

Justification of Parental Violence – A Cross country Analysis Evidence from World Values Survey- Variances based on Gender, Age and Education

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Abstract: Every society experiences violence in some way or other. Domestic violence is one of the most common and neglected violence. Research proves that domestic violence has significant short- and long-term impacts on children's physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social developmental processes. Some international studies have shown that 80-90% of children around the world have been physically punished within the family. In this regard, the researchers aim to explore to what extent parental violence is justified across nations around the world, taking the data from the seventh wave of values survey conducted from 2017 to 2021 in around 59 countries. The research also aims to explore the variance based on gender, age, and education as moderators. SPSS version 26 was used to analyze the data. Mean values, Mann – Whitney U Test and Kruskal Wallis test were the tools used to explore the variance based on gender, age and education. Among the 86,820 total respondents from 59 countries, 41,245 were male respondents and 45,575 were female respondents. The major finding includes there is statistically significant variance exists between male and female respondents as well as different age groups and education levels of the respondents. There was an inverse relationship between age group and education level with the justification of violence. The analysis findings demonstrates the importance of education in reducing the justification of parental violence, highlighting the potential for educational programs to change attitudes toward parenting practices. The findings of this study have significant implications for promoting positive parenting practices and reducing violence against children globally. The research has implications for some policy-making through recommendations.

Keywords: Parental Violence, Gender, Age, Education, World Values Survey

1. Introduction

As educators, we believe there should be no place for any kind of violence in any society; and human rights must be respected. However, every society experiences violence in some way (Arisukwu, Igbolekwu, Adebisi, & Akindele, 2021). Domestic violence is one of the most common and neglected violence. Domestic violence has significant short and long-term impacts on children's physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social developmental processes (Lloyd, 2018). Studies have shown

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that 80%-90% of children throughout the world have been physically punished within the family.

Due to underreporting, the actual rate of violence is unknown (Giacaman, Shannon, Saab, Arya, & Boyce, 2007; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2007) and cannot be determined. For most countries, there are no long-term statistics on violent discipline against children. This article aims to examine the justification of parental violence across countries based on education, gender, and age.

2. Objectives

- To determine the prevalence of parental violence across different countries using data from the World Values Survey.
- To investigate whether there are any significant gender-based differences in the justification of parental violence across different countries.
- To determine whether the educational level is a significant factor in the justification of parental violence across different countries.
- To investigate whether there are any significant age-based differences in the justification of parental violence across different countries.
- To provide recommendations for interventions and policies to prevent and reduce parental violence.

2.1 Theoretical Background

2.1.1 Parental Violence

Cross-cultural studies have shown that children around the world experience various forms of violence, and most violence against children occurs in family settings. Additionally, according to Straus, Gelles, and Stienmetz (2017), mothers commit more violence against their children than fathers. Some societies' parental violence patterns against children differ from ones reported in Western literature (d'Antonio, Darwish, & McLean, 1993; Levinson, 1988). According to the findings of research conducted in Hong Kong among Chinese families, younger parents often commit violent behavior more frequently toward younger children (Tang, 1998). UNICEF reported that children in households affected by intimate partner violence (IPV) are more likely to experience violence from male and female caregivers, notably in Brazil, Peru, China, Egypt, and Uganda (UNICEF, 2020). The data collected by the General Social Survey in the United States indicated that today about two-thirds of American parents agree (strongly agree and agree) with spanking. Moreover UNICEF database showed that violent discipline is less common in wealthier countries (Ortiz-Ospina & Roser, 2017). The relationship between violence and education is reciprocal (Bandiera et al., 2020). Education can be used as a tool to reduce the occurrences of violence. Parenting programs that promote parents' knowledge and skills have shown positive effects on domestic violence. Violent punishment significantly decreased through the training that educated participants about non-violent behavior and positive parenting practices in Liberia case (Sim et al., 2014).

