The relationship between perceived severity of parental physical punishment and the development of moral reasoning of young adults.

Shelley E. Wilkin

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SEVERITY OF PARENTAL PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL REASONING OF YOUNG ADULTS

by

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B.A. Glendon College, York University, 1994
B.Ed. Glendon College, York University, 1994

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research through the Department of Psychology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1996
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between parental physical punishment severity as recalled by young adults and level of moral reasoning. Specifically, the relationships between 3 levels of maternal and paternal physical punishment severity (non-physical punishment, moderate physical punishment, and severe physical punishment) and level of postconventional (higher order) moral reasoning were investigated. One hundred and twenty-four undergraduate psychology students completed a modified version of the Assessing Environments III (physical punishment severity measure used to classify participants into three punishment groups) and the Defining Issues Test (moral reasoning measure). Attrition due to inconsistency in completing the questionnaires resulted in a loss of approximately 21% of the original sample and produced a final sample of 83 individuals. Results indicated that participants did not differ in moral reasoning level depending on physical punishment severity. Additional analyses revealed relationships between consistency in completing the questionnaires and moral reasoning level, educational level, race, and socioeconomic status. Explanations for these findings are considered and implications of these results are discussed.
DEDICATION

To my parents
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project such as this one involves the participation and support of many individuals. I would like to extend my most sincere thanks to my advisor, Dr. Sylvia Voelker, who gave me time and patience. I am grateful for all of her guidance and reassurance. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Bob Orr and Dr. Larry Morton, for their time, support, and many helpful suggestions.

My gratitude also extends to Dr. J. Knutson for generously granting me permission to use the Assessing Environments III, and to Dr. J. Rest for his permission to reproduce and use the Defining Issues Test.

Thanks are also due to all those who participated in the study --both to the students who took time to complete questionnaires and to the instructors who allowed me to enlist student volunteers from their classes.

Finally, special thanks are given to my friends and family for their continued support, love, and encouragement throughout all my academic pursuits.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Overview

Physical punishment of childhood misbehaviour appears to be a common practice in North America. A recent survey of 526 Canadian adults indicates that 88% of respondents report being frequently or occasionally physically disciplined as a child (Durrant, 1994). The National Family Violence Survey conducted with 8145 American families in 1985 indicates that over 90% of parents report having used physical punishment as a corrective measure (Straus, 1990). Although the use of physical punishment appears most frequent for young children (3-4 years), almost 30% of parents of offspring in their late teens (15 - 17 years) reported using physically punitive methods (Straus, 1990; Wauchope & Straus, 1990).

Although physical punishment appears to be a popular method of discipline, its use with children and adolescents has been questioned (e.g., Straus, 1990, 1991). Physical punishment has been criticized as an ineffective method of discipline (e.g., Brooks, 1991). Furthermore, physical punishment has been related to a number of negative effects for the child and adolescent, the family, and society (e.g., Hess & McDevitt, 1984). It is the effect of physical punishment on moral development, however, that is of prime concern to the present study.

Competent moral reasoning is associated with the ability to resist external pressures and use internalized social and moral norms to guide one’s behaviour (e.g., Hoffman, 1977). Less competent moral reasoning is associated with lack of awareness or disregard
for these norms and a tendency to give in to external pressures and temptations (e.g.,
Hoffman, 1977). The method of discipline used by a parent can influence the likelihood of
norm internalization and consequently affect the competency of moral development (e.g.,
Hoffman, 1975, 1979). Parents who rely on punitive measures, such as physical punishment
or material deprivation, tend to have children who show a reduced level of internalization
and attain a lower level of moral reasoning than do parents who use non-punitive methods
such as reasoning and explanation (e.g., Eisikovits & Sagi, 1982; Hoffman, 1979).

Current studies concerning moral reasoning often contrast the negative influence of
punitive methods with the positive effect of non-punitive methods (e.g., Eisikovits & Sagi,
1982; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967). One issue that has not been addressed however, is the
influence of different severities of one of the most common punitive methods --physical
punishment --on moral reasoning. The purpose of the present study is to examine the
relationship between severity of physical punishment as reported by young adults and moral
development.

To provide a context for the current study, literature examining the relationship between
reported physical punishment and moral reasoning is reviewed. The negative behavioural,
cognitive, and social consequences that are associated with the use of physical punishment
are presented, followed by a more detailed consideration of the consequences of physical
punishment for the development of moral reasoning. The importance of adequate moral
development is outlined and current conceptions and models of moral development are
presented. Finally, current research concerning the effect of parental discipline methods -- in particular physical punishment -- is reviewed.

The Effectiveness and the Consequences of Physical Punishment

Societal surveys in North America indicate that physical punishment of misbehaviour is relatively common (Durrant, 1994; Straus, 1990). Nonetheless, despite its apparent prevalence as a form of discipline, the effectiveness of physical punishment has been questioned on a number of grounds (e.g., Dreikurs & Grey, 1968; Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964; Gelles & Straus, 1990; Gordon, 1979; Hotaling, Straus, & Lincoln, 1990; Straus, 1990, 1991). Physical punishment tends to be a short-term solution for controlling misbehaviour. Punitive discipline techniques like physical punishment are typically effective in eliciting compliance in the immediate situation, however, such methods tend to be highly inefficient in preventing misbehaviours in the long-term (Bee, 1992; Brooks, 1991; Dreikurs & Grey, 1968; Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964; Gordon, 1979; Hoffman, 1975; Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986; Vasta, Haith & Miller, 1995).

It has been suggested that effective discipline techniques typically encourage internalization of societal values and attitudes so that behaviour becomes motivated by internal factors rather than the anticipation of external consequences (e.g., Dreikurs & Grey, 1968; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Hoffman, 1975; Lytton, 1977; Straus, 1991; Vasta, Haith & Miller, 1995). Punitive discipline methods like physical punishment have been criticized as ineffective because they minimize the degree of this internalization and focus on immediate external consequences rather than on intrinsic motivation to behave appropriately in the
long-term (Hoffman, 1975). Thus, a child who anticipates physical punishment may be compelled or coerced to comply in the short term; however, when the threat of external sanctions disappears, there will be little motivation to comply and long-lasting behavioural change is unlikely to have occurred (e.g., Brooks, 1991; Dreikurs & Grey, 1968; Gordon, 1979; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

It has also been argued that the effectiveness of physical punishment is limited because it is a retaliatory discipline method that provides little, if any, corrective information to the child (e.g., Bee, 1992; Dreikurs & Grey, 1968, Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964; Vasta, Haith & Miller, 1995). Although physical punishment is typically intended as a means to encourage appropriate behaviours, it rarely teaches children acceptable alternatives to their present actions. Furthermore, it provides poor models of behaviour (e.g., Bee, 1992; Dreikurs, 1964; Dreikurs & Grey, 1968; Ginott, 1969; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967; Vasta, Haith, & Miller, 1995).

Physical punishment has also been shown to be related to a variety of negative effects for the child, the family, and society. Physical punishment has been associated with increased aggression, poor intellectual functioning, poor social skills, and negative personality traits and behaviours (e.g., Straus, 1990).

**Physical Punishment and Aggression.** Children who are physically punished for misbehaviour display more acting out and/or aggressive behaviours than those children who are not physically punished (e.g., Larzelere, 1986; Michels, Pianta, & Reeve, 1993). Given our awareness of social learning principles and the number of studies which have shown how
observing models of aggression may lead to aggression by the observer (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961; Fairchild & Erwin, 1977), this relationship between physical punishment and aggression is not surprising.

Michels, Pianta, and Reeve (1993) conducted a longitudinal study that considered the relation between parental reports of physical discipline at home and children's acting out behaviours at school. Parental interview reports of discipline methods were gathered for 342 children entering kindergarten. Teacher ratings of acting out behaviours such as level of disruptiveness, defiance, and physical aggression were obtained twice in kindergarten and once in first grade. The results indicated that children who were physically punished displayed significantly more acting out behaviours than their non-physically punished peers. Moreover, children who received frequent physical punishment (more than once per week) displayed more acting out behaviours than those infrequently physically punished (less than once per week).

A similar conclusion was reached by Larzelere (1986) who focused his study on the relation of different frequencies of physical punishment to report of child and adolescent aggression against parents and siblings. Parents of children between the ages of 3 and 17 reported on how frequently they had used different tactics --particularly physical punishment -- when in conflict with their child during the previous year. The frequency of physical punishment was considered mild if one to six incidents of physical punishment had occurred within the year; moderate if between six and twenty incidents had occurred; and frequent if greater than twenty. Parents also reported the tactics used by the child when dealing with
conflict with parents and siblings. Two of the tactics used by the child --aggression toward parent and aggression toward siblings-- constituted the dependent measures. Both consisted of the sum of the child's reported physically violent tactics against these family members over the year.

Because age was the strongest correlate of the frequency of physical punishment, separate analyses were conducted for young children (age 3-6), preadolescents (age 7-12), and adolescents (age 13-17). For all groups, a positive linear relationship was shown to exist between frequency of physical punishment and report of aggression against parents and siblings.

Similarly, a study conducted by Weiss, Dodge, Bates, and Pettit (1992) showed a positive relationship between early physically punitive discipline and child aggression. These researchers studied two cohorts of children (278 children and 248 children) who were entering kindergarten. The children came from diverse backgrounds and were recruited from three different geographical locations.

During the study, the children's parents completed inventories which measured the extent and severity of physical punishment used with the child. The parents further reported and rated the aggression expressed by their children over the previous year. The children's teachers also rated childhood aggression through use of inventories. Direct observation of the children was undertaken by trained observers to further measure the level of aggression.

Results indicated that ratings of the severity of physical punishment positively correlated with parent and teacher report of aggression and with direct observation and measurement of
childhood aggression. The relationship did not appear to be due to confounding factors such as child temperament, SES, or marital violence, which had been controlled in the study.

Physical Punishment and Social Competence. The relationship between physical punishment and the social competence of children and adolescents also suggests a negative effect of punitive disciplinary practices (e.g., Hart, Ladd, & Burleson, 1990; Kennedy, 1992). Kennedy (1992) conducted a study that examined the social competence of 52 preschoolers (age 3-5) and its relationship to maternal beliefs and childrearing strategies. The social competence of the children was measured by both behavioural observation of the children’s social interaction and through sociometric peer ratings. Maternal beliefs and childrearing strategies were assessed through structured interviews with the children’s mothers. Questions regarding discipline methods considered the frequency of the use of physical punishment, reward, and reasoning. Results indicated that mothers of children who were rejected by their peers used more physical punishment and less reasoning in discipline, were less likely to teach children about social skills, and spent less time in child-centered activities.

