

Corporal Punishment in Families of Mexican-Origin: The Role of Acculturation and
Respeto

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Elizabeth S. Ibañez, M.A.

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Approved

Joaquin Borrego, Jr., Ph.D. Chairperson

Lee Cohen, Ph.D.

Catherine Epkins, Ph.D.

Stephanie Harter, Ph.D.

Darcy Reich, Ph.D.

John Borrelli
Dean of the Graduate School

August, 2007

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....ii

ABSTRACT.....iv

LIST OF TABLES.....v

CHAPTER ONE

 Introduction.....1

CHAPTER TWO

 Method.....23

 Participants.....23

 Materials.....24

 Procedure.....27

 Statistical Analyses.....28

CHAPTER THREE

 Results.....30

 Bivariate Correlations.....30

 Regression Analyses.....32

CHAPTER FOUR

 Discussion.....38

REFERENCES.....54

TABLES.....62

APPENDIX: Extended Literature Review.....74

ABSTRACT

Corporal punishment (CP) is a widely used discipline technique in the United States. Most of what we know regarding corporal punishment is based on Caucasian families. In contrast, there is a paucity of research investigating predictors and outcomes of CP with families of Mexican-origin who are the largest and fastest growing Hispanic subgroup (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). This study examined level of acculturation and belief in respect toward authority (*respeto*) as predictors of CP among mothers of Mexican-origin. This study also examined the association between CP and child externalizing behavior problems. A community sample of 83 mothers of Mexican-origin with children between the ages of 3 to 8 participated in the study. A series of regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. After controlling for parent and child demographic variables, mothers' level of acculturation was not a significant predictor of CP. Also contrary to predictions, mothers with higher levels of acculturation who were more oriented toward Anglo culture reported a higher belief in *respeto*. The hypothesis that *respeto* would be a significant predictor of CP was not supported. Lastly, as predicted, mothers' use of CP significantly predicted externalizing behavior problems in that children disciplined with CP had higher rates of behavior problems. The results of this study indicate that other cultural factors besides acculturation and belief in *respeto* may influence use of CP among mothers of Mexican-origin. This study supported previous findings with non-Hispanic samples that found a positive relationship between CP and behavior problems. Future research should examine other possible predictors of CP, replicate with fathers, and include other Hispanic subgroups. Results will be discussed within the context of future research and clinical implications.

LIST OF TABLES

1.	Mother Demographic Information (N = 83)	62
2.	Respeto Scale Inter-Item Correlations	64
3.	Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency for Study Variables	66
4.	Percent of Mothers who Endorsed Nonphysical Discipline	67
5.	Percent of Mothers who Endorsed Corporal Punishment	68
6.	Intercorrelations Among Study Variables	69
7.	Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Acculturation Predicting CP	70
8.	Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Acculturation predicting Respeto.....	72
9.	Hierarchical Regression Analysis for CP Predicting Behavior Problems	73

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Parenting practices can influence a child's emotional and behavioral adjustment (Larzelere & Kuhn, 2005), educational attainment (Straus, in press), and socialization (Zayas & Solari, 1994). A parent's cultural background can impact parenting behaviors as well as their understanding of child development and socialization (McDade, 1995). Methods of child socialization are greatly influenced by cultural and socioeconomic factors, and are adaptive for facing unique challenges related to being a member of an ethnic minority group (Zayas & Solari). Thus, parenting beliefs and behaviors can differ among ethnic minority groups. An important component of parenting practices is the discipline implemented to shape appropriate child behaviors or correct misbehaviors.

One type of discipline practice commonly used by parents is corporal punishment. Corporal punishment (CP) is defined as the "use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behavior" (Straus, 2001, p. 4). CP can include spanking, slapping, grabbing, shoving, pinching, and hitting with certain objects (i.e., belt, brush, or paddle) (Straus). It has been estimated that 70% to 90% of parents in the United States report using corporal punishment (Saadeh, Rizzo, & Roberts, 2002). Despite the reported prevalence of corporal punishment and its role in parenting, there is a paucity of research investigating predictors and outcomes of corporal punishment with ethnic minority families, such as Hispanics. Several contextual factors can contribute to ethnic minority parents using corporal punishment such as belief in respect, intergenerational modeling, and power

assertion (Williams-Gray, 2001). Furthermore, corporal punishment could be a means of teaching children cultural norms and values.

It is important to examine discipline practice in Hispanic families since Hispanics are now the largest ethnic minority group in the United States. It is estimated that 41 million Hispanics reside in the U.S., comprising 14% of the nation's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). In comparison to other ethnic groups, Hispanic families tend to include a larger number of children (Garcia-Coll & Vazquez Garcia, 1995). According to Fontes (2002), research examining approval of corporal punishment among Hispanics is limited. The few studies that have attempted to examine CP acceptability and use with Hispanics have resulted in inconsistent findings, suggesting that more research is needed with Hispanics before making concrete conclusions about their use and approval of CP.

There is great heterogeneity with regard to the composition of Hispanics (i.e., Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Central and South American groups). Individuals of Mexican-origin (67%) are the largest subgroup of Hispanics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003) and though they reside across the United States, most live in the southwestern states of California, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado (Garcia, 2001). Among Hispanics, Mexican-origin populations have the highest proportion of individuals under age 18, thus making them a relatively young population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). In this paper, the terms Mexican (born in Mexico) and Mexican American (born in the U.S. but parents or grandparents born in Mexico) will be used to specify subgroups of individuals of Mexican-origin.

Despite Mexican-origin populations being the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States, research on parenting in Mexican families remains limited

(Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003; Martinez, 1999). Additionally, most research with Mexican-origin families does not take into account within-group differences in terms of acculturation, education, and socioeconomic status. Within families of Mexican-origin, there is no one parenting style or pattern of behaviors used to describe these parents (Martinez). Given the growing number of Mexican-origin families in the United States, it is important for researchers and practitioners to understand parenting practices among families of Mexican-origin.

Forty percent of Hispanics are foreign-born (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Therefore, within group differences might reflect heterogeneity related to acculturation. According to Berry (2003), acculturation can be conceptualized as a multidimensional phenomenon that occurs when groups of individuals having different cultures come into first-hand contact, resulting in subsequent changes to one or both groups. According to Cuellar et al., acculturation reflects behavioral (e.g., language and cultural expressions), cognitive (e.g., beliefs about gender roles and family), and affective (e.g., emotions associated with cultural connections) functioning. Based on this definition, acculturation can impact various areas of functioning including parenting practices.

The following sections will discuss the relevant literature related to predictors and outcomes of CP. When relevant, research on Hispanic and Mexican-origin parenting practices will be highlighted. In this paper, the terms corporal punishment, physical discipline, and spanking will be used interchangeably.

CP and Child Outcomes

Despite the almost overwhelming endorsement of CP in America, there are debates about the harmful short and long-term effects of even moderate use of CP (Flynn,

1996). According to Wissow (2002), opponents argue that CP has been associated with increased child and adolescent emotional distress and physical aggression as well as increased risk for child maltreatment. In contrast, supporters of CP claim that there is inconclusive evidence to suggest that CP should be banned or labeled as detrimental since research often overlooks contextual variables such as family and child characteristics related to outcome (Wissow, 2002). Most studies have found that physical punishment is positively associated with child externalizing behavior problems such as subsequent child aggression (Brenner & Fox, 1998; McLoyd & Smith, 2002; Michels, Pianta, & Reeve, 1993; Stormshak, Bierman, McMahon, & Lengua, 2000; Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994; Straus, 1994).

In addition, two large meta-analyses summarizing the impact of CP on child functioning have been conducted in the past few years. The first meta-analysis conducted by Gershoff (2002) consisted of reviewing 88 studies, completed in the past 62 years, to explore the association between CP and outcome variables during childhood and adulthood. Gershoff found that CP was associated with one beneficial outcome, increased immediate child compliance. However, CP was also associated with both short and long-term negative outcomes such as increased aggression, delinquent/antisocial behavior, and physical abuse (child and spousal).

In another meta-analysis, Larzelere and Kuhn (2005) found that the associations between child outcomes of noncompliance and antisocial behavior depended on the type of physical punishment used. They found that in comparison to alternative discipline tactics (e.g., time-out, restriction of privileges, and reasoning), conditional spanking (e.g., spanking under limited conditions) was associated with less child noncompliance and

antisocial behaviors. No significant differences were found between customary physical punishment and alternative discipline tactics. In other words, customary physical punishment was neither associated with positive nor negative outcomes. However, alternative discipline was favored over severe and predominant physical discipline. Larzelere and Kuhn noted that conditional spanking compared favorably with alternative discipline tactics when it was used in response to a 3-4 year-old being noncompliant, as a back-up for time-out noncompliance, when used in a controlled manner, and when combined with reasoning. However, when physical punishment was overly severe or used as the predominant discipline tactic, it was more detrimental than alternative tactics. Based on their definitions, most discipline falls under the definition of customary physical punishment. Therefore, the results related to conditional spanking may not apply to most disciplinary encounters.

The following studies discussed below specifically inquired about parents' use of CP and examined the association between CP and behavior problems with Hispanics. In a nationally representative sample of 448 African American, 427 Hispanic, and 1,890 Euro-American parents, Straus (1994) found that 58% of European Americans, 52% of African Americans, 47% of Hispanics reported using CP during the past year. Hispanics had the lowest use of CP and Caucasians the highest. Straus did not discuss reasons for African Americans reporting less use of CP than Caucasians nor did he report other demographic variables to explain these percentages (e.g., education, SES, etc.). Straus found a significant association between CP and child delinquency for Euro-American and Hispanic children, but not for African American children. However, across all three ethnic groups, as use of CP increased, so did the probability that a child was classified as

physically aggressive. Two important limitations of this study were that Straus did not specify which Hispanic subgroups were included in the sample nor did he assess for within group variability, such as acculturation levels among Hispanics.

In a longitudinal study of elementary school children, McLoyd and Smith (2002) found that for Hispanics, Caucasians, and African Americans there was a significant positive relationship between maternal use of spanking and level of maternal rated problem behavior over time. Therefore, children who experienced an increase in spanking also had a greater increase in behavior problems over time. According to McLoyd and Smith (2002), even after taking into account poverty and emotional support levels, the effects of spanking on the development of behavior problems were the same across ethnic groups. Limitations of the McLoyd and Smith study include that it only inquired about mother's using spanking in the past week, it did not specify the country of origin of Hispanics, and it did not measure Hispanics' acculturation levels.

Grogan-Kaylor (2005) used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (N = 6, 912) to examine the functional relationship between corporal punishment and antisocial behavior problems among Caucasian (50%), African American (29%), and Latino (19%) children ages 4 to 14 years old. Grogan-Kaylor found that 27% of the children received corporal punishment in the past week. In this study, the effects of corporal punishment on antisocial behaviors did not differ by race. For all three ethnic groups represented in the study, corporal punishment was associated with higher child antisocial behaviors. Therefore, parents who used corporal punishment had children with more antisocial behaviors than those parents who did not use corporal punishment. In addition, parents who exhibited toward their children more cognitive stimulation and

emotional support had children with less antisocial behaviors. This study had a couple noteworthy limitations in that the study did not present an operational definition of corporal punishment and only asked about corporal punishment in the past week.

Child and Parent Characteristics Associated with CP

The use of CP differs depending on child and parent characteristics. Child demographic variables (age and gender) increase the likelihood of a parent using CP with their child. Physical discipline has been rated as more appropriate for younger (3-4 years-old) or middle age (7-8 years-old) children than for older (11-12 years-old) children (Flynn, 1998). Most research indicates that as children get older the prevalence and chronicity of spanking decreases (Dietz, 2000; Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995; Jackson et al., 1999; Walsh, 2002). Although CP is sometimes used with children of all ages, prevalence rates are the highest with preschool aged children. Specifically, Straus and Stewart (1999) found in a national survey of American parents that 94% of children between 3 and 5 years of age were disciplined with CP.

Small effects have been found in relation to the child's gender and CP. Overall, male children tend to be disciplined with CP more than females (Dietz, 2000; Straus, 2001). Additionally, the type of misbehaviors can impact the child's likelihood of receiving physical punishment. Parents are more likely to use CP as a response to children engaging in physical aggression, noncompliance, and other disruptive behaviors such as destroying property (Holden, Coleman, & Schmidt, 1995; Holden, Miller, & Harris, 1999). Thus, younger, male children who engage in noncompliant and disruptive misbehaviors are more likely to be disciplined with CP.

Conversely, various parent characteristics that influence approval and use of CP include age, gender, SES, education, and ethnicity. Younger, single parents are more likely to use CP (Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995). Also, use of physical discipline is more prevalent among parents of lower socioeconomic status and education levels (Dietz, 2000; Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995; Kelley, Grace, & Elliot, 1990; Pinderhuges, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000). In regards to parent gender, some studies conclude that mothers are more likely to use CP since they spend more time with their children (Dietz, 2000; Jackson, et al., 1999; Straus, 2001). In contrasts, Flynn (1998) and Straus and Mathur (1996) found that males have higher approval of CP than females. Finally, Wissow (2002) did not find any significant differences between mother and fathers using CP. Therefore, studies on parent gender and CP have yielded mixed results.

Research (e.g., Dietz, 2000; Pinderhuges, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000; Straus & Mathur, 1996) suggests that African Americans have a higher acceptability and use of CP than Caucasians and Hispanics. Studies that examine the use (Cardona, Nicholson, & Fox, 2000; Solis-Camera & Fox, 1995) and acceptability (Buriel, Mercado, Rodriquez, & Chavez, 1991; Medora, Wilson & Carson, 2001) of CP among Hispanic populations have yielded mixed results and differ depending on acculturation level.

One study that examined parenting practices with Hispanics was Cardona et al. (2000). This study included 76 married mothers from lower and higher socioeconomic statuses (38 Hispanic, 38 Anglo-American) with children between the ages of 3 and 5 years. Hispanic mothers' level of acculturation was measured and only mothers who were classified as "predominantly Hispanic" in acculturation were included. Results indicated that Hispanic mothers reported using corporal punishment more frequently than Anglo-

American mothers. However, limitations of this study included their failure to specify the subgroups of Hispanics (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc.), country of birth, or years living in the U.S., therefore, they did not specify to what groups these results might generalize.

Contrary to Cardona et al. (2000), a study by Medora et al. (2001) found that Hispanic mothers from disadvantaged economic backgrounds did not differ from Caucasian and African American mothers from similar SES backgrounds in their acceptability of using spanking as a means of discipline. In this study, all mothers listed spanking as the least preferable parenting strategy, while praise, reasoning, and ignoring were listed as highly preferable. The authors concluded that their findings challenge the stereotype that Hispanics approve of using spanking more than Caucasians. Limitations of this study were that the authors did not ask about the actual frequency of parents using CP with their own children and included only mothers from a disadvantaged SES group.

CP and Mexican Families

One study that examined parenting practices and use of CP in families of Mexican-origin was conducted by Solis-Camera and Fox (1995). They found that when Mexican mothers living in Mexico and Caucasian mothers living in the U.S. were matched on education level, no significant differences in parenting practices (e.g., developmental nurturing behaviors, developmental expectations, and discipline strategies) with children 1 to 5 years of age were found. Contrary to research with Caucasians (e.g., Giles-Sims et al., 1995), Solis-Camera and Fox found that older Mexican mothers (ages of 30 to 49) endorsed higher use of corporal punishment (CP) than younger Mexican mothers (29 years-old or younger). Unlike Mexican mothers in the study, younger Caucasian mothers

endorsed higher use of CP than older Caucasian mothers. Both Mexican and Caucasian mothers had higher expectations and reported using more frequent discipline (CP and verbal punishment) with older (3-5 years-old) than younger children (less than 3 years-old). When mothers had more than one child, mothers also had higher expectations and use of discipline than if only one child was in the home. The authors noted that more research is needed to examine ethnic difference related to maternal age and use of discipline among Mexican parents. Also, this study demonstrated that ethnic or cultural differences may diminish or disappear when comparing parents with similar levels of education.

