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The use of physical punishment on children in Saudi Arabia. Perceptions and experiences of parents and young people

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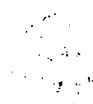# THE USE OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT ON CHILDREN IN SAUDI ARABIA. PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract

Violence against children is a worldwide phenomenon. The use of physical punishment on children is a type of this violence. However, there is a significant lack of research on this social problem in Saudi Arabia. This study attempted to investigate parental physical punishment in Saudi Arabia.

The study sample consisted of two groups of people, parents and young people. 530 persons who live in Riyadh city (285 parents and 245 young people) took part. Two questionnaires (one for each group of participants) were developed for this study purposes and SPSS was used to analysis the data.

Parental use of physical punishment was common among the study sample members. Boys were more likely than girls, to have been physically punished. Similarly, young children were exposed to physical punishment more than older children. Frequency of use of physical punishment also varied according to parental age. No difference was found between fathers and mothers in regards to gender, education, and employment status but parents with childhood experience of physical punishment used physical punishment more than parents without such childhood experiences. The majority of participants supported parental use of physical punishment on children. Moreover, the majority of parents disagreed with preventing parents from using physical punishment by law. In contrast, the majority of the young people agreed with the prevention of parental use of physical punishment by law. Findings are discussed in light of the ecological model and an analysis is offered of the utility of this model in explaining the trends outlined.

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Dedications

First of all I dedicate this work to those people who supported me and were so patient with me throughout my study.

I dedicate this work to my lovely parents. Father and mother many thanks to you for all your encouragement since I was a child and for your prayers for me to finish this work. I thank you, too, for your great patience while I have been away from you during my studies. Yet, I hope you are now proud of your son and his achievement.

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Finally, I dedicate this work to all children, researchers, professionals, and people who devote themselves to working for a safe environment for the children of Saudi Arabia.

Declaration

I hereby declare that no portion of the work that appears in this study has been used in support of an application of another degree in qualification to this or any other university or institution learning.

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Chapter One: Introduction

> *"We must send a clear and unambiguous message that violence does not solve problems at any level and is unacceptable on any level."*
>
> (Cited in: Tasmania Law Reform Institute 2003 p.39)

1.1 Preamble

This chapter is an introduction to the thesis. The chapter provides exhaustive details regarding the research themes and interests. The chapter reviews the research problem, the researcher's position, the contextual background, definition of terms, significance of the study, research objectives, and the organization of the thesis.

Violence against children extends all over the world. Home is one of the key places where children experience violence (Tang 2006). Nevertheless, parents are the most important people in a child's life, as well as being responsible for the child's development and socialization (Kolar and Soriano 2000). Luster et al. (2005 p.xi), argue that "although parents typically share strong feelings of love and concern for their children, they differ in the ways they approach the task of caring for their children." For example, parents have different options in response to their children's misbehaviour (Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Regalado, Sareen et al. 2004). They can punish the child physically, isolate the child in his or her room, take away some of the child's advantages, or even ignore the child's misbehaviour (Gershoff 2002b). Also, they can use verbal punishment (Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999). Nevertheless, it has been suggested that the majority of parents are more apt to use physical punishment in order to correct their children's misbehaviours (Gershoff 2002b).

It is important to note that several terms or phrases have already been used above which will later need to be defined and clarified. A separate section in this chapter provides a clear definition of each of the study terms.

Parental use of physical punishment has been found worldwide regardless of culture, language, religion, or race (Kazdin and Benjet 2003; Ateah and Durrant 2005; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Tang 2006). According to Straus (1994 p.31), "physical punishment has been a part of human society for thousands of years." The majority of parents across the world use at least one type of physical punishment on their children at some point (Zigler and Hall 1989; Tang 2006). Therefore, it is likely that in Saudi Arabia, as in many countries, many parents use physical punishment as a means to discipline their children. Actually, within Saudi society, children are viewed as the property of their parents who have full authority over them, a situation that is supported by the law (Al-Zahrani 2005). The use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia has been known for hundreds of years and has become part of the society's culture. Recently, for example, several local newspapers in Saudi Arabia have reported cases of children who have been injured or even died as a result of their parents' harsh treatment (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2005; AlRiyadh Newspaper 2006c). However, there has been little if any systematic attempt neither to measure the frequency of these behaviours in research nor to assess the attitude of parents and young people to these issues. Therefore, this study aims to explore Saudi perceptions and experiences regarding physical punishment of children.

1.2 Researcher's position

It is important for me to give a brief insight in to my own position in order to recognize the motivations which led me to conduct this study. I have a personal idea that children in Saudi Arabia are exposed to violence at home and no action is taken to protect them. This idea is derived from several factors. First, I am from Saudi Arabia, married and have children; therefore, I am a part of this

community and know much about its culture, and the social lives of both parents and children. I have a broad awareness of how parents deal with their children in the Saudi community. During my daily life I hear many stories about children who have been hurt by their parents. I have also read many reports in local newspapers of children who were hurt by their parents. Second, I have worked in two different hospitals in Riyadh. During my work in those hospitals I witnessed several cases of injured children (about ten cases) who arrived at the emergency room as result of their parents' aggressive behaviour. I noticed that almost all those children who had visited hospitals and sought treatment of injury caused by their parents were sent back home with their parents after their essential medical treatment. This happened because there is no law which gives hospitals the authority to separate the child (victim) from his or her parent (perpetrator). As a result of my personal and professional experience I considered that the issue of violence against children needed more attention from researchers and the authorities in Saudi Arabia. This consideration created a personal desire to know more about this issue in order to help Saudi children.

After my period working in the hospitals I joined Mohammed bin Saud University in Riyadh as a lecturer in the social work department. When the university granted me a scholarship to continue my postgraduate education abroad, I chose the United Kingdom to study for my PhD degree. I seized this opportunity to learn more about the issue of violence against children; namely, parental use of physical punishment. I found a significant lack of Saudi studies in child abuse in general and in relation to the parental use of physical punishment specifically. Accordingly, I decided to conduct this study in order to describe parental use of physical punishment among a sample population of the Saudi community.

1.3 Contextual background

Throughout history, children have been subjected to different types of maltreatment such as beating, flogging, being forced to do harsh work, even to murder (Zigler and Hall 1989). Before the industrial revolution (late 18th and early 19th centuries) children were maltreated but not seen as victims of abuse for two reasons: first, high infant mortality rates and disease reduced people's overall level of concern over child mortality. Second, children were considered as the property of their parents who could treat them as they wished (Miller-Perrin and Perrin 1999). However, even after the industrial revolution in the west children remained targets of violence. Zigler and Hall (1989 p.41) argue that:

> "The industrial revolution brought relief from hard labour
> for many, but it ushered in a new age of darkness for the
> children of the lower classes. Even very young children
> were forced to work long hours at backbreaking tasks in the
> worst conditions. Very often they were beaten, shackled,
> starved, or dipped in cold water barrels, either to make them
> work or as punishment for not working hard enough.
> Working in very hot or very cold factories (depending on
> the time of year and the type of industry) with dangerous
> machinery, they were exposed to the hazards of
> occupational injuries and disease."

From the mid 19th century onwards, the world's view of children changed as people recognised that children were suffering from different types of maltreatment (Zigler and Hall 1989; Hendrick 2003). For example, several child protection agencies and movements emerged in the United Kingdom and the United States (Zigler and Hall 1989; Hendrick 2003). Also, "children were given a new social and political identity as belonging to the nation" (Hendrick 2003 p.19).

By the 19th century child maltreatment was conceptualized as a social problem in the United States of America. In 1874 the first case of child maltreatment was observed by a church social worker called Etta Wheeler. Etta Wheeler discovered that an eight year old girl, Mary Wilson, was being physically abused by her stepmother. The case of Mary Wilson received national attention in the United States and led to the establishment of the "Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children" (Miller-Perrin and Perrin 1999 p.11).

By 1880 child abuse was being recognized as a social problem in the United Kingdom (Hendrick 2003), accordingly, several pieces of legislation were introduced in the late 19th century to protect children. In 1842 the "Mines Act" was passed by the government to prevent the employment of children under ten years old in order to protect them from industrial hazards (Nettlesworth 2006). In 1889 the first "Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act" was passed (Hendrick 2003; NSPCC 2008). Since then, many regulations have been legislated for in the United Kingdom to protect children and to define parents' responsibilities toward their children. For instance, in 1933, the *Children and Young Persons Act* was passed to protect children from maltreatment by their parents (Keep 2004). In 1989, the *Children Act* defined the child-parent relationship and explained parents' responsibility for and authority over their children (Keep 2004). Furthermore, the 1998 *Human Rights Act* indicated that all people of all ages, including children, "have a right to be protected from inhuman and degrading treatment, and a right to respect for their private and family life" (Keep 2004 p.4).

By the turn of the 20th century, the use of corporal punishment on children as a disciplinary method had fallen under increasing scrutiny (Evans and Fargason 1998; Tijerino 2001) "Children's rights were a concern of the League of Nations as early as 1924" (Nee 1996). In 1959 the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child was established in order to protect the children of the world. For example, Principle 9 of the declaration indicates that children shall not be exposed to any type of maltreatment or harsh treatment (UN 1959).

Furthermore, in 1989, children's rights were defined and became more respected after the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention has been endorsed by most of the world countries, except Somalia and the United States (Keep 2004). The 1989 Convention pointed to three categories of rights (Keep 2004 p.4):

1. "Rights to provision": all children have the right to education, healthcare, accommodation, recreation, a family environment or alternative care if the biological family is unable to provide an appropriate environment.

2. "Rights to protection": all children have the right to protection from any type of maltreatment, violence, discrimination, abduction, to give significant attention to their best interests.

3. "Rights to personal freedoms and to participate in decision-making": all children have the right to have the respect of adults. Children's opinions, beliefs, religion, and privacy must be respected.

The actual start of research into the phenomenon of child abuse began in the early 1960s in the United States of America and soon after that in the United Kingdom (Cooper 1993, in Al-Zahrani 2005 p.22). The world's attention was drawn to child maltreatment in 1962 when Kempe and his colleagues described "battered child syndrome." Kempe and his colleagues drew people's attention in the United States and other Western countries to the fact that children may be exposed to great harm by their parents (Korbin and American Anthropological Association. 1981; Gough 1996; Miller-Perrin and Perrin 1999; Karthikeyan, Mohanty et al. 2000). Currently, child maltreatment is becoming an interesting area of study for most of the world's countries (World Health Organization 2002).

Although child maltreatment is prohibited by law in many countries, parental use of physical punishment is still lawful in many countries worldwide (CRIN 2006). For example, in the United Kingdom it is legal for the parents to "smack" their children, but it is illegal if the smack causes serious harm (Keep 2004). In Mexico the use of physical punishment of children by parents is supported by the

law (Corral-Verdugo, Frias-Armenta et al. 1995). Saudi Arabia is one of those countries where physical punishment is lawful (CRIN 2006).

In summary, parental use of physical punishment for discipline and control purposes has been recognized for thousands of years (Straus 1994). Also, it is supported by many parents. For example, a 1986 national survey in the United States found that almost 85% of the population agreed or strongly agreed that it is sometimes necessary to use physical punishment to discipline children (Straus 1994) Moreover, a survey conducted in New Zealand found that almost 96% of parents had hit their children at some time in their lives (Rodriguez and Sutherland 1999).

Yet, physical punishment of children remains a controversial issue among childhood professionals. According to Gershoff (2002), professionals are divided into two camps; some of them believe that physical punishment is a successful way to discipline a child and others believe that it is an unsuccessful mechanism (Bollenbacher and Burtt 1997). But, whether it is a successful or an unsuccessful method of discipline, researchers argue that physical punishment of children can become physical abuse at some point (Straus 1994; Straus and Yodanis 1996; Gershoff 2002a; Gershoff 2002b) or, at least, it may increase the potential for child abuse (Eamon 2001).

Before going into greater detail, it is appropriate to illustrate what I mean by various terms (e.g. physical punishment of children, child maltreatment, physical abuse, violence, and discipline.)

1.4 Definition of terms

According to Gough (1996), definitions are important because they can both specify problems needing societal attention and delimit an individual's area of work.

The current research seeks to explore parental physical punishment of children in Saudi society. In such studies, which consider cultural perspectives different from those in the west, culture can play a vital role in definitions. According to Gough (1996 p.993) "definitions vary with cultural and historical view about children and their care". Hence, I argue that it is essential to find specific definitions relevant to the specific research and its particular population.

Physical punishment of children

The physical punishment of children has been a subject of research for a very long time (Parke 2002). Throughout this period of research the physical punishment of children has been subject to different definitions. For example, it has been defined as "an action intended to cause physical discomfort or pain to correct a child's behaviour, to 'teach a lesson', or deter the child from repeating the behaviour" (Durrant, Ensom et al. 2004 p.1). Straus defined physical punishment as "the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behaviour" (Straus 1994 p.4). However the Straus definition can lead to complexity because some types of physical punishment could cause injury for a child at some levels. Even so this definition is widely used in similar studies (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

For the purposes of this study I will adopt an operational definition of the physical punishment of children that will embrace any act committed by parents on a child for the purpose of discipline or misbehaviour control such as spanking, slapping, beating, or any other method parents could use on their children, whether or not these acts cause physical injuries to the child.

Child maltreatment

For this study's purpose I will adapt the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of child maltreatment. The WHO has defined child maltreatment as follows: "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power" (World Health Organization 2002 p.59)

Physical child abuse

Physical child abuse is a type of child maltreatment (Miller-Perrin and Perrin 1999). This happens when a child is exposed to physical harm or injury by an adult (Finkelhor and Korbin 1988). Physical abuse includes burning a child, beating a child with an object, and exposing the child to severe physical punishment (National Research Council 1993).

In this study, the following definition will be used. Physical child abuse is "those acts of commission by a caregiver that cause actual physical harm or have the potential for harm (World Health Organization 2002 p.60) by non-accidental means" (Cicchetti and Toth 2005 p.410).

Violence

In this study I use the following definition: "violence is an act carried out with the intention, or perceived intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person" (Straus 1991 p.135). Violence against children in this study can range from a slap on the hand to a cigarette or candle burn to an act so violent that it could cause disability or death.

Discipline

Smith (2005 p.2) described discipline as "guidance of children's moral, emotional and physical development, enabling children to take responsibility for themselves when they are older. It involves teaching children the boundaries of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable, and makes them aware of the values and actions which are acceptable in their family and society."

Wilson (1982) argued that "Discipline and punishment are not synonymous, yet they are all too often seen by many as such." However, Friedman & Friedman (1977) "clearly distinguished between corporal punishment and discipline. For example, discipline ought to be constructive and entail positive methods rather than negative ones, such as physical punishment. Physical punishment is considered by these authors an "abuse of discipline" that may physically harm the child and lead to problems in development" (Cited in: Tijerino 2001 p.8).

1.5 Statement of the problem

Although there are many countries which fight against all kinds of child maltreatment, they ignore what is happening to children at home by their own parents under the guise of discipline; Saudi Arabia is one of these countries.

In Saudi Arabia, as in most of the world's countries, most parents use physical punishment in order to discipline their children. Nevertheless, most of these parents believe that they have the right to use any type of punishment in order to rear their children (Al-Zahrani 2005). I argue that, because the parents' authority over their children is supported by the law and culture, most of them are likely to use any type of physical punishment and feel their action is justified because they have the right to do so. According to Al-Zahrani (2005) some parents use physical punishment in order to discipline their children without realising this could harm their children. They believe it is an effective and useful discipline mechanism and do not consider they are abusing their children. Therefore, I

argue that there is an ambiguity about the line to be drawn between the right of parents to discipline their children and causing a physical injury on the child, in another words physical abuse. Moreover, several researchers have argued that many physical abuse cases begin as physical punishment but go beyond the original purpose (Straus 1994; Whipple and Richey 1997; Nobes, Smith et al. 1999; Elliman and Lynch 2000; Tijerino 2001).

Child physical abuse has been prevalent in Saudi society for long time. But it has tended not to have been seen as a social problem. However, recently this problem has received more attention from the government and researchers (Al-Eissa 1998; Al-Zahrani 2005). Several studies and local newspapers in Saudi Arabia have shown that many children have been seriously injured and some of them have died as a result of their parents' harsh treatment (Al-Ayed, Qureshi et al. 1998; Kattan 1998; Al-Mutrik 1999; Elkerdany, Al-Eid et al. 1999; Roy, Saleem et al. 1999; Karthikeyan, Mohanty et al. 2000; Al-Zahrani 2004; Al-Zahrani 2005; AlRiyadh Newspaper 2005; Alyousif, Al-Romah et al. 2005; AlRiyadh Newspaper 2006c; AlRiyadh Newspaper 2008a). However, parents' use of physical punishment of children has been overlooked. This study attempts to explore the perceptions and experiences of parents and young people in Saudi Arabia regarding the use of physical punishment on children.

1.6 Study objectives

As indicated above this study seeks to explore parental use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia. The study is based on a cross-sectional survey which used a questionnaire to collect the data.

The study is centred on Al-Riyadh city, the capital city of Saudi Arabia. The study's population consists of two groups within Saudi society: parents (fathers and mothers), and young people (males and females). The study sample was selected from different locations in Riyadh such as universities, schools, government ministries, and hospitals (more detail regarding the study sample and methodology will be presented in the methodology chapter). The objectives of this study are to:

1. Assess the prevalence of parental use of physical punishment.
2. Identify the common types of physical punishment of children used by parents.
3. Identify the common child misbehaviours which led parents to use physical punishment.
4. Assess the severity of outcomes of physical punishment.
5. Identify the age groups and gender of children who are most frequently being physically punished.
6. Identify the age groups and gender of parents who most commonly use physical punishment.
7. Assess the risk factors for physical punishment of children.
8. Assess attitudes towards the use of physical punishment on children.
9. Assess perceptions on the difference between physical punishment and child abuse.
10. Assess views on preventing parental use of physical punishment by law in Saudi Arabia.

1.7 Significance of the study

The small number of studies done in Saudi Arabia on child abuse illustrates the fact that physical abuse of children still exists in the Saudi community. Currently there is a movement in Saudi Arabia to diminish the prevalence of such physical abuse (Asharq Alawsat 2004). I argue that one of the causes of physical abuse is the use of physical punishment. Therefore, I claim that in order to end this physical abuse we must start to treat its causes. According to Zigler and Hall (1989) numerous researchers have argued that the problem of child physical abuse will not be solved as long as the use of physical punishment is accepted as a method of discipline.

The consequences of the use of physical punishment harm not only the child and his family but reach out to the community as well. According to Straus (1991 p.134), "Physical punishment may serve to legitimize violence. Since physical punishment is used by authority figures who tend to be loved or respected, and since it is almost always used for a morally correct end when other methods fail, physical punishment teaches that violence can and should be used under similar circumstances." Accordingly, children could use violence as a method to resolve their own difficulties with other people such as members of their own family, friends, or even people they meet in the street.

This leads me to argue that the use of physical punishment is a problem which needs urgent attention. Therefore, the aim of this study is to shed light on the parental use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia in order to recognize its nature and frequency. This study will attempt to describe the prevalence of this phenomenon as a social problem among Saudi parents and as one which the authorities and researchers in Saudi Arabia should face up to. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first study in Saudi Arabia to discuss this issue in detail. Hopefully, it will be used as a basis for future research.

1.8 Organisation of the study

The thesis consists of eight chapters as follows:

Chapter One: "Introduction" This chapter provides an overview of the research problem.

Chapter Two: "Overview of Saudi Arabia" This chapter provides an overview of Saudi Arabia as a country and a society. The chapter contains general information about Saudi Arabia such as location, the main cities, demography, culture, family structures, education and health services, and other children's services. The chapter gives an overview of Riyadh in regard to its location, demography, family structures, and the socioeconomic status of families. The chapter also discusses the use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia from the Islamic perspective.

Chapter Three: "Theoretical Framework" This chapter discusses theoretical explanations for the use of physical punishment on children. The chapter contains a review of the link between physical abuse and physical punishment of children. It examines a psychiatric model, a sociological model, social learning theory, frustration and aggression theory, and an ecological model. The chapter ends with the researcher's view on applying the ecological model to the use of physical punishment.

Chapter Four: "Literature Review" This chapter reviews previous empirical studies on the subject of this study and reviews risk factors for the use of physical punishment, the consequences of physical punishment, cross-cultural studies, and the nature of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia. The chapter ends with a discussion of the findings and hypotheses from previous studies.

Chapter Five: "Research Methodology" This chapter illustrates the methodology and procedures used in the fieldwork. It contains a review of the

study's design, objectives, sampling, the data collection instrument and techniques. The chapter ends with an overview of the data analysis procedure.

Chapter Six: "Findings" This chapter presents findings of the data collected using the survey questionnaire. It presents a descriptive analysis of the sample and the data according to the study's objectives and hypotheses. The data from each group in the sample is presented independently.

Chapter Seven: "Discussion" This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the original hypotheses, existing literature and previous research.

Chapter Eight: "Conclusion and Recommendations" This chapter reviews the main findings of the study, study strengths and limitations, the researcher's experience of carrying out the study, and ends with suggested recommendations.

1.9 Chapter summary

The aim of the chapter was to provide an introduction to the theme of the research. Different points have been discussed such as the study purpose, the researcher's position, the contextual background, definition of terms, the significance of the study, and finally the structure of the thesis.

Since the current study is about the Saudi Arabia, it is appropriate to ask ourselves a question. What is Saudi Arabia? The next chapter will provide an overview of Saudi Arabia as a country and as a society.

Chapter Two: Saudi Arabia Overview

2.1 Preamble

This chapter seeks to offer information about Saudi Arabia and its people in order to help the reader contextualize the study. This includes not only general introductions to Saudi Arabia and to Riyadh, the specific location of the field work, but also discussion of child welfare in Saudi Arabia.

Children are also discussed from an Islamic perspective and Islamic perspective on the use of physical punishment is outlined. I also discuss the current situation in Saudi Arabia with regard to parents' use of physical punishment. During my discussion I will use several expressions that reflect the Muslims' respect for Allah (God) and the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him). For example, the expression "Peace be upon Him" is required after mentioning the name of a prophet and all Muslims should say this when they do. Therefore, I will write this expression whenever I have referred to the prophet.

2.2 General overview of Saudi Arabia

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located in the south western part of the Asian continent. It is bordered by eight countries: Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Saudi Arabia covers approximately 2,150,000 square km, with a total population of roughly 23 million. The 2004 Population and Housing Census indicates that the sex ratio among the Saudi population is 101 males per 100 females (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2005). Saudi Arabia is located in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula and is by far the largest country. It is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council,

which consists of six countries, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Oman.

Figure 1 Map of Saudi Arabia

In addition to its location at the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia is at the heart of all Muslims' affections because within its boundaries are the most important and respected places for each Muslim; namely, the two holy mosques of Mecca and Medina (Sullivan 1970; Mimesh, Al-Khenaizan et al. 2008). Indeed, one of Saudi Arabia's names is the Land of the Two Holy Mosques.

Mecca is of central importance to Muslims worldwide, forming the focal point for the five daily prayers and the place of pilgrimage to the Holy Mosque, one of the five pillars of Islam. The Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said that, Islam is built on five pillars: the "*Shahada*" (the profession of faith that there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His messenger), performing prayers, paying

Zakat (charity), fasting during Ramadan, and performing the pilgrimage to the Holy Mosque (Khan 1997). Medina, also, occupies a special place in Islam being considered the second holiest place for Muslims.

The location of these two holy places in Saudi Arabia gives it a special place in other Muslims' hearts and increases the Saudi people's religiosity. According to Bird (1995 p.277), "Saudis take very seriously the responsibility of being custodians of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina and are proud to host the pilgrims, the hajjis." Therefore, I argue that this increases Saudi people's conservativeness and religiosity. However, this is not the only reason why Saudis are considered conservative. Culture, also, plays an essential role. Saudi Arabia is a tribal society with the majority of the Saudi nation being made up of Bedouins. This structure of Saudi society makes people pay much attention to social norms and values because any person who does not follow them will be isolated and criticized.

If we went back about 100 years in the history of Saudi Arabia we would find that Saudi Arabia consisted of a large number of tribes scattered over a vast area of land, each tribe occupying its own area in this vast land. It was not until 1932 that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia adopted this as it official name. Between 1902 and 1932, King Abdulaziz Al-Saudi (the establisher of Saudi Arabia) struggled to unify all these cities from the north to south and west to east under the name of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In 1932 his unification campaigns succeeded and King Abdulaziz Al-Saud assumed the name of King and announced that the name of the unified country would be the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In 1953 King Abdulaziz Al-Saud died. After his death, authority was transferred to his sons one after another as follows: King Saud, King Faisal, King Khalid, King Fahad, and King Abdullah who is governing Saudi Arabia currently.

The governing system in Saudi Arabia is a monarchy and its constitution is drawn from Islamic law (*Shari'a*). According to the first article in the Saudi constitution, "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic state with Islam as its religion; the holy *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, Peace

be upon Him, are its constitution, Arabic is its language and Riyadh is its capital"
(Jerichow 1998). The Islamic law (*Shari'a*) is derived from two main sources:
namely, the Holy *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be
upon Him). The Holy *Qur'an* is the book revealed by God (Allah) to Prophet
Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) and the *Sunnah* exemplify the words and deeds
of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him). God the Most High says, "*He
who obeys the messenger has indeed obeyed Allah*" (Al-Nisa, Verse 80).

Saudi Arabia is the largest petroleum producer in the world (Madhi and
Barrientos 2003). As result of this natural wealth, Saudi Arabia passed through a
large economic boom during the seventies and earlier eighties (UNICEF 2008)
with the Saudi lifestyle changing as result of this economic revolution. Many of
the people moved from rural areas to the main cities seeking jobs, education and
a modern lifestyle. According to the Ministry of Economy & Planning (2005
p.61), the disparities in economic activity have encouraged this internal
migration. Moreover, people have taken with them their own culture and norms.
Traditional (rural) habits are still practised in modern cities. However, migration
has affected social life considerably. In Saudi Arabia, the "rapid demographic
and economic and social changes, the multiplicity of roles played by women
within the home and outside, urban expansion and other developments have
increased pressures on the family" (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2005
p.349). For example, several previously unrecognised social problems are now
acknowledged. These include drug abuse, crime, domestic violence, divorce, and
family breakups, all of which are now becoming visible problems in the Saudi
community (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2005). However, although
emerging, most of these social problems remain covered up from researchers and
away from the media. These problems need more attention from researchers and
other relevant professional organizations.

There are three main cities in Saudi Arabia: namely, Riyadh, Jeddah, and
Dammam. These cities are considered the largest and most active in Saudi
Arabia. However, the most active and important is Riyadh because it is the
capital city of Saudi Arabia. There is where the head quarters of all government

ministries and embassies of other counties are located. Most importantly, the Saudi government is based there.

For the purposes of this study Riyadh was selected as the location for the study. This selection was built on several reasons. First, I am a resident of this city, so I know much about the city which should help to facilitate the study process. Second, the city has many advantages such as its location, size, population, and importance. In addition, because Riyadh is a most active and vital city, it has a cosmopolitan population drown from different places all over the country. Accordingly, in the following section I will provide comprehensive details regards Riyadh in order to provide the reader with a clearer image of the chosen location.

2.3 Overview of Riyadh

2.3.1 Location

Riyadh is located in the central region of Saudi Arabia. Riyadh is the largest city in Saudi Arabia and covers an area of approximately 1782 square km.

2.3.2 Population

The areas of population concentration in Saudi Arabia are three: Riyadh in the central region, Jiddah in the west region and Dammam in the east region. Almost 25% of the Saudi population are concentrated in Riyadh, 25% in Jeddah, almost 15% in Dammam, and the rest of the population is distributed among the other towns and cities of the kingdom (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2005). The total population of Riyadh city is more than 5 million (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2004). According to the Ministry of Economy & Planning (2004), the total population of Riyadh in 1992 was 3,834,986, an increase of 42% over 12 years, with average annual growth rate of almost 3%. The distribution of the Riyadh residents in regard to gender is 57% males and 43% females. In regard to

the population structure by age, 40% are less than 15 years old, 57% are aged 15 – 64, and 3% are aged 65 or over (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2004).

2.3.3 Education status

The population census 2004 shows that 15% of Riyadh residents aged 20 years or older are illiterate and 6% can just about read and write. The remaining 79% are shown as having attained different education levels as follows; 31% have a certificate below that of the secondary school certificate, 25% have a secondary school certificate, and 23% have qualification higher than a secondary school (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2004).

2.3.4 Marital status and family size

In Saudi Arabia people usually get married when they are young. However, nowadays the situation is changing a little, according to the Ministry of Economy & Planning (2005); the number of people who marry below the age of 18 has declined. In regard to the marital status of Riyadh residents, the population census 2004 shows that 73% those aged 20 years or older were married, 1.4% were divorced, and 3% were widowed, and 22.6% were single. However, divorce was more prevalent among females than males (76% and 24% of all divorcees respectively). Also, the census showed that 4% of people aged 15-19 years old were married. In addition, one of the Saudi traditions is to have large numbers of children. The average size of the family is 6 people per a family (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2004).

2.3.5 Socioeconomic status

With regard to the socioeconomic status of Riyadh residents, the 2004 census shows that 49% of the people aged 20 years or older were employed, 83% of whom were males and 17% were females. The breakdown of those people identified as unemployed (51%) was as follows: 10% were students, 5% were retired, 34% were housewives, and 2% were others. With regard to housing types,

52% of families in Riyadh owned their residence, 40% rented it, 7% was provided by their employer, and 1% came from other sources. In terms of the types of housing unit 11% of the families in Riyadh live in a traditional house, 40% live in villa, 22% have a floor in a villa, 25% live in apartment, and 2% live in other types.

2.4 Family structure in Saudi Arabia

According to Bernhardt (1964 p.157) "No two families are like. They differ from each other in every conceivable way." In order to understand community social problems, typical family structures in Saudi Arabia must be understood. First of all, in Saudi Arabia the husband is conceived of as the head of the family. He is responsible for providing and paying for all the family's expenses and he has the right to make decisions in the family or to approve the other members' decisions. This structure of the family has been derived from *Shar'ia* (Islamic law) where God says, *"The men are made responsible for the women, and GOD has endowed them with certain qualities, and made them the bread earners. The righteous women will cheerfully accept this arrangement, since it is God's commandment, and honor their husbands during their absence"* (Al-Nisa, Verse 34). Nowadays, the situation is changing a little. Women are taking on greater financial and moral responsibility for their families and are sharing these with men. Al-Sweel (1993 p.81) has described this shift in the role of women in the Saudi community. He stated:

> "Although many women still wear the *abbayah* (a black long dress that covers the whole body of the women) on the street, they (nevertheless) mix socially with their husbands' friends, business associates, and casual acquaintances. The first generation of educated Saudi women, particularly those with university degrees, is findings its way in society. With their husbands' approval, they are welcoming in their homes a wide variety of male acquaintances whom they would not have been able to

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meet twenty-five years ago. These women are as poised,

outgoing, and educated as women anywhere in the world"

(Cited in: Al-Sharideh 1998 p.42).

However, there are still some people in Saudi Arabia who do not accept women's involvement in community activities or family responsibilities.

With regard to the children's discipline, usually the father is responsible for boys' discipline and the mother is responsible for the girls' discipline. However, there are some exceptions and in those cases where the father or mother is absent for any reason, the remaining parent becomes responsible for discipline.

Family structure in Saudi Arabia is of two types: the extended family and the nuclear family. However, extended families are the most common type in Saudi Arabia especially in the rural areas. The existence of extended families is the more common among the Saudi community and can be attributed to two factors; religion or/and culture.

First, Islam encourages and indeed orders people to take care of their own parents. God (Allah) says in the Holy Qur'an: "*Your Lord has decreed that you shall not worship except Him, and your parents shall be honored. As long as one or both of them live, you shall never say to them, "Uff" (the slightest gesture of annoyance), nor shall you shout at them; you shall treat them amicably*" (Al-Isra, Verse 23). Also, God (Allah) says in the Holy Qur'an: "*We enjoin the human being to honor his parents*" (Al-Ankaboot, Verse 8). These religious instructions are followed carefully. According to Al-Saggaf (2004 p.2), "Family ties are a priority in the Saudi culture." Therefore, young people or youths do not leave their parents home if their parents still need their assistance. For instance, if a son gets married while he has elderly parents and young siblings, he will not be able to leave his parents' house even after his marriage, because he needs to take care of them and his younger siblings. In addition, it is not acceptable socially for any son in a similar situation to leave his extended family and live with his wife in

their own house. However, this situation usually changes after the family size becomes bigger and the siblings are able to live alone.

Another reason for the prevalence of extended families in Saudi Arabia is cultural; namely, early marriage. Many families try to marry their sons at an early age for either religious or customary reasons. The religious reason is to prevent young people from falling into extra marital sex which is forbidden in the Islamic religion. It is customary, too, that families want to see their grandchildren. Some like to marry their children simply for pride. Early marriages sometimes happen without previous planning. For example, some parents marry their sons while they are not in employment or even do not have their own house; therefore, the son and his wife live in the family house. This makes the size of the family larger.

It is preferable in Saudi Arabia to have a large number of children. However, this is not just from the cultural perspective. It is recommended by Islam. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) encouraged Muslims to have a large number of children by saying, "*Marry women who are loving and very prolific*" (Al-Joziayah 2000 p.16). Therefore, most Saudis prefer to have large numbers of children. In the Arabic culture, in general, and the Saudi one in particular, boys are preferred to girls. However, this not from Islam. God the Most High says, "*God is the master of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wishes, He gives daughters to whom He wishes; He gives the sons to whom He wishes, or He gives them in pairs, boys and girls. He makes sterile whom He wishes. He is wise and powerful*" (Al-Shoora, Verse 49-50). M'Daghri (1995 p.31) translated this verse as following:

> "*In the phrase "He gives daughters to whom He wishes" God the most High uses the word "gives" to make clear that children, whether boys or girls, are purely a gift from God who grants His grace without demanding reciprocation. Man would be ungrateful to refuse or disdain that which God grants him as a simple gift, because gifts are never refused. In the phrase "He*

> *gives daughters to whom He wishes and He gives the sons to whom He wishes" God the Most High cites daughters before sons, be it to please their mothers, since men usually prefer boys to girls, and this is why God insists on pleasing women by naming them first in this verse, or in view of the greater number of women than of men, or because of the weakness of girls and the interest of God takes in them in order to motivate them to demonstrate more obedience and submission, or in order to please women and to prevent any inferiority complex. Likewise, to please boys, God names them in the definite form, using the article, "He gives daughters to whom He wishes and He gives the sons to whom He wishes"; He then names them first at the end of the following sentence: "He gives daughters to whom He wishes, He gives the sons to whom He wishes, or He gives them in pairs, boys and girls," which means that, through His power and His will, God gives to whom He wishes both sons and daughters."*

Also, Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) showed that daughters are similar to sons, he said, "*Whoever has a daughter and he does not bury her live, does not insult her, and does not favour his son over her, God will enter him into paradise.*" Also, said in another Hadith, "*If someone has three daughters and has been patient with them, feeds and clothes them from his wealth, they will be a shield against the Fire for him in the Day of Judgment*" (Al-Joziayah 2000 p.23-27). Other reasons may contribute to boys being preferred to girls, for instance boys carry on their family name and are also responsible for the family after the father's death. In addition, they will take care of their parents when they become aged; daughters usually transfer to their husbands' homes after marriage and they become unable to take care of their elderly parents.

One of the ways to increase the number of children in Saudi culture is polygamy. Polygamy is acceptable in the *Shari'a* (Islamic Law) and Saudi culture permits up to four wives. However, Islam has set regulations or provisions for polygamy.

God (Allah) says in the Holy Qur'an, *"You may marry two, three, or four. If you fear lest you become unfair, then you shall be content with only one, or with what you already have. Additionally, you are thus more likely to avoid financial hardship"* (Al-Nisa, Verse 3). Accordingly, of those provisions for polygamy, the most important provisions are the ability and the capacity to exercise justice between wives. I argue that when the ruler (Allah) said ability, He did not mean financial ability only, but ability in all life's aspects. One of those aspects is children-rearing, so, he who is not able to take care of his children in an appropriate way should not marry more than on wife. But, in Saudi Arabia many people do not take account of this point. Therefore, it is becoming normal to find a father who has 12 children or more which increases the hardship of taking care of this large number of children.

2.5 Child welfare in Saudi Arabia

Because children are considered the nucleus of the future development of, and an investment in, the country the Saudi government strives to ensure children live with dignity and pride right from birth. Also, it takes into account their right to live as human beings and their right to obtain necessary services such as education, medical treatment, housing and other requirements. Therefore, the tenth article of the Saudi constitution states that; "The state will aspire to strengthen family ties, maintain its Arab and Islamic values and care for all its members, and to provide the right conditions for the growth of their resources and capabilities" (Jerichow 1998).

Saudi's government is particularly solicitous of children's education. For instance, it provides free education for both boys and girls at different ages. However, education in Saudi Arabia is segregated by sex from the elementary level right through to university level.

The first public school for boys was established in 1925 and for girls in 1961 (Bird 1995). The opening of the first girls' school was a challenge because at that

time girls' education was faced with opposition, but the government has dealt with it. General education in Saudi Arabia consists of six years of primary school and three years each of intermediate and secondary school. "School attendance is not compulsory but there are incentives built into the system, even stipends, to encourage the attendance of every child, and education is available throughout the sprawling kingdom from the large cities to the most remote mountain villages" (Bird 1995 p.276). In the past, in order to encourage parents to send their children to school, the government provided financial assistance to pupils. Currently this support has been suspended, but female students still have free transportation. Higher education, also, is free for young Saudi people and monthly financial support is paid for students (about £150).

In Saudi Arabia, healthcare is provided free to everyone. The government has focused on healthcare by providing necessary services to all its citizens, but with greater concentration on children. For example, the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia emphasises child vaccination as a protection against different diseases; and regular follow-ups occur. Also, to encourage parents to immunize their children, the Ministry of Health does not issue an official birth certificate unless parents can prove that a child has completed the necessary immunizations for the first two years. According to June Kunugi, UNICEF Representative in the Gulf, "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has achieved remarkable progress in child survival, the under-five mortality rate in 1960 was 250 deaths for every thousand live births; last year it was down to 27. This was done through investment in the health infrastructure and programmes including immunization which UNICEF supported early on; our partnership with the Kingdom started in 1961." (UNICEF 2007)

In addition to the government's role in child welfare many non-profit organizations aim to provide care for children in Saudi Arabia. There are about 317 charitable organizations in Saudi Arabia, some of which are concerned with children (Asharq Alawsat 2006). Most of those organizations get regular funds from the government (Al-Khatib 2005). Al-Khatib (2005) mentioned six of those organizations which concentrate on children as follows:

- The Renaissance Women's Charitable Society, established in 1962 in Riyadh
- Al-Wafaa Charitable Society, established in 1977 in Riyadh
- The Gulf's Girl Charitable Society, established in 1979 in Eastern Region
- Al-Bir Charitable Society in Jeddah, established in 1983 in Western Region
- Care House of Disabled Children Charitable, established in 1987 in Riyadh to take care of children with special needs
- National Saudi Committee of Childhood, established in 1978. This committee aims to coordinate the charitable organizations and the government's efforts.

The main goals of those organizations among the Saudi community can be summarised as:

- Working as a link between families and government organizations.
- Providing child and maternity care in many aspects.
- Providing financial assistance for needy families.
- Increasing Saudi women's awareness of their role in society.
- Increasing the awareness of Saudi families about different issues in regard to children's and mothers' health.
- Helping children with special needs and their families.
- Promoting community development.

It is worth mentioning that, whilst those organizations seek to help children and their families, their help does not involve protection of children from abuse or maltreatment. For example in a national survey on the role of the non-profit organization in social development by the Alwaten newspaper (2003), involving 3000 persons (1143 males and 1857 females), almost 99% of the participants said they wished these organizations would help those people who are exposed to domestic violence (cited in: Alyousif, Al-Romah et al. 2005).

One of the government efforts in welfare has been to establish several committees to help children. In 1979 a specialist commission was established by the government under the name of the National Saudi Commission for Childhood. This commission consists of representatives of several ministries concerned with child welfare, for example, the Ministries of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, Education, Culture and Information, Health, Economy and Planning, Labour, Social Affairs, Municipal and Rural Affairs, the General Presidency for Youth Welfare. The main object of this commission was to set policies for children in Saudi Arabia, to plan programmes for their needs, and to coordinate the government with public organizations concerned with childhood in Saudi Arabia (Ministry of Education 2007). However, these committees have directed their efforts to issues concerning children outside the home, and have taken little consideration of the risk that children suffer in the home.

Recently (in 2007) a new programme was launched entitled the National Family Safety Programme. This programme is focused on providing medical and social services for victims of domestic violence, and sponsored in collaboration with various stakeholders, both governmental and private. In addition, the programme seeks to activate medical and scientific research as well as social and specialized training for workers in the field of domestic violence by providing expertise and resources. However, there is no significant progress in this programme in regard to child protection at home.

The Saudi government has been keen to participate in all fields that serve humanity. One of the most important fields of humanitarian concern in Saudi Arabia is childhood. Saudi Arabia is a member of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Labour Organization (ILO). In addition, it has acceded to several conventions that aim to ensure better lives for children. For example, in 1996 Saudi Arabia acceded to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but with reservations on Articles that are contrary to the provisions of Islam (National Society for Human Rights 2006). In 2001 Saudi Arabia acceded to the

Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. It also agreed to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2007a). In addition, as a sign of determination to protect people's rights, including those of children, in 2004 a National Society for Human Rights was established in Riyadh (National Society for Human Rights 2007).

Finally, as mentioned above, the Saudi government has provided great and valuable services for children and works hard in order to ensure a healthy life for them. However, still there is a missing ring to the chain. This ring is a law to protect children from physical punishment by their parents. I argue that the government has paid much attention to child welfare outside the home and neglected child safety inside the home. Specifically, Saudi Arabia is one of the countries where parental use of physical punishment is lawful (CRIN 2006).

Anyone who wants to understand Saudi culture and its way of life must read about Islam. According to Powell (1982 p.101), "Any discussion of Saudi Arabia requires discussion of Islam... pervades all aspects of Saudi life. In Saudi Arabia, one finds remarkably few distinctions between the religious and secular. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in most daily activities, the secular as it is understood in the West, simply does not exist. Islam is very much a way of life in Saudi Arabia" (Cited in Al-Sharideh 1998 p.52). Also, according to Al-Saggaf (2004 p.1) "Saudi Arabia's culture is in its very nature, religious. That is, Islam plays a central role in defining the culture, and acts as a major force in determining the social norms, patterns, traditions, obligations, privileges and practices of society." Therefore, it is important to examine the position of children in Islam.

Before I start I would like to illustrate that Islam set up regulations and bases for Muslims' lives, but nowadays not all Muslims follow the entire Islamic instructions. It would also be useful to explain that there is some inherent tension

in researching/discussing sensitive issues (i.e. the use of physical punishment) within a national context of devout religiosity. This means that identifying and challenging particular "social problems" is made more difficult. At the same time this creates a barrier to identifying issues of social concern (physical punishment) in a wider modernising, globalising context to which 'children's rights' belong.

2.6 Children in Islam

First of all, Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country; the official religion of the country is Islam. All Saudis are Muslims; however, there are two sects; namely, Sunni and Shia. The vast majority of Saudis are Sunni and about 5% are Shia (Economist.com 2007) concentrated in the Eastern region of Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, there are few differences in regards to Islamic belief between these two sects.

Islam takes care of children's lives. First, Islam gives great recognition to the environment where the children live; that is, in a family. Islam gives special consideration to the family because it is considered the foundation of the community, and because building a healthy community requires a healthy family first. Therefore, Islam sets many rules and regulations for creating a family in order to build a healthy community. First, Islam encourages Muslims to get married in order to establish a family. God the Most High says, *"Among His proofs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, in order to have tranquillity and contentment with each other, and He placed in your hearts love and care towards your spouses. In this, there are sufficient proofs for people who think"* (Al-Room, Verse 21). He says in another verse, *"You shall encourage those of you who are single to get married. They may marry the righteous among your male and female servants, if they are poor. GOD will enrich them from His grace. GOD is Bounteous, Knower"* (Al-Noor, Verse 32).

Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) encouraged early marriage. He said, "O you young people, men and women! Whosoever can bear the burden of marriage, let him or her get married. It is indeed contentment to the eye and a protection to the modest parts" (Al-Zahrani 2004 p.37). Also, he (Peace be upon Him) said, "Marriage is my recommended custom. Whosoever turns away from my recommended custom is turning away from me"(Al-Joziayah 2000 p.16).

From the above it is clear that marriage is highly recommended by Islam for a variety of reasons, one of which is creating a family. According to Al-Sabooni (1968), the family in Islam is built on a concrete base as follows:

1. That the husband and wife have been created from one origin. God the Most High says, *"O people, observe your Lord; the One who created you from one being, and created from it its mate, then spread from the two many men and women. You shall regard GOD, by whom you swear, and regard the parents. GOD is watching over you"* (Al-Nisa, Verse 1).

2. The family foundation is based on affection and mercy. God the Most High says, *"Among His proofs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, in order to have affection and mercy with each other, and He placed in your hearts love and care towards your spouses. In this, there are sufficient proofs for people who think"* (Al-Room, Verse 21).

3. The family foundation is based in justice and equality, so, each spouse has duties and rights. God the Most High says, *"The women have rights, as well as obligations, equitably"* (Al-Baqarah, Verse 228).

4. The family foundation is based in social solidarity. Accordingly, Islam views the family as a group of people who cooperate and help each other.

Islam gives importance to children from birth to adulthood. Actually Islam gives importance to children even before birth. Many Islamic scholars and researchers

have discussed children's rights in Islam (M'Daghri 1995; Al-Joziayah 2000; Al-Zahrani 2004; Al-Khatib 2005; Al-Zahrani 2005; Alyousif, Al-Romah et al. 2005), therefore, I will summaries those rights.

Importance before birth: Before the child's birth, Islam encouraged the Muslim man to choose a good wife. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, "Choose your wives well" (M'Daghri 1995 p.31). Islam urges the husband to choose good wife because she is seen as the basis of the morality of the children. In Islam, to marry a good woman is considered a victory, because the wife is the most important pillar of the family. She bears the children who will inherit many of their characters from her, and from her they will get most of their social behaviour patterns.

Also, Islam ensures the life of child even before birth by forbidding and criminalizing abortion. God the Most High says, "*You shall not kill your children due to fear of poverty. We provide for them, as well as for you. Killing them is a gross offence*" (Al-Israa, Verse 31). This right is not simply for the embryo but for the child after birth as well. God the Most High says, "*Mothers shall nurse their infants for two full years*" (Al-Baqarah, Verse 233).

According to Islamic Law (*Shari'a*) children are entitled to various rights after birth:

- <u>Rights in the protection of the lineage</u>: Islam ensures for each child his or her right in lineage. God the Most High says, "*Call them by (the names of) their fathers: that is juster in the sight of Allah. But if ye know not their father's (names, call them) your brothers in faith*" (Al-Ahzab, Verse 5). So, it is obligatory, in Islam, on the father to show his child lineage. Prophet Mohammed (peace be up on him) said, "*Allah, the Exalted, will veil Himself from any man who disowns his child when he looks at him, and disgrace him in the presence of all creatures, first and last*" (Al-Iraqi 2003 p.514). Therefore, one of the obligatory deeds to show the child lineage is that the father must slaughter a sheep (two for boy and one for

girl) and give the child a name in the first week of birth and tell people that he got has a new baby.

- <u>The right to choose a good name</u>: Islam encourages parents to choose good names for their children. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, "*Whoever gets a new baby must choose him/her a good name*" (Al-Joziayah 2000 p.197).

- <u>The right of expense</u>: Parents are responsible for spending on their children, for supplying all kinds of needs such as food, clothes, shelter and whatever is needed for their well-being until they become adults and are able to spend on themselves. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, "*Of the money you spend as a contribution in Allah's path, or to set free a slave, or as a donation given to the needy, or to support your family, the one yielding the greatest reward is that which you spent on your family*" (Al-Saud 2000 p.89). Negligence or miserliness on children as much as over-spending is not desirable in Islam. God the Most High says, "Those who, when they give, are neither extravagant nor stingy hold a just (balance) between those extremes" (Al-Furqan, Verse 67).

- <u>The right of equal treatment</u>: Islam encourages parents to treat their own children equally. It is not accepted in Islam to prefer one child over another or boy over girl or the opposite. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, "*Fear God (Allah) and be equal between your children*" (Al-Joziayah 2000 p.198). However, this right treatment is not a command for parents only, but according to *Shari'a* (Islamic law) on the community which must treat all its members equally. God the Most High says, "*Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition*" (Al-Nahl, Verse 90). Therefore, Islam gives children the right to be treated equally by their families and communities as well.

-   The right to Education: Islam has reserved for children the right of a basic education. Islam encourages Muslims to educate their children by giving importance to education. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, *"To ask for education is a right for every Muslim."* In addition, child education has been afforded special attention in Islam. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, *"When parents educate their children, then, they will get rewards for their deeds more than by doing charity every day"* (Al-Joziayah 2000 p.196). In Islam child education is not a mission for the parents only, but for the community as well which is co-responsible for providing the tools of education.

-   The right to love, compassion, and respect: Islam encourages parents to show love and compassion for their children and other children. It has been told that the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) was very compassionate to children. One story has it that he would allow his grandsons Hassan and Hussain (may God be pleased with them) to ride on his shoulders even during his prayers (Al-Zahrani 2004 p.55). Islam also encourages parents to value their children and treat them with esteem. Abdullah bin Amir (one of the Prophet's companions, may God be pleased with them) said, "My mother called me one day when the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) was sitting in our house. She said: "Come here and I shall give you something". The Prophet (Peace be upon Him) asked her: "What did you intend to give him?" She replied: "I intended to give him some dates." The Prophet (Peace be upon Him) said: "If you were not to give him anything, a lie would be recorded against you" (Hasan 1993 p.1513).