Similarly, Amato (1986) undertook a study that considered the relationship between the personal and social competence of 99 children (age 8-9) and 102 adolescents (age 15-16) and several family processes. The family process measures were based on child and adolescent reports and ratings and considered aspects such as level of parental support, level of parental control, discipline method, and level of household responsibility. Several aspects of child and adolescent competence such as self-esteem, social competence, and self-control were
measured through the use of inventories. For the family process measure concerning discipline method, competence was associated with low levels of punitive discipline practices for both children and adolescents.

Hart, Ladd, and Burleson (1990) also examined maternal disciplinary styles and their relationship to children’s peer status and children’s expectations of the outcomes of social strategies. In this study, the mothers of 59 first graders and 85 fourth graders were interviewed about disciplinary practices. The children were interviewed concerning their expectations about the outcomes of social strategies employed in hypothetical conflict situations. Sociometric testing was also conducted to assess peer status. Results indicated that the children who were raised with more punitive techniques (such as physical discipline), were less accepted by peers and tended to mistakenly expect successful outcomes for unfriendly assertive behaviours towards their peers.

Physical Punishment and “Cognitive Effects”. Several studies of physically punitive disciplinary methods have also considered their impact in cognitive domains (e.g., Hess & McDevitt, 1984). Hess and McDevitt (1984) examined the relationship between maternal intervention techniques and child school related abilities. In a longitudinal design, 67 mothers were observed and interviewed about their disciplinary methods. Their children were then given vocabulary and block sorting tests at age 4, cognitive ability and school readiness tests at age 5 and 6, and scholastic aptitude and mathematics tests at age 12. Results indicated that intervention techniques that maximized parental dominance (such as physical punishment) were negatively correlated with achievement on the tests.
Weiss, Dodge, Bates, and Pettit (1992) also found an association between harsh parental discipline and processing biases and difficulties in two cohorts of kindergarten children. Through the course of examining the relation between harsh parental discipline occurring early in life and later aggression, these authors found support for the suggestion that social information processing biases and difficulties develop in response to harsh discipline. Possible confounding factors such as child temperament, SES, and marital violence were controlled in their study.

**Physical Punishment, Personality Dimensions and Mental Health.** There have also been indications that physical punishment may be associated with less desirable personality traits and may contribute to poor mental health (e.g., Gussman & Harder, 1990; Straus & Kaufman-Kantor, 1994). In 1990, Gussman and Harder conducted a study with 40 college students that considered parental use of physical punishment and offspring personality traits. Forty college students completed questionnaires which assessed personality traits. They also provided retrospective reports of their parents' use of a variety of disciplinary practices. Results indicated a positive correlation between perceived frequent punishment as a child and traits such as self dissatisfaction, hostility, pessimism, self derogation, and sensitivity. Results also showed that reports of frequent physical punishment were associated with reports of depression in adulthood.

Straus and Kaufman-Kantor (1994) investigated the possibility that corporal punishment during adolescence may contribute to the development of mental health and social relationship problems later in life. Their study was conducted with a subset of
4500 subjects drawn from the 1985 National Family Violence Survey. Subjects were interviewed and provided information on several variables such as: frequency and chronicity of physical punishment as an adolescent, current conflict resolution tactics, current depressive symptomatology, current suicidal ideation, current drinking frequency and chronicity. Results indicated that corporal punishment during adolescence was associated with a significantly increased probability of depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and alcohol abuse as an adult. These results were obtained while controlling for possible confounding factors such as SES, age, gender, and violence between the subject's parents.

Physical Punishment, Delinquency and Social Issues. Studies have also suggested that physical punishment in childhood may contribute to negative outcomes such as adolescent delinquency and abusive parenting (e.g., Dishion, 1990; Eisikovits & Sagi, 1982; Hotaling, Straus, & Lincoln, 1990; Straus, 1991; Straus & Kaufman-Kantor, 1994; Welsh, 1976; Zigler & Hall, 1989).

A longitudinal study conducted by Newson, Newson and Adams (1993), suggests that there are significant correlations between child rearing strategies and the development of delinquency. In their study, the mothers of 504 children were interviewed about childrearing attitudes and practices when the child was aged 1, 4, 7, 11, and 16 years. The interview data from when the children were 7 and 11 were analysed with respect to "troublesomeness" at 16 (based on parental report) and the acquisition of a criminal record in early adulthood.

The results indicated that, independent of factors such as sex, social class, and family size, childrearing strategies were related to the development of delinquency. Specifically, an
authoritarian approach to children, a lack of sensitive communication, and the frequent use of physical punishment (greater than 1 incidence per week) at age 7 and 11 predicted subsequent delinquency.

Physical punishment has also been linked to child abuse. Although most physical punishment does not turn into physical abuse, physical abuse often results from the escalation of “ordinary” physical punishment (Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986). It has been estimated that more than 60% of child abuse cases begin with “ordinary” physical discipline (Zigler & Hall, 1989). Study of abusive parents also indicates that they tend to use physical punishment more frequently than non-abusive parents regardless of type of child misbehaviour (Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986).

Research further indicates that disciplinary strategies are learned early in life and that physically punitive and abusive discipline methods are passed transgenerationally (e.g., Straus & Kaufman-Kantor, 1994; Wolfe, Katell & Draman, 1982; Zaidi, Knutson & Mehm, 1989). For example, Straus and Kaufman-Kantor (1994) have demonstrated that an increased experience of corporal punishment as an adolescent, may increase the risk that, as a parent, the individual will go beyond physical punishment to acts that are severe enough to be labelled physical abuse. The connection between physical punishment and abuse has led some individuals to suggest that in order to break transgenerational abuse patterns and achieve a society with a minimum of abuse, the physical punishment of children must be abolished (Straus, 1991).
In sum, evidence indicates that physical punishment has negative consequences for a number of areas of childhood development. It affects areas such as level of childhood and adolescent aggression, child social competence, child and adolescent cognitive functioning, child and adolescent mental health, and occurrence of delinquency and abuse. Besides these areas, the use of physical punishment as a disciplinary measure has also been negatively related to another important area of development -- namely moral development.

Physical Punishment and Moral Development

Morality and Society. Clearly, adequate moral development is vitally important to the fabric of society. As described by Hoffman (1979) “moral development epitomizes the existential problem of how humans come to manage the inevitable conflict between personal needs and social obligations” (p. 958). No doubt, for society’s well being, it is imperative that individuals be able to balance their own personal needs with social requirements (Hoffman, 1979). It is not always possible for society to enforce external sanctions to control behaviour. Thus, it is necessary for individuals to internalize social and moral norms and intrinsically monitor and regulate their own behaviour. Adequate moral development encourages this internalization and regulation (e.g., Hoffman, 1979). Consequently, it is in society’s best interest to encourage adequate moral development.

Conceptions of Moral Development. Although several frameworks for the study of moral development have been proposed, the most dominant has been the cognitive-developmental framework (e.g., Modgil & Modgil, 1986; Rest, 1979; Sapp, 1986; Walker, 1986). No doubt, the most popular schema for conceptualizing moral development within this framework is
Lawrence Kohlberg’s stage theory (1981, 1984; e.g., Modgil & Modgil, 1986; Rest, 1979, 1984; Walker, 1986). Kohlberg is often credited as being the most influential individual in the study of moral development, judgement, and behaviour (e.g., Rest, 1986a; Sapp, 1986). His stage theory has shaped research in moral development and has led to the creation of several scales designed to measure moral reasoning (e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Rest, 1979).

Kohlberg (1981, 1984) proposed that moral development is tied to cognitive development and proceeds through stages. His stage model is characterized by three main criteria: holistic structure, invariant sequence, and hierarchical order. Firstly, Kohlberg maintained that each separate stage represents a whole—the characteristics of each stage are interconnected and belong together. Thus, within a given time span, individuals show a consistent stage level across contents and contexts. Secondly, the sequence of moral reasoning stages is invariant. Moral development occurs sequentially from lower stages to higher stages without any skipping. Lastly, successive stages transform, reorganize, and restructure the concepts of prior stages and represent a more advanced development. Kohlberg (1984) further argued that these stages are universal and represent how moral development proceeds for both genders and all cultures.

Kohlberg (1984) identified six stages of moral reasoning based on the examination of the responses given by children, adolescents, and adults to stories in which characters face moral dilemmas. Each stage is characterized by its own distinctive notion of justice. The six stages are divided into three overriding levels: preconventional morality—the morality of self-interest when individuals obey to avoid punishment or gain concrete rewards, conventional
morality - the morality of law and social order when individuals obey to gain approval or help maintain the social order, and postconventional morality - the morality of abstract principles when individuals obey to affirm society's agreed upon rights or their own ethical principles.

Despite its popularity as a schema of moral development, Kohlberg's theory and his measure of moral reasoning -- the Moral Judgement Interview -- have been criticized. Dominant criticisms include questioning of the universality of Kohlberg's stages (e.g., Simpson, 1974; Snarey, 1985); doubts about the invariant, hierarchical nature of the stages (e.g., Kurtines & Greif, 1974; Siegel, 1986); questioning of the possibility of a gender bias (e.g., Gilligan, 1982); and criticisms of empirical and methodological aspects of Kohlberg's research and measures (e.g., Kurtines & Greif, 1974).

Kohlberg answered these criticisms by conducting a number of longitudinal studies, by critically examining opposing arguments, and by improving his measures. Both his work, and the work of other researchers, have produced evidence to indicate that a stage theory is generally supported (e.g., Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983; Kohlberg, 1984; Snarey, 1985; Walker, 1986). Research supports the universality and invariant sequence of the stages (e.g., Snarey, 1985; Walker, 1986). Examination of sex differences tend not to support significant differences (e.g., Snarey, 1985). The Moral Judgement Interview and scoring procedures have been improved and are more reliable (Kohlberg, 1984). Moreover, other similar and highly useful measures of moral development have been created that incorporate aspects of Kohlberg's work while attempting to improve upon its perceived flaws (e.g., Rest, 1979, 1986b; Ziv, 1976).
Moral development and the Effects of Parental Discipline. Given the importance of moral development to society's well being, it is consequential to examine the conditions that lead to effective moral reasoning. It is generally agreed that conditions which foster internalization are most beneficial to moral development. However, there is some debate as to what these conditions are.

