

Evolution of Parental Disciplinary Tactics: A Comparative Study between College Students and their Parents

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Abstract—Physical punishment is one of the most used disciplinary methods. Still, it is yet to be proven as one of the most effective, both in positive and negative aspects of child development, or rather a simple generational and traditional upbringing. As such, this study aimed to identify the disciplinary methods employed by college students and their parents during their childhood years and, therefore, analyze the significant differences between the two—an online survey collected and analyzed responses through descriptive and inferential analysis. The results have shown no significant differences between the two variables, as $p = 0.529 > .05$, but rather, a similarity in disciplinary methods used from the past until present generations. As supported by the survey responses, physical punishment is an effective method of discipline. By this, the study concludes that the traditional execution of techniques, along with its perceived child impact, leads to the effectiveness of physical punishment. Further research providing more focus on the behavioral development of children under physical discipline is recommended to attain a more detailed understanding and comparison.

Keywords— Parenting styles; Disciplinary approaches; Parental Discipline; Generational changes; Parent-child relationships.

I. INTRODUCTION

From the perspective of children's young minds, their parents are the most important people. Aside from providing food, shelter, and emotional support, parents also teach independence to their children (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). It may be challenging for children's undeveloped minds and bodies to understand the world around them. To cultivate fruitful child development, it is crucial to understand the importance of choosing the right techniques parents will implement during their child-rearing. According to Lanjekar et al. (2022), effective parenting is a requirement for successful cognitive development. Their study has shown an increase in the risk of developing depression during adolescence in children who experience negative and hostile parenting styles in their childhood. With this in mind,

familiarizing themselves with the concepts of parenting and analyzing its effects on children are important factors that parents should consider.

One of the key approaches to successful parenting is child discipline. It aids young individuals' development, particularly in addressing and managing behaviors and stability. According to Steele (2018), child discipline promotes young individuals' self-motivation, self-control, personality, and decision-making processes. However, parents' selection of the best disciplinary techniques resulted in the emergence of dismissive parental control. As per Mamaug (2012), there are different disciplinary methods, but the most employed is the practice of corporal punishment.

In contrast, Wehrli (2021) stated that other parenting techniques were also grounded on verbal cues, such as gentle and boundary-based discipline. These disciplinary techniques justify that their advantages correlate to their disadvantages. Improper usage of parental punishments can result in an ineffective deterrent that increases an individual's thinking from repeating undesirable behaviors (Alla, 2021).

Physical discipline had been accounted for by most parents as the usage of corporal punishment towards children as a way of teaching good morality. In the study of Ramiro and Madrid (2022, p. 104), the common methods used toward children are mostly known as beating, spanking, twitching of ears, and not providing food. They also utilize verbal punishments, which include degradation, cursing toward children, and being yelled at. Parents use these methods to prevent them from doing it against their wishes through psychological discipline as they thought it necessary to mold their character (Castillo, 2011). Some parents see physical and verbal discipline as "positive parenting" to show their love and care for their children and help them grow into well-developed adults; however, these methods instill fear and pain in children. (Sanapo & Nakamura, 2010, p. 40).

Despite numerous studies, little attention has yet to be given to its effectiveness on later adult psychology (Filby, 2022). Moreover, the main purpose of this study is to comprehensively investigate the difference in generation towards parental disciplinary methods employed by college students and their parents during middle childhood. This study attends to the question behind the psychology of disciplinary tactics and their differences through the years of generational experiences. The objectives collectively aim to provide a valuable understanding of the evolution and effectiveness of parental disciplinary methods.

Overall, parenting may depend on family structures, socioeconomic status, and other significant factors. However, with modern studies, it is best to remain culturally aware of suggestions that encourage critical thinking and improvement. With readily available resources, parents can start accepting and recognizing newer methods. Some have found undesirable effects from their old parenting methods and considered different approaches. Over time, parental disciplinary tactics have evolved methodologies and rationale due to unfavorable indications, modernized beliefs, and generational differences.

