A SURVEY ON THE OCCURRENCE AND EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON CHILDREN IN THE HOME

BY

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PROOF READING CERTIFICATION

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SUMMARY

The aim of the current study was to determine the occurrence and effects of corporal punishment in the South African environment. Special attention was paid to themes that were derived from the literature. These themes were immediate compliance, aggression and the parental influence of corporal punishment.

This was a quantitative study which utilised a survey developed by the researcher using previous literature on the topic of corporal punishment. The sample was taken from four different schools in the Johannesburg area. The sample consisted of one hundred and twenty one children within middle childhood (N=121).

It was found that corporal punishment is occurring in South African homes. It was also found that children do not feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment. When it came to the use of corporal punishment and socio-economic status, it was found that there is a significant correlation between the two.

KEY TERMS

Corporal punishment in the home
Middle childhood
Indifferent
Immediate compliance
Parental Influence
Aggression

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Corporal punishment has been a topic of great debate recently. The clause on corporal punishment within the Child Amendment Bill has caused some controversy and debate on whether or not parents should be allowed to use corporal punishment on their child (Carter, 2007: 1).

In Uganda, Naker (2006) talked to parents and children about corporal punishment and found that the general consensus around the use of corporal punishment in the home to discipline a child was that it did not result in any real learning by the child. In fact it was believed that it merely taught the child to fear their parents and the act itself (Naker, 2006: 1-2). Roper (2006: 3) agrees with this when he states that discipline should be there to teach a child and not to gain some sort of power over the child. It is said that if corporal punishment is not applied as a consequence of bad behaviour and rather as a means of condemnation or control, it could affect a child's self-esteem negatively (Furnham, 2005: 144).

In contrast to Naker (2006) and Roper (2006), Turner and Muller (2004: 763) and Furnham (2005: 144) found that when corporal punishment was administered by a loving and supportive parent who was actively involved in the child's life, the negative effect stated by other studies were not present.

Corporal punishment is frequently used in South African homes (Wylie, 2006: 11). Mezmur (2006: 8) found that corporal punishment has become a part of African culture and the saying 'spare the rod, spoil the child' is on the lips of many African parents. Yet it is not only a part of African culture, but also a part of American culture, where 94% of parents state that they have used some form of corporal punishment on their child (Aucoin, Frick & Bodin, 2006: 527).

The debates have been on both sides of the fence where the public, activist groups as well as Members of Parliament bring up the possible effects on a child's self-concept or self-esteem (these two terms being used interchangeably within the proposed study). Some argue that corporal punishment in the home is not to blame for a low self-concept but that verbal abuse is to blame. Others state the opposite (Carter, 2007: 1; Lockhart, 2007: 1).

It is due to the current debate around corporal punishment in the home as well as its praise and criticism, that the researcher believes that a survey concerning the effects and occurrence of corporal punishment within a South African setting is both needed and relevant at this time.

1.2 Problem and rationale

1.2.1 Problem statement

Naker (2006) states that corporal punishment in the home can be used as a manner of asserting power over children in order to gain a certain degree of control over them. In this way, Naker (2006) claims that corporal punishment is in fact a humiliating act that can, in fact, have an impact on the child's sense of self. This was confirmed at the 'second international policy conference of the African child' where corporal punishment was placed under fierce criticism. It was stated that corporal punishment scars a child's childhood and was also referred to as a humiliating form of discipline (Bower & Mezmur, 2006: 8). Children tended to confirm this opinion when they stated that being punished corporally made them feel enraged and did not make them feel loved or cared for (Naker, 2006: 2). It can also be seen as damaging to the child's sense of mastery as the child may begin to feel that he cannot do anything correctly. A sense of mastery is vital to a child's self-concept especially during middle childhood (Turner, 2005: 258), which is the age group under scrutiny within this study.

Ahlert's (2005) article adds to the above-mentioned argument when it states that child rearing experts feel that the use of corporal punishment in the home can be damaging to a child's self-concept (self-esteem). Ahlert, however, disagrees with the experts and states that hitting a child on the buttocks or on the hand is not the same as beating a

child with a foreign object. He feels that a distinction between abuse and corporal punishment has not been established (Ahlert, 2005: 1) and the researcher tends to agree with the author on this point. Ahlert (2005) follows Bell's (1998) reasoning by stating that studies that find that spanking a child as a form of discipline is harmful to the child have a huge flaw in their reasoning, as they do not distinguish between abuse and corporal punishment, which is not intended to be abusive (Bell, 1998: 2). Some claim, however, that the act of corporal punishment, which is intent on causing pain to the child, is abusive (Bitensky, 2006: 1).

Jaffee, Caspi, Moffitt, Polo-Thomas, Price, & Taylor, (2004) showed that children who have been corporally punished show signs of child-type antisocial personality disorder (conduct disorder). It was also stated in their article that other research has proposed that a child's antisocial behaviour may be the cause of the parent's use of corporal punishment, putting the link between the use of corporal punishment and antisocial personality disorder into question. Yet it was also said that the use of corporal punishment may worsen the antisocial behaviour in children, further emphasising the point that negative disciplining techniques, in this case corporal punishment, may in fact increase negative behaviour in children, causing a vicious circle to develop (Jaffee *et al*, 2004: 1047-1049). On the other hand, Turner and Muller (2004: 765) state that this is more likely when administered impulsively by a parent, while Paris, Smith, Whatley and Leung (2000: 756) state that an impulsive child may be the cause of the corporal punishment being administered in the first place. A study by Taylor, Lemer, Sage, Lehman and Seeman (2004) follows similarly from this as they argued that a harsh early family environment is related to mental and physical health in adulthood. It is said that the early family environment affects the child's development of emotional, social and biological mechanisms that underlie one's ability to regulate stress. It was suggested that maltreatment causes problems in this area but surprisingly so does modest dysfunctions and negativity (Taylor *et al*, 2004: 1365). A startling statistic was also announced within this study which stated that in the past thirty years child depression, anxiety and suicide rates have steadily increased and that this was linked to the family environment and corporal punishment in the home (Taylor *et al*, 2004: 1389). This statistic illustrates a possible link between corporal punishment and the child's sense of self, due to the increase in

depression, anxiety and suicide among children, illustrating possible negative effects on children.

Turner and Muller (2004) add to this by saying that the emotional state the parent is in when the corporal punishment is administered, such as being in a rage or extremely frustrated, also impacts on the effect the punishment will have on the child's self-concept and further emotional development and possible emotional problems (Turner & Muller, 2004: 777). This result may also occur if the child is unaware of why he is being punished. The parent should take the time before or after the corporal punishment to explain why the child is being punished and why his behaviour was unacceptable (Furnham, 2005: 144).

In an article by Paolucci and Violato (2004) it was stated that some psychologists as well as some paediatricians believe that if corporal punishment in the home is used effectively it can, in fact, result in positive outcomes. They state that corporal punishment should be administered by an emotionally supportive parent who also interacts positively with the child. It is believed that this will result in positive outcomes rather than the negative outcomes stated by the anti-corporal punishment articles (Paolucci & Violato, 2004: 198). Furnham (2005: 144) tends to agree with this line of reasoning. Paolucci and Violato (2004) also mentioned that for corporal punishment to be truly effective in the long run, it would need to be administered only when the child knows and understands why he is being punished and as close to the event as possible in order for a connection to be made between the negative act and the consequence (corporal punishment) (Paolucci & Violato, 2004: 199). In another article it was stated that uninvolved and unsupportive parents who punish their child corporally run the risk of teaching their child that violence is an acceptable means of getting what one desires. It was stated that these children tend to be abusive spouses (Turner & Muller, 2004: 763). It was also said in the article by Turner and Muller (2004: 763) that children who are corporally punished by unsupportive and uninvolved parents also tend to have higher rates of anxiety and depression, these emotions or conditions being related to a change in self-concept (Turner & Muller, 2004: 767). This statement links to the one made previously by Taylor *et al* (2004, 1389).

Turner and Muller (2004) also suggest that corporal punishment may impact on the healthy development of one's self-concept. They even went as far as saying that corporal punishment may in fact damage a child's self-concept and this, in turn, would result in negative emotional outcomes when they become adults (Turner & Muller, 2004: 767). Aucoin *et al* (2006) found similar results in their study where they made a connection between corporal punishment and problems with behavioural and emotional adjustment. Their results were dependant on the degree of corporal punishment (high or low levels), high levels indicating a strong connection between corporal punishment and adjustment problems (Aucoin *et al*, 2006: 527). Children who have been corporally punished also tended to describe themselves as performing below average in certain tasks, while their grades and performance were, in fact, average or above (Turner & Muller, 2004: 767). A surprising result within the study conducted by Turner and Muller (2004) stated that it was not necessarily corporal punishment that caused low levels of self-concept and hence later depression, but rather the frequency of the other forms of discipline that were utilised. This result once again blurs the connection between corporal punishment and low self-concept (Turner & Muller, 2004: 777). Stormshak *et al* (2000 in Aucoin *et al,* 2006: 529), on the other hand, found a strong connection between corporal punishment and negative effects on self-concept. The results found by Aucoin *et al* (2006) were nearly opposite to the results found by Stormshak *et al* (2000). Aucoin *et al* (2006: 537) found low self-concept (self-esteem) results when corporal punishment levels were, in fact, low.

This dilemma brings one to the problem addressed in this study. The aim of the research was to determine the effects of corporal punishment according to South African children and to determine the frequency of its use within South African homes. This will help one get a sense of the occurrence of corporal punishment within South African homes as well as the perceptions of South African children with regards to corporal punishment. This will then add information to the current debate around corporal punishment and will help determine if corporal punishment is being utilised in South African homes as much as has been assumed.

1.3 Goals and objectives

1.3.1 <u>Goal</u>

The goal of a particular study can be defined as the purpose of the study or what one wants to achieve by doing a particular study (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 104). It is the statement of what the researcher aims to get out of conducting an intended study. It is a specific statement of the researcher's intensions (Barret, 2002: 24).

The goal of this research was to determine the effects, if any, of corporal punishment on children in middle childhood as well as to determine the frequency with which it is administered to children in South African homes.

1.3.2 <u>Objectives</u>

The objective(s) of a study are the steps that will enable the researcher to reach a particular goal (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 104; Barrett, 2002: 24). The objective(s) of a study is the best way one can go about reaching the goal of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2004: 72).

The completed objectives of this research:
- A literature review on certain concepts relevant to the research topic was compiled in order to define a place for this study within the academic world.
- A survey was administered to children in the middle childhood years from four different schools in the Johannesburg area.
- The data obtained was analysed and interpreted to determine the effects and occurrence of corporal punishment in South African homes.
- Recommendations and conclusions for future research were also mentioned.

1.3.3 <u>Hypothesis for the study</u>

A hypothesis is a form of testing wherein the researcher tests what he expects to find by doing the particular research. This assumption is often based on what has been

shown by other empirical data (Kerlinger in De Vos, 2005: 36). In other words, a hypothesis is a formal statement of a prediction made by the researcher (Davis & Rose, 2003: 44).

The hypotheses for this particular study, were:

Ho: There is no significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

H1: There is a significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng.

Ho: Children do not feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

H2: Children feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

Ho: There is no significant correlation between the use of corporal punishment and socio-economic status.

H3: There is a significant correlation between the use of corporal punishment and socio-economic status.

1.4 Research approach

1.4.1 <u>Approach</u>

Quantitative approach can be defined as a formalized and controlled approach that is more strictly defined and resembles research conducted within the physical sciences (Fouché & Delport, 2005: 73). A quantitative method often includes numbers and is used in order to determine frequencies and patterns (Breakwell & Rose, 2003: 19).

The goal of this research was to look at the occurrences and effects of corporal punishment on children in middle childhood, as well as the frequency of occurrence. A quantitative method (a survey) was used in order to determine the common effects stated by children as well as to determine the overall occurrence of corporal punishment in South African homes.

1.4.2 <u>Type of research</u>

Research can be divided into basic and applied research. Basic research is research that attempts to answer questions that could add or impact on current theory, thinking and knowledge (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 105). Applied research attempts to solve specific problems or attempts to solve a specific task. It is aimed at solving practical problems (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 105). The main difference between applied and basic (pure) research is that basic research aims to obtain theoretical results, while applied research aims to obtain practical results (Fouché & De Vos, 2005: 105).

This research was a form of basic or pure research as it was attempting to answer a question that may have an impact on the way in which one sees and thinks about corporal punishment.

1.4.3 <u>Research design</u>

A research design can be defined as the way in which a particular study is to be conducted (Strydom, 2005: 252). It is the planning of a scientific enquiry in which a plan is decided upon as being the best possible manner in which to find out something on a particular topic (Babbie & Mouton, 2004: 72).

The research design for this study was to conduct a survey with the children from four different primary schools that are currently in middle childhood (grade five) to determine if they are being corporally punished at home and to show how the children felt about corporal punishment in the home.

1.4.3.1 <u>Survey</u>

Surveys can be used for explanatory, descriptive and exploratory purposes. It is an ideal method to collect original data from a large amount of people (Babbie & Mouton, 2004: 232). A survey is a term used to describe a set of questions that are presented to a respondent related to a research study (Delport, 2005: 166). It can make use of closed-ended questions or open-ended questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2004: 233).

The survey in this study was to utilise close-ended questions, in the form of multiple choice questions, in order to be more time-efficient and easier for the children to complete.

1.5 Research and work procedures

1.5.1 <u>Sampling</u>

1.5.1.1 <u>Universe</u>

A universe can be defined as all the people who could be included in the sample. It is a group that has certain qualities that are of interest to the researcher (Strydom, 2005: 193). A universe is all the people within a population that have certain characteristics the researcher wants to observe (Babbie & Mouton, 2004: 164). The universe in this research consisted of all children aged between ten and eleven within South Africa.

1.5.1.2 <u>Population</u>

The population is smaller than the universe as it is a group of individuals with specific characteristics or attributes that are of interest to the researcher and the research he or she is conducting. A study of a population is considered to be a study of a whole or complete entry (Strydom, 2005: 193). The researcher goes further in his selection of the population narrowing the universe to more exact elements that he or she wants to observe within a certain selection of people (Babbie & Mouton, 2004: 164). The population within this research consisted of children aged between ten and eleven, located in Johannesburg, Gauteng.

1.5.1.3 <u>Sample</u>

A sample is taken from the population in order to make a generalization of the population as a whole. A sample thus helps us to make a generalization concerning the population as a whole (Strydom, 2005: 194). A sample is a representation of the population (Babbie & Mouton, 2004: 164).