In an analog study, Buriel et al. (1991) compared disciplinary preferences of 63 Mexican American mothers with children between the ages of 5 and 9 years-old. Mothers were divided into two groups, those born in the U.S. (native-born) and Mexico (foreign-born). Buriel et al. presented mothers with hypothetical situations that described child misbehaviors (e.g., disobedience, breaking an object, fighting) and asked mothers to imagine this was their own child and rate how likely they would be to use spanking and other disciplinary techniques (e.g., scolding, reasoning, restriction of privileges). Buriel et al. found that even after controlling for socioeconomic differences, foreign-born mothers had a greater likelihood than native-born to endorse using physical discipline. However, all mothers first preferred non-physical means of discipline (restriction of privileges and scolding) more than spanking. Interestingly, Buriel et al. (1991) noted that even though foreign-born mothers endorsed spanking more often, they also paired spanking with a verbal explanation for their behavior. This study highlights how a combination of disciplinary practices is preferred by native and foreign-born mothers. Although foreign-

born mothers were more likely to endorse spanking, this was not their most preferred or only disciplinary practice.

Parenting Styles versus Practices

Some studies (e.g., Florsheim, Tolan, & Gorman-Smith, 1996; Varela, Vernberg, Sanchez-Sosa, Riveros, Mitchell, & Mashunkashey, 2004) have examined parenting styles (e.g., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) among Mexican families. Wissow (2002) suggest that spanking has been associated with an authoritarian (high control and low warmth) style of parenting. However, there is a paucity of research supporting these conclusions and parents identified as authoritative (high warmth and control) and permissive (high warmth but low control) have also been shown to endorse use of CP (Wissow).

Varela et al. (2004) compared differences in parenting styles between Caucasian and Mexican-origin parents, including Mexican parents living in Mexico, Mexican immigrants, and Mexican Americans. Varela et al. found that across ethnic groups, parents reported using more authoritative than authoritarian parenting styles. Mexican parents living in Mexico did not report more authoritarian parenting than Caucasians. However, Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans living in the United States reported more authoritarian parenting than Mexicans in Mexico. Varela and colleagues concluded that among parents of Mexican-origin living in the U.S., factors associated with living in a host country and being an ethnic minority might contribute to differences in parenting styles. They suggest that researchers and clinicians should not assume that parents of Mexican-origin will have authoritarian parenting styles and should also examine the possible outcomes of parenting behaviors. It should be noted that the

acculturation measure used in this study (*Cultural Lifestyles Inventory*; Mendoza, 1989) only assessed level of assimilation into the U.S. culture. Therefore, greater specificity in the assessment of acculturation may help clarify the influence of culture on parenting practices of Mexican-origin families (Varela et al.). Furthermore, this study examined parenting styles but did not directly assess parents' use of corporal punishment.

There is a distinction between parenting styles and parenting practices. Parenting styles are viewed as a combination of parent-child relationship factors such as communication, parenting attitudes, and expectations (Fox, Platz, & Bentley, 1995). Unlike parenting styles, parenting practices are defined as specific goal directed behaviors conducted by parents within the context of childrearing (Fox et al.). The constructs of parenting styles applied to one culture may not be appropriate for others since parent and child behaviors could be construed as appropriate or problematic depending on the cultural context (Florsheim, Tolan, & Gorman-Smith, 1996). Instead of attempting to classify parents according to these parenting styles, it may be more useful to examine cultural variations in parenting behaviors and their outcomes on child functioning. Although, these parenting styles may determine parents' interactions with their children, they appear to lack generalization to other non-Western cultures.

Mexican Parenting Practices and Child Outcomes

Similar to Caucasian and African American families, parenting practices have also been found to influence child adjustment in Mexican American families. Dumka, Roosa, and Jackson (1997) investigated how mothers' parenting practices (supportive parenting and inconsistent discipline) influenced child adjustment (conduct disorder and depression) among low-income Mexican immigrant and Mexican American families. In

this study, high levels of maternal supportive parenting practices were associated with low levels of child depression and conduct disorder. In contrast, high levels of inconsistent parenting were associated with high levels of child depression and conduct disorder. Higher maternal acculturation was related to greater consistency in discipline. Possible explanations offered by Dumka et al. is that higher acculturated mothers have more contact with the majority culture and might adopt more directive and restrictive parenting practices. Also, these mothers may be more aware of child risk factors (i.e., discrimination and poverty) and thus be more protective. This study had various limitations including using mothers from predominantly low income and acculturation levels, it lacked a specific measure of corporal punishment, and it did not assess for relevant cultural values associated with parenting. Also, this study only included mothers of fourth graders thus having a restricted range of child ages.

In a similar study, Hill, Bush, and Roosa (2003) examined the relationship between parenting practices and child conduct problems and depression among low-income Mexican American and Euro-American families living in the same neighborhood. Hill et al. found that across both groups, families with high levels of warmth, acceptance, and consistent discipline and low levels of family conflict and hostile control had children with fewer conduct problems and depressive symptoms. Hill et al. found significant differences between English and Spanish-speaking Mexican American families in that the use of hostile control co-occurred with maternal acceptance for Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans. Acceptance and hostile control was negatively correlated for Euro-Americans, unrelated for English-speaking Mexican Americans, and positively correlated for Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans. Based on these results,

Hill et al. hypothesized that for Spanish-speaking Mexican Americans, use of hostile control and acceptance could serve as protective factors against developing conduct problems. However, they did not test this assumption. Hill and colleagues suggested that low-acculturated Mexican American parents handle their children with a combination of warmth and hostility, which they claim could be adaptive for parents and children during the acculturation process. A major limitation of this study was that they used language preference as a measure of acculturation. Also, parents were from a low income group, which may limit generalizability to middle and upper class families.

The Hill et al. (2003) study contrasted Parke et al. (2004), which found that for European and Mexican American fathers of fifth grade children, use of hostile parenting practices was associated with negative child adjustment problems. For Mexican American mothers, higher acculturation levels was associated with decreased use of hostile parenting strategies, which could be a result of mothers having more knowledge and acceptance of non-coercive discipline practices (i.e., restriction of privileges and reasoning) as well as being more aware of unacceptable attitudes about physical discipline (Park et al.). According to Parke et al., more research on parenting, acculturation, and child adjustment is needed.

Respeto as a Cultural Value among Hispanics

A culturally based value that might influence discipline practices, including the use of CP, is respect. Respect, translated as *respeto* in Spanish, has been found to be a common cultural value among Latino parents (Harwood et al., 2002). In Mexican families, the concepts of children demonstrating *respeto* and good manners (*buena educaciòn*) is highly valued (Garcia, 2001). *Respeto* refers to “knowing the level of

courtesy and decorum required in a given situation in relation to other people of a particular age, sex, and social status” (Harwood et al., p. 25). *Respeto* implies a relation status which is communicated by interpersonal interactions and communication (Garcia, 1996); for example, using formal greetings and names for individuals in an authority position. In relation to childrearing values, respect is often equated with children being obedient (Arcia & Johnson, 1998; Gonzalez-Ramos, Zayas, & Cohen, 1998). Although authors agree that *respeto* is a common cultural value across Hispanics and that Hispanics place a greater emphasis on *respeto* than European Americans, there is little research on how acculturation impacts beliefs and expectations related to *respeto* (Harwood et al).

Arcia and Johnson (1998) described values that Mexican-immigrant mothers of young children (8 years and younger) found were important to instill in their children. Mexican-immigrant mothers in this study reported that children should be compliant, well-behaved, and respectful. Furthermore, mothers rated children being respectful as a high priority childrearing value. Respect was described as children recognizing their place in a social hierarchy and being obedient to authority. Being polite, courteous, and well-mannered were also listed as part of children being respectful.

Respect has been contrasted with critical thinking because the focus is on accepting the authority figures point-of-view without questioning or arguing (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993). Furthermore, unlike with expressing critical thinking, children are expected to be good listeners and not participate in adult conversations unless asked. Some examples of children demonstrating *respeto* in Mexican families according to Delgado-Gaitan, include children greeting adults politely (i.e., using the formal version of you, *usted*, instead of *tu*) and not interrupting adults. In a case study of five Mexican-

immigrant and first-generation Mexican American families in California, Delgado-Gaitan found that in Mexican-immigrant and first-generation Mexican families, teaching a child to be respectful to authority figures (i.e., parents, grandparents, or other adults) was a main component of childrearing. This was typically done by instructing the child to show respect and scolding the child for parent perceived violations of respect. In comparison to Mexican-immigrant families, Mexican American families incorporated emphasis on respect with allowing a child to be inquisitive or demonstrate aspects of critical thinking.

No studies to date have examined how differences in acculturation level impact childrearing values of *respeto* with Mexican-origin parents. However, research on *respeto* and acculturation has been conducted with other Hispanic groups. For example, in a sample of low-income, urban, Puerto Rican mothers of preschoolers, Gonzalez-Ramos, Zayas, and Cohen (1998) found that lower acculturated mothers ranked respect as a more important child-rearing value than did higher acculturated mothers. Children demonstrating honesty and responsibility were also ranked as highly important values. Also, mother's emphasis on respect and obedience were main child socialization goals, especially for less acculturated mothers. As acculturation increases, the importance of respect as a childrearing or child socialization goal might resemble Anglo values (Gonzalez-Ramos et al.). In other words, as parents become more acculturated to the majority culture, they may be less likely to endorse certain traditional cultural values. According to Harwood et al (2002) and Gonzalez-Ramos et al., more research is needed to examine the effects of acculturation on childrearing beliefs and practices among different Latino groups.

In sum, values such as respect, obedience, honesty, loyalty to family, and sharing have been identified as important childrearing values within Hispanic families (Gonzalez-Ramos, et al., 1998). Hispanic parents will likely engage in parenting practices that are likely to promote these values in their children. As researchers and clinicians are likely to encounter increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse populations, they must recognize how cultural beliefs and values are manifested in parenting practices (Gonzalez-Ramos et al., 1998). Knowing how parenting practices are influenced by cultural beliefs and values will assist clinicians to effectively serve culturally diverse families.

Limitations of CP Research with Families of Mexican-origin

As seen, there are inconsistent findings related to the types of parenting practices used by families of Mexican-origin. Ethnic differences related to parenting practices are often attributed to ethnicity; however, research does not disentangle the influences of culture and socioeconomic status as possible alternative explanations of results (Hill et al., 2003). Furthermore, discrepancies in parenting research related to discipline and child behavioral problems among Hispanic families may be due to the differences in acculturation and cultural values (Hill et al.). Therefore, caution should be applied when making generalizations across and within ethnic minority groups due to possible individual and group differences.

When investigating predictors and outcomes associated with CP with families of Mexican-origin, it is necessary to control for possible confounding variables such as child and parent demographic variables. Specifically, socioeconomic factors such as income and education need to be accounted for when conducting research with Mexican-origin families (Dumka et al., 1997). A major limitation of research with Mexican families is

that authors often conclude that results are attributed to ethnicity or culture without controlling for socioeconomic and other contextual factors.

One important limitation of previous studies is the methodology in how corporal punishment was assessed. As an example, some studies that have investigated the approval or use of discipline practices with Hispanics (Medora et al., 2001) and parents of Mexican-origin (Buriel et al., 1991) have used analogue methods rather than directly asking parents about their actual discipline strategies. Thus, it cannot be assumed that hypothetical situations would generalize to real world situations.

Another limitation pertains to the homogeneity assumed when the Hispanic subgroup is not specified. As an example, though studies have inquired about use of CP (Cardona et al., 2000) as well as CP and child outcomes (McLoyd & Smith, 2002; Straus, 1994) these studies did not specify what Hispanic subgroup was included. As noted earlier, there is great heterogeneity between Hispanic subgroups and thus results cannot be generalized across different groups.

A related limitation of research with Mexican families is not accounting for within group differences, especially, in regards to the relationship between acculturation and parenting beliefs and practices. Parenting practices may vary depending on level of acculturation (Dumka et al., 1997; Parke, et al., 2004). There is considerable variation in immigration status and acculturation levels within Mexican families in the United States (Garcia-Coll & Vazquez Garcia, 1995). As mentioned previously, Solis-Camera and Fox (1995) compared parenting practices, including physical discipline between similarly educated Mexican mothers living in Mexico and Caucasians in the U.S. This study provided some information about common and differing parenting strategies of mothers

with young children. However, results may not generalize to parents of Mexican-origin living in the United States and to families with children older than 5 years of age.

Most studies of Hispanics substitute generational status for acculturation level and draw conclusions based on these methods (Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Asencio, & Miller, 2002). According to Dumka et al. (1997), immigration status and years of residency are not the same as acculturation level. For example, certain individuals can reside in the U.S. for many years or be of a 2nd or 3rd generation, yet still adhere to traditional Mexican values and practices. Different generations have varying exposure to both their culture of origin and the host country (Harwood et al.). In addition, generation status or language preference is not a sufficient measure of acculturation since country of birth does not determine knowledge or adherence to Mexican beliefs or cultural practices. Therefore, when conducting research with Mexican populations, it is essential to examine differences based on acculturation levels using an acculturation measure with adequate specificity.

Lastly, when conducting research with Mexican families, it is necessary to take into account cultural factors that may influence the relationship between ethnicity and approval of CP. As stated previously, cultural values related to parenting such as respect can provide more information than ethnicity as a proxy variable. The following section describes respect and highlights the importance of examining how this belief may impact the use of CP in families of Mexican-origin.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine culturally specific variables, such as acculturation and respect as predictors of corporal punishment (CP) in families of

Mexican-origin. Additionally, this study examined the relationship between CP and externalizing (e.g., noncompliance, aggression, destructiveness) behavior problems among Mexican-origin children. In order to expand CP research with Mexican families, the following research questions and hypotheses were addressed

RQ1. Does mothers' level of acculturation predict use of CP?

H1: After controlling for child (age and gender) and mother (age, education, marital status, and income) demographic variables, mothers with higher acculturation levels will be less likely to use CP.

Research related to the acceptability of CP in Hispanic families has yielded mixed results (e.g., Buriel, Mercado, Rodriguez, & Chavez, 1991; Cardona, Nicholson, & Fox, 2000; Medora, Wilson, & Larson, 2001). Research suggests that acculturation impacts parenting practices such as consistent, supportive, and coercive parenting practices (Dumka et al., 1997). This hypothesis is consistent with Parke et al. (2004), which found that for Mexican American mothers, higher acculturation levels were associated with less hostile parenting practices.

RQ2. Does mothers' level of acculturation predict their belief in children demonstrating respeto?

H2: It is predicted that as level of acculturation increases, mothers' belief in children demonstrating *respeto* will decrease.

The Gonzalez-Ramos et al. (1998) study with Puerto Rican mothers found that lower acculturated mothers ranked respect as a more important childrearing value than higher acculturated mothers. Since most authors agree that *respeto* is a common value among Hispanics, the Gonzalez-Ramos et al. study lends some support that this same

phenomenon would be found in families of Mexican-origin. However, these results still need to be tested with parents of Mexican-origin. Also, Delgado-Gaitan (1993) found differences between Mexican-immigrant and first-generation Mexican American parents in that Mexican American parents demonstrated more flexibility incorporating respect and Anglo-based values such as critical thinking into childrearing. Thus, some differences in adherence to traditional cultural values have been observed within families of Mexican-origin.

RQ3. Does mothers' belief in children demonstrating respeto predict use of CP?

H3: After controlling for child (age and gender) and mother (age, education, marital status, and income) demographic variables, it is predicted that mothers who hold higher beliefs in *respeto* as a childrearing value will be more likely to use CP.

To date, no studies have examined belief in *respeto* as a predictor of CP. Because parents who value *respeto* are more likely to expect children to be obedient (Arcia & Johnson, 1998; Gonzalez-Ramos, Zayas, & Cohen, 1998) one way to achieve obedience is through using CP. In turn, when a child obeys, they are demonstrating *respeto*. Research with Caucasians suggests that parents are more likely to use CP if they believe in its effectiveness to achieve compliance (Andero & Stewart, 2002). Thus, this may generalize to Mexican mothers who highly value children demonstrating respect. Therefore, mothers of Mexican-origin who highly value respect may use physical discipline to shape a child's behavior, despite it possibly being a harsh form of discipline.

