Abstract

Background: Despite empirical evidence for the negative effects of corporal punishment (CP) on children, there is still widespread use of CP around the world. This demands a more systematic understanding of the problem.

Objective: This article tries to identify people’s degree of acceptance of parental CP on children and examines the nature of associations of different factors (such as emancipative and nonmasculine values) with such acceptance.

Participants and Setting: Data from World Values Survey 6 which has country representative samples from 60 different countries.

Methods: The study analyzed the data using linear regression analysis.

Results: The study finds that the presence of emancipative values ($\beta = -0.049$, $p < .001$) and nonmasculine values ($\beta = -0.076$, $p < .001$) reduce support for CP, while greater religiousness ($\beta = 0.052$, $p < .001$) and personal dissatisfaction with life ($\beta = 0.053$, $p < .001$) raise endorsement of CP. The study also finds that on one hand, people with higher education ($\beta = -0.058$, $p < .001$) and age ($\beta = -0.094$, $p < .001$) tend to express less support for CP, while on the other, people from lower social classes ($\beta = 0.054$, $p < .001$), more children ($\beta = 0.026$, $p < .001$), no partners ($\beta = 0.033$ and $p < .001$) and men ($\beta = 0.009$, $p < .05$) tend to express higher support for the use of CP.

Conclusions: The findings of this study may help us to expand our knowledge on the dynamics of CP and guide us to develop more effective policies to address the issue.

Keywords: Corporal punishment; Values; Large scale survey; Child abuse

1. Introduction

Despite empirical evidence for the negative effects of corporal punishment (CP) on children (e.g., Durrant & Ensom, 2012; Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016; MacMillan & Mikton, 2017) and the
continuous efforts to prevent it by international organizations such as the United Nations (through instruments like the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and the European Union (duRivage et al, 2015; Straus, 2010), there is still widespread use of CP on children around the world (Lee, Taylor, Altschul, & Rice, 2013; UNICEF, 2017). Data from UNICEF (2017) show that around 300 million children aged two to four years worldwide (three out of four) experience violent discipline regularly from their caregivers. So far (as of August 27, 2019), 56 countries have banned CP completely (EndCorporalPunishment, 2019); this means that in most countries, it is still not illegal to use CP on children. The countries where CP is not illegal include not only several developing countries but also developed countries such as the United States and Australia. In the United States, it is against the law to hit prisoners, criminals or other adults, but children who are the most vulnerable members of society may be hit by their parents (Knox, 2010).

Based on a systematic review, Zolotor & Puzia (2010) found that in many countries, banning CP is considered to be an intrusion into the family that violates individual autonomy. These contrasting views on parental CP demand a more systematic study to measure the extent of acceptance of CP among different people, and the factors that may create such variations of the acceptance of CP. A survey across countries may be an effective technique to capture people’s attitudes to CP and to identify the effects of various factors on the endorsement of CP; that is, it may reveal the factors that increase or decrease acceptance for CP. This study is an attempt to address this need, by examining if different factors such as emancipative and nonmasculine values are correlated with degree of acceptance of parental CP. For this study, the words “acceptance,” “endorsement” and “support” for CP are used interchangeably.

There are many studies on the use of CP for children based on surveys in a single country or in a group of countries (e.g., Dietz, 2000; Lansford et al, 2015; MacKenzie, Nicklas, Brooks-Gunn, & Waldfogel, 2011), but there appears to be a scarcity of such studies based on a large number of countries. The data from the World Values Survey 6 (2010–2014) may be useful to address this need, because it has measure of the acceptance of parental CP in 60 countries. It has around 1200 representative samples from each country (WVS, 2019). Therefore, the findings from these data can be quite comprehensive. However, the measure of CP acceptance in this database only captures people’s attitude toward one type of parental CP (beating only). This is a severe form of CP. There are milder forms and other severe variants of CP (Mossige & Stefansen, 2016). Thus, the analyses and interpretation of these data need to be confined to the populations’ views on the acceptance of this particularly severe form of parental CP to children.