-   The rights of orphans and refugee children: Islam also ensures the rights of those children who do not know their parents. According to M'Daghri (1995 p.33) "The child whose father and mother are both unknown has not been deprived of the attention of Islamic law, which offers them the same treatment as the one whose ties of filiation are established and which guarantees him a noble and decent life." God the Most High says,

"And they ask you about the orphans: say, "Bringing them up as righteous persons is the best you can do for them. If you mix their property with yours, you shall treat them as family members" (Al-Baqarah, Verse 220). Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, *"One who looks after the orphan whether he is his relative or not, I and he would be together in Paradise like this, and Malik (explained it) with the gesture of drawing his index finger and middle finger close together"* (Siddiqui 2000 p.1537).

In brief, Islam has established instruction for the care of children and asked people to follow them in order to raise healthy children. However, Muslims do not follow some of these instructions and I argue that many children in Saudi Arabia do not enjoy the rights they have under *Shari'a* (Islamic Law). I argue that Islam has formulated rights for children but does not ignore the need for children to be disciplined. Islam ordains specific regulations and instructions for this purpose. The following section will shed the light on the use of physical punishment in *Shari ' a.*

2.7 Parental use of physical punishment in Islam

In Arab history before Islam, children were killed and no one protested. For instance, female infanticide was widely practiced by Arabs. However, with the coming of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, these practices have been forbidden by *Shari'a* (Al-Moosa, Al-Shaiji et al. 2003; Al-Mahroos, Abdulla et al. 2005). God the Most High says, *"When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in the dust? Ah! What an evil (choice) they decide on?"* (Al-Baqarah, Verse 220).

Islam emphasises affection and mercy for children. Mercy is one of the virtues advocated by Islam; each Muslim should be characterized by this virtue. Consequently, parents must show mercy in dealing with their children. So, the harsh treatment of children and child abuse conflicts with the virtues that Islam advocates (Al-Saud 2000). Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, *"The Merciful (God) shows mercy to those who are merciful. Have mercy on those on earth, and the One above the heavens (God) will have mercy upon you"* (Khan 1997 p.1033). He also said, *"God will not have mercy on one who is not compassionate towards people"* (Khan 1997 p.1048). Islam also emphasises being compassionate toward children. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, *"Is there any one of us who does not show mercy to our children and respect our elderly people"* (Hasan 1993 p.1443). One story reported of Prophet Mohammed in this regard is that of the man who saw Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) kissing his grandchild and said to the Prophet, "I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them." The Prophet said, "He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy will be shown to him" (Khan 1997 p.1397). Prophet Mohammed also said, *"He whoever kisses his child, God will write a good deed for him, and who exhilarate his child God, will exhilarate him on the Day of Judgement"* (Khan 1997 p.1398).

Nevertheless, Islam permits the use of physical punishment in disciplinary and educational circumstances. According to Al-Mutrik (1999), the wisdom behind the legality of the use of corporal punishment in Islam is the protection of the family as a whole and the preservation of children from delinquency or slipping into bad behaviours in additional to educational purposes. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, *"Teach your children to perform prayer at the age of seven and beat them if they do not do so by the age of ten"* (Al-Nasser and Darwish 1991 p.201). Furthermore, it has been reported that Prophet Mohammed said, *"Hang up the scourge in a place where the family members can see it"* (Al-Nasser and Darwish 1991 p.202). Al-Nasser and Darwish (1991) have commented on this by saying that seeing the scourge may be sufficient to make its use unnecessary. However Islam permits the use of physical punishment, yet, this permission was conditional. Nevertheless, *Shari'a* (Islamic law) imposes

conditions and rules for using physical punishment on children. Several scholars and researchers have written about it (Al-Nasser and Darwish 1991; Al-Mutrik 1999; Al-Saud 2000; Al-Iraqi 2003). In the following paragraphs I will summarise the rules and conditions:

- Parents should not resort to physical punishment before exhausting all other methods of discipline such as discussion, advice, verbal reprimands and/or withdrawing privileges etc.

- Parents should not use physical punishment while angry. It has been reported that Prophet Mohammed said "Teach and facilitate (He repeated it three times), and if you find yourself angry just don't do" (Al-Mutrik 1999 p.213). This *Hadith* (the observed words and deeds of the Prophet) advocated that people should not do anything while angry because the result may become contrary. So, parents must avoid using physical punishment while angry.

- Parents should not use physical punishment on a child aged less than ten years old. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, *"Teach your children to perform prayer at the age of seven and beat them if they do not do so by the age of ten"*(Al-Nasser and Darwish 1991 p.203). This *Hadith* indicates that children under ten years old should not be beaten; yet, they must be taught and directed.

- Parents should not use severe physical punishment which could break a child's bone or even leave bruises. Muslims scholars have decided that physical punishment must not break a bone or leave a bruise (Al-Mutrik 1999).

- Parents should not use hard tools to punish their children physically. Some Muslim scholars choose to use the bare hand only in physical punishment (Al-Mutrik 1999).

- Parents should not beat or hit their children in sensitive places of child's body such as the head, face, or genitals. Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) said, "If one of you beat, he should avoid beating the face and genitals" (Al-Nasser and Darwish 1991 p.218; Al-Saud 2000 p.93).

- Physical punishment should be equal to the misbehaviour committed by the child. So, it is not acceptable for parents to punish a child for a misbehaviour that does not deserve punishment (Al-Qarni 2005).
- Physical punishment should be proportionate to the child's age.

In brief, as is clear from the above discussion, Islam gives parents the authority to use physical punishment for discipline purposes but with restrictions. I argue that the use of physical punishment in Islam should not now be considered the first resort for discipline. Many other methods should come before the use of physical punishment. For example, reasoning, advice and discussion are methods which can be used to show the child his or her misbehaviour before the use of physical punishment. Nevertheless, while Islam permits parents to use physical punishment as a type of punishment for child misbehaviour, Islam encourages parents to reward child for good behaviours. God the Most High says, *"Is there any reward for goodness - other than goodness?"* (Al-Rahmaan, Verse 60). According to AL-Nasser and Darwish (1991), reward is two parts of *Shari'a* (Islamic law):

- Tangible rewards: such as providing the child with a toy, doll, sweets, or cash money etc.
- Verbal rewards: such as encouragement by words, praise in front of other people, smiling when the child behaves well etc.

2.8 Parental use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia

Whoever reads the above review could conclude that Saudi Arabia is a perfect community and would not harm children for two reasons; many services are provided to help look after children and Islam has ordained many regulations in order to protect children. Yet, the reality is different from this view. The government has passed legislation in order to promote a healthy and good life for children such as providing all necessary services and by its effort to protect them from abuse in schools by banning corporal punishment at school. Yet, the use of physical punishment is still used in many schools in Saudi Arabia as discussed more fully below. Moreover, parents still have full authority over their children and no official regulations protect them from severe physical punishment. Although Saudis are considered religious and conservative people, and Islam has formulated many regulations on using physical punishment, many people still use it.

For many years, parents in Saudi Arabia, like other parents worldwide, have used physical punishment on their children. The use of physical punishment is a part of Saudi history. For example, in the past (over thirty to fifty years ago) the majority of Saudis would have been exposed to physical punishment either at home or school. In the past the teacher's use of physical punishment was recommended even by parents. In the past, the parents sent their children to school and would tell the teacher to punish them if they did not obey his instructions or do well in their studies. One traditional saying in Saudi Arabia is that "The stick is for him who disobeys" which means if a child does not obey the instructions he/she will be beaten with the stick. Another one is "The meat is yours and leave the bone for us" which means the parents give full authority to the teacher to use physical punishment even he cause the child death. For instance, Bird (1995 p.279) said that, "One of the deputy ministers in Saudi Arabia told me of his memory of school: "Look at my ear lobe, (which was somewhat extended and black as if severely bruised). I can thank my teacher in the mosque school in my village for this. He pulled me from one end of the mosque to the other until I was able to recite my Quranic verses perfectly."

Recently, the use of physical punishment in schools has been banned, however, a number of teachers still use it. Many cases of teachers using physical punishment have been reported by different newspapers. For instance, AlRiyadh newspaper (a local newspaper) (2007b) recently reported that an elementary school teacher had used severe physical punishment on one of his students leaving an injury on the child's hand.

The child pointing to his injured hand (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2007b).

So, the use of physical punishment on children is part of Saudi history, and in the past its use in the Saudi community was for two main goals: discipline and education. However, at times it appears that the use of physical punishment extends beyond these two goals. In the past it was unacceptable for any person to talk about family problems in Saudi Arabia, but nowadays the situation is changing, because many children have been injured and a number of them have died as a result of the harsh treatment by their own parents. One of the instruments that has helped to show this phenomenon is the media. The media play a prime role in exposing the real problem and the extent of children's suffering from their parents' harsh treatment. Several newspapers have reported cases of children injured by their own parents. However, many cases remain hidden. According to AlRiyadh Newspaper (2006b), 90% of the violence towards children at home is hidden and only 10% is exposed to the public. Yet, many in the Saudi community believe less than 10% is detected.

A girl was whipped on her back by her stepmother (Alwatan Newspaper 2006a)

During the previous years, several local newspapers have reported many dreadful stories of children who have been subject to their parents' aggressive maltreatment. Some of those children have been badly injured and some have died as a result of their maltreatment. For example, one of the famous stories reported in Saudi's newspapers is the story of a nine-year-old girl called "Ghoswon" who died as result of her father's and stepmother's maltreatment and torture (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2006a; AlRiyadh Newspaper 2006c). Another five-months-old girl called "Remas" died as a result of punishment. According to Alwatan Newspaper (2005), the father of the girl, who was aged 23 years, brought her body to the hospital, claiming that she fell down from the bed. The physician on duty was suspicions and transferred her body to a paediatric specialist who confirmed that she had recently been exposed to violent and harsh treatment and called for her to be transferred to the forensic medicine department. Another physical abuse case reported by AlRiyadh Newspaper (2005) was of an 8-year-old girl admitted to the hospital in a critical situation as a result of severe physical punishment by her father who had used different objects in punishing her, such as a stick, wire, and an iron rod.

A girl admitted to the hospital as a result of physical punishment (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2005)

Recently another case of a girl's death was reported by Alwatan Newspaper (2006b). A seven-year-old girl was brought dead to the hospital by her father and brother. The medical examination showed that the cause of death was torture and severe beating. Her father admitted that he punished her using objects such as electric cable and other sharp tools.
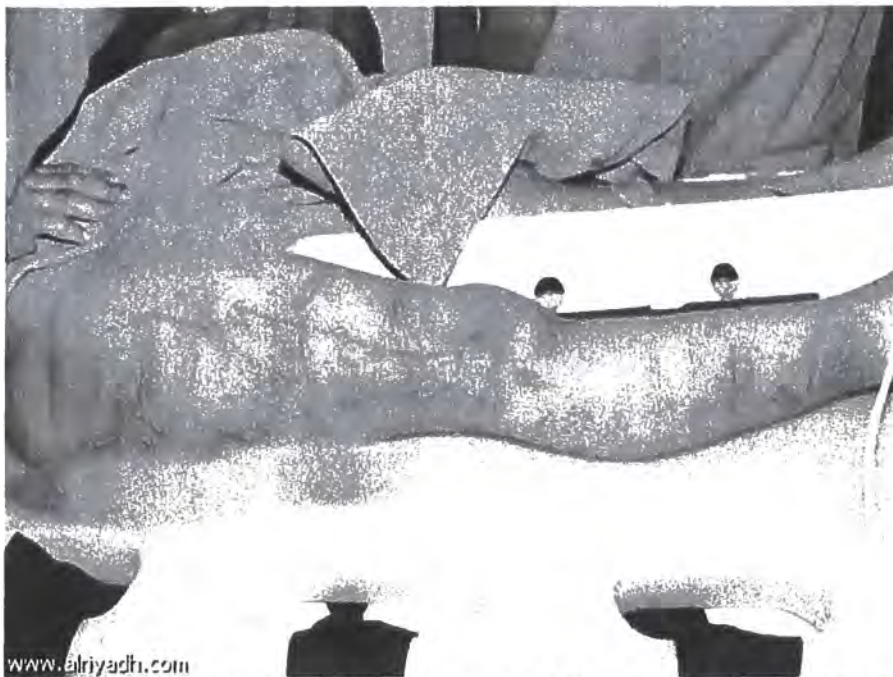
A child exposed to physical punishment (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2006d)

www.alriyadh.com
A child at hospital as a result of parental maltreatment (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2007a)

Ultimately, in addition to what has been reported in the media, many more cases remain hidden. Reported cases were either because the cases ended with a child's death or the child was in a critical medical situation. Many other cases where children are harmed through physical punishment do not come to the attention of the media or medical services. So, it is reasonable to assume that physical punishment continues to exist in the Saudi community and some parents use severe physical punishment. Accordingly, I suggest that this problem warrants considerable attention by researchers. Hopefully, this study will be a first step in this regard. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework of the current study for more understanding of this social problem.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Preamble

This literature review has been divided into two parts: the first provides a review of theories which set out to explain parental use of physical punishment. The second reviews empirical studies which have been undertaken in this field. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to provide details regarding theoretical models that can be used to explain factors contributing towards parental use of physical punishment. This chapter will provide an illustration of the link between child abuse and physical punishment, followed by illustration of three theoretical models; namely, a psychological model, a sociological model, and an ecological model.

In order to identify factors contributing to parents' use of physical punishment on children in Saudi Arabia, an appropriate theoretical framework is needed. According to Donnelly and Straus (2005 p.6) "Theoretical grounded research ... provides a meaningful way of organizing and interpreting research findings." Many theories have been adapted in order to explain the reasons behind child abuse or maltreatment. However, few theories have been concerned with the physical punishment of children. Donnelly and Straus (2005 p.6) argue that "The lack of adequate theoretical grounding for research has undoubtedly hampered study of corporal punishment." Therefore, in order to build a clear theoretical framework to explore the reasons behind parental use of physical punishment, the relationship or association between physical punishment and child abuse should be explored.

3.2 The link between physical punishment and physical abuse

"Physical punishment and physical abuse are two points along a continuum, such that if a physical punishment is administered too severely or too frequently, it crosses the line into physical abuse" (Gershoff 2002a p.553). Several researchers have argued that ineffective use of physical punishment can escalate into severe physical punishment which can lead to physical abuse (Fontes 2002; Orhon, Ulukol et al. 2006). According to Straus and Yodanis (1996) a number of studies have found an association between the use of physical punishment and physical abuse of children. Several researchers have found that the majority of physical abuse incidents were the result of parents' attempts to discipline or correct their children's misbehaviours (Gershoff 2002a; Durrant 2005). According to Gil (1971 p.644), "It should be noted that in most incidents of child abuse the caretakers involved are normal individuals exercising their prerogative of disciplining a child whose behaviour they find in need of correction. Some of these adults may often go farther than they intended because of anger and temporary loss of self-control…"

According to Whipple and Richey (1997), several studies have found that abusive parents use physical punishment on their children more than non-abusive parents. Also, parents who abuse their children physically are regularly found to have employed extremely harsh discipline methods (Whipple and Richey 1997). Moreover, a relationship has been found between parents who have been abused or physically punished by their own parents as children and their use of physical punishment on their own children (Trocmé and Durrant 2003). For example, abusive parents are more likely to have experienced physical punishment as children than non-abusive parents (Straus and Smith, 1992 cite in Trocmé and Durrant 2003). A study involving 595 Canadian mothers found that those mothers who had been abused as children were more likely to use physical punishment on their children than mothers without child abuse experiences (Berger, 2001 cited in Trocmé and Durrant 2003).

Some researchers argue that "The line between physical punishment and child abuse is arguably thin and ambiguous to many parents" (Rodriguez and Sutherland 1999 p.652). Hence, it is hard for parents to decide when they must stop using physical punishment to avoid falling into a physical abuse situation. However, other researchers have tried to clarify the ambiguity of this line. They state that child physical abuse is the point when any injuries such as cuts, burns or broken bones could happen (Whipple and Richey 1997; Durrant 2005). For example, Stein and Lewis (1992) considered any beating with an object or any physical punishment associated with injury to be physical abuse. The line between physical punishment and physical abuse is ambiguous and it is very hard for an angry parent to decide when he/she must stop using physical punishment to avoid hurting the child. As Smith (2005 p.2) says: "Although researchers attempt to distinguish between physical punishment and abuse, this is very hard to do and there is no general agreement about the dividing line between physical punishment and physical abuse. It is not possible to define what a 'safe smack' is."

Other researchers view physical punishment and physical abuse as similar concepts. According to Durrant et al (2004 p.1):

> "There is no clear distinction between physical punishment and physical abuse. Attempts to distinguish them in terms of degrees of force, parental intent or even extent of injury have not been successful."

Similarly, Tijerino (2001) has argued that the line which distinguishes physical punishment of children and child physical abuse has not yet been found.

Alternatively, some researchers have distinguished child physical abuse and physical punishment by the types of punishment (Baumrind, Larzelere et al. 2002). According to Gershoff (2002a), actions that do not cause major physical harm, such as a spank or slap, are physical punishment, whereas actions which cause physical harm, such as punching or burning, are physical abuse. According

to Straus (1994) physical punishment which causes psychological harm to a child should be considered child abuse. However, other commentators have pointed out that physical punishment does not per se constitute child abuse (Baumrind 1994 p.362).

Straus (1994 p.90) proposed a model to explain the link between child physical abuse and physical punishment. Figure 3.1 shows the model. It is based on three concepts to explain the link between a parent's own experience of physical punishment as child and that parent's subsequent use of physical punishment and abuse as a parent; namely, cultural spillover theory, depression, and marital violence. Further description of this model is provided by Straus (1994 pp.90-91)
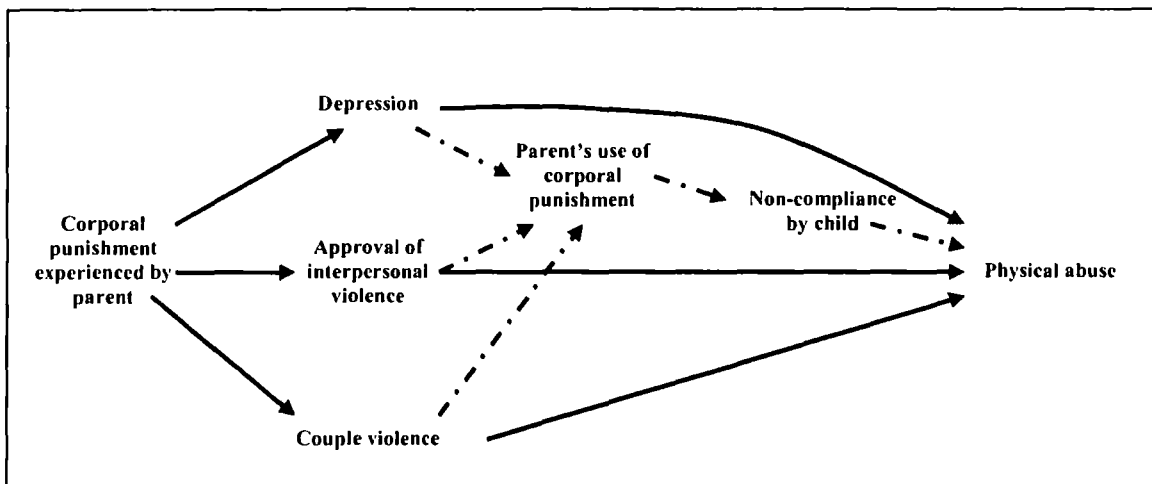
Figure 3.1 The link between physical punishment and physical abuse. Adapted from (Straus 1994 p.91).

1) Cultural Spillover Theory

According to this perspective, cultural norms formulate the acceptance or non-acceptance of violent actions in a society. According to Straus (1994), Culture Spillover Theory assumes that community acceptance of violence against children, such as corporal punishment, as a normal and acceptable act could be applied to physical abuse as well. Furthermore, "Cross-cultural researchers have frequently found that one form of aggression is associated with another. In other words, many societies appear to have a culture-wide pattern of violence. If one

form of violence occurs, others are also likely to occur" (Ember and Ember 2005 p.613). For example, a study conducted in the United States on more than 950 parents found that parents who believed in the use of physical punishment as a discipline method used severe types of punishment on their children more than other parents who did not believe in the use of physical punishment as a discipline method (Straus 1994). Another study consisting of 105 Mexican mothers (Corral-Verdugo, Frias-Armenta et al. 1995) concluded that there is a significant association between these mothers' beliefs and their actual use of physical punishment.

2) Depression

According to Straus' model, there is a link between exposure to physical punishment and depression. Several researchers have confirmed the link between depression and the use of physical punishment (Straus 1994; Eamon and Zuehl 2001; Frias-Armenta 2002; Gershoff 2002a). Moreover, the link between depression and the use of physical punishment was found in two ways. According to Straus (1994) physical punishment in childhood may lead to depression and depression make parents more prone to use physical abuse. Straus (1994) writes, "The more corporal punishment a person experienced as an adolescent, the greater the chance of being depressed as an adult." Also, "Depression often may be associated with aggression, especially in the form of uncontrolled violent outbursts against others" (Straus and Yodanis 1996). Gershoff (2002a p.560) argued that, "Depression may precipitate corporal punishment because it biases parents to value parent- over child-centred interactional goals and to make negative attributions about their children's behaviours." Elsewhere, depressed parents have been found to use physical punishment on their children more often than non-depressed parents (Durrant, Ensom et al. 2004).

In the United States (Webster-Stratton 1988), a study consisting of 205 parents (120 mothers and 85 fathers) found an association between mothers who were depressed and their use of aggressive disciplinary methods. A study conducted

on 451 two-parent American families concluded that depressed parents often describe their children's behaviours as "dissatisfied" (Simons, Beaman et al. 1993). Another study conducted with 280 women aged 18-90 years in the United States (Carlin, Kemper et al. 1994) found that 83% of those women who claimed that they had experienced abuse as children said they had experienced depression during their lifetime. In Mexico (Frias-Armenta 2002), a study of 150 women, concluded that women with child abuse experiences were more depressed. The study found also that depression increases the possibility of mothers' use of physical punishment on their children.

3) Marital violence

This theoretical view claims that there is an association between couple violence and physical punishment and abuse of their children. According to Straus (1994 p.91), this theoretical perspective is based on two areas of research. The first suggests that a person who has experienced physical punishment in childhood has a greater chance of experiencing couple violence as an adult. The second suggests that couple violence greatly increases the chance of physical abuse. Straus (1994) argued that this model was formulated as a response to professionals noting that physical punishment increases the risk of physical abuse because parents who were subjected to physical punishment by their parents are apt to use violence as a method to correct their own children's misbehaviours, to participate in spouse assault, and be more vulnerable to depression. Dawes et al. (2005) argued that marital violence has a direct and an indirect influence on parents' use of physical punishment. The direct consequence is that those parents who use violence to resolve their marital conflicts use the same method to deal with their children's misbehaviours (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). According to Straus (1994 p.59) "Evidence from a wide variety of studies shows that aggression in one sphere of life tends to be generalized to other spheres." A national survey conducted on American parents in 1975 showed that those parents who used violence toward each other were more likely to physically punish their children (Straus 1994). The indirect consequence is that those children who witness marital violence become aggressive (Sternberg, Lamb et al.

1993). According to Gershoff (2002a), several studies have found an association between the use of physical punishment on children and child aggression. The child's aggressive behaviour can, in turn, prompt parents to use increasing physical punishment to stop this behaviour (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

Several researchers have mentioned the relationship between the use of physical punishment on children and marital violence (Wolfe 1985; Straus 1994; Dietz 2000; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). For example, in 1990 (Cited in: Straus and Yodanis 1996) a national survey of 2143 American couples found that the higher the rate of physical punishment experienced as a child, the higher the rate of participation in spousal violence.

In conclusion, there appears to be a clear relationship between physical abuse and physical punishment and a similarity between the aetiology factors of both physical abuse and punishment (see Figure 3.2). Figure 3.2 shows how the two phenomena are distinct, but related, and that a degree of cross-over exists between the two in terms of aetiology. Specifically, it is my contention that the use of physical punishment is one of the causes of child abuse. Consequently, I claim that theories which explain the reasons behind physical abuse can be applied in order to explain the use of physical punishment. The following section will provide a theoretical explanation of the aetiology of parents' use of physical punishment on children.
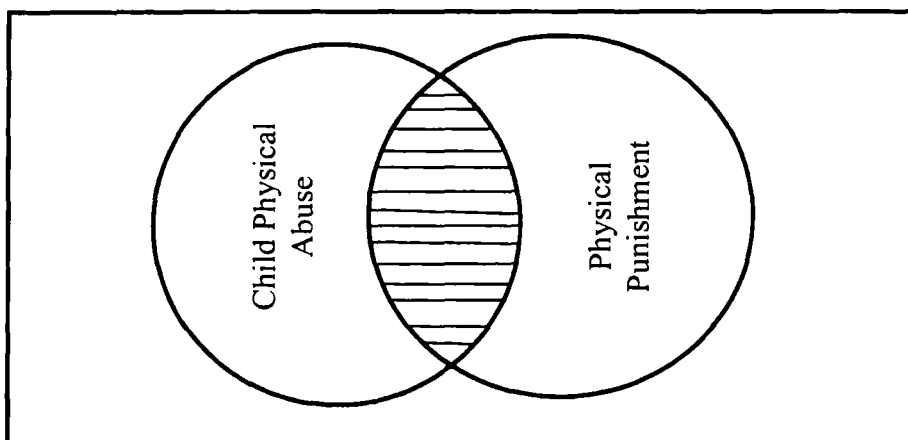
Figure 3.2: The relationship between physical abuse and physical punishment

3.3 Theoretical explanations for the use of physical punishment

No specific theory can provide a comprehensive explanation of parents' use of physical punishment on their children. Actually, many theories in social science and psychology operate at a general level but are employed to explain some more distinct social phenomena (Al-Zahrani 2004). There are three basic theoretical perspectives which can be employed to explain the factors that contribute to parental use of physical punishment on their children: psychological, sociological and ecological models. I argue that these perspectives can help to explain the aetiology of parents' use of physical punishment. Each perspective provides an explanation of child maltreatment from a different angle. Therefore, this section will provide a review of each model in order to explore which one best explains parents' use of physical punishment.

3.3.1 Psychological perspective

A psychological perspective on child physical abuse focuses on parents' psychological status and their mental health. This perspective assumes that abusive parents have different psychological characteristics from non-abusive parents (Wilson-Oyelaran 1989; Sherbourne 2004; Tolliver 2004). According to Tolliver (2004), it is most likely that abusive parents' personalities include poor self-esteem, poor self-image, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

This perspective was developed when the "battered child syndrome" concept was first outlined by Kempe and his colleagues in 1960s. As a result of this concept physical abuse was described as a consequence of parental psychological dysfunction (Durrant 2004; Sherbourne 2004). However, later, this perspective was adapted because it was found that only 5-10% of those parents could be described as mentally ill (Sherbourne 2004; Tolliver 2004). According to Durrant (2004 p.1), "Today, we know that most parents who harm their children do not demonstrate psychopathology, but have chosen to use physical force as a means of controlling or correcting a child's behaviour."

According to Straus et al. (1981), the concept that abusive people are mentally ill seems logical when one hears about aggressive situations such as the following two scenarios:

> *"Mr. Timmons grew angry at his son for constantly knocking into things around the house and breaking valuable objects like lamps and ashtrays. One evening, his son banged into a table and broke yet another lamp. Mr. Timmons, enraged, dragged his four-years-old into the basement and held him down while putting the whirling bit of a power drill through the boy's chest. His son died instantly."* (Straus, Gelles et al. 1981 p.125)

> *"Mrs. King had long tried to teach her daughter not to touch hot objects. When the little girl wandered near the stove and tried to play with the knobs on the front of the stove, Mrs. King grabbed her hand and held it down on the gas burner until the hand was burned beyond recognition."* (Straus, Gelles et al. 1981 p.125)

Yet, the vast majority of people who commit family violence do not suffer any psychological disorder.

One of the weaknesses of this perspective is that it focuses on one factor of child abuse; namely, the parents' psychological status. According to Sherbourne (2004 p.14), this perspective assumes that factors within the individual abuser are responsible for occurrences of child abuse. According to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1995 p.63), "Although mental distress is common and is itself a powerful explanatory factor in violence to children, psychotic mental illness is much less usual and explains rather little." Therefore, this perspective alone does not provide an adequate explanatory model for physical punishment.

3.3.2 Sociological perspective

In contrast to the psychological perspective is the sociological perspective. This perspective focuses on factors outside the individual's personality and cites culture, society, and the economy to explain the occurrence of child abuse (Wilson-Oyelaran 1989; Harder 2004; Sherbourne 2004; Tolliver 2004). The assumption of this perspective is that external factors such as poverty, unemployment etc. can raise stress levels in parents which may increase the likelihood of child abuse occurring (Harder 2004; Sherbourne 2004; Tolliver 2004). According to Turner (2005 p.261) "It is evident that stressful conditions and experiences can be determinants of violence toward children". She also argues that "there is also reason to believe that stress can manifest itself, either directly or indirectly, in aggressive or violent behaviour" (p.258). This may include the use of physical punishment in discipline. Moreover, according to this perspective, culture could be a factor in predicting child abuse. In a culture where physical punishment is an acceptable method of discipline, physical abuse is more likely to occur. According to Jack (2001 p.189) "In societies where the physical punishment of children is either rare, or legally prohibited, the child physical abuse rate tends to be significantly lower than in countries where corporal punishment is sanctioned. In the same way societies that view children as being the property of their parents, and in which the state is prepared to intrude into the private sphere of family life only in extreme cases, will find it very difficult to prevent child abuse." Also Belsky (1980 p.329) argues that, "It is doubtful that maltreatment can be eliminated so long as parents rear their offspring in a society in which violence is rampant, corporal punishment is condoned as a child-rearing technique, and parenthood itself is construed in terms of ownership." Several studies have found that economic status, social isolation and unemployment are factors which predict the use of violence toward children (Wilson-Oyelaran 1989; Sherbourne 2004). For example, a recent study in Egypt found that economic difficulties were considered a fundamental factor within family conflicts in families who have a higher tendency to discipline their children physically (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998). In addition, other factors such as alcohol or drug abuse may be risk factors for the parental use of physical

punishment. According to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1995 p.67), "Alcohol in particular, and other forms of substance abuse, are associated in various ways with violence. In relation to children's potential for violence, both their parents' and their own alcohol and substance abuse are risk factors."

One potential criticism of this perspective is that it focuses on external factors and ignores personal factors. Yet, child maltreatment is a result of several overlapping factors (Garbarino 1977; Belsky 1980). Therefore, a purely sociological perspective does not provide a clear and accurate explanation of the use of physical punishment.

Up to this point, the exploration of theoretical understandings of child physical punishment has focused only on overarching psychological and sociological perspectives. Whilst theses are helpful in some ways, used alone they are incomplete. Additionally, many more specific theories emerge from these broad perspectives, and will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.3 Social learning theory

One theory that may explain parents' use of physical punishment is social learning theory. Social learning theory was developed by Albert Bandura. This theory is based on a general assumption that children learn their behaviours. According to learning theory, behaviours are learned from one of two sources; either "experience" or "observation." According to Bandura (1977 p.16), "People are not equipped with inborn repertories of behaviour. They must learn them. New response patterns can be acquired either by direct experience or by observation." Social learning theory emphasizes learning through modelling. Bandura (1977 p.22) argued that "Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action." According to this theory parents can accept the use of physical punishment through the modelling they themselves

experienced as children. Rich (2005 p.170) argues that "A child who observes a person (model) perform an act is more likely to behave in a similar manner." According to Simons et al. (1994 p.592), "The message conveyed by harsh parents goes beyond approaches to parenting; it involves conflict resolution tactics to be used with people in general. Consistent with this idea, numerous studies have found that children subjected to corporal punishment tend to be more aggressive than children whose parents use alternative disciplinary strategies."

Several researchers have applied social learning theory in order to explain the causes of child abuse and domestic violence in general (Al-Zahrani 2004; Al-Qarni 2005; Alyousif, Al-Romah et al. 2005). According to Al-Qarni (2005) social learning theory is the most popular theory for explaining the use of violence and delinquency. Alyousif et al. (2005 p.21) applied this theory in order to explain the reason behind domestic violence and he summarized its key hypotheses:

1. Domestic violence is learned in the family.
2. Many of the aggressive behaviours used by parents begin with attempts to discipline.
3. Aggressive behaviour is learned through a mutual relationship between parents and children and early childhood experiences.
4. Child abuse can produce an aggressive person.
5. Family members who are less powerful become targets of violence.

Social learning theory is therefore promising in its ability to explain one of the risk factors for the use of physical punishment. This theory suggests that children who are exposed to physical punishment as children may learn to accept this as justification for treating their own children in the same way. However, I argue that this is clearly true for some people but it does not work for every person. Many people experience things but they do not repeat them; otherwise all victims of crime would become criminals.

3.3.4 Frustration and aggression theory

One of the most famous proponents of frustration and aggression theory is John Dollard. This theory is based on an assumption that frustration leads to aggressive behaviour (Dollard, Doob et al. 1961). In other words, when people become frustrated they become angry and infuriated which increases their motivation to behave aggressively. According to Lawson (1965 P.14) "the basis of this theory consists of two seemingly very straightforward propositions:

1. The occurrence of frustration always increases the tendency for an organism to respond aggressively.
2. Whenever an organism responds aggressively, this is prima-facie evidence of previous frustration."

Dollard et al. (1961 p.27) argued that there are four factors that interact with each others in the process of aggression: "the strength of instigation to aggression, inhibition of aggression acts, the object toward which aggression is directed and the form this aggression takes, and the reduction of instigation to aggression."

Based on this theory, child misbehaviour can be interpreted as a frustration factor which increases the possibility of parents' using physical punishment. For example, when suddenly a parent discovers that his or her son smokes, the parent may become frustrated by this behaviour which may translate into anger and then prompt use of physical punishment as a consequence. Other frustration factors may be external to the child. For example, those parents who are unable to provide for their family's living expenses and their basic needs might feel frustrated enough to behave aggressively at home. Dollard et al (1961 p.39) argued that "The strongest instigation, aroused by a frustration, is to acts of aggression directed against the agent perceived to be the source of the frustration and progressively weaker instigations are aroused to progressively less direct acts of aggression." Based on that, a parent's urge to use physical punishment could be higher when the child is the source of the frustration. For example:

> *"Last night I did something that really frightened me. I was helping our son with his homework and he refused to try to solve the math problem-just kept saying "I can't get it." I become so infuriated I started to slap his face as hard as I could and I couldn't stop. Today the little guy was black and blue marked on his cheeks. I was so ashamed I didn't let him go to school."*
>
> A mother's statement (cited from Straus, Gelles et al. 1981 p.66)

The above theories have provided some promising ways of explaining some of the factors that can contribute to parental use of physical punishment, yet they ignore some aspects of parental use of physical punishment. For example, the gender of parent and child, and age factors have not been taken into account. The question which arises here is whether any perspective is suitable to use as a basis for understanding parents' use of physical punishment. I suggest that an ecological perspective is relevant, as discussed in the next section and in Chapter Seven below.

3.3.5 Ecological perspective

The psychological and the sociological perspectives provide two possible explanations of child maltreatment from two different viewpoints. While the psychological perspective focuses on a parent's personality, the sociological perspective focuses on external factors such as economic status, society, culture etc. Accordingly, both of these perspectives are considered as "unidirectional" perspectives, whereas child maltreatment is a result of several overlapping factors (Garbarino 1977; Belsky 1980; Sidebotham and Golding 2001). In an effort to correct the weaknesses of these approaches the ecological perspective was developed (Tolliver 2004).

"The word ecology is usually used to refer to the mutual interdependence of plants, animals, people and their physical environments" (Jack 2001 p.185).

According to World Health Organization (2002 p.12), "No single factor explains why some individuals behave violently toward others or why violence is more prevalent in some communities than others. Violence is a result of the complex interplay of individual relationship, and social, cultural and environmental factors." The ecological perspective focuses on "more than one level of analysis, more elaborate antecedent consequent relationships, and more in-depth examinations of potential causal factors and processes by which factors might operate" (Tolliver 2004 p.6). According to this perspective "child maltreatment is viewed as resulting from complex transactions of factors across multiple ecological levels that encompass individuals, families, communities, and the larger society and culture" (Korbin, Coulton et al. 1998 p.216). Consequently, it is clear that the ecological perspective is trying to give an explanation of the problem not only from personal characteristics or personal dysfunction, but situates these factors in the context of the environmental circumstances of people.

The main aim of the present study is to understand factors that contribute to parents' use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia and in my view the use of the perspective as an organising theory is helpful to meeting this aim. According to Garbarino (1977 p.722), "The task of understanding child abuse is particularly well-suited to an ecological model as it is increasingly being recognized that child maltreatment is the product of a multiplicity of factors, not of one influence acting alone." According to Sidebotham and Golding (2001), the best understanding of child maltreatment comes from an ecological model. In addition, the ecological model has been adopted by several researchers to explain the phenomenon (Garbarino and Crouter 1978; Sidebotham and Golding 2001; World Health Organization 2002; Sidebotham and Heron 2003; Tolliver 2004; Tang 2006); and the use of physical punishment on children (Muller 1996; Day, Peterson et al. 1998).

Garbarino (1977 p.722) has summarised the essential elements of the ecological model in four points:

1. "The ecological approach focuses on the progressive, mutual adaptation of organism and environment.

2. It conceives of the environment topologically as an interactive set of systems "nested" within each other, and sees the interdependent interaction of systems as the prime dynamic shaping the context in which the organism directly experiences social reality.

3. It focuses on the issue of "social habitability" - the question of environmental "quality" and the means for achieving it.

4. It asserts the need to consider political, economic and demographic factors in shaping the quality of life for children and families."

The ecological model is based on Bronfenbrenner's work (1979) on the ecology of human development (Wilson-Oyelaran 1989; Sidebotham 2001; Harder 2004). He described it (1979 p.21) as following:

> *"The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded."*

"The basis of an ecological model is that child maltreatment is multi-determined by forces at work in the individual, in the family and in the community and culture, and that these determinants are nested within one another" (Sidebotham 2001 p.103). Hence, the ecological model consists of four levels: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner 1979).
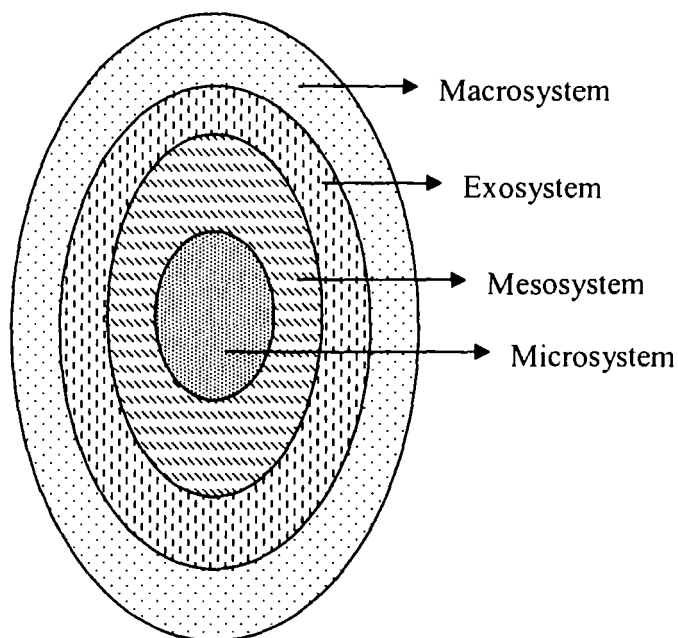
Figure 3.3 Ecological model (adapted from Harder 2004)

The microsystem level has been defined as "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal reactions experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics" (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p.22). This level includes those factors within the family environment which could predict the occurrence of child abuse. Some of these factors are family dynamics, maltreatment, parenting styles, and psychological resources of abusive parents (Harder 2004).

The mesosystem level has been defined as a level which "comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighbourhood peer group; for an adult, among family, work, and social life" (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p.25). "Most families at high-risk of child abuse or neglect are in need of intervention at the mesosystem level" (Harder 2004).

The exosystem level has been defined as "one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the settings containing the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p.25). This level focuses on unemployment, social

isolation, and other community-related factors as increasing the likelihood of child physical abuse (Tolliver 2004). This level focuses on the value of the support from parents' friends and other support groups in the case of facing any life difficulties. Jack (2001 p.188) has described social support as "consisting of the practical help, emotional support and advice and information available to individuals through their relationships with relatives, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and professional or voluntary helpers. These networks of relationships vary in the number of people included, the frequency of their contact and their reliability and the usefulness of the support that they can provide." Lack of social support has been found to be a predictor of parental stress (Mapp 2004). In addition, as mentioned above, stress can be a factor which contributes to the occurrence of physical abuse. According to Wolfe (1985), child maltreatment can be considered as an attempt by parents to gain control over stressful events present in their environments. On the other hand, social support enhances parenting skills. According to Jack (2001 p.188) "Numerous research studies have demonstrated that supportive social relations, especially those provided by relatives and close friends or neighbours, have a positive effect on parental well-being, family functioning, parent-child interaction and the development of children."

The macrosystem level has been defined as "consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, and exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies" (Bronfenbrenner 1979 p.26). This level includes community norms and dominant beliefs about using physical punishment on children among the community members. For example, in a community that agrees on physical punishment as an acceptable discipline method, parents may consider their use of physical punishment on their children as a normal act.

3.3.6 Belsky's model

The ecological model has been modified by Belsky (1980). According to Tolliver (2004 p.7): "Belsky attempted to account for the individual's contribution to the process, utilizing the ontogenic, microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem levels of the ecological model in an effort to propose a framework of dynamic, interactive relationships among multiple factors in the prediction of child physical abuse". The ontogenic level emphasises on the parents' own experience of abuse in childhood and their lack of experience in rearing a child (Belsky 1980), or, in other words, how the parents themselves grew up. According to Belsky (1980 p.323), "In addition to childhood exposure to violence and aggression, experience in caring for children or, more accurately, the absence of such experience represents another aspect of ontogenic development that may play an important role in the abuse and neglect process."

In this way, Belsky emphasises the potential role of earlier childhood experiences in influencing later parenting behaviours, as discussed above in relation to social learning theory.

The second ontogenic factor mentioned by Belsky (1980) is the absence of parenting experience. First of all, parenting has been defined as "the protection and transfer of energy, information, and social relations to offspring" (Geary and Flinn 2001 p.5). In addition to the parenting experience, parenting styles can also affect parents' selection of a discipline method. According to Kircaali-Iftar (2005 p.193) "Parenting styles include attitudes and beliefs regarding how to rear children. These attitudes and beliefs, in turn, form a context for parenting practices." Consequently, I argue that parenting style plays a vital role in the use of physical punishment on children. Gershoff (2002a) argued that the parents' decision to use or forgo physical punishment of children as a discipline method is based on their parenting style.

Four parenting styles have been identified: authoritative parenting, authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting, and neglectful parenting (Baumrind 1991;

Hackett 2003). Two main components formulate parenting styles; "responsiveness" and "demandingness" (Darling 1999; Hackett 2003). Responsiveness refers to "the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands" (Baumrind 1991 p.62 Cited in: Darling 1999; Hackett 2003). "Demandingness" refers to "the claims parents make on children to become integrated into the family whole, by their maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys" (Baumrind 1991 p.61-62 Cited in: Darling 1999; Hackett 2003). Hackett (2003 p.162-163) provides an inclusive description of parenting styles (see Figure 3.4) as following:

Authoritative parenting: These parents have an active communication and good control over their children's behaviours. Thus, these parents are both demanding and responsive (Grusec and Goodnow 1994; Hackett 2003). Moreover, these parents do not prefer to use punishment as a discipline method on their children (Darling 1999).

Authoritarian parenting: These parents show a lower level of trust, communication, and a high level of control over their children (Grusec and Goodnow 1994; Hackett 2003). They tend to give orders and structures to their children (Darling 1999). Hence, these parents are demanding but not responsive (Darling 1999; Hackett 2003) Moreover, these parents tend to use physical discipline on their children (Hackett 2003).

Permissive parenting: These parents tend to exercise less control over their children's behaviour and allow more sovereignty and self-sufficiency (Grusec and Goodnow 1994; Hackett 2003). So, these parents are responsive but not demanding (Darling 1999; Hackett 2003). Children in families with a permissive parenting style show low levels of academic achievement (Hackett 2003).

Neglectful parenting: These parents abandon controlling and supervision of their children's behaviours, as well as their children's needs for emotional warmth and

acceptance. These parents ignore both demandingness and responsiveness (Hackett 2003). Children of parents under this style could experience low levels of self-esteem, self-regulation, and poor academic attainment (Hackett 2003).
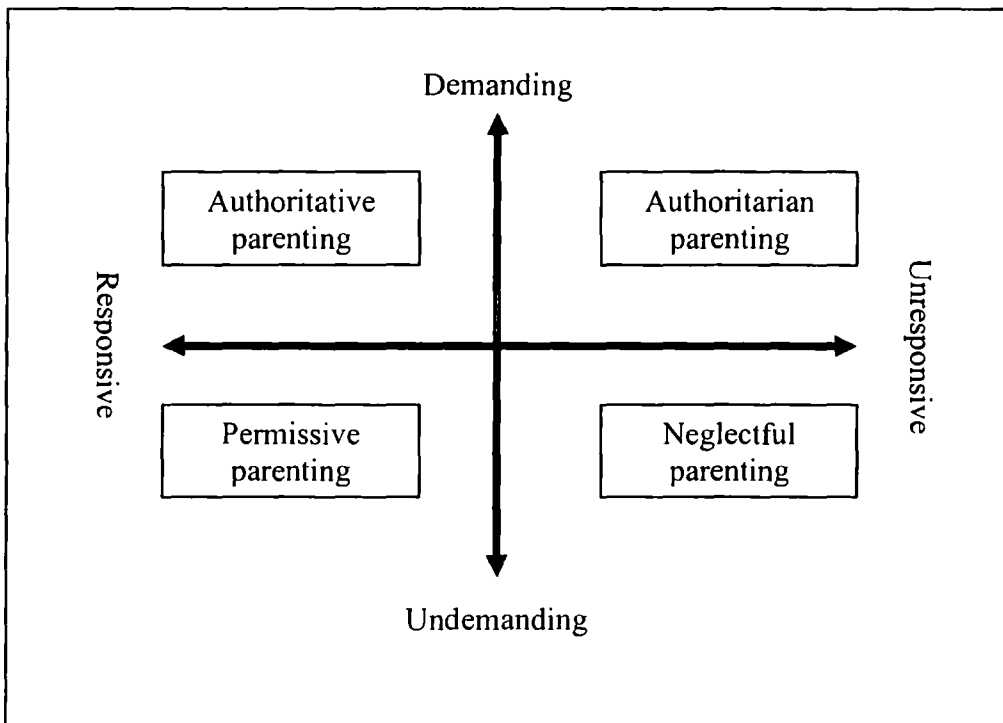
Figure 3.4 Parenting styles. Adapted from Hackett (2003 p.162)

Some researchers argue that, even when the parents use physical punishment, its effectiveness could be different depend on the parenting style (Deater-Deckard and Dodge 1997). According to Gershoff (2002a), several researchers have found that the use of physical punishment with a warm-parenting style may have positive results and low negative effects. However, physical punishment would be harmful and ineffective if it is used with a negative parenting style. Grusec and Goodnow (1994) argued that parents who discuss and reason with their children are more successful in meeting their children's needs and correcting their misbehaviours than those parents who opt to use only physical punishment to discipline them. On the other hand, several researchers have found that some styles of parenting which use a harsh style tend to teach children to use violence as a method to resolve their conflicts with others (Simons, Whitbeck et al. 1991). In addition, parenting practices differ between abusive and non-abusive parents

depending on the child's misbehaviour. For instance, while abusive mothers were found to use physical punishment on their children regardless of the misdemeanour, non-abusive mothers were found to use alternative discipline methods which included discussion and/or physical punishment and use of the two together would depend on the child's misbehaviour (Grusec and Goodnow 1994).

In summary, I suggest that the ecological model is useful to explain the issue of parents' use of violence on children. According to Sidebotham (2001 p.105) "An ecological model, it is argued, enables researchers to combine all the factors known to be relevant to child abuse and will serve as a guide for further empirical research, having the power of generating a variety of testable predictions concerning the dynamic processes through which child maltreatment occurs." He also suggests that "incorporating an ecological approach emphasizes that all levels are important and need to be assessed if a full picture is to be gained" (Sidebotham 2001 p.106). Consequently, this study uses the ecological model in order to describe the contributing factors of parental use of physical punishment among a sample of parents and young people from Saudi Arabia. Specifically, I examine factors at child, parent, family, and community levels in my exploration of these issues in Saudi Arabia, as is explained in the following section.

3.4 Application of the ecological model to parental use of physical punishment

Belsky (1980 p.332) has argued that the ecological model can be a positive implement for enhancing our understanding of a variety of social problems since the determinants of parental use of physical punishment are multiple (Holden, Miller et al. 1999) and the ecological model looks at the problem from several levels, personal, family, community and cultural levels. The model also takes into account both parts of the problem, namely the parents and the child.

Therefore, the ecological model is an appropriate theoretical frame for explaining factors contributing to parents' use of physical punishment. In addition, my adoption of this theoretical perspective was built on the assumption that "the use of physical punishment is a function of other characteristics of the society and its members, and that physical punishment in turn influences society and its members (Straus 1991 p.138).

The World Health Organization (2002) adopted the ecological model in order to explain the use of violence. Those factors can be viewed on four levels: personal factors, family factors, community factors, and societal factors (see Figure 3.5). I will now identify these levels and factors. These will form the bases for my own exploration of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia.

Personal level: This level includes those factors regarded as risk factors for parental use of physical punishment either in respect of the child or parents. These personal factors are as follows:

1. Child gender: for example, a number of previous studies have identified that more boys than girls are at risk of being punished physically by their parents (Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

2. Child age: child age plays a significant role in the parental use of physical punishment (Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

3. Child misbehaviour: parents decide to use physical punishment when the child misbehaves (Gershoff 2002a).

4. Parent's gender: according to Gershoff (2002a p.559), "the gender of the parent is often linked with the use of corporal punishment, with mothers reporting more frequent use."