A sample is a group of people taken out of a population or universe that is said to be representative of that population or universe. It is said that whatever is observed in this group of people or sample, would be viewed within a similar sample from the same population (Strydom, 2005: 193). A sample should be representative of the characteristics in a population. This means that the sample that has been selected should have the same characteristics of the population and these characteristics should be relevant to the research topic at hand (Strydom, 2005: 195). The sample of this research consisted of children aged between ten and eleven, attending four different primary schools in the Johannesburg area.

1.5.1.4 <u>Sample size</u>

Sample size should be large enough to ensure that the sample is truly representative of the population from which the sample has been selected. It should not be too small so that statistical findings are seen to be insignificant but should not be too large so that all findings or anomalies are significant. One can see that sample size is, therefore, a delicate procedure and should be handled with care (Strydom, 2005: 195).

There are elements that affect the sample size of a study:
- The heterogeneity of the population;
- The desired degree of accuracy;
- The type of sample;
- Availability of resources and
- The number of variables being considered (Strydom, 2005: 195).

The researcher conducted a survey of all fifth grade pupils at four different primary schools, which consisted of approximately two hundred and fifty scholars.

1.5.1.5 <u>Sampling technique</u>

Non-probability sampling is used when randomization is not present and one cannot determine or calculate the probability of an individual being included in the sample as

the researcher is unaware of the exact size of the population (Strydom, 2005: 201). Purposive sampling is a type of sampling that relies entirely on the judgment of the researcher on who will be included and what characteristics will be included in the study (Strydom, 2005: 202).

One can therefore state that the sampling technique within this study was non-probability, purposive sampling as the researcher was unaware of the exact size of the population within the study and did not use randomization in the study.

The sampling criteria for this research were:

- Pupils aged between 10-11 years;
- In Grade 5;
- Male and female;
- English-speaking;
- No race specification and
- No socio-economic specifications.

1.5.2 <u>Procedure</u>

Four primary schools were contacted and the goal and objectives were explained to the relevant parties. The parents of the fifth grade class were sent letters (informed consent) explaining the goal and objectives of the study. They were also required to sign a consent form stating that their child was willing to participate and that they gave their permission for their child to participate in the study.

Once consent forms were returned to the researcher, the children who have consented to participate were given the survey to complete. These were handed out, completed and returned to the researcher upon completion.

The researcher then interpreted and analyzed the data obtained.

1.5.2.1 <u>Data analysis</u>

The researcher determined the percentages of the responses to each question in order to determine the frequency of corporal punishment and the overall consensus of the effects and responses to it. She also looked at the correlation between certain responses and questions.

Four schools were surveyed in order to gain a representative sample. The Private schools, Crawford Preparatory School in Fourways and St Andrews School for Girls, gave a limited response with both schools totalling only eleven responses. The Public schools, one being an upper class primary school, Hurlyvale Primary and the other from a disadvantaged community, Roseneath Primary, gave a greater response with Hurlyvale handing back sixty-six responses and Roseneath handing back forty-four responses.

1.5.3 <u>Consultation with experts</u>

To determine the viability of the study, two South African experts were consulted. The researcher consulted with **Ms. Goodness Zulu**, head of the clinical department at Childline's inner city branch in Gauteng as well as **Mrs. Faye Gough**, the play therapist at Childline's inner city branch in Gauteng, to ask their opinion of the effects corporal punishment has on a child.

Ms. Zulu stated that she had concerns about the connection between corporal punishment and a child's self-esteem. She stated that children will always be looking over their shoulder wondering if they are doing the correct thing throughout their life and hence they will not have a secure sense of autonomy. She also stated that the connection between the punishment and the negative incident is not always clear in a child's mind and hence argues if they are really learning from the use of corporal punishment or if they are learning that it is all right to do something wrong as long as one does not get caught. She also stated her concerns about the stressful life we all lead and that stress can be taken out on a child under the shadow of corporal punishment. Where does one draw the line between corporal punishment and abuse? This question seemed to come up several times in our discussion.

Mrs. Gough, on the other hand, was not completely against the use of corporal punishment, as she asked how one would teach a child that something is wrong when they are not able to understand reasoning. Another concern that she raised was the problem parents will face when moving from corporal punishment as a means of discipline to merely talking to their children. Will their children feel that they have more control than their parents and will their behaviour worsen without corporal punishment being used? This raised the issue of how one controls an out of control child without the use of corporal punishment?

Both Ms. Gough and Ms. Zulu felt that the distinction between corporal punishment and abuse was a huge concern for them and have seen cases of abuse where the parents state that the child was naughty and deserved to be hit, hiding the abuse under the name of corporal punishment. Their other concern with the use of corporal punishment was its connection with emotional abuse which further damages the child's sense of autonomy and self-esteem.

Both Mrs. Gough's and Ms. Zulu's concerns highlight issues around the way corporal punishment makes a child feel and whether or not corporal punishment is in fact an effective disciplining tool for children. Also, due to the current debate surrounding corporal punishment one can see the importance of determining how often it occurs in South African homes as well as a child's perspective on the use of corporal punishment as a disciplining tool.

1.6 Ethical aspects

Ethics is a moral issue that deals with what is right and what is wrong. It is commonly defined as a professional adhering to the standards of conduct put forward by the profession that he finds himself in (Babbie & Mouton, 2004: 520).

1.6.1 <u>Avoidance of harm</u>

A researcher has the ethical responsibility to protect the participants from any physical and/or emotional harm (Strydom, 2005: 58).

It is believed that no child was harmed by this study or in the participation in this study, as the administration of the survey was anonymous and should not have evoked any negative emotions in the participants. If a child and/or parent felt that they would like to talk about any issues and/or concerns related to the research, the researcher offered counselling or referred the participant for relevant counselling. This service was not utilised by any of the participants.

1.6.2 <u>Informed consent</u>

Obtaining informed consent from potential participants means one must inform the potential participants of the purpose of the study, the advantages and disadvantages of taking part in the study as well as of any dangers that may be involved in taking part in the study, before consent can be given (Strydom, 2005: 59).

The participants were given an informed consent form which was signed by them as well as by their parents and/or guardians and handed back to the researcher. The participants were also told that they did not have to participate in the study and have the choice to remove themselves from the study at any point.

1.6.3 <u>Confidentiality</u>

Confidentiality can be defined as that no other person will be able to link information to a particular person (Strydom, 2005: 61).

The participant's identity is protected by the researcher as she is the only one to know who participated in the study due to the informed consent forms handed back to her. The participants' names did not appear in the study and will be locked in a safe in the researcher's home where no one else will have access to it.

1.6.4 <u>Feedback</u>

Feedback can be defined as making the research available to the public (Strydom, 2005: 65). A copy of the completed study has been made available to the participants upon request.

1.7 Definitions and main concepts

The following section includes the definitions of the main concepts present in the research.

1.7.1 <u>Corporal punishment</u>

Corporal punishment is also defined as any kind of bodily punishment of which spanking is the most common form. It is also a form of punishment that does not cause any injury to the child and is usually administered on the buttocks (Paolucci & Violato, 2004: 198).

Jaffee *et al* (2004: 1048) defined corporal punishment as the use of physical force or means with the intention to cause the child pain but not injury. This action is undertaken for the purposes of correction as well as control of the child's bad or incorrect behaviour. Maltreatment was defined as an action that involves significant physical injury, and is mainly administered to children between the ages of 5 and 8 (Jaffee *et al*, 2004: 1048).

While reading an article by Eugene Anthony (2000: 1) who proudly stated that he was caned and he is glad that he was, the researcher came across a form of 'corporal punishment' that struck her as a form of abuse. Anthony (2000: 2) stated that he had his ears twisted and his hand hit with a wooden ruler. He even had his arms pinched by a teacher. This did not strike the researcher as a form of discipline but actually as a form of abuse, hence raising the age-old question of where one draws the line between abuse and corporal punishment.

In Arnold Ahlert's (2005: 1) article he stated vehemently that hitting a child on the buttocks or the hand does not mean beating a child with a foreign object. The researcher agrees with his line of reasoning in this regard, especially when he asks how one would reason with a child who is below the age of understanding 'reason' (Ahlert, 2005: 1).

For the purpose of this study, corporal punishment was defined as a means of correcting negative behaviour by spanking a child with an open hand on the buttocks, as the researcher believes that the use of a foreign object may cause more harm and can be seen as possibly abusive.

1.7.2 Indifferent

The term 'indifferent' means that a person does not care or is uninterested in something (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/indifferent). It can also be described as neutrality. A person who is indifferent is one who has no preference or firm opinion on a particular topic (Reber & Reber, 2001: 348).

For the purpose of this study 'indifferent' was defined as a state in which a child does not feel anything towards, in this case, being subjected to corporal punishment.

1.8 Report layout

1.8.1 Introduction

Chapter one has included a brief overview of the research and what has been included in the study.

1.8.2 Theoretical aspects

Chapter two focuses on the literature that has been reviewed to support the research study as well as theories to compare to the findings in a later chapter.

1.8.3 Methodology, results and discussion

Chapter three explains the process the researcher has embarked on in order to complete the study. Within this chapter the researcher has summarised the results obtained after the data has been collected. The results have then been discussed and related to the theoretical chapter (Chapter 2).

1.8.4 Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter four contains a brief summary of the study and recommendations are given regarding future research in this area.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter was an overview of the ideas and debates surrounding the topic of corporal punishment. The method that was utilised within this study has also been outlined briefly and the concept of corporal punishment has been explained. The next chapter will expand on the debates mentioned here as well as go into theories of middle childhood and the possible effects corporal punishment has on a child in middle childhood.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review is the beginning of any empirical endeavour. It is the review of existing and important literature on the topic of interest in preparation of entering into an empirical investigation of said topic. It is an essential part of any research (Barrett, 2002: 27; Mouton, 2002: 86). This chapter will capsulate the literature review of the current study.

Corporal punishment in the home has been an integral part of the way parents discipline their children (Gershoff, 2002: 539). It is a disciplining tool that is often utilised in South African homes (Wylie, 2006: 11). Professionals also appear to be divided on whether or not the benefits of using corporal punishment to discipline children outweigh the negative effects of its utilisation. Some argue that it is, in fact, an effective and desirable disciplining method, while others say that it is an ineffective technique which can be harmful to a child (Gershoff, 2002: 539).

Three themes emerged from the literature. These themes were immediate compliance, parental influence and aggression. These themes appeared to be main discussion points in many articles and will therefore be the main themes under discussion within this chapter.

Several developmental theories will be incorporated in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the middle childhood child and the role of corporal punishment. Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1961; 1967) were consulted in order to gain a greater understanding of the way a child learns from his environment. Corporal punishment is utilised in many instances to help a child learn right from wrong, therefore the above-mentioned theories were consulted to determine the efficiency of corporal punishment in this regard. Gestalt theory (Perls, Hefferline & Goodman, 1951) as well as the work of Erikson (1980; 1997) was also consulted to determine the social influence of corporal punishment on a child's development.

In this chapter one can expect a review of past literature and research on the topic of corporal punishment and its possible effects on children. The above-mentioned theories on a child's developmental process were also reviewed in order to gain a better understanding of the developmental levels of a child in middle childhood.

The themes of immediate compliance, parental influence and aggression will be discussed first, followed by a discussion of Erikson's Psychosocial Model (1997; 1980), Piaget's Cognitive Model (1961; 1967); Vygotsky's Social Learning Theory (1978) and Perls' Gestalt theory (1992).

2.2 Review of relevant literature

The before-mentioned themes are summarised below and were also utilised in the development of the survey for the current research.

2.2.1 <u>Immediate compliance</u>

Compliance can be defined as conforming to behaviour desired by another individual. The person who is complying with another's wishes may not necessarily believe why he needs to act or behave in a certain manner (Reber & Reber, 2001: 139). Etzioni's theory stated that compliance is achieved by one person using power over another person in order to gain what he desires of him or her. This power is often expressed in a physical manner, such as corporal punishment (Marshall, 1998: 105). The term 'immediate compliance' implies compliance without any delay, without thought and/or without assimilation (Reber & Reber, 2001: 343).

Corporal punishment in the home is often used to correct and enforce moral behaviour in the child. The moral reasoning behind this punishment is decided by the parents of the child depending on what the child's parents deem to be right or wrong (Benatar, 2001: 1). The question raised by Gershoff (2002: 541) was what kind of punishment could actually result in positive and adaptive behaviour in the child. He stated that in general, corporal punishment results in immediate compliance from the child and may not result in adaptive behaviour from the child (Gershoff, 2002: 541). If, as Benatar

(2001: 1) and Gershoff (2002: 541) suggest, corporal punishment merely results in immediate compliance, then the child will not have learned from the act of corporal punishment and no learning or socialisation would have taken place. Consequentialists also have a concern about the effectiveness of corporal punishment on adaptive behaviour, yet the retributivists claim that if it is deserved, then it is justified. It is said that the retributivists are mainly concerned, however, with the act of punishment rather than the learning from the act of punishment (Benatar, 2001: 4).

Benatar (2001: 13) and McCord (2005: 168) stated that if corporal punishment is used only when completely necessary and is utilised infrequently, the deterrent effect will be increased. He feels that if used frequently, it will become habitual and will not deter a child from moral wrongdoings. It is also emphasised that a child does need an explanation of why he is being punished. This helps the child make the connection between the wrongdoing and the punishment. It is also important that the punishment follows the wrongdoing as soon as possible (Benatar, 2001: 12-18). McCord (2005: 167) stated that corporal punishment gives a greater value to immoral behaviour as the child will soon want what is forbidden. He feels that it is teaching the child to not avoid moral wrongdoing but rather to avoid one's own pain (McCord, 2005: 169).

It is therefore viewed by the researcher that corporal punishment will not result in adaptive behaviour and will therefore result in immediate compliance. It is believed that it will not result in actual moral learning. Since a parent is considered to be the main administerer of corporal punishment to a child within the home, it is important to determine the effect that this has on a child as well as the effect that corporal punishment itself has on a child.

2.2.2 Parental influence and effects of corporal punishment

Parents have a major influence on a child's life. The way in which a parent disciplines their child can cause detrimental effects for their relationship with their child and the self-esteem of their child (Naker, 2006: 1).

It was found that corporal punishment could, in fact, cause a child to fear his parents and does not teach them right from wrong, which is the general aim of its utilisation.

It could even be seen as asserting power over a child in order to gain immediate compliance from the child (Naker, 2006: 1-2). Roper (2006: 3) continues with this line of reasoning by stating that asserting power will not result in the child learning what is good behaviour and what is bad behaviour. He states that it is often not applied as a consequence to negative behaviour and is in fact used as a method of control or manner in which to condemn the child, the result of which could be damage to the child's sense of self (Roper, 2006: 3).