The study examines whether the presence of emancipative and nonmasculine values or regulatory bans in a country reduces support for CP. It also examines whether religiousness and greater dissatisfaction with life in general or specific factors of dissatisfaction with life such as financial difficulties and poor health increase endorsement of CP. In addition to these factors, this study also explores the effects of several sociodemographic variables such as social class (self-reported), age, partnership status, education and gender. To explore the effects of these factors, the remainder of the article is organized into five sections: a short overview of CP, possible theoretical explanations and some relevant hypotheses concerning variations in the endorsement of CP, a description of methods and limitations, results and examination of the hypotheses, and a discussion of the findings with concluding remarks.

2. Corporal punishment: A brief overview

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines CP as “any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light” (CRC/C/GC/8: Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006, para. 11) (UN, 2007). CP is usually practiced with the intention of correcting or controlling children’s behaviors while doing no injury or harm to them (Donnelly & Straus, 2005). However, the use of CP is criticized on two grounds
Such aggressiveness and dominance may manifest role behaviors to conform to their sense of masculinity. People with traditional masculine ideology or a “macho” self-schema may exhibit socially harmful behaviors to conform to their sense of masculinity because this can be a reference point for behavior (Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Pleck, 1995). In general, these people favor traditional gender roles. Masculine or patriarchal values may promote aggressiveness and dominance (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2017). Such aggressiveness and dominance may manifest in women (Jakupcak, 2003) and children. People with a traditional masculine ideology or a “macho” self-schema may exhibit socially harmful behaviors to conform to their sense of masculinity because this can be a reference point for behavior (Jakupcak, Lisak, & Roemer, 2002; Pleck, 1995). In general, these people favor traditional gender roles. Masculine or patriarchal values may promote aggressiveness and dominance (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2017). Such aggressiveness and dominance may manifest in women (Jakupcak, 2003) and children.

Nevertheless, some studies have questioned the magnitude of the impact of some forms of CP such as spanking; for example, based on a meta-analysis of longitudinal studies on CP, Ferguson (2013) found minimal negative effects. However, most studies show negative effects on a child’s development (Gershoff, 2002; MacMillan & Mikton, 2017). In addition, the use of CP may not be limited to mild physical punishment. People usually spank a child to teach a lesson but there may be disobedience, and they may fail to achieve the desired outcomes, making them frustrated and angry; this may prompt a harsher physical punishment (Knox, 2010). Thus, both the chronicity (repetition) and the severity of CP may increase (Straus & Stewart, 1999).

3. Theoretical strands and hypotheses

Attitudes toward CP may develop from a variety of factors, such as personal or collective values (Gershoff, 2002; Taylor, Hamvas, Rice, Newman, & DeJong, 2011), life conditions (Gershoff, 2002; Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Pettit, & Zelli, 2000) or the legislative environment (Durrant, 1999). Values may be a key factor of CP endorsement because they define childrearing beliefs, parent–child relationships and parental disciplinary strategies (Deater-Deckard, Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2003; Ripoll-Nunez & Rohner, 2006). A study on university students in Thailand by Watakakosol, Suttiwan, Wongcharree, Kish, & Newcombe (2019) indicates that cultural values and beliefs contribute to the acceptance and continuation of CP there. Similarly, Wang & Liu (2018) report that Chinese parents and children perceive harsh discipline to be a sign of parental concern, care and love; this is also echoed in a Chinese proverb: “beating and scolding is the emblem of love” (Hou, Yu, Ting, Sze, & Fang, 2011).

However, these kinds of strict disciplinary values may change with the presence of emancipative values, which lead to the development of “responsible parenting”; this “responsible parenting” emphasizes children’s self-control above parental control; in such a relationship, parents play the role of an active teacher in guiding a child to develop self-control skills (Graziano & Namaste, 1990). According to Welzel’s (2013) “Emancipation theory,” when human empowerment advances, emancipative values emerge and the demand for freedom arises. These values remain dormant when people face “existential constraints.” Thus, a “ladder of freedom” can be constructed. The people on the upper rungs of the ladder of freedom may have different views about the way one should behave with a child than those on the lower rungs. Because people on the upper rungs care more about freedom and self-expression values, they may allow more autonomy to the children without restricting their behavior. However, those people on the lower rungs may have stricter values owing to their personal orientation and allow less autonomy. These variations may be reflected in their acceptance of parental CP. People who care more about children’s freedom and autonomy may show less support for CP than those who care less. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**H1:** People with stronger emancipative values may show less support for parental corporal punishment of children.
through violent attitudes. People with such characteristics may show greater support for CP for children. In a study in South Africa, Morrell (2001) showed that masculinity plays an important role in perpetuating CP. Such effects may be intensified when such masculine values become widespread in a society; then they may become cultural. In such situations, nonconformity with this kind of role can violate social expectations of manhood. One may be blamed for not regulating one’s family properly and not performing the duties determined by masculine values. Therefore, in such a society, one may be more in favor of CP to regulate one’s family. That is probably why Connell (1995) states that the use of CP is a “way of claiming or asserting masculinity” (cited in Rydstrøm, 2006).