5. Parent's age: young parents use physical punishment on their children more than older parents (Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

6. Parents' education level: the education level of parents is recognized as a predictor of parental use of physical punishment (Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

7. Parents' experience of physical punishment as children: a history of physical punishment in childhood is a significant predictor of parental use of physical punishment as parents (Gershoff 2002a; Clement and Bouchard 2005).

Family level: this level includes those factors which represent a risk factor for parental use of physical punishment. These family factors are as follows:

1. Number of Children: a large number of children can affect the likelihood of parental use of physical punishment (Gershoff 2002a; Clement and Bouchard 2005; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

2. Family income: a low family income increases the risk of physical punishment. Several studies have pointed out that low income is a predictor of parents' use of physical punishment (Clement and Bouchard 2005; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

3. Marital status: according to (Gershoff 2002a p.561) "marital status itself may also influence parents' use of corporal punishment, presumably because the stress of single parenthood can precipitate a reliance on corporal punishment. Single parents and separated or divorced parents have been found to use more corporal and harsh punishment with their children than married parents."

4. Marital violence: the relationship between the use of physical punishment on children and marital violence (Wolfe 1985; Straus 1994; Dietz 2000; Clement and Bouchard 2005; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

Community level: this level includes those factors which present a risk factor for parental use of physical punishment in respect of the community. These community factors are as follows:

1. Absence of child protection law or, in other words, the legalization of parental use of physical punishment: most people do not hesitate to commit any action that is not prohibited by the law. That does not mean if it becomes illegal people will not continue to use it. For example, drug

abuse is forbidden by almost all countries all over the world, yet still there are some people who use drugs. However, the existence of a law that prevents parents from using physical punishment could reduce its use. For example, in 1979, Sweden banned physical punishment (Roberts 2000). Durrant (1996) argues that, "The Swedish experience . . . provides evidence for the effectiveness of such measures in altering societal attitudes toward the use of physical force in childrearing" (Cited in Roberts 2000 p.1029).

2. Unemployment: several researchers have linked unemployment with the use of violence on children (English 1998; World Health Organization 2002; Clement and Bouchard 2005). According to Belsky (1980), unemployment is associated with frustrations such as insufficient income for parents to meet the family's expenses. Consequently, it is possible in some cases that these frustrations could contribute to domestic violence. Additionally, an unemployed parent spends much time at home which increases the opportunities for violence (Belsky 1980) including physical abuse and punishment. Moreover, many researchers have noticed that there is a relationship between physical abuse and unemployment (Straus, Gelles et al. 1981). Job type has also been seen to play a role in parents' use of physical punishment (Wolfner and Gelles 1993). For example, a random sample of 6002 households drawn from an American national survey in 1985 found that working class, "blue-collar" jobs, and low income people were more prone to use physical punishment on their children (Wolfner and Gelles 1993).

3. Poverty: several researchers have pointed out that poor families are at greater risk of using violence on their children than other families (Hashima and Amato 1994; English 1998; Pinderhughes, Dodge et al. 2000; Tijerino 2001; World Health Organization 2002). Poverty and unemployment affect each other, according to Gallacher et al. (1983), poverty is common among the unemployed. Many incidents of physical abuse of children have been found among families in poverty (Hashima

and Amato 1994). This situation exists because poor parents may experience high rate of stress due to their financial difficulties (Hashima and Amato 1994). As a result of this stress, parents could use violence against their children. According to Ghate and Hazel (2004 p.11), "If parents have problems in one area they will almost certainly have problems in other areas of their life, further compounding parenting difficulties." Accordingly, poverty can cause other problems such as stress, which are linked to the use of physical punishment.

4. Substance abuse: parents' substance abuse has been recognized as a risk factor in the use of aggression on children (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 1995; World Health Organization 2002; Clement and Bouchard 2005).

Societal level: Social factors include the following:

1. Culture and beliefs concerning discipline: Dawes et al. (2005 p.4) argue that "families are embedded in a social-cultural context which impacts upon patterns of family interaction and the values and skills that parents transmit to their children through socialization. The socio-culture also provides the scripts for childrearing and belief systems that guide parenting."

2. Religion: the effect of religion on discipline systems has been recognized (Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). From my own perspective, if the use of physical punishment is not prohibited by religion, people will continue to use it and will consider their practice as justified.
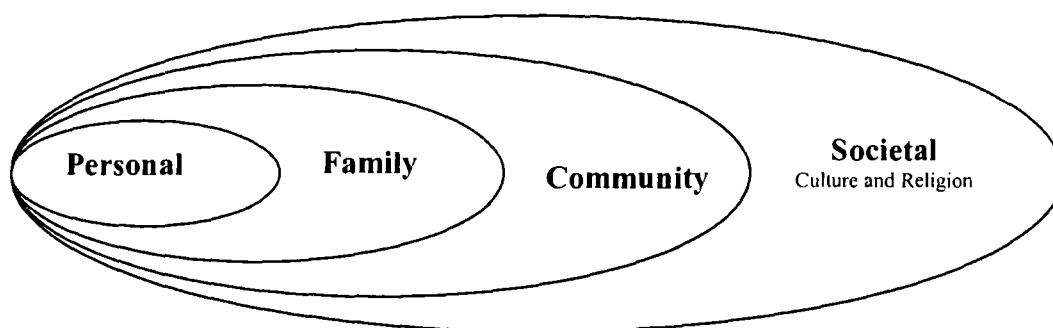
Figure 3.5 Ecological model for understanding physical punishment
Adapted from World Health Organization (2002 p.12) with some changes by the researcher.

In brief, the ecological perspective assumes that many factors can contribute to the occurrence of physical punishment. These can be personal, family, community, or societal factors. Therefore, I suggest that the ecological perspective provides a helpful theoretical perspective to explore the parental use of physical punishment on children, although in Chapter Seven I offer a critical analysis of its particular strengths and limitations and I offer a development of the model which specifically addresses the Saudi Arabian context. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the risk factors of parental use of physical punishment are multiple. However, because this study is limited by time and budget, it will address a number of but not all factors. Those factors will be reviewed extensively in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: Literature Review

4.1 Preamble

In the previous chapter a range of overarching theoretical approaches applicable to the study were reviewed and discussed. This chapter will review and discuss the existing empirical literature relating to child physical punishment and abuse. Throughout history children have been subjected to physical punishment by their parents. Moreover, children have been physically punished by different people such as teachers, relatives, neighbours and others. But because this study is focused on parents' use of physical punishment on their children, I will review the literature with specific attention to this matter. This issue has been investigated by many researchers and studied by professionals around the world. The chapter will provide details of previous international studies, as well as existing national (Saudi Arabia) studies.

First of all, it is helpful to review the procedure that I went through in researching the literature. I used two main sources to determine relevant articles and studies. Those sources were libraries and databases. I started by using different libraries and databases in the UK and Saudi Arabia to identify the most recent studies in the field. My search started with specialist journals. I began with such journals as "Child Abuse and Neglect", the "Journal of Marriage and the Family", "Children and Society", "Family Relations." My research involved the use of key phrases such as 'physical punishment of children', 'corporal punishment of children', 'child abuse', 'child maltreatment', 'child rearing', 'discipline methods', 'child education', 'children's rights', 'family relation' etc.

Through the search process I found that hundreds of studies have discussed the phenomenon of child abuse from different angles and many studies have discussed the use of physical punishment on children. However, there is little

published work in this field based in the Middle East in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular. This lack of studies presented a challenge, one that has been identified by other authors writing on Saudi Arabia and the Middle East (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Al-Saud 2000; Al-Zahrani 2005). Therefore, my aim in reviewing the international literature is to present a cross-cultural perspective of the use of physical punishment on children. This will help to improve understanding of the issue and compare what other researchers have found and concluded internationally with current understanding and practice in Saudi Arabia.

Physical punishment

4.2 Physical punishment across the world

Youssef et al. (1998) argued that the use of physical punishment of children is widely employed by parents worldwide. In addition, many studies have confirmed that the use of physical punishment is a global issue not a specific issue in any one particular country. For instance, a study of children in the United Kingdom found that more than 34% of the study sample were subjected to physical punishment by their parents (Elliman and Lynch 2000). In the United States of America, the use of physical punishment on children as a discipline method is inherited culturally (Straus 1994). Several studies in the United States have shown that approximately 90% of American parents report having spanked their children (Straus 1994; Giles-Sims, Straus et al. 1995; Day, Peterson et al. 1998).

According to Tijerino (2001), about 75% of Canadian parents use physical punishment as a disciplinary method. Several studies have found that physical punishment is a common discipline method among Chinese parents (Lau, Liu et al. 1999; Tang 2006). It was also found to be a prevalent method of disciplining

children in South Africa (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). A study conducted on 2388 Italian families concluded that it is common among parents (Bardi and Borgognini-Tarli 2001) with 77% of parents among the study sample reporting use of physical punishment.

A Croatian study involving 587 children aged 8-15 years found that 82% of the study sample said that they had experienced physical punishment at home (Vlasis-Cicvaric, Prpic et al. 2007). A cross-sectional survey which was conducted on more than 330 Kuwaiti parents found that approximately 70% of participants supported the use of physical punishment as a discipline method (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998). In Egypt, a study conducted with more than 2000 school students found that almost 40% of participants stated that they had been subjected to physical punishment by their parents (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998).

The above studies indicate varying rates of physical punishment across countries. Of course this variance might be accounted for by a whole range of factors including different methods used by researchers, different definitions of physical punishment, different data collection methods, different study samples, or indeed different practices in countries. Therefore, it is difficult to conclude that these studies give a true picture of the extent of physical punishment. However, the evidence from the studies appears to suggest that the use of physical punishment is a common parental behaviour in several countries of the world. Moreover, I claim that physical punishment is common, also, in Saudi Arabia.

4.3 International Studies

4.3.1 Physical punishment of children as a controversial issue

Through reviewing the literature, different perspectives and perceptions have surfaced on the issue of using physical punishment on children. It is inarguable that its use on children is a controversial issue (Evans and Fargason 1998). According to Holden (2002 p.590), "Parental use of corporal punishment is the single most controversial and emotionally charged topic in parent–child relationships." In the following paragraphs I will review the perspectives of four groups of people involved in the issue: parents, children, researchers, and policy makers.

Parents' perspectives

> "I was hit as a child and it didn't do me any harm. On
> the contrary, I wouldn't be where I am today if it were
> not for my parents and teachers physically punishing
> me."
> A parent's argument (Cited in: Save the Children Sweden 2005
> p.23)

As discussed above, parents' use of physical punishment has been described as a disciplinary method used by parents to correct a child's misbehaviours or reduce undesirable behaviour (Straus 1994; Gershoff 2002a; Gershoff 2002b). As such, many parents use physical punishment and believe that its use is justified:

> "Common justifications for using corporal punishment
> are found across different cultures and contexts. The
> main arguments invoked in favour of corporal
> punishment are: children need such discipline to learn
> right from wrong, to be respectful of elders, hard

working and obedient. How children are brought up is a
private family issue, not a public one; corporal
punishment has been passed over generations and
nothing wrong has happened to those who received it"
(Save the Children 2003 p.1).

However, not all parents use beating to discipline their children. Therefore, while
some parents believe that physical punishment is an effective way to correct
child misbehaviour and/or reduce undesirable behaviours (Holden, Miller et al.
1999; Dietz 2000), other parents believe that physical punishment is an
ineffective method of influencing the behaviour of a child (Durrant, Ensom et al.
2004). Simons et al. (1993 p.94) argued that "Some parents believe that inductive
reasoning and reinforcement of positive behaviour are the best way to mould
child behaviour whereas others perceive that physical discipline is the most
effective method for gaining compliance."

A study of Australian parents in 1990 found that almost 76% of mothers and
69% of fathers strongly disagreed with the use of "serious" physical punishment
on children as a disciplinary method (Freeman 1999). Moreover, a survey of
Canadian parents in 1988 found that more than 75% of parents believed that the
use of physical punishment as a disciplinary method was improper and only 2%
of parents believed its use was an appropriate disciplinary method (Durrant,
Ensom et al. 2004).

In a survey carried out in New Zealand consisted of 1000 participants aged 18
years old and over 53% of the participants were currently parenting, 29% of the
participants had previously parented and 18% of the participants had never
parented. The study found that the majority of participants (80%) felt that the use
of an open hand to smack a child as a disciplinary method should be the lawful
right of parents or caregivers. 15% of participants felt that the use of an object to
punish a child or to smack a child in the head or neck area as a disciplinary
method should be lawful (Carswell 2001). Moreover, a study of 321 Kuwaiti
parents in 2003 found that 70% agreed that physical punishment was an

acceptable method to discipline a child who misbehaved (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998).

However, sometimes there is a discrepancy between what people believe and what they do. For example, a survey conducted on 925 parents in South Africa in 2005 found that 70% of the participants believed physical punishment was not an appropriate disciplinary method, whereas, 57% of the participants indicated that they had punished their children physically (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). Moreover, a study carried out in the United Kingdom on 54 parents found that the majority of participants did not support the use of physical punishment as a disciplinary method for young children, whereas about 63% of the participants indicated that they had punished their children physically in the previous week (Thompson and Pearce 2001).

Children's perspectives

"Parents, they should stop beating children. They must learn a better way of dealing with children."
(Girl in primary school, cited in: Save the Children Sweden 2005
p.12)

There is little available information on children's perspectives on the use of physical punishment (Save the Children Sweden 2005). However, many children suffer harsh maltreatment and are aware that this maltreatment is against their human dignity. For instance, in South Africa in 2002 a study was done by Save the Children Sweden. It consisted of 1200 children. When children were asked about children's rights, they indicated that the absence of child protection legislation against physical punishment was a violation of their rights (Save the Children Sweden 2005). Another study which consisted of 2366 children aged 6-18 years (Save the Children Sweden 2005), concluded that 80% of children have

experienced physical punishment. When children were asked if they agreed with the use of physical punishment, 92% of children believed that parents should use alternative discipline methods. Conversely, 8% of children believed physical punishment was a proper disciplinary method.

Even among children themselves the use of physical punishment is a controversial issue. Whilst most children do not like the use of physical punishment as a disciplinary method, some children do not view their parents' use of physical punishment as abuse. To this end, Bower and Knutson (1996) argued that children view the use of physical punishment as justified when they feel they have misbehaved in a manner which deserves such punishment. Another researcher argued that most children who accept physical punishment as a disciplinary method come from families where violent types of discipline are normal (Save the Children Sweden 2005). Accordingly, it is clear that children's and young people's perspectives on physical punishment are influenced by their personal experiences and social environment. A study conducted on 139 college students in the United States concluded that those participants who were exposed to violent discipline as children consider physical punishment as a proper disciplinary method. Another American study conducted on 679 unmarried college students found that 93% of the students had experienced physical punishment as children and about 85% of them said they would use physical punishment on their own children in the future (Graziano and Namaste 1990).

Researchers' perspectives

Parental use of physical punishment is also controversial among researchers and professionals working with children (Day, Peterson et al. 1998; MacMillan, Boyle et al. 1999). Researchers are divided into two groups; some researchers consider physical punishment to be an "effective and desirable" disciplinary method, while others consider physical punishment to be "ineffective at best and harmful at worst" (Gershoff 2002a p.539). For instance, several researchers have argued that physical punishment is an effective disciplinary method if it is combined with reasoning and discussion (Grusec and Goodnow 1994; Larzelere

1998; Gershoff 2002a). Grusec and Goodnow (1994) argue that giving a child a clear explanation of the relationship between his or her misbehaviour and the punishment he or she experienced enhances the effectiveness of physical punishment as a disciplinary method. Also, Baumrind (1994) argues that when physical punishment is used within an awareness by the parent and child of the reason behind the use of the physical punishment, it is likely to be an effective disciplinary method. A number of authors of childrearing books support the use of physical punishment on children as a discipline method (Straus 1994; Dietz 2000; Elliman and Lynch 2000). For instance, in the United States, a study which examined 31 of the most popular books on parenting found that 35% did not discuss physical punishment at all, 30% advised parents to use physical punishment on their children and 35% forewarned parents about the use of physical punishment on children (Carson 1986 Cited in Straus and Yodanis 1996).

On the other hand, many researchers have pointed out that physical punishment is an ineffective and harmful discipline method (Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003; Paintal 2007). According to Hindberg (2001 p.7) "Corporal punishment of children often becomes inhuman or degrading, and it always violates their physical integrity, demonstrates disrespect for human dignity and undermines self-esteem."

Policy perspective

Although physical punishment occurs in many countries (Ateah and Durrant 2005), policies regarding parents' use of physical punishment are diverse from one country to another. On the one hand, physical punishment of children by their parents is lawful in several countries in the world (Ghate 2000), for example, in Mexico where the use of physical punishment on children is supported by the law (Corral-Verdugo, Frias-Armenta et al. 1995). Moreover, in the United Kingdom parental use of physical punishment is lawful. According to Boyson (2002 p.iii)

> "In the UK, the current legal framework, dating back to 1860, neither provides children with adequate protection from physical force, nor gives a clear message that physical punishment is not an acceptable practice in a modern society."

She also argues that:

> "In the UK, the continued existence of the defence allowing parents to use 'reasonable chastisement' when disciplining their children remains a barrier to fully respecting children as human beings in their own right as developing citizens, the responsibility, and not the property, of their parents" (Boyson 2002 p.1).

On the other hand, around eighteen countries have prohibited the physical punishment of children: Sweden, Finland, Norway, Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Latvia, Croatia, Belgium, and Germany (Freeman 1999); Greece, Hungary, Israel, Iceland, Italy, Romania, and Ukraine (Paintal 2007). In 1979 Sweden became the first country to ban the use of physical punishment on children and in 1983 Finland followed the Swedish example (Freeman 1999). Currently there is an international effort by different organizations to prevent the use of physical punishment on children and criminalize its use (Baumrind, Larzelere et al. 2002). According to Paintal (2007 p.410) "Several countries making progress toward banning corporal punishment of children in all settings, including homes, are Switzerland, Poland, Spain, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Portugal, Fiji, Taiwan, Colombia, Costa Rica, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands."

In summary, in some parts of world there is still popular support for the use of physical punishment on children as a disciplinary method, while in an increasing number of places people do not support its use and have acted to limit and

criminalize its use. However, in some places of the world where parents are still using it, policy makers are seeking to find regulations to ban its use. One of the dilemmas that delays legislation to prevent its use is the people's belief in the benefits of physical punishment as a disciplinary method. This belief is drawn from several factors of which culture is the most significant. This is discussed in more detail in section (4.3.4.4) below.

4.3.2 Types of physical punishment

Many types of physical punishment used by parents have been mentioned in the literature. Several researchers have divided physical punishment into two categories, "severe" and "mild" (Corral-Verdugo, Frias-Armenta et al. 1995; Nobes and Smith 1997; Bardi and Borgognini-Tarli 2001; Baumrind, Larzelere et al. 2002; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Orhon, Ulukol et al. 2006). Dawes et al. (2005) argue that while actions such as spanking or smacking are "mild" types of physical punishment, hitting with an object such as a belt is a "severe" type of physical punishment. They argue that a child can be harmed by any type of physical punishment, but that the risk is higher with the use of an object. In addition, Straus and Gelles (1990) use the term "very severe violence" which includes forms of punishment such as kicking, biting, hitting, beating up, burning or scalding, threatening to or actually using a knife or gun (Cited in: Whipple and Richey 1997 p.434). For the purposes of the current study types of physical punishment will be categorised as either "severe" or "mild."

According to Nobes and Smith (1997) "Severe punishments are defined as those that were intended to, had the potential to, or actually did cause physical and/or psychological injury or harm to the child" (p.275). Hence, "severe" physical punishments are those actions that could cause physical injuries or leave bruises, whereas, acts that cause pain without injury or bruises are considered "mild" physical punishment. A survey of 2,388 families in Tuscany, Italy, in 1998 revealed differences between mild and severe physical punishment. The study found an association between alcohol and drug problems and the use of severe

physical punishment on children. They found that those parents who had alcohol or drug problems were using severe physical punishment on their children more than other parents (Bardi and Borgognini-Tarli 2001).

On the other hand, some researchers use the phrase "legal forms of punishment" (Straus 1994; Tijerino 2001). According to Straus (1994) "Almost every parent who kicks or punches a child also engages in legal forms of hitting children, such as spanking and slapping" (p.167). In my own view it is very difficult for parents to draw an exact line between legal and illegal physical behaviours towards children and many parents cannot be sure that they would not cross this boundary.

Another complexity is that the acceptance of different types of physical punishment has varied across time and places:

> "The history of corporal punishment makes a fascinating chronicle. Throughout the years, flagellation has probably been the most common method, including the use of the birch on children in European homes and schools. During the 16th and 17th centuries, whipping and beating children were common occurrences, both in Europe and in Colonial America" (Davis, Chandler et al. 2004 p.1292).

A range of studies have highlighted different types of physical punishment that parents used on their children. For instance, a study carried out in the United Kingdom consisting of 465 parents from 366 two-parent families (Nobes, Smith et al. 1999) found that different types of physical punishment were used by parents such as pushing, holding or throwing, biting, squeezing, and pinching, using soap and water, smacking, and using implements such as slippers, wooden spoons, or hairbrushes. Another study in the United Kingdom consisted of 99 two-parent families (Nobes and Smith 1997). The study found that 94% of mothers and over 91% of fathers reported using types physical punishment such as hitting and smacking. However, only 4% of fathers and 7% of mothers were

found using soap and water in washing the child's mouth out as a punishment. More than 50% of the study sample did not report using severe physical punishment; even so, 14% of mothers and 15% of fathers reported using implements to punish their children.

In Barbados, (Payne 1989) a survey of 499 adults aged 20-59, found that almost 71% of the respondents approved parental use of physical punishment on children. About 77% of those respondents who approved it said it is acceptable to flog/lash the child with a belt or strap on the buttocks, 14% said it is acceptable to slap the child with a hand, 14% said it is acceptable to spank the child with an object such as shoe or slipper, 13% said it is acceptable to use a rod or cane to punish the child physically, and 5% said it is acceptable to hit the knuckles or palm of the hand with a ruler. However, the study concluded that many respondents disapproved of any punishment that could cause an injury to the child. A study carried out in China consisted of 1,019 parents (359 fathers and 660 mothers) who had a child under 16 years old (Tang 1998). The study found that about 50% of children aged 16 years or less had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents at least once during the past year. 53% of the children had been exposed to minor violence and 46% had been exposed to severe violence. Tang's study found that the most common form of violence used by parents towards their children was "slapping/spanking and hitting/ trying to hit with an object" (P.386). Violent behaviours such as: "threw something at the child; slapped or spanked; and hit or tried to hit with an object" (P.386) were found to be used by mothers more than fathers.

A cross-sectional survey in Egypt (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998) of 2,170 students (male and female) found parents use different types of physical punishment: such as using an open or fist hand, tying, burning, and using objects such as a belt, hose, a stick, shoes, and a metal chain. Almost 71% of children who had been exposed to such punishment indicated that it had left no permanent marks whereas, almost 26% indicated that it had.

A survey of 925 parents in South Africa (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005) found that 59% of the sample reported that they had used "severe" types of physical punishment on their children such as beating with a belt or other object. In a survey of Swedish mothers in 1991, 16% of the sample stated that they had slapped their child on the fingers, 6% had pulled the child's hair, 3% had twisted the child's ear, 2% had hit the child with an object, and 1% had slapped the child in the face (Cited in: Roberts 2000). A study consisting of 110 Canadian mothers (Ateah and Durrant 2005) concluded that 59% of the participants had used physical punishment on their children during the two weeks preceding the interview. 88% of those participants who said they had used physical punishment had either spanked or slapped their children, 6% had grabbed the child's shoulders, and the rest had either dragged, pushed, or sprayed the child's face with water. In Turkey, a survey of 210 adults (65 parents, 39 paediatricians, and 106 medical students) (Orhon, Ulukol et al. 2006) concluded that two physical punishment types out of ten were rated as acceptable. Acts such as "shake a child and spank hand with an open hand 1 to 3 times leaving temporary red marks" were found acceptable acts; nonetheless, acts such as "hit head causing bruises and unconsciousness" were found not acceptable as a punishment (p.1086).

Studies such as these suggest that children, internationally, are frequently exposed to both "mild" and "severe" physical punishment. However, it appears that the most common types of physical punishment are: spanking, slapping, grabbing, shoving a child roughly, hitting with an object (Rohner, Kean et al. 1991; Straus 1994), smacking (Ghate 2000), beating, burning (Rohner, Kean et al. 1991; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998); and whipping and punching (Litty, Kowalski et al. 1996). In addition to these most common types of physical punishment, a range of other less common types has been identified in these studies, such as: washing a child's mouth out with soap, requiring a child to remain motionless or in a sitting position without a chair, forcing a child to kneel on a floor grate, isolating the child in a confined space, denying a child use of the toilet, forced physical exertion, placing hot pepper sauce in a child's mouth, and/or denying access to water, food or sleep (Durrant, Ensom et al. 2004).

Of all types of punishment, spanking appears to be the type most commonly used by parents (Brown and Bzostek 2003). Spanking is considered a milder form of physical punishment (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005) because it causes a 'trivial' or momentary level of physical pain (Baumrind, Larzelere et al. 2002).

> "An important scientific consensus conference on corporal punishment defined spanking as that subset of the broader category of corporal punishment that is a) physically non-injurious; b) intended to modify behaviour; and c) administered with an opened hand to the extremities or buttocks" (Baumrind, Larzelere et al. 2002 p.581)

Many studies of physical punishment of children indicate that the majority of parents have spanked their children (Day, Peterson et al. 1998). For example, in the United States almost ninety percent of parents have spanked their children (Straus 1994; Giles-Sims, Straus et al. 1995; Day, Peterson et al. 1998). In the United States, McLaurin (2005) found that "spanking" was the term used by study participants to describe how they were disciplined by their parents. According to Roberts (2000), a survey conducted on a random sample of Swedish mothers by a Swedish statistical agency in 1991 found that spanking (which translated as "smack his/her bottom") was the most common form of discipline that had been used by about 33% of sample members (p.1032).

However, the term spanking has different meaning. While some researchers use the term to indicate a specific physical punishment type such as "slapping a child's buttocks", others use it as a generic term to include other forms of physical punishment, such as "slapping a child" (Giles-Sims, Straus et al. 1995). According to Straus (1994 p.8)"physical punishment and spanking refer to the same acts." In a meta-analysis of 88 studies of physical punishment, Gershoff (2002a) found that the term 'spank' was used most to characterize physical punishment. Furthermore, other researchers justified their use of the term

'spanking' instead of 'hitting' in their research because spanking is socially accepted as a disciplinary method (Straus, Hamby et al. 1998).

4.3.3 Physical punishment in school settings

Although this study is restricted to parental use of physical punishment it is clear from the literature that physical punishment practice is not confined to the home. Children can be exposed to physical punishment outside their home, such as in school (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003). School is an institution where children can receive knowledge and education. Teachers constitute the principal part of this institution (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998). In addition to the courses of lessons, teachers sometimes administer physical punishment as a disciplinary method (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998).

Physical punishment in school has been abolished in many of the world's countries. There are however, numerous exceptions (Zigler and Hall 1989; Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003). For example, in the United States of America physical punishment is banned in number of the states' schools, yet it is legal in 23 states (Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003). According to Greydanus et al. (2003 p.386), "Experts note that about 1.5 million cases of physical punishment in school are reported each year, but calculate the actual number to be at least 2 to 3 million; as a result of such punishment, 10,000 to 20,000 students request subsequent medical treatment each year."

Physical punishment in school is a controversial matter (Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003). Several studies have shown that physical punishment in school is ineffective in both teaching and discipline processes (Zigler and Hall 1989; Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003) and can have similar consequences to those at home (Zigler and Hall 1989). However, another survey conducted in the United States of America in 1985 found that almost 50% of American parents and more than 57% of school staff supported the use of physical punishment in school (Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003).

In the United Kingdom, physical punishment in schools has been prohibited since 1986 (BBC 2000). However, a survey of one thousand British parents in 2000 showed that more than 50% of parents supported the return of physical punishment in school (BBC 2000).

Parents and teachers who promote the use of physical punishment allege that it is a harmless and effective discipline method (Elliman and Lynch 2000). Teachers who are pro the use of physical punishment in school believe that its use in the classroom, or at least the threat of its use, prevents student aggression (Hyman 1995). Moreover, people who support the use of physical punishment are those parents who experienced similar discipline as children and claim it had no negative effects on them (Hyman 1995).

4.3.4 Risk factors of parental use of physical punishment

Using the ecological model, parents' use of physical punishment can be seen to result from factors at the level of the child, parents, family, or the community, as follows.

4.3.4.1 Child characteristics

Child age

Child age has been identified as a potential risk factor across a number of studies (Straus, Gelles et al. 1981; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000). Several researchers have pointed out that younger children, 5 years or under, are more exposed to physical punishment by their parents than older children (Whipple and Richey 1997; Dietz 2000; Doe 2000; Straus 2000; Gershoff 2002a). Similarly, studies have indicated that the spanking rate is high for pre-school age children (Giles-Sims,

Straus et al. 1995; Tijerino 2001) and that this rate reduces as children become older (Day, Peterson et al. 1998).

Several studies have found that younger children were more likely to experience physical punishment from their parents than older children. Table 4.1 summaries key findings from across studies about the association between child age and physical punishment.

Moreover, an association has been found between a child's age and the use of severe physical punishment. A survey of 991 American parents found that parents reported that they use severe physical punishment, such as hitting a child with an object, when children are between 5 and 8 years old more that when the children are younger than 5 years or older than 8 (Straus and Stewart 1999).

These findings lead me to suggest that younger children suffer physical punishment more that older children. It appears that parents believe that the use of physical punishment is more effective and can produce a positive result with younger children more than reasoning and discussion. According to Gershoff (2002a), parents tend to view physical punishment as the most appropriate disciplinary method for children aged less than 5 years old and least appropriate for children aged 5 years old and over. For example, a UK study found that 24% of the sample (n = 54 parents) believed that physical punishment is desirable for a 3 year old child for dangerous behaviours; 15% of the sample believed that physical punishment is desirable for a 3-year-old child for irritating behaviours. 39% of the participants supported using physical punishment on children aged 1-3 years old for dangerous behaviours (Thompson and Pearce 2001). A New Zealand survey of 1000 adults found that 23% of the sample supported the use of physical punishment on children under 2 years old, 62% of the sample supported the use of physical punishment on children aged 2-5 years old, 72% of the sample supported the use of physical punishment on children aged 6-10 years old, but only 16% of the sample supported the use of physical punishment on children aged 15-17 years old (Carswell 2001).

Table 4.1 Age of child and frequency of physical punishment

#	Author	Date	Country	Sample	Conclusion
1	Nobes and Smith	1997	UK	99 two-parent families	Children aged less than 11 years old were punished physically more frequently than children aged 11 years.
2	Day et al.	1998	US	2,863 parents	Children aged less than 7 years old were punished physically more frequently than children aged 7 years and above.
3	Youssef et al.	1998	Egypt	2,170 students (male and female)	Younger children were more exposed to physical punishment than older children.
4	Hunter et al.	2000	India	500 mothers	Children aged less than 12 years old were punished physically more frequently than children aged 12 -17 years.
5	Dawes et al.	2005	South Africa	925 parents	Children aged 3-4 years were the most likely to be exposed to physical punishment by their parents.
6	Tang	2006	China	1,019 parents	Children aged 12 years old or less were punished physically more frequently than children aged 13 years and above.
7	Vlasis-Cicvaric et al.	2007	Croatia	587 children aged 8-15 years	Younger children were exposed to physical punishment more than older children

In fact, children in general are in a vulnerable position, but this vulnerability is higher in younger children because of their level of dependence on their caregivers, their susceptibility to injury and inability to defend themselves if attacked by adults (Miller, Fox et al. 1999; Tijerino 2001). According to Jackson et al (1999), younger children need more attention and supervision from their parents which could include physical punishment, whereas older children need more reasoning from their parents which decreases the likelihood of physical punishment being used against them. Others have argued that younger children have less ability to control themselves than older children and therefore physical punishment is a necessary method of discipline in the younger age groups (Tang 1998).

Child gender

Child gender is factor which can influence the occurrence of physical punishment (Straus, Gelles et al. 1981; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000). Several researchers have indicated that boys typically experience more physical punishment than girls (Straus 1994; Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Straus and Stewart 1999; Dietz 2000; Doe 2000; Gershoff 2002a; Durrant, Ensom et al. 2004; Regalado, Sareen et al. 2004; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Stephenson, Sheikhattari et al. 2006). Table 4.2 summarises key findings from studies about the association between child gender and physical punishment.

Nevertheless, other studies have shown no significant differences between the physical punishment of boys and girls by their parents. According to Straus (1994 p.29), some studies "reported no sex differences in the proportions before entering school, but after that, more boys than girls were hit by their parents". A telephone survey of 991 parents carried out in the United States in 1995 concluded that there was only a small difference between the numbers of boys and girls being physically punished by their parents. Parents reported using physical punishment with 65% of boys but also with 58% of the girls (Straus and Stewart 1999). A study carried out in rural India consisting of 500 mothers found no gender differences between the numbers of boys and girls receiving any type of physical punishment (Hunter, Jain et al. 2000). In Croatia, a study of 587 children aged 8-15 years (Vlasis-Cicvaric, Prpic et al. 2007), found no gender differences between boys and girls receiving physical punishment. It is clear that research is not conclusive on this issue because some of these studies are contradictory even in one culture. However, the weight of the evidence overall suggests, across cultures, boys are more likely to experience parental physical punishment than girls.

Table 4.2 Gender of child and frequency of physical punishment

#	Author	Date	Country	Sample	Conclusion
1	Day et al.	1998	US	2,863 parents	Boys were punished physically more frequently than girls.
2	MacMillan et al.	1999	Canada	4,888 adults aged 15-64 years	Male participants were exposed to physical punishment more than females.
3	Bardi and Borgognini-Tarli	2001	Italy	2,388 families	More boys than girls experienced mild physical punishment but no difference between boys or girls in receiving severe physical punishment.
4	Tang	2006	China	1,019 parents	Boys were more likely to suffer physical punishment by their parents than girls.

In summary, the evidence suggests that boys are at greater risk of receiving physical punishment from their parents than girls. There may be two main reasons for this. First, several researchers have argued that boys tend to be more aggressive than girls and thus engage more in misbehaviours (Straus 1994; Straus and Stewart 1999; Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). Second, the greater use of physical punishment on boys than on girls is based on parental judgement. Parents may use physical punishment on boys more than on girls because they believe that boys need to be tougher to defend themselves when needed (Straus 1994; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). In contrast, popular opinion has it that girls are vulnerable to injury and not expected to toughen themselves up to defend themselves (Straus 1994). For example, a survey in the United States of America found that 75% of the American population agreed that boys need to be involved in "fist fights" during their childhood (Cited in: Straus 1994 p.30).

Child misbehaviour [1]

Child misbehaviour is considered a risk factor in the use of physical punishment by parents (Muller 1996; Jackson, Gyamfi et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000; Tijerino 2001; Gershoff 2002b; Tang 2006). According to Gershoff (2002a p.541), "The primary goal most parents have in administering corporal punishment is to stop children from misbehaving immediately." Moreover, several researchers have argued that children's misbehaviours can draw out physical punishment from their parents (Engfer and Schneewind 1982; Muller 1996; Deater-Deckard and Dodge 1997; Gershoff 2002b). Misbehaviours such as fighting, aggression, disobedience, and lying can act as predictors of parents' use of physical punishment on their children (Muller 1996). Bell (1968) argued that "most associations between parental disciplinary tactics and child behaviour could reflect the child's influence on the parent rather the parent's influence on the child" (Cited in: Larzelere 1998 p.11). Children's misbehaviour can increase parents' anger which can result in the use of physical punishment to punish this misbehaviour rather than to educate or discipline the child. Also, some parents punish their children physically without telling the child the reason for this punishment. Nevertheless, not all parents respond to their children's misbehaviour with physical punishment (Straus 1994). In addition, several researchers have pointed out that a child who misbehaves is not necessarily the only one responsible for provoking the subsequent physical punishment (Muller 1996; Tijerino 2001; Gershoff 2002b).

In the United Kingdom a study of 54 parents examined attitudes on rearing young children and compared stated opinions with actual practices (Thompson and Pearce 2001). It concluded that almost 65% of the parents punished their children at least once in the preceding week. However, most of them rated their children's behaviours as difficult to control, overactive, or antisocial. A study

[1] I acknowledge that labelling children's behaviour as misbehaviour is subject to debate. However, for the purposes of this study I am going to use this term to refer to a common set of behaviours by children which parents may find to be unacceptable or problematic.

carried out in Pennsylvania, in the United States, with 328 families found a significant relationship between physical punishment occurrence and child misbehaviours. The study found children's behaviours (such as fighting, refusing parents' orders or instructions, dangerous behaviour, aggressiveness, disobedience, lying, smoking, stealing, drinking, having inappropriate companions, and sexual behaviour) could be employed as predictors of physical punishment occurrences (Herrenkohl et al. 1983).

A study carried out in Egypt of 2,170 students found that parents' use of physical punishment is associated with their children's misbehaviours (Youssef et al. 1998). misbehaviours (such as fighting, poor performance in school, lying, smoking, running away from home, disobedience, and aggression to others i.e. destroyed others' belongings) were found as predictors of parental physical punishment. The study also found that those children who had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents reported an inability to communicate with their parents

A Kuwaiti survey of 321 parents (both male and female) who had at least one child sought to discover parents' attitudes toward using physical punishment as a disciplinary method (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998). The study found the following misbehaviours were those parents gave as reasons for their physical punishment of their children: not washing hands before eating, poor performance in school, disobedience, dangerous behaviour, fighting, lying, using bad language, driving without license, smoking, stealing, and drug abuse. Almost 63% of the participants strongly agreed that stealing was a sufficient reason for the use of physical punishment. More than half of the participants strongly agreed that smoking was sufficient reason and approximately 35% agreed that lying was sufficient reason (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998).

In brief, child misbehaviour or children whose behaviours are highly demanding of parents can act as a risk factor for physical punishment. Clearly, not all misbehaviours are responded to by parents with physical punishment. In other words, the use of physical punishment is based on parents' judgement of the

misbehaviour in question. Therefore, one object of the current study objectives is to identify those misbehaviours for which parents punish their children physically in Saudi Arabia.

4.3.4.2 Parent Characteristics

A range of parental characteristics have also been found to be risk factors for predicting physical punishment, as described below.

Parents' age

Several researchers have found that younger parents tend to use physical punishment on their children more than older parents (Wolfner and Gelles 1993; Straus 1994; Giles-Sims, Straus et al. 1995; Straus, Hamby et al. 1998; Straus and Stewart 1999; Gershoff 2002a; Regalado, Sareen et al. 2004; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). For example, a study carried out in Ohio, in the United States, on 7,725 mothers aged 25-33 in 1990 (Giles-Sims, Straus et al. 1995) found that younger mothers (25-29 years old) used physical punishment on their children more often than older mothers (30-34 years old). A study of 1,019 parents in China similarly found that younger parents (76.7%) were more likely to use "violence" toward their children than older parents (56.7%) (Tang 1998). A more recent study in China consisting of 1,662 parents (Tang 2006) has confirmed this result.

On the other hand, some studies have found to the opposite attitudes or behaviours. For example, a public attitude survey on the use of physical punishment as a disciplinary method carried out in New Zealand in 2001 (Carswell 2001) consisting of 1000 participants aged 18 years old and over found that almost 90% of participants aged 60 years and over supported the use of an open hand smack as a disciplinary method. In contrast, only approximately 60% of younger participants aged 18-29 supported smacking. Moreover, in South Africa, a study of 925 parents (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005) found that 64%

of older parents (35 years old and over) had beaten their children whereas 51% of parents under 35 years old had done likewise.

Based on the above younger parents appears to be at greater risk of using physical punishment on their children than older parents. This may be because younger parents have had less experience in dealing with children than older parents. Younger parents are also more likely to experience stress associated with family income difficulties. For instance, Day et al. (1998) argues that parents' use of physical punishment declines as they become older because they become more educated and have learned from the experiences life has given them. According to Bostrom (2003 p.4), "Lack of experience can cause parents to make bad decisions that can lead to neglect or abuse." Dawes et al. (2005), ascribe the greater use of physical punishment by young parents over older parents to three factors; the lack of parenting experience (Gershoff 2002a; Tang 2006), alcohol abuse, and economic difficulties (Straus and Stewart 1999). In addition to these factors, it is of course also the case that older parents are more likely to have older children and therefore the reduced rate of physical punishment could be reflection of the age of the child rather than necessarily the age of the parent.

Parental gender

The gender of parents is a further factor for determining the likelihood of physical punishment being used (Gershoff 2002a). Mothers use physical punishment on their children more than fathers (Wolfe 1985; Wolfner and Gelles 1993; Straus 1994; Straus, Hamby et al. 1998; Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Straus and Stewart 1999; Tijerino 2001; Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Tang 2006). However, the physical punishment handed out by a father is likely to be harsher and more harmful than by a mother (Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999).

Table 4.3 Gender of parents and frequency of physical punishment

#	Author	Date	Country	Sample	Conclusion
1	Park*	1994	Korea	1,080 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students	79% of participants had been punished physically by their mothers and 55% by their fathers
2	Day et al.	1998	US	2,863 parents	31% of fathers and 44% of mothers reported that they had used physical punishment on their children during the previous week.
3	Dawes et al.	2005	South Africa	2,388 families	70% of mothers and 30% of fathers (n = 925) reported that they had punished their children physically in the past year.
4	Tang	2006	China	1,019 parents	Mothers than fathers reported using physical punishment on their children (61% & 51% respectively).

* (Cited in: Doe 2000)

Several studies have found that mothers use physical punishment more than fathers. Table 4.3 summaries key findings from across studies about the association between parent gender and physical punishment. On the other hand, some studies have found no difference between the percentages of fathers and mothers who physically punish their children. For example, in the United Kingdom, Nobes and Smith (1997) found no significant difference between the two genders in the use of physical punishment. For example, 25% of mothers and 26% of fathers (*n* = 99 two-parent families) reported they had punished their children at least once a week or more. Another study by Nobes, Smith et al. (1999) of 366 two-parent families carried out in the United Kingdom reached a similar conclusion. It found that 26.2% of fathers reported using a type of punishment at least once a week and 26.8% of mothers did the same. With regard to the severity of physical punishment there was little difference between fathers and mothers. In the United States, a study of 42 fathers and 42 mothers aged between 25 to 46 found no difference between fathers and mothers in the rate of their use of physical punishment (Holden, Miller et al. 1999). Nevertheless, researchers have related this to the education levels and economic status of the parents. Participants in their study were college educated and middle class. In Kuwait, Qasem et al. (1998) found fathers and mothers (*n* = 321) equally in

agreement on the use of physical punishment on children as a disciplinary method.

The general consensus of the studies above is that mothers are at greater risk of using physical punishment of their children than fathers. Several researchers argue that mothers use physical punishment more than fathers because they spend more time at home with their children and are considered the primary caretaker which increases the likelihood of situations arising in which they will use of physical punishment (Straus, Gelles et al. 1981; Straus and Stewart 1999; Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Tang 2006). According to Straus et al. (1981 p.66), "Frustrations created by children tend to affect the mother more than the father. A problem with the child reflects on her competence as a parent more than the father's."

Experience of physical punishment

Parents' own experience of physical punishment as a child is another risk factor that is associated with their use of physical punishment (Rodriguez and Sutherland 1999; Frias-Armenta 2002; Ateah and Durrant 2005). Parents who have been exposed to physical punishment as children are frequently found to use this method on their own children (Gelles 1980; Widom 1989; Simons, Whitbeck et al. 1991; Simons, Beaman et al. 1993; Simons, Johnson et al. 1994; Straus 1994; Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Rodriguez and Sutherland 1999; Dietz 2000; Straus 2000; Tijerino 2001; Frias-Armenta 2002). According to Simons et al. (1991 p.159), "On the basis of the results of a variety of studies, some researchers have concluded that the most significant determinant of abusive child rearing is having experienced harsh punishment as a child." This perspective draws on social learning theory which supposes that harsh behaviour is learnt (Swinford, Demaris et al. 2000) as well as the "cycle of violence" hypothesis (Gelles 1980; Widom 1989; Simons, Johnson et al. 1994; Rodriguez and Sutherland 1999), which proposes that parents who experienced physical

punishment as children will use it on their own children (Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003).

Several studies have concluded that parents who experienced physical punishment as children use similar method on their own children. For example, one US study aimed at testing a 'social learning model' consisted of 451 two-parent families selected from families living in eight regions in north central Iowa State (Simons et al. 1991). These families were living on farms or in small towns. The study concluded that those parents who had been exposed to physical punishment by their own parents as children were more supportive of its use. Another study in Kuwait consisted of 321 parents (fathers and mothers) who had at least one child (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998). The study found that about 90% of the sample members had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents during their childhood and 86% of the study sample said they supported the use of physical punishment on children as a disciplinary method. A survey of 449 parents in the United States (Buntain-Ricklefs, Kemper et al. 1994) found that 94% of participants reported experiencing physical punishment as children and 88% of participants agreed with the use of using physical punishment on children. In New Zealand, a study of 99 parents (79 mothers and 20 fathers) aged 25 to 52 years (Rodriguez and Sutherland 1999) concluded that the parents' experiences of physical punishment as children was a predictor of them using it on their own children. Another study consisting of 150 Mexican women (Frias-Armenta 2002) concluded that mothers who had experienced "violence" as children used "violence" on their children.

However, other studies found that only a small number of people who had been subject to physical punishment as children tended to use it with their own children (Muller 1996). For instance, Kaufman and Zigler (1987) found that only 30% of parents who had experienced physical punishment as children used it on their children (Cited in: Muller 1996 p.475). A study conducted with 110 Canadian mothers (Ateah and Durrant 2005) concluded that there was no significant relationship between mothers' own experiences of physical punishment and their use of it on their own children. It is clear that not all parents

who experienced physical punishment as children use it on their own children. For instance:

"Sue, caller to 'Australia Talks Back': 'Well we used to get belted literally and people around me would be saying "If you kids are going to do this you are going to get a belt" and hit with a belt. Oh horror, horror stuff. I am against it." (Cited in: Tasmania Law Reform Institute 2003 p.37)

After considering the studies above it appears that there is evidence to suggest that many parents who have experienced physical punishment carry this forward into their own parenting behaviour. Of course, this does not apply to all parents. However, the evidence points toward childhood experiences of physical punishment as a risk factor for the use of physical punishment in adulthood. The extent to which this risk factor applies in any given case, or with any given parent, depends upon several other variables. So, it would be wrong to stereotype all children who are physically punished as being at risk of physically punishing their own children. However, according to Durrant (2005 p.88), "Individuals who received severe physical discipline as children tend to grow up to believe that their experiences were normal." An American study on 11,660 college students asked them about their experiences of physical punishment as children and the perceptions that this constituted abuse (Knutson and Selner 1994). 83% of the respondents reported that they had been subject to physical punishment but the vast majority of them (75%) said that they did not believe that they had been abused.

Parental education levels

Parents' education levels also appear to constitute a risk factor in the physical punishment of children (Simons, Whitbeck et al. 1991; Buntain-Ricklefs, Kemper et al. 1994; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000; Eamon 2001). Parents with low level educational achievement have been found to use physical punishment more than other parents (Simons, Whitbeck et al. 1991; Whipple and Richey 1997; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Dietz 2000; Tang 2006). Table 4.4 summaries key findings from across studies about the association between parental education level and physical punishment.

This may be due to a number of underlying factors. Several researchers have pointed out that poorly educated parents have limited knowledge of parenting methods, are less able to manage difficult parenting situations, or have less awareness of the negative consequences associated with the use of physical punishment which could predict their use of physical punishment on their children (Dietz 2000; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). According to Eamon (2001 p.788), "couples with more education may be more likely to use non-conflictual methods to resolve differences."

After considering the studies above it appears that there is evidence to suggest that many parents with low level of educational achievement use physical punishment on their children. However, this does not apply to all such parents. In contrast, some parents with high education levels have been found to use physical punishment on their children. For example, in the United States a study conducted on 619 family physicians and paediatricians (McCormick 1992) found that 70% of the family physicians and 59% of paediatricians agreed with the use of physical punishment.

Table 4.4 Parental education level and use of physical punishment

#	Author	Date	Country	Sample	Conclusion
1	Simons et al.	1991	US	451 two-parent families	Parents with low education levels more than parents with higher qualifications used physical punishment on their children.
2	Flynn	1994	US	987 Adults	Adults who had failed to complete secondary schooling supported the use of physical punishment more than college graduate adults.
3	Dietz*	1995	US	1000 parents	Parents with low education levels were found to use physical punishment on their children more than parents with higher education levels
4	Qasem et al.	1998	Kuwait	321 Parents	Parents with low level educational achievement used physical punishment more than other parents.
5	Youssef et al.	1998	Egypt	2,170 students (male and female)	Parents with low level educational achievement used physical punishment more than other parents.
6	Hunter et al.	2000	India	500 mothers	Parents with low level educational achievement used physical punishment more than other parents.
7	Tang	2006	China	1,019 parents	Parents with low level educational achievement used physical punishment more than other parents.

* (Cited in: Dietz 2000)

4.3.4.3 Family characteristics

Family size

Family characteristics such as family size may influence the rate of use of physical punishment by parents (Gershoff 2002a). Several studies have found that a large family size is a risk factor (Gelles 1980; Flynn 1994; Dietz 2000; Gershoff 2002a; Regalado, Sareen et al. 2004).

A study of 987 American adults (Flynn 1994) found that parents of large families supported the use of physical punishment more than those in the smaller families. In Egypt, a study by Youssef et al. (1998) of 2,170 school students found that those students who came from large families were more likely to experience physical punishment.