RQ4. Does mothers' belief in children demonstrating respeto mediate the relationship between level of acculturation and use of CP?

H4: If acculturation is a significant predictor of *respeto* and if *respeto* is a significant predictor of CP, then *respeto* will mediate the relationship between acculturation and use of CP. In other words, including *respeto* as a predictor of CP use may minimize or account for some of the relationship between acculturation and CP.

RQ5. After controlling for mother demographic variables (age, education, marital status, and income) and use of non-physical discipline, does maternal use of CP predict externalizing behavior problems among children of Mexican-origin?

H5: It is predicted that there will be a significant relationship between CP and child externalizing behavior problems such that higher levels of CP will predict an increase in child behavior problems.

According to Straus (1994), CP has a universal harm effect in that regardless of sociocultural context it is associated with undesirable effects during childhood and adulthood (i.e., aggression, delinquency, substance use, poor academic performance). There is substantial research to suggest that CP is related to externalizing behavior problems; however, the majority of studies examining this relationship have been conducted with Caucasians (e.g., Brenner & Fox, 1998; Gershoff, 2002; Michels, Pianta, & Reeve, 1993; Stormshak, Bierman, McMahon, & Lengua, 2000; Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994). There has been some research with Hispanics and African Americans (e.g., McLoyd & Smith, 2002; Straus, 1994) but no studies to date have specifically examined this relationship with families of Mexican-origin.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

The community sample consisted of 83 mothers of Mexican-origin with a least one child between 3 to 8 years of age (please see Table 1 for additional demographic information). It was estimated that a sample size of 83 would provided sufficient statistical power to detect a medium effect size at an alpha level of .05 (Cohen, 1992). Through recruitment efforts, 124 mothers initially expressed interest in the study. After a telephone screening process, 41 mothers were excluded due to invalid telephone numbers, their children not being in the appropriate age range, or mothers not willing to participate.

The mean age of the mothers was 31 years ($SD = 5.2$ years). Sixteen mothers (19%) were first generation (i.e., born in Mexico), 22 (27%) were second generation (i.e., parent(s) born in Mexico), 11 (13%) were third generation, 16 (19%) were fourth generation, and 18 (22%) were fifth generation. Twelve of the first generation mothers and one second generation mother completed the measures in Spanish. First generation mothers had a mean of 15.5 years ($SD = 8.2$) living in the United States. The majority of mothers were married and indicated that another adult lived in the household, specifically, 61 (74%) of these adults were the child's father. Mothers were asked to list their annual household income; however, 7 mothers left this question blank. Income levels ranged from \$1,200 a year to \$75,000 a year, with a mean of \$34,166 ($SD = 19,958$) a year.

Mothers who had more than one child between the ages of 3 and 8 were instructed to complete the questionnaires in regard to the youngest child. Forty (48%) of the children for which the questionnaires were complete were 3 to 5 years old, while 43 (52%) were 6 to 8 years old. The mean child age was 5.6 years ($SD = 1.69$ years). Thirty-nine (47%) of the children were male and 44 (53%) were female.

Materials

Demographic Questionnaire. Parents reported the following demographic variables, age, gender, marital status, education level, generation status, occupation, annual household income, religious affiliation, and number and ages of children, number of adults living in the household, and years of residency in the U.S.

Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II; Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). Parents' acculturation level was assessed using the ARSMA-II. The ARSMA-II is a paper and pencil self-report questionnaire that consists of 30 items, which measure acculturation based on a multidimensional model (integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization). Respondents rated the extent that their language preference, ethnic identification, social affiliations, and daily practices reflect Mexican or Anglo culture. Responses are rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely often or almost always). The ARSMA has two subscales, the 17 item Mexican Orientation Subscale (MOS) and the 13 item Anglo Orientation Subscale (AOS). These scales are scored by summing responses for items reflecting Mexican culture for the MOS and Anglo culture for the AOS. Good construct validity and internal reliability has been reported for both subscales (Cronbach's Alpha= .88 for MOS and .86 for AOS). In the current study, good internal reliability was obtained for the ARSMA-II

Total ($\alpha = .63$), AOS ($\alpha = .91$) and MOS ($\alpha = .88$) scales. The ARSMA-II has been translated in both English and Spanish. In order to obtain an individual's linear acculturation score based along a continuum from very Mexican Oriented to very Anglo oriented the MOS mean is subtracted from the AOS mean. The acculturation score can be used to categorize individuals into 1 of 5 acculturation levels based on a linear continuum with higher levels reflecting higher acculturation (Level 1 = < -1.33 , Level 2 = ≥ -1.33 & $\leq -.07$, Level 3 = ≥ 1.19 & < 2.45 , Level 5 = > 2.45).

Discipline Questionnaire. The Discipline Questionnaire is a modified version of the *Conflict Tactics Scale Parent-Child Version* (CTSPC: Straus, Hamby, & Warren, 2003). The full CTSPC was not used because it assesses for constructs not relevant to the current study such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. The scale consists of 10 items that inquire about the frequency during the past 12 months (never, once, twice, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, 11-20 times, more than 20 times) of parents using corporal punishment and nonphysical discipline. The following six items measure corporal punishment: spanked child on the bottom; shook child; hit child on the bottom with belt or hairbrush; slapped child on the hand, arm, or leg; pinched child; slapped child on the face, head, or ears. Four items measure nonphysical discipline: put child in time-out; explained to child what they did wrong; gave child something else to do that was more appropriate; and took away privileges. Scoring for the two scales (Corporal Punishment and Non-Physical Discipline) consisted of obtaining the sum of items in that scale. Permission to modify this scale was obtained from the author (M.A. Straus, personal communication, October 25, 2005). In past research (Straus, Hamby, & Warren, 2003), the CTSPC has demonstrated adequate construct validity and internal reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$ for

Nonviolent Discipline and .55 for Physical Assault). The current study also obtained adequate internal reliability for both the Corporal Punishment (Cronbach's $\alpha = .64$) and Non-Physical Discipline (Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$) scales.

Child Respect Scale (CRS; Ibanez & Borrego, 2005). The CRS was developed for this study to measure parents' belief in children demonstrating respect to authorities. The items for this scale were selected based on definitions and examples of respect given by authors of conceptual (Harwood et al., 2002; Garcia, 1996) and research articles (Arcia & Johnson, 1998; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Gonzalez-Ramos, Zayas, Cohen, 1998). Parents were asked how much they agree with statements about their child showing respect and obedience towards authority figures. The CRS consists of 14 items rated on a 7-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Scoring consisted of obtaining the sum of all items. Item 6 is reverse scored. Higher scores on the CRS reflect stronger beliefs in children demonstrating respect to authority. Due to low inter-item correlations, items 6 ("It is okay for my child to call adults by their first name") and 10 ("My child should not speak until spoken to by adults") were excluded from the final 12 item scale. In this study, good internal reliability was obtained for the 12 item CRS (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). Please see Table 2 for inter-item correlations.

Child Behavior Checklist Ages 1 ½ - 5 & 6-18 (CBCL: Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000, 2001). The parent-report versions (ages 1 ½- 5 and 6-18) of the Child Behavior Checklist was used to assess child internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. The CBCL for ages 1 ½ to 5 has 100-items and the 6-18 years has 113-items that asks parents to rate how often the listed problem behaviors occur with their child (0 = not true, 1= somewhat or sometimes true, 2 = very true or often true). The CBCL is available in English and

Spanish. Extensive research has been conducted establishing the CBCL as a valid and reliable measure to rate child functioning. Both the CBCL 1 ½ - 5 and 6-18 have shown excellent test-retest (7-8 day intervals) reliability Pearson correlations ranging from .80 to .90, and .93 to 1.00, respectively. The Externalizing scale assesses child conduct problems, aggressive behaviors, and attention problems. The Internalizing scale of the CBCL assesses child depression, anxiety, somatic complaints, and emotional reactivity. A computer scoring program was used to score CBCL profiles. Individual scores for the Internalizing and Externalizing scales were examined, which consist of obtaining T-scores for these scales. Scores are considered to be in the clinical range if greater than 64T.

Religiosity Questionnaire. Mothers completed a six-item questionnaire about their religious affiliation, church attendance, and religious practices. These items were obtained from previous studies on religiosity (e.g., Hovey, 1999 and Fetzer Institute, 1999). Items were rated on a six-point Likert scale (0 = not at all religious/not at all influential to 6 = extremely religious/extremely influential). Good internal consistency was obtained for these three items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). Mothers also reported their frequency of church attendance and praying in private.

Procedures

Approval to conduct this study was obtained from the Texas Tech University Internal Review Board. Mothers were recruited in person from local community cultural events (e.g., *Jamaicas* and the *Raiders Rojos Back to School Fiesta*) and from research laboratory studies. Recruitment and data collection were done by the researcher and graduate and undergraduate research assistants. At the recruitment events, parents were

given a flyer and informed that the study was investigating discipline practices among families of Mexican-origin. Mothers were then asked to provide a telephone number and were contacted at a later date to solicit participation. Mothers who agreed to participate when contacted via telephone had the option to complete the study at the Texas Tech University Psychology Department or in their home. The vast majority of mothers (92%) selected to complete the questionnaires at their home. Prior to participating in the study, parents were asked their language preference (English or Spanish) and measures were administered accordingly. Measures were translated into Spanish by the researcher, back-translated into English by an undergraduate research assistant of Mexican-origin, and any discrepancies were resolved by another translator (research supervisor). Spanish versions of the ARSMA-II and CBCL were already available from the original authors. Informed consent was obtained prior to administering the measures. Mothers completed the paper and pencil measures in the following order: Demographics Form, ARSMA-II, Religiosity Questionnaire, modified CTSPC/Discipline Questionnaire, Child Respeto Scale, and CBCL. The study took one-hour to complete and participants were given \$10 for participating. A brief oral debriefing was provided by the researcher in which it was explained that the purpose of the study was to learn about how parenting practices and culture impact discipline choices. Mothers were also provided with contact information for community mental health resources.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were obtained for demographic variables and study variables (e.g., ARSMA, Corporal Punishment, Nonphysical Discipline, Respeto, Religiosity, and CBCL). Prior to

data analysis, data was inspected for missing data and outliers. Seven participants did not report their annual household income and one participant had missing values on the CBCL. Data analyses indicated that income was not correlated with use of nonphysical discipline practices ($r = .079$, $p = .498$) or corporal punishment ($r = .059$, $p = .615$); therefore, in the first hierarchical regression, income was excluded from the analyses ($N = 83$). The only variable significantly associated with income was education ($r = .342$, $p < .01$). As education increased, so did the mothers' reported annual household income. A series of simple linear and hierarchical regressions were conducted to test the hypotheses. When applicable, results are presented by examining the full regression model R^2 , R^2 change (ΔR^2), and the standardized regression coefficient (β). The regression assumptions, including normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity of residuals, were met for all regression analyses. Please see Table 3 for a summary of descriptive statistics for study variables. Please see Tables 4 and 5 for a summary of the percentages of mothers who reported using nonphysical and physical discipline.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Bivariate Correlations

Corporal Punishment and Nonphysical Discipline. Corporal punishment was significantly positively associated with nonphysical punishment ($r = .406, p < .001$) (please see Table 6). Therefore greater use of corporal punishment was related to greater use of nonphysical discipline. Education was significantly positively correlated with use of nonphysical discipline ($r = .290, p < .01$) but not with corporal punishment ($r = .198, p = .073$). Corporal punishment ($r = .251, p < .05$) and nonphysical discipline ($r = .354, p < .001$) were positively associated with generation status. As generation status increased, mothers were more likely to use corporal punishment and nonphysical discipline. The ARSMA Total Acculturation score ($r = .335, p < .01$) and Anglo orientation ($r = .327, p < .01$) were positively correlated with use of nonphysical discipline, while Mexican Orientation was negatively correlated with nonphysical discipline ($r = -.266, p < .05$). Therefore, as acculturation and Anglo orientation increased, mothers' use of nonphysical discipline also increased; while higher levels of Mexican orientation was related to less use of nonphysical discipline. There were no significant correlations between corporal punishment and acculturation, Anglo orientation, or Mexican orientation ($r = .206, .178, \text{ and } -.189, \text{ respectively}, p > .05$). As predicted, there was a significant positive relationship between corporal punishment and CBCL child externalizing (T score) behavior problems ($r = .228, p < .05$). However, there was not a significant correlation between use of nonphysical discipline and child

externalizing (T score) behavior problems ($r = .178, p = .11$). Therefore, greater use of corporal punishment was related to greater child externalizing behavior problems.

Post-hoc analyses revealed that out of the religiosity questions, the only significant correlation with discipline practices was between mothers' frequency of praying in private and corporal punishment ($r = .260, p < .05$). Thus, mothers who prayed more frequently were more likely to endorse use of CP. The correlation between religiosity and respeto approached significance ($r = .20, p = .07$), thus, higher religiosity was associated with greater belief in respeto. Religiosity was not significantly associated with the acculturation total score ($r = .13, p = .26$), MOS ($r = -.06, p = .61$), or AOS ($r = .16, p = .14$).

Generation Status. There was a significant positive correlation between mothers' generation status and education ($r = .314, p < .01$); therefore, as generation status increased so did education level. Generation status was positively associated with the ARSMA Total acculturation score ($r = .721, p < .01$) in that later generation status was associated with higher acculturation. As would be expected, generation status was positively associated with the Anglo Orientation Scale ($r = .619, p < .01$) and negatively associated with the Mexican Orientation Scale ($r = -.664, p < .01$). Therefore, the higher the generation status, the more oriented mothers were to Anglo culture, and the less they were oriented toward Mexican culture.

Acculturation, AOS, & MOS. Acculturation, as measured by the ARSMA Total score, was significantly positively associated with Anglo orientation ($r = .900, p < .001$) and negatively associated with Mexican orientation ($r = -.876, p < .001$). Education was also positively associated with acculturation ($r = .566, p < .001$) and Anglo orientation (r

= .559, $p < .001$). However, education was negatively associated with Mexican orientation ($r = -.441, p < .001$). These relationships suggest that more acculturated and Anglo-orientation mothers had more years of education than the lower acculturated, Mexican-oriented mothers.

Respeto. Acculturation, as measured by the ARSMA Total score, was positively associated with *respeto* ($r = .446, p < .001$). *Respeto* was positively correlated with education ($r = .392, p < .001$), generation status ($r = .322, p < .01$), Anglo orientation ($r = .455, p < .001$), and nonphysical discipline ($r = .246, p < .05$). In contrast, *respeto* was negatively correlated with Mexican orientation ($r = -.331, p < .01$). Thus, contrary to expectations, mothers who endorsed greater belief in children demonstrating *respeto* had higher levels of education, later generation status, higher use of nonphysical discipline, and higher acculturation and Anglo orientation. Also, contrary to predictions, lower levels of belief in *respeto* were associated with mothers being more Mexican oriented.

Regression Analyses

H1: Corporal Punishment and Acculturation. A hierarchical regression was used to test the first hypothesis that after controlling for child and mother demographic variables, acculturation, as measured by the ARSMA Total score, would be a significant predictor of corporal punishment. The dependent variable was mothers' use of corporal punishment in the past year. This score was obtained by summing the six corporal punishment items on the CTSPC. The age and gender (dummy coded with male as the reference group) of the child for which mothers rated discipline and behavior problems was entered as a set in the first step. Next, the mothers' demographic variables, including marital status (dummy coded with married as the reference group), education, and age

were entered as a set in the second step. The ARSMA total score was entered in the final step.

The full regression model accounted for 17% of the variance in corporal punishment, $F(6, 76) = 2.67, p < .05$. Child age and gender accounted for 8% of the variance in use of corporal punishment, $F(2, 80) = 3.29, p < .05$. When mothers' marital status, age, and education were entered in the second step, it significantly improved the model by accounting for an additional 9% of the variance in corporal punishment ($\Delta R^2 = .09, p < .05$). When acculturation was entered in the final model, it did not account for any additional significant amount of the variance in use of corporal punishment, above and beyond child and mother demographic variables ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .45$). Therefore, hypothesis one was not supported; after accounting for child and mother demographic variables, acculturation was not a significant predictor of mothers' use of corporal punishment.