Corporal punishment has been banned in South African schools since 1992. Due to this ban, the only place where corporal punishment of children does occur, is within the home. This could lead a child to believe that one can only get punished by a person who is meant to love you and someone you in turn love as well. This could lead the child to fear his parents as they are the only disciplinarians in his life (Benatar, 2001: 3).

Roper's (2006: 3) and Turner's (2005: 258) assumption that corporal punishment could, in fact, diminish a child's sense of self, may also expand to affecting the child's sense of competency and mastery of new skills. This may, in turn, affect his overall development. Turner (2005: 258) stated that the use of corporal punishment on a child may hamper his sense of mastery of new tasks as the child may feel that he cannot do anything correctly without assistance, which is also stated in Erikson's Fourth Stage of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1997: 109). It was also found that children within middle childhood who have been corporally punished describe themselves as being below average students, even though their grades show that they actually perform above average (Turner & Muller, 2004: 767). This statement further amplifies the belief that corporal punishment may in fact damage a child's sense of mastery.

It has been stated that the effects of corporal punishment depend on the emotional state of the parent (Gershoff, 2002: 541). Depression, anxiety and suicide amongst children have been linked to a negative family environment as well as to corporal punishment in the home. Surely, the combination of a stressed and extremely angry parent will impact on the family environment as well as the degree of the corporal punishment used (Rohner, Bourque & Elardi, 1996: 842; Taylor *et al*, 2004: 1389).

The claim that corporal punishment leads to depression, inhibition and a lower self-esteem in children and in their later lives has always focused on the extreme forms of corporal punishment, but when corporal punishment is used in its mildest form these effects do not seem to be present (Benatar, 2001: 5). Murray Strauss (in Benatar, 2001: 6) found a connection between mild corporal punishment and depression, but this study was based on a self-report measure and Benatar (2001: 7) saw this as a flaw in Strauss's research. Rohner *et al* (1996: 843) stated that research that claims that corporal punishment causes children to experience a low self-esteem and depression, amongst other negative effects, have methodological flaws in their conclusions.

Benatar (2001: 13) went on to say that if corporal punishment is used only when it is completely justified and is also used infrequently, the deterrent effect of corporal punishment for negative behaviour will be enhanced. He feels that if corporal punishment is used too frequently, it will become a habit for the child and this will lessen the deterrent effect (Benatar, 2001: 13; McCord, 2005: 168). McCord (2005: 167) countered this argument by stating that the use of corporal punishment to punish bad behaviour may, in fact, increase the value of the negative behaviour. He states this by saying that the child could end up seeing corporal punishment as a manner of a parent trying to stop a child from doing what he wants to do. McCord (2005: 167) views punishment as a manner of making a child want to do or have that which is forbidden.

One of the main arguments from those against the use of corporal punishment in the home is that it could lead to abuse. They say it is a degrading form of discipline and that, like Taylor *et al* (2004) finds, it is psychologically damaging and could, in fact, lead the child into a life of sexual defiance. Corporal punishment, according to the critics, can create a negative relationship between the parents and their child. It is even argued that the damages outweigh any positives as corporal punishment is seen to be somewhat ineffectual (Benatar, 2001: 4).

When it comes to crossing the line between abuse and corporal punishment, it has been shown that parents who are, in fact, abusive, ultimately use more corporal punishment than the parents who are not considered to be abusive. On the topic of

corporal punishment crossing over to abuse, there has been no justified correlation made here and past research has been inconclusive at this juncture (Benatar, 2001: 4).

It has also been said that a child's low self-esteem or low self-concept has rather been linked to verbal abuse in the home and not necessarily the corporal punishment itself, further implying that the state in which the parent is at the time of bad behaviour is important when looking at the child and the child's sense of self (Carter, 2007: 1; Lockhart, 2007: 1). This implies that corporal punishment might not necessarily be to blame when looking at the cause of a child's low self-esteem.

In an ideal world, the child's parents should have the child's best interests at heart and will not do anything if they believe that it will be harmful to the child. It is also said that the child's parents should be the people who know their children the best and love and want to care for their children. This love may, however, blind the parent to what the correct manner of disciplining his child may be, and may lead the parents to, in fact, feel guilty about disciplining their children at all (Benatar, 2001: 3). Following from this, it is stated that if corporal punishment is administered by an emotionally supportive parent who not only disciplines the child but who also positively interacts with the child, the negative consequences of the use of corporal punishment tends to vanish (Paolucci & Violato, 2004: 198).

All negative effects of the use of corporal punishment seem to be linked to the child's perceptions of the fairness of the punishment when compared to the wrongdoing or negative behaviour. This further illustrates the importance of the parent-child relation and the importance of healthy communication between both parties. Positive communication between parents seems to alleviate the negative consequences of corporal punishment on a child's self-esteem and perception of fairness of the punishment as well. This would also help learning to take place (Rohner *et al*, 1996: 843). It has been said that the perception of the justness and harshness of the punishment appeared to affect the child's psychological adjustment more that the actual punishment itself. Corporal punishment appeared to only have negative effects on the child's psychological adjustment and behaviour when the child saw the punishment as a form of caretaker rejection. It was found that if the main interactions that a child has with his caretaker are full of love and affection, the negative

ramifications became almost or completely non-existent. Alternatively, if this was not the case and the child did not have a loving and affectionate relationship with his caregiver, the negative ramifications tended to appear (Rohner *et al*, 1996: 850-851). Corporal punishment is most effective when it is not the only form of attention that a child receives. Children should be punished for wrongdoings but also rewarded for their good behaviour. Anxiety is also reduced when a child knows that in doing something wrong, they will be punished (Furnham, 2005: 138).

Inconsistency in a parent's discipline practices may be linked to delinquency in children, but this link was not made here, within this study, with corporal punishment. A parent should be consistent with his child when it comes to disciplining bad behaviour. When a parent has decided that something is wrong, they should make sure that they are consistent in that way of thinking and not punish their children every so often for the same indiscretion (Rohner *et al*, 1996: 843). This statement is supported by Furnham (2005: 137) who says that if corporal punishment is administered consistently (with every wrongdoing), the negative effects tend to diminish or are eradicated entirely.

Corporal punishment has been linked to low self-esteem within children, especially if the punishment is administered by a parent. As stated above, corporal punishment is used to inflict pain on a child and hence when administered by a child's parent can instil the notion that one can only be hurt by someone you love (Rohner *et al*, 1996: 850-851).

The third theme identified from the literature, which will be discussed accordingly, is aggression.

2.2.3 <u>Aggression</u>

Aggression is a general term that is used to describe a number of actions that involve a certain amount of anger, hostility and possible violence (Marshall, 1998: 11; Reber & Reber, 2001: 17).

A significant amount of research has been done trying to establish a link between the use of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children in the home and aggression in children as well as in later life. It is believed that by using corporal punishment as a disciplining tool, parents are socialising their children in believing that violence is a suitable means in which to solve problems (Gershoff, 2002: 541; Turner & Muller, 2004: 763). It tended to show children that their parents view violence and aggression as acceptable means of problem-solving (Aucoin *et al*, 2006: 528). Benatar's (2001: 9) work corresponds with this line of reasoning and adds that corporal punishment in the home may teach a child that if someone does something that he does not like or approve of, it is all right for him to deal with this in a violent manner. McCord (2005: 165) also states that corporal punishment teaches a child that inflicting pain on another person is morally correct.

It has been stated that harsh corporal punishment or corporal punishment in general can be linked to displays of aggression. A study conducted on college students who had been known to have a problem with aggression, found that they had been corporally punished when they were children (Rohner *et al*, 1996: 842).

McCord (2005: 165) states that children tend to see their parents as either good or not good. He states that if a child believes that his parents are good and have been punished by their parents, they will deduce that it is normal and okay to administer pain on someone else. They will view it as '*if good people can do bad things, then it is okay to do bad things*'. If the child perceives his parent to be not good, then the child may believe that he does not have to do what their parent says (McCord, 2005: 166). Parents who are using corporal punishment to stop aggression may, in fact, only be stopping it in the home but not outside of the home. This would make one conclude that the use of corporal punishment is not teaching the child that aggression is bad, but that is just not allowed in the home (McCord, 2005: 166).

Corporal punishment has also been linked to conduct disorder in children who have been subjected to corporal punishment. The problem with this particular link was that it could not be established whether or not it was the conduct disorder that caused the parent to utilise corporal punishment or whether the use of the corporal punishment was the cause of the conduct disorder (Jaffee *et al*, 2004: 1047-1049). Evidence has

shown that there is no correlation between corporal punishment and misbehaviour. This shows that corporal punishment does not deter the child away from bad behaviour but may in fact increase the likelihood of conduct disorder (McCord, 2005: 166). It has also been found that delinquent children tend to spend more time unsupervised when they are compared to their non-delinquent peers and have also received more corporal punishment than their non-delinquent peers (McCord, 2005: 167).

Aggression and corporal punishment are words that are often associated with each other. However, from the above discussion, the connection between the two words is not as strong as one would previously have thought.

The age group under investigation in the current study was that of middle childhood. In the next sections, middle childhood will be discussed using the developmental theories mentioned earlier in this chapter.

2.3 Middle childhood

Middle childhood falls between the ages of six and twelve years of age. This stage of a child's life has often been ignored in the past years. This is due to the idea that no real important development takes place in this stage of life. Piaget (1961) and Erikson (1997) began the task of showing the importance of this stage for a child's development. Piaget and Erikson state that it is within this developmental stage that a child starts learning the skills and ideals of their culture and that this is done mainly in the social environment in which the child finds himself (Newman & Newman, 1999: 264).

Within the next few sections the before-mentioned theories of child development within the middle childhood age group will be discussed in order to fully understand the age group of interest within this particular study. These theories will also be used to discuss certain issues related to corporal punishment in the following sections.

2.3.1 <u>Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development</u>

The researcher viewed the theory as vital as it covers and explores the manner in which a child within middle childhood thinks and interacts with the environment in which the child finds himself. Also, due to the issue of immediate compliance associated with corporal punishment and addressed by Benatar (2001) and McCord (2005), it is important to understand and take note of the way learning takes place in the middle childhood phase.

Piaget's (1961) model of cognitive development discusses four main factors that affect the manner in which a child's learning takes place. These are the emergence of new abilities through physical maturation, experience, social transmission and equilibration (Beckett, 2005: 74). It is a model based on structuralism (Rich, 2005: 177). Piaget viewed intellectual development as a process in which a child, as well as an adult, actively explores their world and constructs mental representations of the world in which they find themselves (Jarvis & Chandler, 2001: 129; Piaget, 1961: 111).

Certain terms, utilised in Piaget's theory (1961), are discussed below.

2.3.1.1 <u>Assimilation</u>

Assimilation, a concept also used in Gestalt theory (discussed later in this chapter), is seen slightly differently by Piaget. Piaget understood that to assimilate something from the environment is to take something old (like an older schema) and applying it to a new situation. A schema is a basic building block in acquiring knowledge that is gained from perception and actions from the environment (Beckett, 2005: 74). From this the researcher asks whether, if a child does not create a new schema from being disciplined, the child will not be able to apply anything to a new situation and will not be able to assimilate, as Piaget (1961) argued. Due to this a possible deduction can be to say that immediate compliance may be detrimental to a child's learning process.

2.3.1.2 Operations and Schemas

Piaget proposed that a mind is made up of two structures: operations and schemas. Operations are rules that govern society. These operations can alter with age but are dictated by society and develop as the child's brain matures. With this said, a young child will have no operations available to him or her and is thus considered to be preoperational. Due to this, a child who makes logical mistakes in his thinking, has limited operations at his disposal at that stage in his life (Jarvis & Chandler, 2001: 130-131). Morality is seen to be a set of rules that a child must learn from society (Rich, 2005: 177). If the articles mentioned within this chapter are correct in saying that immediate compliance does not result in a child learning right from wrong, the researcher believes that a child will not be developing operations or morality.

Mastery of social rules are usually developed by the age of eleven (Piaget, 1961: 111; Rich, 2005: 180), but this would depend on the acquisition of operations at previous stages of one's life. Piaget's (1961) stages of cognitive development will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.1.3 Piaget's stages of cognitive development

Piaget talks of four different levels of cognition that can be reached at different stages in one's life. He does give age ranges but states that a child may progress through these stages at a different pace to that of another child and that each stage must be completed before another one can be undertaken (Beckett, 2005: 74; Piaget in Figursk, 2001: 1895). The stages will be discussed briefly:

2.3.1.3.1 Stage One: Sensori-motor

Piaget's first stage is known as the stage of sensori-motor development, which occurs approximately between birth and eighteen months (Piaget in Figursk, 2001: 1895). Within this stage the child gains knowledge through movement and action. This begins with the child using his basic physical reflexes and eventually learns how to modify these reflexes to different situations (Beckett, 2005: 77). At this stage the

child learns how to coordinate his sensory input with his sensory output as well as beginning to show signs of symbolic thought (Weiten, 2001: 448).

2.3.1.3.2   Stage Two: Pre-operations

Piaget's second stage is known as the stage of pre-operations and occurs between eighteen months and seven years. At this stage the child's use of mental images improves and is used with more sophistication due to the acquisition of language. The development of symbolic thought is marked by irreversibility, centralisation and egocentrism (Beckett, 2005: 79; Piaget in Langer, 1998: 174; Weiten, 2001: 448). This acquisition of language helps the child to better understand explanations of wrongdoings when it comes to discipline.

Piaget often emphasised the importance that adults keep in mind that a child thinks differently to an adult and hence their use of punishment should illustrate this difference in thinking when it comes to corporal punishment and explanation (Beckett, 2005: 79; Piaget in Figursk, 2001: 1895).

2.3.1.3.3   Stage Three: Concrete operations

Stage three of Piaget's cognitive model is that of concrete operations which occurs between the ages of seven and twelve (Beckett, 2005: 81). This is the age group that the sample taken for this research falls in and is hence an important stage for the purpose of this research.

At this stage the child is able to grasp operations and is hence able to reverse situations but still struggles with abstract operations. The child's thinking also becomes less egocentric and he is also able to focus on more than one thing at a time. He is able to place things and situations in groups (therefore able to see the difference between a naughty action and a bad action). Centration is also a skill that is acquired at this stage of development (Beckett, 2005: 80; Weiten, 2001: 449). At this stage a child may possibly truly understand why he is punished.

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The child, according to Piaget, is now able to see things from more than one point of view and is able to compare different objects and situations, possibly seeing why his parents are angry. He does, however, struggle to think in a self-conscious manner about the way in which he is using rules (Beckett, 2005: 81; Piaget in Langer, 1998: 279).

