey, *we are only interested in corporal punishment used by parents and/or guardians of children.*

16.) Did your parent(s)/guardian(s) ever use corporal punishment to discipline you when you were growing up?

- Yes. *Please answer questions 16a through 16h.*
- No. *Please go to question 17.*

 16a.) Please check with an "x" which of the following forms of corporal punishment were used. Please check all that apply.

Spanking of the Buttocks or Legs

- Slapping of the Hands
- Slapping of the Face
- Shoving
- Excessive Exercise Drills (e.g. Running Suicides or Long Distances)
- Subjection to Painful Body Positions
- Subjection to Foul Odors (e.g. Vinegar)
- Subjection to Foul Tastes (e.g. Lemon Juice in the Mouth)
- Pinching
- Shaking


Other, Please List: _____

16b.) About how often did you experience corporal punishment?

- Once a Year
- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily

16c.) Did your parent(s)/guardian(s) use an object(s) when delivering corporal punishment in the form of spanking or slapping?

- Yes. *Please answer question 16cc.*
- No

 16cc.) Please check with an "x" the object(s) that your parents(s)/guardian(s) used. Please check all that apply.

- Belt
- Paddle
- Hairbrush
- Switch (e.g. stick from a tree)
- Fly Swatter
- Spatula/Spoon

Other, Please List: _____

16d.) Why do you believe your parent(s) administered the corporal punishment? Please check with an "x" all that apply.

- Out of Anger
- Out of Fear
- In an Effort to Teach a Lesson
- They Did Not Know What Else to Do
- Unclear/I Don't Know

Other, Please List: _____

16e.) Did your parent(s)/guardian(s) use any other types of punishment other than corporal punishment? If so, please check with an "x" those punishments listed below. Please check all that apply.

- Grounding
- Timeout
- Chores
- Private Verbal Reprimand
- Public Verbal Reprimand
- Financial Penalty (i.e. Paying for a Broken Window)
- Taking Away of Electronics (i.e. Cell Phone or Computer)

Other, Please List: _____

16f.) If your parent(s)/guardian(s) used corporal punishment when disciplining you, how old were you when you **first** received some type of corporal punishment?

_____ (years)

16g.) If your parent(s)/guardian(s) used corporal punishment when disciplining you, how old were you when you **last** received some type of corporal punishment?

_____ (years)

16h.) If your parent(s)/guardian(s) did use corporal punishment when disciplining you, do you believe that you usually deserved the corporal punishment you received from your parents?"

Yes

No

17.) Did you have any siblings or were there any other young dependents living in your household?

Yes. *Please answer 17a.*

No



17a.) If yes, did they ever experience corporal punishment?

Yes

No

18.) Do you currently have a child(ren) or dependent(s)?

Yes. Please answer questions #18a through 18b.

No. Please go to question #19.



18a.) If yes, have you ever used corporal punishment?

Yes. Please answer question #18aa.

No. Please go to question #19.

18aa.) If yes, please check with an "x" which of the following forms of punishment you have used. Please check all that apply. Then please go to question #20.

Spanking of the Buttocks or Legs

Slapping of the Hands

Slapping of the Face

Shoving

Excessive Exercise Drills (e.g. Running Suicides or Long Distances)

Subjection to Painful Body Positions

Subjection to Foul Odors (e.g. Vinegar)

Subjection to Foul Tastes (e.g. Lemon Juice in the Mouth)

Pinching

Shaking

Other, Please

List: _____

If you have or were to have children/dependents in the future, would you ever use corporal punishment?

Yes. Please answer #19a.

No. Please go to question #20.



19a.) If yes, please check with an "x" which of the following forms of punishment you would use. Please check all that apply.

Spanking of the Buttocks or Legs

Slapping of the Hands

Slapping of the Face

Shoving

Excessive Exercise Drills (e.g. Running Suicides or Long Distances)

Subjection to Painful Body Positions

Subjection to Foul Odors (e.g. Vinegar)

Subjection to Foul Tastes (e.g. Lemon Juice in the Mouth)

_____ Pinching
 _____ Shaking

Other, Please List: _____

*For the next section of the survey, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the number that best represents your opinion. **We are interested in corporal punishment used by a parent or guardian of a child.***

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19.) Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline for very young children (less than 2 years old) who misbehave.	1	2	3	4
20.) Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline for young children (ages 2-12) who misbehave.	1	2	3	4
21.) Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline for adolescents (ages 13 to 17) who misbehave.	1	2	3	4
22.) Corporal punishment is an effective form of discipline for very young children (less than 2 years old) who misbehave.	1	2	3	4
23.) Corporal punishment is an effective form of discipline for young children (ages 2-12) who misbehave.	1	2	3	4
24.) Corporal punishment is an effective form of discipline for adolescents (ages 13 to 17) who misbehave.	1	2	3	4
25.) There are better ways to punish a child than using corporal punishment.	1	2	3	4
26.) Corporal punishment results in emotional harm (e.g. low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) to children and adolescents who experience this form of discipline.	1	2	3	4
27.) Corporal punishment should be considered child abuse.	1	2	3	4
28.) Corporal punishment should be illegal.	1	2	3	4

Thank you for your time. Please wait until the investigator asks for all of the surveys before turning in your survey and consent form.

VITA

Zachary Rush was born in Cleveland, TN, to the parents of Teresa and Clyde Rush. He is the first of two children. He attended Charleston Elementary School and Cleveland Middle School and continued to Walker Valley High School in Cleveland, TN. After graduation, Zachary attended the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, majoring in criminal justice. He completed the Bachelor of Science degree in May 2018. Zachary immediately continued onto graduate school, accepting a graduate research assistantship at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with the Criminal Justice Department. He then graduated with a Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice in May 2020. Zachary plans to take a break from academia to serve as a police officer.