To examine if the Mexican Orientation (MOS) and Anglo Orientation (AOS) individual subscales of the ARSMA were predictors of use of corporal punishment, a second hierarchical regression analyses was conducted. Similarly to described in the above analyses, child demographic variables (age and gender) and mothers' demographic variables (marital status, age, and education) were entered in the regression analysis as step one and two, respectively (see Table 7). The full regression model accounted for 17% of the variance in corporal punishment, $F(7, 75) = 2.26, p < .05$. When Mexican orientation was entered in the third step, it did not improve the prediction model ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .45$). When Anglo orientation was entered in the fourth step, it also did not improve the prediction model ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .84$). As part of a post-hoc analysis, an

interaction term between MOS and AOS was created and entered as a fifth step in this model. The result of this interaction was not significant ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .43$). Therefore, after child and mother demographic variables were entered as predictors of corporal punishment, neither Mexican nor Anglo orientations were significant predictors of mothers using corporal punishment.

H2: Respeto and Acculturation. A simple linear regression was conducted to test the second hypothesis that acculturation would be a significant predictor of *respeto*. Acculturation was a significant predictor of *respeto*, accounting for 20% of the variance, $F(1, 81) = 20.10, p < .001$. However, the relationship between acculturation and *respeto* was in the opposite direction to what was predicted, in that higher levels of acculturation was associated with higher belief in *respeto* ($\beta = .45, p < .001$).

Next, a hierarchical regression was conducted to examine if the Mexican orientation or Anglo orientation scales were significant predictors of *respeto*. Mexican orientation was entered in the first step and Anglo orientation was entered in the second step (Table 8). The full model with both Mexican and Anglo orientation accounted for 21% of the variance in *respeto*, $F(2, 80) = 10.89, p < .001$. Mexican orientation alone accounted for 10% of the variance in *respeto*, $F(1, 81) = 9.95, p < .01$. Anglo orientation accounted for an additional 11% of the variance in *respeto*, ($p < .01$), and Anglo orientation was a significant predictor of *respeto* ($\beta = .396, p < .01$). When Anglo orientation was added to the model, Mexican orientation was no longer a significant predictor of Respeto ($\beta = -.10, p = .40$). Therefore, mothers who were more oriented toward Anglo culture endorsed higher belief in children demonstrating *respeto* than

Mexican oriented mothers. Furthermore, Anglo orientation appeared to be a better predictor of *respeto* than Mexican orientation alone.

H3: Respeto and Corporal Punishment. A hierarchical regression was used to test the third hypothesis that after controlling for child and mother demographic variables, *respeto* would be a significant predictor of corporal punishment. As in hypothesis one, child (age and gender) and mother (marital status, age, and education) demographic variables were entered in steps 1 and 2, respectively. The full regression model account for 19% of the variance in corporal punishment, $F(6, 76) = 2.93, p < .01$. Child demographic variables accounted for 8% of the variance in corporal punishment, $F(2, 80) = 3.29, p < .05$. Mothers' demographic variables accounted for an additional 9% of the variance in corporal punishment ($\Delta R^2 = .09, p < .05$). This hypothesis was not supported since *Respeto* was not a significant predictor of CP, above and beyond child and mother demographic variables ($\Delta R^2 = .02, p = .17$). Thus, mother's belief in children demonstrating *respeto* did not predict their likelihood of using corporal punishment. Furthermore, because this hypothesis was not supported, it was not possible to conduct the proposed test of mediation to examine whether *respeto* would be a significant mediator of the relationship between acculturation and corporal punishment (H4).

H5: Corporal Punishment and Externalizing Behaviors. A hierarchical regression was conducted to test the last hypothesis that corporal punishment would be a significant predictor of child externalizing behavior problems, as measured by the CBCL Externalizing subscale T score. Mother's demographic variables (age, marital status, and education) were entered in first step (Table 9). Mothers' use of nonphysical discipline in the past year was entered in the second step. This score was obtained by summing the

four nonphysical discipline items on the CTSPC. Mothers' use of corporal punishment in the past year was entered in the final model. The full regression model accounted for 23% of the variance in child externalizing behavior problems, $F(5, 76) = 4.55, p < .01$. In the first model, mother's demographic variables accounted for a significant 12% of variance in child behavior problems, $F(3, 78) = 3.59, p < .05$. In step two, nonphysical discipline was not a significant predictor of child behavior problems ($\Delta R^2 = .03, \beta = .20, p = .09$). However, when corporal punishment was added to the model, it accounted for an additional 8% of the variance in child behavior problems ($\beta = .31, p < .01$). Therefore, this hypothesis was supported. Corporal punishment was a significant predictor of child externalizing behavior problems, above and beyond mother's demographic variables and nonphysical discipline, such that higher levels of corporal punishment were associated with higher levels of behavior problems.

A post-hoc hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine if there was an interaction between acculturation and corporal punishment when predicting child externalizing behavior problems. The full regression model accounted for 10% of the variance in externalizing behavior problems, $F(3, 78) = 2.77, p < .05$. When the Total ARSMA acculturation score (centered variable) was entered in the first step it did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in behavior problems ($R^2 = .02, p = .25$). When corporal punishment (centered variable) was added in the second step, it accounted for a significant proportion of the variance ($\Delta R^2 = .07, p < .01$) in behavior problems. In the final step, the interaction between acculturation and corporal punishment (centered variables) was not significant, ($\Delta R^2 = .007, p = .43$). Therefore, there was not a main effect of acculturation nor was the interaction between acculturation and corporal

punishment a significant predictor of child externalizing behavior problems. This result suggests that regardless of mothers' level of acculturation, corporal punishment was a significant predictor of behavior problems.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between cultural factors and parenting behaviors for mothers of Mexican-origin with children 3 to 8 years old. Mothers' level of acculturation and belief in children demonstrating *respeto* were examined as predictors of corporal punishment use. The association between mothers' use of corporal punishment and child externalizing behavior problems was also examined. The results suggest that acculturation and *respeto* are not significant predictors of mothers using corporal punishment with their children. Given this, it was not possible to conduct a proposed test of mediation between the variables of acculturation, *respeto*, and corporal punishment. The study found that acculturation significantly predicted mothers' belief in *respeto*. However, contrary to expectations, higher levels of acculturation and Anglo-orientation were associated with mothers having a higher belief in *respeto*. Lastly, the results indicate that corporal punishment was a significant predictor of child behavior problems. Children who were disciplined with corporal punishment had higher levels of externalizing behavior problems.

Acculturation and Corporal Punishment

Hypothesis one stated that acculturation would be a significant predictor of corporal punishment. Contrary to what was predicted, acculturation was not significantly associated with corporal punishment. Higher acculturated and Anglo-oriented mothers endorsed using nonphysical discipline more frequently than less acculturated and Mexican-oriented mothers. Interestingly, the bivariate correlations suggest that later generations and Anglo-oriented mothers used nonphysical discipline more frequently

than earlier generation, Mexican-oriented mothers. This finding suggests that the use of nonphysical discipline is likely to increase as mothers become more Anglo-oriented.

These mothers may be exposed to nonphysical discipline strategies through their contact with the majority culture and their higher levels of education. Similar to Cuellar, Arnold, and Maldonado (1995), this study found that acculturation was positively related to education in that higher acculturated/Anglo-oriented mothers had more years of education.

In previous studies with non-Hispanic samples (Dietz, 2000; Jackson et al., 1999; Straus & Mathur, 1996) lower levels of education have been associated with more frequent use of corporal punishment. However, in the current study, corporal punishment was not significantly associated with mothers' level of education. In this sample, mothers with more education had a greater frequency than less educated mothers of using nonphysical discipline such as time-out, restriction of privileges, and reasoning.

Therefore, the finding that more acculturated and Anglo-oriented mothers were more likely to use nonphysical discipline could be explained by education level. As suggested by Cardona and colleagues (2000), Hispanic mothers from a higher socioeconomic background may believe they need to control their children and promote their success in academic and social domains by using more frequent discipline. These mothers may frequently use non-physical punishments such as time-out, scolding, and restriction of privileges to achieve their parenting expectations.

In this study, Mexican-oriented mothers did not report more frequent use of corporal punishment than Anglo-oriented mothers. This conclusion supports previous research (e.g., Solis-Camara & Fox, 1995), which found that Mexican parents living in

Mexico did not have higher use of corporal punishment in comparison to Caucasians in the U.S. Instead, contextual factors that arise from being an ethnic minority in a host culture such as poverty, segregation, and racism can impact discipline practices and may not necessarily reflect traditional Mexican cultural values and beliefs (Varela et al., 2004). It is also possible that lower acculturated mothers may have underreported using corporal punishment and may be unaware of how acceptable corporal punishment actually is in the United States. Some have argued that as immigrant parents have more contact with the host culture they will adopt the parenting practices of the majority culture (Dumka, Roosa, & Jackson, 1997). The findings of this study provide some support for the conclusion that physical discipline might not be a normative practice among this sample of mothers of Mexican origin. Other unidentified variables such as personal discipline history during childhood, child expectations, knowledge, and experience with particular discipline techniques may contribute to discipline practices.

Acculturation and Respeto

The second hypothesis stated that acculturation would be a significant predictor of mothers' belief in children demonstrating *respeto*. In this study, acculturation was a significant predictor of *respeto*. Furthermore, mothers with higher levels of acculturation were more likely to agree that children should demonstrate respect toward authority figures. Among Hispanic populations, *respeto* has been described as a culturally based parenting expectation that children should be obedient and exhibit respect toward adult authority figures (Arcia & Johnson, 1998; Gonzalez-Ramos, Zayas, & Cohen, 1998). In this study, acculturation was positively associated with *respeto*. In contrast to less acculturated and Mexican-oriented mothers, higher acculturated and Anglo-oriented

mothers were more likely to endorse the importance of children demonstrating *respeto*. Furthermore, education and generation status were positively associated with *respeto*. This finding suggests that belief in *respeto* does not decrease as mothers become more acculturated and that *respeto* is an important value for educated and later generation Mexican mothers as well. These results are contrary to a study of *respeto* with Puerto Rican mothers of preschool children (Gonzalez-Ramos et al., 1998) which found an opposite trend in that less acculturated mothers ranked *respeto* as a more important childrearing value than higher acculturated mothers. This highlights the importance of differentiating between subgroups of Hispanic populations when conducting research since results may vary by country of origin. Methodological differences such as the participant's country of origin and rating scales used between the current study and the Gonzalez et al. findings could account for the different findings.

Overall, higher acculturated mothers had higher scores on the *Respeto* scale than lower acculturated mothers. As noted in the methods section, scores on the *Respeto* Scale range from 1 to 84 with higher scores indicating higher agreement with the construct of *respeto*. In this study, scores on the *Respeto* Scale ranged from 39 to 84 ($M = 71.97$, $SD = 10.44$) suggesting mothers of Mexican-origin endorse that children should respect and obey authority figures. These results suggest that *respeto* is still viewed as an important childrearing value for these mothers. Thus, belief in *respeto* is likely to persist across generations. Furthermore, *respeto* may also be a traditional cultural value reflected in the South where this study was conducted (West Texas). Therefore, as mothers become more acculturated, their belief in *respeto* may be reinforced by the majority culture.

Respeto and Corporal Punishment

The third hypothesis, which stated that *respeto* would be a significant predictor of mothers' use of corporal punishment, was not supported. Therefore, regardless of how much mothers agreed or disagreed that children should demonstrate respect toward authority figures, it did not appear to influence their likelihood to use corporal punishment. Furthermore, since *respeto* was not significantly associated with corporal punishment, the proposed test of mediation could not be conducted. A possible explanation for the lack of association between *respeto* and use of corporal punishment may be that mothers who hold a strong belief in *respeto* may believe in eliciting *respeto* through other nonphysical means. Post-hoc analyses found that *respeto* was significantly positively correlated with mother's explaining to their child what they did wrong ($r = .25$, $p < .05$). *Respeto* was not significantly associated with any other nonphysical discipline practice, such as time-out ($r = .13$, $p = .27$), re-direction ($r = .12$, $p = .27$), and restriction of privileges ($r = .14$, $p = .20$). Therefore, mothers who endorsed higher belief in children demonstrating *respeto* also used frequent verbal reasoning or explanations with their child. According to Arcia and Johnson (1998), Mexican mothers give their children verbal instructions and reprimands as a means of educating their children about being respectful and obedient. Therefore, mothers who want to teach their children about these important childrearing values might do so through verbal explanation rather than physical punishment. In addition, mothers' acceptance of and prior history with corporal punishment could predict use of corporal punishment. As suggested by previous research (Ateah & Durrant, 2005), a combination of child and parent variables such as type of

child transgression and parental perception of intent could influence punishment for this population.

CP and Child Behavior Problems

As predicted by hypothesis five, the current study found that corporal punishment was a significant predictor of child externalizing behavior problems. The finding is consistent with research that has found a positive relationship between parental use of corporal punishment and child behavior problems (Brenner & Fox, 1998; McLoyd & Smith, 2002; Michels, Pianta, & Reeve, 1993; Stormshak, Bierman, McMahon, & Lengua, 2000; Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994; Straus, 1994). After statistically controlling for the frequency that children were disciplined with non-physical punishment, children who were disciplined with corporal punishment had higher rates of child externalizing behavior problems on the CBCL.

Throughout the past years there has been a continuous debate over whether or not corporal punishment leads to increased behavior problems in children. Consistent with the findings of this study, numerous researchers have concluded that corporal punishment is associated with higher rates of child behavior problems (Gershoff, 2002; Grogan-Kaylor, 2005; Strassberg et al., 1994; Straus, Sugarman, & Giles-Sims, 1997). Nevertheless, the causality of corporal punishment and behavior problems has been difficult to establish since the majority of studies, such as this one, are cross-sectional and correlational.

Some authors suggest that the association between corporal punishment and behavior problems is different across ethnic groups (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Stormshak et al., 2000; Simons et al., 2002). The majority of studies find that use of

corporal punishment is associated with greater externalizing child behavior problems for Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanics. The current study supports the conclusion that use of corporal punishment during the past year is associated with greater behavior problems among children of Mexican-origin. Our results are consistent with studies (e.g., McLoyd & Smith, 2002; Straus, 1994), which included Hispanic families and found a positive association between spanking and child behavior problems such as delinquency and physical aggression.

Methodological Implications

Acculturation. The current study contributes to the parenting and corporal punishment literature because it specified a subgroup of Hispanic mothers (Mexican-origin) and included mothers of various levels of acculturation. In the current study, the ARSMA was used to measure acculturation levels rather than relying on generation status as an indicator of acculturation. Also, this study inquired about the frequency of mothers using physical and nonphysical discipline rather than presenting hypothetical case vignettes. Although acculturation was not significantly associated with mother's use of corporal punishment, it was positively associated with use of nonphysical discipline. Therefore, the findings of the current study indicate that when examining discipline practices with families of Mexican-origin researchers should assess for levels of acculturation.

Congruent with previous research (e.g., Dietz, 2000; Jackson et al., 1999; Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995; Straus & Steward, 1999), child (age and gender) and mother (age, marital status, and education) demographic variables were significant predictors of corporal punishment. These results indicate that when examining discipline

practices with families of Mexican-origin, the methodology used should account for within-group heterogeneity related to demographic variables. As found in this study, less acculturated mothers were likely to have fewer years of education and lower socioeconomic status. Because these variables are confounded with acculturation, researchers and clinicians need to tease apart what aspects of parenting behaviors or attitudes are likely a result of education and SES rather than cultural in nature.

It should be noted that some mothers might not have accurately reported their income because they were unsure of their household income, especially in cases where their husbands were the primary source of income or in charge of household finances. Therefore, research with Mexican mothers may need to include additional measures of SES and not rely solely on classifying mothers based on income level.