Hoffman (1977) clearly emphasizes the importance of parental effects on socialization and the process of internalization. In particular, he highlights the contribution of parental discipline methods to the development of morality. Hoffman views the central conflict in any moral encounter as the conflict between the individual's egoistic needs and the moral requirements of the situation. He argues that discipline encounters have much in common with moral conflicts, and that furthermore, they teach the child about balancing personal needs and social requirements. The discipline method sets the stage for the acquisition of either an external focus or internalization. Thus, early discipline experiences are argued to have a long-term influence on one's moral actions and beliefs (Hoffman, 1977).

Research in the area of parental discipline as a socialization force indicates that a) techniques involving physical punishment or material deprivation --labeled as punitive or power assertive techniques--are associated with a moral orientation based on fear of external sanctions, and b) techniques which use explanation and rationalization to point out the consequences of the child's behaviour --labeled as inductive techniques--are associated with a moral orientation based on internalization (Hoffman, 1975, 1979; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967; Kochanska, 1991; Nevius, 1967).
Studies indicate that inductive techniques tend to be related to a more advanced level of moral reasoning, while power assertive techniques are associated with a less advanced level (e.g., Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967; Kochanska, 1991; Saraswathi & Sundaresan, 1980). For example, in 1967 Hoffman & Saltzstein measured several dimensions (affective, cognitive, overt) of the moral development of 444 seventh grade children. Interviews were then conducted with a subsample of 204 of their parents concerning the discipline methods used. Results indicated that a more advanced development along the various moral dimensions was associated with an infrequent use of power assertive techniques and a frequent use of inductive techniques.

A study of delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents conducted by Eisikovits & Sagi (1982) further reinforces the positive relationship between use of induction and the level of moral development. These researchers assessed various dimensions (behavioural, cognitive, affective) of the moral development of 26 lower class delinquent adolescents, 20 middle class non-delinquents, and 20 lower class non-delinquents. Delinquents performed at a less competent level than did non-delinquents on most measures of moral development. When Q-sorts related to the discipline methods used were administered to both the delinquents and non-delinquents and their parents, less induction was found to be used in the case of the delinquent adolescents. Social class did not seem to contribute to these differences. The authors concluded that disciplinary methods may account for the differential moral development found between delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents.
In sum, research indicates that the development of moral reasoning is affected by parental disciplinary styles. Induction, or reasoning and explanation, is associated with a higher level of internalization and consequently a more advanced level of moral reasoning. Power assertive or punitive and retaliatory methods focus on external sanctions and are related to a less advanced level of moral development.

Methodological Issues

For the purposes of the proposed study, it is important to consider several methodological issues related to both physical punishment and the development of moral reasoning. Characteristics of the participant's parent, as well as characteristics of the participant must be considered. Most of the research in the area of physical punishment fails to distinguish between maternal versus paternal punishment. Most studies adopt either a generic position when asking about parental punishment (e.g., describe your parent's discipline methods; e.g., Berger, Knutson, Mehm, & Perkins, 1988), or focus on maternal punishment (e.g., Kennedy, 1992). Sex differences related to physical punishment have not been widely studied.

It is also important to consider possible participant sex differences in terms of moral development or experience with physical punishment. Prior studies of moral development indicate that sex differences are minimal (e.g., Rest, 1986a), yet, typically, sex is controlled in studies of moral reasoning. There are some indications that the frequency of physical punishment may be different depending on sex (e.g., Straus, 1990). Several studies indicate that boys generally experience and report more frequent physical punishment experiences
(e.g., Knutson & Selner, 1994; Straus, 1990). Studies often control for sex (e.g., Deley, 1988).

Socioeconomic status (SES) is also typically controlled in both studies of physical punishment (e.g., Weiss et al., 1992) and studies of moral development (e.g., Rest, 1979). The impact of SES appears more significant in terms of physical punishment, with a number of studies indicating a negative correlation between SES and frequency of physical punishment (e.g., Straus, 1990). Studies of moral reasoning do not show SES as a powerful correlate of moral reasoning level (e.g., Rest, 1979) yet typically, it is controlled.

The relation of several other variables specifically to moral development must be considered. The most powerful correlate of moral development is educational level (e.g., Rest, 1986a, 1986b). Scores on Rest’s (1986b) measure of moral reasoning (DIT, 1986b) are positively correlated with educational level. Significant correlations have also been found between moral reasoning scores and age (Rest, 1979), as this variable is typically confounded with educational level. Cognitive level or IQ, has only shown a moderate correlation with moral reasoning (e.g., Rest, 1979), while variables such as culture and religion have been shown to have little relation to level of moral reasoning (e.g., Rest, 1986a; Rest, Thoma, Moon, & Getz, 1986).

The final methodological issues that need to be addressed are questions about causal direction and the difficulties associated with retrospective reports. Admittedly, when considering the relationship between physical punishment and moral development, it must be kept in mind that no definite conclusions can be drawn about causal direction. Intense or
frequent physical punishment may limit the level of moral reasoning. However, it is also possible that characteristics associated with poor moral reasoning ability elicit more intense or more frequent physical punishment. Causal inferences cannot be drawn because of the inability to ascertain the direction of the relationship.

Difficulties associated with retrospective reports must also be taken into account. The reliability of retrospective reporting may be called into question. Clearly, longitudinal prospective studies which examine parental physical punishment and moral development would be valuable in avoiding the pitfalls associated with retrospective reporting. However, logistically, such studies are highly difficult and present their own problems. Moreover, there are some indications that retrospective reporting related specifically to the use of punishment is reliable. For example, a study investigating the reliability of retrospective data related to childrearing practices did not find a significant difference in terms of the accounts of punishment, between original parental reports and offspring reports given 25 years later (Finkel & McGue, 1992). Data related to retrospective accounts of other childrearing practices showed only moderate reliability.

Rationale and Hypotheses

Although a great deal of work has been undertaken which suggests that power assertive techniques negatively influence moral development, there has been little research into the relationship between different levels or severities of power assertion and moral development. In particular, it has remained unclear how different severities of one of the most common forms of power assertive techniques --physical punishment --relates to the development of
moral reasoning. In fact, previous research has not distinguished between the effects of absent, moderate, or severe physical punishment during childhood and adolescence on the development of moral reasoning.

The current study examined this relationship between severity of physical punishment as reported by young adults and the development of moral reasoning. The relationship between three severities of physical punishment -- non-physical punishment, moderate physical punishment, and severe physical punishment -- and level of postconventional (high stage) moral reasoning (Rest, 1986b) was examined for both males and females. The study also differentiated between maternal versus paternal use of physical punishment.

**Hypothesis 1.** Studies indicate that power assertive techniques like physical punishment are generally related to less advanced moral reasoning while inductive techniques are related to more advanced moral reasoning (e.g., Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967). A study examining the relationship between different frequencies or levels of physical punishment and aggression suggests that differing levels of physical punishment may have differing effects (Larzelere, 1986). Given these considerations, it was hypothesized that moral reasoning development would differ according to severity of physical punishment for both males and females. Individuals who reported that they were not physically punished were hypothesized to show the highest levels of moral reasoning while those who reported severe physical punishment would show the lowest level of moral reasoning. Individuals in the moderate physical punishment group were expected to show intermediary moral development.
**Hypothesis 2.** Given that literature suggests that there is no significant difference between mothers and fathers in incidence and use of physical punishment (e.g., Starrels, 1994; Wauchope & Straus, 1990), it was expected that differences in moral reasoning development according to severity would be evident for both maternal and paternal use of physical punishment.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

One hundred and twenty-four native English speaking undergraduate students were
initially recruited to participate in the study. Participants were drawn from several
psychology classes at the University of Windsor in SouthWestern Ontario. Each participant
received experimental credit and was treated according to the ethical standards for research
with human subjects (American Psychological Association, 1992). A final sample of eighty-
three individuals (25 male, 58 female) was drawn from the initial group of students in order
to exclude those who were over the age of 25 (n=15) and those who showed inconsistency in
filling out the questionnaires (n=26).

Measures

Report of Intensity of Physical Punishment. The Assessing Environments III (AEIII:
Berger & Knutson, 1984) was used to assess severity of reported physical punishment and to
assign participants into one of three groups: non-physically punished, moderately physically
punished, and severely physically punished. The AEIII was developed according to a
rational statistical approach for the purpose of investigating punitive childhood experiences
of adults and adolescents. It consists of one hundred and fifty six face valid true--false items
related to a range of childhood experiences, attitudes, and perceptions.

The AEIII is divided into fifteen different scales. The Physical Punishment Scale (PP) was
of primary importance for the purposes of the present research. This scale assesses the
occurrence of specific events of physical discipline --ranging from moderate disciplinary tactics such as spanking, to more severe tactics such as punching, kicking, and choking. The PP Scale consists of twelve primary items (items 41, 45, 54, 58, 67, 75, 81, 82, 88, 113, 116, 132) and seventeen additional items (items 12, 19, 28, 31, 35, 38, 40, 51, 60, 63, 66, 76, 83, 93, 95, 110, 129) which permit the participant to a) identify specific objects (e.g., paddles, belts, etc.) used by the parent in disciplinary situations, b) identify type of injuries sustained (e.g., bruises, fractures, etc.) and c) identify medical services required (e.g., casts, hospitalization). Scoring of three of the primary items (items 45, 54, 75) is conditional on the endorsement of additional items (scored conditionally on endorsement of one or more of items 12, 19, 35, 40, 51, 66: scored conditionally on endorsement of one or more of items 60, 63, 95; scored conditionally on endorsement of one or more of items 28, 31, 38, 76, 83, 93, 110, 129). Item 18, which reads “I was forced to engage in sexual activities by one or both of my parents” was excluded given its potential for distressing participants.

The AEIII has shown good test-retest reliability over a two month period (average = .83), and adequate internal consistency (KR-20 coefficients range from .65 to .79 for the scales). The modest internal consistency coefficients are not unexpected given the broad nature of the entire questionnaire.

The validity of the AEIII has been supported by studies which have shown its ability to differentiate between abused and non-abused adolescents (e.g., Berger et al., 1988). The validity of the PP Scale has also been supported by a study which reported a significant correlation between the PP scores of young adults and existing reports of home observation
of parental discipline methods (e.g., Prescott, 1991). The information related to parental
discipline methods consisted of archival data gathered when the subject was involved in a
research project as a child ten years earlier (e.g., Prescott, 1991).