The findings of studies showed that gender-based violence occurs in many sectors of social relations. Official statistics and scientific evidence have indicated that gender violence and the effects it has on

children are significant social problems (Montserrat, Garcia-Molsosa, Planas-Lladó, & Soler-Masó, 2022). The recognition and perception of violence are as important as violence occurrence. When culture and religion are used as justification for violence, it becomes tolerated and accepted by society (Arisukwu et al., 2021). In many countries, reliable data on parental violence against children was not available until recent years. Even while responding to anonymous surveys, parents underreported their violent actions against children. Generally, parents are unwilling to speak honestly about their behavior toward their children. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) reported that 63% of children aged 0-5 were killed by a parent (Cooper & Smith, 2011; Diaz & Petersen, 2014), which shows the inhuman side of violence. The majority of homicide victims are not kidnapped or stabbed outside. Unfortunately, 50% of all homicide victims under the age of ten are killed by their parents (Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2013). Therefore, poverty and lack of education, which are the main reasons for violence, should be addressed.

3. Methodology

This study utilizes quantitative methods and data from the World Values Survey (Haerpfer et al., 2022) to investigate the relationship between the justification of parental violence and gender, education, and age across countries. The analysis employs cross-tabulation, mean values, Mann-Whitney U test, and Kruskal-Wallis test to explore the distribution of responses, compare average responses between groups, and compare response distributions between groups. Statistical software SPSS version 26 was used for analysis, and data limitations and ethical considerations were acknowledged. A study using the World Values Survey by Dhahir Saber and Begum (2022) used the methodology of identifying the variances based on Gender, Age, Education, and other factors using non-parametric tests. This methodology provides a rigorous approach to understanding the cultural, social, and economic factors that contribute to the normalization of parental violence and informing policy and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting positive parenting practices and reducing violence against children. There are more than 350 variables in the World Values Survey. For this study, the researchers have taken the Justifiability of Parents beating their Children with a scale of 1 to 10. A small number indicates less justifiability and a higher number indicates more justifiability.

4. Results and Discussion

The Following paragraphs confer the results and discussion.

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of Gender and Justifiability

Report			
Justifiable: Parents beating children and Gender Cross-Tabulation			
Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	2.97	41245	2.603
Female	2.77	45575	2.505
Total	2.87	86820	2.554

Source: Own Computation data from the World Values Survey

Table 1 depicts the number of male and female respondents of the world values survey; the seventh wave for the survey question, Justifiable parents beating children, along with the Mean Values. It can be observed that the mean of males is higher than females, which demonstrates that males justify more than females.

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Justifiable: Parents beating children is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 1: Hypothesis Test based on the Gender and Justifiability

Source: Own Computation data from the World Values Survey

The Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to compare the distribution of responses to the survey question regarding the justification of parental violence between genders. The test yielded a significance level of (0.00) (Figure 1), indicating that there is a significant difference in the distribution of responses between genders. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, which assumes that the justification of parental violence is the same across genders. This suggests that the justification for parental violence differs between males and females in the sample population. Further analysis can be conducted to explore the differences in attitudes towards parental violence between genders and potential cultural, social, or economic factors that may contribute to these differences.

Table 2 Cross-tabulation of Age and Justifiability

Report			
Justifiable: Parents beating children and Age Cross Tabulation			
Age of the Respondent	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
16-29 years	3.16	22164	2.718
30-49 years	2.92	34720	2.572
50 and more years	2.58	29666	2.370
Total	2.86	86550	2.554

Source: Own Computation data from the World Values Survey

According to Table 2, it appears that there is a relationship between age and the justifiability of parents beating their children. There is an inverse relationship. Older individuals are less likely to view parents beating their children as justifiable. It is worth noting that the standard deviation for justifiability is relatively consistent across all age groups, ranging from 2.370 to 2.718. This indicates that there is a relatively consistent level of variability in responses across age groups. Age is an important factor in shaping attitudes towards the justifiability of parents beating their children, with younger individuals being more likely to view this behavior as acceptable.

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Justifiable: Parents beating children is the same across categories of Age of the Respondent.	Independent-Samples of Kruskal-Wallis Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 2: Hypothesis Test based on the Age and Justifiability

Source: Own Computation data from the World Values Survey

The results of the Kruskal-Wallis test (Figure 2) suggest that the distribution of justification of parents beating children is not the same across age categories. The null hypothesis, which states that there is no difference in the distribution of justification of parents beating children across age groups, is rejected with a significance level of (0.00).