Respeto. No other studies to date have examined the relationship between parental use of corporal punishment and the childrearing value of *respeto*. This study attempted to operationally define the construct of *respeto* by using a quantitative, self-report measure. Although there was not a significant relationship between *respeto* and corporal punishment, future research in this area is warranted since it might provide valuable information related to what and how culturally based values translate into parenting behaviors. In other words, how do parents from different cultures expect children to behave and what parenting/discipline strategies do they engage in to elicit these behaviors? It may also be that parents do not view corporal punishment as an effective means of eliciting *respeto* and that physical discipline does not model for children how to respect others. It could also be that other childrearing values (e.g., familism, personalism, and machismo) traditionally emphasized in Mexican culture might be better predictors of

parenting behaviors. Furthermore, the results suggest that as mothers become more acculturated they continue to emphasize *respeto* as a significant childrearing value. Less acculturated mothers did endorse *respeto* to a lesser extent than higher acculturated mothers, this could be an anomaly of the sample or the measure used to assess *respeto*. Therefore, this result should be replicated with another sample of Mexican-origin parents.

Child Behavior Problems. In this study, it was not possible to conduct separate statistical analyses for children of different age groups (3 to 5 versus 6 to 8 year olds) because we did not have the necessary number of participants per group to obtain adequate statistical power. As suggested by Frick, Christian, and Wootton (1999), corporal punishment could have different effects on children of different ages such as increased aggression, conduct problems, and socialization difficulties. Furthermore, childrearing expectations and values might change as children age (Arica & Johnson, 1998). Therefore, certain values regarding how children should relate to others and behave may fluctuate for parents depending on the age of their children.

A common criticism of research on corporal punishment and child behavior problems is that initial levels of child behavior problems need to be included in statistical models (Grogan-Kaylor, 2005). Because this was a cross-sectional study, we were not able to longitudinally track children's behaviors. Grogan-Kaylor (2005) found that there was a main effect of corporal punishment even after controlling for initial levels of child antisocial behaviors, thus the effects of corporal punishment on child antisocial behavior did not differ. Since children who engage in disruptive behavior problems are more likely to be disciplined with corporal punishment, it is also necessary to identify other factors that may place these children at risk for continued behavior problems. Researchers could

conduct longitudinal studies with clinical and non-clinical samples of at-risk children whose parents do and do not use corporal punishment.

Clinical Implications

This study does not support the stereotype that physical discipline is predominantly used by less acculturated Mexican-oriented mothers. Therefore, when working with Mexican families within the context of teaching child management strategies, clinicians should be careful about relying on heuristics. Dissemination of empirically based information can assist clinicians working with these families to be better informed or knowledgeable about what family, parent, and child characteristics to assess and incorporate when conducting case formulations and interventions. This empirical information can include research related to treatment acceptability and acculturation (Borrego, Ibanez, Spendlove, & Permberton, in press), discipline practices (Buriel et al., 1991), and childrearing values (Arcia & Johnson, 1998) relevant to families of Mexican-origin. If a recent immigrant reports using corporal punishment, clinicians should not assume that it is because they are not acculturated or that such practice is culturally based. Similarly, if a highly acculturated parent presents for treatment with their child for disruptive behavior problems, clinician should inquire about use of corporal punishment.

Given that in the current study mothers with higher levels of acculturation and education endorsed using nonphysical discipline, these child management techniques are likely to be accepted by these mothers if recommend. For example, Borrego et al. (in press) found that Mexican-American parents viewed response cost (restriction of privileges), a nonphysical discipline strategy, as an acceptable punishment-based

discipline technique. Higher acculturated mothers are likely to expect that their child be respectful and obedient of authority figures. Therefore, intervention strategies, such as verbal reasoning, could assist with achieving these parenting goals. However, when working with lower acculturated and less educated mothers of Mexican-origin, it may be necessary to provide more information (e.g., rationale, modeling, and practice) when recommending nonphysical discipline techniques.

When working with families of Mexican-origin, clinicians should be aware of risk factors that might influence child adjustment. Mexican immigrant and Mexican American families face multiple risk factors for child adjustment problems (e.g., poverty, acculturation stress, and lower education attainment); however, supportive and consistent parenting has been associated with positive child adjustment in these families (Dumka, Roosa, & Jackson, 1997). As this study found, corporal punishment can be related to negative child outcomes (child externalizing behavior problems). One way to buffer the negative effects of corporal punishment could be for clinicians to target increasing supportive and consistent nonphysical forms of discipline (e.g., restriction of privileges, time-out, and differential attention). Teaching parents to effectively reason with their child could improve parental confidence and satisfaction (Medora et al., 2001). Parents who use corporal punishment could feel less capable or confident in their parenting abilities or have a narrower repertoire of effective behavior management strategies.

This study suggests that corporal punishment is not likely to improve child behavior problems but may actually contribute to the maintenance of these problems. Parents are more likely to respond to child misbehaviors using corporal punishment when the behaviors are deemed to be serious offenses such as prolonged deviance or physical

aggression (Holden, Miller, & Harris, 1999). Also, corporal punishment is more acceptable under situations where previous discipline attempts have been unsuccessful (Flynn, 1998) and when the parent perceives the child's behavior as intentional (Rodriquez & Sutherland, 1999).

The irony of using corporal punishment is that it may actually exacerbate the behaviors parents are attempting to decrease or eliminate. Corporal punishment does not teach the child how to effectively develop alternative appropriate prosocial behaviors but instead may model physical aggression. Because parents are more likely to use physical discipline when other methods have failed or when they view the child's offense as very serious, it is important to identify and implement nonphysical discipline strategies that will prevent further escalation of behavior problems.

Furthermore, parents may find it easier to implement physical discipline with younger children because of their assumptions and expectations of child development. For example, they might assume that physical discipline is effective because they cannot reason with younger children. In a comparative study of Mexican mothers in Mexico and Caucasian mothers in the U.S., Solis-Camara & Fox (1995) did not find any cultural difference in the types of parenting practices used with young children. The authors suggested that when parenting young children there are similar challenges that would lead mothers of different backgrounds to have similar developmental expectations, discipline styles, and nurturing strategies. Solis-Camara and Fox also suggest that cultural differences may not emerge until children are older and behavioral demands change; therefore, parenting interventions commonly used with Caucasian children may be applicable to Mexican families with young children.

In the current study, 19% of the mothers were first generation immigrants, therefore, they are likely to face additional challenges (e.g., language barriers, financial difficulty, limited access to services, etc.). Since immigrant families face multiple stressors related to acculturating to the host culture clinicians should also identify stressors that might influence them using physical discipline. Therefore, clinicians need to be aware of how parents are coping with such stressors in order to address parenting difficulties and use of physical discipline. Use of corporal punishment has been associated with poverty and younger age (Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995) as well as marital distress (Woodward & Fergusson, 2002) which are factors that can contribute to high parenting stress. According to Pinderhuges et al. (2000) stress can result in parents having more negative perceptions of their child behaviors and using harsh discipline strategies such as spanking. Among different ethnic groups, particularly Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanics, spanking has been related to rigid parenting strategies, problems with self-control, and increased abuse potential (Medora, Wilson, & Larson, 2001). These authors suggest that when children are exposed to these harsh punishments it may lead to an increased tolerance and require parents to implement more extreme or severe forms of discipline, which in turn can increase abuse potential and escalation.

Limitations and Future Research

Mothers in this study were asked to rate their frequency of using physical and nonphysical means of discipline with their three to eight year old children. A limitation of this method is that mothers may have been less willing to acknowledge using corporal punishment out of concerns of how this information would be used or perceived. This

might especially be relevant for the less acculturated and Spanish speaking mothers who are likely to be unfamiliar with research protocols. Although mothers were assured that their data was anonymous they may have been influenced by social desirability. As is common with research on corporal punishment, participants can be hesitant to respond accurately or they may not be able to recall their actual frequency of each discipline practices. Mothers may have also been biased in reporting use of CP due to asking them to recall discipline instances within a one-year time frame. Instead, future studies may use shorter time frames (e.g., within the past month) to minimize the distortion of recall effects.

One of the challenges of doing research with ethnic minorities, such as individuals of Mexican-origin, is the limited availability of standardized instruments normed with these populations and developed to assess cultural constructs (e.g., respeto). Therefore, another methodological limitation of this study is the use of a non-standardized measure to assess the construct of respeto. The *Child Respeto Scale* was developed for this study based on the description of respeto in the scientific literature and demonstrates face validity. However, the wording of the *Child Respeto Scale* may have influenced the results of this study since it asked parents to rate how “important” it was for their child to show respect or obey adults rather than asking about their expectations for children. Thus, further psychometric data is needed to assess the reliability and validity of this measure.

Consistent with other correlational studies on corporal punishment, it is not possible to make causal inferences related to corporal punishment and externalizing behavior problems. However, the results support opponents of corporal punishment who

argue that the positive association between corporal punishment and behavior problems lends itself to question its use and recommend alternative discipline strategies. Another methodological limitation is the use of a single informant to rate the frequency of discipline and child behavior problems. Using multiple informants and behavioral observations may improve the design of the study by providing additional information that is independent of possible response biases. Additionally, results of this study might differ depending on the ages of the child in question; however, these differences could not be examined statistically because of the reduced power to detect an age effect. Future research may examine if differential outcomes of CP are moderated by child gender since males tend to be disciplined more frequently and exhibit higher rates of externalizing behavior problems than females.

Another variable that could interact with the outcome variables of interest is marital status. Because the majority of the sample (67%) was married the results may lack some generalizability to single parent households. In addition, given that mothers in this study reported higher levels of education, these results may lack generalizability to mothers with less than a high school education. Furthermore, this study only included mothers, thus, results should be replicated with a sample of fathers of Mexican-origin. Since participants were Hispanic mothers of Mexican-origin, results would also need to be replicated with other Hispanic populations (e.g., Puerto Ricans, Cubans, etc.) in order to conclude that the findings would generalize.

Conclusion

Results of this study suggest that acculturation and belief in respeto are not significant predictors of corporal punishment among mothers of Mexican-origin. In this

study, mothers who had higher acculturated/Anglo-orientation also had a stronger belief that children should demonstrate *respeto* toward authority figures, in comparison to less acculturated mothers. Higher acculturated mothers reported using nonphysical discipline more often than Mexican-oriented mothers. Consistent with previous research with non-Mexican parents, this study found higher rates of child externalizing behavior problems among children who were disciplined with corporal punishment. Therefore, corporal punishment was a significant predictor of child externalizing behavior problems. Methodological and clinical implications were discussed within the context of the results and limitations of this study.

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Table 1

Mother Demographic Information (N = 83)

	N	%
Generation Status		
1 st	16	19
2 nd	22	27
3 rd	11	13
4 th	16	19
5 th	18	22
Acculturation Level		
1	14	17
2	12	14
3	39	47
4	17	21
5	1	1
Marital Status		
Single	13	16
Married	63	76
Divorced	6	7
Widow	1	1
Education Level		
Some High School	20	24
High School/GED	21	25

Table 1 (continued)

Some College	28	34
Bachelor's Degree	11	13
Graduate Degree	3	4
Annual Income		
\$0-\$20,000	26	31
\$20,001-\$40,000	26	31
\$40,001-\$60,000	16	19
\$60,001-\$80,000	8	10
Missing Income	7	9

Table 2

Inter-Item Correlations for Respeto Scale

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Show respect	--	.76	.76	.75	.56	.01	.22	.43
2. Show good manners		--	.68	.71	.73	-.04	.27	.39
3. Obey parents			--	.85	.57	.02	.29	.63
4. Obey teachers				--	.71	.03	.30	.52
5. Obey family members					--	-.08	.41	.45
6. Okay to call adults by 1 st name*						--	-.08	.06
7. Obey adults without questioning							--	.53
8. Should not interrupt adults								--

Table 2 Continued

Inter-Item Correlations for Respeto Scale

Item	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Show respect	.49	.06	.45	.26	.31	.56
2. Show good manner	.56	.02	.47	.25	.26	.58
3. Obey parents	.63	.04	.55	.36	.42	.80
4. Obey teachers	.60	.11	.49	.44	.46	.82
5. Obey family members	.52	.09	.44	.39	.42	.58
6. Okay to call adults by 1 st name*	.02	.03	-.08	.17	-.04	-.02
7. Obey adults without questioning	.56	.15	.38	.39	.41	.38
8. Should not interrupt adults	.79	.30	.55	.50	.58	.69
9. Should pay attention when spoken to	--	.22	.59	.44	.52	.64
10. Should not speak until spoken to*		--	.19	.31	.17	.21
11. Should be obedient			--	.47	.51	.56
12. Should not contradict adults				--	.63	.48
13. Should do what told					--	.56
14. Should be respectful						--

Note. * Items deleted from final 12 item scale.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Reliability Coefficients
for Study Variables*

	M	SD	Min	Max	α
ARSMA Total	.14	1.33	-3.09	2.65	.63
ARSMA AOS	3.57	.79	1.38	5.00	.91
ARSMA MOS	3.43	.71	2.00	4.76	.88
Corporal Punishment	.83	.74	0	4.00	.64
Nonphysical Discipline	3.32	1.45	0	6.00	.77
Respeto Scale	6.00	.87	3.25	7.00	.91
CBCL Externalizing	47.33	10.07	28.00	71.00	--
Religiosity	3.85	1.45	0	6	.91

Table 4

Percent of Mothers who Endorsed Nonphysical Discipline in the Past Year (N = 83)

Frequency	Time-Out	Explanation	Redirection	Privilege Removal
Never	13	4	22	21
Once	6	4	6	8
Twice	8	6	8	7
Three – Five	28	17	19	31
Six-Ten	22	22	21	17
Eleven to Twenty	7	11	5	6
More than Twenty	16	37	19	10

Note. Frequency column indicates how often mothers engaged in each discipline practice.

Table 5

Percent of Mothers who Endorsed Corporal Punishment in the Past Year (N = 83)

	Spanking	Belt on Bottom	Shook Child	Pinched Child	Slapped on Hand	Slapped on Face
Never	25	69	94	66	51	93
Once	21	8	5	11	16	4
Twice	15	6	0	13	10	2
Three – Five	17	11	1	6	17	1
Six-Ten	12	5	0	1	4	0
Eleven to Twenty	7	0	0	0	0	0
More than Twenty	4	1	0	3	2	0

Note. Frequency column indicates how often mothers engaged in each discipline practice.

Table 6

Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
ARSMA Total	--					
ARSMA AOS	.900**	--				
ARSMA MOS	-.876**	-.578**	--			
Corporal Punishment	.206	.178	-.189	--		
Nonphysical Discipline	.335**	.327**	-.266*	.406**	--	
Respeto Scale	.446**	.455**	-.331**	.130	.246*	--
CBCL Externalizing	.129	.084	-.147	.290**	.192	.193

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 7

*Hypothesis 1**Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Acculturation Subscales Predicting Corporal Punishment (N = 83)*

Variable	B	SEB	β
Step 1			
Child's Age	-.57	.28	-.22*
Child's Gender	-1.53	.96	-.17
Step 2			
Child's Age	-.55	.29	-.21
Child's Gender	-2.03	.96	-.23*
Mother's Marital Status	.71	1.13	.07
Mother's Education	.55	.30	.20
Mother's Age	-.17	.10	.20
Step 3			
Child's Age	-.53	.29	-.20
Child's Gender	-2.02	.97	-.23*
Mother's Marital Status	.77	1.13	.07
Mother's Education	.43	.34	.16
Mother's Age	-.17	.10	-.20
ARSMA MOS	-.56	.74	-.09

Table 7 (continued)

Variable	B	SEB	β
Step 4			
Child's Age	-.53	.29	-.20
Child's Gender	-1.99	.98	-.22*
Mother's Marital Status	.79	1.15	.08
Mother's Education	.40	.37	.15
Mother's Age	-.17	.10	-.20
ARSMA MOS	-.49	.83	-.08
ARSMA AOS	.17	.82	.03
Step 5			
Child's Age	-.50	.30	-.19
Child's Gender	-1.97	.98	.22*
Mother's Marital Status	.95	1.16	.09
Mother's Education	.26	.41	.09
Mother's Age	-.15	.10	-.18
ARSMA MOS	-.61	.85	-.10
ARSMA AOS	.14	.90	-.02
ARSMA MOS X AOS	.95	1.78	.12

Note. $R^2 = .08$ for Step 1; $\Delta R^2 = .09$ for Step 2 ($p < .05$); $\Delta R^2 = .01$ for Step 3 ($p = .45$); $\Delta R^2 = .01$ for Step 4 ($p = .84$); $\Delta R^2 = .01$ for Step 5 ($p = .43$).