Through an ethnographic study in Vietnam, Rydstrøm (2006) showed how masculine discourse affects physical punishments there. In Vietnam, the male body is considered to be “hot” (an indication of bad-tempered people) and because of that people have acceptance of their violent attitudes on the kids. The use of CP may not be limited to regulating children or claiming masculinity but may also be related to toughening children to be masculine enough to suit that society. This is because in such society it may be assumed that inflicting pain is a way to install masculine values to children (Morell, 2001; Adams & Govender, 2008). In such a situation, people receive relative social impunity for such behavior and may endorse CP. In contrast, people without such values may be less approving of CP. Based on these arguments, this study postulates:

H 2: People with nonmasculine values may show less support for parental corporal punishment of children.

A large body of research indicates that religious belief systems shape human attitudes and behaviors (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993). For example, a mixed study on 122 respondents in Ghana shows that the majority of the participants cited the Bible as their justification for CP (Agbenyega, 2006). One such reference is “Correct your son and he will give you rest” (Proverbs, 29:17) or “Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way” (Proverbs, 15:10) (The New King James Version of the Bible, cited in Agbenyega, 2006). In Ghana, schoolteachers believe that if they do not use CP, they may fail in their religious duties because they are responsible for the moral upbringing of the child (Agbenyega, 2006). Similar studies (such as Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009; Gershoff et al, 2016; Gershoff, Miller, & Holden, 1999) explored the relationship between religiousness and support for CP of children and found a strong relationship. However, most of such studies are from Christian societies, particularly Western countries. Studies in non-Western societies (e.g., Agbenyega, 2006; Rydstrøm, 2006; Tostensen & Onyango, 2015) also indicate that religiousness is related to support for CP.

A nationally representative survey-based study in Turkey (a predominantly Muslim country) indicates that religiousness is associated with obedience to authority and good manners (Acevedo et al, 2015). This study is not specifically on CP but on associated factors such as obedience and good manners, by which people usually justify CP. One Hadith (the highest source of Islamic law and instructions after the Quran) states: “Hang your whip where the members of your household can see it, for that will discipline them” (Al-Tabaraani, cited in Ihsan, 2010). However, there are also Hadith that discourage harsh behavior toward children, such as “He is not of us (the one) who does not have mercy on our young children, nor honor our elderly” (Tirmidhi, cited in Ihsan, 2010). Nevertheless, in reality, CP is widely practiced in many Muslim countries; studies (e.g., Fay, 2013; Sultana, Reza, & Bromfield, 2019) indicate that Madrasas (Quranic schools) in Muslim countries practice CP to discipline students.

In a description of CP in Thailand, Nelson, Honrath, Lacci, & Menzano (2009) indicate that the Buddhist principle of Karma is related to the use of CP because children may feel subjected to it because of Karma (retributive justice), and parents feel justified in using it for the same reason. Rydstrøm’s (2006) ethnographic study indicates that Confucianism contributed to the masculine culture in Vietnam that eventually led to greater acceptance of CP in that country. In Hinduism, Danda (punishment by the ruler) is used to correct any violation of Dharma (religion) (Davis, 2010).
According to Shmueli (2001), the “centerpiece” of the Jewish attitude toward CP of children is related to the verse “He that spareth his rod hateth his son” (Proverbs 13:24) (Morag, 2011). Thus, there is evidence of the support or promotion of CP by different religions in a range of societies. However, some of the studies mentioned here are based on schoolteachers’ CP practices (e.g., Agbenyega, 2006; Fay, 2013), but the main related logic of religion may also be applicable to people’s view on parental CP of children as parents play the role of teacher to their offspring. The fundamental logic of most religions concerns obedience; so, by design they promote discipline for those who do not obey directives. And, as childhood is a person’s formative phase, religious people may favor CP to teach children obedience and discipline. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis was developed:

H 3: People with greater religiousness may show higher support for corporal punishment of children.