II. METHODOLOGY

This area provides the details about research methods and procedures that will be utilized in obtaining the important data for the study. Understanding this section can give readers a vision of how the methods will be implemented and the validity and reliability of the approach. As this study aims to determine the parental disciplinary tactics employed by parents throughout generations, the researchers chose a quantitative research design. This identifies the differences between the independent and dependent variables, which explores whether the independent variable has a difference from the dependent variable (Velazquez, 2021). Due to attaining young individuals' experiences with the effects of the applied parental disciplinary approaches by their parents, this type of research design links to the research objectives.

The researchers will compose a close-ended questionnaire consisting of a record scale and multiple-choice questions with two sets of questionnaires, comprising 30 questionnaires distributed to college students and 30 to their respective parents. This questionnaire will be conducted through the online survey platform Microsoft Forms and distributed through the online social media platform Facebook Messenger. Respondents will be chosen through random sampling within Far Eastern University Manila. They will serve as the primary data sources, whereas existing research will be the secondary source to meet the research goals further. Once the necessary data has been collected, the researchers will use descriptive and inferential analysis, particularly the t-test method, to analyze the results, as it is aligned with the purpose of quantitative research. The collected data will be analyzed by summarizing the respondents' data from the questionnaire using Jamovi Statistical Software. After the summarization of each question answered by the participants, the researchers will also apply visualization for better presentation and understanding of the

given data. However, these survey respondents will be limited to 30 college students from randomized course programs and one parent representative of each student. Parent representatives are limited to only one per student. They can be the mother, father, or guardian but are not limited to gender roles, emotional relationship with the child, or distance from the child's current residence. After 60 respondents are collected, the survey forms will be closed to maintain the integrity of the study. With this, anticipated data collection challenges include difficulties with the parents recalling their childhood, concerns regarding the confidentiality of responses, and limited sources of data due to constraints in time and resources. Overall, these data collection methods will support the research arguments by using subjective data from those who first-handedly experienced and initiated physical discipline and witnessed its effects on child development. The researchers can obtain a larger perspective of the results and their interpretations through these methods, creating evidence-based conclusions that answer research questions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The table below shows the parental disciplinary tactics employed by college students during their mid-childhood. The American Psychological Association (2019) supported the data further to illustrate the highest score among the four disciplinary tactics.

TABLE 1. Descriptive result based on the parental disciplinary tactics employed to college students during their mid-childhood.

Disciplinary tactics	N	Mean	SD
Positive discipline	30	0.133	0.346
Boundary-based discipline	30	0.367	0.490
Physical discipline	30	0.367	0.490
Behavior modification	30	0.133	0.346

According to the findings, physical and boundary-based discipline had the highest mean score among the four conditions, implying that these were the parental disciplinary strategies used on college students during their middle childhood. As per the American Psychological Association (2019), parents are more likely to choose physical discipline because it reduces undesirable child behavior that is solely related to the parent's historical, cultural, and contextual factors. The selection of parents concerning parental discipline shows its effectiveness based on their past child occurrences and employed disciplinary actions on them. Furthermore, the standard deviation of the four conditions was greater than the mean, indicating that the results were far from the mean and varied widely within the examined group.

To further illustrate the selected physical discipline employed by parents to college students during their mid-childhood, table 1.1 shows the various physical forms of child discipline.

According to the results, hitting with a belt got the highest mean score of 0.533, implying that this is their parent's most

commonly utilized physical method of discipline. With a mean score of 0.500, it was followed by spanking. Furthermore, the standard deviations were greater than the mean, indicating that the values were substantially different from the mean and that there was great diversity among the studied group. However, it was justified by Glicksman (2019) that hitting a child with a belt can cause psychological harm to children and is considered an illegal act in some states, such as California.

TABLE 1.1. Descriptive results based on different physical forms of discipline

Physical forms	N	Mean	SD
Spanking	30	0.500	0.509
Slapping	30	0.300	0.466
Pinching	30	0.433	0.504
Hitting with hard objects	30	0.233	0.430
Hitting with a belt	30	0.533	0.507
Kneeling on rice grains	30	0.067	0.254
Standing facing the wall	30	0.167	0.379

To determine whether this type of disciplinary action is effective, the tables below show their level of effectiveness and whether there are changes in their behaviors concerning the applied parental discipline.