* $p < .05$.

Table 8

Hypothesis 2

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Acculturation Subscales Predicting Respeto (N = 83)

Variable	B	SEB	β
Step 1			
ARSMA MOS	-4.85	1.54	-.33*
Step 2			
ARSMA MOS	-1.49	1.78	-.10
ARSMA AOS	5.25	1.61	.39*

Note. $R^2 = .09$ for Step 1. $\Delta R^2 = .10$ for Step 2 ($p < .01$). * $p < .01$.

Table 9

Hypothesis 5

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Corporal Punishment Predicting
CBCL Externalizing Behavior Problems (N = 82)*

Variable	B	SEB	β
Step 1			
Mother's Marital Status	- 8.27	2.55	-.35*
Mother's Education	-.24	.69	-.04
Mother's Age	.08	.21	.04
Step 2			
Nonphysical Discipline	.35	.20	.20
Step 3			
Corporal Punishment	.69	.25	.31*

Note. $R^2 = .04$ for Step 1. $\Delta R^2 = .09$ for Step 2 ($p < .05$). *

APPENDIX

EXTENDED LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Corporal punishment (CP) is a prevalent form of discipline in American families. However, there is a paucity of research on CP with ethnic minority families, especially Hispanic populations. Based on previous findings, there has been increased concern among the scientific community about the possible short and long-term negative effects (e.g., increased aggression, delinquency, depression, and risk for child maltreatment) of using corporal punishment. The following sections will expand on research related to child and parent characteristics associated with parental use of corporal punishment. Also, empirical literature highlighting the short and long-term effects of corporal punishment will be presented.

Child Characteristics Associated with CP: Child Age and Gender

Research has found that parents' use of corporal punishment varies depending on a child's age and gender. A study by Giles-Sims, Straus, and Sugarman (1995) found that 37% of mothers with children 6- to 9-years-old and 16% with children 10-years-old or older reported spanking on the average of two times per week. Straus and Stewart (1999) found that 35% of parents of infants and 94% of parents with children ages 4-5 had used CP during the past year. They also found that by the time children reached age 17 parents use of CP declines but that as late as age 13, over 40% of parents reported still using CP. Thus, use of CP in this sample began with infants, was highest for toddlers, and continued into adolescence.

Research on child gender differences in CP has yielded inconsistent findings. Some studies (Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995; Holden, Coleman, & Schmidt, 1995) have not found significant effects of child gender when examining variables that influence mothers spanking their children. However, Dietz (2000) using the Gallup Organization Survey of 1000 households, found that parents were more likely to use CP with males. According to Straus (2001), the majority of studies indicate that male children are on average more likely to be spanked than female children; however, these differences are typically small. Straus (2001) claims that gender differences in application of CP can be accounted for by the assumption that boys generally have higher rates of behavior problems. Also, the types of misbehaviors exhibited (i.e., aggression, disruptiveness, destructiveness) by males are more likely to elicit CP, and social views imply that it is more acceptable to use physical discipline with males (Straus, 2001).

CP and Child Misbehaviors

Support and use of CP also depends on situational factors such as different types of child misbehaviors. Thus, not all child misbehaviors will result in parents using physical discipline. In a study of college students, Flynn (1998) asked participants whether it was appropriate to spank a child after varying the situation (not cleaning his/her room, running into the street without looking, taking something without permission, misbehaving in public, talking back, hitting another playmate). In the Flynn (1998) study, participants were more likely to approve of spanking for serious violations or misbehaviors such as stealing, talking back to parents, and hitting another child, than for ignoring a command (to clean his/her room). Interestingly, Flynn (1998) noted that even participants who generally opposed spanking identified some situations in which

they claimed spanking was appropriate; for example, with younger children who engaged in serious misbehaviors.

Children whose misbehavior consisted of physical aggression or violating the rights of others (e.g., taking away another child's toy) rather than conventional misdeeds are more likely to be spanked, thus, punishing aggression with aggression (Holden, Coleman, & Schmidt, 1995). Also, Holden, Coleman, and Schmidt (1995) found ignoring a warning or not responding to other discipline techniques is more likely to elicit parents using spanking, which can be considered coercive interactions since noncompliance can continue to escalate into spanking. Furthermore, the child's severity of behavior problems as determined by their frequency of misbehaviors can result in more frequent use of physical discipline (Holden, Miller, & Harris, 1999).

Parents' perceptions about the child's intent (e.g., if misbehaviors are seen as intentional) or attributed culpability for misbehaviors can also influence parents disciplinary responses. This was found in an analogue study of 91 mothers and fathers from diverse SES backgrounds (Rodriquez & Sutherland, 1999). They found that parents rated spanking as being a less severe discipline response, when the child was depicted as provoking a parent (e.g., kicking their little sister). The Rodriquez and Sutherland's (1999) findings indicate that the perceived culpability of the child can influence parents' beliefs about physical discipline in that the more the child is seen as intentionally misbehaving, the more likely they are to be disciplined by means of CP. Thus, types of misbehaviors, frequency and severity of misbehaviors, and perceived culpability can influence parents' likelihood to use physical discipline.

Parent Demographic Variables that Predict use of CP: SES, Education, Age, Gender, and Marital Status

Previous research has found a negative relationship between SES and use of CP in that the lower the parent's income level, the more positive their beliefs are about spanking and the higher the frequency of using CP as a means of child discipline (Kelley, Grace, & Elliot, 1990; Pinderhughes et. al, 2000). Giles-Sims, Straus, and Sugarman (1995) found that mothers living in poverty, receiving government assistance, and who were employed for less than 40 hours per week had the highest rates of spanking. Similarly, Dietz (2000) analyzed data from a national Gallup survey of 1000 parents of diverse ethnic and income backgrounds and found that parents with annual household incomes at or below \$15,000 were almost twice as likely to use CP than parents with higher income.

In addition to SES, differences in parent approval and use of CP as a result of education level have been found, such as in Straus and Mathur's (1996) meta-analysis of seven studies conducted from 1968 to 1994, which indicated that as education level increased, approval of CP decreased. Jackson et al. (1999) and Dietz (2000) also found similar results in that parents who endorsed physical discipline had lower levels of education. Although most of these studies find a significant negative relationship between education level and likelihood to support CP, they rarely specify the exact ranges of education level when making these comparisons. However, Dietz (2000) specified that parents with less than a high school diploma were more likely than parents with at least a high school diploma to use severe CP (i.e., hitting with an object, on the face, or pinching). Given the association between SES and education level, it appears warranted

to conclude that education and SES are closely related variables, thus, the effects of these relationships between SES, education, and CP may be due to other variables or experiences that are shared by individuals from disadvantaged SES and education backgrounds.

Since research indicates that lower SES predicts use of CP, it may be more meaningful to know specifically what factors associated with SES account for this relationship. In a study of factors contributing to this negative relationship between SES and positive beliefs and frequency of using CP, Pinderhuges and colleagues (2000) found that parents' stress levels served as a mediator for harsh discipline responses (i.e., spanking) in that the higher the parent's stress, the more negative perceptions they had of children and more intense their emotional response to child misbehaviors leading to spanking. Pinderhughes et al. were not able to determine how within group differences (i.e., gender, age, and number of children) among low-income parents contributed to their views about parenting and CP; though they did raise new questions about the relationship between SES and CP. For example, do low SES parents use CP for different reasons related to their beliefs about the effectiveness of CP, their emotional response, and/or stress? According to Dietz (2000), actual stress rather than income level accounts for the association between income and use of CP. Other possible explanations might be related to the association between SES and education, which may also be related to limited knowledge or exposure to alternative non-coercive or physical discipline strategies.

Certainly, challenges faced as a result of being from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background can serve to increase parenting stress, which in turn may make these parents more susceptible to problems coping with negative emotions such as

anger and frustration. Also, parents from disadvantaged backgrounds may have limited resources such as parenting education, child care services, regular contact with medical providers, and social support that may limit their exposure to alternative discipline strategies and stress management. Researchers such as Dietz (2000) and Pinderhuges and colleagues (2000) support this notion that situational factors associated with income, race, and education are more theoretically useful than mere demographic variables. Therefore, knowing that differences in acceptability and use of CP based on SES and education exist is not sufficient to explain the relationship or have applicable implications. However, distinguishing between groups of parents of different SES background and their reasons for using CP is more meaningful since it can contribute to interventions (e.g., stress management, parent training) and future research.

In regards to parent gender and CP, some studies (e.g., Flynn, 1998; Straus & Mathur, 1996) indicate that males have higher approval of CP than females. Flynn (1998) attributes these gender differences of males having more favorable attitudes because they are more likely to have been spanked as children. In contrast, Jackson et al. (1999) and Dietz (2000) found that females were more likely to use physical discipline with their children than males. Jackson et al. (1999) and Dietz (2000) concluded that since females or mothers may spend more time caring for their children, increased time interacting with their children might increase their likelihood to use physical discipline. Other studies (Wissow, 2002) failed to find significant gender effects associated with spanking.

In a study of only mothers, Giles-Sims, Straus, and Sugarman (1995) found that even after controlling for SES, younger mothers were more likely to use spanking than older mothers. Other studies (Holden, Miller, & Harris, 1999; Walsh, 2002; Wissow,

2002) have also resulted in a negative association between parent's age and using spanking such that the younger parents used CP more frequently than older parents. Possible explanations offered by Giles-Sims et al. for the negative relationship between younger parent age and higher frequency of using CP include that younger mothers are more likely to have younger children, be single, and have lower socioeconomic status, which could result in experiencing more stressors.

Single mothers have been found to use CP more often than married mothers (Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995). Among married mothers, there is evidence to suggest that high levels of marital conflict predict greater use of physical discipline (Jackson et al., 1999; Woodward & Fergusson, 2002). The positive relationship between marital conflict and more frequent use of CP could in part be explained by the likelihood of these parents experiencing greater stress, which in turn can increase their likelihood of using CP, as in the case of lower SES parents also highly endorsing CP. Furthermore, in a study by Simons, Beaman, Conger, and Chao (1993), Caucasian middle-class mothers perceived low levels of spousal support was a significant predictor of using harsh discipline strategies such as CP. Therefore, marital status alone may not be as informative when examining use of CP. However, the quality and stressors associated with the marriage or being a single parent could be better predictors of CP.

Family Religious Background and Geographical Region

Living in a particular geographical region of the U.S. can also influence approval and use of CP. Those living in the Southern regions have the highest approval of CP and the Northeastern regions the lowest CP approval rates (Dietz, 2000; Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995; Straus & Mathur, 1996). Future studies should identify what factors

contribute to these differences in endorsing CP across the United States as well as how these trends change across time. Possible hypotheses for Southerners having higher approval of CP are due to the larger percentages of religious conservative parenting beliefs and ethnic minorities (i.e., African Americans) residing in these areas. For example, Giles-Sims, Straus, and Sugarman (1995) found that rural and southern areas were more likely to use spanking, even after controlling for SES. Others such as Dietz (2000) suggest that the southern regions of the U.S. are generally more supportive of using physical punishment in disciplining children, making CP more normative in these regions.

Religious beliefs or biblical interpretations have been influential in justifying or maintaining support for CP. Danso, Hunsberger, and Pratt (1997) found that undergraduate college students and parents who reported a fundamentalist religious orientation had greater approval of CP. Parents whose religious beliefs include a strong emphasis on child obedience and literal biblical interpretations may practice CP more readily. According to Straus (2001), religion is commonly used to justify CP, for example, claiming that physical discipline “is an obligation imposed by God, just as God expects parents to love and nurture children” (p. 15). However, research surveying parents about using CP as a religious practice or characteristic is lacking. Also, more empirical data is needed related to aspects of religious orientation and child expectations that contributes to the relationship between CP and religiosity; for example, examining if members of a particular religious orientation perceive CP as being expected of them and necessary for positive child development.

Parents' Expectations about CP

Reasons given by parents for using corporal punishment discipline is that it is likely to result in immediate compliance (Andero & Stewart, 2002) and having favorable attitudes towards CP (Holden, Coleman, & Schmidt, 1995). Therefore, parents' expectations and beliefs about the effectiveness of physical discipline can influence use of physical discipline. Jackson and colleagues (1999) note that understanding predictors of parenting are important for identifying risk factors that place nonabusive parents at risk of harming their children in certain circumstances (e.g., high-stress or substance use). Their study found that parents who have positive attitudes towards physical discipline and devaluing children are more likely to use physical discipline.

Holden, Miller, and Harris (1999) investigated the link between positive outcome expectancies for parents who use spanking and negative outcomes from parents who do not spank their children. Participants in this study consisted of 36 mothers and 42 fathers, Caucasian, middle-class parents who had 3-year-old children. Mothers who spanked regularly rated spanking as a more appropriate response that would result in more positive child outcomes and they experienced less feelings of guilt related to spanking (Holden, Miller, & Harris, 1999). Therefore, mothers who used spanking associated more positive outcomes with use of CP and mothers who did not use CP associated more negative outcomes and feelings (i.e., guilt). The Holden, Miller, and Harris (1999) findings support the hypothesis that parents who frequently use CP perceive it to be effective. This study generated further questions related to the development of parent's CP expectations. Holden, Miller, and Harris (1999) suggest that future research should

explore the relationship between expectancies and behaviors, for example, asking if expectancies develop after engaging in the behavior or before engaging in the behavior.

Parent Psychological Variables Associated with Approval and Use of CP

Psychosocial stressors such as parent stress levels and cognitive-emotional responses have been found to influence their beliefs about children and CP (Pinderhughes et al., 2000). Specifically, Pinderhughes and colleagues found that parents with higher levels of stress were more likely to endorse CP. Also, parents who had more hostile attributions about child misbehaviors, were highly upset, worried about the future implications of their child's misbehaviors, and had fewer social support networks, were more likely to endorse CP (Pinderhughes et al.). High parental frustration is also associated with increased likelihood to use spanking with younger children (Wissow, 2002). Additionally, Thompson et al. (1999) indicated that difficulty with emotional regulation such as anger and frustration was positively related to endorsement of physical discipline.

Parents who experience depression or depressive symptoms may also have increased risk of endorsing CP. Among mothers participating in an Early Head Start program, Coyl, Roggman, and Newland (2002) found that maternal depression, and increased economic and relationship stress was associated with increased use of spanking. Similarly, in an eighteen year longitudinal study of 1,025 mothers in New Zealand, Woodward and Fergusson (2002) found that mothers' history of depression and alcohol/drug problems was positively associated with higher frequency of using physical punishment. For both father and mothers in a national Commonwealth Survey (Wissow, 2002), depressive symptoms were positively associated with use of spanking.

Thus, based on these findings parents who have high levels of stress, economic or social pressures, depression, and negative emotional responses such as anger and frustration in relation to child interactions may have more favorable beliefs about CP and frequently use CP as a discipline technique. These psychosocial factors may increase endorsement of CP because parents may react more negatively to child transgression and have limited use of alternative discipline strategies. Also, these parents may have children who are at-risk or have higher levels of behavior problems, which in turn could increase the likelihood of parents using CP.

The Influence of Childhood Experiences on CP

Research has found that a childhood history of receiving CP can influence parents using physical punishment with their own children (Rodriquez & Sutherland, 1999; Woodward & Fergusson, 2002). This intergenerational transmission of discipline might be explained by social learning theory in that parents may model discipline they received (Rodriquez & Sutherland, 1999). According to Simons, Beaman, Conger, and Chao (1993), the discipline received as a child can affect the quality of his or her parenting as adults, including perceptions about the effectiveness of harsh discipline strategies.

Intergenerational transmission of beliefs about parenting can be acquired before becoming parents and even as early as childhood or adolescence (Flynn, 1996). To examine this effect of intergenerational transmission of CP attitudes and use, Deater-Deckard, Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, and Bates (2003) conducted an 8-year longitudinal study of attitudes about physical discipline with 566 European American and African American children from 5 to 13 years of age by assessing possible moderators of attitudes including experience with physical discipline and suspected physical maltreatment.

Deater-Deckard and colleagues found that children who had experienced physical discipline were more likely to approve of this type of discipline. Among those who had a suspected history of physical abuse, some had approving attitudes towards physical discipline while others did not. Therefore, other complex factors may influence development of attitudes about discipline when they may have experienced abuse. This study was the first to assess the influence of children's experiences from kindergarten until middle school; however, it lacks generalizability to other ethnic groups besides European Americans and African Americans and the researchers did not assess other aspects of the parent-child relationship (e.g., relationship quality and child behavior problems) that could account for differences in physical discipline experiences and approval.

An adult who experienced abuse or witnessed domestic violence during childhood can also be a significant predictor of CP approval and use (Jackson, et al., 1999; Thompson et. al., 1999). Ferrari (2002) also found similar results in an ethnically diverse sample of mothers and fathers' child rearing practices. In this study, mothers' childhood history of abuse and/or neglect was a significant predictor of using physical punishment with their own children. In contrast, fathers who reported a childhood history of abuse and neglect were less likely to use physical punishment. Ferrari (2002) concluded that these gender differences may be attributed to the likelihood that fathers, in comparison to mothers, spend less time disciplining their children. Additionally, Ferrari did not include specific information about the type, severity, and duration of abuse or neglect, which contributes to the limitations of these findings.

Bower and Knutson (1996) also examined the relationship between childhood history of CP or child physical abuse and disciplinary attitudes. Among undergraduate college students, they found significant differences between those who reported experiencing severe physical punishment and labeled themselves as abused versus those that did not label themselves as being abused. Specifically, participants who did not label themselves as abused, but had a history of severe physical punishment, were more tolerant of physical discipline and less likely than those who had a similar history to classify potentially physically abusive parental acts as abuse. Participants that reported having experienced severe physical punishment and labeled these experiences as abuse were less likely to approve of CP. Therefore, their interpretations rather than the actual experience of being disciplined with CP could be a better predictor of CP beliefs and use. However, these cases appeared to have reflected more severe forms of CP, which may explain the Bower and Knutson's findings.

Furthermore, Dietz (2000) found that parents who reported being physically abused by their own parents were 1.5 times less likely to use CP with their own children. Dietz (2000) explained her findings as being due to these parents wanting to avoid using violence with their own children as a result of their own childhood experiences. Therefore, the results of the above mentioned studies suggest that both personal experiences and the perceptions of those experiences (i.e., labeling as abuse or not) can contribute to increased or decreased approval of potentially abusive discipline such as severe CP.

Distinguishing Corporal Punishment from Child Physical Abuse

According to Bower-Russa, Knutson, and Winebarger (2001) it is difficult to assess where on the continuum from clearly acceptable to clearly unacceptable discipline does CP transition from the point of appropriate normative discipline acts to abusive acts. Straus (2001) states that society distinguishes legal and acceptable forms of CP from CPA by the outcome of injury both physical and psychological harm, and if the severity and frequency of hitting exceeds what is considered allowed by cultural norms. However, despite decades of research on child abuse, remarkably little is known about accurately distinguishing between permissible forms of physical punishment and actual abuse (Whipple, 1997).

Corporal punishment and child physical abuse (CPA) are closely linked due to their strong association and the potential for corporal punishment to escalate into physical abuse (Gershoff, 2002). According to Gershoff (2002), CP might be distinguished from CPA by the outcome of the physical punishment such that behaviors that do not result in significant physical injury (e.g., spanking, slapping) are considered CP whereas behaviors that risk injury (e.g., punching, kicking, burning) are considered physical abuse. Straus (2001) suggests that physical abuse involves, an attack on a child that results in or is very likely to result in an injury, hitting that is more frequent or severe than that allowed by cultural norms, and results in psychological harm. Furthermore, Larzelere (2000) suggests that nonabusive physical punishment can be differentiated from CPA by applying the following guidelines: assessing whether the physical punishment is not overly severe, parental control is exercised, the parent delivers CP out of concern for the child, and the physical punishment is used in conjunction with reasoning and flexibility.

However, these guidelines are problematic because they require personal judgement in determining the extent to which the discipline is reasonable, flexible, and severe. Also, they do not provide options for exactly how to assess the severity or intent of physical discipline. For example, CP can result in physical marks to a child such as bruises or scratches, thus, then being considered a form of CPA.

Defining CPA is problematic because definitions differ at the federal and state level and consist of ambiguous wording. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA; 1996) defines physical abuse as characterized by the infliction of a physical injury as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, or otherwise harming a child. The parent or caretaker may not have intended to hurt the child; rather the injury may have resulted from over-discipline or physical punishment (CAPTA, 1996). States have alternative definitions of CPA. For example, in accordance to Texas Family Code Chapter 261.001 (1997), physical abuse indicates the following acts or omissions by a person, including physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline. The wording of state and federal definitions of abuse allow for subjective interpretations of such words as “substantial harm, over-discipline, and reasonable discipline.” Consequently, subjectivity in the interpretation of definitions of physical abuse creates conflicts when deciding what constitutes physical abuse versus CP. Furthermore, depending on individual beliefs about CP, it can be perceived as a lesser form of CPA since it involves use of physical force against a child and risks injury to a child.

CP and Ethnicity

Most studies on parenting or childrearing are based on Euro-American families. Additionally, assumptions about normative childrearing beliefs and behaviors are modeled after Euro-American values, which is problematic because differing values and behaviors are often considered deviant (Zayas & Solari, 1994). According to Wissow (2001) there have been inconsistent findings regarding use and approval of CP based on ethnicity. Since cultural and ethnic differences in child-rearing expectations can contribute to important differences in CP attitudes and practices, it is important to examine group differences in discipline practices. Research (e.g., Dietz, 2000; Ferrari, 2002; Giles-Sims, Straus, Sugarman, 1995; Ibanez, Borrego, & Terao, 2003; Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000; Straus & Mathur, 1996; Wissow, 2001) suggests that African Americans have higher acceptability and/or use of corporal punishment in comparison to other ethnic groups such as Caucasian or Hispanics. Studies that have compared Hispanic populations to other ethnic groups (e.g., Caucasians and African Americans) have resulted in inconsistent findings. Overall, the majority of studies indicate that Hispanics do not endorse CP as a cultural norm (Calzada & Eyberg, 2002; Buriel, et al., 1991; Ibanez, Borrego, & Terao, 2003; Medora, Wilson, & Larson, 2001).

Childhood Effects of CP

The use of CP has become a controversial parenting practice, thus, research examining the relationship between CP and subsequent psychological adjustment is growing. However, the methodology, results, and conclusions of these studies are mixed. Despite the almost overwhelming endorsement of CP in America, more recent debates

about the harmful short and long-term effects of even moderate CP, such as subsequent aggression, delinquency, internalizing disorders, child abuse potential, and low achievement, has evolved (Flynn, 1996). According to Wissow (2002), arguments raised by opponents of CP can be summarized as the following: 1) there is a lack of evidence showing that CP is better or as good as nonphysical discipline, 2) there is growing evidence that CP is associated with increased child and adolescent emotional distress, 3) CP is associated with increased childhood and adulthood physical aggression, and 4) CP is associated with increased risk of child maltreatment, especially in the context of heightened parent anger or frustration. In contrast, supporters of CP claim that there is inconclusive evidence to suggest that CP should be banned or labeled as detrimental since research often overlooks contextual variables such as family and child characteristics related to outcome (Wissow, 2002).

In order to draw conclusions about the short-term detrimental and/or beneficial effects of physical punishment, Larzelere (2000) conducted a literature review of nonabusive or customary physical punishment (i.e., spanking) by parents. Larzelere identified 38 articles from 1995 to 2000 that were published in peer-review professional journals in the English language, had child outcome variables that specified beneficial (e.g., improved compliance) versus detrimental (e.g., lower self-esteem, increased delinquency) child outcomes, included at least one measure of nonabusive or customary physical punishment, were not cross-sectional, and the average child age when spanked was younger than 13 years. According to Larzelere (2000), the results of the studies selected for his review could be “almost equally divided into predominantly beneficial outcomes (32%), predominantly detrimental outcomes (34%), and neutral or mixed

outcomes (34%)” (p.201). Overall, the results of this review indicate that the effects of parental use of physical punishment differ depending on the research methodology used (e.g., randomized, longitudinal, controlled), child characteristics (e.g., age or behavior problems), how physical punishment is used (e.g., frequency, severity, or with/without supplementary disciplinary practices), and cultural context (ethnicity, religiosity). According to Larzerele (2000), the studies reviewed indicated that physical punishment can be beneficial for increasing immediate child compliance and effectiveness of supplementary discipline techniques (e.g., time-out and reasoning). However, detrimental effects such as increasing externalizing behavior problems, hostility, low self-esteem, and emotional and competency problems in children have been observed.

Although, Larzelere conducted a large review of the existing CP outcome literature, a major limitation of his review was that beneficial outcomes of physical punishment were defined based on the child’s compliance soon after the physical punishment was delivered. Therefore, although CP might increase child immediate compliance, these results do not discount or minimize the detrimental effects, which could outweigh the short-term benefits of eliciting immediate compliance from children.

The quality of the parent-child relationship can also be affected by parents using CP. For example, in a study of infant attachment with a predominantly European-American, rural, and economically disadvantaged sample of mothers, Coyl, Roggman, and Newland (2002) found that infant security was negatively correlated with frequency of being spanked by their mothers. In other words, spanking directly affected level of infant attachment, which can be a risk factor for later child development problems (Coyl, Roggman, & Newland, 2002). Furthermore, some children perceive parent’s use of CP as

harsh, unjust, and as a sign of rejection, which may in turn influence children's psychological adjustment (i.e., self-esteem, competence, aggression) and their perception of the parent-child relationship lacking warmth, support, and acceptance (Rohner, Bourque, & Elordi, 1996).

CP and Externalizing Behavior Problems

Several studies have found that CP is positively associated with subsequent child aggression (Brenner & Fox, 1998; Michels, Pianta, & Reeve, 1993; Stromshak, Bierman, McMahon, & Lengua, 2000; Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994). For instance, Brenner and Fox (1998) found that within a community sample of 1,056 mothers of children 1- to 5-years-old, after controlling for demographic variables (i.e., marital status, age, SES), parental CP was a significant predictor of increased child behavior problems (e.g., acting-out aggressively, noncompliance, and negative attention seeking). Similarly, Michels, Pianta, and Reeves (1993) also found that Caucasian and African American kindergarten children (168 boys and 174 girls) who received physical punishment from their parents had significantly higher rates of aggressive behaviors at school than peers who had not received physical punishment at home. Furthermore, for children who were hit by their parents, as the frequency of them receiving physical punishment increased, so did the child's frequency of school behavior problems (Michels, Pianta, & Reeves, 1993). Interestingly, children who received nonphysical discipline only (time-out, scolding), but not physical discipline, did not differ significantly in their frequency of acting-out behaviors at school, regardless of whether they received frequent or infrequent nonphysical discipline. Therefore, even when children received frequent nonphysical discipline at home, they did not demonstrate frequent behavior problems at school.

Michels, Pianta, and Reeves (1993) suggested that children who receive physical discipline may be more difficult to manage or non-responsive to nonphysical discipline, may reflect difficulties related to the parent-child dyad, and may have less conflict resolution skills or more self-management problems.

In another study of 273 Caucasian and African American kindergarten boys and girls from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, Strassberg et al. examined the relationship between spanking in the home, as reported by mothers and fathers, and subsequent peer aggression. Children's levels of aggressive behaviors such as reactive aggression (angry retaliation following peer conflicts), bullying aggression (unprovoked act on a peer), and instrumental aggression (oriented towards obtaining an objector goal) were determined based on their observed classroom behaviors throughout different observation periods. The findings of the Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, and Bates study resulted in positive associations between parental use of physical punishment and subsequent child aggression towards peers. Although, boys in this study had higher overall aggressive acts than girls, both boys and girls who were spanked by their mothers and/or fathers had higher frequencies of classroom aggression, even after controlling for SES. Therefore, the findings of this study indicate that parents who spank, regardless of how often they spank, have children who are aggressive towards their peers more than parents that do not spank (Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994). Even though this study was correlational and thus casual effects can not be made, findings provide supporting evidence for the argument that parent's physically aggressive behaviors towards their children, even within the context of disciplinary practices, are associated with increased child physical aggression.

In a longitudinal study of 277 community families (80% European American, 17% African American, and 2% Latino, Asian or American Indian) followed from kindergarten through third grade, Nix, Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, and McFadyen-Ketchum (1999) found that mother's use of harsh discipline practices such as spanking was a mediator between mother's hostile attributions (negative child expectations and intentions) and externalizing behaviors. Nix et al. concluded that mother's hostile attributions function as a self-fulfilling prophecy for child behavior problems and increase the likelihood that mother's respond using harsh discipline, which in turn produces the counter-intended effects of maintaining behavior problems overtime. Therefore, in order to address mother's use of harsh discipline practices and child behavior problems, it is also necessary to address mother's attributions or cognitions about the behaviors.

In a study of European (51%) and African American (49%) 631 first-grade children, Stormshak, Bierman, McMahon, and Lengua (2000) found similar results related to parental use of physical discipline and child disruptive behavior problems (aggressive and oppositional behaviors). In the Stormshak et al. (2000) study, European American parents of oppositional, aggressive, and/or hyperactive children and of multi-problem children used spanking more than parents of low-problem or hyperactive-only children. Thus, children with behavior problems experienced more punitive discipline strategies including spanking. Although both European American and African American children whose parents used spanking exhibited greater behavior problems, this association was stronger for European American than African American children.

When investigating the association between CP and conduct problems, the age of the child should be specified. Particularly, Frick, Christian, and Wootton (1999) illustrated that age trends may affect the relationship between parental use of CP and child conduct problems. These researchers found different correlations for children that had been disciplined with CP by their parents depending on their ages. For clinically-referred children in the Frick et al (1999) study, those that were in the middle age group (ages 9 to 12) had a significant positive correlation between CP and conduct problems (Conduct Disorder or Oppositional Defiant Disorder). However, this relationship was not significant for younger children (ages 6 to 8) or adolescent children (ages 13 to 17). Frick and colleagues (1999) attributed these findings to the cumulative effects of CP over an extended period of time, such as into middle childhood, being what actually may explain the relationships between CP and conduct problems for the middle age group. However, the lack of a significant relationship between CP and conduct problems for the adolescent age group may be due to there being a decrease in parents using CP with this age group. Since the Frick et al (1999) study consisted of predominantly male, Caucasian, lower to middle-class children that were already in treatment for behavioral, emotional, and learning problems, there results lack generalizability to other families (i.e., ethnic minority, female children, higher SES, and non-clinical populations) and may be an artifact of the sample used. As noted by Nix et al (1999), the impact of genetics and environmental factors cannot be ignored when examining the associations between parental behaviors (aggression) and cognitions (hostile attributions) and child behavior problems or aggression, since both nature and nurture are likely to play a role in these associations. Therefore, children may model parent's behaviors, may be more reactive to

provocation, and view aggression as instrumental. Research also needs to determine whether parents use spanking because their children are already more aggressive and difficult to manage or if it is spanking that leads to higher aggression and behavior problems. Overall, spanking does not appear to improve child socialization since it has been associated with higher peer aggressiveness (Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994). Thus, in addition to teaching parents alternative discipline techniques, it may also be necessary to teach children who are spanked more positive social or problem-solving skills.

Based on the literature discussed prior, it can be assumed that children who experience or witness violence or physical aggression can reenact or model these behaviors as part of social learning. Furthermore, parents cannot only be the perpetrators of physical aggression (i.e., corporal punishment) but also the recipients of child-to-parent-violence (Ulman & Straus, 2003). Although, there are very few studies that have investigated child-to-parent violence, Ulman and Straus (2003) conducted a study with the objective of identifying factors related to this phenomena. These researchers used data obtained from the 1975 Family Violence Survey, which was a large nationally representative study of 1,023 parents with children between 3 and 17-years-old. Both parents and children were interviewed and asked about incidence of parent-to-child physical aggression (corporal punishment), parent-to-parent aggression, and child-to-parent physical aggression (i.e., hitting, kicking, spanking, pushing, slapping) in the past year. Ulman and Straus (2003) found that 14% of fathers and 20% of mothers reported being hit by their child during the past 12 months, as children's age increased, incidents of child-to-parent violence decreased, and no statistically significant child gender effects

were found, although there was a trend for boys to be more aggressive than girls. In terms of the relationship between parent-to-child violence, or use of corporal punishment, there was a significant positive relationship between the two. For mothers who did not report using CP in the past 12 months, 13% reported being hit by their children. As use of corporal punishment increased, the percent of children that hit their mothers also increased. Specifically, 30% of mothers were hit by their child when CP was used once or twice, 40% of mothers were hit when CP was used three or more times (ordinary use), and 47% of mothers were hit by their child when they used more severe forms of physical aggression towards their child (i.e., hitting with an object, punching, or kicking). The authors noted that limitations included this being a cross-sectional correlational design, thus not allowing for causal direction interpretations, the likelihood that parents underreport both CP and being hit by their child, and the time that had elapsed since the data was collected. Despite these limitations, this study indicates that in order to curbe violence in the family, efforts also need to address use of CP since this can be associated with continued child aggression against parents.

Ethnic Differences and CP Outcomes

Sociocultural differences in developmental outcomes and parenting practices have been observed (Whaley, 2000). Sociocultural theories for why CP might have different outcomes in ethnic minority families can be summarized by three major theories. In cultures where CP is the norm or where children are at risk (e.g., living in poverty or high crime areas) CP is thought to be a means of 1) promoting socialization in societies that demand strong obedience (cultural relativity theory), 2) provide structure and control (social disorganization theory) or 3) has a deterrent effect from crime and delinquency

(deterrence theory) (Straus, 1994). According to Straus (1994, 2003) CP has a “universal harm” effect in that regardless of sociocultural context it is associated with undesirable effects during childhood and adulthood (i.e., aggression, delinquency, substance use, poor academic performance).

CP has been associated with poor academic achievement among Euro-American, African American, and Hispanic children, even after controlling for confound variables (e.g., child’s antisocial behaviors, mother’s education, race, child gender, father’s presence and number of children in the home, cognitive stimulation, and emotional support) (Straus, 2003). Straus hypothesized that CP might negatively influence school performance through lowering child self-esteem, weakening the parent-child bond, and increasing behavior problems. More research is need to examine the relationship between CP and school performance.

Other researchers (e.g., Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettite, 1996) have suggested that for African Americans and European Americans, ethnicity moderates the relationship between physical discipline and child externalizing behavior problems. In a longitudinal study of 466 European American and 100 African American children that were followed from kindergarten through 3rd grade, Deater-Deckard et al., (1996) examined whether the relationship between physical discipline and child behavior problems was moderated by ethnic group membership. The authors controlled for possible confounding variables (e.g., child gender, SES, parent marital status) by entering all of these into a model predicting child externalizing behavior problems rated by multiple informants (mother, teacher, and peer ratings). The authors reported that when teachers and peers rated frequency of behavior problems, higher levels of physical

punishment were associated with higher levels of aggression and behavior problems in the school setting for European American children but not African American children. Also, Deater-Deckard et al. note that when mothers rated child behavior problems, no significant interaction between ethnicity and physical discipline effects was observed. The authors suggest that for African American families, use of nonabusive physical discipline might serve as buffer for externalizing behavior problems and can also occur in the context of a warm parent-child relationship; however, these assumptions were not tested in this study.

The results of the Deater-Deckard et al., (1996) study highlight the importance of considering ethnic/cultural variations and multiple-informants when evaluating outcome variables. Consistent with Deater-Deckard and colleagues, Stormshak and colleagues (2000) also observed ethnic differences in that spanking was a significant predictor of disruptive oppositional, aggressive, and hyperactive behaviors for European American children but not African American children.

According to Simons, Kuei-Hsiu, Gordon, Brody, Murry, and Conger (2002) the wide acceptance of CP in African American families helps explain the absence of a relationship between CP and externalizing behavior problems. However, some differences related to CP and conduct problems have been observed depending on the type of family environment investigated. To examine this association, Simons et al., (2002) examined whether the effects of use of CP on child conduct problems depends on the neighborhood environments. Simons and colleagues only selected African American families to participate in their study (841 children and caretakers). They hypothesized that the effects community context would be more evident with African American

families since they are more likely to live in impoverished and high-risk neighborhoods, where CP is viewed as normative. The Simon et al. study found that the majority of African American caretakers reported using CP (69%); however, the prevalence of CP differed by communities. The main findings of Simons et al. (2002) was that there was a significant positive relationship between CP and conduct problems in communities where CP prevalence was low, but no relationship in communities where CP was more prevalent. In other words, the relationship between the effects of CP and conduct problems depends on or is moderated by whether CP is endorsed by the proximal community environment, especially when antisocial behaviors are more prevalent. These findings provide a rationale for why studies of African Americans and CP outcomes find contrary results from European American samples in that the parenting practices implemented depend on the cultural context. Furthermore, as noted by Simons and colleagues (2002), for African American families that live in high-risk communities, using parenting practices modeled after middle-class Caucasians may not be sufficient for deterring child anti-social behaviors. Thus, children in high-risk environments might require more severe interventions (e.g., physical discipline) that are viewed as necessary and legitimate discipline practices in these communities (Simons et al., 2002). It is unclear whether these same assumptions would apply to at-risk Hispanic children.

A major limitation of the Simons et al. study was the lack of generalizability to other ethnic groups besides African Americans living in small communities. In addition, these moderator models have not been tested with other ethnic groups besides African Americans and Caucasians nor adequately controlled for confounding variables (e.g., parent and child characteristics).

Based on the studies described, it is unclear why some studies have found that moderate physical discipline is a risk factor for European American children developing conduct problems but not for African American children. Parental rationale for using physical discipline that is child-oriented or parent-oriented should be considered when evaluating CP and outcomes. According to Whaley (2000), a child-oriented view of physical discipline assumes that it is used as part of socialization to teach obedience necessary to become a responsible and respectful adult, while from a parent-oriented view, physical punishment is a means of obtaining obedience to parental authority. Some authors (Deater-Deckard & Dodge, 1997; Whaley, 2000) assume that differences in child versus parent-oriented use of physical punishment can distinguish African Americans reasons for using CP. However, this assumption has yet to be tested. Also, cross-cultural variations in child outcomes and physical discipline still need to be tested with other ethnic minority groups besides African Americans.

Although some studies have found ethnic differences between CP and child externalizing behavior, this does not assume that use of severe physical punishment will show the same trend. Overall, for both African Americans and Caucasians of different SES, physically abusive parenting practices increase the likelihood of aggressive child behavior problems (Deater-Deckard et al., 1996). Therefore, these results should not be misinterpreted in regards to drawing conclusions about harsh discipline practices that could be considered abusive.

McLoyd & Smith (2002) included a sample of Hispanic children when examining the relationships between physical discipline, maternal emotional support, and behavior problems. McLoyd and Smith (2002) used data from a large National Longitudinal

Survey of Youth (1,039 European Americans, 550 African Americans, and 401 Hispanics). They recorded via in-person home interviews mother's use of spanking, observer rated emotional support, and mother rated child behavior problems beginning when the children were 4- to 5-years-old and reassessed every two years for 6 years. In this longitudinal study, across all three ethnic groups, the child's initial frequency of behavior problems did not influence mother's frequency of spanking. In other words, some low-behavior problem children were hit fairly frequently, and some high-behavior problem children were hit fairly infrequently. McLoyd and Smith found that for all three ethnic groups and child genders, there was a significant positive relationship between maternal use of spanking and level of maternal rated problem behavior over time. Therefore, children who experienced an increase in spanking also had a greater increase in behavior problems over time. These findings contradict previous studies (e.g., Deater-Deckard et al., 1996; Simons, et al., 2000) because they did not find significant ethnic differences between Caucasians and African Americans. However, the McLoyd and Smith (2002) study differed in that it assessed spanking and behavior problems across a six-year period. According to McLoyd and Smith (2002), even after taking into account poverty and emotional support levels, the effects of spanking on the development of behavior problems were the same across ethnic groups. Their findings also suggest that the effects of spanking partially depended on whether it is administered in the context of high maternal emotional support for the child. Thus, high maternal warmth moderated the relationship between spanking and behavior problems among all three ethnic groups. This conclusion seems somewhat paradoxical in that engaging in physical discipline with a child can occur in conjunction with demonstrating emotional support. Limitations to

the McLoyd and Smith study include that it only inquired about mother's using spanking in the past week, which could result in a restricted time-frame. Also, it did not assess for co-morbid child internalizing behavior problems. Although this study included a sample of Hispanic mothers and children, they did not specify what country of origin these families were from nor did they assess for families acculturation levels. Overall the McLoyd and Smith found no evidence that the relationship between spanking and behavior problems differs depending on ethnicity. Studies that have examined ethnic differences and CP outcome have differing methodologies such as the informants used (i.e., parents, teachers, peers) to assess child behavior problems, whether they are cross-sectional or longitudinal, the method of data collection and analysis used, as well as moderating variables assessed. Thus, more research is needed to test the assumption and rationale for the discrepancies regarding ethnic differences in CP outcomes.

Long-Term Outcomes of CP

Thus far, results of CP longitudinal and cross-sectional studies that examined CP outcomes have been inconclusive, especially since studies vary regarding the type of physical discipline examined (i.e., normative physical punishment or severe physical punishment). Some studies have found that negative caregiver discipline strategies such as severe physical punishment have been associated with increased psychopathology such as depression, delinquency, suicidal ideation, and aggression in adolescents and young adults (Koenig, Ialongo, Wagner, Poduska, & Kellam, 2002). However, authors such as Simons and Johnson (1994) argue that CP alone does not predict long-term outcomes, rather, other aspects of parenting such as parental involvement and warmth account for the effects of CP on later adjustment. Despite these disagreements related to the

mechanisms by which physical discipline influences long-term outcomes, there is existing research that supports a connection between childhood CP and negative affects during later life adjustment. For example, CP during childhood has been associated with later adult delinquent behavior, regardless of amount of maternal and parental warmth (McCord, 1997). In a longitudinal study, McCord (1997) examined the long-term impact of CP on males that took part in a Youth Survey begun in 1939 and followed-up in 1979. McCord reported that CP was related to lack of maternal and paternal warmth. Also, findings indicated that among males who were disciplined with CP by mothers or fathers had a greater likelihood of adult criminality (e.g., assault, robbery, larceny, abuse, rape) regardless of degree of maternal/paternal warmth (McCord, 1997). Therefore, these findings suggest that the long-term effects of CP are not completely moderated or buffered by discipline within the context of a warm parental relationship as suggested by others (e.g., Simons & Johnson, 1994).

In a similar study, Straus and Yodanis (1996) hypothesized that normative approval of violence, lack of developing nonviolent conflict-resolutions skills, and depression-based aggression are mediating variables that contribute to the relationship between adolescent CP and domestic violence. To test these hypotheses, they used data from the National Family Violence Survey, which included a nationally representative sample of 4,401 European American, African American, and Hispanic couples. They defined domestic violence as including any of the following acts: hitting, throwing objects, pushing, shoving, kicking, slapping, choking, threatening with a knife/gun, and biting. Straus and Yodanis (1996) found that experiencing CP during adolescence was associated with an increased probability of approving of violence against spouses, adult

depression, and poor non-violent conflict-resolution skills for men and women. These results were significant even after controlling for age, socioeconomic status, ethnic group, and history of witnessing domestic violence. Therefore, they concluded that CP predicts domestic violence by impacting the three mediating variables assessed. The Straus and Yodanis study contributes to the CP outcome literature by offering a theoretical model that included possible direct and indirect relationships between CP and other adult outcome variables.

CP as a Risk Factor for Abusive Parenting Practices

One single factor is not enough to predict abuse potential or outcomes since abuse likely stems from complex interactions of factors related to perpetrator, child, and contextual factors (Bower-Russa, Knutson, & Winebarger, 2001). Since both childhood experiences with physical discipline and interpretations of those experiences affect perceptions of disciplinary practices (Bower & Knutson, 1996), it is important to identify those who are at lower or higher risk of repeating patterns of severe physical punishment or abusive parenting practices.

There is evidence to suggest that experiencing CP during childhood can influence discipline attitudes and acceptance of potentially abusive discipline during adulthood (Bower & Knutson, 1996; Bower-Russa et al., 2001). For example, in a study of college undergraduates, Bower-Russa et al., found individuals who had experienced a particular physical discipline (e.g., hit with a belt or strap) were less likely to classify similar parental acts that could result in injury to a child as abusive, than those that did not have experience with physical discipline. Furthermore, individual's appraisals of their own childhood experiences influenced their judgments about potentially abusive parenting

acts (Bower & Knutson, 1994; Bower-Russa, Knutson, & Winebarger, 2001). Therefore, there is a possibility that those who experience CP, especially more severe forms during childhood, have difficulty distinguishing CP from physical abuse, since they may regard these acts as normative or experience intergenerational transmission of beliefs about discipline. Also, inquiring about childhood history of CP and whether or not individuals label potentially abusive acts they experienced as abuse may also provide information about risk factors for child maltreatment. Bower and Knutson (1996) suggest that those who self-label an abusive childhood history may be at lower risk for being perpetrators of physical abuse than those who do not self-label. Therefore, increasing awareness and distinguishing between CP and abuse is essential to identifying protective factors for preventing abuse. However, some individuals who experience severe CP may have difficulty distinguishing between these acts of violence.

Furthermore, based on their research findings, Crouch and Behl (2001) suggest that beliefs about the value of CP moderate the relationship between stress and child physical abuse potential. Therefore, parents with strong beliefs in the value of corporal punishment and high parenting stress have greater child physical abuse potential. The Crouch and Behl findings suggest that in order to curb abuse potential among parents with high parenting stress, it is also necessary to modifying beliefs about the value of CP. Since those that experience CP (Rodriquez & Sutherland, 1999) and abusive discipline practices (Jackson et al., 1999; Thompson et al., 1999) are more likely to approve of CP and use it with their own children, they can also be at greater risks for engaging in severe physical discipline or physical abuse. Therefore, discouraging use of CP among parents can be part of the movement to decrease child maltreatment and negative effects of CP.

Conclusion

Corporal punishment (CP) is a widely used discipline practice; however, there is a paucity of research with ethnic minority families. Prior research has found that young, single, and less educated parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds tend to endorse using CP. Also, parents who have young, male children who engage in severe behavior problems tend to use CP. Contextual variables such as parenting stress, childhood discipline history, and childrearing expectations may also impact increased use of CP. Supporters of CP argue that CP is an effective means of discipline that is harmless to children. Opponents argue that it is a form of violence with short-term (e.g., increased child aggression and defiance) and long-term (e.g., increased abuse potential and delinquency) effects that outweigh any possible immediate effectiveness. Providing parents with education about the effects of CP and offering equally acceptable and effective solutions is essential to decreasing CP. Thus, rather than CP being accepted as a cultural norm for certain groups, the situations that maintain endorsement of CP such as poverty, oppression, and lack of education should be examined. Given the high prevalence of CP and the different types of parents and children affected by CP, there does not appear to be a one-size-fits all model for CP. However, it is important to identify parents that are at-risk for using CP as a primary discipline strategy, as well as occasional users, since even moderate use of CP has been associated with detrimental outcomes. Although, most CP outcome research is correlational, the only positive outcome associated with CP has been immediate child compliance.