Several studies indicate that people in more stressful situations are more likely to support CP (Gershoff, 2002; Pinderhughes et al, 2000). People’s level of stress may be reflected in their life satisfaction—dissatisfaction with life may be due to personal stress. Because of this link between stress and life satisfaction, there may be an association between dissatisfaction in life and endorsement of CP—people under greater stress may feel more dissatisfied with life, which may contribute to their endorsement of CP for children. There may be factors that contribute to stress or dissatisfaction, such as financial circumstances or health conditions. Problems in these areas may contribute to the endorsement of CP. A survey-based study in the US showed that people on lower incomes were more likely to use CP (Dietz, 2000). Based on these arguments, we propose the following hypotheses:

H 4: People feeling more dissatisfaction with life may show greater support for corporal punishment of children.

H 4a: People feeling more dissatisfaction with their financial circumstances may show greater support for corporal punishment of children.

H 4b: People in poor health may show greater support for corporal punishment of children.

Apart from these individual-level factors, country-level factors can also affect individuals’ attitudes toward CP. One such factor may be legal provisions concerning CP. In a longitudinal study of nine countries, Lansford et al (2015) claim that national differences in beliefs about the necessity of CP and its use may be affected by laws and national policies. This claim is supported by Durrant’s (1999) study on Sweden. Based on administrative data and interviews, this study found that Swedish attitudes toward CP changed both before the legal ban (allowing it to be passed) and afterward. More clear evidence of this country-level variable can be found in Zolotor & Puzia’s (2010) systematic study. They found that legal bans on CP are closely associated with decreases in support for and use of CP as a child discipline technique. However, Robert’s (2000) time-series analysis of the publicly available quantitative surveys on this ban in Sweden indicate that the legal reform did not reduce support for CP. Amid these conflicting empirical findings, this study seeks to test the following hypothesis as most of the studies find the reduction of support for CP owing to a national ban:

H 5: Banning corporal punishment in a country may reduce its acceptance among people.

Other individual factors, such as sociodemographic factors, can affect the endorsement of CP. Several studies (Dietz, 2000; Helland, Križ, Sánchez-Cabezudo, & Skivenes, 2018; Simons & Wurtele, 2010) indicate that having more children, lower educational attainment, age and partnership status can affect endorsement. This study includes these sociodemographic factors in the regression models as control variables to identify their effects.
4. Methods

The study is mainly based on statistical analyses of the latest published data from the World Values Survey (Round 6) (WVS 6). This survey has tracked public opinion and attitudes on a range of sociopolitical issues around the world since 1981. The latest round of WVS for which data are publicly available (i.e., Round 6) was conducted over the period 2010–2014. Currently (in 2019) the seventh round of the survey is underway in several countries. WVS 6 has representative samples of around 1,200 people from 60 countries (WVS, 2019).

4.1 Measures

The main dependent variable in the current study is the “acceptance of parental corporal punishment.” The item used to measure this variable was “For each of the following actions, please tell me whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between: Parents beating children” (variable V209 of WVS 6). The concept of beating may reflect only one form of CP, but as the survey has only this measure, this study uses it to capture the degree of acceptance of parental CP. The variable is measured using a 10-point scale of the responses where 1 = Never justifiable and 10 = Always justifiable. Thus, higher values indicate greater acceptance of parental CP.

In this study, the degree of acceptance of parental CP is explained using four sets of independent variables related to the hypotheses. To examine the effects of individual values connected with the first three hypotheses (H1–H3), the three variables of emancipative values, masculinity and religiousness are used. For emancipative values (related to H1) this study uses Welzel’s measure of autonomy based on three indicators: independence, imagination and acceptance of disobedience as a desired child quality (Welzel, 2013). For this index, Welzel (2013) used a 0–1 scale: 0 = lowest level of emancipative values and 1 = highest level of emancipative values. Intermediate positions are given in fractions of 1. Welzel (2013) conducted an internal consistency test to check the reliability of the index; for more on the index and the reliability test, see Welzel (2013: 66–69).