This finding (Figure 2) implies that there are significant differences in the justifications for parents beating children across age categories. Further analysis, such as post hoc tests, may be necessary to identify the specific age groups that differ significantly from one another.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation of Education and Justifiability

Report			
Justifiable: Parents beating children and Education Cross Tabulation			
Education Level	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Lower	3.14	27361	2.740
Middle	2.81	30141	2.536
Higher	2.66	28726	2.357
Total	2.87	86228	2.553

Source: Own Computation data from the World Values Survey

The results of the cross-tabulation of Table 3 indicate that there is a relationship between education level and the justifiability of parents beating their children. The mean score for justifiability decreases as education level increases, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of education are less likely to view parents beating their children as justifiable.

The mean score for justifiability is highest among individuals with a lower education level, at 3.14, and decreases to 2.81 for those with a middle education level and further decreases to 2.66 for those with a higher education level. The total mean score for justifiability across all education levels is 2.87. It is also worth noting that the standard deviation for justifiability is relatively consistent across all education levels, ranging from 2.357 to 2.740. This indicates that there is a relatively consistent level of variability in responses across education levels.

The results suggest that education level is an important factor in shaping attitudes towards the justifiability of parents beating their children across nations. Individuals with higher education levels are less likely to view this behavior as acceptable.

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Justifiable: Independent-Parents beating children is the same across categories of Education Level.	Kruskal-Wallis Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 3: Hypothesis Test based on Education and Justifiability

Source: Own Computation data from the World Values Survey

Figure 3 depicts the results of conducting an independent sample Kruskal-Wallis test. The null hypothesis is that the distribution of the variable being tested is the same across all groups or categories being compared. In this case, the variable being tested is the justification of parents beating children, and the groups being compared are based on education level: lower, middle, and higher.

The significance value of (0.00) indicates that the p-value is very small, which means that there is strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that the distribution of justification for parents beating children is not the same across the three education level categories.

To further investigate the differences between the groups, post hoc tests could be conducted. These tests would compare the distribution of the variable within each pair of groups and could help to identify which specific groups differ significantly from each other.

Table 4: Country-wise Mean Values

Justification of Parents beating Children			
Country	Mean	Country	Mean
Greece	1.22	Puerto Rico	2.64
Japan	1.30	All Countries Mean	2.87
Maldives	1.37	Ethiopia	2.93
Cyprus	1.47	Tunisia	3.00
New Zealand	1.47	Libya	3.05
Germany	1.51	Mexico	3.09
Australia	1.61	Ecuador	3.30
Andorra	1.69	Iraq	3.34
Netherlands	1.73	China	3.34
Romania	1.77	Pakistan	3.34
Peru	1.90	Singapore	3.36
Armenia	1.91	Macau SAR	3.52
Argentina	1.94	Serbia	3.54
United States of America	1.99	Venezuela	3.58
Chile	2.02	Colombia	3.59
Turkey	2.09	Mongolia	3.66
Canada	2.10	Hong Kong SAR	3.76
Bangladesh	2.16	Egypt	3.87
Kyrgyzstan	2.20	Philippines	3.96
Iran	2.21	Guatemala	4.06
Tajikistan	2.29	Taiwan ROC	4.25
Thailand	2.32	Zimbabwe	4.33
Russia	2.34	Nicaragua	4.35
Kazakhstan	2.37	Brazil	4.38
South Korea	2.40	Malaysia	4.47
Indonesia	2.44	Vietnam	4.54
Ukraine	2.45	Kenya	4.70
Lebanon	2.54	Morocco	4.70

Jordan	2.55	Myanmar	5.04
Bolivia	2.60	Nigeria	6.05

Source: Own Computation data from the World Values Survey

Table 4 shows that the mean prevalence of justifiable parents beating children is 2.87, with a standard deviation of 2.554, based on a sample size of 86,871 individuals from various countries. The highest mean prevalence was found in Nigeria (6.05), followed by Kenya (4.70), Myanmar (5.04), and Zimbabwe (4.33). On the other hand, the lowest mean prevalence was found in Greece (1.22), followed by Germany (1.51), Andorra (1.69), and the Netherlands (1.73). The United States had a mean prevalence of 1.99, while Canada had a mean prevalence of 2.10.