According to Dawes et al. (2005), a large number of children influences parenting styles because parents have less time and energy to deal with each child, this can lead those parents to use physical punishment as a quick rearing method. In addition, it clear that having a large number of children can increase the financial burden on parents which can induce parenting stress, as noted above.

Parental employment status

Parents' employment status has also been seen as a risk factor associated with the use of physical punishment (Clement and Bouchard 2005). In particular, unemployed parents have been seen to be more likely to use physical punishment on their children than employed parents (Sidebotham, Heron et al. 2002).

Several studies have suggested a relationship between unemployment and parental use of physical punishment. For instance, in the UK *Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children* based on a large cohort study consisting of 14,256 children, 115 children had been registered by the local child protection services as having been abused (Sidebotham, Heron et al. 2002). The study found a significant relationship between unemployed parents and child maltreatment. In China (Tang 2006), a study consisting of 1,662 parents concluded that unemployed parents used physical punishment more frequently than employed parents.

Unemployed parents may be at greater risk of aggressive parenting practices because of particular circumstances; first, the higher stress that they can experience as a result of their inability to meet all their family requirements and expenses; second, unemployed parents may spend more time at home which

increase the possibility of parent-child conflicts. Sidebotham et al. (2002 p.1244) argued that, "unemployment may affect risk through the stress of reduced material resources, a sense of powerlessness in the unemployed parent, or through increased parent-child contact. On the other hand, maternal employment brings significant stresses into the parent-child relationship and has implications in terms of childcare arrangements, but may also act as a protective factor through a range of social-psychological benefits."

Family income

"It has been well documented that economic hardship influences how parents interact with their children" (Hashima and Amato 1994 p.394). Several studies have found that families with low income are more likely to use physical punishment on their children (Heffer and Kelley 1987; Wolfner and Gelles 1993; Hashima and Amato 1994; Straus 1994; Straus and Stewart 1999; Dietz 2000; Pinderhughes, Dodge et al. 2000; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). Dietz (2000) argued that several studies during the 1950s and 1960s found that the use of physical punishment among working or lower class parents was higher among the middle-and upper-class parents. A random sample of 6,002 households drawn from an American national survey in 1985 found that working class, "blue-collar" job, and low income people were more prone to use physical punishment on their children (Wolfner and Gelles 1993). In the United States another study consisting of 1035 parents (Hashima and Amato 1994) found that parents with low incomes used physical punishment on their children more often than parents with higher incomes. In Egypt, Youssef et al.(1998), ($n = 2170$) found that low income families were more likely to use physical punishment on their children than other families. A study of 1,019 Chinese parents aimed at exploring the rate of physical punishment on children found that unemployed parents reported a higher rate of violence toward their children than employed parents (Tang 1998).

According to Pinderhughes et al. (2000 p.393) parents with low income "experienced higher levels of stress". According to Gershoff (2002a), several studies have declared that there is an association between economic status, stress

and the use of physical punishment. Tang (2006 p.904) argued that "economic hardship can compound parental stress and negative affect, which are in turn significant risk factors for parent-to-child violence." According to Gelles (1980 p.879), "investigators reported associations between various forms of family violence and specific stressful situations and conditions, such as unemployment or part-time employment of males and financial problem."

4.3.4.4 Culture and parental attitudes to physical punishment

"Culture is a society's common fund of beliefs and behaviours, and its concepts of how people should conduct themselves" (World Health Organization 2002 p.59). Child discipline is highly influenced by the prevailing culture (Fontes 2002). Therefore, culture's values and norms play a significant role in parental attitudes toward using physical punishment as a method of discipline (Muller 1996; Al-Zahrani 2005). According to Hindberg (2001 p.22), "If the norms and legislation of society support the use of corporal punishment, it will be used more frequently than otherwise." In addition, culture not only affects people's acceptance of physical punishment as a means of discipline, it affects their acceptance of specific types of physical punishment. LeVine (1988) argued that "each culture, drawing on its own symbolic traditions, supplies models for parental behaviour that, when implemented under local conditions, become culture-specific styles of parental commitment" (Cited in: Kolar and Soriano 2000 p.5). Hence, parenting beliefs and practices in one culture which may be regarded as acceptable may be regarded as unacceptable in another culture (Korbin 1980; Salzinger, Kaplan et al. 1983; Kolar and Soriano 2000). For instance, spanking a child on the buttocks is an acceptable discipline method in many countries; however, in Egypt this method was considered unacceptable by parents (World Health Organization 2002). In addition, what constitutes child misbehaviour in one culture may be seen as normative, and therefore undeserving of physical punishment, in another. For instance, in Saudi culture, parents may punish their child if they see a teenage child talk and chat with a person of another sex, while it is normal social life in other cultures.

Deater-Deckard and Dodge (1997) argue that culture is transmitted through parents to children; hence children learn culturally appropriate behaviours from their parents. According to Fontes (2002 p.33) "What children need to learn and the methods considered for teaching them are passed down from one generation to another as cultural knowledge." Therefore, if the use of physical punishment of children is culturally accepted in a community and expected as a discipline method, both parents and children may come to view it as normal (Gershoff 2002a). Therefore, several researchers have argued that banning the use of physical punishment on children will not occur if the use of physical punishment as a discipline method is culturally inherited (Gershoff 2002a).

Corral-Verdugo et al. (1995 p.677), argue that "Cultural attitudes are powerful influences on the development of beliefs." Parents' beliefs play a significant role in their technique of rearing their children (Kolar and Soriano 2000; Gershoff 2002a). According to Pinderhughes et al. (2000 p.381), "Several studies illustrate the link between parenting beliefs and attitudes and parenting behaviour." According to Holden et al.(1999), parents who use physical punishment on their children believe it is a positive and effective discipline method. Also, several other researchers have pointed out that parents' attitude to the use of physical punishment is a risk factor that could predict their use of physical punishment on children (Whipple and Richey 1997; Holden, Miller et al. 1999; Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Crouch and Behl 2001; Ateah and Durrant 2005). In addition, several studies have found that those parents who believed in physical punishment as a discipline method were more likely to use it with their children than other parents (Simons, Whitbeck et al. 1991; Holden, Miller et al. 1999; Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). Corral-Verdugo et al. (1995) conducted a study to assess the relationship between mothers' beliefs on the effectiveness of physical punishment as a disciplinary method and their actual use of physical punishment on their children. The study consisted of 105 Mexican mothers, 59 of whom were reported as child abusers and the rest were selected from the general population as a "control group". The study concluded that, in general, the mothers' beliefs in the

effectiveness of physical punishment were associated with their use of it. Also, the study found that those mothers who were reported as abusive mothers had far stronger opinions in using physical punishment than the mothers from the "control group".

One of the important and essential steps in order to eliminate parents' use of physical punishment as disciplinary method is therefore to change attitudes. According to the World Health Organization (2002 p.244), "approval of harsh, physical punishment in child-rearing is deeply ingrained in some societies. Interventions are unlikely to be successful unless they take into account the strength of these beliefs and attitudes, and the way they relate to other aspects of local culture."

4.3.5 The consequences of physical punishment

The consequences of physical punishment can include physical injury, psychological harm (Straus 1994; Tijerino 2001; Frias-Armenta 2002; Greydanus, Pratt et al. 2003; Ateah and Durrant 2005), and/or social difficulties for the child (Bollenbacher and Burtt 1997; Thompson and Pearce 2001). The worst consequence of violence on children is death (Frias-Armenta 2002). Although the harmful consequences of physical punishment have received little attention (Straus and Yodanis 1996), it is considered a controversial issue among researchers (Rohner, Bourque et al. 1996; Turner and Finklhor 1996; Holden, Miller et al. 1999; Tijerino 2001; Baumrind, Larzelere et al. 2002; Afifi, Brownridge et al. 2006). For example, some researchers argue that only severe physical punishment have harmful consequences. But mild physical punishment can have harmful or negative consequences on a child (Fergusson and Lynskey 1997; Tijerino 2001). Gershoff (2002b) argues that not every child exposed to physical punishment will experience harmful side effects, but the risk of them is elevated by the degree of severity.

Nevertheless, some researchers argue that physical punishment is effective and has no consequences if it used with a warm family atmosphere (Rohner, Bourque et al. 1996). Moreover, Payne (1989) lists four benefits of the use of physical punishment on children: "promotes obedience in the immediate situation and in the long term, deters future misbehaviour, instils discipline, and teaches right from wrong" (Cited in Holden, Miller et al. 1999 p.909).

Physical harm

Several researchers have indicated that using physical punishment on children can cause physical injuries (Straus 1994; Durrant, Ensom et al. 2004). As indicated above physical punishment can also lead to physical abuse in some cases, (Straus 1994; Whipple and Richey 1997; Tijerino 2001) therefore, this means the evidence on side-effects of physical abuse can be applied to these specific cases of physical punishment. According to Fergusson and Lynskey (1997) a significant number of children exposed to physical punishment by their parents are subjected to physical injuries.

The physical harm of physical punishment can range from minor injuries to severe brain damage or even disability or death (National Research Council 1993; Miller-Perrin and Perrin 1999). Minor injuries can include bruises, the most common type of physical injury, or other markings which could be the result of using an object such as a belt (Miller-Perrin and Perrin 1999). According to Miller-Perrin and Perrin (1999) head injuries are the most serious kinds of injury and causes of death. Other serious injuries can result from the use of physical punishment such as broken bones, burns, or chest and abdominal injuries (Miller-Perrin and Perrin 1999).

Psychological harm

The psychological or emotional consequences of the use of physical punishment are a controversial issue among professionals (Simons, Johnson et al. 1994;

Rohner, Bourque et al. 1996). A number of studies have found an association between exposure to physical punishment and psychological and cognitive damage such as depression, anxiety (Bryan and Freed 1982; Rohner, Kean et al. 1991; Simons, Whitbeck et al. 1991; Simons, Johnson et al. 1994; Turner and Finklhor 1996), low self-esteem (National Research Council 1993; Simons, Johnson et al. 1994; DeVET 1997; Tijerino 2001), learning disorders, or even severe organic brain syndromes (National Research Council 1993). On the other hand, other researchers believe that physical punishment does not cause any psychological harm to children (Tijerino 2001)

Social difficulties

The use of physical punishment on children can affect a child's social life. Social difficulties can range from poor peer relationships to extraordinarily violent behaviours (National Research Council 1993).

The use of physical punishment can, and does, lead to aggression in some people. Several studies have found that children exposed to physical punishment are apt to be more aggressive than other children (Rohner, Kean et al. 1991; Simons, Johnson et al. 1994; Straus 1994; Straus and Yodanis 1996; Deater-Deckard and Dodge 1997; Miller and Knutson 1997) and "the higher rate of aggression shows up when these children are parents themselves" (Straus 1994 p.100). Heyman and Slep (2002) found that families who used physical punishment in the rearing of their children contributed to causing violence and child abuse in their adult families. On the other hand, White (1985) found no association between exposure to physical punishment as a child and becoming an aggressive adult (Cited in: Straus 1994 p.100).

Moreover, several studies have found an association between exposure to physical punishment and later violence (Turner and Finklhor 1996; Miller and Knutson 1997). A number of studies have found an association between exposure to physical punishment as a child and physical assaults on spouses in later life (Straus 1991; Straus and Yodanis 1996). Other studies have found a correlation

between childhood experience of physical punishment and their own later use of physical punishment with their children (Whipple and Richey 1997; Tijerino 2001).

Numerous other studies have found that the use of physical punishment is a predictor of child delinquency (Bryan and Freed 1982; Straus 1991; Simons, Johnson et al. 1994; Straus 1994). A study of 130 boys from Cambridge-Somerville (USA) found that the use of physical punishment on a child was a possible predictor of that child becoming delinquent and committing criminal activities (Deater-Deckard and Dodge 1997).

Several studies have found that children who were exposed to physical punishment report a low level of education achievement (Turner and Finklhor 1996). A survey of 170 college students in the United States has found that those students who had experienced physical punishment as children by their parents reported low grades in their classes and other problems such delinquency, aggression, and other psychological problems (Bryan and Freed 1982).

In contrast, other researchers have found that the use of physical punishment on children did not cause psychological harm, aggression or delinquency. For example, a study conducted on 450 two-parents families in the United States of America found that the use of physical punishment on children was not associated with adult psychological harm, delinquency, or aggression (Simons, Johnson et al. 1994). Although no psychological harm was found as a result of the physical punishment of children, the researcher did not recommend it use because it was capable of causing physical injury (Simons, Johnson et al. 1994).

4.3.6 Physical punishment across cultures

"Cross-cultural refers to the perspective afforded from a consideration of widely varying groups around the world" (Korbin 1980 p.4). The aim of cross-cultural studies in parenting is to observe the similarities and differences in child discipline methods and techniques and their influence on children (Kolar and Soriano 2000). Cross-cultural studies in the United States and other countries have shown diversity in disciplinary behaviours and attitudes among parents (Deater-Deckard and Dodge 1997). There could be differences, also, among the ethnic groups within a single culture. For example, a study on Euro-American and Afro-American mothers by Deater-Deckard et al. (1996) found that physical punishment was associated with negative effects on the children of Euro-American mothers only.

Despite these cultural differences and parenting methods, variations in the use of physical punishment as a discipline method have been recognized worldwide and in different cultures (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). The main purpose of parents' use of physical punishment is to correct child misbehaviour or stop undesirable behaviour (Gershoff 2002a). Parents usually use physical punishment because they believe it is a harmless and effective discipline method (Straus and Yodanis 1996; Tijerino 2001)

The sum of these studies leads me to conclude that the use of physical punishment as a discipline method is a cross cultural issue worldwide. Saudi Arabia is a part of this world. Therefore, it is useful and essential to review the Saudi literature regarding this matter and to set the limited existing Saudi Arabia studies within the context of this broader international literature base.

4.4 Saudi Arabian studies

As mentioned previously, several researchers have pointed out that there is a significant lack of studies on child abuse and child maltreatment in Saudi Arabia in particular and the Middle East in general (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Al-Saud 2000; Al-Zahrani 2005). In addition to the lack of studies on this topic, it is also difficult to conduct such a study in a conservative society like Saudi Arabia. According to Al-Zahrani (2005 P16), "Nobody likes to hear the term child abuse, particularly among strict conservative societies, because when one refers to child abuse the first impression is usually that it is sexual abuse that is being addressed. As we know, sexual relations between parents and children in Saudi Arabia are totally unacceptable. It is considered to be sinful and for this reason is prohibited." Therefore, I have tried to include all available studies or article that relate to child abuse in Saudi Arabia, such as professional studies, theses, medical studies, and newspaper reports.

My search of the literature started with databases in a similar way to that used with international studies. I searched the electronic journals, published articles, and local newspapers. I searched the data bases of popular libraries in Saudi Arabia such as the King Faisal Library and the King Fahad Library. Also, during my visit to Saudi Arabia in summer 2006, I visited different libraries across Saudi Arabia. My search concentrated on all articles either in English or Arabic regarding physical punishment and child abuse in general. Different words and phrases were used: "physical punishment on children", "child abuse", "child maltreatment", "child rearing", "discipline methods", "child education", "children's rights", "family relations" etc. However, few studies were unearthed.

Table 4.5 Saudi Arabian studies

#	Author(s)	Study Title	Date	Nature of study	Sample	Sample Size
1	Al-Metrik, A.	The right to discipline children and not consider it one of the reasons of crimination between Islamic legislation and contemporary regimes	1999	Master's dissertation	Court's case files	12
2	Al-Saud, M.	Child abuse in Riyadh: Types, causes and characteristics of victims	2000	PhD thesis	Professionals who work at hospitals (social workers, psychiatrics, doctors and others)	82
3	Ashui, M.	Disciplining children in the family environment: realities and trends	2003	Published study	Female college students	126
4	Al-Zahrani, S.	Child abuse phenomenon in Saudi society	2004	Study for Interior Ministry	Male school students	2050
5	Al-Qarni, M.	The impact of family violence on deviant behaviours of girls in intermediate schools in Makkah city	2005	Published study	Schoolgirls	350
6	Alyousif et al.	Domestic violence: A field study on Saudi Arabia	2005	Study for Social Affair Ministry	Professionals who work at different places such as prisons, hospitals, houses of juveniles etc.	491
7	Al-Zahrani, A.	Child abuse and neglect: Its causes and consequences in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	2005	PhD thesis	University students and households	823
8	Kattan et al.	Subcutaneous fat necrosis as an unusual presentation of child abuse	1995	Published study	Child abuse cases	2
9	Al-Ayed et al.	The spectrum of child abuse presenting to a university hospital in Riyadh	1998	Published study	Child abuse cases	13
10	Elkerdany et al.	Fatal physical child abuse in two children of a family	1999	Published study	Child abuse cases	2
11	Karthikeyan et al.	Child Abuse: report of three cases from Khamis Mushayt	2000	Published study	Child abuse cases	3

Saudi literature review

Eleven Saudi studies were found on the subject of child abuse. Four studies were conducted by physicians and outline cases dealt with on a medical basis. Two studies discuss family violence at home and one child discipline. Three studies explore the issue of child abuse in Saudi Arabia. One Master's degree dissertation discusses parental use of physical punishment from the Islamic Law perspective (see table 4.1). However, most studies simply address child abuse generally; without a focus on the potential connections between these abuse cases and physical discipline practices of parents.

As there are few substantive studies which have been conducted in Saudi Arabia, and as these few studies are critical in setting the context to my own current study, the following section discusses each of these in turn.

1) Master's dissertation prepared by Al-Metrik (1999) entitled "The right to discipline children and not consider it one of the reasons of crimination between Islamic legislation and contemporary regimes"

The aim of the study: to understand the rights of the child's guardians in using physical punishment as a disciplinary method. Also, it sought to clarify the legalization of disciplinary methods based on Islamic Law. Finally, the study clarified the Islamic definition of the age of children who can expose to physical punishment as a disciplinary method.

Sample size and characteristics: Several law and Islamic books and 10 official (court) reports.

Methodological approach: this study followed an historical inductive and deductive methodology and uses case studies.

Main findings: the study analyses ten court reports on child abuse cases. Seven cases involved children who had died as a result of family violence. The majority

of the victims of those cases were girls aged 2-8 years old. In five of these cases, the father was the perpetrator. In the other two cases, the perpetrator was one of the child's relatives. Most of those cases, where the father was perpetrator, ended without charging the perpetrator and the rest of the cases ended with sentences ranging between months to 7 years in prison.

2) A PhD thesis by Al-Saud, M. (2000) entitled "Child abuse in Riyadh: Types, causes and characteristics of victims." According to the author this study was the first study done in Saudi Arabia in the field of child abuse.

The study aim: to explore child abuse in Saudi Arabia by identifying its types, causes, as well as victim and family characteristics in Riyadh.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of 82 professionals were selected from ten hospitals across Riyadh. 40% of the sample members were social workers, 37% were paediatricians, 19% were psychiatrists, psychologists, and doctors, and 4% belonged to other professions. Almost 55% of the sample members had bachelor (BA) degree and about 45% had a postgraduate degree.

Methodological approach used: questionnaire developed by the researcher consisting of three parts: personal details, information regarding child abuse cases with which participants had been dealing, and the decision taken in respect of the cases.

Main findings: The study found that 39% of the participants had witnessed child abuse cases during their work and 61% had not. The study found that 92% of the cases involved physical abuse and 78% of the cases child neglect. The majority of child abuse cases involved only one of the parents; however, there was no difference in percentages between fathers and mothers committing abuse. More boys than girls experienced child abuse (65% of cases involved boys and 56% of cases involved girls). The study concluded that more young children (less than eleven years) than older children (eleven years or more) experienced

physical abuse. 72% of the children came from low income families, 58% of them came from what was described as 'large' families, 54% of them came from families where the father's level of education was low, and 44% of them came from families where the mother's level of education was low.

3) A study by Ashui, M. (2003) entitled "disciplining children in the family environment: realities and trends."

The study aim: to describe female college students' experiences of discipline during their childhood and to explore their attitude towards the use of child discipline methods on their own children. Finally, to examine the association between the parents' use of disciplinary methods and demographic variables such as economic status, the parents' level of religiosity, and parents' education level.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of 126 female students were selected from a college in King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dammam, in the East region of Saudi Arabia. 83% of the sample members were between 18 and 25 years old. 70% of them indicated that their families' income levels were average. 60% of the sample members' level of religiosity was average, 46% of them came from a large family (8-11 siblings), and 68% of the sample members were urban.

Methodological approach: Two questionnaires were adapted from a previous relevant study and developed by the researcher. The first questionnaire was designed to investigate physical punishment methods applied to children by their parents. The second questionnaire was designed to investigate participants' attitudes towards the use of physical punishment on children.

Main findings: The study found that 69% of the participants had experienced parental physical punishment during their childhood, 25% from both parents, 21% from only their mothers, 13% from only their fathers, and 4% from other relatives. (NB. These figures are included in the original study, and the author does not account for the remainder.)

About 18% of the girls said their first experience of physical punishment was when they were less than six years old, 36% when they were between 6 and 10 years old, about 9% when they were between 11 and 15 years old, and 2% of the sample members when they were over 15.

30% of the girls had been physically punished once a year, 21% more than once a year, 3% once a week, and 2% more than once a week. Hitting the children's hands, arms, or legs and punching them were the most common types of physical punishment experienced by the sample members. About 9% of the participants had been threatened with a knife or another weapon by their parents.

4) A study by Al-Zahrani, S. (2004) entitled "Child abuse phenomenon in Saudi society"

The aim of the study: to understand child abuse in the Saudi community by; first assessing the prevalence of child abuse in the Saudi community; second, identifying the most prevalent types of child abuse; third, identifying the age groups most exposed to child abuse; fourth, assessing the family characteristics of those children exposed to child abuse; fifth, assessing the social differences between families in which child abuse occurs; and sixth, assessing the social problems that children face as result of child abuse.

Sample size and characteristics: a total of 2,050 male students aged 10-17 years, a representative sample of the three education stages (elementary, intermediate, and secondary school). The sample members were selected from the three main cities in Saudi Arabia: Riyadh, Mekkah, and Dammam. The participants were selected using cluster sampling.

Methodological approach: A questionnaire developed by the researcher, consisting of three main parts: personal details, family details, and questions regarding three types of child abuse (physical, psychological, and neglect). The

researcher did not ask about sexual abuse because of the sensitivity of the topic in the Saudi community.

Main findings: Almost 50% of the study sample members reported that they had been abused at least once in their life. Psychological and emotional abuse were the most prevalent type (60%) followed by physical abuse (54%). Children aged 16-17 years old were exposed to most physical abuse and children aged 10-12 were exposed to least physical abuse. The researcher argued that children in the teenager years (16-17) are more active and more likely to break the family rules. Families with a history of divorce were also those in which children experienced most physical abuse (42%). In contrast to most international studies on this subject, the study concluded that children with parents with high education levels were exposed to physical punishment more than those children with parents with low education levels. Children from large families (15 or more) were exposed to child abuse more than children from smaller families. Children from low monthly income families (less than 3000 SR) experienced child abuse more than other children.

5) A study by Al-Qarni, M. (2005) entitled "The impact of family violence on deviant behaviours of girls in intermediate schools in Makkah city."

The study aim: to identify the patterns of domestic violence (physical, verbal, or neglect) used against female students by their parents; to determine the effects of domestic violence on female students' behaviours; and to determine the relationship between the types of family violence and the deviant behaviour of students.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of 350 female students were selected from seven intermediate schools in Makkah city (West coast of Saudi Arabia), 50 students from each school. The average age of the sample members was 14.6 years. 89% of the participants were living with both their parents, whereas 11% of them were living with one of their parents (either father or mother). Education levels of the sample members' parents were low (72.6% of fathers and 82.8% of

mothers had a low education level). The average size of family members was seven.

Methodological approach: A questionnaire developed by the researcher consisting of three parts: demographic characteristics of the participants, questions on the participants' experiences of physical punishment, and questions relating to the participants' misbehaviour in school.

Main findings: Most of the sample had been exposed to, or observed, one or more types of family violence (physical or verbal) or neglect by their parents. Almost 45% of the participants had been either exposed to physical abuse by their parents or had witnessed domestic violence. About 42% of the participants had either endured or witnessed verbal abuse by their parents. Over 40% of the girls had experienced neglect by their parents. The study found that 65% of the sample reported being involved in different types of deviant behaviours such as fighting, cheating, lying, and violating school regulations. The study concluded that those children who had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents demonstrated deviant behaviours and were more vulnerable to psychological pressure. The study also found that families with histories of family violence tended to have similar characteristics such as low economic status, large number of children, and low parent education levels.

6) A study prepared by Alyousif et al. (2005) entitled "Family violence: A field study on Saudi Arabia."

The aim of the study: to understand family violence in the Saudi community by: first, assessing the most prevalent types of family violence in the Saudi community; second, assessing the characteristics of those families in which family violence happens; third, recognizing the strategy of reporting family violence to the authorities; fourth, recognizing the obstacles that face professionals when dealing with family violence cases; fifth, assessing appropriate ways to solve the problem.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of 491 professionals participated in the study. They were selected from nine Saudi cities. The sample was divided into four groups of professionals as follows: 62 male social workers employed in residential social care for juveniles; 25 female social workers employed in prisons for women; 35 female social workers employed in servants' affairs offices; 369 other social workers, physicians, psychologists, and other employees in several public hospitals in Saudi Arabia.

Methodological approach: Data were gathered using questionnaires. Four different questionnaires were developed by the researchers and each sample group was provided with a particular questionnaire.

Main findings: children and women are most exposed to family violence in the Saudi community. Family violence has become a phenomenon which needs serious intervention. Most of the family violence cases occur either in families involved in divorce cases, in the absence of one of the parents (such as the death of one parent), or in cases of parental addiction. Neglect is the most common type of abuse that children face in their own families followed by physical abuse. The study concluded that the main reason for not reporting family violence cases to the authorities is the families' failure to cooperate. Indeed, in many cases victims deny being exposed to violence. The study also found that in most child abuse cases reported to hospitals (77%), victims were sent back with their parents after receiving medical treatment.

7) A thesis prepared by Al-Zahrani, A. (2005) entitled "Child abuse and neglect: Its causes and consequences in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

The study aim: to identify the most prevalent types of child abuse in Saudi society; to explore the causes of child abuse cases; and to investigate the consequences of abuse on the future lives of children.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of 823 adults (male and female) aged 18 years old and over were selected from different places (universities and

households). 65% of the participants were male and 35% were female. 22% of the participants were aged between 18 and 20 and 44% were aged between 21 and 25. 56% of the participants described themselves as a middle class, and 14% as lower class.

Methodological approach: A questionnaire developed by the researcher consisting of three parts; the prevalence of child abuse; the consequences of child abuse, and the causes of child abuse. Some parts of the questionnaire had been adapted from other studies.

Main findings: The study found that the most prevalent types of child abuse cases were child emotional neglect (27%), emotional abuse (22.8%), and physical abuse (13%). Almost 29.5% of those participants who had been exposed to physical abuse were abused by their fathers and around 8% by their mothers. Again, in contrast to the weight of existing international studies that highlight young children as most vulnerable to physical abuse, about 40.5% of those participants who had been exposed to physical abuse were between 11 and 15 years old, about 32% were between 6 and 10 years old and about 4% were under 5 years old.

The study found a significant relationship between physical abuse and family economic status (P < .002) and family size (P < .036). Large families and families with low income presented a significantly increased risk of physical abuse. However, there was no relationship between physical abuse and either the father's (P = .254) or the mother's education level (P = .377). There was a relationship between physical abuse and different psychological disorders such as low self-esteem (P < .02) and aggression (P < .001).

Additionally, four studies were prepared by a number of physicians working in different hospitals in Saudi Arabia as follows:

8) A study prepared by Kattan, H. et al. (1995) entitled "Subcutaneous fat necrosis as an unusual presentation of child abuse"

The study aim: to discuss child abuse cases medically.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of two child abuse cases were seen in the emergency room of a hospital in Riyadh. Two girls, members of one family, were under two years of age.

Methodological approach: Medical examination.

Main findings: Both children had been exposed to physical abuse. The mother was 24 year old and the father was 38 year old. The father was married to four women and had a total of twenty children.

9) A study prepared by Al-Ayed et al. (1998) entitled "The spectrum of child abuse presenting to a university hospital in Riyadh"

The study aim: to discuss child abuse cases medically.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of thirteen child abuse and neglect cases were seen in the emergency room of a general hospital in Riyadh. The study consisted of five boys and 8 girls aged between 1 and 11.

Methodological approach: Medical examination.

Main findings: Four cases out of thirteen were physical abuse; three cases were sexual abuse; four cases were neglect resulting in the death of a child; one was case of 'Munchausen's syndrome by proxy'; and one case was labour abuse.

10) A study prepared by Elkerdany et al. (1999) entitled "Fatal physical child abuse in two children of a family"

The study aim: to discuss child abuse cases medically.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of two child physical abuse cases were seen in the emergency room of a general hospital in Jubail (Eastern region of Saudi Arabia). A boy and girl, members of one family and both were under two years of age.

Methodological approach: Medical examination.

Main findings: The medical examination showed that both children had been exposed to physical abuse. The mother was a 16-year-old and the father was 35-year-old and both had low levels of education.

11) A study prepared by Karthikeyan et al. (2000) entitled "Child Abuse: report of three cases from Khamis Mushayt"

The study aim: to discuss child abuse cases medically.

Sample size and characteristics: A total of three child abuse cases were seen in the emergency room of the Civil Hospital in Khamis Mushayt (Southern region of Saudi Arabia). Two boys were three and seven years, and a girl was one-year-old.

Methodological approach: Medical examination.

Main findings: Two of the three cases constituted physical abuse and one case sexual abuse. Regarding the physical abuse cases, the parents did not reveal how injures happened. Also, in the sexual abuse case the father did not reveal who was responsible for the child's injury.

4.5 Observations from the literature review

From the above literature review, it is clear that children in Saudi Arabia, as in most countries across the world, are at risk of exposure to violence by their

parents. Studies conducted in Saudi Arabia to date support some results from international studies and yet differ in some regards.

Although the number of studies is limited and sample sizes tend to be small, the evidence points towards both physical abuse and the use of physical punishment being prevalent in Saudi Arabia. Al-Mutrik (1999) cited seven cases of children who had died as a result of parental violence. Al-Saud (2000) found that 92% of the child abuse cases were physical abuse. Ashui (2003) found that 69% of his sample had experienced physical punishment by their parents. Al-Zahrani (2005) found that 13% of the child abuse cases were physical abuse. Al-Qarni (2005) found that 45% of the children in his study had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents. In addition, Alyousef et al. (2005) concluded that family violence is a phenomenon in the Saudi community. Gershoff (2002a p.553) argued that "Physical punishment and physical abuse are two points along a continuum." Accordingly, the use of physical punishment and its relationship to physical abuse in Saudi Arabia needs more investigation.

Many of the researchers named above have discussed child maltreatment in Saudi Arabia from different angles including both child and parental characteristics. As in the international literature, Saudi studies currently indicate more boys than girls being exposed to violence. Studies of the age of children being physically abused have produced conflicting results. Al-Saud (2000) found that younger children (less than 11 years) more than older children (11 years or more) had been abused. However, Al-Zahrani (2004) found that children aged 16-17 were exposed to physical abuse more than children in the younger age groups.

Similar discrepancies have been found concerning the relative frequency of abuse perpetrated by mothers as opposed to fathers. For example, Al-Zahrani (2005) found that physical abuse had been committed by 29% of fathers and 8% by mothers. On the other hand, Al-Saud (2000) found no difference between abusing mothers and fathers. In addition, findings on family characteristics are also inconclusive. For instance, the low education level of parents was associated

with child maltreatment by Al-Saud (2000) and Al-Qarni (2005). However, Al-Zahrani (2004), found that children with highly educated parents were exposed to more abuse than children with poorly educated parents. At the same time, Al-Zahrani (2005) found no relationship between child abuse and parents' education levels.

As well as providing inconclusive and contradictory findings, there are also some gaps in the areas addressed in the existing Saudi literature. For instance, whilst the question of 'who abuses?' has been asked, the question of whether parental age is related or not in influencing rates of abuse has not been examined. Nevertheless, it is striking that these cases of child abuse which were reported by physicians had been committed by young mothers (Kattan, Sakati et al. 1995; Al-Ayed, Qureshi et al. 1998; Elkerdany, Al-Eid et al. 1999). Additionally, with regard to physical punishment, none of the studies in Saudi Arabia have discussed the relationship between child misbehaviours and the parents' use of physical punishment which has been a feature of many international studies (Muller 1996; Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Tijerino 2001; Gershoff 2002b). Therefore, one of the current study's aims is to clarify the most common misbehaviours for which parents punish their children physically in Saudi Arabia.

Moreover, there have been only two studies which have discussed the issue of parents' use of physical punishment on children in Saudi Arabia at all; i.e. those by Ashui (2003) and Al-Qarni (2005). Both of these studies are limited in their scope and focus. Ashui (2003) discussed the types of discipline that school students had experienced by their parents and Al-Qarni (2005) discussed the patterns of family violence (physical, verbal, or neglect) which had been used on his female students. Both studies investigated the issue only in relation to girls. Therefore, in the current study, physical punishment is discussed from two different perspectives, i.e. parents and young people, and relating to both males and females. To the best of my knowledge this study is the first to discuss the use of physical punishment on children by their parents in Saudi Arabia in depth.

4.6 The study hypotheses

A review of international and Saudi studies has led me to formulate the following hypotheses for my study in regard to parents' use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia:

1. Parents' use of physical punishment is prevalent in the Saudi community; that majority of the parents in the sample will have used physical punishment on their children and the majority of young people in the sample will have experienced parental physical punishment.

2. A range of types of physical punishment will be used by parents and some types will be common.

3. Parents punish their children physically for different types of misbehaviours and some of these misbehaviours are commonly punished.

4. Severe outcomes of physical punishment are caused by only a minority of parents.

5. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and child gender, and it is expected that boys are significantly more likely than girls to be exposed to physical punishment.

6. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and child age, and younger children are significantly more likely than older children to experience physical punishment.

7. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' gender, and mothers are significantly more likely than fathers to use physical punishment.

8. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' age, and parents younger than 35 years old are significantly more likely than parents over 35 years old to use physical punishment.

9. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' education level, and parents with low education levels are

significantly more likely than parents with high education levels to use physical punishment.

10. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' employment status, and unemployed parents are significantly more likely than employed parents to use physical punishment.

11. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' experience of physical punishment. Parents who were exposed to physical punishment as children by their own parents are significantly more likely than parents who were not exposed to physical punishment as children by their own parents to use to physical punishment.

12. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and family size, and parents with a large number of children are significantly more likely than parents with a small number of children to use physical punishment.

13. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and family income, and parents with low income are significantly more likely than parents with high income to use physical punishment.

14. There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and a positive attitude toward the use of physical punishment, and those parents who use physical punishment on their children show high support for the use of physical punishment on children.

15. The majority of parents in the sample support the parental use of physical punishment.

16. The majority of young people in the sample support the parental use of physical punishment.

17. The majority of the sample (both parents and young people) do not view parental use of physical punishment as a type of child abuse.

18. The majority of the sample (both parents and young people) do not view their own parents' use of physical punishment on them as abuse.

19. The majority of the sample (both parents and young people) do not support preventing parental use of physical punishment by law.

20. The majority of the sample (both parents and young people) support preventing the use of *severe* physical punishment by law.

Further clarification on the relationship between the study's objectives and these hypotheses is presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Matching the study objectives and hypotheses

#	Objectives	Related Hypotheses number
1	Assess the prevalence of parental use of physical punishment.	1
2	Identify the common types of physical punishment of children used by parents.	2
3	Identify the common child misbehaviours and parents' subsequent use of physical punishment.	3
4	Assess the severity of outcomes of physical punishment.	4
5	Identify the age groups and gender of children who are most frequently being physically punished.	5 & 6
6	Identify the age groups and gender of parents who most commonly use physical punishment.	7 & 8
7	Assess the risk factors for physical punishment of children.	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14
8	Assess attitudes towards the use of physical punishment of children.	15 & 16
9	Assess perceptions on the difference between physical punishment and child abuse.	17 & 18
10	Assess views on preventing parental use of physical punishment by law in Saudi Arabia.	19 & 20

Chapter Five: Research Methodology

5.1 Preamble

This chapter will present a comprehensive view of the research methodology that has been used in the present study, including sampling, the development of the survey questionnaire, the data collection process, and data analysis.

Although parental use of physical punishment is considered a global issue and has been investigated by many researchers around the world, it is still a contentious and neglected issue in Saudi Arabia. Indeed, no specific study has specifically discussed the issue of physical punishment of children in Saudi Arabia. According to Babbie (2000), there are three common purposes of social research: exploration, description, and explanation. Whilst some studies may have more than one purpose, the lack of existing research and the objectives set out for this study means that the current study is descriptive in nature, therefore, I will give a brief review of descriptive research.

5.2 Descriptive research

Sarantakos (1998 p.7) provides the following succinct summary of descriptive research:

> "This form of research is quite common, in most cases as a preliminary study or an exploratory study, but also as an independent investigation; it aims to describe social systems, relations, or social events, providing background information about the issue in question as well as stimulating explanations."

Kelley et al. (2003 p.261) argued that the descriptive researcher "aims to observe (gather information on) certain phenomena, typically at a single point in time: the cross-sectional survey. The aim is to examine a situation by describing important factors associated with that situation, such as demographic, socio-economic, and health characteristics, events, behaviours, attitudes, experiences, and knowledge." In other words, descriptive studies focus on 'what' is the situation (Punch 2005). Sekaran (2003 p.122), argues that the purpose of a descriptive study is to provide the researcher with "a profile or to describe relevant aspects of the phenomena of interest from an individual ... or other perspectives."

According to Sekaran (2003 p.122) several beneficial results can be gained from conducting a meaningful descriptive study such as:

- Understanding the characteristics of a group in a given situation.
- Thinking systematically about aspects in a given situation.
- Offering ideas for future research.

Descriptive and explanatory research are inter-related (Punch 2005). Indeed, it can be argued that "What is going on?" and "Why is it going on?" are the most common research questions in social research. While descriptive research seeks to address the first question, explanatory research is addressed to the second question (Vaus 2001 p.1; Punch 2005). According to Vaus (2001), descriptive research stimulates the "*why*" questions of explanatory research.

The current study aims to understand "what is going on" in relation to parental use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia. As discussed in the literature review in chapter four, the use of physical punishment exists in Saudi Arabia but there remains a lack of information about the phenomenon. Accordingly, this study is considered a descriptive study.

5.3 The preliminary visit to Saudi Arabia

Prior to the main fieldwork, I visited Saudi Arabia during the period from June to August 2006. The visit provided a preliminary period of preparation. I achieved

three goals from the visit. First, I visited several libraries in order to search for relevant literature, including, the King Abdulaziz Library, the King Fahad National Library, the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, the Mohammad bin Saudi University Library, and the King Saud University Library. Second, I contacted several key professionals and researchers who had conducted research on similar topics in Saudi Arabia in order to discuss with them their experiences of conducting such studies in Saudi Arabia.

Finally, I visited several places where I planned to distribute the study questionnaires such as universities, ministries, schools, private companies and hospitals. In each location, I provided administration assistants with clear information about the study, its objectives and procedures. The vast majority of those consulted welcomed me and showed their willingness to help in the data collection process. As I would not be able to directly contact females to participate in the study, I planned to employ a small number of female research assistants to help in the process of data collection. Therefore, I contacted a number of women who were working at different places and asked for their help in the data collection process. For example, I had worked at a hospital and had had good relations with several employees (male and female). I visited these women in their work place and explained the reason for my visit and explained the aims of the study and its procedures. Happily the women showed their willingness to help. More details will be provided in section 5.7.

5.4 Research design and method

5.4.1 Study design

The research design is a plan or structure for the data collection and analysis processes (Bryman 2001). The purpose of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer his or her research questions as clearly as possible (Vaus 2001). In social research there are several types of designs, for example, experiment, case study, longitudinal design, and cross-sectional survey (Vaus 2001). Each one of these designs serves a different

purpose from the others. This study's design is a cross-sectional survey, as discussed below.

Cross-sectional design

Cross-sectional design, or social survey as it is called by some researchers (Bryman 2001) is "the selection of a relatively large sample of people from a pre-determined population, followed by the collection of a relatively small amount of data from those individuals" according to Kelley et al. (2003 p.261). It has been defined by Bryman (2001 p.41) as: "The collection of data on more than one case (usually quite a lot more than one) and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables (usually many more than two), which are then examined to detect patterns of association."

Cross-sectional design is considered the most widely used design in social research (Vaus 2001). According to Babbie (2000 p.238), "Survey research is probably the best method available to the social researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly."

Schutt (1995 pp.268-270) has pointed out three distinctive features of the cross-sectional (social survey) design:

- Versatility:
"Although a survey is not an ideal method for testing all hypotheses or learning about every social process, a well-designed survey can enhance our understanding of just about any social issue."

- Efficiency:
In a social survey data can be collected from a large number of people at relatively low cost and quickly and "many variables can be measured without substantially increasing the time or cost".

- Generalizability:

"Survey designs lend themselves to probability sampling from large populations... In fact, survey research is often the only means available for developing a representative picture of the attitudes and characteristics of a large population."

Cross-sectional or social survey design is the most appropriate design for the study due to several reasons. This design enabled me to obtain results relatively quickly because the data could be collected at one point in time. Its cost is reasonable because it does not require repetitive data collection (Vaus 2001). Moreover, this design is very useful for investigating the association between variables (Schutt 1995) and ideal for descriptive analysis, yet it is not restricted to this kind of analysis (Vaus 2001). In addition, the cross-sectional design has been used in many similar previous studies and has proved to be effective (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Al-Saud 2000; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000; Al-Qarni 2005; Orhon, Ulukol et al. 2006; Tang 2006).

5.4.2 Data collection method

Generally, in social science there are different methods of data collection such as questionnaires, interviews, observation, analysis of documents, diaries etc. However, questionnaires and interviews are probably the most used methods of data collection in a social survey (Sarantakos 1998; Babbie 2000; Bryman 2001). I was interested to use either a questionnaire or interview instrument for the data collection. Therefore, this section will highlight these two methods.

The interview instrument

According to Babbie (2000) the interview is frequently used for data collection in social surveys. The interview is a most appropriate technique for data gathering where the information is gathered from people directly about themselves, their experiences, opinions or attitudes etc. (Busha and Harter 1980 p.78). Moreover,

the interview is flexible. It can be conducted by face-to-face encounter, by telephone (Babbie 2000) or online (Sekaran 2003).

There are also several types of research interview such as the structured interview, an unstructured interview, and a semi-structured interview (Sarantakos 1998).

Structured interview: this is where the interview questions are prepared in advance and the required information is prepared by the researcher before conducting the interview (Sekaran 2003). This type is similar to a questionnaire but it is oral by nature and not written (Sarantakos 1998). According to Bryman (2001 p.107) this is the most commonly used type in social research because "it promotes standardization of both the asking of questions and the recording of answers."

Unstructured interview: this is where the researcher has no planned questions to ask (Sekaran 2003) or "no strict procedure to follow" (Sarantakos 1998 p.178). The purpose of this type is to "bring some preliminary issues to the surface so that the researcher can determine what variables need further in-depth investigation" (Sekaran 2003 p.225).

Semi-structured interview: this has elements from both structured and unstructured interviews (Sarantakos 1998). The researcher has a list of questions which need to be answered completely, but the interviewee has neither time nor fixed sequence restrictions in answering questions (Bryman 2001).

There are both advantages as well as disadvantages to interview techniques. Sarantakos (1998 p.198-199) has pointed out a number of both:

The advantages:

- It is flexible and can be adjusted to many diverse situations;
- High response rate because the interviewer can discuss the questions and clarify any doubts or queries with the respondents;

- Answering all questions is guaranteed;

- Face-to-face interviews help the researcher to observe the respondents' verbal or non-verbal behaviours;

- It provides the opportunity to record spontaneous answers; and

- Greater length is possible.

The disadvantages:

- It is costly and more time-consuming than other methods such as questionnaires;

- It offers less anonymity;

- It is less effective when sensitive issues are discussed;

- It is affected by the interviewer and bias may be introduced; and

- Interviewing is more inconvenient than other methods, such as questionnaires.

The questionnaire

The questionnaire is the most widespread data collection instrument in the social sciences. Usually questionnaires are used as the main method of data collection, yet, in some cases, it may be used as a supplementary method (Sarantakos 1998). According to Sekaran (2003 p.236) "Questionnaires are an efficient data collection mechanism when the researcher knows exactly what is required and how to measure the variables of interest." The questionnaire technique has been described by Wiersma (1986 p.179) as "a list of questions or statements to which the individual is asked to respond in writing; the response may range from a checkmark to an extensive written statement." McKernan (1991 p.126) cites a minimal description of questionnaire by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), as "written questions requiring responses."

Types of Questionnaire

There are three main types of questionnaires: the self-administered, the group-administered, and the mailed (McKernan 1991). Several researchers have discussed these as follows:

Self-administered questionnaire

The self-administered questionnaire, or self-completion questionnaire (Bryman 2001), or personal contact questionnaire (McKernan 1991) all refer to one type of questionnaire. This is one which is completed by the respondents themselves during the researcher's visit to their location and the questionnaires are completed during his or her attendance (McKernan 1991) or by distributing the questionnaire to the sample members and then collecting them personally a few days after completion (Babbie 2000). Sekaran (2003 p.236) has mentioned different advantages of this type of questionnaire:

- "High response rate;
- The completed responses can be collected within a short time;
- Any uncertainty or ambiguity in the questions can be clarified by the researcher;
- The researcher has an opportunity to introduce the study topic and motivate the respondents to provide frank answers; and
- Cheaper and time safe because of administering questionnaires to larger number of respondents at the same time."

Mail questionnaire

This type of questionnaire is sent to the respondents by post to answer and return (McKernan 1991). Usually the researcher needs to send a follow-up letter after the notified return date, in order to remind respondents of the questionnaire and stimulate the response rate (Schutt 1995; Sekaran 2003). Sekaran (2003 p.251) has mentioned several advantages and disadvantages of the mail questionnaire as follows:

Advantages:

- High anonymity;

- Can cover wide geographic regions;

- Respondents can take more time to respond at their convenience; and

- Can be administered electronically, if desired.

Disadvantages

- Response rate is almost always low;

- Any uncertainty or ambiguity in questions cannot be clarified; and

- Follow-up procedure for non responses is necessary.

Group-administered questionnaire

This type of questionnaire is one which is completed by a group of respondents who have been brought together into one place (McKernan 1991; Schutt 1995).

In general, questionnaire technique is similar to all other methods. It has advantages and disadvantages in implementation. Sarantakos (1998 p.159) has mentioned the following advantages of using this type questionnaire as a method of data collection:

- It is cheaper than other methods;

- It produces quick results;

- It is convenient, because respondents can complete it at a time convenient to them;

- It offers greater assurance of anonymity;

- It helps to avoid bias or errors caused by the presence or attitudes of the interviewer;

- It can cover wide geographic regions;

- It is stable, consistent, and uniform to measure; and

- It offers considered and objective views on an issue, since respondents can consult their files, and since many people prefer to write rather than talk about some issues.

On the other hand, McKernan (1991 p.129) has mentioned several disadvantages of using the group administered questionnaire as method of data collection:

- It takes time to analyse;
- Responses may not be truthful;
- Respondents may try to produce the correct response;
- Time-consuming to prepare good items; and
- Completion depends on literacy.

Given the above points, the questionnaire instrument appears to be the most appropriate data collection method for the present study. As mentioned previously the study is investigating a highly sensitive topic and many people may not be comfortable to talk directly about this topic. Therefore, I argue that interviews would not be the appropriate method to use in this study. According to Sarantakos (1998), the questionnaire has several advantages, one of which is the anonymity of respondents. I argue that this will encourage people to participate in the study without fear of being identified. Furthermore, this study has a limit in time and budget and the questionnaire technique requires fewer resources than other techniques. In addition, the questionnaire instrument has been used in many similar studies and proved a useful instrument (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; MacMillan, Boyle et al. 1999; Al-Saud 2000; Thompson and Pearce 2001; Ashui 2003; Al-Qarni 2005; Al-Zahrani 2005; Kircaali-Iftar 2005).

So the question here is which type of questionnaire would be appropriate for this study? Again, the self-administered questionnaire appears to be the most suitable type. According to Sekaran (2003 p.236) the self-administered questionnaire has several advantages such as providing a high response rate and the opportunity to introduce the research topic in person. Describing the nature of the topic and its aims to the respondents in person will enhance their participation. Moreover,

allowing respondents to complete the questionnaire by themselves will provide them with a sense of anonymity which may encourage them to complete questionnaire truthfully. Therefore, the self-administered questionnaire was used as a data collection method.

5.5 The study population and sample

Sarantakos (1998 p.124) states: "one of the most significant issues investigators have to consider when designing a project concerns the type and number of the respondents who will be included in the study." Therefore, this section will provide a comprehensive view of the target population sampling strategy and resultant study sample. Also, it will provide an explanation of the sampling process.

5.5.1 Target population

A study population refers to "any set of persons or objects that possesses at least one common characteristic" (Busha and Harter 1980 p.56); "the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate" (Sekaran 2003 p.265); or the total number of people from whom the sample is to be selected (Bryman 2001 p.85).

In order to give the reader a clear view of the study, it is important to define the study population. As the purpose of this study is to investigate parents' use of physical punishment on children in Saudi Arabia, the target population will be drawn from parents and young people in Riyadh. A parent is defined as any person living in a family with at least one biological child. Young person is defined as any person aged between 17 and 21 who is living in Riyadh at the time of the investigation. It is worth mentioning that, due to ethical considerations, children aged 16 or less were excluded from this study. The reason behind the selection of this group of young people to be a part of this sample was two-fold. First, this age group is in the middle stage which is

between childhood and adulthood and childhood experiences are still fresh in their minds. So, it is relatively easy for them to remember any physical punishment that they experienced from their parents. Second, these people are likely to become parents in the near future. According to Saudi statistics, the current average age of marriage in Saudi Arabia is 28.5 years for males and 24.9 years for females (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2005). Therefore, I suggest that it is useful to discover young people's attitudes toward using physical punishment on their own children in the future. This may have the added benefit of helping to design intervention programmes and strategies to protect children in the future.