The next value variable (support for nonmasculine values—connected with H2) is also taken from Welzel (2013). It is related with Welzel’s (2013) gender equality index and is based on three items: support for women’s equal access to education, jobs and power. To measure this variable, respondents’ perceptions of gender roles are used because masculine values usually oppose gender equality in areas such as employment and empowerment of women. Some studies use such indicators to capture the degree of masculinity (see Lenney, 1991). Like previous index, Welzel’s this index also uses a scale ranging between 0 and 1, and it has intermediate positions. Here, higher values indicate greater support for gender equality, i.e., nonmasculine values. Both of Welzel’s aforementioned indexes were developed from the survey responses to WVS 6, so they are relevant and convenient to use and analyze with other data from WVS 6. The degree of religiousness (related to H3) is measured using a seven-point scale where 1 = Attend religious services more than once a week and 7 = Never attend religious services (variable V145 of WVS 6). For convenient interpretation, this variable is reversed so that higher values indicate greater religiousness.

The next set of explanatory variables comes from three indicators of perceived life conditions: dissatisfaction with life (V23) (related to H4), dissatisfaction with household financial circumstances (V59) and state of health (V11). The first two variables are measured using an 11-point scale where 0 = Completely dissatisfied and 10 = Completely satisfied. For the convenience of interpretation, these variables are reversed, and higher values indicate greater dissatisfaction. “State of health” is measured on a four-point scale where 1 = Very good and 4 = Poor. For this variable, higher values indicate poor health. This study also includes several sociodemographic variables in the regression models, such as age, education, partnership status, gender, social class (subjective) and number of children. For partnership status, the original variable is transformed into a dichotomous variable where 0 = Have a partner (Married/living together), and 1 = No partner.
(divorced/separated/widowed/single). Social class is measured by a self-reported 1–5 scale where 1 = Upper class and 5 = Lower class. In addition to these individual-level data, the study included one country-level variable concerning the banning of CP (related to H 5). Countries that have banned CP are labeled as 1, and others 0.

4.2 Analytic approach

The study analyzed the data using linear regression analyses because the dependent variable is measured on a 10-point scale. This analysis is based on three models. The models were developed based on two main categories of hypotheses: values and life conditions. The first model captures the effects of the three value variables, the second only considers life condition variables and the third combines all the explanatory and control variables. Therefore, the decisions or the verdicts concerning the hypothesized relationships in this study mainly derive from the last model (Model 3). For this regression analysis, SPSS 25 statistical software is used.

4.3 Limitations

Although this study uses WVS data to study CP in different countries, the survey is not specifically designed for studying CP; as a result, some possibly important explanatory variables may not be available in this survey’s data or the variables which are included for this study may not be measured comprehensively (e.g., acceptance of parental CP). However, as this is one of the key surveys around the world on socio-political aspects and it has a measure for the acceptance of parental CP along with some possible key explanatory variables, this study uses this data source for further analyses.

5. Results

The results of the regression analyses (Table 1) indicate that all three value variables affect the degree of acceptance of parental CP. People with stronger emancipative values are less likely to support CP of children: $\beta = -0.049$, $p < 0.001$ (Model 3). This supports hypothesis 1 (H 1). Similarly, nonmasculine values reduce support for parental CP: $\beta = -0.076$, $p < 0.001$ (Model 3). Alternatively, it can be said that those with stronger masculine values tend to show more support for CP. These results support hypothesis 2 (H 2). This study also finds support for the hypothesis regarding the effects of religiousness on CP: $\beta = 0.052$, $p < 0.001$ (Model 3); this means higher religiousness is associated with stronger support for parental CP. This supports hypothesis 3 (H 3).

In addition to these value variables, the study examines three life condition variables, finding statistically significant effects for the two life condition variables in Model 3. For “dissatisfaction with life,” $\beta = 0.053$, $p < 0.001$ (Model 3); this means that greater dissatisfaction with life is associated with stronger support for parental CP, and this finding supports hypothesis 4 (H 4). The “state of health” variable indicates a statistically significant effect, but it shows an inverse relationship with hypothesis 4b (H 4b): $\beta = -0.044$, $p < 0.001$ (Model 3). This suggests that people in poor health show less support for parental CP. The “dissatisfaction with the financial circumstances of the household” variable shows a statistically significant effect in Model 2: $\beta = 0.022$, $p < 0.001$—but not in Model 3, where all other variables are included and controlled for in the analysis. Therefore, hypothesis 4a (H 4a) is supported in Model 2 but not in Model 3.