2.3.1.3.4 Stage Four: Formal operations

The fourth and final stage of Piaget's model is known as the formal operations stage, which occurs from approximately the age of twelve years onwards. Within this stage the child begins to operate in a very similar manner to adults and changes are rather in degrees than being fundamental changes. Piaget believed that a child at the age of eleven years is less flexible and systematic in his thinking than a child of fourteen years of age. Therefore the children in the age group in the current research are less flexible and systematic and are unable to perform problem-solving tasks. Abstract rules are also a problem for the age group the current research focuses on. A child in this stage is able to perform problem-solving tasks and also uses many ways in which to solve a particular problem and is able to use abstract rules to help answer or solve problems (such as love, justice and free will). He is also able to make rules and is aware of his own thought processes. He is able to make connections to other problems (Beckett, 2005: 83; Weiten, 2001: 450).

Corporal punishment is believed to instil values within a child; right from wrong, good from bad (Benatar, 2001: 1). It is this reasoning that prompted the inclusion of the next section as it discusses the manner in which moral reasoning is formed in a child's mind.

2.3.2 <u>Piaget's model of moral reasoning</u>

Piaget also developed a model of moral reasoning and stated that there are two aspects of moral reasoning. He studied the development in children's respect for rules and justice (Shaffer, 1999: 533). Morality can be defined as a set of rules defined by society that a child must gain respect for (Piaget in Grecas, 2001: 2856; Rich, 2005:

177). This is important for a child in knowing right from wrong, which is one of the main aims of any form of discipline.

Mastery of social rules or morality is gained in degrees and by the age of eleven a child's social rules or morality become stabilised and they end up taking pleasure in discussing rules and their principles that the rules that they have internalised are based on (Rich, 2005: 178). Children often see rules as something that must be followed in order to avoid a certain punishment instead of assimilating them and making them a part of who they are (immediate compliance, a topic that will be discussed further later in this chapter) (Rich, 2005: 180).

2.3.2.1 Pre-moral stage of moral reasoning

Within the pre-moral phase the child is in his pre-school years where children tend to show little respect for rules and tend not to play their games in a systematic manner with the intent of winning. Games at this stage are there mainly to be enjoyed for the process and not necessarily for naming a winner (Shaffer, 1999: 533).

2.3.2.2 Moral realism stage of moral reasoning

The stage of moral realism occurs between the ages of five and ten. At this stage the child begins to develop a strong respect for rules and what they stand for. The rules that the children hold dear are the ones made by high authority figures such as their parents, God and maybe the police. There is no grey area at this stage between right and wrong and children look at the consequences of their behaviour rather than at the bad behaviour itself. They believe that all bad behaviour will inevitably be punished (Shaffer, 1999: 534). Instead of assimilating the rules of society and so forth, they continue to follow the rules blindly (immediate compliance).

2.3.2.3 Moral relativism

The next stage falls in the area being studied here, middle childhood, ages ten to eleven. Here they enter the stage of moral relativism or autonomous morality. Within this stage social rules are considered to be arbitrary agreements that can be challenged and even changed provided that it is agreed upon by the people who they govern. The

punishment for breaking the rules that govern society is there so that the perpetrator of the rules knows what he has done and will be less likely to repeat this negative behaviour (Rich, 2005: 178; Shaffer, 1999: 534). With the concept of immediate compliance being associated with corporal punishment, it appears unlikely that a child will learn from the act of corporal punishment. According to Rich (2005: 181), corporal punishment should only be used at the early stages of development and only extremely moderately at later stages of development, such as in middle childhood and adolescence, for this reason.

Another theorist, Vygotsky, followed the work of Piaget and expanded on his thoughts and added some further relevant information.

2.3.3 Vygotsky's model

Vygotsky agreed with Piaget that a child is his own means of collecting knowledge, yet he emphasised the importance of the culture and the social environment that the child finds himself in. He believed that an infant is equipped with basic perceptual, attention and memory capacities that develop during the first two years of the child's life while they have contact with the environment (Berk, 2006: 259; Vygotsky, 1978: 112).

While their language skills develop, so does their contact with the environment in which they find themselves and hence the manner in which they think also alters. This continued aim of gaining knowledge as their language skills develop, aids them in learning culturally significant tasks. After some time, Vygotsky believes that a child will begin to communicate with himself in a similar manner as he would with his environment. This results in the child's cognitive ability to become uniquely human and his cognitive processes to become heightened (Berk, 2006: 259; Vygotsky, 1978: 112). Due to Vygotsky's emphasis on societal influences, one can assume that the disciplining methods utilised by a child's parent will affect him quite significantly as a possible teaching tool about the way society operates as well as what is expected of them.

Vygotsky (1978) addressed several elements in his theory of how a child learns. These are discussed below:

2.3.3.1 The child's private speech

Vygotsky believed that a child's private speech, where a child speaks aloud to himself whilst completing tasks, is the manner in which a child begins to develop higher cognitive functioning. He stated that as a child gets older, this speech is internalised and becomes what is known as internalised speech, which is the manner in which we all complete daily tasks (Berk, 2006: 259).

2.3.3.2 Social origins of cognitive development

Vygotsky believed that a child learns within a space that he called the 'zone of proximal development' wherein a child does not have the skills to complete a task on his own and is aided by an adult or a more skilled peer. Within this zone an adult or peer will make sure that the task remains within the child's 'zone of proximal development' by aiding the child by prompts and questions, helping him to learn how to complete the tasks on his own (Berk, 2006: 260). Vygotsky (1978) defined this zone as the distance between the child's actual developmental level and the child's potential developmental level, which would be determined and achieved through problem-solving tasks undertaken through adult and peer guidance (Vygotsky, 1978: 113). If a child is disciplined for not moving at a similar pace as his peers, this could also have negative consequences for the child's cognitive development as he may fear asking his parents for help with certain tasks for the fear of being smacked.

In order to aid a child in the completion of a task the pair must end up in a state of inter-subjectivity, wherein they start a project with two ideas and end up having a shared idea. This aids the communication and completion of the task at hand (Berk, 2006: 260).

Scaffolding is another important aspect in the completion of tasks as it is the process whereby the adult adjusts his support of the child depending on his 'zone of proximal development' (Berk, 2006: 260).

This leads to another point of the appropriateness of the disciplining technique and the action that needs to be corrected.

2.3.3.3 Make-believe play

Make-believe play is the area in which a child challenges himself by trying out and using private speech to talk himself through difficult or challenging tasks. This is an important process as this is the time wherein a child listens to himself (his internal feedback) and does not only learn from the external world but also from his internal world, making the understanding of what corporal punishment means to the child of vital importance. If he does not understand why he was spanked, then how will he make sense of it in his internal understanding? This form of play also enables the child to think before he acts. As he creates certain scenarios he attempts to handle them using a series of trial-and-error solutions helping him to determine which the best possible solution is. This form of play is also rich with private speech and also falls into the child's 'zone of proximal development' (Berk, 2006: 261; Vygotsky, 1978: 113).

Although the cognitive development of the child is important when looking at the topic of corporal punishment, the researcher believed it to be necessary to include the social development of a child and the way his environment affects the manner in which he learns and grows as an individual. The researcher believes that Erikson's psychosocial model and Gestalt theory shed some light on the way a child interacts and is influenced by his environment.

2.3.4 Erikson's psychosocial model

Erikson's theory of psychosocial development addresses issues of social development (Erikson, 1980). Considering that a parent or caregiver is an important social

influence on a child's social development, the researcher felt that Erikson's model is an important model to consider due to the nature of this research.

Erikson's model is a progressive model wherein each psychosocial stage is the foundation for the next psychosocial developmental stage. He stated that each individual is made up of an ego, biological variables as well as the influences from society. It is stated that each psychosocial stage addresses each of these elements in a holistic manner determined by the age and level of development of the individual (Hook, 2002: 266-267). In each stage a developmental task, which is normative for the child at that stage in his life, or a crisis, provides an opportunity for the child to proceed fully in life or alternatively a danger point for psychological problems and anxiety that may, in fact, influence the subsequent development of the individual (Westen, 1999: 662).

Erikson indicates eight stages in his theory of the development of a person as a social being (Westen, 1999: 662). This research focused on the fourth stage, being middle childhood. As Erikson's model is an epigenetic approach, one needs to look at the stages preceding the fourth stage.

2.3.4.1 Stage One: Trust versus mistrust

The child at this stage enters the world basically helpless. He is dependent on his primary caregiver. He must learn to trust this person as this person is the key to his survival. This is a loaded trust as this trust that he develops with the primary caregiver sets the tone for the child's sense of the world either being a good and safe place or a bad and uncertain place (Hook, 2002: 268). Without basic trust the child cannot survive, as this basic trust is a confirmation of hope and security within his environment (Erikson, 1997: 106).

The child's main needs at this stage are physiological; hence his trust is formed on the basis of the primary caregiver meeting his physiological needs such as hunger, thirst and so forth, creating a sense of safety and security (Hook, 2002: 268).

The child develops this trust through the primary caregiver meeting his needs and hence is able to be away from the caregiver and 'know' that he will return. The child then gains a sense of inner certainty. This sense of inner certainty and goodness is created by a routine. If the child knows what to expect, he will feel more secure within his environment (Hook, 2002: 268-269). One can say that if a child knows what punishment he will receive when he does something wrong, he will feel more secure in his environment.

This stage is the most foundational of all the stages and hence it is important for the child to establish a sense of trust over mistrust at this stage (Hook, 2002: 270). Therefore one could argue that if the use of corporal punishment is harmful at this stage, a state of mistrust could develop. If a state of mistrust is the result of this stage the child may, in later life, suffer from depression, may suffer masochistic behaviour as well as schizoid behaviour (Hook, 2002: 270). Therefore consistency is vitally important at this stage of development.

The above possible future outcomes of this stage show the importance of the family within the child's life at this stage. Without a secure environment the child may find himself in a state of mistrust as well as lacking relationship security or attachment security, also mentioned by Naker (2006: 1-2), Roper (2006: 3), Benatar (2001: 3), Hook (2002: 271) and Westen (1999: 662).

2.3.4.2 Stage Two: Autonomy versus shame and doubt

With the foundation of a sense of trust the toddler finds that he is able to make decisions about his behaviour and hence, once explored, a sense of autonomy is developed. However, the child is still very reliant on the primary caregiver and hence can feel a certain amount of doubt about his abilities. Yet this does not stop the toddler from exploring his body and the ways in which he can and cannot control it. At this stage the child also experiences a sense of pride in any accomplishments that he does achieve (Hook, 2002: 271; Westen, 1999: 662). The child becomes wilful and begins to grasp at objects that find themselves within his interest (Erikson, 1997: 107).

Autonomy stems from the caregiver's acknowledgment of the child's accomplishments as well as their reactions to and understanding of the child's failures. This will give the child the strength to explore the world on his own. This well-balanced relationship with the parents aids the child in gaining the freedom to gain a sense of autonomy. The child begins to see and feel his own power and sense of will and with a sense of autonomy the child will also gain a sense of independence and joy in his new-found skills. He is also able to learn about authority and learns how to control his impulses (Hook, 2002: 272; Westen, 1999: 662). According to child-rearing experts one should not use corporal punishment as a form of discipline as one feels that this may damage the child's self-esteem. It is suggested that one should befriend a child and reason with them instead of reverting to corporal punishment (Ahlert, 2005: 1). This also confirms the importance of a parent's role in a child's life as stated by Benatar (2001: 3), Naker (2006: 1-2) and Roper (2006: 3).

2.3.4.3 Stage Three: Initiative versus guilt

This stage usually occurs between the ages of three and six (Westen, 1999: 663). With the child's sense of autonomy the child is now able to explore his environment further as he now has a greater amount of energy. He is able to forget about his failures and move on quickly to the tasks the environment is currently challenging him with (Hook, 2002: 273). At this stage the child develops a sense of playfulness which enables him to follow through with his ideas and goals (Westen, 1999: 663). Initiative is described by Erikson (1997: 108) as an act of moving in a new direction.

Within this stage the child has a sense of purpose and hence takes more responsibility for his actions. In his play he is also testing new ideas and learns from it. He is taking the initiative to gain further knowledge in the environment in which he now finds himself (Hook, 2002: 273; Westen, 1999: 663). The child may develop a tyrannical conscience that begins to make them rigid and constricted in their behaviours as well as in dealing with their impulses (Westen, 1999: 664).

Due to the child's new sense of testing his environment and his ability to understand the meaning of consequences, the researcher asks if corporal punishment could be

acceptable and not damaging at this stage of the child's development depending on the action that is being disciplined (Erikson, 1997: 108).

2.3.4.4 Stage Four: Industry versus inferiority

This is when the child enters the school environment between seven and eleven years of age (middle childhood) and must develop and spread his skills within a larger social field. The skills the child is aiming for in this stage are that of competence and proficiency as well as the mastery of new key skills. The child's peer group becomes another source of affirmation and therefore it is a very competitive time for the child (Erikson, 1997: 109; Hook, 2002: 277-278; Westen, 1999: 664).

As the child is now competing with a larger social group, his evaluation of himself is critical as a negative self-image can cause severe developmental setbacks. This is also the stage where the child begins to form a sense of who he is in the environment in which he finds himself (Hook, 2002: 279). The researcher could argue here that if the use of corporal punishment is indeed damaging to the child's self-esteem, it could be equally damaging at this point in the child's development.

Gestalt theory is the last theory to be discussed. Gestalt theory is a field theory that also emphasises the importance of one's social environment on a child or person's development and well-being (Latner, 2000: 13). It is for this reason that it has been included in this chapter of the current study.

2.3.5 <u>Gestalt theory</u>

Gestalt theory is a holistic theory that deems that all aspects of one's life have an influence on you. All aspects need to be considered if one truly wants to know oneself. It is hence considered to be a form of field theory. Gestalt theory also has its focus in the here and now, meaning that whatever is affecting someone in the present needs to be addressed and if past trauma has no affect on the individual in the here and now, time should not be wasted on it. This leads to another central point of Gestalt therapy and that is the concept of awareness. One needs to become aware of

oneself in the here and now in order to fully grow into the person that one will become (Latner, 2000: 13).

There are many facets involved in Gestalt theory. These facets will be discussed below:

2.3.5.1 Foundational aspects of Gestalt theory

Gestalt theory also has its focus in the here and now, meaning that whatever is affecting someone in the present needs to be addressed and if past trauma has no effect on the individual in the here and now, time should not be wasted on it. This leads to another central point of Gestalt therapy, namely the concept of awareness. One needs to become aware of oneself in the here and now in order to grow fully into the person one will become (Latner, 2000: 13). This, according to Gestalt theory and in the opinion of the researcher, is why children need to be punished as close to the wrongdoing as possible, this making sure that the event is still on the child's foreground.

Gestalt theory states that each person views everything in his life in his own unique manner, through his own eyes. This is called the person's phenomenological field (Latner, 2000: 18). Therefore one should determine what a child thinks of corporal punishment and whether they feel that they have done something wrong. This will determine whether or not it is possible for a child to assimilate right from wrong by using this form of discipline.

Another aspect that stems from the concept of the phenomenological field is that of Gestalt formation. A person will create a focus within their environment; something that stands out from the background of other occurrences. This object, for example, will need to go through a process in order to complete the Gestalt and to move on to the next and newly formed Gestalt. This is what Zinker, in a classical but important text (1978), called the contact cycle wherein people satisfy their needs (Zinker, 1978: 90).

A problem can arise within the contact cycle when a Gestalt is not permitted to be resolved. This can lead to a person experiencing unfinished business as he will have an uneasy feeling surrounding that particular Gestalt and a desire to complete it (Zinker, 1978: 94). Immediate compliance may interrupt the contact cycle of the child, causing unfinished business. The researcher hypothesises that the use of corporal punishment here is the beginning of the contact cycle, the identified Gestalt being that one is going to be punished. If the child has no explanation of why he is being punished, the cycle cannot be completed, causing the child to experience unfinished business.

This incomplete Gestalt may also affect which layer of the personality the child finds himself in.

2.3.5.2 Personality according to Gestalt theory

Fritz Perls (1992: 75-92) believed that there are five layers to one's personality. These are the false layer, the phobic layer, the impasse layer, the implosive layer and the explosive layer (Blom, 2006: 42).

2.3.5.2.1 False layer

Within the false layer or the cliché layer as Perls (1992: 75) calls it, the child is in a state of trying to be what he is not. They mould their behaviour on what the environment expects, or on roles created by them. They act in a manner in which they feel is expected of them. They are introjecting what they get from the environment without making this feedback part of themselves (Blom, 2006: 42; Perls, 1992: 75).

The researcher hypothesises that this introjection can be seen as immediate compliance as the child is not assimilating the information he is receiving from the environment. Immediate compliance can be seen as a reason of the child finding himself in the false layer of personality because he is merely complying to what he believes his parents want and not assimilating the new information he has received from the environment.

2.3.5.2.2 Phobic layer

The phobic layer (Perls, 1992: 75) is characterised by the child becoming aware of him, but feeling anxious that the roles that he took on in the previous layer are not true to who he in fact is. Is he acting in fear of being corporally punished, as McCord (2005: 169) suggested? Although the child enters into a state of awareness of this, he may be inclined to continue to play the role that he has adopted regardless of his conflicting feelings (Blom, 2006: 43; Perls, 1992: 75; Philippson, 2002: 1).

2.3.5.2.3 Impasse layer

The impasse layer finds the child in a state of relying heavily on environmental support as he does not feel capable of supporting himself in the world. He looks to the environment for answers as he does not want to take responsibility for completing his unfinished business. He constantly relies on the environment to tell him what he can and cannot do in order to prevent taking responsibility for his actions (Blom, 2006: 44; Perls, 1992: 76; Philippson, 2002: 1).

This feedback could be administered to the child in the form of corporal punishment, making the child fear his own choices and desires especially if no explanation has been given around why that particular choice he has made is the wrong one (as suggested by Benatar, 2001: 12-18).

2.3.5.2.4 Implosive layer

During the implosive layer the child has a lack of energy to take the initiative to alter his behaviour and step out into the world as a self-supporting individual. He may experiment with new behaviours, but he will not be ready to take responsibility for these behaviours (Blom, 2006: 45; Perls, 1992: 76; Philippson, 2002: 1).

2.3.5.2.5 Explosive layer

The final layer is the explosive layer wherein the child begins to alter the behaviours from the false layer effectively because he now has the energy to do so and the awareness of what he wants. Hence, in this layer the child is beginning to complete his unfinished business and accept his emotions as his own (Blom, 2006: 45; Perls, 1992: 76; Philippson, 2002: 2). He has successfully assimilated information from his environment and may even have learned right from wrong.

2.3.5.3 Assimilation

From a Gestalt perspective, if corporal punishment does not result in adaptive behaviour (Benatar, 2001: 1; Gershoff, 2002: 541), the child would not have assimilated the lesson or reason for the use of the corporal punishment and would not be able to repeat the correct behaviour without the use of corporal punishment on behalf of the parent. Assimilation is defined as the process of taking information from the environment and making it a part of oneself; adding to one's knowledge so that the information can be called upon and applied to a given situation at any time (Blom, 2006: 32). Assimilation is the process of breaking down what is received from the environment and taking only what is needed or what is important to the person and making this part of themselves (Perls *et al*, 1951: 190). The use of corporal punishment in disciplining children calls into question whether or not assimilation is a possible outcome of such a disciplining technique.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some previous research concerning the use of corporal punishment in the home, focusing on three themes, namely immediate compliance, parental influence and aggression. It has also outlined certain important theories concerning the way a child learns from himself and from the environment.

In Chapter Three the researcher will be addressing the methods and research design which were utilised in this research as well as describe the results obtained in the research. Chapter Three will also include a discussion of the results when compared to the information found in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology, Analysis and Discussion

3.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the methodology utilised within the study. This includes the research approach as well as the research procedures that were followed. The analyses of the data obtained as well as the discussion of the results follows. Another section will focus on unexpected results.

3.2 Research methodology

Within this section the hypotheses of the current research as well as the research approach and procedures will be discussed. The sample and the sampling procedures utilised in this study will also be mentioned and elaborated on in the next few sections.

3.2.1 <u>Hypotheses</u>

It is necessary for the researcher to confirm the hypotheses before the empirical results are presented. The following hypotheses guided this study:

Ho: There is no significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

H1:   There is a significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

Ho: Children do not feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

H2:   Children feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

Ho: There is no significant correlation between the use of corporal punishment and socio-economic status.

H3:   There is a significant correlation between the use of corporal punishment and socio-economic status.

The above hypotheses were addressed using the following approach and procedures.

3.2.2 <u>Research approach and procedure</u>

This research utilised a **quantitative approach** (defined in Chapter One) in order to gather and analyse data. This research was **basic** or pure in nature as its aim was to obtain information in order to answer the question of whether corporal punishment is utilised in South African homes as well as the question of how South African children feel about the use of corporal punishment (refer to hypotheses in section 3.2.1).

The researcher developed a survey (refer to addendum E, page 94), which was derived from the themes identified in Chapter Two, namely the literature review. The survey consisted of thirteen questions, twelve of which were in a multiple choice format. Question One was an open-ended question asking the children how they understood the term "smacked" or the phrase "to be smacked".

The researcher developed the questionnaire by consulting literature on the topic of corporal punishment. This was done as an assessment tool of the utilisation of corporal punishment in the South African context could not be located.

Four schools were contacted and the researcher explained the goals and objectives of the research. The parents of the children in the fifth grade were sent informed consent forms, which were returned to the researcher. The pupils whose parents consented to them participating in the study were then given the survey to complete. The scholars completed the surveys and then gave them or returned them to the researcher. The survey was distributed to the four different schools for the sampled children to complete. The completed surveys were then handed back to the researcher and the raw data was analysed.

The remainder of the possible answers were coded one through four. Many of the questions did not have mutually exclusive options and therefore more than one option could in fact be true. Due to this, if a participant circled more than one response, this was coded as number five. Also under the code of five was the option of "other" (Addendum E, page 94).

The researcher interpreted and analysed the data obtained from the four schools. The sampling and sampling procedures utilised in this study are discussed in detail in the next sections.

3.2.3 <u>Sampling</u>

The sampling technique utilised in this study was non-probability, purposive sampling. The universe of this study was all children aged between ten and eleven years of age within South Africa. The population consisted of all children between the ages of ten and eleven living in Johannesburg, Gauteng. The sample of this study consisted of all fifth grade pupils from four different primary schools which consisted of around two hundred and fifty scholars. The researcher received a total of one hundred and twenty one responses (N=121) from the sampled four schools.

The sampling criteria for this research were:
- Pupils aged between ten and eleven years of age;
- Pupils who are currently in grade five;
- Male and female pupils;
- English-speaking pupils and
- Pupils coming from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds.

3.2.4 <u>Sample</u>

The sample consisted of one hundred and twenty one scholars (N=121). The two private schools generated eleven responses (n=11) and the two public schools generated one hundred and ten responses (n=110). The age distribution of the sample is depicted in Figure 3.1.
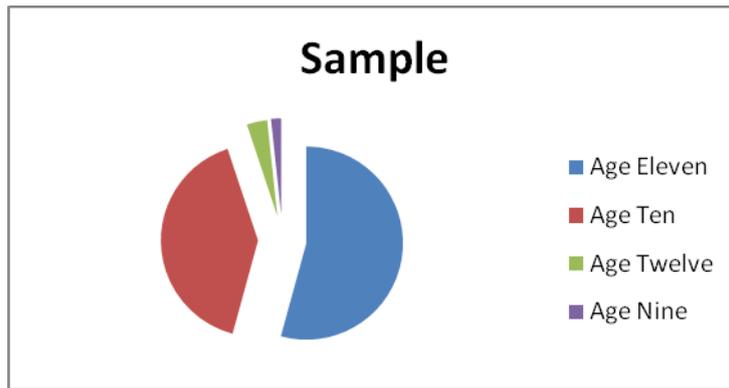
Figure 3.1   The Age Distribution of the Sample

Within the sample sixty-four participants were eleven years old and forty-eight were ten years old. Two of the participants were age nine and a total of four participants were age twelve. One participant did not include his age. This is illustrated in the graph above, Figure 3.1.

The data obtained in this research was analysed as follows:

3.3 Data analysis

Data within a quantitative study can be analysed manually or with the use of a computer. Within this paradigm, data analysis does not provide the answers to the research questions proposed by a particular study. The answers are found through interpretation of the results achieved. To interpret something to give it meaning, therefore, data analysis is the act of organising and reducing the data to a more manageable and interpretable form (Krüger, De Vos, Fouché & Venter, 2005: 218). To put it more concisely, data analysis is the organising of raw data into more concise and intelligible data which can later be analysed (Bless & Kathuria, 2000: 1).

The data was organised and analysed as follows:

3.3.1 Coding

Coding can be defined as the formal numeric representation of data (Fife-Schaw, 2003: 161; De Vos, 2005: 338). A statistical programme named NCSS 2000 was

utilised for the purpose of analysing the closed ended questions (Question Two through thirteen). This programme is designed for the use of analysing data obtained through research and has been used since 1981 (www.ncss.com).

The survey consisted of multiple choice questions and the options A, B, C and D were coded as 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The "other" option was coded as 5. If a participant chose more than one response to a question, this also fell under the code 5.

3.3.2 <u>Analysis of data</u>

Question One was an open-ended question:

<u>Question One: Tell me, in your own words, how you understand the word 'smacked' or the phrase 'to be smacked'?</u>

Figure 3.2   A Visual Representation of Question One

Out of one hundred and twenty one responses three did not understand the term. The majority (60.3%) stated that it was a form of punishment that was administered when one did something 'naughty' or something that their parents did not like. Some stated that it was a painful punishment while many stated simply that it was to be hit by someone. Eight out of the one hundred and twenty one (6.6%) responses stated that it was to be hit by a foreign object, like a spoon or a belt. Fifteen (12.4%) of the responses stated that they believed that to be smacked was in fact a form of abuse and that it should not happen under any circumstances. Another twenty two responses (18.2%) stated that to be smacked was to be hit on the bottom or on the hand or even on their faces.

The remaining questions were analysed using frequency analysis and will be discussed accordingly.

3.3.3 Frequency analysis

In order to analyse and make sense of data collected, one needs to assess how the data is distributed. This aids in determining any trends that appear in the data collected (Bless & Kathuria, 2000: 3; Krüger, De Vos, Fouché & Venter, 2005). The frequency analysis of each question for the current study is illustrated below.

Question Two: When you do something naughty or something that your mom or dad do not like, do they ...

A. Give you a smack?
B. Talk to you about what you have done?
C. Send you to your room?
D. None of the above.
Other: ....
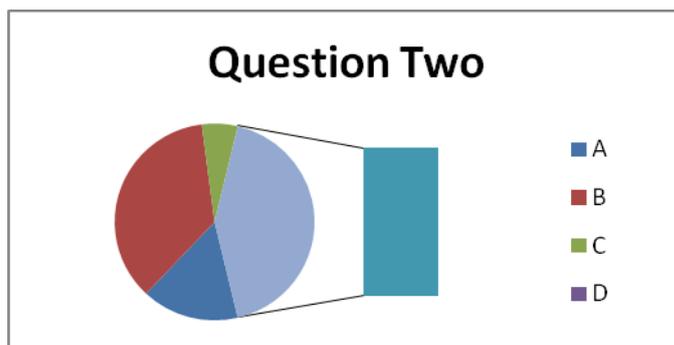
Figure 3.3   A Visual Representation of Question Two

When the children were asked what their parents do when they do something wrong, 42.5% of the children answered 'other' or had circled more than one response. The second highest frequency was that their parents talked to them when they had done something deemed to be wrong by their parents (35.83%). A total of 15.83% stated that when they do something wrong, their parent would give them a smack.

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Question Three: When was the last time you were given a smack?

A. Today

B. Yesterday

C. Last week

D. Last month

E. Never
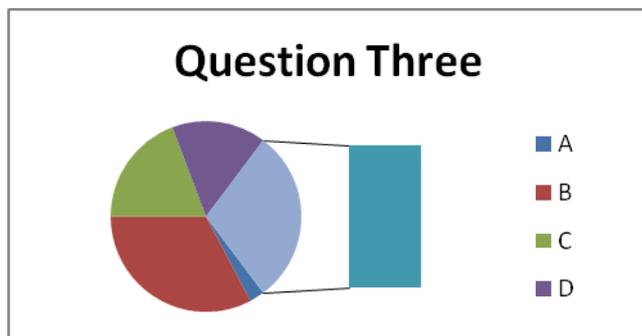
Figure 3.4   A Visual Representation of Question Three

When asked in Question Three when last they had been smacked, the majority response (32.77%) was that they had been smacked the day before the survey was completed. 19.33% of the children stated that they had been corporally punished the week before the survey was completed and 29.66% of the children stated that they had never been smacked by their parents.