Table 4 provides insights into the prevalence of justifiability of parents beating children in different countries. The findings suggest that cultural differences play a significant role in determining attitudes toward physical discipline. It is essential to promote non-violent forms of discipline and to address cultural attitudes that may perpetuate the use of physical discipline. This can help to create safer and more nurturing environments for children worldwide.

4.1 Implications

This highlights the prevalence of justifiable parents beating children in different countries. The higher prevalence in some countries may have negative implications for children's physical and emotional well-being. Children who are subjected to physical discipline may be at risk of physical injury, emotional trauma, and poor mental health outcomes. Therefore, it is important to promote non-violent forms of discipline that are effective in promoting positive behavior in children.

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the survey data, the following conclusions are drawn.

The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to analyze the data related to the distribution of justifications for parents beating children across different categories. The test rejected the null hypothesis in all cases, indicating that the distributions were significantly different across the categories being compared.

In the case of age, it was found that there were significant differences in the distribution of justifications across different age groups. This suggests that people's views on the acceptability of parents beating children may be influenced by their age.

Similarly, in the case of education level, significant differences were found in the distribution of justifications across different levels of education. This suggests that education level may also significantly influence people's attitudes toward parents beating children.

It is important to note that in all cases, the mean values for the justifications were relatively low, indicating that overall, people are less likely to justify parents beating children. However, the significant differences found in the distributions suggest that there are still significant variations in attitudes towards this issue across different demographic groups.

These findings have important implications for policy and intervention efforts to reduce the prevalence of physical punishment in children. By understanding the factors that influence people's attitudes towards this issue, it may be possible to develop more effective strategies for changing societal norms and reducing the use of physical punishment as a disciplinary tool.

Children who grow up in violent environments, home, school, and society will learn to use violence in their personal relationships. Parental violence against children triggers a circle of violence (Rada, 2014). Today's victims of parental violence are tomorrow's perpetrators - "violence begets violence" (Holt & Gillespie, 2008). As parents' non-violent training reduce the violence against children, incompetent parents who do not know how to parent or are troubled by personal problems should be educated.

6. Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the distribution of justification of parents beating children across different countries, age groups, and education levels. The data were collected from a large sample of individuals across 59 countries, with a total of 86,871 participants.

The results showed significant variation regarding the distribution of justification of parents beating children across different countries. For instance, the mean score for the United States of America was 1.99, indicating that parents' physical punishment of their children was not considered justifiable by most people in this country. On the other hand, countries such as Nigeria and Ethiopia had mean scores of 6.05 and 2.93, respectively, indicating a higher level of acceptance of physical punishment as a disciplinary measure by parents.

The results also showed significant variation when considering the distribution of justification of parents beating children across different age groups. The independent sample Kruskal-Wallis test rejected the null hypothesis that the distribution of justification is the same across age categories. This suggests that accepting physical punishment as a disciplinary measure varies significantly across different age groups.

The distribution of justification of parents beating children across different categories of gender also showed significant variation. The Mann-Whitney U Test rejected the null hypothesis that the distribution of justification is identical across males and females. This suggests that the opinion on parents beating children justifiability is not the same among males and females. Also, the mean values demonstrate that males justify more than females.

In addition, the distribution of justification of parents beating children across different education levels also showed significant variation. The independent sample Kruskal-Wallis test rejected the null hypothesis that the distribution of justification is the same across categories of education levels. This suggests that the acceptance of physical punishment as a disciplinary measure varies significantly across different education levels.

These findings are consistent with previous research that has demonstrated that cultural and social factors influence parents' acceptance of physical punishment as a disciplinary measure (Gershoff, 2013). Additionally, the present study adds to the existing literature by demonstrating that age and education level are significant factors in accepting physical punishment.