Table 1: Summary of linear regression models of support for parental corporal punishment (Standardized Beta Coefficients)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual-level data</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipative values (low–high)</td>
<td>$-0.071^{***}$</td>
<td></td>
<td>$-0.049^{***}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the regression analyses of the data at the individual level, we can also see that a national ban on CP is associated with individual opinions on it. We can see that bans are associated with less support for CP: $\beta = -0.130$ and $p < .001$ (Model 3). From these individual-level findings, we find support for the fifth hypothesis (H5), i.e., a ban on CP is associated with lower acceptance of CP.

However, the country-level data show a more complex scenario in which it is difficult to determine whether banning CP has any effect. On the one hand, Table 2 indicates that the countries that banned CP, many of them have lower-level support for parental CP (such as Sweden, Cyprus and New Zealand), and alternatively, the countries which do not have any law banning CP, people there have higher acceptance of parental CP (such as Rwanda, Taiwan, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Nigeria). On the other hand, this table also indicates the deviation from this trend; there are countries where there is higher acceptance of parental CP despite of its banning (for example, Brazil and Tunisia). At the same time, the three countries that have the lowest level of acceptance of parental CP in Table 2 (i.e., Chile, Japan and South Korea), do not have banning of CP. So, there is no clear pattern in these country-level data of the effects of banning CP and from this, we do not get clear support for the fifth hypothesis (H5). Because this study does not have longitudinal data on the acceptance of parental CP before and after the ban of CP from the sample countries, it is very difficult to say the actual effect of this banning on the acceptance of CP. However, in Table 2, we see an interesting trend; regardless of whether there is a ban, there is a level of acceptance of parental CP in all countries. Therefore, acceptance of parental CP may not be just a legal issue. To address the problem, attention through appropriate policy tools is needed for the individual factors identified in this study, such as personal values and life conditions.
Table 2: Degree of acceptance of parental corporal punishment in different countries (1–10 scale) and legal conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Degree of acceptance of CP (Mean values)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>CP banned</th>
<th>Year of ban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>1527</td>
<td>2.188</td>
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<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>1184</td>
<td>2.520</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>1552</td>
<td>3.124</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>2.827</td>
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<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>3471</td>
<td>2.956</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>1759</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>4.61</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2.594</td>
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<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>4.32</td>
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<td>2.761</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Morocco</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>3.231</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>1477</td>
<td>2.908</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1511</td>
<td>2.633</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
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<td>1196</td>
<td>2.139</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>2074</td>
<td>2.740</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Qatar</td>
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<td>1059</td>
<td>2.634</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>NA</td>
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This study also finds associations between sociodemographic variables and endorsement of parental CP (Table 1). People who perceive themselves to be in a lower social class tend to support parental CP more: $\beta = .054$, $p < .001$ (Model 3). This variable has the strongest positive effect on the endorsement of CP in Model 3. Older people tend to support CP less: $\beta = -.094$, $p < .001$ (Model 3). Higher education reduces support for CP: $\beta = -.058$, $p < .001$ (Model 3). There is also variation in the support for parental CP between genders; it seems males show more support for CP than females: $\beta = .009$, $p < .05$ (Model 3). People with more children also show more support for CP: $\beta = .026$, $p < .001$ (Model 3). It seems that partnership status may also contribute to support for parental CP; people without partners (divorced/separated/widowed/single) tend to support CP more strongly: $\beta = .033$ and $p < .001$ (Model 3).

### 6. Discussion and concluding remarks

The study finds that the presence of emancipative values and nonmasculine values reduces support for parental CP. People with stronger emancipative values prefer children to have independence and freedom, compared with simply controlling them. On the other hand, people who prefer more authority and control remain on the lower rungs of the “ladder of freedom,” as predicted by Welzel’s (2013) emancipation theory. Lower positions are associated with more authoritarian childrearing values and lead to stronger endorsement of CP. Narratives like “spare the rod and spoil the child” or “give the favorite child an extra beating” are indications of the endorsement of such authoritative childrearing values.