Question Four: The last time you were given a smack was because:

A. You said something naughty

B. You did something naughty

C. You said or did something your parents did not like

D. You do not know

Other: ....
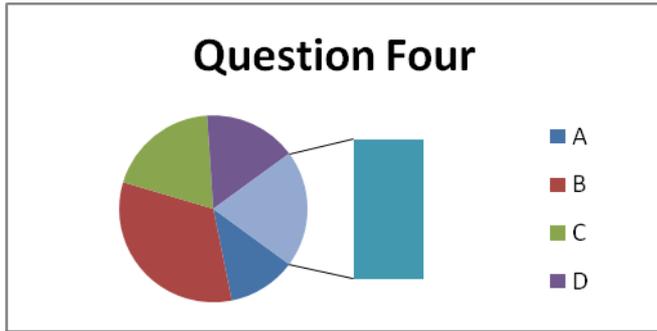
Figure 3.5   A Visual Representation of Question Four

The majority (32.77%) also stated in Question Four that the reason that they were given a smack was because they had done something that they were not supposed to do ('something naughty'). 19.33% of the participants stated that it was because they had said or done something that their parents did not like. Another 15.97% stated that they in fact did not know why it was that they were being punished.

Question Five: When your parents smack you, you feel ...

A. Happy
B. Sad
C. Angry
D. They do not smack me
Other: ....
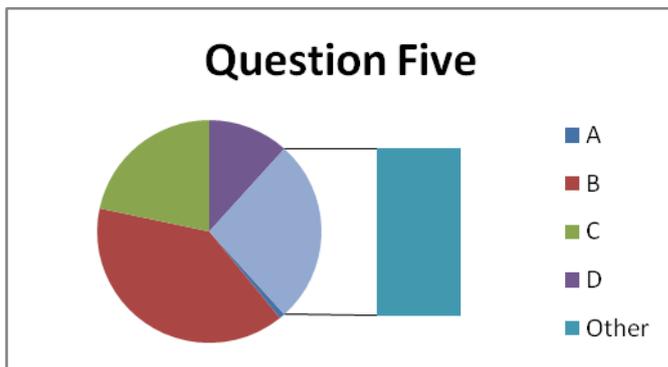
Figure 3.6   A Visual Representation of Question Five

The response to the question of how they felt after they had been smacked, was that they felt sad (39.17%) and 21.67% of the respondents stated that they felt angry about being smacked. 11.67% of the responses stated that their parents did not smack them.

Question Six: After you were smacked, you ...

A. Cried

B. Shouted

C. Ran to your room

D. I did nothing

Other: ....
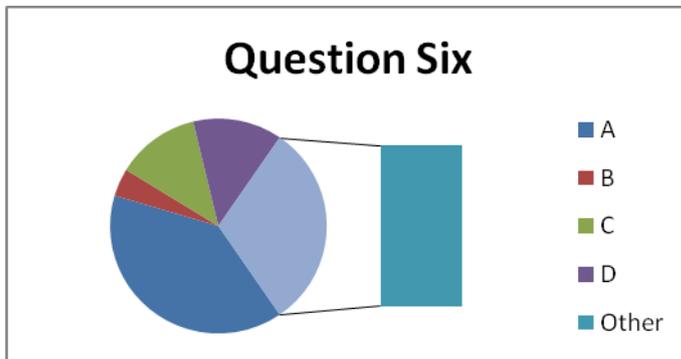
Figure 3.7   A Visual Representation of Question Six

39.17% of the participants stated that they cried after they had been smacked, while 4.17% stated that they retaliated and shouted back at their parents after being smacked. 13.33% of the children stated that they did not do anything after they had been smacked and 12.5% stated that they ran to their rooms.

Question Seven: Who smacks you most of the time?

A. Mom

B. Dad

C. Granny

D. Grandpa
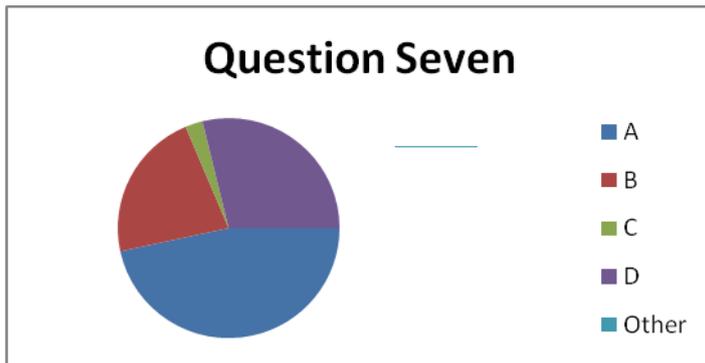
Other: ....

Figure 3.8   A Visual Representation of Question Seven

Within the sample the majority (46.61% and 28.81% respectively) of children were also smacked mainly by their mothers and their grandfathers. 22.03% stated that it was their fathers that disciplined them.

Question Eight: Do you think that you learned anything from being smacked, like what is right or wrong?

A. Yes
B. No
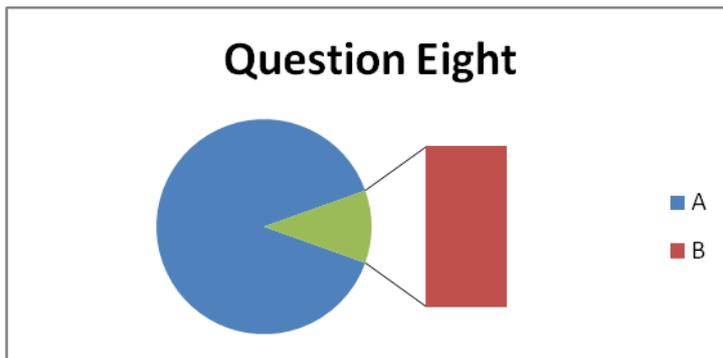
Figure 3.9   A Visual Representation of Question Eight

A majority (88.24%) stated that they felt that they had learned something from being smacked and that this helped them to learn right from wrong. 11.76% of the children stated that they did not learn anything from being corporally punished.

Question Nine: Would you rather have your parents talk to you when you do something that they do not like instead of smacking you?

A. Yes
B. No
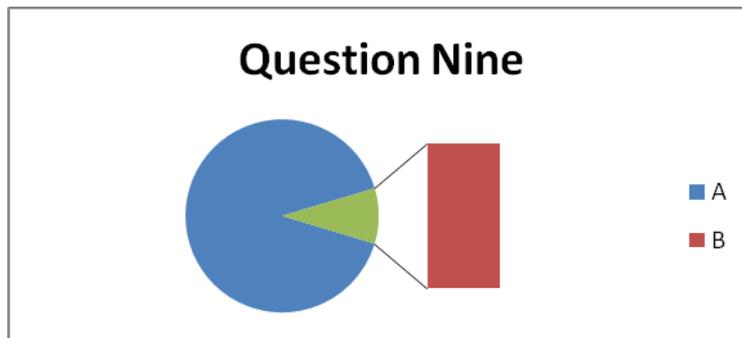
Figure 3.10   A Visual Representation of Question Nine

90.68% of the participants stated that they would prefer to be talked to by their parents when they have done something wrong. Alternatively, 9.32% of the participants stated that they would not prefer that their parents talk to them when they have done something wrong.

Question Ten: How soon after you have done something wrong do you get smacked?

A. Straight away
B. A while later, e.g. an hour or more
C. I don't get smacked
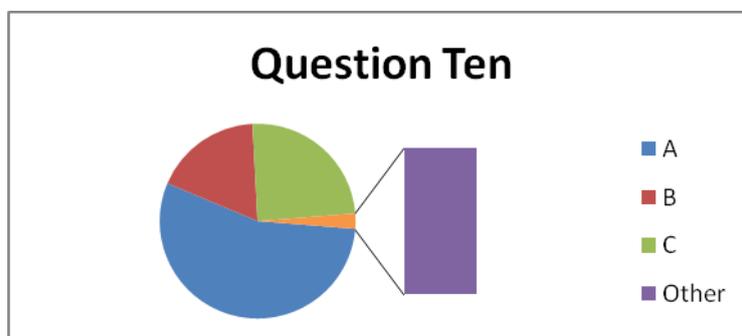
Figure 3.11   A Visual Representation of Question Ten

More than half of the children (55.08%) said that they were disciplined immediately after their indiscretion and here 24.58% stated that they do not get smacked.

Question Eleven: Where on your body do you get smacked?

A. Face

B. Bottom

C. Hand

D. Back

Other: ....
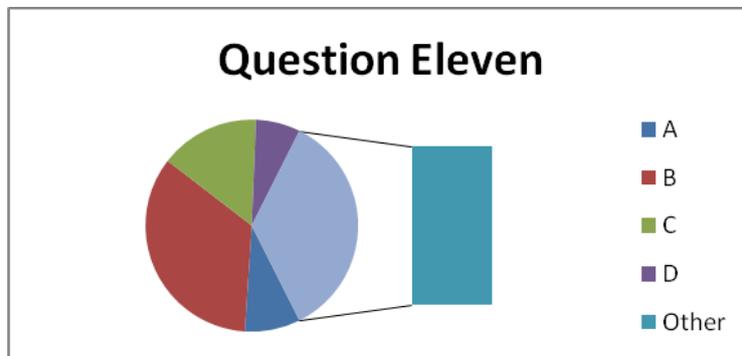
Figure 3.12   A Visual Representation of Question Eleven

35.29% of the children stated that they get smacked on more than one place on their bodies while 34.45% stated that they get smacked on their buttocks. 8.4% of the participants stated that they get smacked on their face, 15.13% stated that they get hit on their hand/s and 6.72% stated that they get smacked on their back.

Question Twelve: What do you get smacked with?

A. Hand

B. Spoon

C. Belt

D. Stick
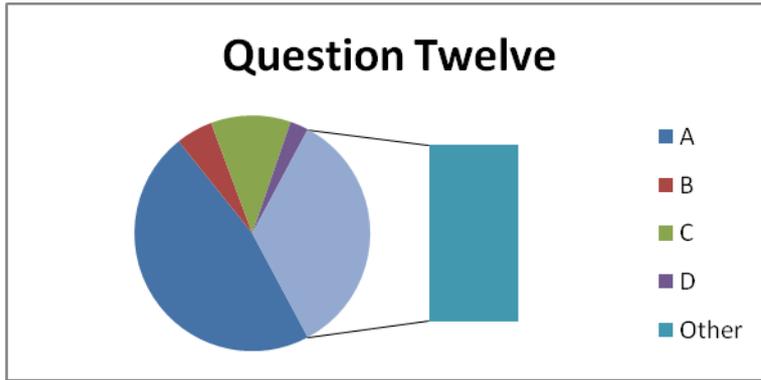
Other: ....

Figure 3.13   A Visual Representation of Question Twelve

A total of 18.48% of children get smacked with a foreign object while 47.06% stated that they get smacked with a hand. 34.45% of the participants answered 'other' or made more than one selection.

<u>Question Thirteen: Why do you think that you get smacked?</u>

A. I did something wrong

B. Mom/Dad … were angry at me for something

C. Mom/Dad … were angry

D. I don't know

Other: ....
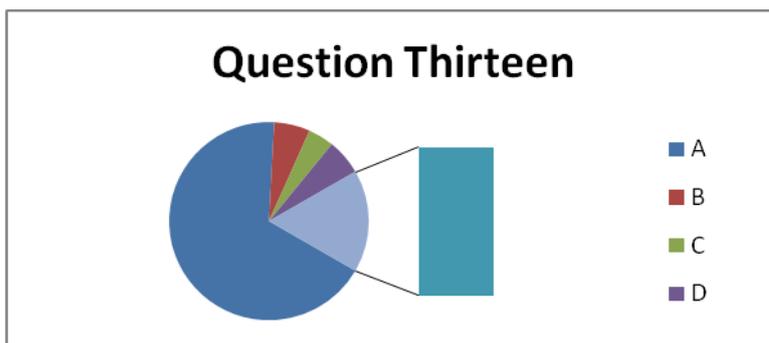
Figure 3.14   A Visual Representation of Question Thirteen

67.5% of the children stated that they think that they get smacked because they had done something wrong, while 5.83% said that they did not know why they were being smacked. 5.83% stated that they were being corporally punished because their mother or their father was angry at them for something that they had possibly done, while

4.17% stated that they were being smacked because their mother or father was just angry.

From the results obtained within the study, one can conclude that there is a significant occurrence of corporal punishment within Gauteng homes. Approximately 70% of the participants stated that corporal punishment does occur within their homes. It is for this reason that the null hypothesis, as stated above, is rejected accepting the alternative hypothesis, providing that:

There is a significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

Within this study it was found that children do cry after being corporally punished, yet they do feel that they have learned from the act of being corporally punished. The children within this study did state that they would in fact prefer their parents to talk to them when they had done something that their parents did not approve of. Due to this and other findings, discussed in Chapter Three, it was concluded that corporal punishment can be a useful disciplining tool. Corporal punishment can also cause negative emotions and reactions from the child being corporally punished. Due to the reactions of the participants one can state that they do not feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in South African homes.

It is for this reason that the null hypothesis, as stated above, is rejected accepting the alternative hypothesis, providing that:

Children do not feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

3.3.4 Cross tabulation report on Hurlyvale Primary and Roseneath Primary

The Chi-squared test is the most frequently utilized statistical test. It is a test based on a comparison between observed frequencies and expected frequencies (Bless & Kathuria, 2000: 186).

A cross tabulation report using a Chi-squared analysis was used to determine any differences in responses between the two schools that the researcher received the most feedback from. The two schools were D, a government school in Parktown, and C, a government school in Edenvale. This was done in order to explore the differences, if any, between the economic statuses of the two schools and the occurrence of corporal punishment.

In the case of this research it was hypothesized that the frequencies between the two government or public schools would be similar and there would not be a significant difference between the frequencies of the answers selected by the participants from the two different schools. If Ho is rejected and it is found that a significant difference does exist, then one could hypothesize that the reason for this is a possible difference in the socio-economic statuses of the two schools analyzed here.

Ho: There is no significant correlation between the use of corporal punishment and socio-economic status.

H3: There is a significant correlation between the use of corporal punishment and socio-economic status.

The questions that showed a significant difference in the manner in which they were answered were Questions Two, Six, Seven and Eleven, while there was no significant difference in the responses to Questions Three, Four, Five, Eight, Nine, Ten, Twelve and Thirteen.

Question Two: When you do something naughty or something that your mom or dad do not like, do they ...

Table 3.1   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Two

Counts Section

C2	1	2	Total
1	8	11	19
2	17	17	34

3	4	2	6
5	37	13	50
Total	66	43	109

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	8.170950
Degrees of Freedom	3.000000
Probability Level	0.042608
	Reject Ho

In Question Two there is a significant difference between the manners in which the two schools answered the question, where the majority of Hurlyvale Primary answered 'other' or gave more than one response, whereas Roseneath Primary answered that their parents mainly talk to them when they do something that their parents did not like.

Question Six: After you were smacked, you ...