TABLE 1.2. Frequencies of Gender

Effectiveness	Counts	% of Total
Female	22	73.3%
Male	8	26.7%

TABLE 1.3. Frequencies of Effectiveness

Effectiveness	Counts	% of Total
1	3	10.0%
2	8	26.7%
3	12	40.0%
4	7	23.3%

According to the college students, with the rating with the highest count being 3, their parents' disciplinary measures were moderately effective, meaning there were modifications and improvements in their behavior, yet they felt self-conscious about themselves. Although the respondents agreed with a level of effectiveness, the disciplinary measures have still inflicted a cognitive effect that holds a risk of future developmental complications. A study by Lanjekar et al. (2022) concludes that parenting tactics employed on children

may also contribute to negative cognitive effects on the child, including lower levels of acceptance and poorer self-image caused by their parents' criticism.

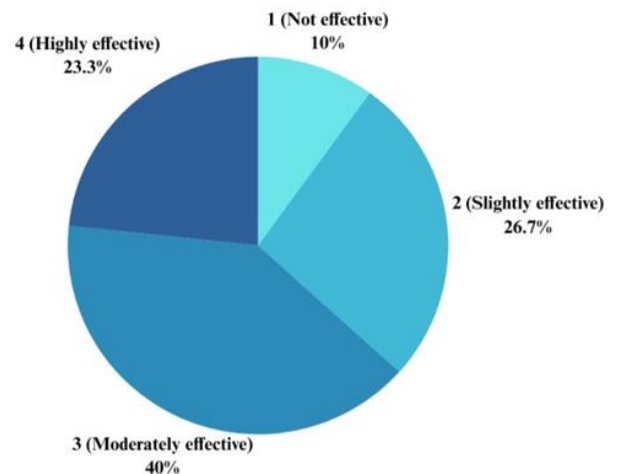


Fig. 1. Frequencies of Effectiveness Pie Chart

This figure shows the proportion of respondents who responded about the effectiveness of the disciplinary tactics used by their parents. With a rating of 3 or Moderately effective being the highest, it has accumulated 12 counts and represents 40% of the total respondents.

TABLE 1.4. Frequencies of Changes

Changes	Counts	% of Total
No	8	26.7%
Yes	22	73.3%

Among the 30 respondents, 22 believed there were changes in their behavioral development due to their parents' differing punishment styles. This can be interpreted as the respondents' punishment styles were deemed effective for their behavior discipline. Hosokawa and Katsura (2019) state that parenting tactics impact a child's behavioral development, whereas authoritative style can more likely develop negative influences, and permissive styles allow the risk of developing disruptive behaviors.

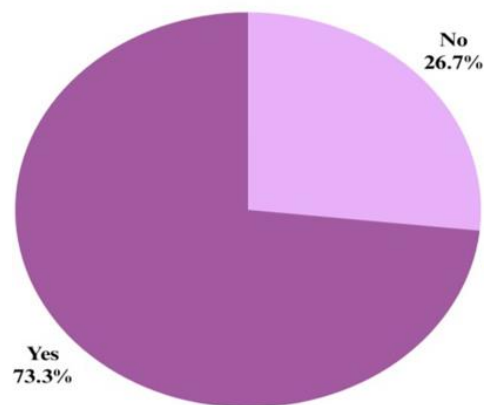


Fig. 1.1. Frequencies of Changes Pie Chart

This figure shows the respondents who answered “Yes” and “No” regarding behavioral changes associated with their parents’ disciplinary tactics during their child development. With “Yes” being the highest tally, which indicates the presence of behavioral changes, it represents 73.3% of the total respondent population.

TABLE 2. Descriptive result based on the parental disciplinary tactics employed during the mid-childhood of the respondents’ parent

Disciplinary tactics	N	Mean	SD
Positive discipline	30	0.100	0.305
Boundary-based discipline	30	0.433	0.504
Physical discipline	30	0.433	0.504
Behavior modification	30	0.033	0.183

Table 2 shows which parental disciplinary tactics employed during mid-childhood by the respondents’ parents are used the most and least employed. The findings were comparable to the results of college students. Physical and boundary-based discipline received the highest mean score, implying that the parents encountered this type of treatment when their children were young. The article Analysis of Parent Discipline as Predictor of Aggression Across Generations (2021) backs up the data that the two most used disciplinary tactics in the generation of the respondent’s parent are physical discipline and boundary-based discipline. It only shows that discipline across generations did not change much as the disciplinary tactic employed by college students during their mid-childhood and their parents had the same highest mean score. Furthermore, the standard deviations were greater than the mean, indicating that the values were far from the mean and varied widely across the examined group.