However, it is important to note that the present study has some limitations. The study did not assess other factors that may influence the acceptance of physical punishment, such as religiosity or socioeconomic status.

In conclusion, the present study provides valuable insights into the distribution of justification for parents beating children across different countries, age groups, gender, and education levels. The findings highlight the need for further research to understand the underlying factors influencing the acceptance of physical punishment as a disciplinary measure. Additionally, the findings suggest that interventions aimed at reducing the use of physical punishment should consider cultural, social, age, and education level factors.

These findings are consistent with the previous study by Kavlu and Begum (2022) where there was significant variance found across different gender, ages, and education on the Justifiability of Parents beating Children taking the Iraq data. The variance of gender on different aspects is consistent with another study by Begum and Ahmad (2021) where the opinion of males and females was significantly different on the Economic Values variables. For the Ethical Values and Norms also, the variance is significant.

7. Limitations

Several limitations to this study should be acknowledged.

Firstly, the data used in this study were from 59 countries which may introduce response bias or societal influence bias and limit the generalizability of the results to the entire population. Additionally, the data were cross-sectional, which means that causality cannot be inferred from the results.

Secondly, the study only focused on the justification of parents beating children and did not explore other forms of discipline or abuse. Therefore, the results may not reflect the entire range of disciplinary practices used by parents.

Thirdly, the study did not consider cultural or contextual factors that may influence attitudes toward using physical discipline. For example, some cultures may view physical discipline as an acceptable form of punishment, while others may not.

Finally, the study did not examine the relationship between the justification of parents beating children and actual rates of physical abuse. It is possible that some individuals who justify physical discipline may engage in abusive behaviours towards their children.

In summary, while this study provides important insights into attitudes towards the use of physical discipline among parents, the results should be interpreted with caution due to the limitations outlined above. Future research should aim to address these limitations and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence attitudes towards physical discipline.

8. Findings

- There are significant variations in the levels of justification of parental violence across different countries.
- Women tend to justify parental violence less than men.
- Higher levels of education are associated with lower levels of justification of parental violence.
- Older individuals tend to justify parental violence more than younger individuals.
- The factors of gender, education, and age interact in complex ways to influence attitudes towards parental violence across different countries.

9. Implications of this Study

Policy implications: The findings of this study suggest that parental violence is a significant issue that needs to be addressed globally. The results indicate that parental violence is prevalent across different countries and is influenced by various factors such as gender, education, and age. Policymakers can use these findings to develop effective strategies and interventions to prevent parental violence and promote positive parenting practices. For instance, policies could focus on providing parenting education and support to parents, especially those who are less educated or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Societal implications: The study also highlights the importance of recognizing the impact of parental violence on children's well-being and mental health. The findings suggest that children who experience parental violence are more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. This emphasizes the need for greater awareness and education among parents, teachers, and the general public about the harmful effects of parental violence. The study also suggests that societal norms and values related to parenting practices need to be examined to promote positive parenting practices and prevent violence towards children. Overall, this study underscores the importance of creating a safe and nurturing environment for children.

10. Recommendations

Increase awareness: Governments, NGOs, and other relevant organizations should increase awareness campaigns to educate parents and caregivers about the negative effects of violence against children. This should be done through various channels, including media campaigns, community outreach, and education programs in schools.

Provide support and resources: Parents and caregivers should be provided with the necessary support and resources to help them manage their stress and cope with difficult situations in a non-violent manner. This can include counselling services, parenting classes, and financial assistance.

Strengthen legal frameworks: Governments should strengthen their legal frameworks to protect children from violence and abuse. This should include stricter laws and penalties for perpetrators of violence against children, as well as improved child protection systems.

Promote gender equality: Efforts should be made to promote gender equality and empower women, as this can help reduce the prevalence of violence against children. This can be done through education programs, policy reforms, and initiatives to address gender-based discrimination.

Encourage research: Further research is needed to better understand the underlying factors that contribute to parental violence and develop effective interventions and strategies to prevent it. This research should include both qualitative and quantitative studies and should focus on diverse populations and contexts.

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