Like emancipative values, the presence of nonmasculine values may also reduce the endorsement of CP. Because masculine values promote aggressiveness and dominance (Gilbert & Gilbert, 2017), decreases in the strength of such values reduce endorsement of parental CP of children. This study finds that higher religiousness scores are associated with greater acceptance of parental CP. This finding is consistent with other studies such as that of Ellison & Bradshaw (2009), and Gershoff et al (1999), who found an association between CP and religion. The current study does not calculate differences in the effect sizes of different religions, but there may be differences. This study analyses the effects of religiousness in general and finds support for it.

Moreover, this research finds that life conditions such as dissatisfaction with life may increase support for parental CP. Dissatisfaction with life may create frustration and anger, which may be
reflected in endorsement of aggressive attitudes. However, the study finds an effect of "dissatisfaction with financial circumstances" in one model, but when other variables are included and controlled for, the effect disappears. It may be because, "financial circumstances" variable may work through other factors. From this study, it is difficult to say further about such possible factors and mechanisms. Poor health is associated with less support for parental CP—poor health probably increases empathy toward others, which may reduce support for CP.

From the individual-level data, the study finds a possible association between banning CP and reduced acceptance of parental CP, but the country-level data does not indicate any clear pattern. There are countries where CP is banned but support for CP remains high (such as Brazil and Tunisia) compared with other countries. In the three countries with the least support for CP (Chile, Japan and South Korea), CP is not banned. Where higher acceptance of CP remains after a ban was imposed, there is a possibility that acceptance of CP was even higher before the ban, which may have reduced it to the current level, but acceptance remains high compared with other countries. Because this study has no longitudinal data (i.e., from before and after a CP ban), it is difficult to determine conclusively the effect of banning CP.

In some cases, countries banned CP in response to factors such as international pressure in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (see Zolotor, & Puzia, 2010), but those countries are yet to have a social transformation to reduce acceptance of CP. In other countries, social transformation has already occurred, and it led to the ban on CP (Durrant, 1999). From these two mechanisms, it appears that value transformation is important to reduce acceptance of parental CP. The individual-level associations found in this study may reflect value transformation, and because of that transformation, people may already have negative views on parental CP. This view is similar to Robert’s (2000) findings based on time-series analyses of the banning process in Sweden. In this study, he found that legal reform does not reduce acceptance of CP; rather, the social transformation that makes Sweden more child-centric reduces this support.

A variety of sociodemographic variables seem to affect acceptance of CP. People who place themselves in the lower strata of society, have more children or do not have partners (i.e., divorced/separated/widowed/single) endorse parental CP to a greater degree. These factors may create stress in their personal lives and engender such views on parental CP. For example, a person with more children may have less time and energy to spend on a child, or a divorced or separated person may also have personal stress and/or a greater family burden. The study finds that more educated people tend to support parental CP less. Other studies (e.g., Kelley, Sanchez-Hucles, & Walker, 1993) find similar effects of education on attitudes toward CP for children. The effects of education may be related to consciousness of the negative effects of CP and the development of notions about responsible parenting, as indicated by Graziano & Namaste (1990).

The study findings also indicate that men tend to support CP more than women. This finding is similar to those of a study based in the US, which shows that fathers were more likely to endorse CP (Ellison & Bradshaw, 2009). However, other studies (e.g., Lee, Altschul, & Gershoff, 2015; Scholar & Stein, 1995; Walsh, 2002;) show that mothers tend to beat their children more often than fathers. This is probably attributable to proximity because in many societies children spend most of their time with their mothers. Fathers may endorse CP more, but in reality, because they are away from home for economic activities, they may have less opportunity to apply it (Craig, 2006). In addition, a study in Norway shows that when fathers use CP, the severity of the punishment is greater than that of mothers (Mossige & Stefansen, 2016).

Thus, from this study, we can gain an idea of people’s acceptance of parental CP for children, and some factors in this acceptance. This analysis may help us to expand our knowledge on the dynamics of CP and guide us to develop more effective policies to address the issue.
Acknowledgements:
I am grateful to my colleagues from the Centre for Research on Discretion and Paternalism, University of Bergen, Department of Administration and Organization Theory, Norway, for their constructive comments and criticism, which helped me to improve the article further. I particularly like to convey my gratitude to PI Prof. Marit Skivenes for her comments and input to the paper.

References