5.5.2 The study sample

Since such a study population would be too large to determine, and since I had time and resource limits in conducting this study, a sample of the target population had to be selected. According to Sarantakos (1998 p.125), "Sampling enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in the place of the target population."

Sampling has been described as "the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from the population, so that a study of the sample and an understanding of its properties or characteristics would make it possible to generalize such properties or characteristics to the population elements " (Sekaran 2003 p.266).

Several researchers have mentioned the importance of using a sample rather than conducting the study on the entire study population (Sarantakos 1998; Bryman 2001; Sekaran 2003). For example, Sarantakos (1998 p.125) has mentioned several benefits of using sampling as following:

- In many cases a complete coverage of the population is not possible;
- Complete coverage may not offer substantial advantage over a sample survey;

- Studies based on samples require less time and produce quick answers;

- Sampling is less demanding in terms of labour requirements, since it requires a small portion of the target population;

- It costs less; and

- It offers more detailed information and a high degree of accuracy because it deals with a relatively small number of units.

5.5.3 The sampling process

Types of sample

There are several types of sample and the researcher needs to judge which one is suitable for his or her study. Sampling is generally conceived to fall into two major types; probability and non-probability sampling. Each type consists of different sampling strategies (Schutt 1995; Sarantakos 1998; Babbie 2000; Bryman 2001; Sekaran 2003).

Probability sampling

In this type, all population members have an equal opportunity of being included in the sample (Wiersma 1986; Sekaran 2003). "The majority of social researchers employ probability sampling for several reasons, but especially due to its high reliability, degree of representativeness and high generalisability of the results" (Sarantakos 1998 p.126). This type can involve several strategies: simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling, multi-stage sampling, area sampling, multi-phase sampling, panel studies, and spatial sampling (Sarantakos 1998). However, according to Sarantakos (1998), simple random sampling and systematic sampling are the most common sampling strategies used by social researchers.

Non-probability sampling

In contrast, non-probability sampling indicates that not every unit of the study population has an equal opportunity of being included (Sekaran 2003). As a result, the study findings cannot be generalized to the whole population, yet this strategy has certain advantages and may sometimes be the only possible approach for the researcher (Sekaran 2003). Moreover, "some of the non-probability sampling plans are more dependable than others and can offer some important leads of potentially useful information with regard to the population" (Sekaran 2003). Non-probability sampling includes four sampling strategies: accidental sampling, purposive sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling (Sarantakos 1998). For the purposes of this study I decided to use purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling is a technique where the researcher selects the sample members purposely and this selection is dependant on their relevance to the research topic (Sarantakos 1998; Bryman 2001). In other words, it is "confined to a specific type of people who can provide the desired information, either because they are the only ones who have it, or conform to some criteria set by the researcher" (Sekaran 2003 p.277). According to Babbie (2000 p.179), "it is appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study." Thus, in this sampling strategy, the researcher's judgment is important in obtaining a probability sample (Sarantakos 1998).

For the present study, non-probability sampling is the most appropriate strategy for several reasons. First, the target population is too large and I do not have the required specific details about the whole of the population, such as the exact number of the population or their contact details. So, it is not appropriate to follow probability sampling procedures that require "a sampling frame", such as an up-to-date census (Sarantakos 1998). Second, in Saudi Arabia there are no appropriate and available maps of cities and neighbourhoods. So, I would not know how to reach people at their residence. Third, Saudi Arabian residents have

little or no experience with survey processes, and it would require much time and effort to persuade them of the survey's purpose and benefits. Moreover, Saudi Arabia is a conservative country and has cultural norms and habits which restrict strange men and women from talking to one another. Nor must it be forgotten that parents have full authority over their children and family matters. All these factors could potentially hinder individuals' participation in the study. In addition, the study topic is, as has been noted above, a highly sensitive issue. Therefore, I would expect a very low response rate had I chosen probability sampling. Indeed, low response rates in surveys have been recognized by several researchers who have conducted studies in Saudi Arabia or in a similar environment (Alqahtani 1996; Albahussain 2000). Therefore, I needed to use my personal relationships and contacts to achieve a good response to the questionnaire. According to Al-Qahtani (1996), in a society like Saudi Arabia, the researcher's personal relationships play a vital role in the data collection process. Hence, to complete the process, the researcher may well need to use personal relationships in order to access the sample members. Consequently, the purposive sampling strategy is the best process and it was used in this study.

5.5.4 Sample characteristics

To ensure the participation of a variety of parents in the study's population, the final study sample was collected from a wide range of sites. The group members were accessed through their work places such as ministries, hospitals, schools and companies. Also, to ensure the participation of unemployed people, participants from training institutions and visitors to Riyadh employment and labour offices were invited to participate. The researcher and research assistants visited many places and arranged meetings to invite people to participate in this study. It is worth mentioning that because of the segregation of the sexes in Saudi Arabia, men and women do not work alongside one another except in places such as hospitals. In order to access fathers, the following places were visited: The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Health, the Saudi Telecom, the King Fahad Hospital, the King Khalid Hospital, Al-Riyadh Bank, two primary care centres, and three private training and education

centres. In order to access mothers, the following places were visited: the King Fahad Hospital, the King Khalid Hospital, Alyamamah Hospital, Samba Bank, three girls' schools, two primary care centres, and three private training and education centres (see Table 5.1 for more details).

Table 5.1 Population of parents

#	Location	Respondents gender	Type of responsibility	questionnaires distributed	questionnaires returned
1	Ministry of Education	Male	Employees	27	16
		Female	None	0	0
2	Ministry of Health	Male	Employees	31	21
		Female	None	0	0
3	Saudi Telecom	Male	Employees	39	24
		Female	None	0	0
4	Labour Ministry	Male	Employees/applicants	30	14
		Female	None	0	0
5	Three girls' schools	Male	None	0	0
		Female	Employees	39	21
6	King Fahad Hospital	Male	Employees/Visitors	40	19
		Female	Employees/Visitors	55	25
7	King Khalid Hospital	Male	Employees/Visitors	38	18
		Female	Employees/Visitors	42	22
8	Alyamamah Hospital	Male	None	0	0
		Female	Employees/Visitors	62	39
9	Two Primary Care Centres	Male	Employees/Visitors	29	18
		Female	Employees/Visitors	32	13
10	Al-Riyadh Bank	Male	Employees/Customers	18	9
		Female	Employees/Customers	0	0
11	Samba Bank	Male	None	0	0
		Female	Employees/Customers	19	8
12	Three private training and education centres	Male	Employees/ Trainees	18	8
		Female	Employees/ Trainees	21	10
Total				540	285

Both employees and people using these services were invited to participate in this study. Actually, the choice of these sites to be collection points for the study data was based on my personal contacts that established links with these organizations to facilitate access to the study sample members. However, this enabled me to include a good, mixed sample.

In contrast to the parents in the sample, young people were accessed through their study places. College students (male and female) at Al-Imam Mohammad Bin Saud University and King Saud University in Riyadh were invited to participate in the study (see Table 5.2 for more details).

Table 5.2 Population of young people

#	The place	Type of responsibility	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires returned
1	Mohammed bid Saudi University	Male Students	80	73
		Female Students	80	69
2	King Saudi University	Male Students	70	51
		Female Students	70	52
Total			300	245

5.5.5 Sample size

According to Vaus (2001 p.187), "The sample size depends on funds, time, access to potential participants, planned methods of analysis, and the degree of precision and accuracy required." Usually, available time and budget play the most significant role in sample size decisions (Bryman 2001). On the other hand, some researchers employ statistical methods in order to arrive at an accurate sample size. They argue that if the sample size can be computed statistically, the sampling error will be reduced (Sarantakos 1998).

According to Sarantakos (1998), in some sampling procedures such as purposive sampling, the sample size decision is up to the judgment of the researcher. Only he or she can decide when the number of respondents is considered sufficient. In this instance, since I was limited by time and budget, purposive sampling strategy was chosen to be used for this study. Moreover, the sample size is larger than 30 is considered appropriate by most researchers (Babbie 2000 p.295). The final sample size of the current study was 530 persons, 285 parents and 245 young persons.

Table 5.3 Study sample members

Participants		Respond	%
Parents	Fathers	147	27.7
	Mothers	138	26.1
Young people	Male	124	23.4
	Females	121	22.8
Total		530	100

5.6 Questionnaire construction

In order to construct an appropriate questionnaire for the present study, I reviewed many studies in order to find other examples of standardised questionnaires that could serve as a model for this study. Because of the particular nature of this study and its cultural context, I did not find any questionnaire that would in itself be entirely suitable for the study objectives. However, a number of researchers have investigated physical punishment on children from different angles using questionnaires (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Carswell 2001; Ashui 2003; Straus 2006). I have used those questionnaires and developed from them two questionnaires for my own purposes, one for parents and another for young people.

McKernan (1991 p.128) and Bryman (2001 p.149) have pointed out the following guidelines on constructing an ideal questionnaire:

- Overlong questions should be avoided;

- Questions should be as simple and clear as possible;

- Only essential questions or relevant questions should be asked;

- All alternative answers should be covered and balanced;

- Leading and loaded questions which could lead to biased responses should be avoided;

- Questions which ask two questions, "double-barrelled questions" should be avoided;

- The items should follow a "natural logic, or order"; and

- The questions and their alternative answers should be symmetrical.

Question types

"The questions are the basic components of any questionnaire. They are designed to collect specific pieces of information related to the general research questions. The quantity and quality of information collected really depends on the quality of the specific questions included in the questionnaires" (Summerhill and Taylor, 1992 cited in Bosbait 2003 p. 114). Generally, there are two types of questions; open-ended questions and closed questions (McKernan 1991; Sekaran 2003).

Open-ended questions are where the respondents have a chance to write their opinions or what they think in their own words (McKernan 1991). This type of question helps the respondents to talk freely about the issue. It also helps to explore new areas which the researcher had not considered (Bryman 2001).

Closed questions are where the researcher gives different alternative responses to the respondents who need to select one response from a number of possible responses. Thus, they are multiple choice questions. This type of questioning helps the respondents to complete the questionnaire quickly. Multiple choice

questions help to clarify the meaning of a question for respondents (Bryman 2001). Moreover, they offer quick analysis because the researcher can code the data easily (Sekaran 2003).

Because of the sensitivity of the study topic, the target population and the need to deal efficiently with the data, closed questions were the most appropriate for this questionnaire.

5.6.1 Developing the Questionnaire

Construction of the questionnaire passed though several stages. This section provides an explanation of these stages.

First stage:

Parts of several previous questionnaires have been used to develop my own questionnaire (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Carswell 2001; Ashui 2003; Straus 2006). All questions, either formulated by me or adapted from other researchers, were prepared in order to address the study's objectives and test the study's hypotheses. I attempted to make the questionnaires as simple and short as I could to ensure a high response rate. In addition, an induction sheet was developed in order to explain the survey's purposes and aims. A comprehensive description of the questionnaires is included in section 5.6.2 below.

Second stage:

After the questionnaires had been constructed, both questionnaires were sent to five people for review and suggestions: two academic staff at the School of Applied Social Sciences, two at the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, and a PhD student at Durham University. The aim was to achieve a clear and reliable questionnaire on different aspects such as the order of questions,

ability to meet the study's aims, question clarity, and other related issues. The reviewers made various comments and suggestions which were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire and covering letter.

Third stage:

Because the study's sample members were Arabs and it would be difficult for them to respond to the two questionnaires in English, it was essential to translate both into Arabic. This task was performed by the researcher. After translation, the two versions of the questionnaires, Arabic and English, were sent to three people for checking: a staff member in the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Department, Durham University, and two Arab PhD students at the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics, Newcastle University. All six questionnaires that were sent out were returned with suggested minor corrections, for instance, relating to language use and familiar terminology. Accordingly, modifications were made to the Arabic versions of the questionnaires.

Fourth stage:

To pilot the questionnaire, questionnaires were sent to 20 Saudi persons who were living in the cities of Durham and Newcastle. Five of them were fathers, five mothers, five young women, and five young men. An additional sheet of questions was attached to each questionnaire and the respondents were asked to answer five additional questions about the questionnaire (see Appendix C). 18 out of 20 questionnaires were returned. No changes were suggested to the questionnaires by these 18 respondents, who all agreed that the clarity, language and length of the questionnaires were satisfactory.

5.6.2 Questionnaires review

The final versions of the questionnaires were structured as follows.

Parents' questionnaire

The parents' questionnaire consisted of four sections: demographic information, the use of physical punishment, experience of physical punishment, and cultural factors.

First section: this section consisted of 6 questions regarding respondents' personal information such as age, sex, education level, employment status, monthly income, and family size. The questions were asked in order to assess the relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and these factors.

Second section: this section consisted of four sub-parts: the use of physical punishment, attitudes toward physical punishment, types of physical punishment, severity of outcomes of physical punishment, and child misbehaviours. Part one consisted of 3 questions which sought to assess parents' use of physical punishment, the youngest age at which their children were exposed to physical punishment, the gender of the child, the child's age, and the parents' use of physical punishment during the past year. Part two listed 16 types of punishment and asked respondents which, if any, they had used. Part three consisted of a question which aimed to assess the severity of outcomes of physical punishment inflicted. Specifically, it sought to identify the proportion of parents using severe physical punishment on their children. Part four consisted of one question which sought to assess the range of child's misbehaviour for which parents punished their children physically. In total, 13 misbehaviours were listed.

Third section: this section consisted of 3 questions which sought to assess the parents' own experiences of physical punishment in childhood and to assess their perceptions of these experiences.

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Fourth section: this section consisted of 12 statements which sought to assess parents' attitude towards the use of physical punishment. Finally, the questionnaire ended with an open-ended question which sought to encourage participants to share their experiences and perceptions regarding the use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia.

Young people's questionnaire

The young people's questionnaire was similar to the parents' version in regard to content. Most of the questions were similar yet, while parents were asked about their use of physical punishment, the young people were asked about their own experiences as children. The young people's questionnaire consisted of four sections: demographic information, family information, experiences of physical punishment, and attitudes and perceptions towards physical punishment.

First section: this section consisted of 2 questions regarding respondent age and gender.

Second section: this section consisted of 7 questions regarding parental education levels, parental employment status, monthly income of the family, and family size. This section aimed to assess the relationship between the parents' use of physical punishment and these factors.

Third section: this section consisted of four sub-parts: experiences of physical punishment, types of physical punishment, severity levels of physical punishment, and child misbehaviours. Part one consisted of 2 questions aimed at assessing the children's exposure to physical punishment and the youngest age at which they had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents. In the second part, respondents were asked if they had been exposed to one or more of 16 listed types of punishment by their parents. Part three sought to assess the children's misbehaviours that parents punish their children physically for, and 13 misbehaviours were listed. Participants were asked to report if they had been

exposed to physical punishment by their parents when they committed one of these misbehaviours. Part four consisted of one question that sought to assess the severity of outcomes of physical punishment that participants had been exposed to. Participants were provided with six different levels concerning the physical effects on them following physical punishment and they were asked to indicate to which levels they themselves had been exposed. The respondents were also asked about the use of physical punishment in their families, such as who uses physical punishment more, father or mother, and who experiences it more, boys or girls. These questions sought to assess the relationship between parents' age and gender as well as children's age and gender and the parents' use of physical punishment.

Fourth section: this section consisted of 12 statements which sought to assess young people's attitudes towards their parents' use of physical punishment. Finally, the questionnaire ended with an open-ended question which sought to encourage participants to share their experiences and perceptions with regard to the use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia.

5.7 Data collection process

Data collection was undertaken by the researcher and number of female research assistants. Within Saudi culture, it is unacceptable for males to make contact with females directly. But it was clear that in order to gain a good response rate I needed to explain the research topic to the prospective participants, show its benefits and also to confirm respondent privacy and confidentiality. Direct contact with respondents is ideal as it promotes a better understanding of the study's purposes and the researcher's context which in turn may lead to a higher response. However, this was not possible with female respondents. Therefore, it was necessary to employ female research assistants to help in the data collection from the female sample group. I conducted a personal meeting with each one of the research assistants and supplied them with enough clear information about the study for them to be able to assist the prospective participants. This required

a clear explanation of the questionnaire and its questions to the research assistants. I emphasised that they had to clarify that all information they collected would be handled with complete privacy and confidentiality. In addition, I made myself available to all the research assistants during the data collection process for support and help.

Access process

In order to collect the data from parents, I visited the sites that had previously agreed to take part, along with the research assistants. Together, we invited those people who matched the study's criteria to complete the questionnaire. Only those parents who had at least one child at the time of the survey were selected to participate. After selection, I or one of my assistants introduced ourselves to the respondents, explained more fully the purpose of the study, and asked if individuals were willing to participate.

In order to collect the data from young people, I contacted two universities in Riyadh, King Mohammad Bin Saud University and King Saud University, and obtained the required permission to distribute the questionnaire to the students. After permissions were obtained I met the male and female students in their various departments together with the research assistants. The meetings consisted of a number of lectures organised by the college administrations. The meetings were conducted as follows; first, I or one of my assistants introduced ourselves to the students and explained the study's purpose. The students were then asked about their willingness to participate in the study and informed that if anyone was not willing to participate; he/she had the right to decline. Then the questionnaires were distributed.

Most participants (both parents and young people) completed the questionnaire in my presence or in the presence of one of the research assistants. However, some of the participants preferred to complete the questionnaire outside of the university and return it the next day. In order to increase participation, participants were informed that the questionnaires would be completely

confidential and anonymous, that no one would see them except the main researcher and that all information would be used for the research purposes only. Also, in order to maximize privacy and confidentiality, envelopes were handed out along with the questionnaire. Participants were asked to put the questionnaire in the envelope and seal it before handing in the complete questionnaire.

Data collection took three months. Data were collected in the period from February to April 2007.

5.8 Ethical considerations

"Just as research is never value free, ethics is a vital part of every research project" (Alston and Bowles 2003 p.21). But what do we mean by 'ethical' research? I argue that it is important to define ethics before I start to discuss the ethical issues inherent in this study. According to Babbie (2000 p.470) 'ethical' has been defined as "conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group." Researchers must be aware of several ethical considerations as regards respondents and make sure to respect them during the research project. These points have been mentioned by several researchers (Sarantakos 1998; Babbie 2000; Alston and Bowles 2003) and include

1. "Proper identification": respondents have the right to know the researcher's identification and the purpose of the research project.
2. "Clear outset": respondents should be informed clearly about the possible consequences of their responses (if there are any consequences).
3. "Welfare of the respondent": the researcher should make sure that the respondents' participation does not cause any harm to them physically, emotionally, or socially.
4. "Free and informed consent": participation should be voluntary.
5. "Right to privacy": respondents' privacy should be preserved and they should have the right not to answer any question.

6. "Right of anonymity": The respondents should be anonymous. So, no name, number or any mark should lead to identification.

7. "Right of confidentiality": All information and data collected from participants should be used by the researcher for the research purposes only; no one other than the researcher has the right to monitor it (Sarantakos 1998 p.23-24).

In this study, I made sure that I dealt with ethical issues in a proper manner. First of all, the study topic was sensitive. According to Straus (1991 p.133), "because of ethical restrictions on experiments using physical punishment versus other disciplinary practices, research on this issue is extremely difficult." Therefore, I tried to make sure that all words or expressions used did not cause any emotional harm to respondents and did not create any feeling of guilt or blame. Also, I made sure to respect the respondents' anonymity. For instance, no name or any personal information was required in the questionnaires, and participants were reminded to avoid writing anything which could lead to their own identification. To preserve confidentiality, respondents were provided with envelopes along with the questionnaires and they were asked to put the questionnaire in the envelope provided and seal it before handing it in.

The second major ethical issue was that this research is dealing with a Muslim country. Afifi (2007 p.383) argued that, "in a Muslim community a researcher should observe that research and the procedures followed are within the context of *Shari'a*" (Islamic Law). Accordingly, I tried to make sure I respected the Islamic and Saudi culture, for example, by enlisting the assistance of a number of female research assistants in order to contact female participants. Respondents were always provided with a verbal description of the researcher and the goals of research before participation. In addition, a brief description of the researcher and study was provided on the induction sheet provided. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and they had the right to refuse to participate and not to answer any or all questions.

5.9 Data analysis method

"The purpose of all analysis is to summarize data so that it is easily understood and provides the answers to our original questions" (Kelley, Clark et al. 2003 p.265). For the current study purposes, the "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS) computer software, version 14.0, was used to perform statistical analysis. The data collected through the questionnaires was quantitative data. SPSS is considered the best software for the analysis of such data in social science (Bryman 2001).

Data preparation: this stage consisted of several steps; first, the data were reviewed and checked. This stage was to make sure that all questionnaires were valid for use. According to Sarantakos, (1998 p.332) "it is important that information appearing on a questionnaire is clear, legible, relevant, and appropriate. It is therefore essential that the researcher takes every precaution to ensure that these standards are upheld." For example, if a respondent left most of the questions unanswered, in this case the questionnaire was not used. Second, coding the data and preparing the codebook. Coding is the step where the information in the questionnaire is translated into numbers (Sarantakos 1998). The codebook is a sheet containing all codes for the entire questionnaire. According to Sarantakos, (1998 p.332) "the codebook includes information about how to assign numerical codes for response categories, including value labels and values." Lastly, I entered the coded data into the computer for further analysis using SPSS.

The statistical analysis of the data: there are three types of analysis methods:

- Univariate analysis: (when data analysis involves one variable at time).
- Bivariate analysis: (when data analysis involves two variables at time).
- Multivariate analysis: (when data analysis involves more than two variables at time) (Bryman 2001; Alston and Bowles 2003).

Univariate and bivariate analysis methods were used in this study. For instance, in the situation of univariate analysis, percentages, means and frequencies were used. On the other hand, in order to identify differences between variables, bivariate analysis, Chi-Square and Cross-Tabulation were employed. The chi-square test was used to examine the relationship between the parents' characteristics such age, gender, education etc. and the parents' use of physical punishment. Tables and figures are presented all through.

Chapter Six: Findings

6.1 Preamble

This chapter presents the findings of the data that were obtained from the study sample. Before going on to present findings relating to physical punishment in detail, later in this chapter, this first section provides an in depth description of the participants in order to provide the reader with a clear overview of their nature and characteristics. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was used in order to analyse the collected data, specifically, cross-tabs, frequencies, and percentages.

6.2 Demographic findings

6.2.1 The study sample

In total 840 questionnaires were distributed to the two groups. 530 questionnaires were returned and fit for use, which gives a response rate of 63.1%. According to Babbie (2000), 60% is a "good" rate of response and 70% is "very good" (p.256). In addition, several researchers who have conducted surveys in Saudi Arabia have discussed the difficulty of gaining adequate response rates (Alqahtani 1996; Albahussain 2000). Five questionnaires were excluded either because the respondent left most parts of the questionnaire unanswered or responded to each question in exactly the same way.

In total 530 people participated in this study (as shown in Table 5.3 in Chapter Five). 53.8% were parents and 46.2% were young people; 51.1% of the sample was male and 48.9% female. The results show that the percentages of both males and females who participated in this study were very similar, closely matching the population structure of Riyadh (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2004). This is not a significant achievement in itself given the barriers against me as a male

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researcher in accessing women to take part in the study. The balance of inclusion of almost equal number of males and females, as well as both parents and young people means that this study is more inclusive in terms of sample than most of the previous Saudi Arabian studies reviewed in chapter four.

6.2.2 Characteristics of parents' sample

Gender:

The total number of parents who participated in this study was 285. 147 (51.6%) of them were fathers and 138 (48.4%) were mothers. I had expected fewer responses from mothers due to cultural restrictions on women in Saudi Arabia. However, this high response rate of mothers could be attributed to the subject of the study, which deals with a phenomenon that concerns most families in Saudi Arabia.

Age:

Parents were asked to identify their age group. Table 6.1 shows the parental age groupings:

Table 6.1 Parents by age

Age of parents	Frequency	Percent
21-35 years	142	49.8
36 and over	143	50.2
Total	285	100.0

Almost half of the parents (49.8%) were aged 21-35 years old and 50.2% of them were aged 36 years or more. This is not surprising as one of the most distinctive demographic characteristics of Saudi Arabia is that it is a "young society" (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2005). According to the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2004), Riyadh's population distribution by age is as follows: 51%

of the population is aged 0-19 years old, 26% is aged 20-34 years old, and 23% is aged 35 years or more (see Table 6.2). As shown in Table 6.2 there is no significant difference between people who are aged 20-34 and those aged 35 or more.

Table 6.2 Percentage of population of Riyadh by age

Age Group	Saudi (%)		
	Male	Female	Both Sexes
0-19	50	51.7	51
20-34	26.4	25.7	26
35 and over	23.6	22.6	23
Total	100	100	100

Source: Ministry of Economy and Planning (2004).

In my own study, as shown in Figure 6.1, 64.1% of the parents aged 21-35 were mothers and 35.9% were fathers. In contrast, 67.1% of the parents aged 36 years or over were fathers and 32.9% were mothers. To that end, I have found different patterns in terms of gender representation across the parents' age group than that found by the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2004). Specifically, I have more mothers in the younger end of the age range and more fathers in the older end of the age range of the parents' group. This result could be attributed to the marriage age in Saudi Arabia where, usually, females marry at a younger age than males which means that usually females become parents at a younger age than males. According to the Ministry of Economy and Planning report (2004), in Riyadh almost 69% of females aged 20-34 years are married, whereas only 48% of males aged 20-34 are married. So, this could explain the high percentage of mothers among participants aged 21-35.

Figure 6.1 Age and gender of parents' group
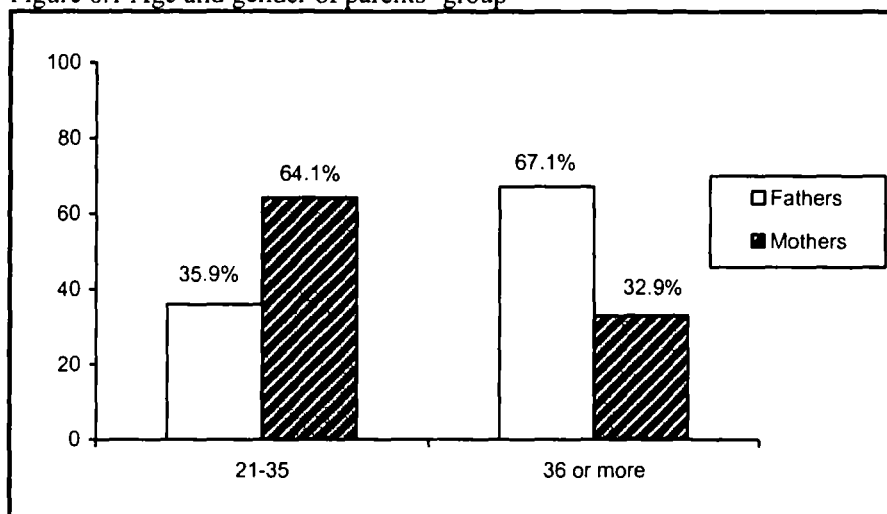
Education level:

In question 3 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to identify the level at which they completed education, from below elementary school to the completion of a university degree or higher. Table 6.3 shows the responses as follows:

Table 6.3 Parental education levels

The education level of parents	Frequency	Percent
Hold no qualifications	3	1.1
Secondary school or less	136	47.7
University degree or more	146	51.2
Total	285	100.0

Table 6.3 shows that the majority of the participants identified their level of educational achievement as either university degree or secondary school or less. Only 3 participants identified their education level as less than elementary school. This can be attributed to the increased number of educated people among Saudis in Riyadh. According to the Ministry of Economy and Planning report (2004), 56% of the total Saudi population in Riyadh aged 20 years or over had been educated to secondary school level or lower, and 23% had either achieved a

university degree or higher qualification (see Table 6.4). The report showed that almost 50% of Riyadh residents aged 20 years or over had achieved secondary school level or higher. I argue that the higher response rate of educated people in my sample when compared to the general population in Riyadh as mentioned by the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2004) could be attributed to the importance such people attached to research in general and to this study in particular. It could also be related to the particular organizations or locations through which I recruited people to the sample.

Table 6.4 Distribution of Riyadh residents by level of education

Level of education	Saudi (%)
Hold No Qualifications	21
Secondary School or less	56
University degree or higher	23
Total	100.0

Source: Ministry of Economy and Planning (2004).

Similarly, as shown in Figure 6.2, the educational achievement level in the current parents sample was highly similar between fathers and mothers.

Figure 6.2 Parents' education level with regard to gender
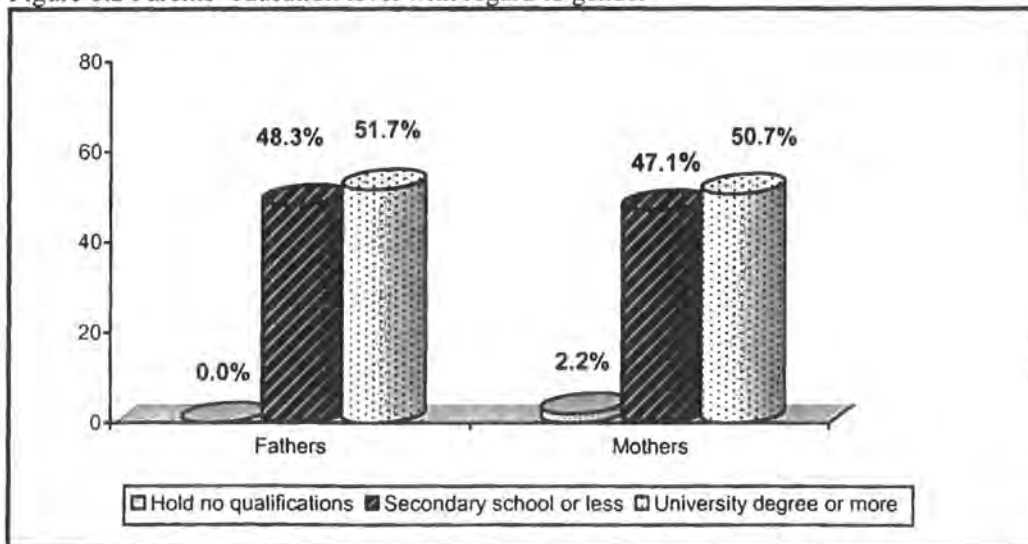
Employment status:

In question 4 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to identify their employment status. Participants' responses are shown in Table 6.5 as follows:

Table 6.5 Employment status of parents

Employment status of parents' sample	Frequency	Percent
In employment	207	72.6
Not in employment	78	27.4
Total	285	100.0

As shown in Figure 6.3, 83.3% of those parents who reported that they were not in employment were mothers. This result is not surprising because female employment in Saudi Arabia is uncommon. According to the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2005), women represent only 12.2% of the total national labour force. More specifically, the employment status of Riyadh residents was distributed as follows: almost 79% of males aged 20 years or more are in employment against 17% of females aged 20 years or over (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2004). In my sample, mothers represent 36.7% of the total number of participants who reported that they were in employment.

Figure 6.3 Parents' employment status with regard to gender
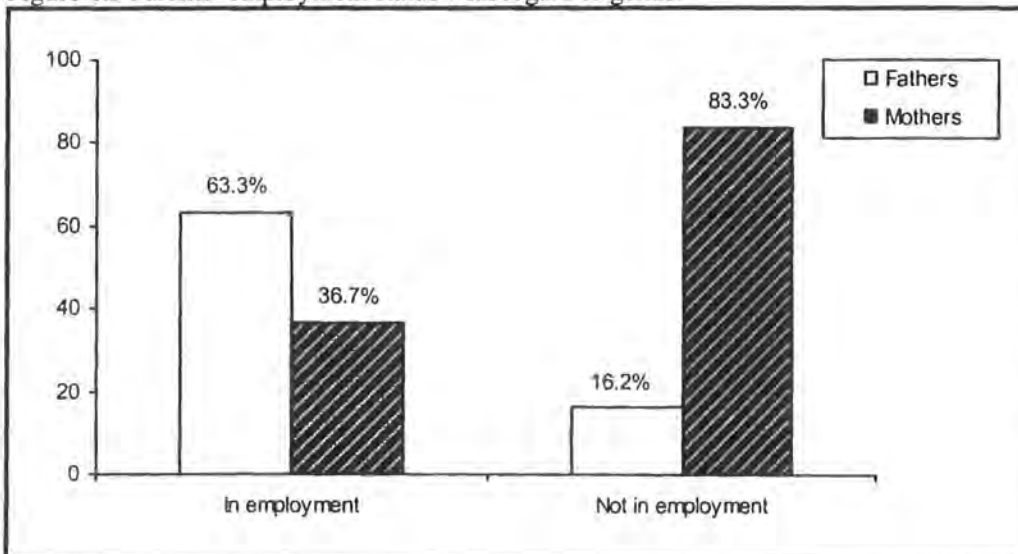
Parents' monthly income:

In question 6 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to declare their monthly income. The participants' responses are listed in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Monthly income of parents

Monthly income of parents	Frequency	Percent
Less than 3,000 SR	28	9.8
3,000-5,000 SR	67	23.5
5,001-10,000 SR	91	31.9
More than 10,000 SR	99	34.7
Total	285	100.0

According to Table 6.6, 66.6% of parents said their monthly income was 5001 SR or more. In contrast, about 10% of parents said their monthly income was less than 3000 SR. I attributed this to the type of people who participated in this study. For example, 51% of these parents who participated in this study had achieved a university degree or higher. In Saudi Arabia, usually, this category of people enjoy higher salaries, at least 5000 SR per month, compared to other people. It is worth mentioning that, despite my search, I did not find any published data in Riyadh about the income of the general population to which I can compare my sample.

Number of children in the family:

In question 7 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to state the number of children they have. Table 6.7 shows the numbers.

As can be seen in Table 6.7, the majority of participants (56%) have 4 or more children. This result is not surprising because the average size of families in Riyadh is large; according the Ministry of Economy and Planning (2004), the average number of children in the families in Riyadh is 6.

Table 6.7 Number of children in family

Number of children	Frequency	Percent
1-3	125	43.9
4-7	143	50.2
8-11	13	4.6
More than 11	4	1.4
Total	285	100.0

6.2.3 Characteristics of young people's sample

Gender:

In the first question of the young people's questionnaire, participants were asked to identify their gender. Table 6.8 shows the numbers.

Table 6.8 Gender of young people

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	124	50.6
Female	121	49.4
Total	245	100.0

Table 6.8 indicates that the total number of young people who participated in this study was 245 young persons, 50.6% of whom were males and 49.4% were females.

Age:

In question number 2 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to identify their age among three groups as follows, less than 17 years, 17-21 years, and older than 21. All young people (*n* = 245) who were included in the final sample were 17-21 years old. This is not surprising as young people aged 17-21 were the study target. However, asking young people this question was essential. It was inserted to eliminate any person who might have responded to the questionnaire but who did not meet the age criteria. In fact, three questionnaires were eliminated because they had been answered by people who were not among the target age group.

Family background:

Father's and mothers' education level:

In order to assess the relationship between parental use of physical punishment and other factors such as education levels, employment status, family income, and family size young people were asked to provide this information. In questions 3 and 5 participants were asked to identify the education level of their fathers and mothers. The young people's responses are listed in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9 Education levels of fathers and mothers

Education level	Fathers		Mother	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Hold no qualifications	18	7.3	53	21.6
Secondary school or less	159	64.9	152	62.0
University degree or more	68	27.8	40	16.4
Total	245	100.0	245	100.0

As shown in Table 6.9 more than half of the participants stated that the educational level of their fathers and mothers was either secondary school or less (65% and 62% respectively). This data does differ from the educational level data reported by parents in my sample. In fact this data appears to match the data of the general population in Riyadh more closely than the information from parents (see Table 6.4). This could be attributed to the places where I collected the young people sample from being more representative of the general population.

Figure 6.4 provides a comparison of the young people's parents with regard to education levels and indicates that the majority of young people (more than 60%) said their parents had been educated to secondary school level or lower. Figure 6.4 also reveals that there is a variation in the education levels between fathers and mothers. The mothers have typically achieved a lower level of education than the fathers. For instance, while almost 22% of mothers had achieved a level below elementary school level (hold no qualifications), only about 7% of the fathers had a similar level. Also, while almost 28% of fathers had a university degree or higher, only about 16% of mothers were had achieved similar levels. This could be attributed to the delayed provision of girls' education in Saudi Arabia, which was discussed earlier.

Figure 6.4 Education levels of parents
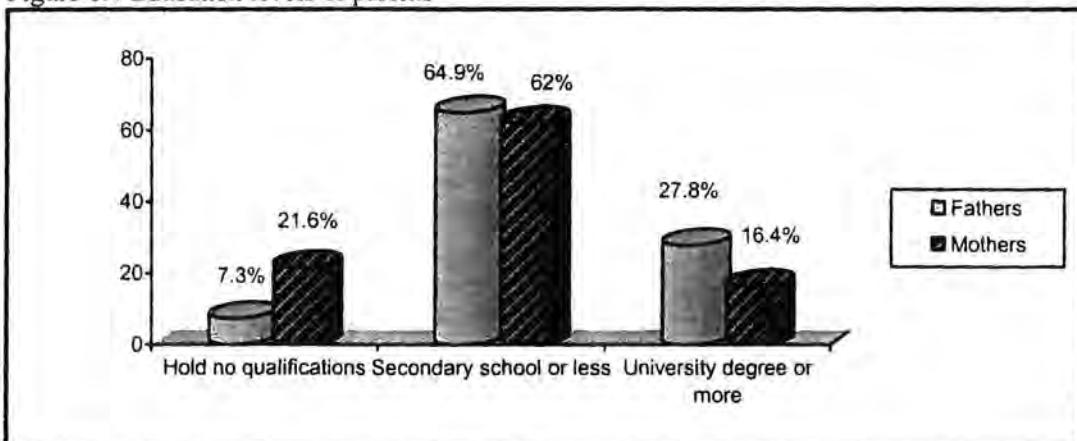
Father and mothers' employment status:

In questions 4 and 6 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to classify the employment status of their fathers and mothers. The responses are as shown in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10 Employment status of fathers and mothers

Employment status	Fathers		Mother	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Employed	171	69.8	33	13.5
Unemployed	74	30.2	212	86.5
Total	245	100.0	245	100.0

Table 6.10 reveals that the majority of the fathers of young people who participated in this study (70%) were employed. In contrast, the majority of the mothers of young people who participated in this study (86%) were unemployed.

Figure 6.5 Employment status of parents
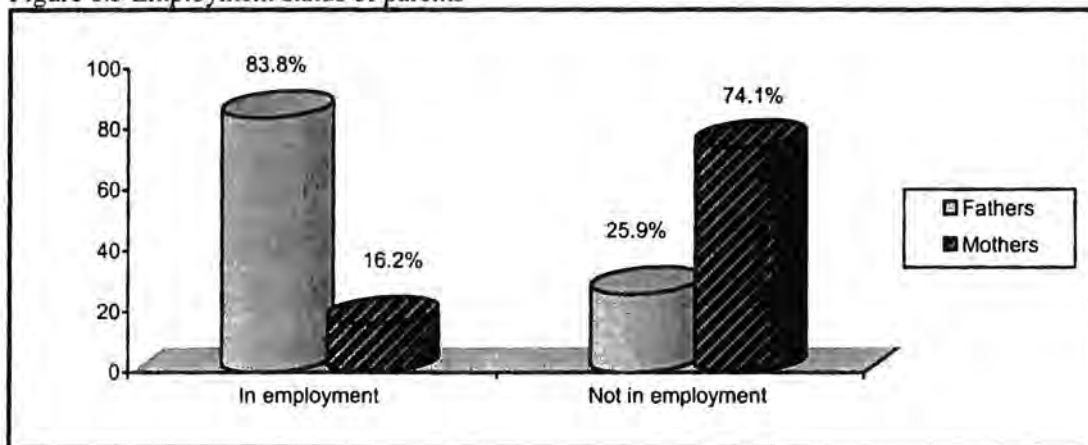
Figure 6.5 provides a comparison of the participants' parents in regard to their employment status. It reveals that there is a significant difference in employment status between the fathers and mothers. While the majority of parents reported as employed (83.8%) were fathers, the majority of parents reported as unemployed

(74.1%) were mothers. This result was expected because the employment of women in Saudi Arabia is not prevalent, as was discussed earlier in this chapter.

Monthly income of family:

In question 7 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to identify the monthly income of their families within one of four categories. However, an additional category was added for those participants who did not know their families' monthly income. The participants' responses are listed in Table 6.11 below.

Table 6.11 Levels of parents' monthly income

Monthly income	Frequency	Percent
Less than 3,000 SR	10	4.1
3,000-5,000 SR	61	24.9
5,001-10,000 SR	57	23.3
More than 10,000 SR	57	23.3
I do not know	60	24.5
Total	245	100.0

Table 6.11 reveals that the majority of the participants came from families with either medial (3000-10,000 SR) or high monthly income (more than 10,000 SR). However, a minority of the participants came from families with low monthly income (less than 3000 SR). Only 4% of the participants stated that the monthly income of their family was less than 3000 SR. On the other hand, almost a quarter of the participants stated they did not know what their families' monthly income was. It is worth mentioning that, as noted earlier in the parents' sample section, I did not find any published data about the income of the general population in Riyadh to which I can compare my sample.

Number of siblings:

In question 9 of the questionnaire, participants were asked to declare how many siblings they had. Table 6.12 shows the participants' responses.

Table 6.12 Number of siblings in family

Number of siblings	Frequency	Percent
1-3	20	8.2
4-7	106	43.3
8-11	91	37.1
More than 11	28	11.4
Total	245	100.0

Table 6.12 reveals that the majority of participants (92%) came from large families, namely families where the number of children ranged from 4 or more. More precisely, 43% of the participants stated that they had 4-7 siblings, 37% had 8-11 siblings, 11% had more than 11 siblings, and 8% had 1-3 siblings.

With regard to the number of children in a family or the family size, Figure 6.6 shows the number or children in families of the entire study sample (parents and young people). As can be seen in Figure 6.6, in almost half of the families (47%) there were between 4 and 7 children. In 27% of the families there were from 1 to 3 children, while in 20% there were from 8 to 11 children. 6% of the sample members stated that there were more than 11 children in their families. These results are consistent with the Ministry of Economy & Planning Report (2004) which illustrated that the family average number of children in Riyadh is six.

Figure 6.6 Number of children in families (the entire study sample)
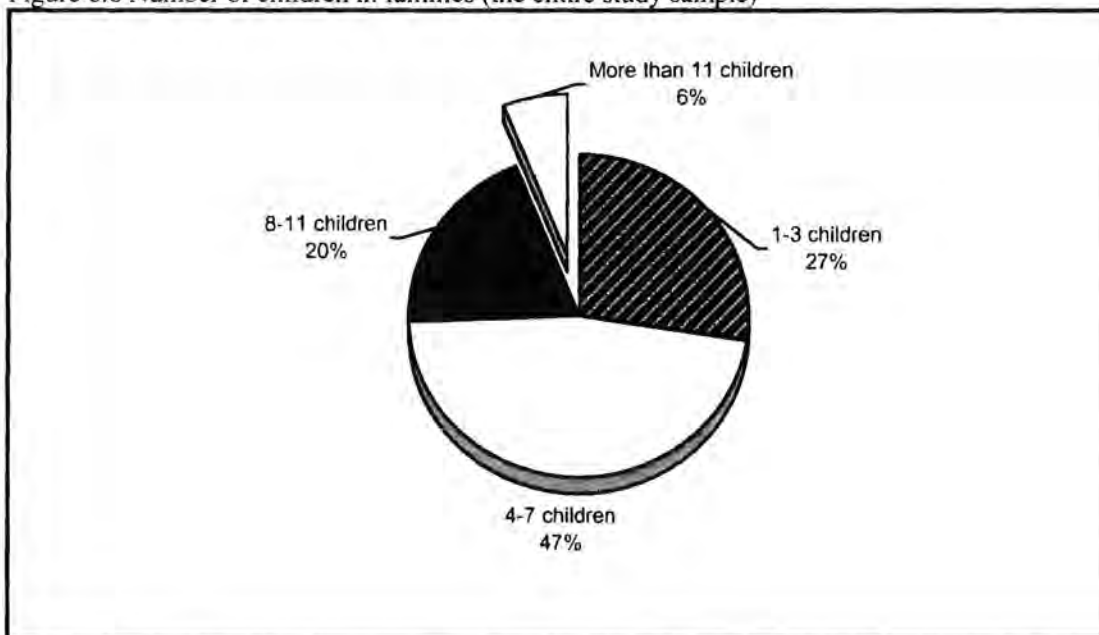
In summary, the members of the study sample came from a range of age groups, education levels, economic statuses, and family sizes. In most of the measures I have been able to find, the sample appears to be largely representative in these terms of the broader population in Riyadh. Therefore, this sample will provide a good base to understand parents' use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia and it will help to clarify many aspects of this phenomenon. Lastly, this section has presented a descriptive analysis of the nature and characteristics of the sample and the following section will now address findings relating to physical punishment as against the hypotheses previously proposed.

6.3 Findings on the use of physical punishment

In order to describe the data in this section I have used generally recognised statistical techniques; frequencies and percentages when univariate, and cross-tabulation and Chi-square when bivariate. The Chi-square test is the most commonly used test in social research. According to Babbie (2000) its use is widespread among social science researchers.

In order to test the study's hypotheses the Chi-square test was used. The procedure of conducting the statistical test consists simply of setting up two kinds of hypotheses; a "null hypothesis" and an "alternative hypothesis". Null hypothesis (H_0) is the assumption that there is no statistical relationship between two variables. An alternative hypothesis (H_1) is assumption that there is a statistical relationship between two variables. So, if the null hypothesis is tested and rejected, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) will be accepted (Bryman and Cramer 1994; Field 2005; Sapsford and Jupp 2006). The decision to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis is based on the significance level (Shannon and Davenport 2001). In this study the significance level (α) has been set at 0.05. Thus, if the probability level of observation (p-value) is less than the significance level (0.05) the result will reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. And, if the probability level of observation (p-value) is greater than the significance level (0.05) the result will reject the alternative hypothesis. The study's hypotheses outlined in Chapter Four are reviewed again at the end of Chapter Eight along with the final results (i.e. either supported or rejected).

6.3.1 Parents' views and experiences of physical punishment

6.3.1.1 The prevalence of parental use of physical punishment

In order to assess the prevalence of parents' use of physical punishment, parents were asked if they had ever punished any of their children physically at any point in their lives. In the questionnaire, physical punishment was described as any action that parents could use on their children such as slapping, spanking, or beating with an object such as a stick etc. Table 6.13 presents the parents' responses. It shows that the overwhelming majority of parents (86%) admitted to having used physical punishment on their children at some point in their children's lives. Only 14% of the parents stated that they had never punished any of their children at any time.

Table 6.13 Parents' use of physical punishment on children

Parents' use of physical punishment	Frequency	Percent
Had used physical punishment	245	86.0
Had never used physical punishment	40	14.0
Total	285	100.0

6.3.1.2 Youngest age of children at which parents had used physical punishment

Those parents who said they had punished their children physically at some point of their lives were further asked the following question: "What was the youngest age at which you physically punished any one of your children?" Table 6.14 presents the parents' responses. It shows that most parents (70%) who had punished their children physically first did so when their child was 5 years or under. In 26% of cases, the first physical punishment occurred between 6 and 10 years, and in 4% between 11 and 17 years.

Table 6.14 The youngest age at which children were punished

The youngest age of children punished by parents	Frequency	Percent
5 years or less	173	70.6
6-10 years	63	25.7
11-17 years	9	3.7
Total	245	100.0

6.3.1.3 Types of physical punishment:

In order to explore what types of physical punishment were used, parents were provided with a list of 16 types of physical punishment (derived from a range of previous studies) and asked to indicate which of the types, if any, they had used. Responses are listed in Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7 shows the types most used by parents. For example, 86% of participants stated that they had spanked their children with an open hand and 65% of the parents stated that they had twisted their child's ear as a physical punishment at least once. The majority of parents (58%) had hit their child on the face as a type of punishment. On the other hand, a number of punishment types were not commonly used. For instance, the vast majority of parents (99%) said they had never punished a child by washing its mouth out with soap, 98% of the parents said they had never denied their children use of the toilet as punishment and 97% had not denied their child food, water, or sleep. Severe physical punishment types were also used only by a minority of parents, including burning a child with matches or a cigarette, biting the child, placing hot pepper sauce in its mouth, or beating it with an object such as piece of wood or pipe.

In brief, it is clear from parents' accounts that whilst physical punishment is commonly employed by parents in the sample, its use is not undifferentiated and parents do make choices about the particular means used to discipline their children.

Figure 6.7 Parents' responses to types of physical punishment

Spanking with an open hand N=245: 44.9%, 41.2%, 13.9%

Ear twisting N=244: 20.5%, 44.7%, 34.8%

Hitting on the face N=245: 15.1%, 43.3%, 41.6%

Pinching N=243: 21.4%, 34.2%, 44.4%

Beating with an object such as a slipper, wooden spoon N=244: 10.2%, 32.8%, 57.0%

Hair pulling N=244: 6.6%, 27.0%, 66.4%

Whipping with a scourge, electrical cord or hose N=245: 4.5, 19.2, 76.3

Thrusting against the wall N=243: 2.9%, 16.0%, 81.1%

Beating with an object such as piece of wood (stick) or pipe N=245: 2.4%, 15.9%, 81.6%

Placing hot pepper sauce in a child's mouth N=245: 1.6%, 9.8%, 88.6%

Biting N=244: 0.8%, 9.8%, 89.3%

Isolating in a confined space N=245: 0.4%, 6.5%, 93.1%

Burning with matches or a cigarette N=245: 0.8%, 4.9%, 94.3%

Denying access to needed water, food or sleep N=245: 0.8%, 2.4%, 96.7%

Denying use of the toilet N=245: 1.2%, 0.8%, 98.0%

Washing a child's mouth out with soap N=245: 0.4%, 0.4%, 99.2%

☒ Never used   ☐ Used once or twice   ■ Used more than twice

N is the number of participants responding.