TABLE 2.1. Descriptive results based on different physical forms of discipline employed on parents

Physical forms	N	Mean	SD
Spanking	30	0.367	0.490
Slapping	30	0.200	0.407
Pinching	30	0.367	0.490
Hitting with hard objects	30	0.167	0.379
Hitting with belt	30	0.333	0.479
Kneeling on rice grains	30	0.200	0.407
Standing facing the wall	30	0.067	0.254

Table 2.1 shows the physical forms of discipline employed by respondent’s parents during their mid-childhood. Based on research findings, the most common physical forms of discipline were spanking and pinching. Parents engaged in these physical forms thought it would improve a child’s behavior, but it was proven that it only worsens and can create

external problems like increased aggression (LaMotte, 2021). Comparing it to the data collected from college students, while hitting with belts is frequently used with them, the older generation receives spanking and pinching the most with the same mean score as spanking is the second highest mean score for college students indicating that spanking is the common physical forms employed both in old and new generations. Furthermore, the standard deviations were more significant than the mean, indicating that the values differed substantially from the mean and ranged significantly across the studied group.

To determine whether this type of disciplinary tactic is effective, the table below shows their level of effectiveness if there are any significant changes in their behaviors regarding the applied parental discipline method during their middle childhood.

TABLE 2.2. Frequencies of Gender

Effectiveness	Counts	% of Total
Female	24	80.0%
Male	6	20.0%

TABLE 2.3. Frequencies of Effectiveness

Effectiveness	Counts	% of Total
2	3	10.0%
3	18	60.0%
4	9	30.0%

According to the parents of the students, the chosen strategies were moderately beneficial for them when they were children. Therefore, there are moderate modifications and improvements in their behavior. The data presented connects to a study by Morin (2023). Based on the study, the effectiveness of these disciplinary practices focuses on misbehavior and teaches individuals responsibility and accountability. It helps them see the significant relationship between their actions and consequences.

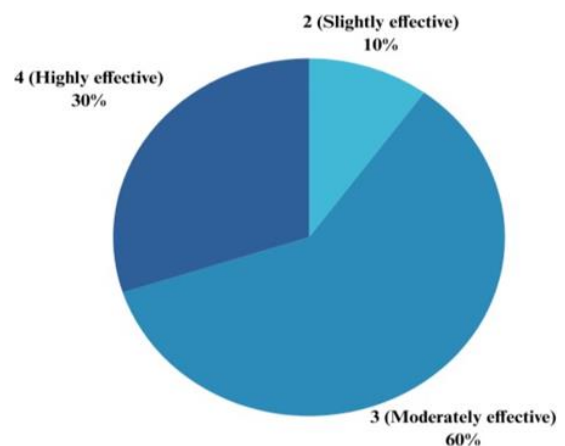


Fig. 2. Frequencies of Effectiveness Pie Chart

This figure shows the proportion of respondents who responded about the effectiveness of the disciplinary tactics used by the parents of the students when they were children. With a rating of 3 or moderately effective being the highest, it has accumulated 18 counts and represents 60% of the total respondents.

TABLE 2.4. Frequencies of Overall Holistic Development

Effectiveness	Counts	% of Total
1	1	3.3%
2	6	20.0
3	16	53.3%
4	7	23.3%

The methods of discipline also had a moderate level of efficacy on the parents' overall holistic development as they transitioned from childhood to maturity. The data connects to a study conducted by Castillo (2011) since it is said that these disciplinary styles serve to mold their character and shape them to improve their overall development throughout their life. This connection highlights how individuals are disciplined with these practices in childhood and have lifelong effects that can help with their development and well-being into adulthood.

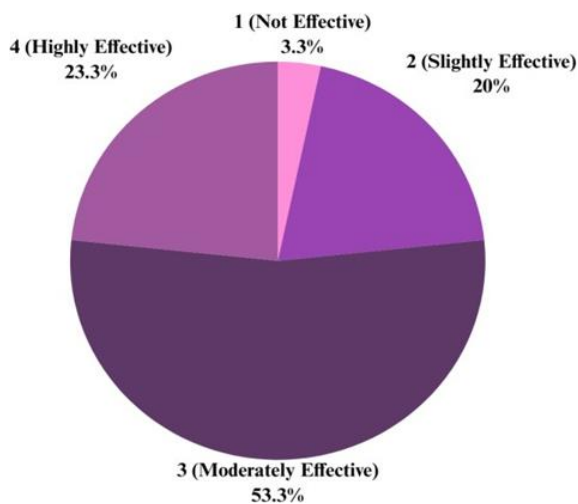


Fig. 2.1. Frequencies of Overall Holistic Development Pie Chart

This figure shows the proportion of respondents who responded about the effectiveness of the disciplinary tactics of the parents to their overall holistic development throughout childhood to adulthood. With a rating of 3 or Moderately Effective being the highest, it has accumulated 16 counts and represents 53.3% of the total respondents.

To determine if there are significant differences in parental disciplinary tactics employed during the childhood of college students and their parents.

TABLE 3. Independent Samples T-test

		Statistic	df	p
Disciplinary Tactics	Student's t	0.634	58.0	0.529

Note. $H_0: \mu_{\text{Student}} = \mu_{\text{Parent}}$

In Table 3, an independent sample t-test was utilized to analyze the evolution of parental and child punishment approaches. According to the findings, there is no significant difference between the two variables in parental disciplinary measures used during childhood, as $p = 0.529 > .05$. This implies that, regardless of generation, the level of discipline and efficacy would remain constant. The use of discipline amongst their children is implied to be the same. Hence, the same disciplinary tactics were used due to their efficiency to instill the right values and shape their child's character and behavior to the parents' understanding (Ramiro & Madrid, 2022).

Despite having different mean scores, there is no apparent variation in disciplinary approaches between students and their parents. This suggests that there needs to be more distinction between the respondents' responses during the assessment. According to Sanapo (2012), those who experienced different disciplinary tactics are more prone to approve of its methods. Hence, the disciplinary approaches in both generations were closely the same during the childhood of students and their parents.

IV. CONCLUSION

The parental disciplinary tactics employed on college students during their middle childhood have resulted in a variety, in which the respondents have chosen positive, boundary-based, physical, and behavior modification discipline. However, the methods with the highest number out of the research population were physical and boundary-based disciplines. Similarly, when it comes to parental disciplinary tactics employed during the mid-childhood of the respondents' parents, physical and boundary-based disciplines also had the highest number out of all the research population.

This research further highlights whether there are significant differences in the parental disciplinary tactics employed by college students and their parents during their middle childhood. The gathered data shows no significant differences between the two variables, implying that regardless of generation, the employed and selected disciplinary measure was based on its effectiveness and efficacy for child development. In contrast, physical punishments are still applied in today's generation for behavioral corrections. Despite no significant differences being shown between the present and older generations, the similarities regarding the disciplinary tactics show that the experiences of a parent during their mid-childhood are the same tactics they employed with their child. This can indicate that parents relied on their parents' disciplinary methods when they were children as they perceived them as practical, which presents a significance that generation still plays a role in parenting. Another difference noted is the perception between the college students and their parents concerning physical disciplinary tactics being employed on

them. In contrast, the students represented a slightly larger number agreeing with such tactics' moderate to high effectiveness. This entails that the utilization of corporal punishments can be based on the history, culture, and societal norms to which a family belongs. Regardless of the consequences of the disciplinary tactics employed in the older generations, the same tactics are being employed in the newer generation, changing the type of physical forms they execute. While the disciplinary tactics show no significant differences, the study's results show that they only differ in the methods of execution of physical discipline across the generations. However, the tactics themselves display little differences.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

In this research, it would be recommended to conduct another study focusing on the difference in generations of both parent and child when it comes to different disciplinary approaches, such as the effects of physical punishment on the behavioral development of children. This allows future researchers to have a detailed understanding of comparing both generations. Additionally, despite understanding the use of disciplinary tactics, there is still a need to educate parents and students to consider which brings more harm than good in building their moral character.

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