



# Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Spanking:

## A Study of Child Misbehavior and Child-Adult Relationship

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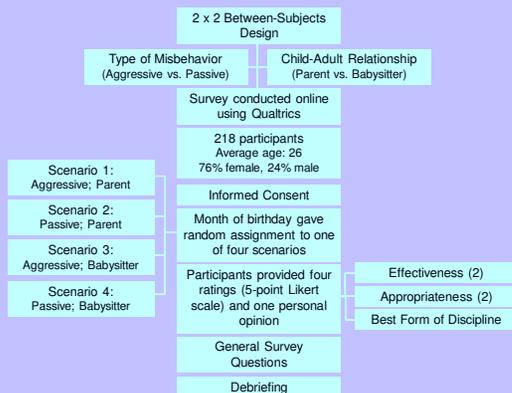
### Introduction

- ❖ Spanking is a term used to describe hitting a child's buttocks with the inside of the hand, and it is considered the most well-known form of corporal punishment (Giles-Sims, Straus, & Sugarman, 1995).
- ❖ 94% of American parents find it is necessary to implement physical force when disciplining (Lazerlere, 2008).
- ❖ Adults are more likely to use spanking in response to aggressive misbehavior, which is viewed as more appropriate than if used for passive misbehavior (Gershoff, 2002).
- ❖ Spanking is found favorable when it is routine without strong emotion (i.e. from a parent); however, misbehavior will not decrease if spanking is used on an impulse (i.e. from a babysitter) (Gershoff, 2002).
- ❖ A prudent use of discipline is a necessary tool in any child-parent relationship to ensure a responsive and supportive relationship (Baumrind, 1996).
- ❖ If babysitters are too lenient with disciplining, they lose control over the children and misbehavior is more likely to continue (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, 1998).
- ❖ People have the belief that spanking is decreasing as a form of child discipline and is not considered appropriate or effective in either type of misbehavior.

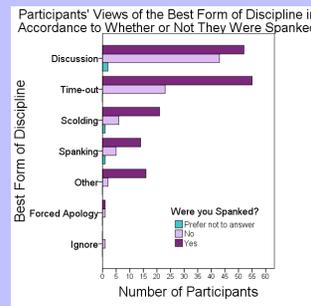
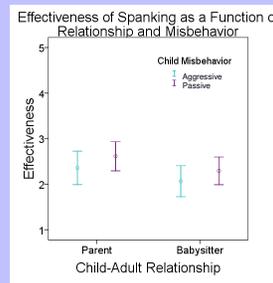
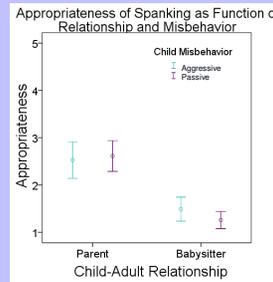
### Hypotheses

- ❖ Spanking will be more appropriate in a child-parent relationship and for aggressive behaviors.
- ❖ Spanking will be less effective in a child-babysitter relationship and for passive behaviors.
- ❖ There will be no interaction between type of misbehavior and child-adult relationship.

### Method



### Graphs



### Comments

"I don't think spanking should be the only form of punishment, I think spanking is a way for parents to demonstrate their authority and then discussion should follow. There is a big difference between beating a child and a few swats on the bum."

"I believe it's fine to spank your own child if there is meaning to it. If you spank your child all the time, a lesson isn't being taught. If it's someone else's child, I don't think it is appropriate...unless parents permission is asked."

"In my opinion it was wrong for the babysitter to spank the child. It was not her role to punish the child like that."

### Results

#### Appropriateness of Spanking

- ❖ People perceive spanking to be more appropriate when performed in a Child-Parent Relationship than in a Child-Babysitter Relationship.
- ❖ Spanking used in both types of Misbehavior, Aggressive and Passive, was not considered appropriate.
- ❖ However, participants disagreed with the appropriateness of spanking overall.

#### Effectiveness of Spanking

- ❖ There is a minimal bias for spanking being effective when used in a Child-Parent Relationship than in a Child-Babysitter Relationship, but it is not significant.
- ❖ Spanking is not perceived as being effective when performed for neither Aggressive Misbehavior nor Passive Misbehavior.
- ❖ Participants disagreed with the use of spanking as an effective form of discipline.

#### Correct Discipline

- ❖ Discussion and Time-out were selected by the majority as the best forms to use when disciplining a child.

### Discussion

- ❖ Spanking is seen as inappropriate to the general public because many adults do not want to be associated with anything related to child abuse (Gershoff, 2002), which could be a possible factor for why the participants viewed spanking as inappropriate.
- ❖ Spanking is perceived as neither an appropriate nor an effective form of discipline regardless of the type of misbehavior, possibly because it produces negative outcomes on children (Gershoff & Bitensky, 2007).
- ❖ Parallel with the results of this study, Arnold et al. (1998) found that it is hard to accept spanking as a form of discipline for babysitters because it is unclear to which degree discipline can be generalized to people other than the child's own parents.
- ❖ Future studies should explore other methods of discipline because spanking is typically combined with other forms of discipline (Gershoff, 2002).
- ❖ Future work should implement a successive independent samples design to examine changes that occur within the public's views of spanking over time.
- ❖ The major implications of this study suggest that spanking should **not** be implemented as a form of discipline.

### Special Thanks

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