6.3.1.4 Severity of outcomes of physical punishment:

The previous section looked at particular types of physical punishment used by parents, some types are inevitably more serious by their nature, but it is of course the case that even less 'serious' types may have severe outcomes on children depending on how they are administered. For example, smacking with an open hand is the type that was most commonly used but depending on how it's done. Therefore, in order to look at the severity of outcomes of different types of physical punishment, I was keen to ask parents about the range of outcomes caused by their punishing of their children. According to Straus and Stewart (1999), the severity of physical punishment can be measured in several ways. Participants in the current study were provided with six levels of punishment severity and they were asked to decide which levels, if any, they had used on their children.

Figure 6.8 Parents' responses to questions of severity of outcomes of physical punishment
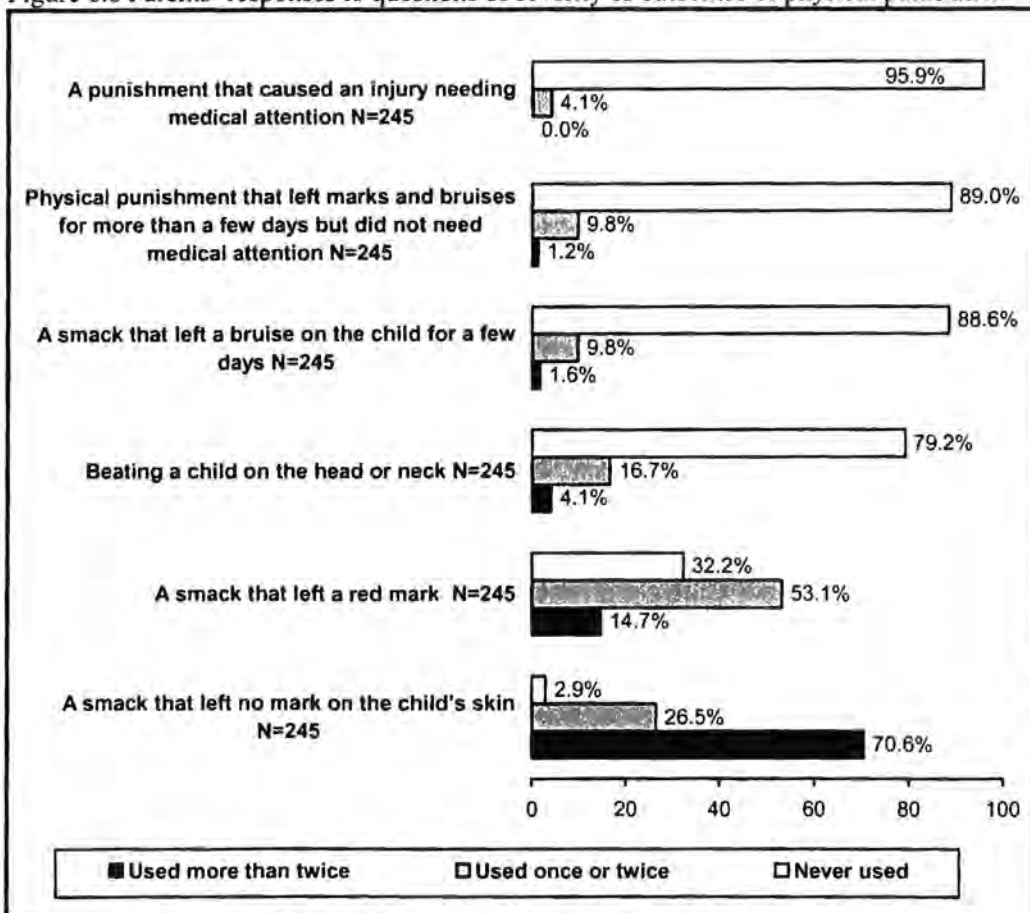
N is parents who said they used physical punishment.

Figure 6.8 confirms that severe physical punishment is, according to parents, relatively uncommon. For instance, the vast majority of parents (95.9%) said they had never caused their child an injury which required medical attention. Nevertheless, more than half of parents (67.8%) said that they had physically marked their children through smacking at least once.

6.3.1.5 Child misbehaviours

Participants were provided with a list of 13 children misbehaviours ranging from those deemed 'less serious' such as not washing hands before eating, to 'serious' behaviours such as using drugs or other illicit substances. These examples of misbehaviours were obtained from a range of previous studies as discussed in Chapter Four. Participants were asked to state if they had punished any of their children physically after the child had engaged in any of these behaviours.

Figure 6.9 shows parental responses to these ranges of child misbehaviour. It is to be noted that the variance in the numbers reported across the different items related to the number of parents who said that their child had engaged in these behaviours. Therefore, some of the most 'serious' behaviours such as "using drugs or other illicit substances" related to a very small proportion of the overall sample. As shown in Figure 6.9, antisocial misbehaviours (using drugs or other illicit substances, stealing, smoking, using bad language), disobedience, and disregarding safety (playing with dangerous objects), and damaging home property were the most common misbehaviours resulting in parental physical punishment. Where drugs or other illicit substances were concerned, only 4 parents stated that their children had been involved in such behaviour; yet, all 4 had used physical punishment as a consequence. On the other hand, the majority of parents (58.5%) said they had never punished their children physically as a result of them obtaining low marks at school.

Figure 6.9 Parents' responses to child misbehaviours

| | Never punished | Rarely punished | Always punished |
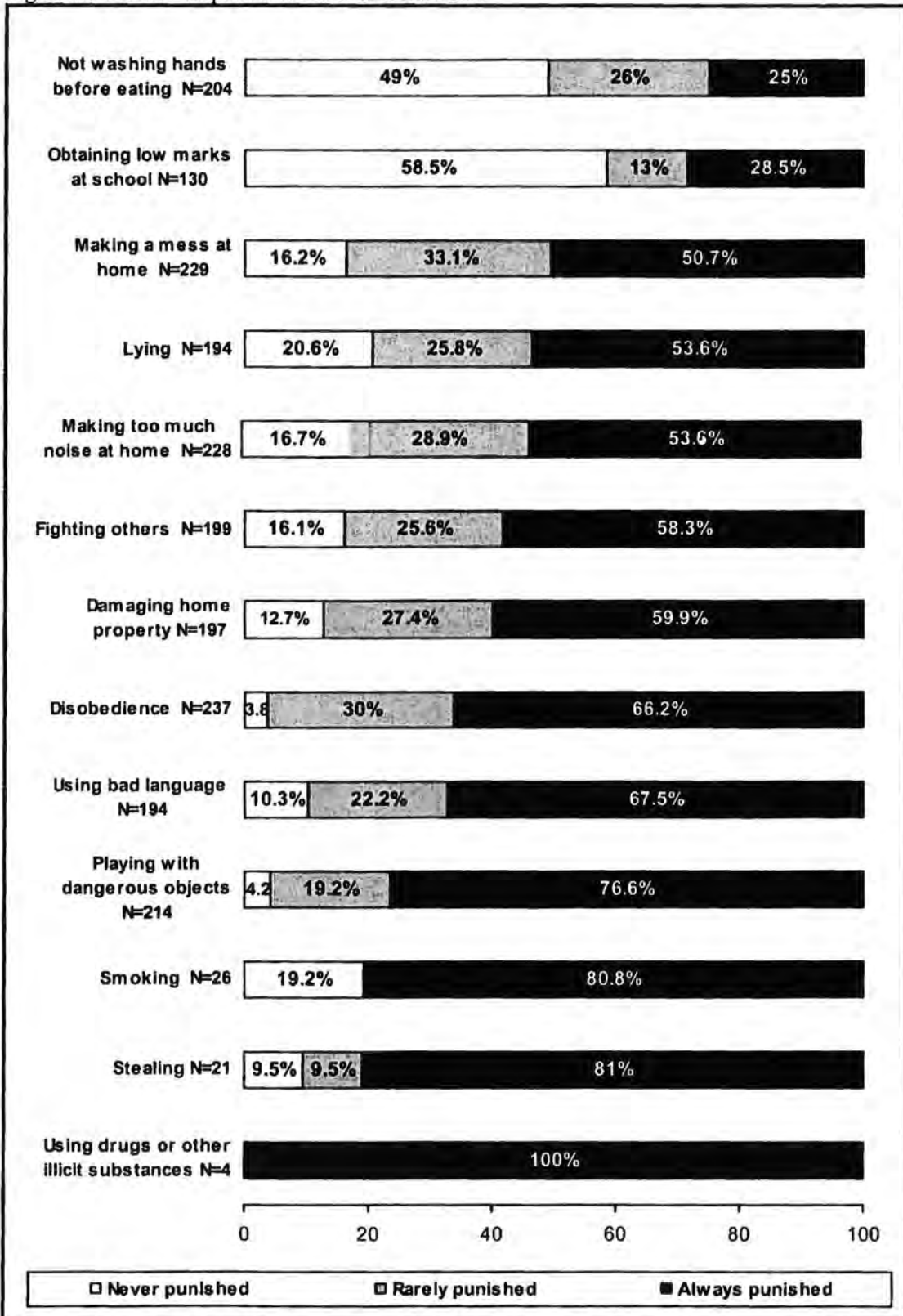
N is parents who said they used physical punishment when the child did similar misbehaviour.

6.3.1.6 The relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and other factors

Parents' gender

Whilst the majority of parents in this study (86%) had used physical punishment on their children at some point of their lives, no significant difference was found between mothers' and fathers' use of physical punishment (p = .136 > 0.05). However, a slight percentage difference is indicated between fathers and mothers. As shown in Table 6.15, while 83% of fathers said they punished their children at some point of their lives, 89% of mothers said the same.

Table 6.15 Parents' gender and their use of physical punishment

Parents		Punished their children	Never punished their children	Total
Fathers	N	122	25	147
	%	83.0	17.0	100.0
Mothers	N	123	15	138
	%	89.1	10.9	100.0
Total	N	245	40	285
	%	86.0	14.0	100.0

Chi-Square value = 2.222, p-value = .136

Parents' age

Those parents who said they used physical punishment on their children (*n* = 245) were also asked if they had punished any of their children during the past year. This question was asked to determine which parental age group used physical punishment the most and to test for a statistical relationship between parental age and the use of physical punishment.

Table 6.16 Parental age and the use of physical punishment

Groups of age		Parents' use of physical punishment during the past year		Total
		Used	Not use	
21-35	N	106	12	118
	%	89.8	10.2	100.0%
36 +	N	98	29	127
	%	77.2	22.8	100.0%
Total	N	204	41	245
	%	83.3	16.7	100.0%

Chi-Square value = 7.041, p-value = .008

Table 6.16 shows that 83.3 % of the parents who said that they had used physical punishment at least once (n = 245) said they had punished their children physically during the past year. Table 6.16 shows that the p-value was significant (p = .008 < 0.05) which means there was a significant relationship between parental age and parental use of physical punishment with young parents significantly more likely to use physical punishment on their children than older parents. For instance, about 90% of parents aged 21-35 reported that they had punished their children physically during the past year, as compared with only 77% of parents aged 36 years or more.

Child gender

Participants were asked to indicate their children's gender, in relation to their use of physical punishment. The total number of children was 1012 children, almost equally divided in terms of gender (50.3% boys, 49.7 girls).

Of these 1012 children, 45.8% had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents during the previous year as shown in Table 6.17. In order to test the relationship between child gender and exposure to physical punishment, a Chi-

square test was employed. The p-value was found to be significant (p = .000 < 0.05). More boys were exposed to physical punishment by their parents than girls; 59% of boys as opposed to 41% of girls during the previous year.

Table 6.17 Child gender and exposure to physical punishment

Child gender		Exposure to physical punishment	No exposure to physical punishment	Total
Boys	N	274	235	509
	%	53.8	46.2	100.0
Girls	N	190	313	503
	%	37.8	62.2	100.0
Total	N	464	548	1012
	%	45.8	54.2	100.0

Chi-Square value = 26.274, p-value = .000

Child age

Table 6.18 Child age and their exposure to physical punishment

Groups of age		Exposure to physical punishment	No exposure to physical punishment	Total
11 years or under	N	403	328	731
	%	55.1	44.9	100.0%
12 and older	N	61	220	281
	%	21.7	78.3	100.0%
Total	N	464	548	1012
	%	45.8	54.2	100.0

Chi-Square value = 98.640, p-value = .000

With regard to age, children were categorized into two age groups: Younger children (11 years or under), and older children (12 years and older). Table 6.18

shows that the p-value was significant (p = .000 < 0.05) indicating a significant relationship between children's ages and their exposure to physical punishment. More younger children (11years or under) were exposed to physical punishment (87%) than older children (12 years or older) (13%) (see Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10 Percentage of children exposed to physical punishment during the previous year by age

☐ Children aged 11 years or under ☐ Children aged 12 years or older
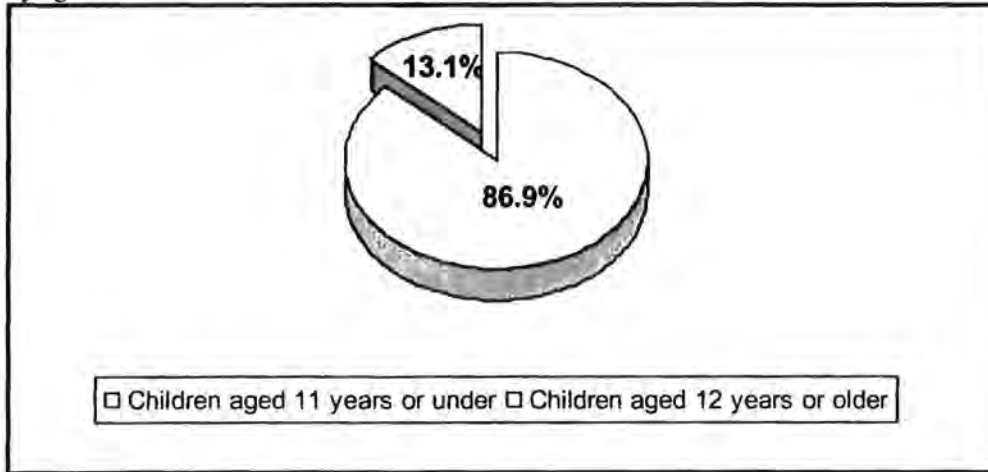
Parents' education level

A Chi-Square test was applied in order to test for a statistical relationship between parental education levels and their use of physical punishment. Table 6.19 shows that the p-value was found not significant (p = .287 > 0.05) whilst there was no significant difference between parents' use of physical punishment and their education level, yet there is a slight percentage difference. For instance, 80% of parents with a secondary school level of education or lower, whereas 87% of the parents with a university degree or higher said that they had punished their children physically during the past year. It is interesting to note that parents with no qualifications were less likely to use physical punishment than any other group. However, this group is very small with only three parents and therefore it maybe not a reliable finding.

Table 6.19 Parental education levels and their use of physical punishment

Groups of education		Parental use of physical punishment during the past year		Total
		Used	Not use	
Hold no qualifications	N	2	1	3
	%	66.7	33.3	100.0%
Secondary school or lower	N	97	24	121
	%	80.2	19.8	100
University degree or higher	N	105	16	121
	%	86.8	13.2	100.0%
Total	N	204	41	245
	%	83.3	16.7	100.0%

Chi-Square value = 2.498, p-value = .287

Family size

In order to determine if there was a relationship between family size and parental use of physical punishment, participants were asked to state the number of children they have. The numbers of children were divided into four groups as shown in Table 6.20. The p-value was found not significant ($p = 0.887 > 0.05$) which means that the number of children in the family did not affect parental use of physical punishment on children. For instance, while about 82% of parents who have 8 children or more said they had punished their children physically during the previous year, about 85% of those who have 1-3 children, and about 82% of parents with 4-7 children, reacted similarly.

Table 6.20 Family size and parental use of physical punishment

Number of children			Parental use of physical punishment during the past year		Total
			Used	Not use	
1-3		N	83	15	98
		%	84.7	15.3	100.0%
4-7		N	107	23	130
		%	82.3	17.7	100.0%
8 or more		N	14	3	17
		%	82.4	17.6	100.0%
Total		N	204	41	245
		%	83.3	16.7	100.0%

Chi-Square value = 2.239, p-value = .887

Parents' employment status:

Table 6.21 Parent employment status and their use of physical punishment

Employment status			Parental use of physical punishment during the past year		Total
			Used	Not use	
Employed		N	137	32	169
		%	81.1	18.9	100.0%
Unemployed		N	67	9	76
		%	88.2	11.8	100.0%
Total		N	204	41	245
		%	83.3	16.7	100.0%

Chi-Square value = 1.893, p-value = .169

In order to explore the relationship between parent employment status and the use of physical punishment, participants were asked about their current employment status. Table 6.21 shows that the p-value was not found to be

significant (p = 0.169 > 0.05) which suggests that parental employment status did not affect their use of physical punishment. The majority of parents who were employed (81%) or unemployed (88%) used physical punishment on their children during the previous year. However, a slight percentage difference is indicated between employed and unemployed parents.

Parents' monthly income

Table 6.22 Parent's monthly income and their use of physical punishment

Monthly Income		Parental use of physical punishment during the past year		Total
		Used	Not use	
Less than 3,000 SR	N	23	2	25
	%	92.0	8.0	100.0%
3,000-5,000 SR	N	52	7	59
	%	88.1	11.9	100.0%
5,000-10,000 SR	N	61	17	78
	%	78.2	21.8	100.0%
More than 10,000 SR	N	68	15	83
	%	81.9	18.1	100.0%
Total	N	204	41	245
	%	83.3	16.7	100.0%

Chi-Square value = 3.913, p-value = .271

In order to investigate any relationship between parental monthly income and the use of physical punishment on children, participants were asked to identify their total family monthly income from four income bands. Table 6.22 shows that p-value was not significant (p = 0.271 > 0.05) which suggests that there was no statistically significant relationship between parental monthly income and their use of physical punishment. However, a slight percentage difference is indicated between parents with low monthly incomes and parents with high monthly

incomes. For instance, 88% of parents with a monthly income range of 3,000-5,000 SR said they used physical punishment on their children during the past year and as did 82% of parents with monthly income more than 10,000 SR.

Parents' own experience of physical punishment

In order to investigate if there was a relationship between parents' own experience of physical punishment as children and their use of physical punishment on their own children, participants were asked to state if they had been exposed to physical punishment by their own parents. Table 6.23 shows that p-value was found significant (p = 0.001 < 0.05). More parents who had been exposed to physical punishment as children used physical punishment on their children than those who had not been exposed to physical punishment by their parents as children. The vast majority of parents who had been exposed to physical punishment by their own parents (91.5%) indicated that they had repeated this behaviour on their own children, as opposed to 77% of parents who had not.

Table 6.23 Parents' own experience and their use of physical punishment

Parents' own experience of physical punishment		Parental use of physical punishment		Total
		Used	Not used	
Experienced as child	N	162	15	177
	%	91.5	8.5	100.0%
Not experienced as child	N	83	25	108
	%	76.9	23.1	100.0%
Total	N	245	40	285
	%	86.0	14.0	100.0%

Chi-Square value = 11.970, p-value = .001

6.3.1.7 Parents' attitudes towards the use of physical punishment

In the last section of the questionnaire, I sought to measure participants' attitudes towards the use of physical punishment. To do so, eight statements were developed. Participants were asked to decide if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. These statements were presented in a four-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. One statement was reversed to prevent bias (details can be seen in Table 6.25).

In order to measure participants' attitudes towards the use of physical punishment a scoring scale was adapted from related studies (see for example Qasem et al.(1998), Ateah et al. (2005), and Buck et al. (2006)). Each response of the four responses was given a score as follows: Strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree =2, and strongly disagree =1. The score of participants' attitudes towards the use of physical punishment was obtained by summing the responses given to each of the eight statements. Each statement was giving a value ranging from 1 to 4; hence, the maximum value which could be assigned for any participant was 32 while the minimum was 8. For example, if it is assumed that a participant responds to the eight statements as strongly disagree (=1) the sum of his/her responses will be 8 and if he/she responds to the eight statements as strongly agree (= 4) then the sum of his/her responses will be 32. After summing the responses, the scores of the participants' attitudes were grouped into three categories as follows: not supportive (score 8-16), moderate support (score 17-23), and high support (score 24-32).

The attitude score was then correlated with the parents' actual use of physical punishment. Table 6.24 shows the relationship between parents' attitudes toward the use of physical punishment and their use of physical punishment on their children. The p-value was found to be significant (p-value=.000 < 0.05) suggesting a significant relationship between parental attitudes towards the use of physical punishment and their actual use of it on their children. In other words, those parents with attitudes supportive of the use of physical punishment were, indeed, more likely to use it on their own children than those parents with

unsupportive attitudes. The majority of parents who said they used physical punishment on their children (69%) showed moderate support and 17% showed high support towards its use. Conversely, almost 48% of parents who said they never used physical punishment on their children showed no support towards the use of physical punishment on children.

Table 6.24 Parents' attitudes and their use of physical punishment

Parent use of physical punishment	Attitudes towards the use of physical punishment						Total	
	No support		Moderate support		High support			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Used	36	14.7	168	68.6	41	16.7	245	100
Not used	19	47.5	21	52.5	0	0.0	40	100
Total	55	19.3	189	66.3	41	14.4	285	100

Chi-Square value = 27.210, p-value = .000

Responses to the eight statements as shown in Table 6.25 indicate that the majority of parents agreed or strongly agreed with statements that support the use of physical punishment on children such as "I believe parents need to use physical punishment as a disciplinary method"; "physical punishment is a useful method of discipline if a child is naughty"; and "physical punishment is acceptable action by parents" (81%, 61% & 62% respectively). Although parents showed an overall supportive attitude toward the use of physical punishment, they believe its use is unnecessary at times. For example, 78% of parents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statement: "It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good hard spanking". However, more than half of the participants (60%) indicated that they believe that physical punishment is harmful to children

Table 6.25 Parents' responses to the eight statements

#	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I believe that parents have a right to discipline their children as they wish ($n = 284$)	19.4	53.2	21.5	6.0
2	I believe parents need to use physical punishment as a disciplinary method ($n = 284$)	10.6	70.8	12	6.7
3	Physical punishment is a useful method of discipline if a child is naughty ($n = 282$)	8.2	52.5	30.9	8.5
4	Physical punishment is acceptable action by parents ($n = 283$)	6.0	55.8	29.0	9.2
5	Physical punishment is not an effective way of disciplining a child ($n = 283$)	14.1	31.4	44.2	10.2
6	Physical punishment on children is never acceptable ($n = 283$)	12.0	26.9	53.7	7.4
7	Physical punishment is not harmful to children ($n = 285$)	3.2	37.2	41.4	18.2
8	It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good hard spanking ($n = 284$)	4.9	16.9	32.7	45.4

Parents' perceptions of difference between physical punishment and child physical abuse

Figure 6.11 Parents' perceptions on physical punishment and child abuse
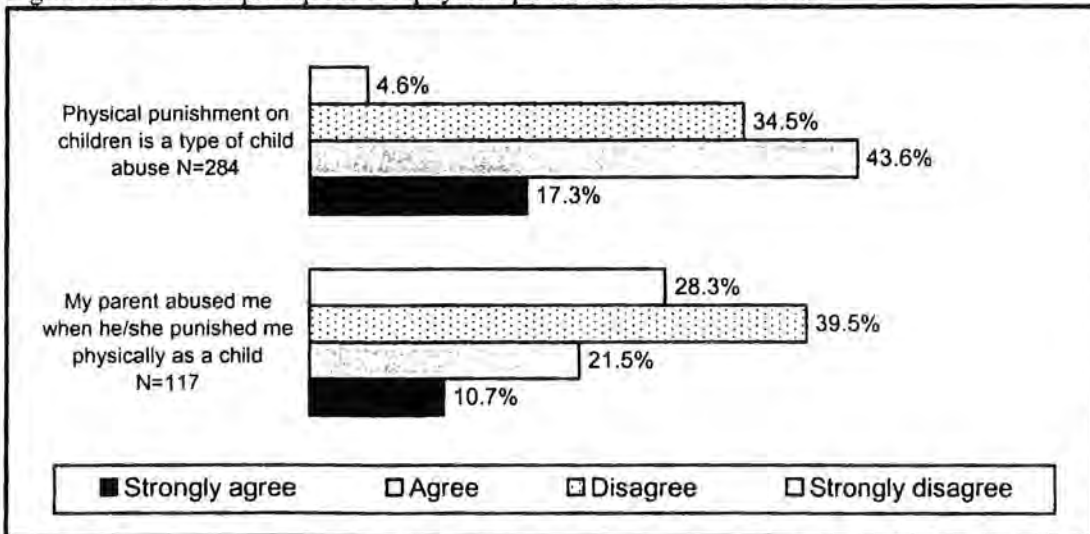
Participants were also asked if they thought physical punishment is a type of child physical abuse. 61% of parents ($n = 284$) strongly agreed or agreed that

physical punishment of children is a type of physical abuse as shown in Figure 6.11. By contrast, 68% of those parents who had experienced parental physical punishment as children (n = 117) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had been abused.

Parents' views on legislation to prevent parents from using physical punishment

Participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the two following statements: "parents' use of physical punishment should be prevented by the law" and "parents who use severe physical punishment must be stopped by the law."

Figure 6.12 shows that 58% of parents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that parental use of physical punishment should be prevented by law. On the other hand, the majority of parents (74%) supported legal measures to prevent parents from using severe physical punishment on their children.

Figure 6.12 Parents' views on preventing physical punishment by law

Parents' use of physical punishment should be prevented by the law N=283	11.7%	
		46.6%
	26.1%	
	15.5%	
Parents who use severe physical punishment must be stopped by the law N=285	6.7%	
	19.3%	
	32.6%	
	41.4%	

■ Strongly agree   □ Agree   □ Disagree   □ Strongly disagree
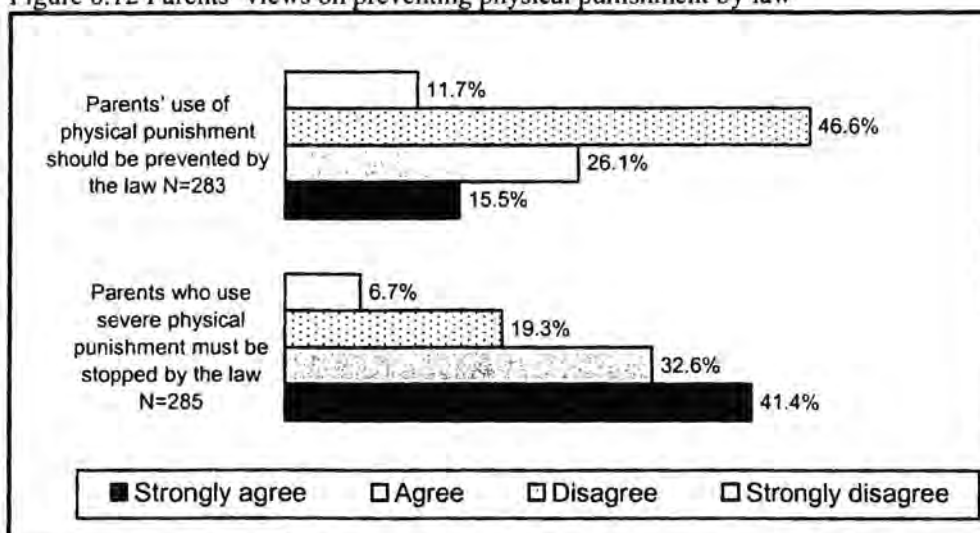
6.3.2 Young people's views and experiences of physical punishment

6.3.2.1 The prevalence of parental physical punishment for young people

In order to assess the prevalence of the use of physical punishment among young people, young people were asked if they had been punished physically by one of their parents at any point in their lives. Table 6.26 shows their responses. The overwhelming majority of young people (89%) said they had been exposed to physical punishment by one of their parents.

Table 6.26 Young people's experience of physical punishment

Young people's experience of physical punishment by parents	Frequency	Percent
Exposed	218	89.0
Not exposed	27	11.0
Total	285	100.0

6.3.2.2 The youngest age at which young people had been physically punished

Table 6.27 shows that the majority of young people (71%) said they were first exposed to physical punishment by one of their parents when they were aged 6-10 years. 16% of the participants said they were aged 11-17 and 12% said they were under 5. Only 1% of the participants said they had first been physically punished by their parents when they were over 17.

Table 6.27 Young people's first exposure to physical punishment by parents

Age of first exposure	Frequency	Percent
5 years or less	26	11.9
6-10 years	155	71.1
11-17 years	34	15.6
Older than 17 years	3	1.4
Total	218	100.0

6.3.2.3 Types of physical punishment

In order to determine the range of physical punishments used by their parents, young people were also provided with a list of 16 types of physical punishment and were asked to report if they had been exposed to each one of these. Figure 6.13 shows that a number of types were common among young people. 76% of young people said their parents had spanked them with an open hand at least once. Other types of physical punishment were also common such as pinching (67%), beating with an object such as a slipper, wooden spoon, or hairbrush (62%), ear twisting (61%), and hitting on the face (54%). On the other hand, some types of physical punishment were uncommon. The vast majority of young people said they had never experienced some types of physical punishment such as "having your mouth washed out with soap" (98%), "being denied use of the toilet" (97%), "being denied access to needed water, food or sleep" (91%), "being burnt with matches or a cigarette" (88%), "having hot pepper sauce placed in your mouth" (88%), "being isolated in a confined space" (85%), and "being bitten" (83.5%).

Figure 6.13 Young people's responses to types of physical punishment

Being spanked with an open hand N=218
33.5%
42.2%
24.3%

Being pinched N=218
27.5%
39.9%
32.6%

Being beaten with an object such as a slipper, wooden spoon N=218
21.1%
40.8%
38.1%

Having your ear twisted N=218
25.3%
35.9%
38.7%

Being hit on the face N=218
12.4%
41.7%
45.9%

Being whipped with a scourge, electrical cord or hose N=217
17.4%
33.5%
49.1%

Having your hair pulled N=218
20.2%
23.4%
56.4%

Being beaten with an object such as piece of wood (stick) or pipe N=218
11.0%
25.2%
63.8%

Being thrusted against the wall N=218
7.3%
21.1%
71.6%

Being bitten N=218
4.1%
12.4%
83.5%

Being isolated in a confined space N=218
0.9%
14.2%
84.9%

Having hot pepper sauce placed in your mouth N=218
1.8%
10.6%
87.6%

Being burnt with matches or a cigarette N=218
0.9%
11.0%
88.1%

Being denied access to needed water, food or sleep N=218
0.9%
7.8%
91.3%

Being denied use of the toilet N=218
0.0%
2.8%
97.2%

Having your mouth washed out with soap N=218
0.5%
1.4%
98.2%

◨ Never experienced   ▣ Experienced once or twice   ■ Experienced more than twice

N is the total number of young people responding to this item.

6.3.2.4 Severity of outcomes of physical punishment

Young people were provided with a list of five levels of outcomes of physical punishment and were asked to report if they had been exposed to each of the levels when they were children. Figure 6.14 shows that almost 92% of the participants said they had never been exposed to a punishment that caused an injury needing medical attention. However, almost three quarters of young people said that their parents had punished them with a smack that left a red mark.

Figure 6.14 Severity of outcomes of physical punishment as reported by young people
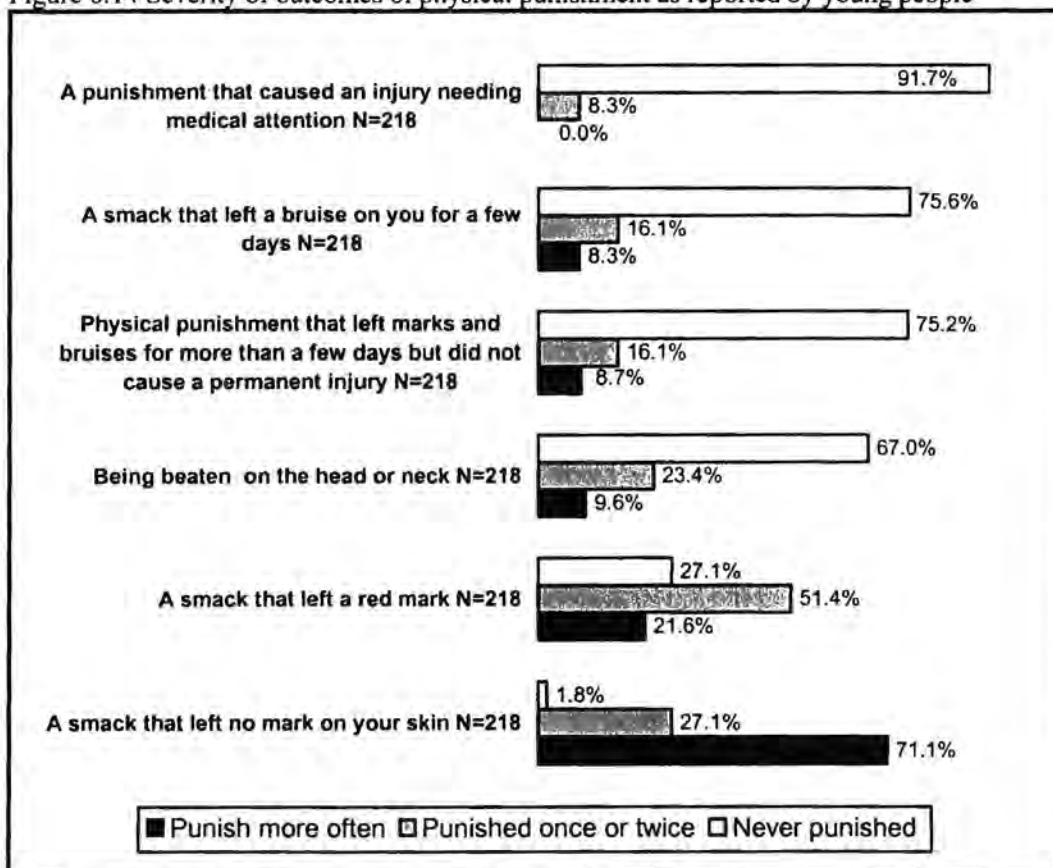
N is the total number of young people responding to this item.

6.3.2.5 Child misbehaviour

Figure 6.15 Young people's experiences of being physically punished as a result of specific behaviours

Behaviour	Never punished	Rarely punished	Always punished
Not washing hands before eating N=172	74.4%	16.9%	8.7
Obtaining low marks at school N=140	60.7%	20.7%	18.6%
Damaging home property N=145	39.3%	33.1%	27.6%
Lying N=174	37.4%	32.2%	30.4%
Making a mess at home N=164	36.6%	28.0%	35.4%
Using bad language N=159	24.5%	34.6%	40.9%
Fighting others N=183	23.0%	32.8%	44.2%
Making too much noise at home N=185	23.8%	27%	49.2%
Playing with dangerous objects N=180	17.8%	29.4%	52.8%
Stealing N=31	22.6%	22.6%	54.8%
Smoking N=54	24.1	20.3%	55.6%
Disobedience N=200	5.5	28%	66.5%
Using drugs or other illicit substances N=6	33.3%		66.7%

☐ Never punished   ☐ Rarely punished   ■ Always punished

N is the number of young people who had experienced physical punishment as a result of there behaviours.

In order to recognize those types of child misbehaviours that could induce parents to punish their children physically, young people were asked to report if their parents had punished them physically when they committed any of 13 identified misbehaviours. Young people's responses can be seen in Figure 6.15.

Antisocial misbehaviours such using drugs or other illicit substances, stealing, and smoking, disobedience and unsafe behaviour (e.g. playing with dangerous objects) were misbehaviours for which young people commonly were physically punished by their parents. For instance, with regard to misbehaviour such as using drugs or other illicit substances, only 6 participants said that they did such behaviour, and 67% of them said they were always punished by their parents for such misbehaviour. 66.5% of participants said they were always punished by their parents for disobedience as were 56% of participants for smoking. 55% of the participants also said they were always punished physically by their parents for stealing. 52.8% of the participants said they were always punished physically by their parents if they played with dangerous objects. On the other hand, misbehaviours such as not washing hands before eating and obtaining low marks at school were minor misbehaviours for which young people were punished physically by their parents. In greater detail, almost 75% of the participants said they were never punished by their parents for not washing their hands before eating nor were 61% of participants for obtaining low marks at school.

6.3.2.6 The relationship between young people's experience of physical punishment and other factors

Parents' gender and young people's experience of physical punishment

Young people were asked the following question; "In your family, who uses physical punishment on the children more often?" Table 6.28 suggests that there is no significant difference between fathers and mothers with regard to the use of physical punishment. For example, while 42% of the young people said their

fathers use physical punishment more, 37% said their mothers use physical punishment more. 9% said fathers and mothers are equally likely to use physical punishment at home.

Table 6.28 Parental use of physical punishment at home

Who use physical punishment at home from young people perspective	Frequency	Percent
Father	104	42.4
Mother	90	36.7
To same degree	23	9.4
Neither of them	20	8.2
Others	8	3.3
Total	245	100.0

Child gender and physical punishment

In order to assess exposure to physical punishment at home from their perspectives, young people were asked: "In your family, who is usually physically punished more often?" Table 6.29 shows the responses. The majority of young people (about 63%) said that boys were more likely to be physically punished than girls in their family. Only 10% of the young people said girls were more likely to be exposed to this parental behaviour. 19% said both genders were equally exposed to physical punishment.

Table 6.29 Child exposure to physical punishment at home

Gender of child exposure to physical punishment at home	Frequency	Percent
Boys	154	62.9
Girls	24	9.8
To same degree	46	18.8
Neither of them	21	8.6
Total	245	100.0

Parents' education level

Young people were asked to identify their parents' level of education in two different questions, one for the father and another for the mother. The Chi-square test was employed here in order to investigate the statistical relationship between parents' education level and young people's experience of physical punishment.

Education level of fathers

Table 6.30 shows that the p-value was significant (p = .023 < 0.05) indicating a significant relationship between a father's education level and the use of physical punishment. More precisely, young people with fathers with a lower level of educational achievement were physically punished more than those with a higher level. Almost three quarters (75%) of young people who said they had been physically punished by their parents said their fathers' education was at secondary school level or less. By contrast, almost half of the young people (about 48%) who said they had never been physically punished said their fathers' education level was at university degree level or higher.

Table 6.30 Fathers' education level and young people's exposure to physical punishment

Young people's experience of physical punishment		Father's education level			Total
		Hold no qualifications	Secondary school or less	University degree or more	
Exposed	N	18	145	55	218
	%	8.3	66.5	25.2	100.0
Not exposed	N	0	14	13	27
	%	0.0	51.9	48.1	100.0
Total	N	18	159	68	245
	%	7.3	64.9	27.8	100.0

Chi-Square value = 7.572, p-value = .023

Education level of mothers

A similar statistically significant relationship was found between a mother's education level and the use of physical punishment (p = .000 < 0.05). More precisely, young people whose mothers had low level of education were exposed to physical punishment more than those whose mothers' education was at a higher level, as shown in Table 6.31. In this case, almost 62% of young people who had experienced physical punishment said their mothers' education level was either secondary school or less. By contrast, 41% of young people who said they were never exposed to physical punishment said their mother's education was at university degree level or higher.

Table 6.31 Mothers' education level and young people's exposure to physical punishment

Young people's experience of physical punishment		Mother's education level			Total
		Hold no qualifications	Secondary school or less	University degree or more	
Exposed	N	53	136	29	218
	%	24.3	62.4	13.3	100.0
Not exposed	N	0	16	11	27
	%	0.0	59.3	40.7	100.0
Total	N	53	152	40	245
	%	21.6	62.0	16.3	100.0

Chi-Square value = 17.680, p-value = .000

Parents' employment status

In order to investigate the relationship between parents' employment status and young people's experiences of physical punishment, young people were asked to identify their parents' employment status.

Employment status of fathers

As shown in Table 6.32 the p-value was found to be not significant (p = .608 > 0.05) which indicates that there is no statistical relationship between a father's employment status and young people's experience of physical punishment. While 69% of young people who said they had been physically punished said their fathers were employed, 74% of young people who had not also said their fathers were employed.

Table 6.32 Fathers' employment status and young people's exposure to physical punishment

Young people's experience of physical punishment		Fathers' employment status		Total
		Employed	Unemployed	
Exposed	N	151	67	218
	%	69.3	30.7	100.0
Not exposed	N	20	7	27
	%	74.1	25.9	100.0
Total	N	171	74	245
	%	69.8	30.2	100.0

Chi-Square value =.263, p-value = .608

Employment status of mothers

In contrast to the finding reported above, a statistically significant relationship was found between a mother's employment status and young people's experience of physical punishment (p = .000 < 0.05). Young people with unemployed mothers were exposed to parental physical punishment more than young people with employed mothers. As shown in Table 6.33, almost 90.0% of young people who were physically punished said their mothers were unemployed. Interestingly, 40.7% of young people who said they had never been physically punished by their parents said their mothers were employed.

Table 6.33 Mothers' employment status and young people's exposure to physical punishment

Young people's experience of physical punishment		Mothers' employment status		Total
		Employed	Unemployed	
Exposed	N	22	196	218
	%	10.0	89.9	100.0
Not exposed	N	11	16	27
	%	40.7	59.3	100.0
Total	N	33	212	245
	%	13.5	86.5	100.0

Chi-Square value = 19.363, p-value = .000

Family monthly income

In order to assess the relationship between family income and young people's exposure to physical punishment, young people were asked to declare the current monthly income of their families.

Figure 6.16 Family income and young people's exposure to physical punishment
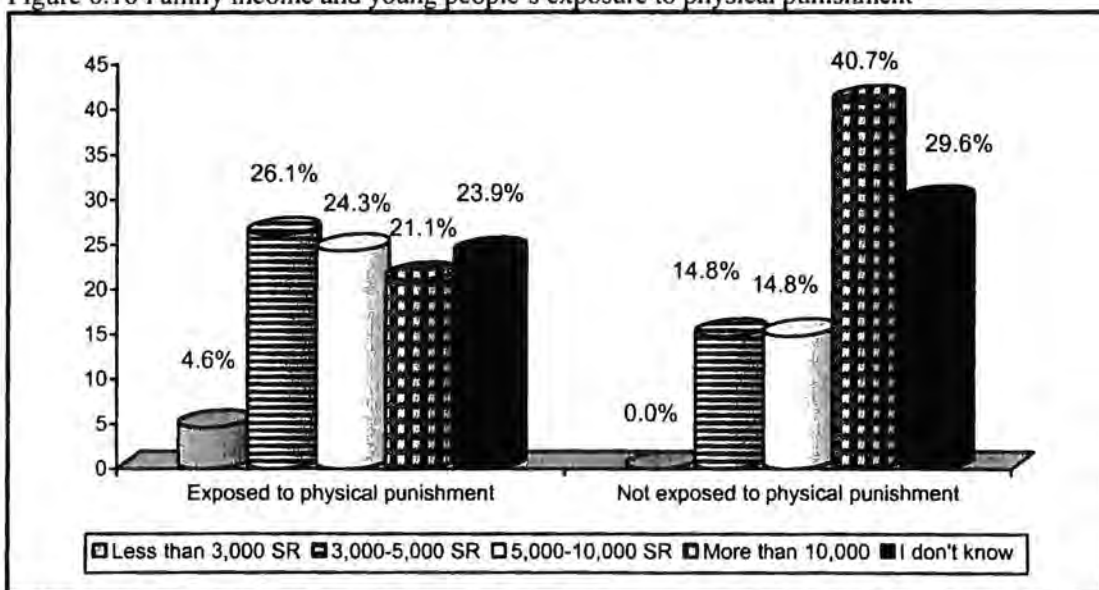
Chi-Square value = 7.719, p-value = .102

The p-value was not found to be significant (p = .102 > 0.05) suggesting that there is no statistical relationship between family income and young people's experience of physical punishment, as shown in Figure 6.16. However, it is interesting to note that about 5% of young people who had been physically punished came from families with a monthly income less than 3,000 SR, whereas none of the non-exposed young people came from a family with this level of income.

Family size

In order to explore the relationship between family size and young people's exposure to physical punishment by their parents, young people were asked to report the number of their siblings. As shown in Table 6.34 the p-value was found to be significant (p = 0.038 < 0.05). More young people with a large number of siblings were exposed to physical punishment than young people with a small number of siblings. For instance, while 50% of young people who had been physically punished came from large families (8 sibling and more), only 6% of young people who were exposed to similar parental behaviour came from small families (1-3 siblings).

Table 6.34 Family size and young people's exposure to physical punishment

Young people's experience of physical punishment	Number of siblings				Total
	1-3	4-7	8-11	More than 11	
Exposed	14	95	84	25	218
	6.4	43.6	38.5	11.5	100.0
Not exposed	6	11	7	3	27
	22.2	40.7	25.9	11.1	100.0
Total	20	106	91	28	245
	8.2	43.3	37.1	11.4	100.0

Chi-Square value = 8.422, p-value = .038

6.3.2.7 Young people's attitudes towards the use of physical punishment

To explore young people's attitudes towards parental use of physical punishment, I used a similar scale to the one used with the parents' group, comprising eight statements (see Table 6.36). Table 6.35 presents the data from scoring of young people's responses to the eight questions using the same scoring scale as with parents in the overall sample.

As shown in Table 6.35 more than half of the young people (57%) showed either moderate or high support on the parental use of physical punishment, but interestingly a significant minority (42.8%) did not support its use.

Table 6.35 Young people's attitudes towards the use of physical punishment

Sample members	Attitudes towards the use of physical punishment						Total	
	No support		Moderate support		High support			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Young people	105	42.8	121	49.4	19	7.8	245	100

As shown in Table 6.36 responses to the eight statements reveal that young people's attitudes towards the use of physical punishment ranged between support and no support. For instance, almost half of young people agreed "I believe that parents have a right to discipline their children as they wish"; and "Physical punishment is a useful method of discipline if a child is naughty" and 64% of young people agreed that "I believe parents need to use physical punishment as a disciplinary method." On the other hand, almost 85% disagreed that it is necessary sometimes to discipline a child with a good hard spank or smack and 57% disagreed that physical punishment is an acceptable action by parents.

Table 6.36 Young people's responses to the eight statements

#	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Physical punishment on children is never acceptable (n = 243)	33.7	35.4	23.5	7.4
2	Physical punishment is not an effective way of disciplining a child (n = 244)	30.7	28.7	25.8	14.8
3	I believe that parents have a right to discipline their children as they wish (n = 244)	13.5	36.9	30.3	19.3
4	I believe parents need to use physical punishment as a disciplinary method (n = 244)	9.4	54.1	20.5	16.0
5	Physical punishment is a useful method of discipline if a child is naughty (n = 241)	7.5	41.1	29.0	22.4
6	Physical punishment is an acceptable action by parents (n = 243)	4.5	38.7	31.3	25.5
7	It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good hard spanking ((n = 245)	4.1	11.4	29.8	54.7
8	Physical punishment is not harmful to children (n = 244)	3.3	19.3	36.5	40.9

Young people's perceptions of difference between physical punishment and child physical abuse

Young people were asked to express their agreement or disagreement to the following statement: "Physical punishment on children is a type of child abuse." As shown in Figure 6.17 the majority of young people (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that physical punishment is a type of physical abuse. However, when those young people who had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents (n = 218) were asked if they believed that their parents had abused them, the response was the opposite, with 65% of 'exposed' young people not considering their parents' use of physical punishment as physical abuse.

Figure 6.17 Young people's perceptions of physical punishment and child abuse

Physical punishment of children is a type of child abuse N=245
- 9.0%
- 18.0%
- 42.4%
- 30.6%

My parent abused me when he/she punished me physically as a child N=218
- 30.7%
- 34.0%
- 19.7%
- 15.6%

■ Strongly agree   □ Agree   ▣ Disagree   □ Strongly disagree
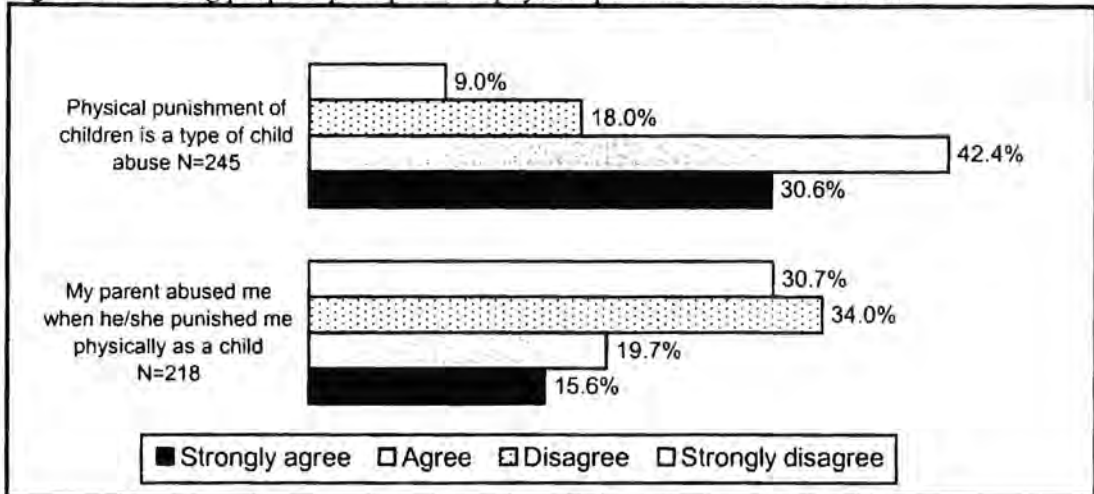
Young people's views on legislation to prevent parents from using physical punishment

Young people were asked about their views on formulating a law to prevent parental use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia. As shown in Figure 6.18, 58% of young people believed that physical punishment should be prevented by the law and 69% believed that parents who use severe physical punishment must be stopped by the law.