For the purposes of the present study, the AEIII was slightly modified. The primary and
additional items of the original PP scale use the generic term Parent(s) rather than specific
references to mother or father. These generic items were modified by replacing each single
generic item with two identical items: one which specified the mother as the parent, and the
other which specified the father. The modification created two separate scales out of the
original PP Scale: a Mother PP Scale and a Father PP Scale. The Mother PP Scale is
comprised of items 4, 10, 17, 26, 29, 31, 37, 39, 50, 58, 64, 68, 71, 77, 79, 86, 88, 94, 97,
100, 102, 118, 123, 129, 137, 142, 147, 153, 169 and the Father PP Scale is comprised of
items 6, 12, 22, 24, 32, 34, 38, 43, 44, 52, 54, 59, 61, 65, 69, 80, 84, 87, 91, 103, 110, 120,
124, 127, 143, 144, 151, 157, 159). These scales are presented in the modified version of the
AEIII which can be found in Appendix A. The modified questionnaire increased the original
AEIII to a total length of 184 items.

The responses on the PP Scales were used to assign participants to punishment groups.
Participants were classified in three ways: a) according to Father PP Scale score  b) according
to Mother PP Scale score  and c) according to Total PP Scale score. For Father classification,
only items on the Father PP Scale were included, while for Mother classification, only items
on the Mother PP Scale were included. Total PP classification was derived using items from
both Father and Mother PP Scales.
For both Father and Mother classifications, participants who endorsed no PP items were assigned to the non-physically punished group, participants who endorsed 1-3 PP items were assigned to the moderately physically punished group, and participants who endorsed 4 or more PP items were assigned to the severely physically punished group. For Total PP classification, participants were assigned to the non-physical punishment group if no PP items were endorsed on either Mother or Father PP Scales, to the moderate physical punishment group if 1 to 3 items were endorsed on one or both PP Scales (endorsement of 4 or more items on either PP Scale precluded classification in this group), and to the severe physical punishment group if 4 or more items were endorsed on one or both PP Scales.

Cutoffs used for group assignment were based on previous work with abused and non-abused adolescents by Berger, Knutson, Mehm, and Perkins (1988). In their study, PP scale scores were shown to be significantly different for abused versus non-abused adolescents. Adolescents who had been adjudicated “abused” endorsed 4 or more items on the PP scale, while “non-abused” adolescents endorsed 3 or fewer items. The criterion score of 4 on the PP scale of the AEIII has been used in other studies to assign subjects to experimental groups (e.g., Zaidi et al., 1989).

**Moral development.** The Defining Issues Test (DIT, Rest, 1986b) was used to assess level of moral reasoning. The DIT consists of six stories of moral dilemmas (see Appendix B). After the presentation of each dilemma, the participant indicates which course of action the central character should follow. Participants are then asked to consider a list of twelve statements which express different considerations that people might use to make a “moral”
decision. Participants rate the importance of each statement on a 5 point scale and then select and rank order the four most important statements.

The twelve statements in the DIT were written to reflect different stages of reasoning within Kohlberg's stage model of moral development. Two specific summary scores are calculated for each subject: the P% score --which reflects the participant's preferences for postconventional reasoning (stages 5 and 6) and the D score --which reflects the relative distribution of ratings across all stages. Stage scores may also be calculated, however, Rest (1986b) advises against attempting to stage type an individual and recommends that the P% score is a more appropriate measure of moral reasoning.

The rationale for Rest's (1986b) recommendation is based on several considerations. Firstly, studies which compared various indices of the DIT (e.g., Cooper, 1972) indicated that the P% Score showed the best test-retest stability, the best convergent-divergent pattern of correlations, and stronger longitudinal trends than all other possible indices --making it the most appropriate measure for DIT data. Secondly, investigation of stage typing reveals that the predominately rated stage is not always greatly predominant over other stages (e.g., Rest, 1979). Thus it may be misleading to classify an individual according to one stage merely because he or she rates more statements in that stage than in others. Lastly, the distribution of items for each stage is not balanced across stories --which may make it difficult to accurately classify an individual in one given stage (Rest, 1979). This imbalance arose out of the difficulty of representing each stage realistically for all stories. Such difficulty led Rest to forego creating an equal number of stage items across stories in order to reduce the
artificiality of the questionnaire. In sum, all these considerations indicate that the P% Score is the most appropriate measure for use with DIT data.

The DIT provides internal checks on reliability and consistency. In general, the DIT has been found to be a reliable measure with test-retest reliabilities for P% and D scores around .80, and values of Cronbach's index of internal consistency in the high .70s (Rest, 1986b). The DIT has been shown to differentially assess moral reasoning as opposed to such related variables as cognitive development and intelligence, and its criterion-group validity is good (Rest, 1986b). It appears to be a reliable and valid measure of moral reasoning.

Procedure

Participants were tested in small group settings. After the procedure was explained and written consent was obtained (see Appendix C), participants completed a questionnaire that considered basic demographic information such as gender, age, race, educational level, and parental occupational status (used to measure socioeconomic status). Subsequently, participants completed the AEIII (Berger & Knutson, 1984) and the DIT (Rest, 1986b). The order of administration of these two questionnaires was counterbalanced across participants. Total testing time for each participant was approximately 1 1/2 hours.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Sample Description

Although 124 individuals participated in the study, the final sample consisted of 83 young adults. Fifteen of the original participants were excluded in order to restrict the age of the sample to 18 to 25 year olds. The rationale for this restriction was based on consideration of findings which indicate that age and education are typically correlated with moral reasoning scores (i.e., the P% Score of the DIT; e.g., Rest, 1979, 1986b). Age/education norms for the P% Score of the DIT indicate associations between this measure and various age/education groupings (i.e., high school (14-17 years); college (18-25 years); graduate school (25- years); and general adults (no post secondary education), thus necessitating the restriction of the sample. An additional 26 participants, approximately 21% of the initial sample, were excluded because they showed inconsistency, according to Rest’s guidelines (1986b), in responding to the Defining Issues Test (DIT) (i.e., they had greater than 8 inconsistencies on one story, or inconsistencies on two or more stories). Unless otherwise specified, all reported results refer to the final sample of 83 participants.

Demographics

The final sample consisted of 58 female and 25 male young adults ranging in age from 18 years to 25 years (see Table 1). The average age of participants was 20.9 years, with a standard deviation of 1.6 years. For the purposes of the analyses, age was grouped in two
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Male Frequency</th>
<th>Male Percentage</th>
<th>Female Frequency</th>
<th>Female Percentage</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
<th>Total Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 - 19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 - 25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
year intervals in order to circumvent difficulties associated with low frequencies in the two most extreme age categories (i.e., 18 and 25 years). All of the participants were undergraduate students with a mean university education of 2.4 years (SD = 1.3).

Distribution of participants across level of education is presented in Table 2.

All of the individuals in the current study were native English speaking students. Seventy-two participants (approximately 87%) described themselves as "white"; 3 (approximately 4%) described themselves as "non-white"; and 8 (approximately 9%) did not specify racial status. Over 72% of participants in the final sample indicated that they were reared in an urban or suburban setting (n = 60) while approximately 27% were reared in a rural setting (n = 23). Eighty participants (97%) indicated that they were single and had never been married, while 3 (3%) indicated that they were currently married at the time of the study. Also of note, is that 61 individuals (approximately 74%) indicated that they would not use physical punishment with their own children.

Participants were classified according to socioeconomic status (SES) using the occupational factor of Hollingshead’s (1975) Four Factor Index of Social Status. Individuals were assigned to one of nine possible SES categories based on parental occupation. More specifically, classification was based on the parent with the highest occupational level (see Table 3). Scores on Hollingshead’s occupational factor can range from a low of 1 (e.g., menial service workers) to a high of 9 (e.g., higher executives, major professionals). The average SES categorization of the final sample was 6.1 (e.g., technicians, semiprofessionals) with a standard deviation of 2.0. For the purposes of subsequent analyses, the nine SES
Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Participant University Education by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Education Level (years)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

Socioeconomic Status of Participants According to Hollinghead’s (1975) Occupational Factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES Categorization</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 --Unspecified</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 --Farm laborers / Menial service workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 --Unskilled workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 --Machine operators / Semiskilled workers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 --Skilled manual workers / Craftsmen / Smaller business owners</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 --Clerical &amp; sales workers / Small farm &amp; business owners</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 --Technicians / Small business owners / Semiprofessionals</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 --Managers / Minor professionals</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 --Administrators / Lesser professionals / Medium-size business owners</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 --Higher Executives / Major Professionals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
categories were collapsed into low (1-4) and high (5-9) groupings in order to avoid the difficulties associated with the low frequencies within certain categories.

Physical Punishment

For the purposes of the analyses, Total Physical Punishment (PP) Scale scores on the Assessing Environments III (AEIII) were used to classify the participants into three different punishment groups: non-physically punished (if both parents were scored in non-punishment range), moderately physically punished (if one or both parents were scored in moderate range), and severely physically punished (if one or both parents were scored in severe range). Fourteen participants (16.9%) were classified as non-physically punished, 52 participants (62.7%) as moderately physically punished, and 17 participants (20.5%) as severely physically punished.

Participants were similarly classified into the same three punishment groups according to Father PP Scale score, and alternately, Mother PP Scale score, to ascertain whether it would be necessary to run separate analyses according to Father or Mother PP classification. As can be seen in Table 4, the distributions of the punishment groups were highly similar for Father and Mother Physical Punishment scales. One hundred percent of the participants in the non-physical punishment category, 48% of participants in the moderate category, and 35% of participants in the severe category were similarly classified according to Father and Mother PP Scores. As is apparent in Table 5, fathers and mothers were consistently described as punishing in the same category (51.8%) or in contiguous categories (48.2%). A Wilcoxon
Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Punishment Categorization Separately by Father, Mother, and Total PP Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Punishment Categorization</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-physically punished</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately physically punished</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severely physically punished</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Punishment Categorization According to both Father and

Mother PP Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no PP</td>
<td>no PP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no PP</td>
<td>mod PP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>missing</td>
<td>mod PP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mod PP</td>
<td>no PP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mod PP</td>
<td>mod PP</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mod PP</td>
<td>sev PP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sev PP</td>
<td>mod PP</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sev PP</td>
<td>sev PP</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Signed-Ranks test revealed no significant differences between Father and Mother PP classifications \((z = -.005, \ p > .01)\). Consequently, running separate analyses according to parent gender was unnecessary.

Although there were substantially more female participants \((n = 58)\) than male \((n = 25)\), there were no significant sex differences found on PP Total score (see Table 6). As well, there was no significant effect found when crosstabulations were performed on sex and PP categorization, \(\chi^2 (2, \ N = 83) = 1.8, \ p > .30\). Similarly, no significant effects were found when crosstabulations were performed on PP categorization and age, \(\chi^2 (6, \ N = 83) = 2.8, \ p > .80\), PP categorization and race, \(\chi^2 (4, \ N = 83) = 1.8, \ p > .70\), PP categorization and education, \(\chi^2 (8, \ N = 83) = 3.6, \ p > .80\), and PP categorization and socioeconomic status, \(\chi^2 (4, \ N = 83) = 1.6, \ p > .80\).

**Moral Reasoning**

For the purposes of the analyses, the P\(^\%\) score (percentage of postconventional or stage 5 and 6 reasoning) of the Defining Issues Test (DIT) was used to define level of moral reasoning. The P\(^\%\) score can range from 0 to 95. Prior research has indicated that university students tend to have P\(^\%\) scores in the low to mid 40’s (e.g., Rest, 1986b). In the current study, participant P\(^\%\) scores ranged from 12.0 to 68.0 with the average P\(^\%\) score being 37.1 \((SD = 12.3)\).

As can be seen in Table 6, there were no significant sex differences found on the P\(^\%\) score of the DIT. There were also no significant correlations found between the P\(^\%\) score
Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Differences between Measures According to Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Females (n =58)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Males (n =25)</th>
<th></th>
<th>t(81)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P% score on the DIT</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>-.90</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total PP score according to the AEIII</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and sex. The P% score on the DIT was, however, significantly correlated with education ($r = .32$, $p < .003$), age ($r = .30$, $p < .006$), and socioeconomic status ($r = .22$, $p < .05$). The relationships between both the P% score and education, and the P% score and age are consistent with prior research with students (e.g., Rest, 1986a, 1986b). Given these findings, education, age, and SES were controlled in subsequent analyses.

**Hypothesis #1**

It was predicted that differences in moral reasoning development would exist according to severity of physical punishment for both males and females. This hypothesis was tested by classifying participants into three punishment severity groups using the Total PP Score (which reflects endorsement of both Father and Mother PP items) on the Assessing Environments III (AEIII) and subsequently comparing these groups in terms of P% score (postconventional or higher order reasoning scores) on the Defining Issues Test (DIT). The means and standard deviations of the P% score for the three punishment groups are presented in Table 7.

A one way analysis of covariance was performed on level of moral reasoning as measured by the P% score on the DIT. The independent variable consisted of Total Physical Punishment (PP) categorization as assessed by the AEIII. Covariates were age, education, and socioeconomic status. The main effect of physical punishment severity level on moral reasoning was not statistically significant, $F(2, 77) = .47$, $p > .60$, indicating that subjects did not differ in moral reasoning level depending on severity of physical punishment.
Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of the P% Score on the Defining Issues Test (DIT)

According to Total Physical Punishment Categorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Punishment Categorization</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-physically punished</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately physically punished</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severely physically punished</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis #2

It was predicted that differences in moral reasoning development would exist according to severity of both maternal and paternal physical punishment. This hypothesis was tested by classifying subjects into the same three severity groups according to paternal physical punishment, and alternately according to maternal physical punishment, and comparing these groups in terms of P% score on the DIT. The means and standard deviations of the P% scores for the three punishment groups classified according to Father PP scores and according to Mother PP scores are presented in Tables 8 and 9 respectively.

Separate one way analyses of covariance were performed on level of moral reasoning as measured by the P% score on the DIT. The independent variable in the first analysis consisted of Father Physical Punishment (PP) categorization as assessed by the AEIII, while in the second it consisted of Mother Physical Punishment (PP) categorization. Covariates in both analyses were age, education, and socioeconomic status. The effect of physical punishment severity level was not statistically significant for fathers, $F (2, 76) = .13, \ p > .80$, or mothers, $F (2, 77) = .41, \ p > .60$, indicating that subjects did not differ in moral reasoning level according to maternal or paternal physical punishment level.

The hypothesis that differences in moral reasoning development would exist for both parents was predicated on the expectation that there would be no differences between mothers and fathers in the use of physical punishment. This expectation was supported by the similar punishment group frequencies found for mothers and fathers for each of the three punishment groups (see Table 4) and by the results of a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks test which
Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations of the P% Score on the Defining Issues Test (DIT) According to Father Physical Punishment Categorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Physical Punishment Categorization</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-physically punished</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately physically punished</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severely physically punished</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of the P% Score on the Defining Issues Test (DIT)

According to Mother Physical Punishment Categorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother Physical Punishment Categorization</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-physically punished</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately physically punished</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severely physically punished</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
found no significant differences between Father and Mother Physical Punishment groups. Thus, while no main effects for punishment level on level of moral reasoning were found, the expectation that no differences would exist between maternal and paternal use of physical punishment was supported.

Additional Analyses

As previously indicated, although the study’s initial sample consisted of 124 undergraduate students, 26 of these participants were excluded due to inconsistency in completing the Defining Issues Test (DIT) (i.e., they had greater than 8 inconsistencies on one story or inconsistencies on two or more stories). Attrition due to inconsistency resulted in a loss of approximately 21% of the original sample. Consequently, investigation of this inconsistency was warranted.

Consistency was defined by performance on the DIT (consistent versus inconsistent). Crosstabulations were performed using consistency as the first variable and physical punishment severity level (non-physically punished, moderately physically punished, severely physically punished), as the second variable. No significant effect was found, $\chi^2 (2, N = 109) = .21, p > .90$. Similarly, no significant effects were found when crosstabulations were performed on consistency and sex, $\chi^2 (1, N = 109) = .10, p > .70$, and consistency and age, $\chi^2 (3, N = 109) = 3.5, p > .60$.

Significant effects were found however, when crosstabulations were performed on consistency and education (1-5 years), $\chi^2 (4, N = 109) = 10.8, p < .03$, consistency and
race (white, nonwhite, unspecified), $\chi^2(2, \ N = 109) = 19.5, \ p < .00006$, consistency and socioeconomic status (low, high, unspecified), $\chi^2(2, \ N = 109) = 7.7, \ p < .03$, and consistency and moral reasoning level (low P% score (0-34), high P% score (35-99); Rest, 1986b), $\chi^2(1, \ N = 109) = 4.8, \ p < .03$.

Differences in the ratios of consistent versus inconsistent responders across educational levels, race, and moral reasoning level were evident during examination of the crosstabulations. Consistent responders outnumbered inconsistent responders for all educational levels. However, while the ratios between consistent and inconsistent responders for second, third, fourth, and fifth plus years were equal to or greater than 4:1, the ratio for first year students was approximately 2:1. In terms of race, the ratio of consistent to inconsistent responders was 5:1 for white responders, 1:3 for nonwhite responders, and 4:1 for those who did not specify racial status. With regards to moral reasoning level, crosstabulations showed ratios for consistent and inconsistent responders of 2:1 for those with lower P% moral reasoning scores (0-34) and 6:1 for those with higher P% moral reasoning scores (35-95).
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between physical punishment severity as recalled by young adults and level of moral reasoning. The hypothesis that differences in moral reasoning development would exist according to severity of physical punishment for both males and females was not supported. Participants did not in fact differ in moral reasoning depending on physical punishment classification. Similarly, the hypothesis that differences in moral reasoning development would exist for both maternal and paternal use of physical punishment was also unsupported. However, the expectation that maternal and paternal physical punishment severity would not be significantly different was supported.

Three possible explanations for these negative results might be considered: the severity of physical punishment may be unrelated to moral reasoning, the current methodology may not have adequately assessed either physical punishment severity and/or moral reasoning, or other methodological issues may have influenced the results. Given that prior research has generally supported a relationship between physical punishment and moral reasoning ability (e.g., Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967), it is more likely that the lack of association found between the variables reflects inadequate assessment or other methodological issues. These possibilities will be considered in turn.

Assessment of Constructs: Physical Punishment Severity

It is possible that the current methodology did not adequately assess physical punishment severity or moral reasoning. Given the frequent use and investigation of the Defining Issues
Test (DIT) as a measure of moral reasoning, it is more likely that there were inadequacies in the assessment of physical punishment severity which impacted on the results.

Firstly, it is possible that the questionnaire used to assess physical punishment severity was inadequate. Although there are a variety of measures which investigate physical abuse, questionnaires related to the assessment of “typical” physical punishment use are sparse. The Assessing Environments III (AEIII) appeared to be the only available questionnaire which provided a measure of physical punishment severity. However, certain attributes of the questionnaire may have resulted in a less than optimal assessment of physical punishment severity.

The AEIII’s Physical Punishment (PP) Scale consists of twelve basic items which are often conditional on the endorsement of various other items. Clearly, the PP items are not overly numerous nor exhaustive (e.g., all possible objects that one could be hit with could not be included as items). As such, they may be restrictive in some instances and thus contribute to a loss of valuable information. Similarly, the forced choice true/false format is also restrictive and may not allow for comprehensive exploration of the physical punishment domain. Furthermore, the modification of the AEIII which expanded generic PP items into two identical mother and father items, added a certain cumbersomeness and degree of repetition to the questionnaire which participants may have found annoying or disconcerting. All of these factors may have affected the reliability and accuracy of the measurement of physical punishment severity and in turn may have influenced the results.
Secondly, a related difficulty in terms of the measurement of physical punishment severity can be found in the study's neglect to completely isolate physical punishment from other possible forms of discipline. Although participants were questioned about the severity of physical punishment they experienced, other disciplinary practices which occurred consecutively or concurrently with physical punishment were not surveyed. Consequently, the influence of these practices cannot be determined. Prior research has indicated differential effects in terms of moral development with differing forms of discipline (e.g., inductive techniques tend to be related to a more advanced level of moral reasoning; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967)). Thus, it is possible that other disciplinary practices may have had a primary or mediating effect on the moral development of participants.

Methodological Issues: Retrospective Reporting

It is also possible that other methodological issues affected the results. Difficulties may have arisen due to the necessity of retrospective reporting related to physical punishment. Admittedly, the reliability and validity of retrospective reports can always be called into question. Participants may not have accurately recalled or reported their punishment history and in turn, this unreliable or inaccurate reporting may have obscured the nature of the relationship between physical punishment and moral reasoning.

Additional Findings

Inconsistent Reporting. As previously indicated, a substantial portion of the initial sample --approximately 21% -- was excluded because of inconsistent responding to the Defining Issues Test (DIT). Rest (1986b) includes guidelines in the DIT manual for detecting
inconsistency in responding and suggests that the questionnaires which meet these guidelines be excluded from the analyses. The rationale for excluding 26 of the original participants from the study was based on his recommendations.

Examination of the consistent versus the inconsistent responders suggests that educational level is related to consistency or reliability of responding. Almost half of the participants in their first year of university responded inconsistently to the DIT, while students in later years showed a higher ratio of consistent to inconsistent responders. Of note is that first year students comprise the majority of the available subject pool at the institution where the study took place and that these students were offered bonus marks for their participation. The higher level of inconsistency of these first year students along with observations during the testing suggest that they may have been motivated to complete the questionnaires expediently with little interest in accurate or reliable reporting.

Examination of DIT inconsistency also suggests that race is related to consistency of response with nonwhite participants showing substantially more inconsistency than white participants. However, caution must be taken in interpreting this result given the relatively low number of nonwhite participants ($n = 12$) versus white ($n = 87$).

It also appears that there is a relationship between consistency and moral reasoning. In sum, almost half of the participants with low moral reasoning scores on the DIT responded inconsistently to the questionnaire while those with higher scores showed a higher ratio of consistent to inconsistent responders. Participants who were assessed to be at a lower moral reasoning level according to the DIT (cognitive measure) were more likely to respond
inconsistently (behavioural measure) --possibly out of the desire to complete the
questionnaire as quickly as possible regardless of the implications for the study. This
suggests a possible correspondence between cognitive and behavioural measures of moral
reasoning.

Future Directions

Inconsistency. Validity follows from reliability. Unfortunately, many questionnaires lack
methods for assessing reliability of response and instead seem to trust that the overwhelming
majority of respondents will be, in the very least, consistent when responding. However, the
high rate of attrition due to inconsistency in the current study suggests that participants often
respond unreliably. In particular, it appears that first year undergraduate students --typically
the most “available” subject pool --do not tend to be as consistent as those in subsequent
years.

In order to obtain reliable and valid results, control must be exercised over sources of
inconsistency. Any study which employs questionnaires that lack consistency checks is
subject to include a substantial group of participants who have responded haphazardly and
unreliably. Unreliable responding can never lead to valid findings. Consequently, it is
imperative for researchers to use questionnaires which include measures of consistency so
that inconsistent and unreliable responders may be excluded.

Physical Punishment Assessment. It is also evident that there is a need for adequate
measurement of “moderate” physical punishment use by both mothers and fathers.
Although there are a number of questionnaires which consider physical abuse, few
questionnaires are available which consider more "typical" levels of physical punishment. Given that it is estimated that over 80% of the population falls into the "moderate" physical punishment category (e.g., Durrant, 1994), it would appear that such measures are needed.

There are many decisions inherent to the creation of an adequate measure of moderate physical punishment. Firstly, decisions must be made as to how to best measure severity. Severity may include measures of how frequently or how hard a child is hit. It may be concerned with what objects are used or how they are used. One might even consider how a child perceives and experiences an instance of physical punishment. Secondly, the age group to which the questionnaire is targeted must be considered. Risks are involved in choosing to create a scale for both young participants who may not be able to understand the task, and for older participants who must report retrospectively. Finally, attention also needs to be given to the format of such a measure so that it is neither too restrictive nor too open ended and broad to be useful. In sum, it is necessary to find adequate solutions to all of these decisions in order to produce a useful measure of physical punishment practices.

**Moderately Physically Punished Individuals.** It also appears that more work needs to be undertaken with the "moderately" punished group. Studies of such variables as moral reasoning, aggression, and social competence have generally looked at the two extremes of physical punishment groups -- those who are not physically punished and those who are abused -- and have repeatedly demonstrated the negative effects of extreme physical punishment. However, relatively little is known about the effects of a "moderate" level of
physical punishment on a variety of variables. Again, given that the majority of the population belongs to this group, it would seem beneficial to examine it more closely.

With reference to moral reasoning in particular, it would be helpful to target in solely on this moderately physically punished group. An improvement on the current study would be to examine this group in terms of a variety of discipline tactics. As such, the possible mediating effects of other discipline forms could be controlled and the nature of the relationship between physical punishment and moral reasoning may be further explored.

Revisions of the Assessing Environments III (AEIII). It should be noted that the AEIII is comprised of a variety of scales and it is not intended to merely assess physical punishment alone. However, it is suggested, particularly given the lack of adequate questionnaires in the punishment domain, that there would be benefits to a specific focus on the PP scale of the questionnaire. A modified version of the AEIII which was concerned only with the PP scale, would allow the total length of the questionnaire to be reduced while more emphasis could be placed on gathering information related to physical punishment.

While the AEIII should be commended for its attempt to assess physical punishment severity, there is still room for improvement in its format. As previously indicated, the Physical Punishment (PP) scale consists of twelve main true/false items (along with conditional items) which are somewhat restrictive and certainly not exhaustive of all the possibilities related to physical punishment. One possible suggestion would be to alter the true/false format into one that is more open-ended in order to allow for some flexibility and hopefully improve the breadth of information that could be collected. For example, rather
than numerous separate items which list objects that could be used in physical punishment, an expanded single item could be written which would allow one to choose relevant objects (e.g., True False I have been hit with an object) followed by a list of possible choices (e.g., If true, specify the object(s) a. belt b. strap c. stick d. other ______________ ). Items could also be introduced which allow the reader to indicate differences between mother and father physical punishment use. These types of modifications would reduce the loss of information due to the restrictive nature of the questionnaire format. Further modifications which could evolve from the aforementioned considerations related to the assessment of physical punishment might also prove useful.

Concluding Remarks

Studies have consistently shown the negative effects associated with the use of physical punishment as a disciplinary tactic (e.g., Straus, 1990). In particular, research has indicated that moral reasoning can be negatively affected by punitive parental disciplinary styles (e.g., Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967). Admittedly, the results of the current study did not find the expected relationship between moral reasoning and physical punishment. However, it is likely that difficulties associated with the assessment of physical punishment severity, retrospective reporting, and the substantial number of inconsistent responders influenced the results and obscured the relationship between the two variables. Clearly, given that a majority of the population continues to use and experience physical punishment (e.g., Durrant, 1994), a fuller understanding of the area is imperative. Hopefully continued
investigation will serve to further our knowledge related to the effects of physical punishment and may even suggest the most effective methods of discipline.
ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTS III

This is a questionnaire about your childhood environment and some of your current attitudes, feelings, and behaviours. Most of the questions refer to experiences that occurred during your childhood (before grade 8). Many of the questions refer to your perception of events or people, so they have no right or wrong answers. Please answer the questions as accurately and as honestly as you can, but bear in mind that some of the questions ask for your opinion as opposed to fact.

Special Problems You Might Have With This Questionnaire

1) If the question refers to something which happened at least ONCE, then the answer is TRUE.

2) If you lived in more than one place, answer the questions in terms of the place you lived longest.

3) If you lived with both your natural father and a step-father (or natural mother and step-mother), answer the questions for the one with whom you lived for the longest period of time.

4) If you never knew one of your natural parents, and never had a step-parent in his/her place, leave questions referring to that parent blank.

**PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE RED ANSWER SHEET PROVIDED. FILL IN CIRCLE A IF THE ANSWER IS TRUE OR CIRCLE B IF THE ANSWER IS FALSE. PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ANY MARKS IN THIS BOOKLET.**
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1. We had a typewriter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2. My mother does (did) volunteer work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>3. Within the last several years, my father has taken an adult education or a university extension course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4. I received head injury from the discipline used by my mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>5. My father got mad a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>6. When I did something wrong, my father sometimes tied me up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>7. Our family used food banks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>8. My parents used harsh discipline with me between the ages of 5 and 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>9. My father is set in his ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10. My mother used to hit me with a wooden spoon or ruler when I did something wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>11. I had a bicycle when I was a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>12. I received dental injury from the discipline used by my father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>13. Most people in my family were too busy to spend much time reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>14. My father is a good father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15. At least one of my parents is/was an officer in an organization to which he/she belongs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>16. My mother has a quick temper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17. When my mother was angry, she sometimes grabbed me by the throat and started to choke me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>18. My mother supported her children alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>19. I had some good friends when I was a child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20. My parents were very strict disciplinarians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>21. My parents' use of discipline was reasonable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22. My father used to hit me with a stick, switch, or paddle when I did something wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>23. My parents used physical force with each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>24. My father used to kick me when he got angry with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25. When I was a child, if my parent had a problem, he/she would sometimes talk to me about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>26. My mother used to hit me with a flyswatter or newspaper when I did something wrong.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
27. I get along pretty well with my father.
28. Other children used to tease me.
29. My mother used to hit me with a belt or strap when I did something wrong.
30. My parents used to give me piggyback rides when I was small.
31. I received burns from the discipline used by my mother.
32. I required a cast for injuries caused by my father.
33. My parents never seemed to have many friends.
34. I have been hit by an object thrown by my father when I did something wrong.
35. Our family almost always ate supper together.
36. My parents were always very supportive of me.
37. I received cuts from the discipline used by my mother.
38. My father used to spank me.
39. When I was bad, my mother used to lock me in a closet.
40. My father is a nervous man.
41. My mother is or has been in treatment for emotional or nervous problems.
42. My mother is active in community affairs.
43. My father used hot water or a hot object to discipline me when I did something wrong.
44. I never received any kind of injury from the discipline used by my father.
45. I went to nursery school when I was a young child.
46. When I was a young child, my parents used to leave me (and my young brothers and sister) alone when they went out.
47. I think my mother has/had a good attitude toward me.
48. My parents were inconsistent in their discipline of me. I never knew whether or not I would be punished for a particular behaviour.
49. My parents seemed to demand a lot of emotional support from me when I was a child.
50. I received broken bones from the discipline used by my mother.
51. My mother is easily upset.
52. My father used physical discipline with me.
53. Our home had more than 100 books (excluding children's books).
54. I required medical attention (at least once) for injuries caused by my father.

55. My parents did a good job of raising me.

56. My parents didn’t argue very much.

57. I had my own crayons when I was a child.

58. My mother used to hit me with her hands (other than spanking).

59. My father used to punch me when he got angry with me.

60. I, and all my brothers and sisters (if any) were mistreated.

61. I required hospitalization for injuries caused by my father.

62. At least one member of our family was active in political organizations.

63. I was physically abused by my parents when I was a child.

64. I required stitches for injuries caused by my mother.

65. I received head injury from the discipline used by my father.

66. Sometimes one of my parents would complain to me about the other parent.

67. When I was a child, my parents tried marital separation.

68. I received bruises from the discipline used by my mother.

69. I was severely beaten by my father.

70. My father is rather cold and unsympathetic.

71. My mother used to hit me with a stick, switch, or paddle when I did something wrong.

72. My father works in an unskilled job.

73. We had an encyclopedia when I was a child.

74. I was rejected by my parents when I was a child.

75. My mother is/was often depressed.

76. My parents were very harsh with me.

77. I received dental injury from the discipline used by my mother.

78. My father helped make important family decisions.

79. My mother used to hit me with something other than her hands when I did something wrong.

80. My father used to hit me with the buckle on a belt when I did something wrong.

81. My father left everything up to my mother.
82. I have very few quarrels with members of my family.
83. My parents argued a lot.
84. My father used to hit me with a flyswatter or newspaper when I did something wrong.
85. I never felt that my parents really loved me.
86. My mother used physical discipline with me.
87. My father used to hit me with his hands (other than spanking).
88. My mother used hot water or a hot object to discipline me when I did something wrong.
89. My parents always expected more from me than I was capable of doing.
90. My father made the important decisions around the house.
91. I received burns from the discipline used by my father.
92. We rarely had guests over to our home when I was a child.
93. My parents are divorced.
94. My mother used to spank me.
95. We had lots of arguments in our family.
96. My mother read a lot.
97. I have been hit by an object thrown by my mother when I did something wrong.
98. My father was employed regularly.
99. Other children didn’t seem to like me.
100. My mother would hit me with a hairbrush when I did something wrong.
101. My family often did things together.
102. I required a cast for injuries caused by my mother.
103. I received cuts from the discipline used by my father.
104. My parents used harsh discipline with me before the age of 5.
105. My father was too strict with me.
106. I had very little contact with my parents’ own families.
107. We often had friends or relatives over to our house.
108. My parents used harsh discipline with me during adolescence.
109. My parents saved money for my university education.
110. When I was bad, my father used to lock me in a closet.
111. My family attends church or synagogue regularly.
112. My parents usually seemed to agree on when I needed to be disciplined.
113. I was rarely punished when I was a child.
114. One of my brothers or sisters was physically abused by my parents.
115. I would describe my relationship with my mother as very close.
116. My father is/was a good provider.
117. My parents often took me along with them to visit friends or relatives.
118. I never received any kind of injury from the discipline used by my mother.
119. Our family got along very well.
120. My father used to hit me with a belt or strap when I did something wrong.
121. My father completed highschool.
122. My parents never used harsh discipline with me.
123. My mother used to kick me when she got angry with me.
124. I received broken bones from the discipline used by my father.
125. My mother helped make important family decisions.
126. I felt rejected by my parents.
127. When my father was angry, he sometimes grabbed me by the throat and started to choke me.
128. My family was pretty easy going.
129. I required medical attention (at least once) for injuries caused by my mother.
130. Our family spent a lot of time watching TV.
131. My parents used to hug me when I was a child.
132. My father has or had a problem with the police.
133. My father was easy going.
134. My father was active in community affairs.
135. At night, our family often did things together such as playing cards, or a game etc.
136. My parents used to kiss me when I was a child.
137. My mother used to punch me when she got angry with me.
138. My parents used to hold me on their laps.
139. My father left discipline up to my mother.

140. My father changed his mood very quickly.

141. I had a lot of freedom when I was a child, but if my parents did decide to punish me they were very harsh.

142. I required hospitalization for injuries caused by my mother.

143. My father used to hit me with a wooden spoon or ruler when I did something wrong.

144. My father used to punch me when he got angry with me.

145. My mother belonged to a social, civic, political, study, literary, or art club.

146. My father has been in jail.

147. When I did something wrong, my mother sometimes tied me up.

148. When I was a child, I shared a lot of activities with my parents.

149. I received bruises from the discipline used by my father.

150. My mother had some university education.

151. My father would hit me with a hairbrush when I did something wrong.

152. My parents used to call me bad names and/or they used to insult me, tell me I was a bad child, and so forth.

153. I was severely beaten by my mother.

154. I think my parents have/had a good marriage.

155. I was born and raised in Canada.

156. Some people in my family are picked on more than others.

157. My father used to hit me with something other than his hands when I did something wrong.

158. I have very little contact with my parents now.

159. I required stitches for injuries caused by my father.

160. I tend to get impatient with my family.

161. My parents were very protective of me when I was a child.

162. When I was young, I was often cared for by a babysitter for the entire day.

163. There were a lot of young families in our neighbourhood.

164. There were lots of interesting things for me to do around our house.

165. I had a regular bedtime as a child.

166. We have lived in at least one home for more than six years.
167. We had two or more pieces of playground equipment in our yard.
168. For at least part of my childhood, I lived with a step-parent.
169. My mother used to hit me with the buckle on a belt when I did something wrong.
170. Almost everyone in our family agrees on how to do things.
171. Many of the things my family did were centered around me.
172. I got good grades in school.
173. When I was a child, my mother often found time to play with me.
174. I was born prematurely.
175. At some time during my childhood my mother had a job outside the home.
176. My parents have told me I was an unplanned baby.
177. As far as I know, I was premaritally conceived.
178. We lived in a quiet neighbourhood.
179. I was not allowed to participate in many activities in which my friends were allowed to participate.
180. My father was a quiet man.
181. For at least part of my childhood. I lived with only one parent.
182. One of my parents died when I was a child.
183. We talked about religion in our family.
184. I was separated from my parents for 5 days or more prior to first grade, due to medical problems or other difficulties.
OPINIONS ABOUT SOCIAL PROBLEMS

This questionnaire is aimed at understanding how people think about social problems. Different people often have different opinions about questions of right and wrong. There are no "right" answers in the way that there are right answers to math problems. We would like you to tell us what you think about several problem stories. The papers will be fed to a computer to find the average for the whole group, and no one will see your individual answer.

Please give us the following information:

Name __________________________________________ female
Age _____ Class and period ________________________ male
School ___________________________________________

In this questionnaire you will be asked to give your opinions about several stories. Here is a story as an example.

Frank Jones has been thinking about buying a car. He is married, has two small children and earns an average income. The car he buys will be his family's only car. It will be used mostly to get to work and drive around town, but sometimes for vacation trips also. In trying to decide what car to buy, Frank Jones realized that there were a lot of questions to consider. Below there is a list of some of these questions.

If you were Frank Jones, how important would each of these questions be in deciding what car to buy?

Instructions for Part A: (Sample Question)

On the left hand side check one of the spaces by each statement of a consideration.
(For instance, if you think that statement #4 is not important in making a decision about buying a car, check the space on the right.)

IMPORTANCE:

Great Much Some Little No

1. Whether the car dealer was in the same block as where Frank lives. (Note that in this sample, the person taking the questionnaire did not think this was important in making a decision.)

2. Would a used car be more economical in the long run than a new car. (Note that a check was put in the far left space to indicate the opinion that this is an important issue in making a decision about buying a car.)

3. Whether the color was green, Frank's favorite color.

4. Whether the cubic inch displacement was at least 200. (Note that if you are unsure about what "cubic inch displacement" means, then mark it "no importance.")

5. Would a large, roomy car be better than a compact car.

6. Whether the front fenders were differential. (Note that if a statement sounds like gibberish or nonsense to you, mark it "no importance.")

Instructions for Part B: (Sample Question)

From the list of questions above, select the most important one of the whole group. Put the number of the most important question on the top line below. Do likewise for your 2nd, 3rd and 4th most important choices. (Note that the top choices in this case will come from the statements that were checked on the far left-hand side—statements #2 and #5 were thought to be very important. In deciding what is the most important, a person would re-read #2 and #5, and then pick one of them as the most important, then put the other one as "second most important," and so on.)

MOST SECOND MOST IMPORTANT THIRD MOST IMPORTANT FOURTH MOST IMPORTANT

5 2 3 1
HEINZ AND THE DRUG

In Europe a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman’s husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could only get together about $1000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I’m going to make money from it." So Heinz got desperate and began to think about breaking into the man’s store to steal the drug for his wife.

Should Heinz steal the drug? (Check one)

- Should steal it
- Can’t decide
- Should not steal it

INSURANCE:

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<tr>
<td>1. Whether a community's laws are going to be upheld.</td>
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<td>2. Isn’t it only natural for a loving husband to care so much for his wife that he’d steal?</td>
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<td>3. Is Heinz willing to risk getting shot as a burglar or going to jail for the chance that stealing the drug might help?</td>
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<td>4. Whether Heinz is a professional wrestler, or has considerable influence with professional wrestlers.</td>
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<td>5. Whether Heinz is stealing for himself or doing this solely to help someone else.</td>
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<td>6. Whether the druggist’s rights to his invention have to be respected.</td>
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<td>7. Whether the essence of living is more encompassing than the termination of dying, socially and individually.</td>
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<td>8. What values are going to be the basis for governing how people act towards each other.</td>
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<td>9. Whether the druggist is going to be allowed to hide behind a worthless law which only protects the rich anyhow.</td>
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<td>10. Whether the law in this case is getting in the way of the most basic claim of any member of society.</td>
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<td>11. Whether the druggist deserves to be rubbed for being so greedy and cruel.</td>
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<td>12. Would stealing in such a case bring about more total good for the whole society or not.</td>
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From the list of questions above, select the four most important:

Most Important
Second Most Important
Third Most Important
Fourth Most Important
STUDENT TAKE-OVER

At Harvard University a group of students, called the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), believe that the University should not have an army ROTC program. SDS students are against the war in Viet Nam, and the army training program helps send men to fight in Viet Nam. The SDS students demanded that Harvard end the army ROTC training program as a university course. This would mean that Harvard students could not get army training as part of their regular course work and not get credit for it towards their degrees.

Agreeing with the SDS students, the Harvard professors voted to end the ROTC program as a university course. But the President of the University stated that he wanted to keep the army program on campus as a course. The SDS students felt that the President was not going to pay attention to the faculty vote or to their demands.

So, one day last April, two hundred SDS students walked into the university's administration building, and told everyone else to get out. They said they were doing this to force Harvard to get rid of the army training program as a course.

Should the students have taken over the administration building? (Check one)

Yes, they should take it over  Can't decide  No, they shouldn't take it over

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<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Are the students doing this to really help other people or are they doing it just for kicks?</td>
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<td>2. Do the students have any right to take over property that doesn't belong to them?</td>
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<td>3. Do the students realize that they might be arrested and fined, and even expelled from school?</td>
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<td>4. Would taking over the building in the long run benefit more people or to a greater extent?</td>
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<td>5. Whether the president stayed within the limits of his authority in ignoring the faculty vote.</td>
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<td>6. Will the takeover anger the public and give all students a bad name?</td>
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<td>7. Is taking over a building consistent with principles of justice?</td>
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<td>8. Would allowing one student take-over encourage many other student take-overs?</td>
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<td>9. Did the president bring this misunderstanding on himself by being so unreasonable and uncooperative?</td>
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<td>10. Whether running the university ought to be in the hands of a few administrators or in the hands of all the people.</td>
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<td>11. Are the students following principles which they believe are above the law?</td>
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<td>12. Whether or not university decisions ought to be respected by students.</td>
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From the list of questions above, select the four most important:

Most Important

Second Most Important

Third Most Important

Fourth Most Important
ESCAPED PRISONER

A man had been sentenced to prison for 10 years. After one year, however, he escaped from prison, moved to a new area of the country, and took on the name of Thompson. For 8 years he worked hard, and gradually he saved enough money to buy his own business. He was fair to his customers, gave his employees top wages, and gave most of his own profits to charity. Then one day, Mrs. Jones, an old neighbor, recognized him as the man who had escaped from prison 8 years before, and whom the police had been looking for.

Should Mrs. Jones report Mr. Thompson to the police and have him sent back to prison? (Check one)

_____ Should report him  _____ Can't decide  _____ Should not report him

IMPORTANCE:

Great  Much  Some  Little  No

1. Hasn't Mr. Thompson been good enough for such a long time to prove he isn't a bad person?
2. Everytime someone escapes punishment for a crime, doesn't that just encourage more crime?
3. Wouldn't we be better off without prisons and the oppression of our legal systems?
4. Has Mr. Thompson really paid his debt to society?
5. Would society be failing what Mr. Thompson should fairly expect?
6. What benefits would prisons be apart from society, especially for a charitable man?
7. How could anyone be so cruel and heartless as to send Mr. Thompson to prison?
8. Would it be fair to all the prisoners who had to serve out their full sentences if Mr. Thompson was let off?
9. Was Mrs. Jones a good friend of Mr. Thompson?
10. Wouldn't it be a citizen's duty to report an escaped criminal, regardless of the circumstances?
11. How would the will of the people and the public good best be served?
12. Would going to prison do any good for Mr. Thompson or protect anybody?

From the list of questions above, select the four most important:

Most Important
Second Most Important
Third Most Important
Fourth Most Important
A lady was dying of cancer which could not be cured and she had only about six months to live. She was in terrible pain, but she was so weak that a good dose of pain-killer like morphine would make her die sooner. She was delirious and almost crazy with pain, and in her calm periods, she would ask the doctor to give her enough morphine to kill her. She said she couldn't stand the pain and that she was going to die in a few months anyway.

What should the doctor do? (Check one)

- [ ] He should give the lady an overdose that will make her die
- [ ] Can't decide
- [ ] Should not give the overdose

**IMPORTANCE:**

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1. Whether the woman's family is in favor of giving her the overdose or not.
2. Is the doctor obligated by the same laws as everybody else if giving her an overdose would be the same as killing her.
3. Whether people would be much better off without society regimenting their lives and even their deaths.
4. Whether the doctor could make it appear like an accident.
5. Does the state have the right to force continued existence on those who don't want to live.
6. What is the value of death prior to society's respective on personal values.
7. Whether the doctor has sympathy for the woman's suffering or cares more about what society might think.
8. Is helping to end another's life ever a responsible act of cooperation.
9. Whether only God should decide when a person's life should end.
10. What values the doctor has set for himself in his own personal code of behavior.
11. Can society afford to let everybody and their lives when they want to.
12. Can society allow suicides or mercy killing and still protect the lives of individuals who want to live.

From the list of questions above, select the four most important:

- [ ] Most Important
- [ ] Second Most Important
- [ ] Third Most Important
- [ ] Fourth Most Important
Mr. Webster was the owner and manager of a gas station. He wanted to hire another mechanic to help him, but good mechanics were hard to find. The only person he found who seemed to be a good mechanic was Mr. Lee, but he was Chinese. While Mr. Webster himself didn't have anything against Orientals, he was afraid to hire Mr. Lee because many of his customers didn't like Orientals. His customers might take their business elsewhere if Mr. Lee was working in the gas station.

When Mr. Lee asked Mr. Webster if he could have the job, Mr. Webster said that he had already hired somebody else. But Mr. Webster really had not hired anybody, because he could not find anybody who was a good mechanic besides Mr. Lee.

What should Mr. Webster have done? (Check one)

- Should have hired Mr. Lee
- Can't decide
- Should not have hired him

**Importance:**

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<tr>
<td>1. Does the owner of a business have the right to make his own business decisions or not?</td>
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<td>2. Whether there is a law that forbids racial discrimination in hiring for jobs.</td>
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<td>3. Whether Mr. Webster is prejudiced against Orientals himself or whether he means nothing personal in refusing the job.</td>
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<td>4. Whether hiring a good mechanic or paying attention to his customers' wishes would be best for his business.</td>
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<td>5. What individual differences ought to be relevant in deciding how society's roles are filled?</td>
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<td>6. Whether the greedy and competitive capitalistic system ought to be completely abandoned.</td>
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<td>7. Do a majority of people in Mr. Webster's society feel like his customers or are a majority against prejudice?</td>
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<td>8. Whether hiring capable men like Mr. Lee would use talents that would otherwise be lost to society.</td>
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<td>9. Would refusing the job to Mr. Lee be consistent with Mr. Webster's own moral beliefs?</td>
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<td>10. Could Mr. Webster be so hard-hearted as to refuse the job, knowing how much it means to Mr. Lee?</td>
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<td>11. Whether the Christian commandment to love your fellow man applies in this case.</td>
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<td>12. If someone's in need, shouldn't he be helped regardless of what you get back from him?</td>
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From the list of questions above, select the four most important:
Fred, a senior in high school, wanted to publish a mimeographed newspaper for students so that he could express many of his opinions. He wanted to speak out against the war in Vietnam and to speak out against some of the school's rules, like the rule forbidding boys to wear long hair.

When Fred started his newspaper, he asked his principal for permission. The principal said it would be all right if before every publication Fred would turn in all his articles for the principal's approval. Fred agreed and turned in several articles for approval. The principal approved all of them and Fred published two issues of the paper in the next two weeks.

But the principal had not expected that Fred's newspaper would receive so much attention. Students were so excited by the paper that they began to organize protests against the hair regulation and other school rules. Angry parents objected to Fred's opinions. They phoned the principal telling him that the newspaper was unpatriotic and should not be published. As a result of the rising excitement, the principal ordered Fred to stop publishing. He gave as a reason that Fred's activities were disruptive to the operation of the school.

Should the principal stop the newspaper? (Check one)

- Should stop it
- Can't decide
- Should not stop it

**IMPORTANCE:**

Great Much Some Little No

1. Is the principal more responsible to students or to the parents?

2. Did the principal give his word that the newspaper could be published for a long time, or did he just promise to approve the newspaper one issue at a time?

3. Would the students start protesting even more if the principal stopped the newspaper?

4. When the welfare of the school is threatened, does the principal have the right to give orders to students?

5. Does the principal have the freedom of speech to say "no" in this case?

6. If the principal stopped the newspaper would he be preventing full discussion of important problems?

7. Whether the principal's order would make Fred lose faith in the principal.

8. Whether Fred was really loyal to his school and patriotic to his country.

9. What effect would stopping the paper have on the student's education in critical thinking and judgments?

10. Whether Fred was in any way violating the rights of others in publishing his own opinions.

11. Whether the principal should be influenced by some angry parents when it is the principal that knows best what is going on in the school.

12. Whether Fred was using the newspaper to stir up hatred and discontent.

From the list of questions above, select the four most important:

Most Important

Second Most Important

Third Most Important

Fourth Most Important
CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

RESEARCHER:  Shelley Wilkin, B.A., B.Ed.  258-0817
SUPERVISOR:  Sylvia Voelker, Ph.D.  253-4232 ext. 2249
                Department of Psychology
                University of Windsor

PURPOSE: Childhood environment and experiences can often affect later adult attitudes, feelings, and behaviours. In particular, parental child management techniques may assert an influence in a number of areas both in childhood and beyond. The purpose of the present study is to examine how such management techniques influence thinking about social problems.

PROCEDURE: For the purposes of the study, you will be asked to complete 3 questionnaires. These questionnaires ask for some basic demographic information as well as for your opinions related to childhood environment, parenting, and social problems. It is possible that some of the questions may make some individuals uncomfortable. Although it is preferable to answer all the questions, you do not have to answer questions that you do not want to. Participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. As a participant, you are free to ask questions prior to, during, or after the study. The entire procedure will take about 2 hours. You will receive experimental points for your participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All of your responses will remain confidential. Names will not be recorded on the questionnaires, rather participants will be assigned numbers which cannot be traced to their names. Participants may receive a summary of the study findings by contacting the researcher after the study is completed.

This study has been reviewed by the Psychology Department Ethics Committee. Any ethical concerns may be addressed to Dr. S. Voelker, Chair, Ethics Committee (253-4232 ext 2249). Any further questions or concerns can be directed to the principal investigator, S. Wilkin, or her supervisor, S. Voelker.

To indicate that you have understood and received a copy of this agreement, that you have had opportunity to ask questions, and that you voluntarily consent to participate, please sign and date the bottom of this form and return it to the principal investigator.

________________________________________  ________________________
Participant’s Name                          Date
Demographic Information
Complete the following questionnaire by filling in the blank or by circling the appropriate response.

1. Age: ____________    Sex: M    F    Race: ________________

2. Primary Language: 1. English
                      2. French
                      3. Other (please specify) ________________
                      If your primary language is not English, please outline your proficiency in English

3. Current Educational Status:
   Full time    Part time    
   1. 1st year university
   2. 2nd year university
   3. 3rd year university
   4. 4th year university
   5. Other (please specify) ________________

4. Occupation (if applicable): ______________________________________

5. Occupation: Mother: ______________________________________
                Father: ______________________________________


7. Approximate Population: 1. less than 10,000
                            2. 10,000 - 100,000
                            3. 110,000 - 500,000
                            4. over 500,000


11. Do you or would you use physical punishment with your child(ren)?
    1. Yes    2. No

12. Have you taken 46-327 (Parenting)? 1. Yes    2. No
REFERENCES


Hollingshead, A. B. (1975). *Four Factor Index of Social Status*. (Available from A. B. Hollingshead, P.O. Box 1965 Yale Station, New Haven, CT, 06520)


VITA AUCTORIS

Shelley Wilkin was born on April 2, 1970 in Fergus, Ontario. In June of 1989 she graduated from Centre Wellington District High School. Shelley then pursued her post secondary education at Glendon College, York University where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree (psychology) and a Bachelor of Education degree in June 1994. Since September of 1994, she has been enrolled in the doctoral program in child clinical psychology at the University of Windsor.