Table 3.2   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Six

Counts Section

C6	1	2	Total
1	20	22	42
2	3	1	4
3	8	5	13
4	7	9	16
5	28	6	34
Total	66	43	109

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	11.951780
Degrees of Freedom	4.000000
Probability Level	0.017713
	Reject Ho

When asked what they did after they had been smacked, there was a significant difference between the answers of the children of the two schools. Hurlyvale Primary answered mainly 'other' or made more than one response while children from Roseneath Primary answered that they cried after they had been smacked.

Question Seven: Who smacks you most of the time?

Table 3.3   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Seven

Counts Section

C7	1	2	Total
1	21	27	48
2	20	4	24
3	2	1	3
5	22	10	32
Total	65	42	107

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	11.853777
Degrees of Freedom	3.000000
Probability Level	0.007901
	Reject Ho

Roseneath Primary mainly answered that it was their mothers who mainly smacked them while children from Hurlyvale gave more than one response to the question or had answered 'other'.

<u>Question Eleven: Where on your body do you get smacked?</u>

Table 3.4   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Eleven

Counts Section

C11	1	2	Total
1	2	8	10
2	34	2	36
3	3	13	16
4	2	6	8
5	24	14	38
Total	65	43	108

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	40.108867
Degrees of Freedom	4.000000
Probability Level	0.000000
	Reject Ho

In Question Eleven there was a significant difference in the manner in which the two schools answered this question. Where Roseneath Primary answered 'other' or gave more than one response to the question of where it was on their body that they were smacked, the majority of students from Hurlyvale Primary answered that they were mainly smacked on their buttocks.

Question Three: When was the last time you were given a smack?

Table 3.5   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Three

Counts Section

C3	1	2	Total
1	3	0	3
2	3	0	3
3	5	5	10
4	35	28	63
5	20	8	28
Total	66	41	107

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	6.430557
Degrees of Freedom	4.000000
Probability Level	0.169219
	Accept Ho

In Question Three there was no significant difference between the manners in which the two schools answered the question. The majority from both schools answered that the last time that they had been smacked was last month.

Question Four: The last time you were given a smack was because:

Table 3.6   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Four

Counts Section

C4	1	2	Total
1	6	4	10
2	20	18	38
3	12	10	22
4	12	3	15
5	15	8	23
Total	65	43	108

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	3.897774
Degrees of Freedom	4.000000
Probability Level	0.420017
	Accept Ho

In Question Four there was also no significant difference between the two schools and the majority answered that they were smacked because they had done something wrong.

Question Eight: Do you think that you learned anything from being smacked, like what is right or wrong?

Table 3.7   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Eight

Counts Section

C8	1	2	Total
1	58	35	93
2	6	6	12
3	0	1	1
5	2	0	2
Total	66	42	108

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	3.529116
Degrees of Freedom	3.000000
Probability Level 0.317005	**Accept Ho**

Question Five: When your parents smack you, you feel ...

Table 3.8   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Five

Counts Section

C5	1	2	Total
2	24	19	43
3	15	10	25
4	8	2	10
5	19	12	31
Total	66	43	109

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	1.997780
Degrees of Freedom	3.000000
Probability Level	0.572868
	Accept Ho

In both schools the majority of children answered that they felt sad when they were smacked by their parents (Question Five) and the majority of students from both schools also believed that they had learned something from being smacked (Question Eight).

Question Nine: Would you rather have your parents talk to you when you do something that they do not like instead of smacking you?

Table 3.9   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Nine

Counts Section

C9	1	2	Total
1	60	37	97
2	6	5	11
Total	66	42	108

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	0.222155
Degrees of Freedom	1.000000
Probability Level	0.637403
	Accept Ho

Although in Question Eight there was a consensus that the majority from both schools did learn from being smacked, the majority from both schools answered in Question Nine that they would rather have their parents talk to them when they have done something wrong.

Question Ten: How soon after you have done something wrong do you get smacked?

Table 3.10   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Ten

Counts Section

C10	1	2	Total
1	38	22	60
2	13	8	21
3	13	10	23
5	2	1	3
Total	66	41	107

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	0.360329
Degrees of Freedom	3.000000
Probability Level	0.948310
	Accept Ho

The two schools showed no significant difference in the manner in which they answered Question Ten and the majority answered that they were smacked immediately after doing something that they should not have.

Question Twelve: What do you get smacked with?

Table 3.11   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Twelve

Counts Section

C12	1	2	Total
1	29	19	48
2	5	1	6
3	4	9	13
4	3	0	3
5	24	14	38
Total	65	43	108

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	8.161852
Degrees of Freedom	4.000000
Probability Level	0.085826
	Accept Ho

Question Thirteen: Why do you think that you get smacked?

Table 3.12   Chi-Squared Analysis of Question Thirteen

Counts Section

C13	1	2	Total
1	43	29	72
2	2	5	7
3	2	3	5
4	4	2	6
5	15	4	19
Total	66	43	109

Chi-Square Statistics Section	
Chi-Square	6.687577
Degrees of Freedom	4.000000
Probability Level	0.153349
	Accept Ho

The majority of children from both schools answered that they were mainly smacked by one of their parent's hands when they were being smacked and not by a foreign object (Question Twelve). The majority from both schools also believed that they were being smacked because they had in fact done something wrong (Question Thirteen).

From this analysis it was found that Roseneath Primary, found in a lower socio-economic district in Johannesburg utilised less corporal punishment in the home when compared to Hurlyvale Primary. It was found, however, that in relation to the definition of maltreatment (defined in Chapter One of the current study), Roseneath mainly fell into the category of maltreatment. Hurlyvale on the other hand fell into the category of corporal punishment as defined in Chapter One of this study.

From the results obtained in the analysis of the manner in which the two schools answered the survey, it was found that, although in many respects the schools both answered in the same manner, the underlying idea of corporal punishment, as stated above, is fundamentally different. It is for this reason that the null hypothesis, as stated above, is rejected, accepting the alternate hypothesis, providing that:

There is a significant correlation between the use of corporal punishment and socio-economic status.

The data obtained in this study will be discussed in relation to the literature review in Chapter Two.

3.4 Discussion

Immediate compliance, parental influence and aggression were the main themes that arose in the literature review for this study (Chapter Two) and will be used here to discuss the above-mentioned results.

3.4.1 Immediate compliance

Within the results of this research many children answered that their parents talked to them when they did something wrong. This helps the child make a connection between the negative behaviour and the discussion with the parents (Benatar, 2001: 12-18). Ahlert (2005: 1) stated that corporal punishment may damage a child's self-esteem, which may be part of the reason why a child would prefer to have their parents talk to them instead of smacking them, especially in this stage of development. This is said by Rich (2005: 181) when he states that corporal punishment should be used in the early stages of development and only infrequently at later stages such as middle childhood, the focus of this particular research.

When it comes to the child being talked to instead of merely smacked, one can say that they will better assimilate the information that they are receiving from their parents and will therefore be able to refer to this information later on in life (Perls *et al*, 1951: 190). This is what is referred to in Gestalt theory as Internalisation and therefore one can state that the child is not learning from what he has done wrong and from the corporal punishment as the child has not made the information from the environment his own (Perls *et al*, 1951: 190). If the child finds himself in the impasse layer of the personality, where environmental feedback is vitally important as the child is looking to his environment for feedback on tasks (Blom, 2006: 44), it becomes more vital for the parents to talk to their child.

The majority of children also stated that when they do something that their parents deem as wrong, they would prefer that their parents talked to them about what it is they have done and why in fact it is wrong. Some children did not know why it was that they were being smacked and this links to what Roper (2006: 3) stated when he said that corporal punishment does not result in learning. In fact, according to

McCord (2005: 167) by using corporal punishment to correct negative behaviour, one was merely increasing the value of the negative behaviour and the child may see this as his parents stopping him from doing what he wants. This could also hamper the relationship the child has with his parents (Naker, 2006: 1-2).

The majority of children within this study stated that they did in fact learn something (such as right from wrong) by being corporally punished. On the other hand a small but significant minority stated that they did not know why they were being corporally punished. According to Piaget a child at this stage of development is able to understand things in the same manner in which adults do, yet they are less flexible and less systematic (Beckett, 2005: 83; Weiten, 2001: 450). This could explain why some children understood why they were getting punished while others did not, although Benatar (2001: 13) stated that the use of corporal punishment would teach a child that they must follow rules in order not to get punished. This would mean that the child is not assimilating the information that his parents are portraying to him. One could hence deduce from this that although they stated that they know why they were being punished, they could have meant that they know the rule and know not to do something because then one would get punished. Due to this, no real learning would have taken place (immediate compliance or lack of assimilation).

The above discussion illustrates that corporal punishment in Gauteng homes does not necessarily have a cognitive effect on children, meaning that a child does not necessarily learn right from wrong by being corporally punished.

3.4.2 Parental effect

Many of the children answered that it was in fact their mothers who mainly smacked them. This may follow the reasoning of Benatar (2001: 3), who stated that a child may see that one can only be punished by someone that they care about and who is meant to love and care for them. The importance of parental involvement also appears in Erikson's second stage of development when the child is heavily reliant on their parents and the feedback a child gets from exploring his environment is important and mainly given by his parents. If the child constantly receives negative feedback (corporal punishment) the child may find himself in a state of shame and doubt

instead of autonomy (Hook, 2002: 2271; Westen, 1999: 662). Many children who have been corporally punished state that they are below average performers when in fact they are above average achievers, further emphasising the previous point (Turner & Muller, 2004: 767). Children at this stage of development (middle childhood) tend to go through a great deal of self-evaluation and comparison with their peers (Hook, 2002: 279). Following from Turner and Muller (2004: 767), it could therefore be damaging for the child to have a low self-esteem, which could have been as a result of being subjected to corporal punishment by their mother.

Parents have a great influence on their child's life (Naker, 2006: 1-2), showing the true impact a mother can have by subjecting her child to corporal punishment, as was found in this study. This discussion also shows that there is in fact a significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

3.4.2.1 <u>Emotional impact</u>

Within this study the majority of respondents stated that they felt sad and angry after being corporally punished. This can be linked with the articles by Taylor *et al* (2004: 1389) and Rohner *et al* (1996: 842) which emphasised the impact of corporal punishment and its connection to depression and anxiety in children. It was also stated that corporal punishment could result in a negative relationship between parent and child (Paolucci & Violato, 2004: 198). This statement shows the possible detrimental effects of a child being corporally punished by his mother.

Some children retaliated after being corporally punished, which relates to the aggression theme in Chapter Two. The literature has certain possible explanations for this. Rohner *et al* (1996: 843) stated that inconsistency in punishment could result in further delinquent behaviour while Turner and Muller (2004: 793), Aucoin *et al* (2006: 528) and McCord (2005: 165) state that using corporal punishment in the first place is socialising a child to think that aggression is acceptable. Vygotsky's 'zone of proximinal development' reaffirms this statement about socialisation and the impact of the people around the child.

A total of 18.48% of the participants stated that they had been smacked with a foreign object. According to the definition of corporal punishment utilised in this study, this would be considered abuse. Benatar (2001: 4) did mention in his article the possibility of corporal punishment leading or crossing the line into abuse. This result could illustrate that corporal punishment in Gauteng homes has a detrimental effect.

The child's perception of the fairness of the punishment is also important. A child must deem the punishment a fair one when comparing it to the wrong that he has done (Rohner *et al*, 1996: 843). 32.77% of the participants here answered that they felt that they had been corporally punished because they had in fact done something wrong.

3.4.3 Other findings

Question One was an open-ended question asking the children what they understood the word 'smacked' to mean. Some children did not understand the word 'smacked' or the phrase 'to be smacked'. This was surprising to the researcher.

According to the definition being used in this research, being hit or smacked by a foreign object, such as a spoon or a belt is considered to be a form of abuse. Some children stated that this is what they thought 'to be smacked' meant and it would therefore constitute abuse considering the definition of corporal punishment in this research.

The researcher believes that in this day and age people are very busy and one could assume that parents, with work and household chores, do not have the time to talk to their children when they do something wrong. It was found, however, in the results of this research that many parents do in fact talk to their children when they have done something wrong. It was also surprising to find that children are mainly disciplined immediately after the negative behaviour, helping them to link the misbehaviour to the act of corporal punishment.

In Chapter Two there was many an article stating that corporal punishment leads to aggressive behaviour instead of correcting bad behaviour. In this research it was

found that only 4.1% of all the respondents retaliated after they were corporally punished, showing some kind of aggressive behaviour.

The researcher assumed when asking the question of whom in fact utilised corporal punishment in the home, that the children would answer that their fathers were the ones who would corporally punish them. This was not the case as 46.61% and 28.81% stated that it was their mothers or their grandfathers who corporally punished them. This could illustrate the importance of the extended family in Gauteng homes and possibly the decline of the nuclear family in South Africa.

3.4.4   Possible explanations for findings

Certain findings obtained in this research needed further explanation.

A question that arose from the difference in the numbers in responses was why it was that the researcher received such a poor response from the private schools and a substantially different amount of responses from the public schools. One could look at the differences in cultures being a contributing factor. Possibly the samples from both private schools are more private and believe that what happens behind closed doors should remain there, whereas the samples from the two public schools may feel more open to sharing what goes on in their homes and in their personal lives.

The poor responses from the private schools could possibly also be explained by the schools not wanting to upset the parents of their pupils as this could cause the schools to lose some pupils and therefore also lose a substantial amount of money. The researcher states this, because when she was turned away from schools when approaching them, she was told that the school did not want to upset the parents of the pupils. They also stated that this research was too controversial and that it might have been too much of a sensitive topic to talk about for the parents at that particular school.

All the surveys were handed out at around the same time, which could also have been a contributing factor. Private and public schools have different terms, where public

schools have four terms and private schools have three. I later found out that the private schools were preparing for exams and a break and this could have contributed to the poor responses from both the private schools.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter addressed the process the researcher undertook when addressing the research problem and hypothesis. The research approach as well as the research work and procedures were discussed. Data analysis was also explained and elaborated on after which the results of the survey were presented. These results were then discussed with regards to the literature review in Chapter Two. Unexpected findings were also mentioned as it was felt that this was important, considering the original research problem.

The next chapter, Chapter Four, will be a summation of the research process, findings and literature reviewed. This next chapter will also address the problems encountered while undertaking the research as well as its limitations and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine the effects and occurrence of corporal punishment on children in Gauteng homes. The age group that was selected was middle childhood, more specifically ages ten to eleven. Four schools from different areas in Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa, were used to gain the sample from different areas of Johannesburg. These schools were Hurlyvale Primary School in Edenvale, St. Andrews School for Girls, a private school also situated in Edenvale, Roseneath Primary in Parktown and Crawford Preparatory School in Fourways, north of Johannesburg.

Chapter One discussed the rationale for doing this particular research. The rationale for this research was primarily that corporal punishment in the home is a controversial topic that has been under discussion earlier in 2008 when the new Children's Act was under scrutiny. There has also been a lot of debate in the professional fields concerning the possible negative ramifications of using corporal punishment to discipline our children. The question that is often raised is whether or not corporal punishment causes more harm than good: Do the perceived benefits outweigh the perceived negative consequences to its use?

At one stage in the debate corporal punishment was to be banned not only from schools but also within the home. This was later altered when it was deemed unconstitutional to tell a parent how to raise his child. Due to the debate around corporal punishment, the researcher felt that it was an important topic in South Africa today and that it was also important to discover whether or not and to what extent corporal punishment is being utilised as speculated.

Chapter Two was a review of previous research done on the topic of corporal punishment in the home as well as the effects the use of corporal punishment has on children, if any. Considering that one of the main aims of corporal punishment is to

discipline and teach one's child right from wrong, the researcher found it imperative to add some theories of how a child learns as well as some theories describing and analysing how a child should behave and what a child's development processes are in middle childhood.

Chapter Three described and addressed the research methodology used as well as the results obtained from the survey used in this research. It also contained a discussion of the results obtained from the survey and the analysis thereof. A discussion of the results in relation to Chapter Two is concluded in Chapter Three.

Within this chapter, one will find a summary of the research that was undertaken. This will include a summary of the procedure used as well as a summary of the results obtained within this study. The researcher has also included the limitations that were experienced within the research as well as possible recommendations for future research.

4.2 Goals and objectives revisited

4.2.1   Goal

The goal of this study was to determine the possible effects corporal punishment have on children as well as the frequency of its use in Gauteng homes.

To achieve the above goal certain objectives were undertaken.

4.2.2   Objectives

The objectives of this research were:
- To develop a literature review on issues and concepts relevant to the research topic.
    - o   This was accomplished in Chapter Two wherein past research on the topic of corporal punishment was discussed and its relevance to the topic at hand emphasised.
- To administer a survey to children in the middle childhood age group.

- A survey was administered to all children from four different schools who had consented to participate in the research. Each survey was completed by each pupil on his own and was then handed back to the researcher.
- To analyse and interpret the data obtained to determine the effects and occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes, specifically Johannesburg homes.
  - The data from the surveys was analysed and interpreted by the researcher. These results and a discussion of said results can be seen in Chapter Three of this study.
- To provide recommendations and conclusions for future research.
  - The recommendation and conclusions for this study and for future research can be found within the current chapter.

From achieving the above objectives, the following revisiting of the hypotheses and the summary of findings will indicate that the goal of the study has been achieved.

4.3 Hypotheses revisited

From the reviewed literature the following describes the null and the alternative hypotheses for this study.

Ho: There is no significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

H1:   There is a significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

From the results obtained within the study, one can conclude that there is a significant occurrence of corporal punishment within Gauteng homes. Approximately 70% of the participants stated that corporal punishment does occur within their homes. It is for this reason that the null hypothesis, as stated above, is rejected accepting the alternative hypothesis, providing that:

There is a significant occurrence of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

Ho: Children do not feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

H2:   Children feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

Within this study it was found that children do cry after being corporally punished, yet they do feel that they have learned from the act of being corporally punished. The children within this study did state that they would in fact prefer their parents to talk to them when they had done something that their parents did not approve of. Due to this and other findings, discussed in Chapter Three, it was concluded that corporal punishment can be a useful disciplining tool. Corporal punishment can also cause negative emotions and reactions from the child being subjected to corporal punishment. Due to the reactions of the participants one can state that they do not feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

It is for this reason that the null hypothesis, as stated above, is rejected accepting the alternative hypothesis, providing that:

Children do not feel indifferent about the use of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

4.4 Summary of findings

The results of the survey are summarized below under the themes identified in Chapter Two.

4.4.1 Immediate compliance

The children in this study stated also that it was mainly their mothers or their grandfathers who disciplined them, illustrating the importance of the extended family in Gauteng homes. Nearly half of the participants (46.61%) stated that it was their mothers who disciplined them, while 28.81% stated that it was their grandfathers who in fact did the disciplining the majority of the time. An illustration of these results is found in figure 3.8 in Chapter Three.

It was found in the current research that children do in fact learn something, such as right from wrong, from being smacked by their parents. 88.24% of the participants within this study stated that they had in fact learned something from being corporally punished after their wrongdoing, while only 15.97% stated that they did not know why it was that they were getting punished. These results show that some learning, in the opinions of the participants, actually did take place by the use of corporal punishment, showing that it may be an effective disciplining tool within the home. Figure 3.5 in Chapter Three shows this by illustrating that 32.77% stated that they were corporally punished because they had done 'something naughty'. This was further illustrated in Question Thirteen, Figure 3.14, where 67.5% stated that they were subjected to corporal punishment because they had done something wrong. This illustrates further that some learning did take place from being corporally punished.

Although the participants in this study stated that they did, in fact, learn something from being smacked (88.24%), they also stated that they would prefer to be talked to by their parents instead of being smacked. Figure 3.10 illustrates this result showing that 90.68% of the participants would have preferred that their parents talked to them when they had done something wrong.

One can therefore conclude that immediate compliance, as defined in Chapter Two of this study, does not appear to be a problem when it comes to the use of corporal punishment as a disciplining tool on children within middle childhood.

4.4.2 Parental influence and effects of corporal punishment

Benatar (2001), Gershoff (2002), Naker (2006), Roper (2006), Turner (2005) and Turner and Muller (2004) all talk about the importance of the parent in a child's life. The authors also talk about the impact the emotional state of the parent has on the child and can also make a child fear his parent.

Many parents do, in fact, talk to their children when they do something deemed to be wrong by their parents. Figure 3.3 in Chapter Three illustrates this by showing that 35.83% of parents do talk to their children when they have done 'something naughty'. It should also be noted here that 90.68% of the participants (illustrated in Figure 3.10)

stated that they would prefer that their parents talked to them when they have done something 'wrong'.

Children also stated that they feel sad (39.17%) and angry (21.67%) when they had been smacked by their parents. Some children (39.17%) even stated that they cried after they had been smacked. Although 13.33% of the participants stated that after they had been smacked by their parents they in fact did nothing, 12.5% ran away from their parents and went to their bedrooms.

Although in 4.4.2 it was stated that children do learn from being subjected to corporal punishment, children would prefer that their parents talked to them when they have done something wrong. The use of corporal punishment also appears to have a negative emotional effect on children within middle childhood.

4.4.3 Aggression

Aggression and corporal punishment have often been linked in many a study of the effects of corporal punishment (Aucoin *et al*, 2006, Benatar, 2001, McCord, 2005, Gershoff, 2002 and Turner & Muller, 2004). Many of these authors state that there is a connection between aggressive behaviour and corporal punishment.

In this study only a small minority (4.17%) of the participants stated that they retaliated when they were subjected to corporal punishment by their parents, by shouting. This is illustrated in Figure 3.8 in Chapter Three. 21.67% stated also that they felt angry after they had been smacked. This could be correlated to aggression as aggression is often linked to anger.

Due to the small amount of participants (4.17%) who acted aggressively when punished corporally, the deduction cannot be made that there is a link between corporal punishment and aggressive behaviour in children.

4.4.4   Maltreatment versus corporal punishment

Question Twelve of the survey dealt with the topic of maltreatment and corporal punishment. After the analysis of the data the following conclusions were made with regards to the topic at hand.

34.45% of the participants gave more than one answer or answered 'other' when asked what, in fact, if anything, they get smacked with. This could possibly fall into the category of maltreatment, as defined in Chapter One of this study as an action that involves significant physical injury that is mainly administered to children between the ages of 5 and 8 (Jaffee *et al*, 2004: 1048).

In Question One, 6.6% of the participants stated that they view getting smacked to mean getting hit by a foreign object. This does fall into the category of maltreatment defined in Chapter One of this study.

For the purposes of this study, corporal punishment was defined in Chapter One as a means of correcting negative behaviour by spanking a child with an open hand on the buttocks, as the researcher believes that the use of a foreign object may cause more harm and can be seen as possibly abusive. 60.3% of the participant's definitions or understandings of 'to be smacked' fell within the boundaries of the definition of corporal punishment for this study.

Due to this majority one can say that corporal punishment, rather that maltreatment, is utilised in Gauteng homes.

4.5   Problems experienced

As with all research, problems are always encountered. The researcher found it extremely difficult to find a sample group due to the stigmatised nature of the topic of this research. It was found that many people were reluctant to talk about the topic and were worried about the perceived idea that any form of corporal punishment is, in fact, abusive.

Another problem that was encountered came after approval from the various schools mentioned above and that was getting informed consent from the parents of the children. As stated earlier, corporal punishment is a taboo topic in our time and many parents, one can assume, fear exposure of their use of this old technique of discipline.

Collecting and organising the distribution of the survey to the children who had been given permission from their parents, also appeared to be a problem due to the time needed to do this, namely during school hours, which are rushed as it is.

4.6 Recommendations for future research

The researcher suggests that a look at the parent's view of corporal punishment would be an interesting endeavour as one could determine whether there is a correlation between opinion and utilisation of corporal punishment. One could also determine if there is a connection between the use of corporal punishment in childhood and the use of corporal punishment as parents.

The researcher also recommends that a more in-depth look at the effects of corporal punishment on children in a Gauteng context needs to be undertaken due to the many debates around this issue. A qualitative study may be useful in this endeavour.

4.7 Conclusion

The current research's aim was to answer the question of whether or not corporal punishment is utilised in Gauteng homes as well as to gain information relating to the effects, as stated by the children, of the use of corporal punishment as a disciplining tool.

It was found that corporal punishment is utilised in Gauteng homes on children within their middle childhood years. It was also found that, contrary to past research reviewed in Chapter Two, children do in fact learn from being punished corporally and therefore immediate compliance is not a major concern when it comes to the use of corporal punishment. Children did state, on the other hand, that they would prefer that their parents talked to them when they have done something wrong and that they do have many negative emotions after being punished corporally (crying, becoming

sad, getting angry, et cetera). The issue of whether corporal punishment leads to aggressive behaviour in children was not established indefinitely.

Corporal punishment is a complicated and stigmatised topic in South Africa as well as in other parts of the world. Due to the debates and controversy surrounding corporal punishment, the researcher endeavoured to better understand the use and effect of corporal punishment in Gauteng homes.

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6. Addendum A: School Consent Letter

To whom it may concern,

My name is Elizabeth Smith and I am currently doing my masters in Play Therapy at Huguenot College. As part of my studies I am required to perform research on a topic of my choice. My research topic is **'A survey on the occurrence and effects of corporal punishment on children'.**

My aim in this research is to determine if, in fact, corporal punishment within the home has any effect on a child as well as to determine the occurrence of corporal punishment within South African homes. In order to gain insight into this topic I will need to hand out a multiple choice survey to your grade five pupils.

Your pupils will not be forced to partake in this study and are free to withdraw from it whenever they or their parents choose. Their names will not be used in the final draft of the dissertation and will not be seen by anyone other than myself. In this way I can guarantee that all information that is supplied by your pupils and their parents will remain confidential.

Please allow me to hand out this survey to your grade five pupils at yours and their earliest convenience.

Thank you for your time,

_____

Elizabeth Smith

7. Addendum B: Parental Consent Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Elizabeth Smith and I am currently doing my masters in Play Therapy at Huguenot College. As part of my studies I am required to perform research on a topic of my choice. My research topic is **'A survey on the occurrence and effects of corporal punishment on children'.**

My aim in this research is to determine if in fact corporal punishment within the home has any effect on a child as well as to determine the occurrence of corporal punishment within South African homes. In order to gain insight into this topic I will be handing out a multiple choice survey to your child.

Your child will not be forced to partake in this study and is free to withdraw from it whenever you or your child chooses. Your name and your child's name will not be used in the final draft of the dissertation and will not be seen by anyone other than myself. In this way I can guarantee that all information that is supplied by you will remain confidential.

Thank you,

_____

Elizabeth Smith

8. Addendum C: Parental Consent Form

Parental consent form

I have read and understood the information provided about the study and understand the processes needed to gain information. I, being responsible for the child, hereby give my consent for the child (name below) to participate in the study if they so choose.

_____ (Signature)   _____

_____   Date

Name of Parent

_____   _____

Researcher, Elizabeth Smith   Date

9. Addendum D: Child Consent Form

Consent form: child

I have read and understand the information provided about the study and understand that my participation within said study is voluntary.

_____ (Signature)   _____

_____ (Name)   Date

_____   _____

Researcher, Elizabeth Smith   Date

10. Addendum E: Survey

<u>**A survey on the occurrence and effects of corporal punishment on children in the home**</u>

My name is Elizabeth Smith and I am doing a study on how children get punished at home. The following questions will help me to find this out. Your name will not appear in the study so you do not need to worry about anyone else seeing your answers.

Age: _____

Grade: _____

School: _____

1. Tell me, in your own words, how you understand the word 'smacked' or the phrase 'to be smacked'.

2. When you do something naughty or something that your mom or dad do not like, do they

A. Give you a smack?

B. Talk to you about what you have done?

C. Send you to your room?

D. None of the above.

Other: _____

3. When was the last time you were given a smack?

A. Today

B. Yesterday

C. Last week

D. Last month

E. Never

4. The last time you were given a smack was because:

A. You said something naughty

B. You did something naughty

C. You said or did something your parents did not like

D. You do not know

Other: _____

5. When your parents smack you, you feel:

A. Happy

B. Sad

C. Angry

D. They do not smack me

Other: _____

6. After you were smacked you:

A. Cried

B. Shouted

C. Ran to your room

D. I did nothing

Other: _____

7. Who smacks you most of the time?

A. Mom

B. Dad

C. Granny

D. Grandpa

Other: _____

8. Do you think that you learned anything from being smacked, like what is right or wrong?

A. Yes

B. No

9. Would you rather have your parents talk to you when you do something that they do not like instead of smacking you?

A. Yes

B. No

10. How soon after you have done something wrong do you get smacked?

A. Straight away

B. A while later, e.g. an hour or more

C. I don't get smacked

11. Where on your body do you get smacked?

A. Face

B. Bottom

C. Hand

D. Back

Other: _____

12. What do you get smacked with?

A. Hand

B. Spoon

C. Belt

D. Stick

Other: _____

13. Why do you think that you get smacked?

A. I did something wrong

B. Mom/Dad … were angry at me for something

C. Mom/Dad … were angry

D. I don't know

Other: _____