Figure 6.18 Young people's views on preventing physical punishment by law

Parents' use of physical punishment should be prevented by the law N=245
- 15.9%
- 26.1%
- 30.6%
- 27.4%

Parents' who use severe physical punishment must be stopped by the law N=245
- 14.7%
- 16.3%
- 25.3%
- 43.7%

■ Strongly agree   □ Agree   ▣ Disagree   □ Strongly disagree
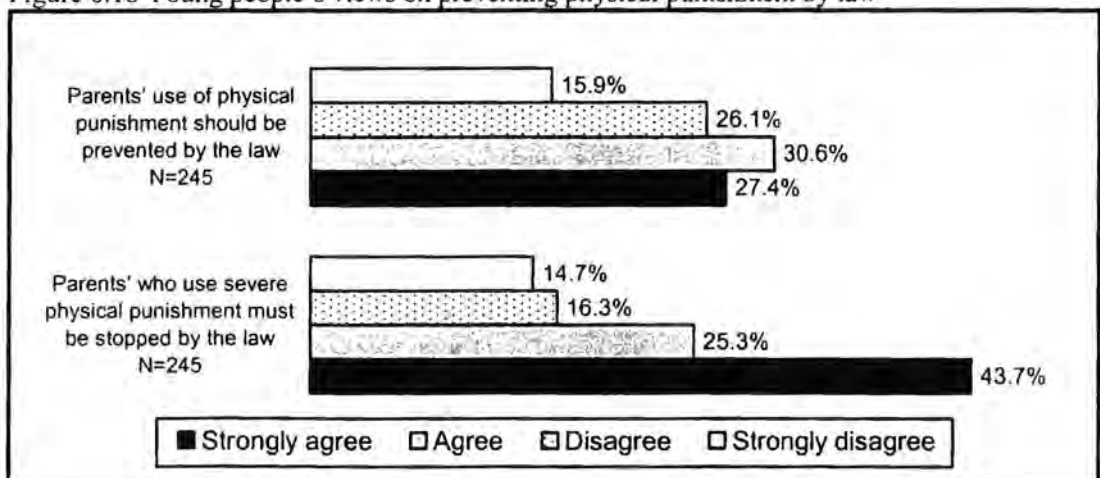
6.4 Chapter summary:

This chapter has presented the study findings. It produced complex set of findings in terms of people's reported experiences, attitudes and beliefs associated with parental use of physical punishment. The findings were presented in this chapter separately for parents and young people. The findings are interesting and need exploration in terms of their meaning and implications. Parents' and young people's results need to be compared and discussion needs to focus on whether the findings support the hypotheses formulated previously as a consequences of the discussion of the Saudi Arabian and international literature. It's to this that the next chapter turns.

Chapter Seven: Discussion

7.1 Preamble

This chapter presents an analytical discussion of the study's findings. The chapter discusses each of the objectives before moving on to my personal viewpoint. At the end of this chapter Tables 7.1(A) and 7.1(B) contain a summary of the findings as set against the study hypotheses.

7.2 The prevalence of physical punishment

The first object of this study was to assess the prevalence of parents' use of physical punishment on their children among a selective sample of parents and young people in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. To this end, **I hypothesised that the majority of the parents among the sample would have used physical punishment on their children and the majority of young people among the sample would have experienced parental physical punishment as children.**

The findings suggest that parental use of physical punishment is common. 86% of parents (n = 285) said they had punished their children physically at some point of their lives and 89% of young people (n = 245) said they had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents. These results are comparable with the findings of studies conducted in several other countries which also found that physical punishment was prevalent among parents (Samuda 1988; Graziano and Namaste 1990; Ritchie and Ritchie 1993; Giles-Sims, Straus et al. 1995; Murphy-Cowan and Stringer 1999; Straus and Stewart 1999; Bardi and Borgognini-Tarli 2001; Ateah and Parker 2002; Frias-Armenta 2002; Ateah and Durrant 2005). It is striking from all the above cited studies that these findings are so similar, all clustering around about 80-90% of participants who either used or experienced parental physical punishment. It is very noticeable that my own

findings here in this first large scale Saudi Arabian study almost entirely correspond with the weight of evidence from these international studies. Of course there are other studies that show lower prevalence rates of physical punishment than my study (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Tang 2006). Such differences could be explained by variations in definition, methodology, data collection or different samples involved, although this difficult to evidence in itself. For instance, in Egypt, Youssef et al.(1998) conducted a survey of 2170 students aged 10-20 years old and found that only 40% of the sample had been punished physically by their parents. In China, a study conducted on 1,662 Chinese parents found that 58% of the parents reported using physical punishment on their children and, in South Africa, Dawes et al.(2005) found that 57% of the parents ($n = 925$) had punished their children physically.

From the above, clearly parental use of physical punishment on children is globally practiced and Saudi Arabia is one of those countries where its use is prevalent. Whilst this result may not be surprising itself given the many signs of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia, nevertheless there has been limited empirical research undertaken to assess its prevalence. One exception is the study by Ashui (2003) which was limited in its focus to 126 female students aged 18-25. Ashui concluded that the use of physical punishment as a discipline method is prevalent among parents in Saudi Arabia. In addition, there have been several other studies which have confirmed the existence of child physical abuse in Saudi society (Kattan, Sakati et al. 1995; Al-Ayed, Qureshi et al. 1998; Kattan 1998; Elkerdany, Al-Eid et al. 1999; Al-Saud 2000; Karthikeyan, Mohanty et al. 2000; Al-Zahrani 2004; Al-Qarni 2005; Al-Zahrani 2005; Alyousif, Al-Romah et al. 2005). For example Al-Saud (2000) found that almost 92% of the child abuse cases which were dealt with in ten hospitals in Riyadh were diagnosed as physical abuse. Several other researchers have emphasized that physical abuse could be as a result of physical punishment (Straus 2000; Fontes 2002; Al-Zahrani 2004; Ateah and Durrant 2005). Accordingly, it was to be expected that parental use of physical punishment would be prevalent among the participants in this study.

I argue that the prevalence of parental use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia can be attributed to two main reasons:

First, in Saudi Arabia there is no law to prevent parents from using physical punishment on their children. In the worst situation, when a child is injured badly and has to be transferred to the hospital, no action will be taken against the perpetrator if he or she is one of the child's parents. There are two reasons for this. First, parents have full authority over their children. Second, child discipline in Saudi Arabia is considered a family matter. In addition, physicians in Saudi Arabia have no right to investigate any child abuse case (Al-Zahrani 2005). This means that no action can be taken against those parents who deliberately hurt their children while administrating discipline. Therefore, I argue that parents are largely untroubled about using any type of punishment on their children because they feel they have this right. According to Dawes et al. (2005 p.6), "When the community accepts corporal punishment, parents feel justified in using it." However, recently there has been a tangible movement within the Saudi government towards limiting violence against children. For example, a few years ago the use of physical punishment at school was banned officially. Yet, physical punishment is still used by a number of teachers in different schools in Saudi Arabia (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2007b; AlRiyadh Newspaper 2008b). In 1994, the King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre established an unofficial child protection agency which is responsible for child abuse cases which arrive at the hospital (Al-Kredia 2000). Also, in 2005 a Human Rights office was opened in Riyadh under the name "National Society for Human Rights" (National Society for Human Rights 2007). Different cases of child deaths as result of physical punishment have been taken before the courts in Saudi Arabia (Al-Mutrik 1999). The essential point here is that each one of these agencies is working by itself and there is no cooperation or organization between them. Moreover, there are no official regulations that govern these agencies and provide them a legal mandate to work to prevent abuse and harm to children. Of course, the existence of child protection law, or indeed legislation to prevent physical punishment of children by parents, would not in itself eradicate the

problem. For instance, in countries such as the UK and USA where there are laws to protect children, child abuse still exists. Also, in countries such as Sweden which has legislation to prevent child physical punishment, some children are still physically punished by their parents (Durrant 1999). However, legislation to prevent these various practices affirmatively will help to reduce its use.

Second, physical punishment is an acceptable method of discipline among Saudi parents. According to the World Health Organization (2002), the use of physical punishment is socially accepted in the most countries of the world. I argue that its acceptance as a disciplinary method is a result of several factors, described below.

- Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country and its people are considered to be conservative. People obey their religion's instructions carefully. So, I argue that, what is forbidden by religion people will not approach, but what is permissible by religion, people do not hesitate to do. Indeed, they aspire to do it if it is recommended by Qur'an or *Sunnah*. The use of physical punishment on children has been authorised by the *Shari'a* Law for the purpose of discipline. However, this authorisation in governed by several boundaries and terms. For example, Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) formulated rules for the use of physical punishment. First the Prophet pointed to the age for using physical punishment. For instance, when He said "order your children … at age seven and beat them … at age of ten" he was forbidding the beating of children under the age of ten. Second, he forbad the use of severe physical punishment or any punishment that could have a marked effect on the child. For example, he prohibited hitting the child on the face (Al-Nasser and Darwish 1991). Third, the Prophet Mohammed suggested a suitable instrument of punishment. The Prophet Mohamed advocated the threat of the whip but not its use on children. He said "Hang up the whip where the family members can see it, because it will impress them to good breeding" (Al-Nasser and Darwish 1991 p.204) Moreover, Prophet

Mohammed himself never hit or beat a woman, child, or slave (Al-Nasser and Darwish 1991). I argue that Islam has organized the use of physical punishment, yet parents in Saudi Arabia misunderstand the rules and wisdom of using physical punishment on children in Islamic law "*Shari'a*," in the belief that they are following the commands of *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. For example, while *shari'a* prohibits the use of physical punishment on children aged less than 10 years old, more than 90% of the parents in this study have punished their children when they were less than 10 years old (70% said they punished them physically when they were aged 5 years or less).

- The use of physical punishment on children in Saudi Arabia is culturally inherited, passed between the generations, and it has been stored in Saudis' memories. For example, in the past, parents used to send their children to school and ask the teacher to punish them physically if they did not obey the teacher's strictures. A popular saying in the past would have the parents say to the teacher "The meat is yours and keep bones for us," which means the parents give the teacher full authority to use any type of punishment that he believes is good for education. Another saying is "The stick is for the person who disobeys." Therefore, I argue that people in Saudi Arabia have learned that physical punishment is an acceptable disciplinary method from their own culture.

- Most of Saudis do not view their parents' use of physical punishment as abuse. For instance, in the current study sample members were asked if they believed that their parents had abused them when they punished them physically when they where children. A large portion of study sample members (68% of parents and 65% of young people) said they did not believe that their parents had abused them when they punished them physically. This means that the majority of parents believe that physical punishment is an acceptable method of discipline. Hence, they use it on their children and their children might use it on their own children in the

future. The difference between physical abuse and physical punishment from the participants' perspective will be discussed later in this chapter.

7.3 Types of physical punishment

The second object of this study was to identify the common types of physical punishment that are used by parents. To that end **I hypothesised that parents in Saudi Arabia use different types of physical punishment and some types are common.** Participants were provided with 16 types of physical punishment and asked to report if they had used each type on their children (for parents) or if they experienced it from their parents as children (for young people). Six types of physical punishment were found to be common among the sample members (both parents and young people). These types are spanking with an open hand, ear twisting, hitting on the face, pinching, hair-pulling, and beating with an object such as a slipper or wooden spoon. For example, 86% of the parents said they had used spanking with an open hand at least once and 76% of the young people said they had experienced that kind of punishment at least once from their parents. This result is comparable with Ashui's (2003) small scale Saudi Arabian study. Similarly, in Egypt, Youssef et al.(1998) found that about 72% of participants had been spanked with an open hand by their parents. On the other hand, seven types of physical punishment were found to have been rarely used among the majority of the study sample. These types are washing a child's mouth out with soap, denying a child use of the toilet, denying access to needed water, food or sleep, burning a child with matches or a cigarette, placing hot pepper sauce in a child's mouth, isolating the child in a confined space such as a bathroom, and biting a child. Whilst 90% of young people said they had never been burned by their parents as a type of punishment this suggests, however, that a sizable minority of young people - one in ten - had experienced this specific and more severe type of punishment. In contrast with an Egyptian study by Youssef et al. (1998) who found only about 4% of the study sample members said they had been burned by their parents as a type of punishment. It is

noticeable that my current study has revealed a rate more than double what Youssef et al. (1998) found.

Clearly, physical punishment types range from using bare hands to punishment with an object. Whilst almost any type of physical punishment could cause injury to the child, the risk is higher with the use of an object (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). Physical punishment types have been categorized into two categories "mild" and "severe" (Corral-Verdugo, Frias-Armenta et al. 1995; Nobes and Smith 1997; Bardi and Borgognini-Tarli 2001; Baumrind, Larzelere et al. 2002; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). For instance, punishment with bare hands such as spanking or smacking is categorized as "mild" (Orhon, Ulukol et al. 2006), whereas any punishment with an object is categorized as "severe" (Whipple and Richey 1997). Although the findings of the current study suggest that the most common types of punishment used in my sample are considered as "mild," such as spanking with an open hand, ear twisting, hitting on the face, pinching, and hair pulling punishment, the other types cannot be ignored. For example, almost 51% of young people said that they had been whipped by their parents at least once and about 24% of the parents said they had whipped their children at least once in their life. Also, 36.2% of the young people said they had been beaten with a hard object (a piece of wood or pipe) by their parents at least once and about 19% of parents admitted that they had used this type of punishment on their children at least once in their life. Roughly one third of young people said that they have been thrust against the wall by their parents at least once and 19% of parents said they had done that to their children at least once in their lives. These percentages must be considered sizable and cannot be ignored. In other words, a number of parents are using severe physical punishment types on their children and I argue that such punishment can escalate into physical abuse (Fontes 2002). According to Ateah et al. (2003 p.128), "perhaps the negative aspect of physical punishment use that causes the most concern is its relationship to child physical abuse. The identification of child physical abuse is generally based on whether the use of physical force has gone beyond that which is legally permissible as physical punishment. Because pain is considered a necessary component of effective physical punishment, such acts can lead to injury and

therefore child abuse." It could also produce an aggressive generation of parents in the future. According to Orhon et al. (2006 p.1082), "The experience of severe physical punishment during childhood can increase the acceptance of potentially injurious disciplinary acts in adulthood."

The third object of this study was to assess the severity of outcomes of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia. To this end **I hypothesised that only a minority of parents would use physical punishment leading to severe injuries.** Participants were provided with five levels of physical consequences and they were asked to indicate which level corresponded to their use of physical punishment. The majority of the sample reported that they did not use (parents) or experience (young people) physical punishment leading to severe injuries. For example, about 96% of parents said they had never caused an injury to their children which needed medical attention. About 92% of young people said their parents had never caused them an injury which needed medical attention when they were punished. Almost 90% of parents said that they never punished their children in a way that left bruises on the child for more than a few days and 76% of young people said same thing. On the other hand, almost 70% of the parents said that they had punished their children with a smack that left a red mark at least once and more than 73% of young people reported that their parents had at least once in their life punished them to that extent when they were children. These results are comparable with Ashui's (2003) study which found that almost 7% of his sample members said they had been exposed to physical punishment which caused injuries needing medical attention and almost 55% of the study sample members said they had experienced physical punishment which had caused them mild to medium pain. As can be seen from the current study, most parents do not use severe physical punishment on their children in such a way as to cause severe injury, yet a small number of parents still do. Therefore, I argue that physical punishment leading to significant harm of children does exist in Saudi Arabia. A very significant percentage of young people in this sample (8%) said they had been injured so badly that they needed medical attention. Multiplying this by the number of young people across the country suggests a

significant public health issue. Consequently, rapid attention is needed in order to address the problem before it becomes larger and in turn needs a huge effort.

From the above discussion, it is clear that there are contradictions in the participants' responses. For example, the majority of parents and young people said they had never been exposed to severe injury as result of physical punishment, yet some parents said they have used severe types of physical punishment and some young people said they had been exposed to severe types of physical punishment such as being thrust against the wall or whipped or beaten with an object such as piece of wood or a pipe. I suggest that even though some parents have used severe types of physical punishment, they may not have used it to the degree where it caused an injury to the child. For instance, a parent could have thrust his or her child against the wall but not have caused an injury.

7.4 Risk factors of physical punishment

Several factors have been identified as risk factors that could affect parents' use of physical punishment. Several of these factors are child characteristics or parental characteristics and others are family characteristics. In order to assess the existence of these factors among the Saudi community, I have made hypotheses based on previous studies. Each hypothesis tests one factor. Respondents were asked several questions in order to test each in turn. In the following section I will analyse each hypothesis and the participants' responses.

7.4.1 Child characteristics

Child gender

Child gender has been recognized as a risk factor for physical punishment. Several researchers have indicated that boys usually experience physical punishment as a discipline method more than girls (Straus 1994; Jackson,

Thompson et al. 1999; Straus and Stewart 1999; Dietz 2000; Doe 2000; Gershoff 2002a; Durrant, Ensom et al. 2004; Regalado, Sareen et al. 2004; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Stephenson, Sheikhattari et al. 2006). For instance, a meta-analysis study of "parents' differential socialization of boys and girls" consisting of 172 studies from North America and other western countries found that studies from Western countries demonstrated that parents use physical punishment on boys more than girls (Lytton and Romney 1991). Based on these previous studies, **I hypothesised that parents in my sample expose boys to physical punishment more than girls.** The Chi-square test was applied to test the statistical relationship between child age and parents' use of physical punishment and the p-value was found significant ($p = .000 < 0.05$), thus, this hypothesis was supported. The present study indicates that during the past year, according to parents more boys than girls had been exposed to parental physical punishment. For instance, about 54% of boys have been punished physically by their parents; against 38% of girls.

Also, 63% of young people said that boys were more exposed to physical punishment at home than girls. Only 10% said that girls were exposed more than boys to physical punishment. In this way, these young people's responses match those of the parents' sample. These results are comparable to several studies in different countries (Graziano and Namaste 1990; Day, Peterson et al. 1998; Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; MacMillan, Boyle et al. 1999; Al-Saud 2000; Bardi and Borgognini-Tarli 2001; Tang 2006). However, these results contradict those of other studies (Hunter, Jain et al. 2000), who found no difference between boys and girls in receiving physical punishment from their parents. Gershoff (2002a p.557) argued that "some researchers have hypothesized that boys are physically punished more either because boys engage in behaviours that elicit physical punishment more than do girls or because parents have gender-based beliefs and expectations about their children, for example that parents want to toughen up their boys." I agree with this perspective because I have observed this in Saudi Arabia. In Saudi society boys usually engage in several behaviours that girls do not engage in or might engage in but less than boys. For example, in Saudi Arabia boys play in the street or neighbourhood more than girls which

increases the possibility of involvement in several misbehaviours such as fighting, smoking, stealing, or damaging property. According to Huston (1983) "Parents often have different expectations for the behaviours of boys and girls and as a result react differently to the same behaviour depending on the gender of the child exhibiting it" (Citted in: Gershoff 2002a p.557). Parents in Saudi Arabia usually have different expectations of boys than girls; usually parents wish their sons to be tough. In Saudi society it is shameful for boys to show 'soft' characteristics. Some parents do not even allow their sons to cry. I argue that those parents have a cultural belief that men do not cry and they teach their children that. Hence, sometimes boys are exposed to physical punishment if they cry.

Child age

"The age of children determines his or her cognitive ability to process the disciplinary message implied by the punishment" (Gershoff 2002a p.557). Therefore, the relationship between a child's age and vulnerability to physical punishment has been confirmed (Gershoff 2002a; Al-Zahrani 2004). Several researchers have pointed out that parents tend to view physical punishment as a successful method to use with young children (less than 5 years old) but not with infants (less than 1 year old) and children older than 5. A number of researchers have argued that physical punishment is appropriate for children less than 10 years old but not those older than 10 years (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998).

One of this study's goals was to asses the relationship between child age and parents' use of physical punishment. Accordingly **I hypothesised that more young than old children are exposed to physical punishment.** The Chi-square test was applied to test the statistical relationship between child age and parents' use of physical punishment. The p-value was found significant (p = .000<0.05), thus, this hypothesis was supported. The results of the present study have confirmed that young children (11 years or less) are exposed to physical punishment more than older children (12 years or more). For instance, 55% of children aged 11 years or less were exposed to physical punishment by their

parents during the past year, whereas 20% of those children aged 12 years or more were exposed to physical punishment by their parents in the same time period. This result is comparable with several studies in different countries that found more young children than older children experience physical punishment from their parents (Nobes and Smith 1997; Day, Peterson et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Straus and Stewart 1999; Al-Saud 2000; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Tang 2006) and that children aged 11 years or less are most likely to be physically punished (Frick, Christian et al. 1999; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000; Ashui 2003). In Saudi Arabia, Ashui (2003) found that children experienced the highest rate of physical punishment by their parents when they were aged between 6 and 10. In the United Kingdom, a study consisting of 99 two-parent families concluded that more than 90% of children aged 11 years old and under were exposed to physical punishment from their parents (Nobes and Smith 1997). Frick et al. (1999) who conducted a study on 179 children and adolescents in USA found that children were exposed to the highest rate of physical punishment by their parents when they were 9-12 years old. Furthermore, in a study conducted on 500 Indian mothers, Hunter et al. (2000) found that children aged 6-11 years old were more likely to experience physical punishment by their parents than younger or older children. This particular finding may be explained by the extent to which younger children spend significantly more time in the direct presence of their parents and, this can possibly increase the level of conflict between them and in turn the use of physical punishment. It could also be that parents view younger children as less responsive to verbal reasoning about their behaviour and that physical punishment is an easy and quick way for them (as they see it) to give a massage to a child who may not understand verbal reasoning. According to Eamon (2001 p.789), "younger children are dependent upon their parents." Also, according to Jackson et al.(1999 p.17), "Younger children require a great deal of monitoring by parents."

Furthermore, this study sought to identify the age at which parents usually start to use physical punishment on their children. About 71% of parents who had used physical punishment on their children ($n = 245$) said that they had punished

their children physically for the first time when they were aged 5 years or less and 26% said that they had punished their children physically for the first time when they were 6-10 years. However, the young people's responses were found to be different. Only 12% of those who been punished physically by their parents (n = 218) said this occurred for the first time when they were aged 5 years or less, as opposed to 71% who said they were 6-10 years old. These results are again comparable with Ashui's (2003) Saudi study which found that about 17% of the sample said they first were physically punished when they were aged 5 years or less, and 36% when they were 6-10 years old.

What sense should we make of the discrepancy in the current study between parents' and young people's reports on this issue? It could be that parents find it easier to accurately recount their initial use of physical punishment than young people whose early preschool life experience may be difficult to recall.

Child misbehaviour

Several researchers have emphasized that child misbehaviours constitute a risk factor for parental use of physical punishment (Engfer and Schneewind 1982; Muller 1996; Deater-Deckard and Dodge 1997; Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Gershoff 2002a; Gershoff 2002b). It has also been suggested that the type of misbehaviour could also determine parents' use of physical punishment (Gershoff 2002a). I argue that this means parents might punish their children physically for certain misbehaviours, but not for others. One object of this study was to identify those types of child misbehaviours for which a child is punished physically. Accordingly **I hypothesised that parents punish their children for several types of misbehaviours and some misbehaviours are expected to be common.** The study findings support this hypothesis. Participants were provided with 13 types of misbehaviours and asked to report if they had used (parents) or been exposed (young people) each type. Three sets of misbehaviours leading to physical punishment were common among the participants. These misbehaviours are: 1) what could be termed antisocial behaviours (such as using drugs, stealing, smoking, using bad language, and lying), 2) dangerous behaviours, and 3)

disobedience. This finding is consistent with those of several studies in other countries (Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl et al. 1983; Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Thompson and Pearce 2001). I argue that these types are common in Saudi Arabia because of the nature of the prevailing culture. In the case of antisocial misbehaviours, these are prohibited in Islamic and Saudi culture. Saudis grow up in a culture that does not accept such behaviours; hence, parents try to prevent their children from engaging in such behaviours. Therefore, many Saudi parents become strict if their children commit such misbehaviours. Furthermore, in Arabic culture usually people take account of their community's values or, in other words, they have regard for their reputation. Saudi parents as other parents internationally do not like to hear other people speaking badly of their own children. I argue that because parents wish their children to be the best children and do not like their children to make mistakes; therefore, they will try to prevent them from indulging in bad behaviours even by the use of force (physical punishment). In respect of dangerous behaviours, according to Gershoff (2002a p.556), "parents are more likely to use corporal punishment if the child's behaviour is aggressive or is a threat to their own or others' safety." Parents who are concerned about their children's safety will punish them physically when they play with dangerous objects. Most parents believe that, if children are punished they will not misbehave any more. One infamous idea among parents is that, in order to teach the child that fire could be harmful for him/her, one should burn the child's hand with a match. "I only smack my children for safety – for their own sake they must learn about danger" (Parent's argument, cited in: Save the Children Sweden 2005 p.24).

Often debates in a favour of physical punishment of children suggest that this is a rational and calm response to children's misbehaviour, but in many cases the evidence suggests parents respond directly with anger to a child's behaviour and a significant amount of harm can arise from physical punishment driven by uncontrolled anger (Dilillo, Tremblay et al. 2000; Ateah and Durrant 2005). I argue that in misbehaviour such as disobedience, parental anger can play a vital role in the administration of physical punishment. I argue that when a child

disobeys the parents' instructions, that increases the anger level of the parent which results in the use of physical punishment.

My study suggests that parents can and do make distinctions about the types of misbehaviour that they feel should and should not lead to physical punishment. For example, the majority of the participants in my study indicated that two types of misbehaviours were least likely to justify physical punishment. These misbehaviours are "not washing hands before eating" and "obtaining low marks at school". For example, almost 60% of the parents said that they had never punished their children physically when they obtained low marks at school and about the same percentage of young people confirmed that their parents never punished them physically when they obtained low marks at school. This result is consistent with other studies' results. For example, in Kuwait, Qasem et al.(1998) found that almost two-thirds of their study participants did not believe that a child deserves physical punishment when he or she obtains low marks at school or did not wash his or her hands before eating. I argue that these behaviours cannot be regarded as misbehaviours. Yet, they could be regarded as a neglect of duty. Some parents might punish their children when they neglect their duties in order to prepare them to be successful people in the future. However, I argue that most parents may not punish their children for these behaviours because they believe they do not deserve punishment.

7.4.2 Parents' characteristics

Parents' gender

Parental gender has been identified as a risk factor of their use of physical punishment (Gershoff 2002a). According to Gershoff (2002a) mothers at home frequently use physical punishment more than fathers. This conclusion has been linked either to the large amount of time which mothers spend with their children (Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Gershoff 2002a) or because she is considered the primary caretaker. To this end **I hypothesised that more mothers than fathers use physical punishment on their children.** The Chi-square test was

carried out in order to assess the relationship between parents' gender and their use of physical punishment on their children. The P-value was found not significant (p = .136> 0.05) which means there is no significant difference between mothers and fathers in regard to the use of physical punishment. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported. While 83% of fathers said they had punished their children physically, 89% of mothers said the same thing. Moreover, when young people were asked who used physical punishment more at home, about 42% said it was the father, about 38% said it was the mother and 9% said there was no differnce. This result is consistent with a number of other researchers' results (Nobes and Smith 1997; Holden, Miller et al. 1999; Nobes, Smith et al. 1999; Al-Saud 2000; Wissow 2001) who also found mothers and fathers used physical punishment in similar ratios. However, this result is not consistent with a number of other studies which found that mothers used physical punishment more often than fathers (Wolfner and Gelles 1993; Straus 1994; Straus, Hamby et al. 1998; Straus and Stewart 1999; Tijerino 2001; Gershoff 2002a; Ashui 2003; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005).

How can the similar levels of use of physical punishment by fathers and mothers, found in the present study, be explained? Several researchers have mentioned that mothers are more prone to use physical punishment than fathers because they spend more time at home than fathers (Straus, Gelles et al. 1981; Straus and Stewart 1999; Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005; Tang 2006). Whilst this is also true of Saudi Arabia, additional cultural factor factors may be relevant here. While mothers spend more time at home than fathers; it is the fathers who dominate and who have the power at home. Sometimes the mother requests the father to punish the children when they misbehave, because he is the leader in the house. Dawes et al. (2005 p.9) argue that, "Parents in male-dominated households are more likely to utilize corporal punishment as a means of disciplining their children." In addition, most of the studies which have found that mothers use physical punishment more than fathers have been conducted in western countries. In some western countries usually people go to work places from the morning (8:00 or 9:00 am) till the evening (5:00 or 6:00 pm). This means if the father is the person who works, he will spend a large amount of time

outside the home. But, the situation is different is Saudi Arabia. The majority of people work in the public sector (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2005). This means they work from morning (8:30 am) and return home between noon and 2:30 pm. And usually, children finish school between 12:30 and 1:00 pm. Consequently, Saudi fathers spend more time with their children than western fathers do.

Parental age

Parental age has been identified as a risk factor for parents' use of physical punishment. Several researchers have emphasised that more younger parents use physical punishment on their children than older parents (Dietz 2000; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). To this end the **I hypothesised that more younger parents (aged 35 years or less) than older parents (aged 36 years old or more) use physical punishment on their children.** Those parents who said they had punished their children physically at least once of their life ($n = 245$) were asked to report if they had used physical punishment in the past year. The Chi-square test was applied in order to assess the relationship between parents' age and their use of physical punishment. The P-value was found significant (p = 0.008 < 0.05) which means the hypothesis was supported. Almost 90% of younger parents said that they had punished their children physically during the past year, as opposed to 77% of older parents in the sample. Whilst this finding supports some previous research (Giles-Sims, Straus et al. 1995; Tang 1998) it is at odds with some other studies (Carswell 2001; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). Some researchers attribute the high rate of younger parents' use of physical punishment to their lack of parenting experience or the greater economic stress that they face (Day, Peterson et al. 1998; Gershoff 2002a; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). Young parents may face financial difficulties in their married life. Hence, the financial hardship which they may face could produce stress which will affect their disciplinary practices. However, this stress may disappear or diminish as they become older if they become more stable financially. This finding could also be explained by the fact that older parents have more children and may become more expert in child rearing strategies. According to Dawes et al. (2005 p.10),

"the number of incidences of parental corporal punishment and severe assaults decreases with the age of the parent. This is attributed to young parents' lack of experience with children, their propensity to abuse alcohol, and the greater economic stress that they face." However, an alternative explanation could be that older parents are more likely to have older children who, as we have seen above, are less likely to be vulnerable to physical punishment.

Parents' educational level

Parental education levels have been identified as a risk factor for parents' use of physical punishment (Youssef, Attia et al. 1998; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000). Particularly, parents' use of physical punishment has been linked with low education levels (Whipple and Richey 1997; Dietz 2000; Hunter, Jain et al. 2000). To this end **I hypothesised that parents' with a lower level of educational achievement would use physical punishment on their children more than parents' with a high education level.** The Chi-square test was applied in order to assess the relationship between parents' education levels and their use of physical punishment. The P-value was found not significant (p = .287 > 0.05). Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. This study has found no significant difference in relation to prevalence of physical punishment between parents with low education levels, secondary school level or less, and parents with high education levels, university degree or more. The majority of parents reported using physical punishment on their children in the past year irrespective of their education level. However, a slight percentage difference was found between parents with secondary school level educational achievement or less and parents with a university degree or higher. In fact, in contrast to the hypothesis, parents with a university degree or higher were found to use physical punishment more. For example, 80% of the parents with secondary school level or less and 87% with a university degree or higher said they had punished their children physically during the previous year. Interestingly, this result is comparable with the Al-Zahrani (2004) Saudi Arabian study which found that the children of parents with a university degree were exposed to child abuse (as opposed to child physical punishment) more than those with parents with secondary school level

or less. It was surprising for me to find that parents with higher education levels (University degree or more) use physical punishment a little more than those with lower education levels (secondary school or less) (87% & 80% respectively). Some researchers attribute the link between low education level and greater use of physical punishment to the parents' lack of experience and knowledge of child rearing (Eamon 2001; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). In the Saudi Arabian context this finding could be explained by the relative influence, over and above education, of cultural and religious influences. Specifically, parents in general gain their strategies of parenting and attitudes on child discipline from different sources such as their own parents, their culture and religious instruction. In addition, education in Saudi Arabia pays no specific attention to parenting education. For example, no courses or lessons are provided to students in parenting strategies at any stage of general education.

Parents' own experience of physical punishment

Several researchers have pointed out that those parents who were exposed to physical punishment as children are at risk of using it on their own children (Simons, Whitbeck et al. 1991; Simons, Johnson et al. 1994; Straus 1994; Jackson, Thompson et al. 1999; Rodriguez and Sutherland 1999; Dietz 2000; Straus 2000; Tijerino 2001). Consequently **I hypothesised that parents who had physical punishment experiences as children would use physical punishment more than those parents who were not exposed to physical punishment experience as children.** The Chi-square test was applied in order to assess the relationship between the parents' own experience of physical punishment and their use of physical punishment on their own children. The P-value was found to be significant (p = 0.001 > 0.05) which means the hypothesis is accepted. Almost 92% of those parents who said they had been physically punished by their own parents as children said that they had used physical punishment with their own children. On the other hand, roughly 77% of the parents who said they never exposed to physical punishment as children said that they had used physical punishment on their own children. One way of understanding this finding is the relevance of social learning theory which

emphasises that behaviours are learnt. Simons et al.(1993 p.94) argued that, "social learning theory would predict variability in parenting practices as a function of differences in socialization expectation. Consistent with this expectation, past research indicates that individuals raised by abusive parents are more likely to use harsh discipline with their own children."

7.4.3 Family Characteristics

Family size

Family size has been identified as a predictor of parents' use of physical punishment (Wolfner and Gelles 1993; Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). Specifically, parents' use of physical punishment has been linked to families with a large number of children (Dawes, Kropiwnicki et al. 2005). To this end I **hypothesised that parents with a larger number of children use physical punishment more than parents with a smaller number of children.** The Chi-square test was applied in order to assess the statistical relationship between the number of children in the family and the parents' use of physical punishment. The P-value was not found to be significant (p = 0.887 > 0.05), indicating no difference between parents with a larger number of children and parents with a smaller number. About 82% of parents with 8 children or more said that they had used physical punishment during the past year, and 82% of parents with 4-7 children and 85% of parents with 1-3 children concurred. This result is at odds with several studies conducted in Saudi Arabia (Al-Saud 2000; Al-Zahrani 2004; Al-Zahrani 2005) however all of these studies were investigating different types of child abuse such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect, while the current study asked about a specific type of violence against children (parental use of physical punishment) during the past year. Also, this result differs from the results of other studies in different countries. For example, in Egypt Youssef et al. (1998) found that more children who lived in larger families experienced physical punishment than those children who lived in smaller

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families. In South Africa, Dawes et al (2005) attributed the reason behind the parents' greater use of physical punishment in larger families to two factors: first, parents do not have enough time to reason with their children; second, large families put more economic stress on the parents. This situation is dissimilar to Saudi Arabia perhaps explaining why this finding contrasts with most of the international literature, because the dominant shape of families in Saudi Arabia is the large family (Al-Zahrani 2005 p.280). In addition, parents themselves, mostly, come from large families. Therefore, it could be that Saudi parents are prepared for and have the ability to deal with large numbers of children. Thus, in this study the influence of family size could be a limiting factor on parents' use of physical punishment.

Parents' employment status

Parents' employment status has also been identified as a risk factor for physical punishment (Sidebotham, Heron et al. 2002). Unemployment has been identified as a stress factor that can increase the risk of parents using physical punishment on their children (Whipple and Richey 1997). Accordingly, **I hypothesised that unemployed parents would more often use physical punishment on their children than employed parents.** The Chi-square test was applied here in order to assess the statistical relationship between parents' employment status and their use of physical punishment. The P-value was found to be not significant (p = 0.169 > 0.05) which means the hypothesis is rejected. No significant difference was found between employed or unemployed parents with regard to the use of physical punishment. However, a slight difference in percentages is noticeable. For instance, 88% of unemployed parents and 81% of employed parents said that they had punished their children physically during the past year. This result differs from the work of others who have found unemployed parents use physical punishment more than employed parents (Wolfner and Gelles 1993; Sidebotham, Heron et al. 2002; Tang 2006). Some researchers attribute the higher rate of physical punishment use among unemployed parents to three reasons: the extra time which they spend at home with their children which can increase the opportunity for conflict; stress as a result of economic hardship; and the feeling

of "powerlessness" (Sidebotham, Heron et al. 2002; Tang 2006). I argue that the current study's results are different because the majority of the unemployed parents who participated in this study were mothers (78%) and only the minority (22%) were fathers. This is typical of the population of Riyadh where roughly 92% of women aged 15 or over are unemployed (Ministry of Economy & Planning 2004). Therefore, it is to be expected that mothers will represent the higher percentage of the unemployed parents among the study participants.

Family income

Based on the theory that low income can cause stress to parents and, in response to this stress, parents can be aggressive in child discipline situations (Dietz 2000) and based on previous studies, **I hypothesised that parents with low income use physical punishment more than parents with high income.** The Chi-square test was applied in order to assess the statistical relationship between family monthly income and parents' use of physical punishment. The P-value was found not significant ($p = 0.271 > 0.05$) which means no statistical relationship was found. Accordingly, this hypothesis is rejected. While 88% of parents with low monthly income (3,000-5,000 SR) said they had used physical punishment on their children during the past year, about 82% of parents with high monthly income (10,000 SR or more) concurred. This finding differs from other studies which found low income parents use physical punishment more than other parents (Heffer and Kelley 1987; Wolfner and Gelles 1993; Hashima and Amato 1994; Dietz 2000). This difference could be a result of several related factors including the specific nature of the sample, general economic conditions in Saudi Arabia and other cultural and religious factors.

7.5 Attitudes toward the use of physical punishment

One of the risk factors associated with parents' use of physical punishment is their attitudes toward its use (Ateah et al. 2003). Ateah et al. (2003 p.127) argued that "although a positive attitude toward physical punishment alone does not determine its rate of use, it has been found to be a significant predictor." Qasem et al.(1998 p.1190) argued that "parental attitudes towards appropriate punishment provide the social context within which parents respond to child misbehaviours". I argue that in order to create a good programme for physical punishment prevention, we need to understand parental attitudes towards its use. Also, I argue that it is important to understand young people's attitudes towards the use of physical punishment in order to establish prevention strategies for future generations. Therefore, the fourth objective of the present study was to assess the attitudes of the parents and young people involved in this study towards the parental use of physical punishment on children. The participants were provided with eight statements and asked to decide if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. Their responses to the statements were computed as a scoring scale (see chapter 6 for details).

Parents' attitude towards the use of physical punishment

According to Herzberger and Tennen (1985) several factors such as culture and religion influence a person's attitude towards the use of physical punishment. In regard to the parents' attitude, **I hypothesised that the majority of parents among study sample members would support the use of physical punishment.** The study findings reveal that 66.3% of the parents (n = 285) showed moderate support and 14.4% showed high support for the use of physical punishment. In other words, the majority of parents (81%) supported parental use of physical punishment on children. Accordingly, the hypothesis is supported. This result is comparable with the study done in Kuwait by Qasem et al. (1998) that found that about 90% of the study sample supported the use of physical punishment, and a survey on 499 adults aged 20-59 years old in Barbados, in

which 70% of respondents supported the parental use of physical punishment on children (Payne 1989). However, this result is not consistent with other studies. For instance, a Turkish study by Orhon et al. (2006) of 210 adults found a minority of the study sample (45%) supported the use of physical punishment. Also, in the United Kingdom, a study consisting of 54 parents by Thompson and Pearce (2001) found that a minority of respondents supported the use of physical punishment.

How should we understand the widespread support of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia in contrast to the lower level of supportive attitudes among parents in some other international contexts? Two main reasons could be relevant:

First, as highlighted earlier in this thesis, parental use of physical punishment is not forbidden by religion, culture or law in Saudi Arabia. These three elements play a vital role in influencing parental decisions on child discipline strategies. Durrant and Rose-Krasnor (1995) suggest that "law shapes and confirms public values" (Cited in Roberts 2000 p.1028)." They also argue that "cultural norms are changeable and that legislation can be a key tool in enacting such change" (Cited in Roberts 2000 p.1028). For example, after the Swedish experience of banning the use of physical punishment people's opinions changed significantly (Roberts 2000). According to Straus (1994 p.21) "A rapid and dramatic loss of support for corporal punishment in all Scandinavian countries began almost immediately after these countries made it illegal for parents to use any corporal punishment." Therefore, I argue that formulating new legislation that prevents the parental use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia would help to change attitudes toward its use.

Second, parents accept and support the use of physical punishment because they inherited this cultural attitude from their own parents. The vast majority of parents in Saudi Arabia have experienced physical punishment either by their parents, relatives, neighbours, teachers, or others. This study found that 65% of parents said they were physically punished by their parents as children. Even those parents who had not experienced physical punishment on the part of their

parents could have experienced it from other people such as teachers, relatives, or others.

Young people's attitudes towards the use of physical punishment

Young people's attitudes are influenced by their childhood experiences of physical punishment. Mostly, those people who experienced physical punishment as children continue to accept its use as adults (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 1995). Therefore, with regard to young people's attitudes towards the use of physical punishment, **I hypothesised that the majority of young people among the study sample members would support the use of physical punishment.** Young people were provided with the same eight statements as parents and were asked to decide if they agreed or disagreed with each statement. 49.4% of young people (n = 245) showed moderate support and 7.8% showed high support. In other words, the majority of young people (57%) support the parental use of physical punishment, supporting the hypothesis. This means that they hypothesis is supported. According to Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1995 p.36) "it is all to do with the way they are brought up as a child. Once they are grown-ups you can't change their childhood. If they are brought up being hit all the time, they will naturally think it's Ok."

Although the majority of young people (57%) endorse attitudes supportive of physical punishment, it is to be emphasised that the overall level of support among young people was much lower than in the parents group (81%). I argue that this result shows that a majority of the new generation will support the use of physical punishment in the future. Moreover, because only 43% of young people showed no support for physical punishment, and the clear majority of young people (57%) support the use of physical punishment, the implication is that its use could continue in the future if no action is taken against parents who do use physical punishment on their children. However, it is interesting to find that 43% of young people do not support the use of physical punishment. Even though they are subject to the same set of wider cultural influences in Saudi Arabia,

these 4 out of 10 young people do not support its use. Therefore, this is a hopeful message for the future that if we can influence these young people through the education system, this could bring about a further cultural shift leading to a reduction in the overall level of support for physical punishment in the future.

Perceptions of the difference between physical punishment and child physical abuse

The question which arises here is "do the study sample members consider the use of physical punishment as a type of child abuse?" According to Berger et al. (1988 p.255) "Disparity between describing specific punitive childhood experiences and the self-labelling of abusive experiences has been noted by several researchers." In this regard **I hypothesised that the majority of sample members would not view physical punishment as a type of child abuse.** About 61% of the parents and 73% of young people agreed that the parental use of physical punishment on children was indeed a type of child abuse. This means that the hypothesis was not supported. Moreover, **I hypothesised that the majority of sample members would not view their own parents' use of physical punishment as abuse.** Almost 70% of the parents and 65% of young people, who said they had been exposed to physical punishment by their parents, said they did not believe that their parents had abused them. This means the hypothesis was supported. From the above results it is clear that there is a discrepancy in the participants' responses between people's general attitudes and their interpretation of their own experiences. This is comparable with previous studies by Berger et al. (1988) and Knutson and Selner (1994) who found that a large percentage of participants who had experienced physical punishment as children did not label themselves as having been abused.

How should we understand this discrepancy? It could be that people's responses were based on a belief that physical punishment is a proper way to discipline a child, regardless of whether it is a type of abuse. Alternatively, participants' responses could have reflected a desire to respect their own parents, and

unwillingness to acknowledge that their parents' actions towards them as children were mistaken.

The relationship between parents' attitudes and their use of physical punishment

From the above discussion, it is clear that a high percentage of parents supported the use of physical punishment. Several researchers have concluded that those parents who support the use of physical punishment attitudinally are more likely to use it on their own children behaviourally (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998; Holden, Miller et al. 1999; Park 2001; Ateah and Durrant 2005). Therefore, this study aimed to assess the relationship between parents' attitudes toward the use of physical punishment and their actual use of it on their own children. In view of this, **I hypothesised that those parents who use physical punishment support its use more than those parents who do not use it.** The Chi-square test was applied in order to assess the relationship between parents' attitudes towards the use of physical punishment and their actual use of it on their children. The P-value was found to be significant ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$) which means the hypothesis is supported. 85% of the parents who said they used physical punishment on their own children ($n = 245$), showed moderate or high support for its use. In contrast only 52% of the parents who said they had never used physical punishment on their children ($n = 40$), showed moderate support for its use on children. Very interestingly, none of the parents who said they had never used physical punishment showed high support towards its use. So, it is obvious that the majority of the parents who support the use of physical punishment have used it on their children. According to Simons et al. (1993 p.94), "Virtually all parents are concerned with reducing their child's participation in negative behaviours while increasing the child's compliance with parental expectations and requests. They would be expected, therefore, to employ child management techniques that they perceive as effective strategies for producing these valued results". Consequently, parents who believe in the effectiveness and usefulness of physical punishment as a disciplinary method support its use and thus use it on

their own children. Lastly, this is a very important finding in that it confirms a relation between attitudes towards physical punishment and behaviours (i.e. its use on the children). Therefore, this gives a really helpful clue as to how to reduce the frequency of physical punishment and that impacting on attitudes will most likely reduce its use. This emphasises the need for public education campaigns and appropriate media coverage on these issues.

Prevention of physical punishment by law

Finally, this study aimed to assess the sample members' views regarding legislation to prevent parents using physical punishment. Two hypotheses were developed. First, **I hypothesised that a majority of the sample members (both parents and young people) would not support legislation to prevent parents from using physical punishment.** The results of this study show that more young people than parents support legislation to prevent the use of physical punishment on children. This means the hypothesis was partially supported. Specifically, 58% of parents (n = 285) and 42% of young people (n = 245) disagreed with preventing parental use of physical punishment by law.

From the above it is clear that most parents do not support legislation that prevents the use of physical punishment. I argue that these findings reflect Saudi culture. Most parents in Saudi Arabia believe that child discipline is a family matter and no one has the right to prevent them disciplining their children in the way which they think is right. Also, Saudis reject interference in domestic affairs of the family except by family members. However, this culture is not exclusive to Saudi Arabia, it is prominent in other Arab countries (Qasem, Mustafa et al. 1998). This finding, also, suggests that parental use of physical punishment is reinforced in people's minds and they believe it is one of the basic strategies of child discipline. In addition, I argue that these perceptions are likely to be seen in the next generation of parents. For instance, 42% of young people disagreed with preventing parental use of physical punishment by law. 42% is a clear percentage and can not be disregarded. Therefore, the risk remains that the young people

who support the ongoing legality of physical punishment would use it in the future on their own children. This result raises the need for rapid action against this issue in Saudi Arabia.

An additional hypothesis was developed to assess the participants' views regarding legislation to prevent the parents' use of **severe** physical punishment. **I hypothesised that a majority of the sample (both parents and young people) would support legislation preventing the use of severe physical punishment.** The majority of the sample members (almost 74% of parents and 69% of young people) showed their agreement for stopping the use of severe physical punishment by law. This means the hypothesis was supported.

Again, it is important to understand why many participants make such a distinction between severe and non-severe physical punishment in relation to legislation. I argue that parents believe that they need to use physical punishment to control their children's misbehaviour, yet they believe that the use of physical punishment should not cause serious harm to the child. The danger is, of course, where to draw the line between the acceptable and the unacceptable. Sometimes it may be hard for parents to control their use of physical punishment, they might not mean to hurt their children but inadvertently they go beyond their aims. Therefore, in my view, in order to protect children, all kinds of physical punishment should be stopped by law.

In addition, even though the above results show that the majority of participants disagree with the use of severe physical punishment, we still have a clear percentage of people who do agree with the use of severe physical punishment. For example, 25% of parents and 30% of young people were supportive of parents' rights in law to use severe physical punishment on their children. In other words, they believe that parents have full rights over their children even in the use of severe physical punishment. This means that Saudi children now and in the future continue to be at risk of severe physical punishment.

7.6 Similarity and dissimilarity between the two groups' responses

As has been outlined above, parents' and young people's responses were found to be similar on some points and dissimilar on others. For example, regarding the types of physical punishment used, parents' and young people's responses indicated similar views. Six types were agreed upon as being in common use by the two groups. On the other hand, while 51% of young people said they have been whipped by their parents, only 24% of parents admitted to having whipped their children. In regard to child misbehaviours, both groups' responses showed that the most common misbehaviours for which parents punish their children are antisocial behaviours, dangerous behaviours and disobedience. As for the severity of physical punishment, both groups' responses showed that the use of severe physical punishment was not common among the study sample members.

With regard to any links between parental characteristics and the use of physical punishment, some dissimilarity can be noticed between the parents' and young people's responses. For instance, parents' responses suggested that no significant relationship was found between parents' education and the use of physical punishment. On the other hand, the young people's responses indicated that there was a significant relationship between these two factors. In the case of parents' employment status, the parents' responses showed no significant relationship between parental employment status and the use of physical punishment. On the other hand, while the young people's responses showed no significant relationship between fathers' employment status and the use of physical punishment, yet a significant relationship was found between mothers' employment status and their use of physical punishment. I attribute this result to the low number of young people who said their mothers were employed. With regard to family characteristics both the parents' and young people's responses showed no statistical relationship between family income and the use of physical punishment. On the other hand, while the parents' responses showed no statistical relationship between family size and physical punishment the young

people's responses suggested that physical punishment was more likely in large families (8 children and more) than small families (1-3 children).

With regard to the participants' attitudes towards the use of physical punishment, both parents and young people showed similar support for its use. However, some dissimilarity was noted. For instance, while most parents' disagreed on preventing parental use of physical punishment by law, most young people agreed that its use should be prevented by law. Moreover, both groups agreed on stopping severe physical punishment by law.

I argue that the main dissimilarity between the two groups' responses is found in the characteristics of the parents and the family. At the heart of dissimilarity is age; there is ambiguity as to the age at which young people are subjected to physical punishment. For example, some young people could have been exposed to physical punishment when they were age 5 years old (which for the young people in this study means 12-15 ago). At that time their families might have consisted of just 3 or 4 persons, while by the survey time their families averaged 7 people. As another example, they could have been exposed to physical punishment while their parents were unemployed, while by the survey time their parents might be in employment.

Lastly, it is difficult to know why parents' and young people's responses differ in some ways but not in others. A number of complex explanations could be responsible for this: firstly, differences could be accounted for by the relationship that each of the groups had with physical punishment. In other words, the parents were those who were likely to be reporting their own behaviours, whereas young people were reporting behaviours that were perpetrated upon them by their own parents. Therefore, this could lead to different perspectives. Specifically, it could be that parents may have wished to portray themselves as using less physical punishment than in reality. It is well known that in survey questionnaire research people sometimes are more prone to socially desirable responses. By contrast, the differences between parents' and young people's accounts and responses could be more a feature of different generations' attitudes. For instance, it could

be that young people are now subjected to a wide set of influences that was not the case previously or that they may have more liberal attitudes than the parents' generation.

7.7 Developing the ecological model in the Saudi context based on the study's findings

In chapter three I used the ecological model, as developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), as a framework through which I could analyse the existing research relating to parental use of physical punishment. In this section, I now offer a summary of the strengths of the model in relation to the findings of my study and a critique of the theory, outlining its limitations. I offer my own analysis of the utility of the theory and make some suggestions as to how it may be extended to better take into account aspects of my own cultural context.

The essential strength of the ecological model as an explanatory theory relating to physical punishment is its emphasis on the multi-determined nature of causation, with the explicit focus on interlinked factors at individual, familial, community and cultural levels. This is important because in Saudi Arabia, as in other cultures, the relationship between parents' behaviour and outcomes for children is a controversial and sensitive topic. There are those who would seek to explain away findings on the negative impact of physical punishment as the consequence of individual factors associated with 'problem' children, or as the result of actions of a small group of parents whose individual difficulties means that their disciplinary methods spill over from 'normal' to 'deviant' or 'acceptable' to 'unacceptable'. If this were the case, any given society would need to do nothing more than take remedial action against such individuals and broader cultural or societal shifts would be unnecessary. Conversely, there are those who would seek to explain away negative parenting practices as 'cultural issues', thereby absolving individual parents from the responsibility for their own actions and their consequences. Of course, both extremes are overly simplistic. On the one hand cultural issues are underplayed and individual factors

exaggerated. On the other, cultural factors are over-emphasised in the longstanding tradition of 'colour blindness' where marked psychosocial problems are inappropriately explained away with reference to race and culture and where inaction is justified on cultural grounds (Quiroz, 2007). In contrast, Bronfenbrenner's model has provided perhaps the best articulation to date of the inter-relationship between factors that combine to influence developmental outcomes. In other words, children do not develop in isolation, but in relation to their family and home, school, community and broader society. Similarly, adults do not parent their children in a vacuum but in the context of community norms and values, religious beliefs and prevailing social ideas. The two preceding sentences apply equally in Riyadh as they do in Ryhope, although of course the expression of these various factors varies significantly both across cultures and communities, as well as within cultures and communities.

The ecological model also emphasises that the multi-level environments and influences on children and their development are ever-changing and interactive. Applied to a child abuse context, Little and Kantor summarise this in the following way:

> "The Ecological models offer a broad-based conceptualization that take into account the complex interactions among individual, family, community, and societal risk factors in the occurrence of child maltreatment" (Little and Kantor 2002 p.134).

Figure 7.1 represents complexity of these interactions, adapted from Little and Kantor's work. Within this current study, it has been possible to use the overall levels as depicted in Figure 7.1 to focus the data collection and to offer broad categorisations for the analysis of the data. It is also possible to summarise key findings from the study into a revised model, as in Figure 7.2 below. Rather than depicting the interactions as concentric circles as in Brofrenbrenner's conceptualisation, my revised model suggests that societal and religious influences in the Saudi Arabian context act as an overarching and powerful frame for the interaction between individual and community factors which in many

cases lead to the unchallenged and routinely accepted use of physical punishment on children. The evidence for this comes in part from the data I have collected, but also substantially from my analysis of the role of religion in Saudi Arabia, as outlined in Chapter Two. Unlike in most Western countries where there is a separation between legislative systems and formal religion, in Saudi Arabia Shari'a law functions as *the* legal framework for society. So embedded is Islam in society that it is not meaningful to depict a model in which religion is viewed as merely one influencing factor at a societal level. Society and religion are one in the same concept, hence my identification of the 'socio-religious' level. So, when religion does not only condone physical punishment, but also encourages its use, this also means that it is given overall social sanction. As noted in Chapter Two, Shari'a recommends the use of physical punishment when a child over the age of 10 does not perform the required prayer.

Figure 7.1 Interaction between the Ecological model's levels (adapted from Little and Kantor, 2002, p.136)
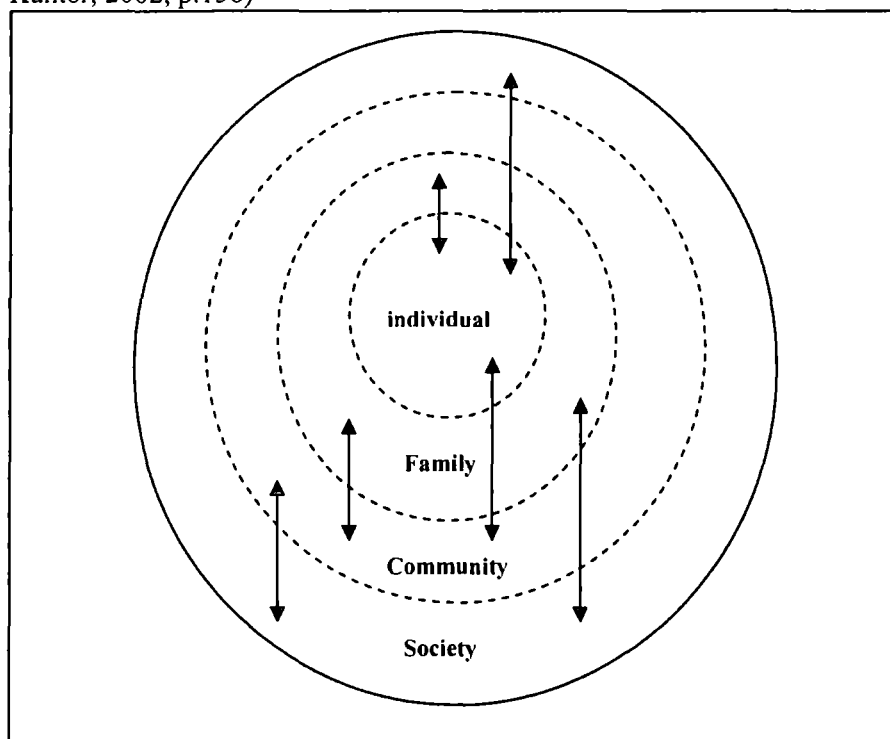
In this respect, it is noticeable that the critical weight of the factors I propose as relevant in my revised model (Figure 7.2) resides within the socio-religious frame. This emphasises the importance of attitudinal shifts at a macro system

level. My adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's model is speculative and offered as a first step in theory building, rather than an empirically tested model. However, the use of this adapted model seeks to avoid simplistic, pathological and linear explanations of physical punishment (and its relationship in severe forms to physical abuse) and demonstrates instead how multiple influences can combine differently or synergistically in individual cases leading to similar outcomes.

Figure 7.2 Understanding physical punishment ecologically in the Saudi Arabian context.
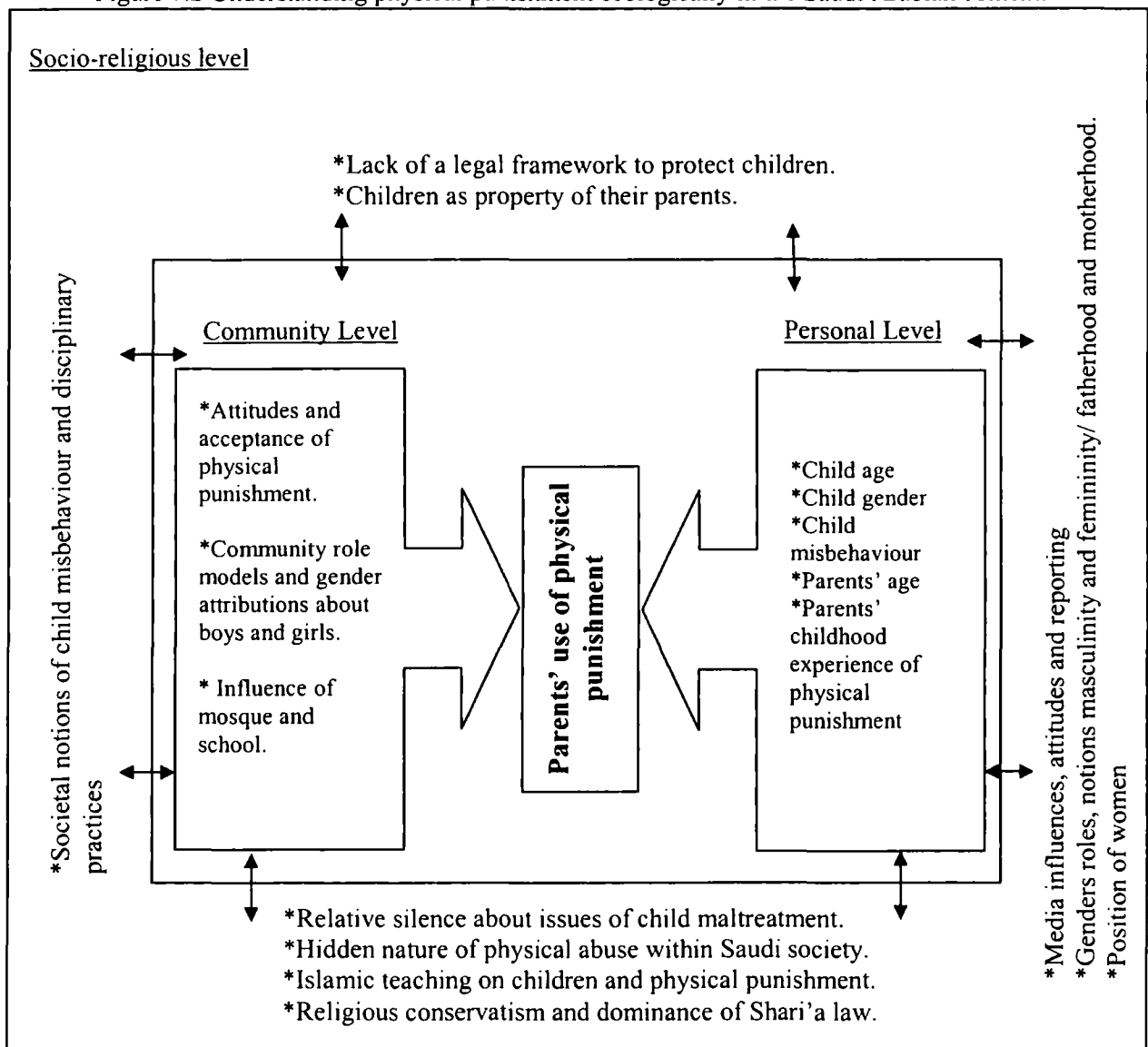
Whilst Bronfenbrenner's ecological model brings with it a range of conceptual strengths to the exploration of physical punishment, as noted above, it is also appropriate to reflect also upon its limitations. First, whilst the model is useful in

terms of articulating the broad based connections that exist between individuals, their communities and society, the model is "expository rather than explanatory" (Payne, 2005, p. 158). In other words, the model does not explain why these interconnections exist. For example, in the current study, I have linked community attitudes toward physical punishment to actual use of physical punishment, in some cases to severe and extreme levels. The mechanisms underpinning this connection are not explained. Nor does the model account for why some people in the sample disagree with the use of physical punishment despite being subject to the same societal influences as the majority of parents or young people inhabiting the same city who agree with its use. Despite being subject to highly similar social and environmental influences, individuals in the sample demonstrate significantly different attitudes and make different behavioural choices with regard to physical punishment. Why do 19% of parents disagree with physical punishment when 81% of their neighbours, friends, work colleagues (etc.) agree with it? Similarly, findings from the current study highlight differences between parents and young people despite their similar backgrounds. Allied to this criticism are concerns about the pathological and deterministic implications of the ecological model:

"The ecological model tends to imply a deterministic view of the world: if, given certain characteristics in the parents' backgrounds, the community and culture, the 'right' family interactions occur, abuse will inevitably happen" (Sidebotham 2001 p.108).

This is clearly not borne out by the evidence.

In a similar vein, the ecological model has a tendency to list potentially relevant factors within each of the levels of influence, but says little about the relative power of each of the individual factors against each other. Neither is it possible to pick out particularly salient trajectories of risk through each of the levels. For example, what combination of parental factors should we be particularly concerned with? How do any of these individual parent factors interact with specific child vulnerabilities? How do community or social factors mediate or moderate such individual factors? The ecological model, as a descriptive

framework involving a series of concentric circles, does not provide the answers to these questions. I should add that my adaptation of the model as presented above seeks to address this criticism by more explicitly addressing the dynamic nature of factors interacting to influence child physical outcomes, but it remains a broad based articulation that says little about the particular pathways in individual cases.

A related criticism of the model is that, whilst it assumes that influencing one part of a system will influence another part (or level), in reality this is overly optimistic and somewhat naïve. For instance, at a societal level, changing the law to legislate against the physical abuse of children (though I have advocated this) would have limited impact were such a legislative change not be accompanied by a broader parenting education campaign supported by the teachings of Imams in local mosques and schools, for instance. Additionally, Payne (2005) suggests that systems theory makes little provision for radical change, preferring to emphasise instead maintenance and integration; in other words small steps at different levels which in time, it is hoped, will make an overall systemic difference. The ethics of this emphasis on small systemic changes, when it comes to issues such as severe physical punishment which may impact directly on children's development and welfare, is far from clear.

A further major criticism of the ecological model is its tendency towards generality. As a generalised model, it is both hard to test empirically, but also there are problems with applying it in specific contexts. As Payne states:

> "Because it is a generalised theory, it is hard to apply to any specific
> situations and, on the other hand, applications might be very variable"
> (Payne 2005 p. 159).

This raises the difficult question of cultural competence. Specifically, because the ecological model has been formulated and applied in Western societies, the usefulness of the model for an Eastern and Muslim society such as Saudi Arabia is subject to debate. As stated above, it is not that the general levels within the

model are not applicable to life in Saudi Arabia (family, school, community, etc.), but it is the case that such conceptualisations do not fully take into account the additional and particular part played systemically and ecologically by, for instance Islam and Shari'a law. As a conservative country where people pay a great deal of attention to religion instruction and regulation, it is my view that this makes parents' use of physical punishment particularly complex. According to Donnelly and Straus (2005 p.18) "Religious support for corporal punishment is a central issue in any cultural analysis of the topic." A similar point could also be made in relation to the empowerment of women within Saudi Arabia and how this relates to dominant notions of mothering, motherhood and family. This is why my own adaptation of the ecological model above suggests a broad socio-religious level as an overarching frame. Having extensively searched the literature for other Islamic (or non Western) articulations of ecological and systems theory, work in adapting and developing Bronfenbrenner's model to an Islamic context appears not yet to have taken place. It therefore appears important for such conceptual models to be proposed and subsequently tested in a wider cross-cultural context.

Finally, there are concerns about 'flat' and 'static' interpretations of the model, despite its stated intention to represent dynamic interacting systems of influence. For example, Sidebotham (2001 p.108) argues that:

> "There is a danger in interpreting such models in a static sense. The
> framework lends itself to an assessment of the multiplicity of factors
> at any one point in time. To add a dynamic, changing process to any
> of the levels serves to complicate the model further".

In conclusion, use of the ecological model has provided me in this study with an overarching framework to analyse and present the international literature relating to physical punishment and has guided my data collection efforts. The survey questionnaire developed for the study makes explicit reference to factors at individual, community and societal levels. As a result, I believe that the findings of this first systematic study of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia demonstrate

that the phenomenon is deeply embedded within our society and influenced variously by identifiable factors which exert influence on parents' behaviours at multiple levels. I have recognised the limitations of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and proposed an adapted framework which captures many of the major elements emerging from my findings. It is my hope that my model will be subject to further scrutiny and testing in the Saudi context in future research in the child maltreatment area.

Table 7.1(A) Results in relation to study hypotheses

#	Hypotheses	Test Result
1	Parents' use of physical punishment is prevalent in the Saudi community; that majority of parents in the sample will have used physical punishment on their children and the majority of young people in the sample will have experienced parental physical punishment.	Supported
2	A range of types of physical punishment will be used by parents and some types will be common.	Supported
3	Parents punish their children for different types of misbehaviour and some of these misbehaviours are commonly punished.	Supported
4	Severe outcomes of physical punishment are caused by a minority of parents.	Supported
5	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and child gender and it is expected that boys are significantly more likely than girls to be exposed to physical punishment.	Supported
6	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and child age, and younger children are significantly more likely than older children to be exposed to physical punishment.	Supported
7	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' gender, and mothers are significantly more likely than fathers to use physical punishment.	Rejected
8	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' age, and parents younger than 36 years are significantly more likely than parents aged 36 years or over to use physical punishment.	Supported
9	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' education level, and parents with low education levels are significantly more likely than parents with high education levels to use physical punishment.	Rejected

Table 7.1(B) Results in relation to study hypotheses

#	Hypotheses	Test Result
10	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' employment status, and unemployed parents are significantly more likely than employed parents to use physical punishment.	Rejected
11	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and parents' experience of physical punishment. Parents who were exposed to physical punishment as children by their own parents are significantly more likely than parents who were not exposed to physical punishment as children by their own parents to use physical punishment.	Supported
12	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and family size, and parents with large numbers of children are significantly more likely than parents with small number of children to use physical punishment.	Rejected
13	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and family income, and parents with low income are significantly more likely than parents with high income to use physical punishment.	Rejected
14	There is a relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and their positive attitude towards the use of physical punishment, and those parents who use physical punishment on their children show high support for the use of physical punishment.	Supported
15	The majority of parents in the sample support the parental use of physical punishment.	Supported
16	The majority of young people in the sample support the parental use of physical punishment.	Supported
17	The majority of the sample (parents and young people) do not view parental use of physical punishment on them as abuse.	Rejected
18	The majority of the sample (parents and young people) do not view their own parents' use of physical punishment as abuse.	Supported
19	The majority of the sample (parents and young people) do not support preventing parental use of physical punishment by law.	Partially support
20	The majority of the sample (parents and young people) support preventing the use of *severe* physical punishment by law.	Supported

Chapter Eight: Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Preamble

As has been discussed and established in this thesis, parental use of physical punishment is found worldwide (Tang 2006). Many parents use this method in order to correct their children's misbehaviour or to teach them that their behaviour was inappropriate (Durrant, Ensom et al. 2004). However, some parents use this method in a severe way which results in injury to the child. In Saudi Arabia, many children have been seriously injured and some of them have died as a result of their parents' aggressive punishment (AlRiyadh Newspaper 2008a). Indeed, parents in Saudi Arabia still have full authority over their children even in the case of injury inflicted by parents. According to Alyousif et al. (2005), almost 80% of children sent for medical treatment at various hospitals in Saudi Arabia because of injuries caused by their parents are sent home with the same people who caused the injury. Alyousif et al. (2005) raised the following question: if parents are responsible for the child's injury, then how is it that the victim is sent back with the perpetrator? I strongly argue that this is a situation that has to be confronted. The issue of parental use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia is a phenomenon which needs the urgent attention of both the government and researchers. This is why this study has aimed to describe this issue from two different viewpoints; namely, parents and young people, the perpetrators and the recipients. In particular, the main aim of this study was to identify those factors which contribute to Saudi parents' use of physical punishment on their children.

8.2 Major findings of the study

The study findings are of two types: literature findings and empirical findings. The literature findings are the researcher's inferences from previous studies in

the field and from which the hypotheses for the study were drawn. The empirical findings are the results of the data collected from the sample members.

8.2.1 Literature review findings

First, this study uses the theory of social ecological, as articulated in Bronfrenbrenner's (1979) model to review the literature. Ecological models view any social problem as a result of multiple factors. Parents' use of physical punishment is a result of several factors relating to the child, parents, family, community, and society in general. According to Jack (2001 p.185),"The child, the child's family, and the environments in which they live influence one another in a constant process of reciprocal interaction." He goes on to say, "The behaviour of individuals can only be fully understood by taking into account the influence of the environment in which they live" (Jack 2001 p.185). Accordingly, my search in the literature used these various factors derived from the ecological model in order to take a more holistic view of the phenomenon of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia.

First of all, findings from the literature review suggested that parents' use of physical punishment is a controversial issue among researchers, parents, and police. While some researchers agree with parental use of physical punishment others disagree (Gershoff 2002a). Also, while many parents view physical punishment as an effective disciplinary method (Holden, Miller et al. 1999), other parents view this action as an ineffective disciplinary method (Durrant, Ensom et al. 2004). This controversy is found also in policies; while some countries have passed laws that have banned the use of physical punishment, in other countries parents still have the right to use physical punishment (Gershoff 2002a; Paintal 2007).

The evidence from the existing literature indicates that parents use many types of physical punishment such as spanking, slapping, grabbing, pushing a child roughly, hitting with an object, beating, burning, whipping, punching, washing a

child's mouth out with soap, requiring a child to remain motionless or in a sitting position without a chair, forcing a child to kneel on a floor grate, isolating the child in a confined space, denying a child use of the toilet, forced physical exertion, placing hot pepper sauce in a child's mouth, and/or denying access to needed water, food or sleep. These types of punishment have been categorized by researchers as having physical consequences on the child which range from mild to severe.

Based on the ecological model, and my adaptation of it, there are different factors that may play a role in parents' use of physical punishment. First, on the individual level, some of the child's characteristics place them at greater risk of physical punishment by their parents. The weight of the evidence from existing studies suggests that boys are more are at risk than girls of receiving physical punishment (Gershoff 2002a) and young children more so than older children (Gershoff 2002a). In addition, type of misbehaviour is another risk factor that researchers have identified as placing the child at greater risk of parental use of physical punishment. On the individual level in relation to parents, parents' own characteristics also may be considered as risk factors in influencing their use of physical punishment. For instance, mothers may be more likely than fathers and young parents more than old parents to inflict physical punishment; parents with low education level more than parents with high education level; unemployed parents more than employed parents; and parents with experience of physical punishment as children more than parents without it. Second, on a family level, family characteristics such as large family size and low family income have also been recognized as family factors which could predict the parents' use of physical punishment. Third, on a community or societal level, the culture in which parents and their children live is certainly a risk factor. Hence, if the culture supports parental use of physical punishment that can itself lead parents to normalise its use. More important, such cultural support can clearly be, and often is, used as justification for its use. Finally, the literature has shown that the consequence of inflicting physical punishment can be physically, psychologically, and even socially harmful to the child.

In order to study parents' use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia, it was essential to search for other research and data on this issue relating to Saudi Arabia. Therefore, I made a great effort to locate as many of the studies thus far conducted in my country as I could. From eleven studies, there were only two studies which discussed the use of physical punishment explicitly as their focus, but their aims were different from those of this study. Other studies discussed child abuse in general. The general findings of my review of the Saudi studies were as follows: the available studies showed that child abuse is prevalent in the Saudi community and physical abuse is the most common type. In addition, there is an obvious lack of studies on child abuse in general and on the parental use of physical punishment in particular. Therefore, the main finding of this literature review is that, to the best of my knowledge, there is no research which has, before my current study, discussed parents' use of physical punishment from the parents' perspective. Accordingly, this study has discussed the parents' use of physical punishment from two different perspectives; namely, those of the parents and of the young people. Finally, based on a review of the literature I formulated the study hypotheses which were tested after the data had been gathered.

8.2.2 Empirical findings

This study has been conducted on 530 Saudi persons (285 parents and 245 young people), living in Riyadh, during the survey period.

Parental use of physical punishment was found to be widespread among the sample. For instance, the majority of parents (86%) said they had used physical punishment on their children at some point in their lives and the majority of young people (89%) said that they had experienced physical punishment from their parents. Six out of sixteen types of physical punishment were common among the study sample members; namely, spanking with an open hand, ear twisting, hitting on the face, pinching, hair pulling, and beating with an object such as a slipper or wooden spoon. Most of these are considered mild types of

physical punishment with the exception of beating with an object such as a slipper or wooden spoon. However, a number of parents and young people said they had either used or experienced some severe types of physical punishment. Whipping a child with an object was found to have been used by 24% of parents and experienced by 51% of young people. Other severe types such as beating the child with a strong object (piece of wood or pipe) and thrusting a child against a wall were found to have been used by number of parents and, again, a number of young people said they had been exposed to those types of physical punishment. Accordingly, while a majority of parents were found to have used mild types of physical punishment, severe types were a significant minority. A majority of parents said they had never caused an injury to their child which needed medical attention or bruising which lasted for more than a few days (96% and 89% respectively). Young people reported low levels of injury and bruising (92% and 76% respectively). However, a tangible percentage of parents (21%) said they had beaten their children on the head or neck and 33% of young people said they had been exposed to such punishment. Almost 68% of parents said they used physical punishment that left a red mark for few days and 73% of young people said they had been exposed to it.

Linked to the ecological model as described in Chapter Three, at the **personal level**, a number of hypotheses were tested to explore risk factors that can contribute to parents' use of physical punishment. Boys were more exposed to physical punishment than girls. For example, according to the parents' statements, 59% of those children who had been physically punished by their parents were boys and 41% were girls. Moreover, when young people were asked who was more exposed to physical punishment at home, 63% said boys were more likely than girls to be exposed to physical punishment at home. With regard to the child's age, younger children (aged 11 years old or less) were more exposed to physical punishment than older children (12 years or older). For instance, almost 87% of children who had been punished physically by their parents were aged 11 years or less. Most children experienced their first physical punishment when they were 5 years old or under. Almost 71% of parents said they had punished their children physically when they were aged 5 years or under. However, when

young people were asked about the first time that they had experienced physical punishment they said it was when they were 6-10 years old.

Three groups of misbehaviours commonly led to physical punishment. They were antisocial behaviours (such as using drugs, stealing, smoking, using bad language, and lying), dangerous behaviours, and disobedience.

With regard to factors in relation to parents, specifically parental characteristics, no difference was found between fathers and mothers in their use of physical punishment. 49.8% of parents who said they had used physical punishment (n = 245) were fathers and 50.2% were mothers. Younger parents (aged 35 or less) used physical punishment more than older parents (aged 36 or more). 90% of younger and 77% of older parents said they had used physical punishment during the past year. There was also no statistical relationship between parents' use of physical punishment and their education level. However, parents with a university degree or higher used physical punishment slightly more than parents who had secondary school level or less. Nor did the study find any statistical relationship between parents' employment status and their use of physical punishment. However, a slight percentage difference was noticed in that unemployed parents used physical punishment slightly more than employed parents. 81% of employed parents against 88% of unemployed parents said they had used physical punishment on their children during the past year. Almost 92% of those parents who said they had experienced physical punishment from their parents as children said they used physical punishment on their children. On the other hand, 77% of the parents who said they had not been physically punished by their own parents as children said they used physical punishment on their children.

Secondly, with regard to the **family level** and in particular the relevance of the family characteristics, there was no statistical relationship between family size and parents' use of physical punishment. For instance, 85% of those families with 1-3 children, 82% of those families with 4-7 children, and 82% of those families with 8 children and more said they had used physical punishment on

their children during the past year. There was also no statistical relationship between family income and parents' use of physical punishment. However, a slight percentage difference was found.

Thirdly, with regard to community/ cultural levels, a number of factors were explored including common Saudi attitudes and beliefs, as well as the sample's views on legislation and the overall place of physical punishment in Saudi society. In general, the majority of parents support parental use of physical punishment in Saudi society. 80% of parents ($n = 285$) showed their support for the use of physical punishment (14% high support and 66% moderate support), against 20% who showed no support. The study found that there is a significant relationship between parental support for physical punishment and their actual use of it. 85% of those parents who said they had used physical punishment on their children ($n = 245$) indicated their support for parental use of physical punishment (68.6% moderate support and 16.7% high support). On the other hand, 52% of those parents who said they had never used physical punishment ($n = 40$) supported parental use of physical punishment (52.5% moderate support and 0.0% high support).

A large proportion of parents (61%) believe that physical punishment is a type of child abuse, though the majority (68%) do not believe that their parents had abused them when they punished them physically as children. Most parents disagree with enacting legislation to prevent parents from using physical punishment (58%); however, the majority of parents (74%) agree with legislation to stop those parents who use severe physical punishment.

Interestingly, the study found that young people actually support parental use of physical punishment. However, they show less support than the parents. For example, 57% of young people ($n = 245$) support the use of physical punishment (49.4% moderate support and 7.8% high support). On the other hand, almost 43% of young people showed no support for parental use of physical punishment.

The study found that the majority of these young people (73%) agreed that physical punishment is a type of child abuse. In contrast, however, a large proportion of young people (65%) did not believe that their parents had abused them when they punished them physically as children. A further contrast to parental views is that most young people (58%) agree with enacting legislation to prevent parents from using physical punishment; a large percentage of young people (69%) agree with legislation to stop those parents who use severe physical punishment.

8.2.3 Summary of major findings

1. Parents' use of physical punishment is prevalent among the study sample.
2. The majority of parents use mild types of physical punishment; yet some severe types are used by a small number of parents.
3. Severe outcomes of physical punishment are caused by a small number of parents.
4. More boys than girls are exposed to physical punishment.
5. More younger children than older children are exposed to physical punishment.
6. The majority of children experienced their first punishment by their parents in the pre-school years (5 years or under).
7. The majority of parents punish the child physically when he/she commits antisocial behaviours, dangerous behaviour, or disobeys their instructions.
8. Mothers and fathers use physical punishment equally.
9. More younger parents than older parents use physical punishment.
10. The parents' education level does not predict parents' use of physical punishment.
11. The parents' employment status does not predict parents' use of physical punishment.
12. Parents with childhood experience of physical punishment use physical punishment on children more that parents without that experience.
13. Family income does not predict parents' use of physical punishment.

14. Family size does not predict parents' use of physical punishment.

15. The majority of the study sample members support parental use of physical punishment.

16. Parents who support the use of physical punishment use it on their children more than those parents who do not support its use.

17. The majority of the sample (both parents and young people) believe that physical punishment is a type of child abuse.

18. The majority of the sample (both parents and young people) do not believe that their parents abused them when they used physical punishment on them as children.

19. Most parents disagree with enacting legislation to prevent parents' use of physical punishment.

20. Most parents agree with enacting legislation to prevent the use of severe physical punishment.

21. Most young people agree with enacting legislation to prevent parents' use of physical punishment.

22. The majority of young people agree with enacting legislation to prevent the use of severe physical punishment.

8.3 Study strengths, contribution to knowledge, and limitations

There are several important points in this study. This is the first study conducted in Saudi Arabia to discuss the sensitive issue of the parental use of physical punishment. Several important implications have emerged. Particularly, the study contributes to an understanding of parents' use of physical punishment in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, I argue that this study can act as a base for future studies in this field in Saudi Arabia. Hopefully, it will encourage other researchers to conduct further studies in this field in particular, and into child abuse in general. This study has examined physical punishment from two perspectives; that of the parents and that of young people and from a number of levels including individual, family and broader society factors. The size of the study sample is

also one of its strong points for it consists of 530 persons. In addition, this study is the first study in this field in Saudi Arabia to be applied to both genders. Given the sensitivities around men researching women (and vice versa) this is a significant achievement.

While this study has many strengths, it also has a number of limitations. Because this study is a PhD thesis and the study was conducted by a student, it was limited by time and budget. For these reasons I limited the study to the geographic area of one city only, Riyadh.

Due also to the culture of the Saudi community which does not accept male-female direct contact, I was unable to connect directly with the female participants. However, I was able to use some of my personal relationships and several female researcher assistants who assisted in the data gathering process. Moreover, the number of illiterate parents who participated in this study was small. It would have been difficult to involve this group of parents more due to the data collection method used. These parents would have needed someone to read the questionnaire to them and this could have been embarrassing because the nature of the topic could be regarded as sensitive.

8.4 Personal experience of conducting this study

First of all I learned a great deal from studying this particular topic. I gained much knowledge on the phenomenon of child abuse in general and parental use of physical punishment on children in particular. Conducting this study has also greatly increased my awareness about books, studies, researchers, and other professionals who are involved in this field. My work in this study has also increased my understanding of research methodology and social theories.

As a foreign student working in a second language, conducting this study has increased my English skills. These skills will help to keep me in contact with research and international journals. It will also help me to publish future studies

in international journals in order to enable interested people around the world to share and use them. During my study I have worked with a variety of people: to complete this study I have worked with a mixed supervisory team (male and female), and studied with female students while being taught by women was a new experience for me as a Saudi student. I have also met people from a host of other countries. This experience has increased my awareness and understanding of other cultures and perspectives. I used the opportunities to talk and discuss several topics but especially issues concerning children. I called this the information exchange. As a result, I have concluded that children are similar despite their geographic location, culture, colour, race, language, religion. I argue that this experience will be helpful and useful for me in my prospective life as a researcher and social worker. Furthermore, during the classes and seminars that I attended I learned many teaching methods and technologies which will be helpful for me as a university lecturer.

My study abroad was not useful to me alone. It was useful for my family members; my wife and my children. My wife and children have accompanied me throughout my study duration. My children have studied at American and English schools, met many children from over the world, and built great friendships with other children. My wife has enrolled on many courses to enhance her English and computer skills. My education journey has thus been very useful for all my family. We have learned a new language, other cultures, the ability to establish new friendships, and visited many places in the world. These experiences will benefit us all in our future lives.

Conducting this study has given me the opportunity to lead a research team consisting of women which was a new experience for me.

During the study process I faced many obstacles. For instance, because this study was conducted in Saudi Arabia, and because I am a Saudi citizen I understand that the Saudi community is a conservative community and Saudis do not like to discuss their personal or family issues with anyone who is not a family member or very close friend. So talking about issues such as parents' use of physical

punishment on children is considered a most sensitive matter in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, I was worried about low responses to the questionnaire. Nevertheless, I was surprised by the response rate; it was 63% which is very good. I argue that this high response rate is a sign of people's awareness of this social problem among the Saudi community. Many people wrote "Thank you" sentences in the questionnaire to signify their happiness to be able to discuss a topic like this at this time. The response and the people's appreciation of the study have motivated me to do more studies in the future. In contrast, other people refused to participate in the study and some of them were hostile. Some of them said "You do not have the right to teach us how to discipline our children." Another one said (in an aggressive way) "Who told you that I punish my children physically?" These examples of aggression and hostility were, however, in the minority.

In brief, I believe this study has proved to be a worthwhile endeavour. Even before conducting this study I had a personal interest in helping children who had been victimised by their parents. After conducting this study my interest in helping those children has grown. It has increased my motivation to continue this work in order to help this group of young people in the future. I have now realized that children need more attention and researchers should regard it as a mission to convey the children's voices to the authorities in order to protect them. Despite there being people who are reluctant to carry out such studies in the Saudi community, I am conscious that there are many people who will welcome any on behalf of the children's wellbeing. Therefore, I will focus my future studies on children's concerns and work hard to help in generating legislation to protect them from harsh maltreatment. Finally, conducting this study has been of undoubted benefit for me personally and educationally and I trust that this study will be regarded as having made a positive contribution to research in Saudi Arabia.

8.5 Study recommendations

The study recommendations have been formulated based on the study findings. This study has demonstrated the lack of studies on child abuse in Saudi Arabia in general and on parental use of physical punishment in particular. I argue that this lack has deferred the efforts to find solutions to this social problem. Studies of this issue will help to pull the authorities' attention towards this problem and help professionals and researchers in Saudi Arabia by increasing their understanding of this problem which in turn will facilitate finding solutions. Therefore, I recommend the following strategies to enhance and encourage future research:

- The establishment of a national research centre to be concerned with childhood issues and child abuse in particular. This centre should provide opportunities and facilities for national research in this field.

- Financial support and encouragement should be provided to those professionals and researchers who are interested in studying this issue.

In regard to areas of research, this study recommends further research in parents' use of physical punishment as follows:

- Additional studies on a national sample to be conducted as soon as possible, in order to estimate the prevalence of this social problem nationally and to understand better on a national basis the factors contributing to the parents' use of physical punishment;

- An assessment of the physical, psychological, and social consequences of parents' use of physical punishment on children; and

- Because the use of physical punishment is connected with child abuse (Solheim 1982; Wilson 1982), further research on child abuse in general.

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Appendix (A) Parents' questionnaire

Dear parent,

My name is Nashmi Alanazi and I am a PhD student in School of Applied Social Sciences at Durham University, UK, under the supervision of Simon Hackett and Helen Charnley. I am inviting you to participate in my study which is investigating the use of physical punishment on children in Saudi Arabia. Participants in the study are a number of parents and young people from Riyadh city. This study will help us to better understand the use of this method by parents.

I am interested in your views, as a parent, about physical punishment and whether this is a method of punishment that you use. As a result, I would be extremely grateful if you could complete this questionnaire.

Your responses be treated as anonymous and will be used for the study purposes only. To maintain complete anonymity and confidentiality, please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. Once you have filled in the questionnaire, please put it in the envelope provided to ensure that no one can observe it except the researcher.

The questionnaire should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you, in anticipation for your participation.

Yours Sincerely
Nashmi Alanazi

Please read the following statements and select one of them:

☐ I would like to participate in this questionnaire and I understand that my participation is a voluntarily.

☐ I do not wish to participate in this questionnaire.

Initial (optional) ....

Reminder: before you start reading the questionnaire, please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Please just select the choice which is most appropriate to you. Remember that the questionnaire is 100% anonymous and that you will not be identifiable to anyone as a result of your participation.

In this questionnaire the term "physical punishment of children" refers to practices that parents use on their children such as slapping, spanking, or beating with an object such as a stick etc.

For each question please tick the box that is most appropriate for you.
Please tick(√) only one box for each question

A) Personal Information:

Please tell me about yourself.

1. What is your gender?
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female

2. How old are you now?
   ☐ Less than 21 years old
   ☐ 21-35 years old
   ☐ 36 or more

3. What was the highest level of education that you have achieved?
   ☐ Less than elementary
   ☐ Secondary school or less
   ☐ University degree or more

4. Are you in employment?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

5. What is your average family monthly income?
   ☐ Less than 3000 SR
   ☐ 3000-5000 SR
   ☐ 5001-10000 SR
   ☐ More than 10000 SR

6. How many children do you have?
- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-7
- ☐ 8-11
- ☐ 12 and more

B) Use of physical punishment:

7. Have you ever punished any of your children physically?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

8. What was the youngest age at which you physically punished any one of your children?

- ☐ 5 years or less
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ 11-17 years
- ☐ Older than 17 years

9. Can you provide me with more details regarding all children in your household (including stepchildren) and your use of physical punishment on them? Could you put them in order by the age, oldest to the younger?

For each child please circle the detail which describe him or her and write the number of age in the age box. (Please see the examples provided)

The children number in the household	Child's Sex		Child's current age (number in years)	During the past year have you used physical punishment On him/her?	
Example 1	M	(F)	13	(Yes)	No
Example 2	(M)	F	8	Yes	(No)
1st Child	M	F		Yes	No
2nd Child	M	F		Yes	No
3rd Child	M	F		Yes	No
4th Child	M	F		Yes	No
5th Child	M	F		Yes	No
6th Child	M	F		Yes	No
7th Child	M	F		Yes	No
8th Child	M	F		Yes	No
9th Child	M	F		Yes	No
10th Child	M	F		Yes	No

(If you have more that 10 children please use the back of the paper to cite the rest)

* Types of physical punishment

10. Which of the following types of punishment have you used on any of your children? (Please tick(√) all categories that apply)

#	Physical punishment type	Never	Once or twice	More than twice
1	Hitting the child on the face			
2	Spanking a child with an open hand			
3	Pulling a child's hair			
4	Shoving a child roughly against the wall			
5	Twisting a child's ear			
6	Pinching			
7	Whipping with a scourge, electrical cord or hose			
8	Burning a child with matches or a cigarette			
9	Biting a child			
10	Beating with an object such as a slipper, wooden spoon, or hairbrush.			
11	Beating with an object such as piece of wood (stick) or pipe.			
12	Washing a child's mouth out with soap			
13	Placing hot pepper sauce in a child's mouth			
14	Isolating the child in a confined space such as bathroom			
15	Denying a child use of the toilet			
16	Denying access to needed water, food or sleep			

11. Others (please specify)...
....

* Severity of outcomes of physical punishment:

12. Have you punished any of your children physically to one or more of the following levels of punishment? (Please tick(√) all categories that apply)

#	Physical punishment level	Never	Once or twice	More than twice
1	A smack that left no mark on the child's skin			
2	A smack that left a red mark			
3	A smack that left a bruise on the child for a few days			
4	Physical punishment that left marks and bruises for more than a few days but did not cause a permanent injury			
5	A punishment that caused an injury that needed medical attention			
6	Beating a child on the head or neck			

* Reactions to child misbehaviour

13. Have you punished any of your children physically when he or she did one of the following misbehaviours? (Please tick (√) all categories that apply)

#	Misbehaviours	Never punished	Rarely punished	Always punished	Never done
1	Not washing hands before eating				
2	Obtaining low marks at school				
3	Disobedience				
4	Playing with dangerous objects				
5	Fighting others				
6	Lying				
7	Using bad language				
8	Damaging home property				
9	Making a mess at home such as being untidy				
10	Making too much noise at home				
11	Smoking				
12	Stealing				
13	Using drugs or other illicit substances.				

14. Others (please specify)...
....

C) Your own experiences of physical punishment:

15. When you were a child, did your parents ever use physical punishment on you?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No (If No Please go to Question #20)

16. If yes, how old were you the last time one of your parents used physical punishment on you?

   - [ ] Less than 5 years
   - [ ] 5-10 years
   - [ ] 11-17 years
   - [ ] Older than 17 years

17. Do you believe that your parent abused you when he or she punished you physically as a child? (Please tick the category that best describes your view)
   - [ ] I strongly disagree
   - [ ] I disagree
   - [ ] I agree
   - [ ] I strongly agree

D) Attitude and Beliefs:

18. Please indicate wither you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(Please tick (√) the category that best describes your view)

#	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good hard spanking?				
2	Physical punishment is not an effective way of disciplining a child.				
3	Physical punishment is a useful method of discipline if a child is naughty.				
4	Physical punishment of children is never acceptable.				
5	Physical punishment is not harmful to children.				
6	Physical punishment is an acceptable action by parents.				
7	I believe parents need to use physical punishment as a disciplinary method.				
8	I believe that parents have a right to discipline their children as they wish?				
9	The parents' use of physical punishment should be prevented by the law.				
10	Parents' who use severe physical punishment must be stopped by the law.				
11	Physical punishment on children is a type of child abuse				

19. Finally, is there any thing else you want to say regarding any aspects of child physical punishment in Saudi Arabia?

....
....
....
....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix (B) Young peoples' questionnaire

Dear student,

My name is Nashmi Alanazi and I am a PhD student in School of Applied Social Sciences at Durham University, UK, under the supervision of Simon Hackett and Helen Charnley. I am inviting you to participate in my study which is investigating the use of physical punishment on children in Saudi Arabia. Participants in the study are a number of parents and young people from Riyadh city. This study will help us to better understand the use of this method by parents.

I am interested in your views, as a young person, about physical punishment and whether this is a method of punishment that you have received as a child. As a result, I would be extremely grateful if you could complete this questionnaire.

Your responses will be treated as anonymous and will be used for the study purposes only. To maintain complete anonymity and confidentiality, please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire. Once you have filled in the questionnaire, please put it in the envelope provided to ensure that no one can observe it except the researcher.

The questionnaire should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you, in anticipation for your participation.

Yours Sincerely
Nashmi Alanazi

Please read the following statements and select one of them:

☐ I would like to participate in this questionnaire and I understand that my participation is a voluntarily.

☐ I do not wish to participate in this questionnaire.

Initial (optional) ....

Young People's Questionnaire

Reminder: before you start reading the questionnaire, please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Please just select the choice which is most appropriate to you. Remember that the questionnaire is 100% anonymous and that you will not be identifiable to anyone as a result of your participation.

In this questionnaire the term "physical punishment of children" refers to practices that parents use on their children such as slapping, spanking, beating with an object such stick etc.

For each question please tick the box that is most appropriate for you.
Please tick(√) only one box for each question

A) Personal Information:

Please tell me about yourself.

1. What is your gender?
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female

2. How old are you now?
   - ☐ Less than 17 years old
   - ☐ 17-21 years old
   - ☐ More than 21 years old

B) Family Information:

Please tell me about your family.

3. What was the highest level of education that your father has achieved?
   - ☐ Less than elementary
   - ☐ Secondary school or less
   - ☐ University degree or more

4. Is your father in employment?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No

5. What was the highest level of education that your mother has achieved?
   - ☐ Less than elementary
   - ☐ Secondary school or less
   - ☐ University degree or more

6. Is your mother in employment?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. What is your family average monthly income?
- ☐ Less than 3000 SR
- ☐ 3000-5000 SR
- ☐ 5000-10000 SR
- ☐ More than 10000 SR
- ☐ I don't know

8. Do you have sibling?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. How many siblings do you have?
- ☐ 1-3
- ☐ 4-7
- ☐ 8-11
- ☐ More than 11

C) Experience of physical punishment:

10. When you were a child, did your mother or father ever punish you physically such as slap, spank, or hit you with an object etc?

☐ Yes ☐ No (If No please go to question #18)

11. How old were you when you were first physically punished by your mother/father?
☐ 5 years or less
☐ 6-10 years
☐ 11-17 years
☐ Older than 17 years

* Types of physical punishment:

12. When you were a child, did you experience one or more of the following types of punishment by your parents? (Please tick(√) all categories that apply)

#	Physical punishment type	Never	Once or twice	More than twice
1	Hitting in the face			
2	Spanking with an open hand			
3	Pulling your hair			
4	Shoving roughly against the wall			
5	Twisting your ear			
6	Pinching			
7	Whipping with a scourge, electrical cord or hose			
8	Burning with a matches or cigaret			
9	Biting			
10	Beating with an object such as a slipper, wooden spoon, or hairbrush.			
11	Beating with an object such as piece of wood (stick) or pipe.			
12	Washing your mouth out with soap			
13	Placing hot pepper sauce in your mouth			
14	Isolating in a confined space such as bathroom			
15	Denying use of the toilet			
16	Denying access to needed water, food or sleep			

13. Others (please specify)...
....

* Reactions to misbehaviour

14. When you were a child, were you physically punished when you did one or more of the following? (Please tick(√) all categories that apply)

#		Never punished	Rarely punished	Always punished	I never did
1	Not washing hands before eating				
2	Obtaining low marks at school				
3	Disobedience				
4	Playing with dangerous objects				
5	Fighting others				
6	Lying				
7	Using bad language				
8	Damaging home property				
9	Making a mess at home such as being untidy				
10	Making too much noise at home				
11	Smoking				
12	Stealing				
13	Using drugs or other illicit substances.				

15. Others (please specify)...
....

* Severity of outcomes of physical punishment:

16. When you were a child, were you ever exposed to one or more of the physical punishment levels? (Please tick(√) all categories that apply)

#	Physical punishment level	Never	Once or twice	More than twice
1	A smack that left no mark on your skin			
2	A smack that left red mark			
3	A smack that left bruise on you for a few days			
4	Physical punishment that left marks and bruises for more than a few days but did not cause a permanent injury			
5	A punishment that caused an injury that needed medical attention			
6	Beating on your head or neck			

17. Do you believe that your parent abused you when he or she punished you physically?
☐ I strongly agree
☐ I agree
☐ I disagree
☐ I strongly disagree

18. In your family, who uses physical punishment on the children more often?
☐ My father
☐ My mother
☐ TO same degree
☐ No one
☐ Others (please specify.......................................)

19. In your family, who is usually physically punished more often?
☐ Boys
☐ Girls
☐ To same degree
☐ No one

C) Attitude and beliefs toward physical punishment:

20. Please indicate wither you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(Please tick(√) the category that best describes your view)

#	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	It is Sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good hard spanking or smacking?				
2	Physical punishment is not an effective way of disciplining a child.				
3	Physical punishment is a useful method of discipline if a child naughty.				
4	Physical punishment of children is never acceptable.				
5	Physical punishment is not harmful to children.				
6	Physical punishment is an acceptable action by parents.				
7	I believe parents need to use physical punishment as a disciplinary method.				
8	I believe that parents have a right to discipline their children as they wish?				
9	The parents' use of physical punishment should be prevented by the law.				
10	Parents' who use severe physical punishment must be stopped by the law.				
11	Physical punishment on children is a type of child abuse				

21. Finally, is there any thing else you want to say regarding any aspects of child physical punishment in Saudi Arabia?

....

....

....

....

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Appendix (C) Piloting study questionnaire

Pilot test of the questionnaire

First of all, we would like to thank you for you're reviewing of the questionnaire. Also, we would be highly grateful if you could provide us with your comments regard the questionnaire.

1) Do you think all questions were clear and easy to understand?

☐ Yes
☐ No (If No please write the questions numbers that you do not understand or were unclear)

....

....

3) Was there any phrase or expression that you were not familiar with or you did not under stand in the questionnaire?

☐ Yes (If yes please could you provide us with the phrase or expression)
☐ No

....

....

4) Do you think the questionnaire length was reasonable?

☐ Yes
☐ No

2) What was the approximate time that you spend to answer the questionnaire?

☐ Less than 10 minutes
☐ Approximately 10 minutes
☐ More than 10 minutes (please specify ....)

5) Do you have any suggestions or comments on the questionnaire?

....

....

....

....

....

(If you have more please use the paper back)

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire