

THESIS

AT WHAT POINT DOES A BEHAVIOR BECOME CHILD ABUSE? A CLOSER LOOK AT
THE CHRONICITY OF CHILD MALTREATMENT AND CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

AT WHAT POINT DOES A BEHAVIOR BECOME CHILD ABUSE? A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CHRONICITY OF CHILD MALTREATMENT AND CULTURE

Child abuse/maltreatment is an issue that faces many families in the United States. One element of debate regarding the lack of unity in defining child abuse, is the chronicity of the abusive behaviors, or the duration/frequency of child abuse within the life of a child. A major factor that affects chronicity is the culture/ethnicity of a person, as child-rearing behaviors have been found to differ between various cultures. The current study aims to answer three main research questions: how often does a behavior have occur for someone to perceive it as abusive, do ethnic differences exist when looking at the perceptions of different types of abuse, and what demographic characteristics are most associated with the perceptions of each category of abuse. I will examine how often each behavior must occur before it is perceived as child abuse; using an original survey of three types of abusive behaviors: physical, sexual, and psychological. Results indicate that for physical and sexual abuse, all behaviors had a majority percentage for the choice “Once”; while for psychological abuse, all but two behaviors had majority percentage for the response “Once”., Findings also showed that the group differences for ethnicity were not significant across any of the abuse types. Lastly, results of a multilevel model using all variables showed that the most significant demographic factors for physical abuse ratings were ethnicity, gender, and previous experience of physical and sexual abuse; for sexual abuse ratings was gender; and for psychological abuse ratings were gender, ethnicity, and age.

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INTRODUCTION

Child maltreatment, consisting of child abuse and neglect, is a major problem across the world. In the U.S., the Children's Bureau at the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) reports that in 2021, an estimated 588,229 children were victims of child maltreatment with 1,478 children dying from this abuse (USDHHS, 2023). Although the number of maltreatment victims recorded was at the lowest point in the past five years (Administration for Children and Families, 2023), the number of deaths rose to 1,770 children in 2020 (USDHHS, 2022). Child maltreatment remains an ongoing issue that is facing many children and families.

An obstacle facing the process of dealing with child maltreatment is the lack of unity and clarity in defining the concept (Donisch & Briggs, 2022). Child maltreatment can be defined as any act of commission or act of omission that results in the threat of harm, actual harm, or potential harm to a child or adolescent (Leeb et al., 2008). While acts of omission constitute the concept of neglect, this study will focus on acts of commission which constitute the concept of child abuse. Child abuse consists of three main types, psychological, physical, and sexual, and can be studied through a focus on the chronicity of the abuse incident (Donisch & Briggs, 2022).

Types of Child Abuse

Child Physical Abuse

Child physical abuse is the intentional use of physical force against a child that has the potential of resulting in, or results in the physical injury of the child (Leeb et al., 2008). Examples of acts that are physically abusive are hitting, beating, smothering, burning, scalding, shoving, biting, stabbing, punching, pushing, kicking, throwing, strangling/choking, dropping,

pulling, dragging, shaking, or poisoning. In 2021, an estimated 93,907 children were victims of physical abuse with 633 fatalities resulting from this type of abuse (USDHHS, 2023).

Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is defined as any attempted or completed sexual contact, sexual act, or exploitation of a child by a caregiver (Leeb et al., 2008). Sexual acts involve penetration between the vulva, penis, mouth, or anus of a child and another individual. Sexual contact consists of intentional touching of the groin, genitalia, inner thigh, buttocks, anus, or breast of the child. Noncontact sexual abuse differs from sexual contact in that it does not include physical contact that is sexual. Instances of noncontact sexual abuse include acts that expose the child to sexual activity (e.g., voyeurism, intentional exhibitionism, or pornography), filming in a sexual manner, sexual harassment, or prostitution (Leeb et al., 2008). There were an estimated 37,361 victims of child sexual abuse in the year 2021 resulting in 12 fatalities (USDHHS, 2023).

Child Psychological Abuse

Child psychological abuse is any intentional act of commission by a caretaker towards a child that conveys the sense that the child is unloved, unwanted, endangered, worthless, flawed, or valued only to meet the needs of another (Leeb et al., 2008). Behaviors that constitute child psychological abuse include corrupting, degrading, intimidating, blaming, exploiting, confining, isolating, terrorizing, belittling, restraining, or spurning the child. In 2021, there were an estimated 59,328 children who were victims of psychological maltreatment/abuse, with 35 children dying to this maltreatment type (USDHHS, 2023).

Parental alienation. A concept that falls under psychological abuse and will be a key element in this study is parental alienation. Parental alienation (PA) is an outcome associated with coercively controlling abuse within the family system. In this family dynamic, a more

powerful, abusive parent uses the child as a weapon against their other parent. To accomplish this weaponization, the abusive (aka, alienating parent) manipulates the child using psychologically abusive tactics (known as parental alienating behaviors) to align the child with them and turn against their other parent. When the child becomes alienated from the parent they have turned against, they reject them for illogical, untrue, or exaggerated reasons (Bernet et al., 2016; Harman et al., 2018; 2021). Approximately 3.8 million children in the U.S. are moderately to severely alienated from one of their parents (Harman et al., 2019).

Culture and Child Abuse

Culture is a set of practices, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes, that has a strong impact on the child-rearing environment (Massarweh & Kosher, 2023). Child-rearing behaviors and ideologies have been found to vary across different cultures (e.g., Bornstein, 2012; Gray & Cosgrove, 1985; Mosby et al., 1999; Korbin et al., 1998). Culture is a major factor in the understanding of child abuse and hopeful reduction of child abuse incidents in the future; creating the sense that research on child abuse should involve culture and ethnicity at its core (Elliot & Urquiza, 2006).

A major reason that the relationship between culture and child abuse has not been portrayed clearly by research is the tendency of research on child maltreatment to focus on individual characteristics and differences, rather than effects caused by culture (Nadan et al., 2015) and ethnicity. Nadan et al. (2015) proposes a possible solution to this issue by stating that a helpful way to view the effects of culture on child maltreatment is to keep in mind the intersectionality between culture and individual characteristics; such as one's race and socioeconomic status.

This sentiment is echoed by Korbin (2002), who states that culture and ethnicity should not be looked at independently pertaining to child maltreatment because it can be difficult to separate the effects of culture and ethnicity versus the effects that socioeconomic status, such as education and income, can have (Cyr et al., 2013; Korbin, 2002). Alink et al. (2013) found that the risk of child maltreatment for immigrants in the Netherlands changed when education level and parenthood were considered alongside culture, rather than only culture and ethnicity. This finding supports the fact that other risk factors should be observed when discussing culture and ethnicity, along with child maltreatment and child abuse (Alink et al., 2013). Korbin (2002) argues that a possible remedy to this predicament could be to measure culture and ethnicity on a smaller scale, such as the community or neighborhood level where culture and ethnicity are more contextualized regarding other risk factors. This measurement approach would allow for both culture and socioeconomic status to be considered at the same time.

While the current study will mostly focus on the ethnicity of a person and its effect on their perception and recognition of child abuse behaviors, I will also examine how other demographic factors such as age and educational level may play a role in perceptions. socioeconomic status.

Ethnic Perceptions of Child Abuse

Research on child abuse and ethnicity has resulted in a variety of findings, which have at times been in conflict with each other (Elliot & Urquiza, 2006). The following section will discuss examples of findings that have been made regarding the perception of child psychological abuse, child physical abuse, and child sexual abuse by children and adults of different ethnic or cultural groups.

Child Physical Abuse. Historically, incidents of child physical abuse have been found in higher prevalence among African Americans and Asian Americans, when compared to Latino, mixed-race children, or non-Latino Whites (Elliot & Urquiza, 2006; USDHHS, 2005). A reason for this difference could be that many Asian Americans, such as Chinese Americans, believe in the idea that spanking is an effective method of punishment that teaches self-control and shows love (Rapoza et al., 2010; Gray & Cosgrove, 1985). Similarly, African Americans have also been found to believe that physical punishment is acceptable and effective, due to the idea that physical punishment can prevent future bad behavior, which minimizes the probability of further punishment that could be deemed excessive (Rapoza et al., 2010; Mosby et al., 1999). A study on Latina mothers and non-Latina White mothers found that Latina mothers used physical discipline more than non-Latina White mothers; they also found that the Latina mothers that had a high socioeconomic status (SES) reported a higher frequency of physical discipline than those who were lower SES (Cardona et al., 2000). From the ethnic perspective of children, Jewish children have reported physical abuse to be more severe than Arab children and report physical abuse to be the most severe form of abuse because it could lead to marks on the body that could create a feeling of shame for the child since they put a large emphasis on the perception of their appearance by others (Massarweh & Kosher, 2023).

Child Sexual Abuse. Ethnic perceptions of child sexual abuse (CSA) are typically aligned across various cultures, such as the views of African Americans and Latinos regarding CSA (Fontes et al., 2001). However, studies have found lower levels of CSA within Asian American communities in the United States when compared to Non-Latino Whites (Elliot & Urquiza, 2006; Futa et al., 2001; Urquiza & Goodlin-Jones, 1994). Possible reasons for this differentiation could be that some Asian groups frown upon sexual activity at a young age due to

their cultural norms, or that they are more reluctant to report or disclose CSA (Elliot & Urquiza, 2006; Chen et al., 2004; Futa et al., 2001).

Child Psychological Abuse. A study conducted by Massarweh and Kosher (2023) found that Jewish children perceived emotional abuse as a more severe form of abuse than Arab children, who perceived neglect as more severe than the other forms of abuse. Although this study will not look at neglect, there are still similarities between certain forms of neglect and child psychological abuse. African Americans have also been found to perceive behavior that constitute emotional neglect or lack of supervision as more abusive than Hispanics or Whites (Rapoza et al., 2010; Korbin et al., 2000).

Culture and Public Policy

Culture, via economic and social trends or events, influences or directly affects the creation of public/social policy, leading many researchers to analyze the impact of policy through a cultural lens when deciding to maintain or reform certain social policies (van Oorschot, 2007). Case studies and research have also found that it is important to understand the cultural context of an area or location when creating policy, so that it will be culturally impactful for the people of those regions (Torr, 2009; Robinson et al., 2008).

As mentioned earlier, culture can affect how child abuse is viewed or perceived, which can be a driving force when policy is created regarding situations of child maltreatment. These laws or policies could put more of an emphasis on certain abusive behaviors, prompting agencies such as police or child protective services (CPS) to act more urgently. The cultural perception of abusive behavior is important to all other administrative systems such as law or investigative processes.

Typically, these policies or laws reflect the dominant culture of the country, which can affect minority or immigrant groups in different ways. An example of this within the United States is how CSA is viewed within the Hmong community, originally from Vietnam, in the various parts of the United States where they reside. Chong Her (2013) states that CSA is often disregarded or not reported in Hmong communities within the US, and she conducted a study to explore the perceptions of CSA within the community. She found that members of the Hmong community in Sacramento felt that the community was not receptive towards those who had been victims of CSA and did not have any way of supporting them. The main reason for this response is that the perception of CSA in Vietnam is different than the United States, so many people who are perpetrators of this form of abuse do not see their actions constituting CSA (Her, 2013). It has also been found that lower education levels have led to this lack of awareness within the community, so further education on relevant topics could help bring more awareness to these problems (Thao, 2019). This example shows how important cultural perceptions of child abuse are, and how the ethnic backgrounds of people can influence their perceptions of abusive behaviors.

Perceptions of Child Abuse

Perception is the process a person uses to organize and interpret sensations that they face in the world to ultimately create a meaningful life experience (Lindsay & Norman, 1977). A greater understanding of how different people, beyond their cultural backgrounds, perceive child abuse, in order to help create a more unified definition of child abuse/maltreatment and ultimately lead to more advanced forms of intervention and an overall reduction of abuse incidents (Bruck et al., 2022; Lev-Wiesel et al., 2020).

An example of how perceptions of abuse can differ based on the person and their identities is how parents and children can sometimes view abusive behaviors differently. Rachel Lev-Wiesel and colleagues (2020) aimed to investigate the differences in the perceptions of parents and children pertaining to child maltreatment and found two effects regarding CSA and child psychological abuse. While parents perceived CSA to be more severe than how the children perceived it, children perceived child psychological or emotional abuse as more severe than the parents did. A possible reason for these differences can be the intersection between age and technological advancement through internet use (Lev-Wiesel et al., 2020), as children/youth use the internet for far more purposes than most adults do; with tasks such as creating social relationships and communicating with others through group meetings, as well as other opportunities granted to them via access to the internet (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Mesh & Beker, 2010). Issues such as cyberbullying and online harassment are more prevalent due to the rise in use of technology, which could explain why children perceive psychological abuse to be more severe than CSA in this study. A separate reason for this conclusion could also be that in cases of child abuse, the child is the victim while the adults are the perpetrator, leading to a difference of positionality regarding situations of child abuse.

While studies such as Lev Wiesel et al. (2020) have focused on age and generation gap as factors that can affect the perception of child abuse/maltreatment, the current study will focus on the effect that a person's culture can have on their perceptions and recognition of child abuse among an adult sample. For this study, cultural background will be represented by the race/ethnicity self-reported by participants, but it is important to note that factors such as racial/ethnic identity and acculturation may better represent culture than a census category.

Issues with the Definition and Measurement of Child Abuse, and its Perception

The definition of child maltreatment or abuse has been a debated topic within the scientific community. The main reason for this debate lies in the fact that the definition has been influenced by adults who had been maltreated as children, using their experiences and perspectives to form the definition (Kosher & Ben-Arieh, 2020; Herrenkohl, 2005; Cicchetti & Manly, 2001) with no account given to the perceptions or perspective of abused children themselves. Hanita Kosher and Asher Ben-Arieh (2020) argue that the participation and perspective of children should be included to complement those of adults to create a more unified definition of child maltreatment. They explain that children who were victims of child abuse have not been seen as a viable source of information regarding child maltreatment, and that fixing this issue could lead to a better effort in identifying and treating children who are victims of child maltreatment (Kosher & Ben-Arieh, 2020).

Another issue regarding the identification of child abuse is how Child Protective Services (CPS) might perceive it, and if that perception is different than those of the victim(s). CPS typically depend on a worker analyzing the incident and deciding on its validity and severity; which could lead to issues as the investigator could mis-identify the incident or prioritize the more severe forms of maltreatment (Knight et al., 2000). An example of this being the difficulty in determining child psychological abuse since the effects are not visible (Tabone, 2019). Other relevant issues could be the formation of recall bias when adults report incidents in their past (Fergusson et al., 2000), and that many incidents are never reported (MacMillan et al., 2003; Cicchetti & Carlson, 1989). Jiyoung Tabone (2019) found that adolescent self-reports regarding predicting risk factors of child abuse were different than CPS reports; stating that a combination of self-reports and investigative reports should be used to effectively identify and understand the

risk behaviors of child maltreatment. As mentioned earlier, one factor that can impact the perception of child abuse by a person is their culture of origin.

Measurement Factors

Most studies investigating child maltreatment have focused on the severity of the abuse behavior (e.g., Knight et al., 2000; Erlanger et al., 2022), however the operationalization of severity has varied across such studies. For example, some scientists have examined the intensity of the act in the moment (e.g., Sprang et al., 2005), or consequences of the behavior (e.g., Currie & Spatz Widom, 2010). For the current study, we examined chronicity of the behavior as an indication of severity, similar to how Rapoza et al. (2010) assessed severity through the context of sibling abuse. We chose to do this because while a single perpetration of physical abuse can have lasting visual marks and residual pain (e.g., internal bruising), psychologically abusive behaviors are not as obvious, and may be perceived by lay persons as needing to occur more frequently than physical abuse to be considered abusive. Chronicity can be defined as the duration of a specific experience of maltreatment, the frequency of maltreatment experiences in a child's life, or the proportion of the child's life that a type of maltreatment has occurred (Gabielli et al., 2017). This study will measure chronicity by investigating how many times a specific behavior has to occur for it to be recognized as child abuse. As previously stated, a variable that can affect this recognition can be how a person perceives an act of child abuse.

The Current Study

The current study is inspired by a study done by Rapoza and colleagues (2010) that examined ethnic perspectives regarding sibling abuse in the United States. Using an open-ended survey, respondents rated examples of sibling abuse as mild, moderate, or extreme based on the chronicity of the behavior (e.g., everyday occurrence versus one time). The authors compared

results across respondents from different ethnic groups: European American, South Asian American, Asian Pacific American, Native American, Latino/Hispanic, and African American. One of their findings was that Asian Pacific Americans within the sample viewed physical aggression as mild sibling abuse when compared to the other ethnic groups that rated physical aggression as more severe (Rapoza et al., 2010). The current study will focus on perceptions of child abuse (rather than sibling abuse) across four of the largest ethnic groups in the U.S.: White, African American, Asian American, and Hispanic/Latino (United States Census Bureau, 2023). The behaviors that will be included in the study are the three types that have been previously mentioned: child sexual abuse, child physical abuse, and child psychological abuse. Due to there not being a large portfolio of research on the perception of chronicity of child abuse and its intersection with culture, no formal hypothesis was made regarding the perceptions of the different cultural groups. However, this study will attempt to address three research questions:

- 1) How often does an abusive behavior need to occur for someone to perceive it as being abusive?
- 2) Are there ethnic differences in these perceptions among different ethnic groups in the U.S. when looking at the different types of abuse? Similarly, are there differences for other demographic variables?
- 3) What demographic characteristics are most associated with the perception of each type or category of abuse?

METHOD

Participants

This pre-registered study contained 786 adult participants; the sample size was calculated using the summary-statistics-based power analysis for multilevel modeling (Murayama et al., 2022). This power analysis was aided by the use of prior research on ethnic perceptions of abuse (Rapoza et al., 2010), and was calculated via the *pwr* package within *R* (Champely, 2020). All participants were recruited by the Prolific recruitment system, and completed/submitted the survey online using prolific.com, after which they were provided compensation for completion of the survey. The method of this study (including recruitment, compensation, etc.) was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Colorado State University.

The average age of the participants ($N = 786$) was 38.08 years ($SD = 12.69$), and the gender distribution of the participants was primarily female ($n = 483$; 61.5%), followed by male ($n = 275$; 35.0%), non-binary/non-conforming ($n = 23$; 2.9%), and transgender ($n = 5$; 0.6%). Regarding the ethnicity of the participants, the ethnicity distribution reflected that of the U.S. (United States Census Bureau, 2023), with the majority being Non-Latino White/European American ($n = 511$; 65.0%), followed by African American ($n = 93$; 11.8%), Asian American ($n = 90$; 11.4%), Hispanic/Latino American ($n = 69$; 8.8%), Multiethnic ($n = 14$; 1.8%), Native American/Indigenous ($n = 6$; 0.8%), and other ($n = 3$; 0.4%). Other demographic variables such as highest year of high school completed, income range, etc. are shown in Table 1.

Because of small group sizes for some of the demographic factors, some of the demographic groups were combined together for the data analysis portion. These groups included the combination of “non-binary/non-conforming” ($n = 23$) and “transgender” ($n = 5$)

participants for gender, the combination of high school graduates ($n = 236$) and less than high school completion ($n = 4$) to create the group of “high school graduate or less” for education level (highest year of school completed), and the combination of multiethnic participants ($n = 14$), Native American/Indigenous participants ($n = 6$), and those who replied not applicable ($n = 3$) to form the “Other” group for ethnicity.

Measures

Each participant completed an online anonymous survey (shown in Appendix A). The first section of the survey assessed the demographic characteristics of the participants, including their age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status (SES), if they are a parent (and if the children were minors or now adults) and if they have personally experienced child abuse (sexual, psychological, or physical).

The second section of the survey consisted of three questionnaire matrices presenting specific behaviors that characterize each type of child abuse. The first matrix consisted of descriptions of 18 behaviors constituting physical abuse (e.g., slapping a child). The second matrix included descriptions of 29 psychologically abusive behaviors (including parental alienating behaviors; e.g., terrorizing), and the third matrix focused on descriptions of seven sexual abuse behaviors (e.g., voyeurism). For each matrix, the participant was shown a question asking, “In your opinion, how often does each of the following parental behaviors have to occur to be considered child abuse (within the past year)?”, with the answer choices being “never abusive”, “once”, “two to five times”, “six to ten times”, and “ten to twenty times”.

After each matrix, there was an additional question that asked the participants, “You were asked in this survey how often these behaviors need to occur before you would consider it abusive to a child. Aside from the frequency of behaviors, what else would you want to know

about the behavior to consider it abusive?” This question was included to investigate what other factors the participants think of when viewing child abuse behaviors, other than frequency.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

Frequency tables were used to assess how often each abusive behavior has to occur before it is perceived as an abusive behavior, with a separate table made for each type of abuse consisting of their unique abusive behaviors. The behaviors for standard psychological abuse and parental alienation were separated to allow for more concise analysis regarding the behaviors and the relationships between them.

Physical Abuse

All eighteen of the behaviors for physical abuse were rated by the majority of the respondents as only needing to occur once to be considered abusive. The behavior rated almost unanimously as only needing to occur once to be abusive was *Poisoning* and *Strangling/Choking* (98.6%). The behaviors with the most variable responses regarding only needing to occur once to be considered abusive were *Pushing* (68.1%), followed by *Shoving* (81.5%). These results indicate that most people view physically abusive behaviors to be abusive after a single incident. The full frequency table for physical abuse can be seen in Table 2.

Sexual Abuse

For all seven sexual abuse behaviors, the responses for each behavior have the majority percentage for “Once”. The highest value for that response being for *Sexual Contact*, which had 97.1% ($n = 763$) of participants responding “Once” and the lowest being 93.3% ($n = 733$) of respondents selecting that response for *Pornography*. With the range of percentages regarding the responses being so narrow, it shows that almost all people view all sexual abusive behaviors as abusive after one occurrence. Full frequency table for sexual abuse is shown in Table 4.

Psychological Abuse

Like the physical abuse behaviors, the majority of the behaviors that constitute psychological abuse were rated by most respondents as only needing to occur once to be considered abusive. *Terrorizing* was endorsed by the largest percentage of participants as only needing to occur once to be abusive (87.8%), followed by *Corrupting* (81.4%), *Exploiting* (76.9%) and *Degrading* (76.6%). Two behaviors had “once” endorsed by less than half the participants: *Confining* and *Blaming*. These behaviors were rated by most participants as needing to occur two or more times before it was considered abusive (see Table 3). These results demonstrate that responses towards psychologically abusive behaviors are more varied than physically abusive behaviors and sexually abusive behaviors, even though most behaviors are still perceived to be abusive after a single incident. The full frequency table for psychological abuse can be seen in Table 3.

Parental Alienating Behaviors (PABs)

Similar to the other psychologically abusive behavior ratings, the ratings of abusiveness based on frequency of parental alienating behaviors were more varied than the sexual or physical abuse behaviors, however the majority of behaviors were still rated by most participants as only needing to occur once to be considered abusive. The PABs that were rated by most participants as only needing to occur once to be considered abusive were *Coaching child to file false abuse report with authorities* (93.5%) and *Withholding love from child if child communicates with other parent or expressed desire to be with them* (84%). Two PABs that had a below fifty percent response rate for “Once” were *Asking child if they like them more than other parent* (45.8%), and *Parent referring to other parent by first name when speaking to child*, (34.2%). These two behaviors were rated as being abusive by most participants if they occurred up to five times,

however (72.4% and 50% respectively). As previously mentioned, the results for the PABs are more varied in their ratings of frequency than the other types of abuse, which makes sense because PABs are just a form of psychological abuse (Kruk, 2018). The complete frequency table for PABs can be seen in Table 5.

Research Question 2

To address if there were any differences in ratings of abusive behaviors between the different ethnicities as well as the different levels of each demographic variable, the means for each group were calculated and compared using planned comparisons. As previously stated, for the data analysis portion of the study, groups with small sample sizes of six or fewer people were combined (e.g., Non-Binary/Non-Conforming and Transgender for gender) to help with statistical power. This process was achieved by summing all the items for each individual category of child abuse (via a number being assigned to each response choice; i.e., 1 = Once, 2 = Two to Five Times, 3 = Six to Ten Times, 4 = Eleven to Twenty Times, 5 = Never Abusive), and then taking the mean of the total number for each demographic group; for example, the total number for physical abuse items was taken for all participants, and then the mean for participants who identified as Hispanic/Latino American was calculated. The “Never Abusive” option was initially scored as the least abusive of the ordinally listed choices by the survey program, so the option was re-coded to be the most abusive of the options. The higher the group mean on this measure in comparison to the maximum total, the more often the behavior is perceived as needing to occur before it is perceived as abusive. The full table with all group means can be found in Table 6.

ANOVAs were conducted to compare means across multiple groups (shown in Table 7), followed by planned comparisons using the Tukey HSD test when there were main effects for

groups, and t-tests were conducted for variables with only two groups. For some of the results, the ANOVA test showed a significant difference, but the following planned comparisons (Tukey HSD test) did not show any differences. While this may seem strange, this can be explained by the fact the two statistical tests are based on different processes/questions and have different statistical sensitivity (i.e., the Tukey HSD test being adjusted to look at multiple pairwise comparisons). This means that the relevant populations may be significantly different from each other, but there is no conclusive evidence regarding which pairs.

Due to the number of tests that were done for research question 2 and 3, there was a higher possibility of Type 1 error occurring which could lead to false positives within the results. While the planned comparisons help with this issue due to the Tukey HSD being a conservative test, the p -value used for significance during the analysis was adjusted from $p < .05$ to $p < .001$.

Physical Abuse

For physical abuse, the maximum total score that could be rated by a participant was 90, meaning that the higher the score, the more often the individual perceived the behaviors as needing to occur before they would consider it abusive.

Ethnicity/Cultural Background. An ANOVA testing group differences indicates that ratings of physical abuse were not statistically significant across the different ethnic groups, $F(4,781) = 3.67, p = < .01, \eta^2 = .02$. The highest mean score was for the Asian American group ($M = 22.13; SD = 7.02$), meaning that Asian Americans in this sample rated physical abuse behaviors as needing to occur more often than the other ethnic groups to be perceived as abusive. Although not statistically different from each other, the lowest mean score was for the “Other” category, which was comprised of Multiethnic participants, those who responded not applicable, and those who identified as Native American/Indigenous ($M = 19.22; SD = 3.81$), with the

remaining from highest to lowest being African American ($M = 21.72$; $SD = 9.29$), Hispanic/Latino American ($M = 20.80$; $SD = 3.48$), and Non-Latino White/European American ($M = 20.12$; $SD = 5.01$).

Age and Gender. Regarding gender, an ANOVA shows that the groups differences were not statistically significant ($F(2,783) = 5.19$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .01$), with no significant difference being found for age either ($F(1,784) = 0.77$, $p = .38$, $\eta^2 = <.01$).

Socioeconomic Status. The differences between the education level groups means were not statistically significant ($F(4,781) = 2.05$, $p = .09$, $\eta^2 = .01$) with the same applying to income range ($F(4,781) = 4.19$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$).

Parenting. There was no statistically significant difference between participants who were a parent or not ($t(494.18) = -0.09$, $p = .93$; $d = 0.01$). There was also not a statistically significant difference in ratings depending on whether the participant's had minor children or not, $t(251.70) = -0.21$, $p = .83$; $d = 0.02$.

Past Experience of Abuse. The group differences for past experiences of abuse were not statistically significant for physical abuse, $t(343.85) = -1.48$, $p = .14$; $d = 0.12$, psychological abuse, $t(787.77) = 0.54$, $p = .59$; $d = 0.04$, or sexual abuse, $t(172.14) = -0.95$, $p = .34$; $d = 0.10$.

Sexual Abuse

The maximum total score for this type of abuse was 35, indicating that the higher the score on this index, the more the individual perceived the behavior as needing to occur before they would consider it abusive.

Ethnicity/Cultural Background. A main effect was not found for ethnic group differences on ratings of sexual abuse behaviors, $F(4,781) = 0.83$, $p = .51$, $\eta^2 = <.01$.

Age and Gender. An ANOVA found that there were no statistically significant differences in ratings of sexual abuse for gender, $F(2,783) = 2.41, p = .09, \eta^2 = <.01$ or age, $F(1,784) = 6.67, p = .01, \eta^2 = <.01$.

Socioeconomic Status. The differences in ratings of sexual abuse were not statistically significant between participants with different education levels, $F(4,781) = 2.32, p = .06, \eta^2 = .01$, or for income, $F(4,781) = 3.75, p = <.01, \eta^2 = .02$.

Parenting. Similarly, ratings of sexual abuse were not statistically significant between parents and non-parents ($t(605.55) = -1.06, p = .29; d = 0.08$) or whether the parent had minor or adult children ($t(240.88) = -0.53, p = .60; d = 0.06$).

Past Experience of Abuse. As with the other demographic groups, we did not find statistically significant differences on ratings of sexual abuse based on past experience with physical abuse ($t(410.91) = 0.34, p = .73; d = 0.03$), psychological abuse ($t(783.55) = 1.43, p = .15; d = 0.10$), or sexual abuse ($t(185.55) = -0.88, p = .38; d = 0.08$).

Psychological Abuse

For the category of psychological abuse, the maximum total score that a person could report was 50, with the higher score meaning more instances needed for the behavior to be perceived as abusive.

Ethnicity/Cultural Background. The differences in ratings for psychological abuse behavior were not statistically significant across ethnic groups, $F(4,781) = 2.72, p = .03, \eta^2 = .01$. The differences between groups were also relatively small for this category, as shown by the small effect size. The highest mean score was for Asian Americans ($M = 17.28; SD = 6.72$), with the lowest being for the Other category ($M = 14.30; SD = 5.27$), meaning that Asian Americans rated that psychologically abusive behaviors needed to occur slightly more often than other

ethnic groups to be rated as abusive, although these differences were not statistically significant. The remaining means were Hispanic/Latino American ($M = 16.09$; $SD = 5.71$), African American ($M = 15.30$; $SD = 7.62$), and Non-Latino White/European American ($M = 15.18$; $SD = 5.64$).

Age and Gender. We found statistically significant differences between gender groups on ratings of psychological abuse, $F(2,783) = 7.02$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Planned comparisons showed significant group differences between males and females ($p < .001$). The highest mean score for psychological abuse was for those who identified as male ($M = 16.59$; $SD = 6.84$), and the lowest was for those who identified as non-binary/non-conforming and transgender participants ($M = 14.82$; $SD = 5.53$). We did not find statistically significant differences in ratings of psychological abuse between age groupings, $F(1,784) = 1.27$, $p = .26$, $\eta^2 < .01$.

Socioeconomic Status. We did not find a main effect for ratings of psychological abuse by groups with different educational levels, ($F(4,781) = 2.06$, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .01$) or income $F(4,781) = 3.75$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$.

Parenting. We found no statistically significant differences between participants who were parents versus non-parents, ($t(667.19) = 1.48$, $p = .14$; $d = 0.11$), and for whether the parent's children were minors or not ($t(239.67) = -0.36$, $p = .72$; $d = 0.04$).

Past Experience of Abuse. We did not find statistically significant differences in ratings of psychological abuse based on past experience with physical abuse ($t(351.46) = 0.24$, $p = .81$; $d = 0.02$), psychological abuse ($t(751.98) = 0.60$, $p = .55$; $d = 0.04$), or sexual abuse ($t(188.69) = 0.14$, $p = .89$; $d = 0.01$).

Parental Alienating Behaviors (PABs)

For the items that corresponded to parental alienation (PA), the maximum score that could be obtained was 95, which, as with the other forms of abuse, means that the higher the score an individual had, the more the behaviors were perceived as needing to occur before they would consider them abusive.

Ethnicity/Cultural Background. An ANOVA found the group differences to not be statistically significant, $F(4,781) = 3.06, p = .02, \eta^2 = .02$.

Age and Gender. The results were not statistically significant for age ($F(1,784) = 0.07, p = .79, \eta^2 = <.01$) or gender ($F(2,783) = 5.31, p = <.01, \eta^2 = .01$).

Socioeconomic Status. An ANOVA showed no statistically significant differences for individuals in their ratings of parental alienating behaviors based in on their education level ($F(4,781) = 1.50, p = .20, \eta^2 = <.01$), or income ($F(4,781) = 1.88, p = .11, \eta^2 = <.01$).

Parenting. The differences across the groups were not statistically significant for the category of being a parent ($t(652.90) = 1.21, p = .23; d = 0.09$), and for age range ($t(218.99) = -0.18, p = .86; d = 0.02$).

Past Experience of Abuse. Similar to the other forms of abuse, the group differences for past experience of abuse were not significant for either physical abuse ($t(361.92) = 0.81, p = .42; d = 0.06$), psychological abuse ($t(749.30) = 1.14, p = .25; d = 0.08$), or sexual abuse ($t(202.22) = 1.14, p = .26; d = 0.10$).

Research Question 3

The association between the demographic variables and the perception of the different types of abuse was assessed using several multilevel models (MLM), to see which predictors were most associated with each type of abuse. The model included participants as the level 2

predictor, along with their demographic factors: age, ethnic group, SES via income range and highest year of education completed, gender, if the participants are parents, and if they had experienced the three types of child abuse. As ethnicity and gender are categorical variables, the analysis used African Americans and Females as the reference category for comparisons. The level 1 predictor was the category of abusive behaviors: psychological abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, and parental alienation behaviors. The chronicity of each abuse behavior was measured at level 2, and analyzed by regressing to the predictors in level 1. The full results for all multilevel models are shown in Table 8.

Physical Abuse

The significant associations with perceptions of physical abuse were with the variables of ethnicity and gender. For ethnicity, the African American group was used as the reference group ($B = 18.36; SE = 0.57, p < .001$), and there were significant negative associations shown by Non-Latino White/European Americans ($B = -1.42; SE = 0.33, p < .001$). This means that this group perceived that there needed to be fewer instances of the behaviors for them to be considered abusive as compared to African Americans. Regarding gender, females were used as the reference group in the model ($B = 18.36; SE = 0.57, p < .001$), and there was a significant positive association found between their perceptions and those of male respondents ($B = 1.40; SE = 0.22, p < .001$). This means that males indicated there needing to be more instances of the behaviors to perceive them as abusive than females. Other significant positive association were with previous experience of sexual abuse ($B = 0.98; SE = 0.29, p < .001$) and previous experience of physical abuse ($B = 0.97; SE = 0.29, p < .001$). These results indicate that for participants that had previously experienced physical or sexual abuse, more instances were

needed for them to report the behavior as abusive. The model accounted for 8.09% of variance at the level of the participants (level 2), and <.001% at the level of the types of abuse (level 1).

Sexual Abuse

There were statistically significant associations between perceptions of sexual abuse with gender. Females were the reference group for gender ($B = 6.20$; $SE = 0.35$, $p < .001$), and there was a significant positive association for males ($B = 0.71$; $SE = 0.14$, $p < .001$), meaning that males reported needing more instances of the behaviors than females to occur before they would consider them abusive. There were no significant negative associations between the predictors and perceptions of sexual abuse, showing that there were no demographic variables where there was an inverse relationship between the predictor variables and the need for more occurrences of the behavior to be abusive. The model accounted for 3.08% variance at level 2, and <.001% at level 1.

Psychological Abuse

For psychological abuse, the significant associations were with ethnicity and gender. African Americans were once again used as the reference group ($B = 9.41$; $SE = 0.52$, $p < .001$), and significant positive associations were found for Asian Americans ($B = 2.64$; $SE = 0.44$, $p < .001$) and Hispanic/Latino American participants ($B = 2.34$; $SE = 0.48$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that for psychological abuse behaviors, Asian and Hispanic Americans needed more instances than African Americans to consider the behaviors as being abusive. Females were used as the reference group for gender ($B = 9.41$; $SE = 0.52$, $p < .001$), and there was a significant positive association with males ($B = 2.36$; $SE = 0.23$, $p < .001$); meaning that males would need more instances than females to see the behavior as abusive. The other significant positive association was with age ($B = 0.05$; $SE = 0.01$, $p < .001$), showing that those who were of an

older age needed more instances of the behavior to perceive it as abusive than those who had not. Similar to sexual abuse, there were no significant negative associations. The MLM made for psychological abuse accounted for 8.96% of the variance at level 2, and <.001% at level 1.

Parental Alienating Behaviors (PABs)

The significant associations with perceptions of PABs were with gender and ethnicity. For ethnicity, the African American group was once again used as the reference group by the model ($B = 23.89$; $SE = 1.38$, $p < .05$), and there were significant positive associations shown by Hispanic/Latino Americans ($B = 5.42$; $SE = 1.13$, $p < .001$) and Asian Americans ($B = 4.09$; $SE = 1.05$, $p < .001$). This means that these groups needed more instances of the behaviors for them to be perceived as abusive when compared to African Americans, with Hispanic/Latino Americans showing the highest margin of increase from the mean. For gender, females were the reference group ($B = 23.89$; $SE = 1.38$, $p < .05$), and there was a positive association found with males ($B = 3.56$; $SE = 0.54$, $p < .001$). Once again, this means that males needed more instances of the behaviors to perceive them as abusive than females. There were no significant negative associations for perceptions of alienating behaviors. The MLM made for psychological abuse accounted for 47.70% of the variance at level 2, and <.001% at level 1.

Factors Other than Chronicity Regarding Perception

The final item on the survey, asked if there was anything else that the participant would like to know to consider a behavior abusive other than chronicity. The participants were given a blank space to respond, and could use as many words as they liked. The qualitative answers were grouped together based on similar themes or ideas by the primary researcher, and the frequencies of each answer for each type of abuse was calculated; the full results for this item are shown in Table 9.

Physical Abuse

Regarding physical abuse, the three most recurring answers were intention/cause of the behavior ($n = 290$; 38.4%), nothing/not applicable ($n = 252$; 33.3%), and severity of the abusive behavior ($n = 116$; 15.3%). While many participants felt that the chronicity of the behavior was enough to perceive it as abusive, many wanted to know the intention behind the action or if a separate incident had caused the behavior to occur.

Sexual Abuse

Responses for this question regarding sexual abuse were almost all nothing/not applicable ($n = 531$; 78.9%). This pattern matches up with the rest of the results, as sexual abuse behaviors were the most unanimous category when it came to the chronicity of the behavior; and the behaviors themselves were enough for most participants to decide the question of how often that behavior had to occur before they perceived it as abusive.

Psychological Abuse

For psychological abuse, the highest responses were nothing/not applicable ($n = 236$; 33.1%), intention/cause of behavior ($n = 191$; 26.8%), and context/more details needed ($n = 185$; 26.0%). Similar to physical abuse, many participants would like to also know about the intention behind the behaviors or the context of the incident, however, most responses were that there was nothing else that they would like to know when compared to the distribution of the responses for physical abuse.

DISCUSSION

Links between perceptions of child abuse and demographic variables, such as culture or ethnicity, have been cited throughout the research literature. The purpose of this study was to examine at what point specific behaviors became perceived as child abuse, and if those perceptions could be influenced by a person's demographic factors. We used a custom survey to examine these research questions by presenting examples of child physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (including parental alienating behaviors) for participants to rate how chronic the behavior needed to occur to be considered abusive. Other research in the field has focused solely on the severity of abusive behaviors, with many studies citing that the classification of abuse can be confusing in certain circumstances (e.g., Knight et al., 2000; Erlanger et al., 2022). This study is unique in the way that it assesses perceptions of abuse by examining the perceptions of the chronicity of abusive behaviors. While past research has used this approach to study ethnic perceptions of sibling abuse in the United States (Rapoza et al., 2010), there has not been research using this approach to study ethnic perceptions of other forms of child abuse.

Research Question 1

The first question that we looked at was how often each abusive behavior had to occur before being perceived as abusive. We found similar results across each type of abuse. For both physical and sexual abuse, all the behaviors had a majority percentage for the response choice "Once", meaning that the participants felt that one instance of the behavior would be enough to perceive it as abusive. For psychological abuse, all but two behaviors had a majority response of "Once"; with the same situation for parental alienating behaviors. Spilsbury and colleagues (2018) have also reported similar findings from a study that had parents list three abusive

behaviors at two time points, twenty years apart. The scholars did not find statistically significant differences in perceptions regarding types of abuse such as sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and bad behavior by parents.

Research Question 2

The second question that we examined was to see if there were any ethnic differences between the perceptions of each type of child abuse, and we assessed this by comparing average means for each ethnic group. There were no significant group differences for ethnicity when looking at all of the types and the effect sizes for all types of child abuse were all small, showing that perceptions regarding abuse are similar across different cultures and people; possibly showing that regarding chronicity, there is consensus across the sample regarding their definitions of child maltreatment.

For physical abuse, the group differences for ethnicity/cultural background were not statistically significant. We did find that Asian Americans reported these behaviors as needing to occur more frequently to be considered abusive than the other racial/ethnic groups (although the differences were negligible), which reflects other research reporting that Asian Americans rate physical punishment to be more acceptable than other ethnic groups (Elliot & Urquiza, 2006; Rapoza et al., 2010; Gray & Cosgrove, 1985). Previous research findings indicate that African Americans perceive physical abuse behaviors as being less abusive than other racial/ethnic groups (Elliot & Urquiza, 2006; Rapoza et al., 2010; Mosby et al., 1999), but the group's score was not statistically significant compared to other groups in this analysis.

For sexual abuse, the group differences for ethnicity were not statistically significant. As the group means were nearly identical for this category. This result shows that perceptions of sexual abuse behaviors across different ethnic communities have become more uniform than in

in the past (Her, 2013), and are becoming aligned with the majority of ethnic groups, such as African Americans and Latinos (Fontes et al., 2001). Fontes and colleagues (2001) found that there was no significant difference between perceptions of sexual abuse by different ethnic groups at that time, and this study supports this finding in the current year.

For psychological abuse, we also did not find significant differences between ethnic groups. However, we found that African Americans rated psychologically abusive behaviors as needing to occur less frequently than Hispanic/Latino Americans, but more frequently than Non-Latino White/European Americans. This finding is partially consistent with work published by other scholars, which found that African Americans view psychological/emotional abuse behaviors as more abusive than Hispanics and Whites (Rapoza et al., 2010; Korbin et al., 2000). We also found statistically significant differences based on gender: males needed to happen more often to be considered psychologically abusive.

Regarding parental alienating behaviors, no previous research has examined differences in perception of chronicity and abusiveness across different demographic groups. As with the other forms of abuse, we found no significant differences between ethnic groups; but found that Hispanic/Latino Americans rated the behaviors as needing to occur more often to be considered abusive than other ethnic groups. While these results may be due to many factors, one could be the perception of the parenting role and acceptable parenting behaviors being different among different ethnicities/cultures (Julian et al., 1994; Jambunathan et al., 2000). For example, Hispanic mothers were found to score higher on parental practices regarding discipline and lower on nurturing practices when compared to Anglo-American (European American) mothers (Cardona et al., 2000); this could lead to a different thought process when responding to the items.

Research Question 3

The third research question that we addressed was which demographic characteristics/variables are more strongly associated with each type of abuse ratings. To answer this question, we used multiple multilevel models with demographics as the predictors.

For perceptions of physical abuse, the most significant associations were with ethnicity and gender. As previously discussed, ethnicity has been associated with perceptions of physical abuse (e.g., Rapoza et al., 2010). While there have been no direct ties between gender and perceptions of physical abuse in the literature, past research has found that gender can influence physical abuse perceptions, such as the finding that abused girls rated mothers as being less caring than abused boys (Sunday et al., 2008). There were also significant positive associations with previous experience of physical and sexual abuse. Previous studies have found that having experienced physical abuse can predict/affect perceptions of physical abuse; because of the incident causing physical health symptoms as well as psychological symptoms such as depression, this can alter that person's perceptions of certain physically abusive behavior when compared to someone who has not experienced it in the past (Masci & Sanderson, 2017; Goldsmith et al., 2009). There have also been similar findings that experience of sexual abuse can also lead to negative outcomes in the future, such as health problems like alcohol use (Dube et al., 2005).

Similar to physical abuse, there were significant associations between the perceptions of sexual abuse behaviors with gender. While there has been research done on differences in perceptions when there is different gender roles involved in the incident of abuse (Maynard & Wiederman, 1997), there has been limited research that links gender and perceptions of sexual abuse. These results show that even though research has shown that perceptions regarding sexual

abuse behaviors are becoming more uniform across different demographic groups (e.g., Fontes et al., 2001), there are still associations between these perceptions and ethnicity.

For perceptions of psychological abuse, the most significant associations were with ethnicity, age, and gender. Similar to the last two types of abuse, ethnicity has been found to be associated with perceptions of psychological abuse (Rapoza et al., 2010), which these results support. Regarding age, there was no previous research that linked age with perceptions of psychological abuse, but could be an interesting relationship to examine with future work in the field. Regarding gender, we found that males needed more instances of a behavior for it to be considered abusive when compared to females; this can be supported by a previous finding in which females reported that certain psychological abuse behaviors would lead to more negative outcomes in the future when compared to males (Rogers & Follingstad, 2011).

The most significant associations with PA were ethnicity and gender. While there is no previous research on the relationship between perceptions on alienation and demographics, the behaviors describe very specific practices that perhaps only parents may have experience with. Given that participants often wanted to know more about the intent of the behavior to classify the behavior as abusive, it is likely that parents have more experiences with specific situations when such behaviors may be justified, resulting in their rating the behavior as needing to happen more often to indicate the harmful behaviors is intentional, and therefore abusive. Future research will need to explore this possibility to a greater extent.

Other Factors Regarding Perception

For all types of abuse, when asked what other factors the participants would like to know to determine if the behavior was abusive, most participants stated that they wanted to know more about the intention/cause of the abusive behavior or the context of the situation. To remedy this,

future research could use vignettes to explain scenarios before having participants respond regarding their perceptions. An example of this method is seen in a study done by Maynard and Wiederman (1997), where they showed eight vignettes to their participants before having them give their perceptions of the abuse occurring in the scenarios. However, the majority of responses for sexual abuse behaviors were that the participants required no additional information for their perception of the behaviors, showing that a knowledge of the context will most likely not impact the perceptions of sexual abuse behaviors.

Limitations

This study contributes to the mass literature regarding child maltreatment/abuse, and focuses solely on the chronicity of child abuse behaviors and assessing the differences in perceptions of chronicity across various demographic factors. One possible limitation of this study is the diversity of the participant ethnicities, with the majority being Non-Latino White/European Americans; although that specific distribution does follow a similar trend to the United States Census (United States Census Bureau, 2023). The overall sample size was determined using the summary-statistics-based power analysis for multilevel modeling method (Murayama et al., 2022), and the power analysis showed that the number of participants was enough to detect significant differences across groups, however the small effect sizes in our analyses indicates that there may not have been enough power to detect differences between demographic groups that had proportionately fewer individuals represented within them. We did consolidate smaller groups to minimize comparison groups and increase the smaller group's sample size, but future research should utilize purposive sampling techniques to make more proportionate comparison groups and better test for potential differences.

This study only examines the main effects of a variety of demographic groups that have been studied regarding their perceptions of child abuse, and intersectionality of these groups was not examined. Future research should examine intersectionality between demographics such as SES and ethnicity to better understand whether these matter in perceptions of abuse. As previously mentioned, SES is a vital factor to consider alongside culture when pertaining to child abuse (Cyr et al., 2013; Korbin, 2002), and a viable method to measure both factors could be to investigate on a smaller scale (e.g., specific neighborhood; Korbin, 2002).

Another limitation of the study is the possibility of Type 1 error due to the many comparisons that were done in the analysis. This issue was addressed by conducting planned comparisons on the results for research question 2 using a conservative measure (Tukey HSD), and by lowering the p -value for statistical significance to $p < .001$; this would help reduce the rate of type 1 error, but would lead to lower statistical power (Liu, 2022). Future research could run similar analyses in one model rather than multiple tests which increase the likelihood of type 1 error.

Conclusions

Overall, this study shows that a person's demographic characteristics and previous experience with abuse can impact their perception of abusive behaviors and incidents where child abuse occurs. As mentioned earlier, culture can directly impact public policy and legislation (van Oorschot, 2007); what certain cultures see as abusive, others may not, which could lead to issues when it comes to reporting abuse or creating law reform around it. An example of this would be communities/cultures where certain behaviors that constitute child abuse are unreported due to their perceptions of the behavior being different than other groups; this contrast in perception could lead to issues with legislation as well as investigations done by CPS.

With that being said, as previously stated, ethnicity is not the only factor that represents culture, so it would be important to keep in mind the role of other factors such as racial identity and acculturation that can be a part of an individuals' culture.

An issue within a CPS investigation could be the difference in perception of the CPS worker and the victim(s) of the abuse. The worker may not perceive the behavior the same as others, which could lead to mis-identification or mis-representation of the incident (Knight et al., 2000). Furthermore, as this study found, the experiences and background of a person can affect their perceptions of certain abusive behaviors and situations, meaning that perhaps the opinion of determination of a single worker may not be adequate to analyzing a case of child abuse. However, it is still important to note the essential role that these workers possess, as they are professionals who explore all possible explanations to help determine the appropriate solutions and interventions (Kruk & Harman, 2024). As previously mentioned, one solution could be to take into account the self-report of the victim(s) should be viewed alongside the report of the CPS worker(s) (Tabone, 2019).

Although the results of this study do demonstrate some differences between ethnicities regarding their perception of child abuse, we do not want the findings of this study to have an indirect effect where it is used to promote discrimination against any groups of people. There have been examples in the past where the findings of a study working with marginalized groups of people have inadvertently led to further stigmatization against those people (Gabbidon & Chenneville, 2021); this work should not be used to stigmatize or marginalize any groups that have been involved in this study.

Table 1*Demographic Statistics (N = 786)*

		Number (%)
Gender		
	Female	483 (61.5%)
	Male	275 (35.0%)
	Non-Binary/Non-Conforming	23 (2.9%)
	Transgender	5 (0.6%)
Age		
	Above 70	12 (1.5%)
	51-70	132 (16.8%)
	41-50	152 (19.3%)
	31-40	227 (28.9%)
	18-30	263 (33.5%)
Ethnicity/Cultural Background		
	Non-Latino White/European American	511 (65.0%)
	African American	93 (11.8%)
	Asian American	90 (11.4%)
	Hispanic/Latino American	69 (8.8%)
	Multiethnic	14 (1.8%)
	Native American/Indigenous	6 (0.8%)
	Other (N/A)	3 (0.4%)
Highest Year of School Completed		
	Post-Graduate Degree	126 (16.0%)
	Bachelor's Degree	307 (39.1%)
	Associate Degree	85 (10.8%)
	Trade School Certificate/Degree	28 (3.6%)
	High School Graduate	236 (30.0%)
	Less than High School Completion	4 (0.5%)
Income Range		
	Higher than \$200,000	36 (4.6%)
	\$100,000 to \$200,000	155 (19.7%)
	\$65,000 to \$99,999	201 (25.6%)
	\$30,000 to \$64,999	235 (29.9%)
	Less than \$30,000	159 (20.2%)
Participant is a Parent		
	No	454 (57.8%)
	Yes	332 (42.2%)
		Child Over 18
		108 (32.5%)
		Child Under 18
		224 (67.5%)
Experienced Child Abuse		
Physical Abuse		
	Yes	199 (25.3%)
	No	587 (74.7%)
Psychological/Emotional Abuse		
	Yes	331 (42.1%)
	No	455 (57.9%)
Sexual Abuse		

Yes
No

129 (16.4%)
657 (83.6%)

Table 2*Frequency Statistics for Chronicity of Physical Abuse Behaviors (N = 786)*

		Number (%)
Kicking	Eleven to Twenty Times	2 (0.3%)
	Six to Ten Times	7 (0.9%)
	Two to Five Times	58 (7.4%)
	Once	714 (90.8%)
	Never Abusive	5 (0.6%)
Shaking	Eleven to Twenty Times	9 (1.1%)
	Six to Ten Times	24 (3.0%)
	Two to Five Times	125 (16.0%)
	Once	622 (79.1%)
	Never Abusive	6 (0.8%)
Dragging	Eleven to Twenty Times	5 (0.6%)
	Six to Ten Times	17 (2.2%)
	Two to Five Times	56 (7.1%)
	Once	702 (89.3%)
	Never Abusive	6 (0.8%)
Hitting	Eleven to Twenty Times	15 (1.9%)
	Six to Ten Times	37 (4.7%)
	Two to Five Times	152 (19.3%)
	Once	571 (72.7%)
	Never Abusive	11 (1.4%)
Beating	Eleven to Twenty Times	5 (0.6%)
	Six to Ten Times	9 (1.1%)
	Two to Five Times	47 (6.0%)
	Once	719 (91.5%)
	Never Abusive	6 (0.8%)
Smothering	Eleven to Twenty Times	1 (0.1%)
	Six to Ten Times	2 (0.3%)
	Two to Five Times	7 (0.9%)
	Once	772 (98.2%)
	Never Abusive	4 (0.5%)
Pulling	Eleven to Twenty Times	4 (0.5%)
	Six to Ten Times	17 (2.2%)
	Two to Five Times	80 (10.2%)
	Once	675 (85.8%)
	Never Abusive	10 (1.3%)

		Number (%)
Burning	Eleven to Twenty Times	1 (0.1%)
	Six to Ten Times	0 (0.0%)
	Two to Five Times	6 (0.8%)
	Once	773 (98.3%)
	Never Abusive	6 (0.8%)
Scalding	Eleven to Twenty Times	0 (0.0%)
	Six to Ten Times	4 (0.5%)
	Two to Five Times	12 (1.5%)
	Once	765 (97.4%)
	Never Abusive	5 (0.6%)
Biting	Eleven to Twenty Times	1 (0.1%)
	Six to Ten Times	3 (0.4%)
	Two to Five Times	31 (3.9%)
	Once	746 (95.0%)
	Never Abusive	5 (0.6%)
Stabbing	Eleven to Twenty Times	2 (0.3%)
	Six to Ten Times	0 (0.0%)
	Two to Five Times	5 (0.6%)
	Once	774 (98.5%)
	Never Abusive	5 (0.6%)
Poisoning	Eleven to Twenty Times	0 (0.0%)
	Six to Ten Times	1 (0.1%)
	Two to Five Times	4 (0.5%)
	Once	775 (98.6%)
	Never Abusive	6 (0.8%)
Shoving	Eleven to Twenty Times	6 (0.8%)
	Six to Ten Times	22 (2.8%)
	Two to Five Times	111 (14.1%)
	Once	641 (81.5%)
	Never Abusive	6 (0.8%)
Pushing	Eleven to Twenty Times	11 (1.4%)
	Six to Ten Times	45 (5.7%)
	Two to Five Times	182 (23.15%)
	Once	535 (68.1%)
	Never Abusive	13 (1.65%)
Punching	Eleven to Twenty Times	1 (0.1%)
	Six to Ten Times	6 (0.8%)
	Two to Five Times	20 (2.5%)
	Once	755 (96.1%)
	Never Abusive	4 (0.5%)

		Number (%)
Throwing	Eleven to Twenty Times	3 (0.4%)
	Six to Ten Times	6 (0.8%)
	Two to Five Times	23 (2.9%)
	Once	748 (95.1%)
	Never Abusive	6 (0.8%)
Strangling/Choking	Eleven to Twenty Times	0 (0.0%)
	Six to Ten Times	0 (0.0%)
	Two to Five Times	4 (0.5%)
	Once	775 (98.6%)
	Never Abusive	7 (0.9%)
Dropping	Eleven to Twenty Times	1 (0.1%)
	Six to Ten Times	1 (0.1%)
	Two to Five Times	24 (3.1%)
	Once	753 (95.8%)
	Never Abusive	7 (0.9%)

Table 3*Frequency Statistics for Chronicity of Psychological/Emotional Abuse Behaviors (N = 786)*

		Number (%)
Blaming	Eleven to Twenty Times	29 (3.7%)
	Six to Ten Times	126 (16.0%)
	Two to Five Times	356 (45.3%)
	Once	248 (31.6%)
	Never Abusive	27 (3.4%)
Intimidating	Eleven to Twenty Times	22 (2.8%)
	Six to Ten Times	61 (7.8%)
	Two to Five Times	226 (28.8%)
	Once	457 (58.1%)
	Never Abusive	20 (2.5%)
Spurning	Eleven to Twenty Times	28 (3.5%)
	Six to Ten Times	65 (8.3%)
	Two to Five Times	219 (27.9%)
	Once	460 (58.5%)
	Never Abusive	14 (1.8%)
Exploiting	Eleven to Twenty Times	11 (1.4%)
	Six to Ten Times	27 (3.4%)
	Two to Five Times	137 (17.4%)
	Once	604 (76.9%)
	Never Abusive	7 (0.9%)
Terrorizing	Eleven to Twenty Times	3 (0.4%)
	Six to Ten Times	11 (1.4%)
	Two to Five Times	77 (9.8%)
	Once	690 (87.8%)
	Never Abusive	5 (0.6%)
Confining	Eleven to Twenty Times	49 (6.2%)
	Six to Ten Times	107 (13.6%)
	Two to Five Times	203 (25.8%)
	Once	370 (47.1%)
	Never Abusive	57 (7.3%)
Degrading	Eleven to Twenty Times	8 (1.0%)
	Six to Ten Times	32 (4.1%)
	Two to Five Times	134 (17.0%)
	Once	602 (76.6%)
	Never Abusive	10 (1.3%)

		Number (%)
Isolating	Eleven to Twenty Times	20 (2.5%)
	Six to Ten Times	61 (7.8%)
	Two to Five Times	189 (24.0%)
	Once	499 (63.5%)
	Never Abusive	17 (2.2%)
Corrupting	Eleven to Twenty Times	7 (0.9%)
	Six to Ten Times	26 (3.3%)
	Two to Five Times	96 (12.2%)
	Once	640 (81.4%)
	Never Abusive	17 (2.2%)
Belittling	Eleven to Twenty Times	22 (2.8%)
	Six to Ten Times	53 (6.7%)
	Two to Five Times	200 (25.5%)
	Once	499 (63.5%)
	Never Abusive	12 (1.5%)

Table 4*Frequency Statistics for Chronicity of Sexual Abuse Behaviors (N = 786)*

	Number (%)
Sexual Contact	
Eleven to Twenty Times	3 (0.4%)
Six to Ten Times	2 (0.3%)
Two to Five Times	9 (1.1%)
Once	763 (97.1%)
Never Abusive	9 (1.1%)
Voyeurism	
Eleven to Twenty Times	4 (0.5%)
Six to Ten Times	3 (0.4%)
Two to Five Times	14 (1.8%)
Once	750 (95.4%)
Never Abusive	15 (1.9%)
Pornography	
Eleven to Twenty Times	5 (0.6%)
Six to Ten Times	4 (0.5%)
Two to Five Times	24 (3.1%)
Once	733 (93.3%)
Never Abusive	20 (2.5%)
Exhibitionism	
Eleven to Twenty Times	3 (0.4%)
Six to Ten Times	3 (0.4%)
Two to Five Times	13 (1.65%)
Once	754 (95.9%)
Never Abusive	13 (1.65%)
Filming	
Eleven to Twenty Times	3 (0.4%)
Six to Ten Times	2 (0.3%)
Two to Five Times	8 (1.0%)
Once	762 (96.9%)
Never Abusive	11 (1.4%)
Sexual Harassment	
Eleven to Twenty Times	3 (0.4%)
Six to Ten Times	2 (0.3%)
Two to Five Times	12 (1.5%)
Once	758 (96.4%)
Never Abusive	11 (1.4%)
Prostitution	
Eleven to Twenty Times	3 (0.4%)
Six to Ten Times	3 (0.4%)
Two to Five Times	5 (0.6%)
Once	758 (96.4%)
Never Abusive	17 (2.2%)

Table 5*Frequency Statistics for Chronicity of Parental Alienation Behaviors (N = 786)*

	Number (%)
Asking Child if They Like Them More than Other Parent	
Eleven to Twenty Times	41 (5.2%)
Six to Ten Times	81 (10.3%)
Two to Five Times	209 (26.6%)
Once	360 (45.8%)
Never Abusive	95 (12.1%)
Encouraging Child to Spend Less Time with Other Parent	
Eleven to Twenty Times	28 (3.6%)
Six to Ten Times	74 (9.4%)
Two to Five Times	199 (25.3%)
Once	440 (56.0%)
Never Abusive	45 (5.7%)
Making Child Feel Guilty if They Enjoyed Time with Other Parent	
Eleven to Twenty Times	29 (3.7%)
Six to Ten Times	51 (6.5%)
Two to Five Times	184 (23.4%)
Once	492 (62.6%)
Never Abusive	30 (3.8%)
Telling Child That Their Relationship with Other Parent is Not Important	
Eleven to Twenty Times	18 (2.3%)
Six to Ten Times	52 (6.6%)
Two to Five Times	152 (19.3%)
Once	538 (68.5%)
Never Abusive	26 (3.3%)
Testing Child to See if They are on Their Side	
Eleven to Twenty Times	19 (2.4%)
Six to Ten Times	54 (6.9%)
Two to Five Times	187 (23.8%)
Once	480 (61.1%)
Never Abusive	46 (5.8%)
Encouraging Child to be Defiant with Other Parent and Not Follow Their Rules	
Eleven to Twenty Times	21 (2.7%)
Six to Ten Times	39 (5.0%)
Two to Five Times	170 (21.6%)
Once	521 (66.3%)
Never Abusive	35 (4.4%)
Coaching Child to File False Abuse Report with Authorities	
Eleven to Twenty Times	2 (0.3%)
Six to Ten Times	6 (0.8%)
Two to Five Times	36 (4.6%)
Once	736 (93.5%)
Never Abusive	6 (0.8%)

	Number (%)
Withholding Love from Child if Child Communicates with Other Parent or Expressed Desire to be with Them	
Eleven to Twenty Times	7 (0.9%)
Six to Ten Times	20 (2.5%)
Two to Five Times	88 (11.2%)
Once	660 (84.0%)
Never Abusive	11 (1.4%)
Asking Child to Keep Secrets from Other Parent	
Eleven to Twenty Times	21 (2.7%)
Six to Ten Times	68 (8.6%)
Two to Five Times	226 (28.8%)
Once	418 (53.2%)
Never Abusive	53 (6.7%)
Encouraging Child to Ignore Other Parent in Public	
Eleven to Twenty Times	12 (1.5%)
Six to Ten Times	31 (3.9%)
Two to Five Times	146 (18.6%)
Once	564 (71.8%)
Never Abusive	33 (4.2%)
Influencing Child to Spy on Other Parent	
Eleven to Twenty Times	14 (1.8%)
Six to Ten Times	31 (3.9%)
Two to Five Times	157 (20.0%)
Once	549 (69.8%)
Never Abusive	35 (4.5%)
Telling Child that They are the Only Parent who Loves Them and has their Best Interest at Heart	
Eleven to Twenty Times	7 (0.9%)
Six to Ten Times	32 (4.1%)
Two to Five Times	110 (14.0%)
Once	605 (76.9%)
Never Abusive	32 (4.1%)
Refusing to Allow Child to have Photos or Gifts from Other Parent	
Eleven to Twenty Times	12 (1.5%)
Six to Ten Times	19 (2.4%)
Two to Five Times	124 (15.8%)
Once	610 (77.6%)
Never Abusive	21 (2.7%)
Encouraging Child to Call Another Adult Mother or Father	
Eleven to Twenty Times	26 (3.3%)
Six to Ten Times	42 (5.3%)
Two to Five Times	131 (16.7%)
Once	424 (54.0%)
Never Abusive	163 (20.7%)
Parent Referring to Other Parent by First Name when Speaking to Child	
Eleven to Twenty Times	34 (4.3%)
Six to Ten Times	51 (6.5%)
Two to Five Times	124 (15.8%)
Once	269 (34.2%)
Never Abusive	308 (39.2%)

		Number (%)
Belittling Other Parent in Front of Child	Eleven to Twenty Times	25 (3.2%)
	Six to Ten Times	69 (8.8%)
	Two to Five Times	190 (24.2%)
	Once	449 (57.1%)
	Never Abusive	53 (6.7%)
Making Child Believe that Something Negative Happened to Other Parent that Never Occurred	Eleven to Twenty Times	8 (1.0%)
	Six to Ten Times	26 (3.3%)
	Two to Five Times	100 (12.7%)
	Once	634 (80.7%)
	Never Abusive	18 (2.3%)
Telling Child their Other Parent Never Loved Them, Abandoned Them, or is Unsafe When They are Not	Eleven to Twenty Times	4 (0.5%)
	Six to Ten Times	19 (2.4%)
	Two to Five Times	57 (7.3%)
	Once	691 (87.9%)
	Never Abusive	15 (1.9%)
Blocking Communication between Other Parent and Child	Eleven to Twenty Times	12 (1.5%)
	Six to Ten Times	34 (4.3%)
	Two to Five Times	119 (15.2%)
	Once	599 (76.2%)
	Never Abusive	22 (2.8%)

Table 6

Note. Highest Possible Number for each category of abuse: Physical Abuse = 90, Psychological Abuse = 50, Sexual Abuse = 35, and Parental Alienation = 95. The ANOVA/t-test results along with their effect size are also presented under each category of means.

Abuse Category Total Means and Standard Deviations for Demographic Variables

	Physical Abuse	Psychological Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Parental Alienation
Ethnicity/Cultural Background				
African American (<i>n</i> = 93)	21.72(9.29)	15.30(7.62)	8.30(5.37)	29.78(13.97)
Asian American (<i>n</i> = 90)	22.13(7.02)	17.28(6.72)	7.86(3.15)	34.31(13.39)
Hispanic/Latino American (<i>n</i> = 69)	20.80(3.48)	16.09(5.71)	7.48(2.61)	34.32(15.32)
Non-Latino White/European American (<i>n</i> = 511)	20.12(5.01)	15.18(5.64)	7.67(3.40)	30.55(14.00)
Other (<i>n</i> = 23)	19.22(3.81)	14.30(5.27)	7.30(1.26)	26.70(13.12)
	<i>F</i> =3.67(η^2 =.02)	<i>F</i> =2.72(η^2 =.01)	<i>F</i> =0.83(η^2 <.01)	<i>F</i> =3.06(η^2 =.02)
Gender				
Female (<i>n</i> = 483)	20.19(5.79)	14.91(5.51)	7.56(3.19)	29.91(12.82)
Male (<i>n</i> = 275)	21.42(6.08)	16.59(6.84)	8.10(4.26)	33.33(16.17)
Non-Binary/Non-Conforming and Transgender (<i>n</i> = 28)	18.86(1.74)	14.82(5.53)	7.14(0.76)	29.96(10.75)
	<i>F</i> =5.19(η^2 =.01)	<i>F</i> =7.02(η^2 =.02)	<i>F</i> =2.41(η^2 <.01)	<i>F</i> =5.31(η^2 =.01)
Age				
Above 70 (<i>n</i> = 12)	22.71(5.62)	15.07(3.91)	8.10(0.29)	30.90(11.32)
51-70 (<i>n</i> = 132)	21.80(6.79)	15.48(6.00)	8.42(3.02)	31.07(14.83)
41-50 (<i>n</i> = 152)	19.70(3.17)	15.25(5.82)	7.73(2.59)	30.62(13.44)
31-40 (<i>n</i> = 227)	20.47(4.90)	15.25(5.96)	7.86(2.75)	31.11(13.96)
18-30 (<i>n</i> = 263)	20.72(3.84)	15.86(5.20)	7.20(0.75)	30.91(11.52)
	<i>F</i> =0.77(η^2 <.01)	<i>F</i> =1.27(η^2 <.01)	<i>F</i> =6.67(η^2 <.01)	<i>F</i> =0.07(η^2 <.01)
Highest Year of School Completed				
Post-Graduate Degree (<i>n</i> = 126)	20.67(6.48)	15.99(6.50)	7.90(4.10)	31.64(14.81)
Bachelor's Degree (<i>n</i> = 307)	21.23(7.27)	15.97(6.20)	7.97(4.06)	32.36(14.47)
Associate Degree (<i>n</i> = 85)	19.68(2.93)	14.15(4.65)	7.41(2.66)	28.96(11.87)
Trade School Certificate/Degree (<i>n</i> = 28)	20.46(4.15)	15.71(8.23)	9.04(6.22)	30.68(17.79)
High School Graduate or Less (<i>n</i> = 240)	20.01(4.01)	15.06(5.71)	7.32(2.12)	30.03(13.41)
	<i>F</i> =2.05(η^2 =.01)	<i>F</i> =2.06(η^2 =.01)	<i>F</i> =2.32(η^2 =.01)	<i>F</i> =1.50(η^2 <.01)
Income Range				

	Higher than \$200,000 (<i>n</i> = 36)	19.17(2.01)	13.72(4.01)	7.25(1.34)	29.72(14.14)
	\$100,000 to \$200,000 (<i>n</i> = 155)	22.08(9.79)	16.85(7.53)	8.62(5.49)	33.09(15.56)
	\$65,000 to \$99,999 (<i>n</i> = 201)	20.12(4.15)	15.20(5.38)	7.60(3.18)	31.76(14.54)
	\$30,000 to \$64,999 (<i>n</i> = 235)	20.70(4.75)	15.69(5.88)	7.26(1.70)	30.88(13.76)
	Less than \$30,000 (<i>n</i> = 159)	19.80(4.02)	14.64(5.67)	7.86(3.89)	28.99(12.25)
		<i>F</i> =4.19(η^2 =.02)	<i>F</i> =3.75(η^2 =.02)	<i>F</i> =3.75(η^2 =.02)	<i>F</i> =1.88(η^2 <.01)
Are You a Parent?					
	No (<i>n</i> = 454)	20.56(4.33)	15.77(5.77)	7.62(3.17)	31.64(13.23)
	Yes (<i>n</i> = 332)	20.60(7.42)	15.11(6.42)	7.90(4.04)	30.38(15.20)
		<i>t</i> =-0.09(<i>d</i> =0.01)	<i>t</i> =1.48(<i>d</i> =0.11)	<i>t</i> =-1.06(<i>d</i> =0.08)	<i>t</i> =1.21(<i>d</i> =0.09)
Age Range of Child					
	Over 18 Years Old (<i>n</i> = 108)	20.48(6.48)	14.94(5.83)	7.74(3.66)	30.17(14.83)
	Under 18 Years Old (<i>n</i> = 224)	20.65(7.85)	15.20(6.69)	7.98(4.22)	30.48(15.41)
		<i>t</i> =-0.21(<i>d</i> =0.01)	<i>t</i> =-0.36(<i>d</i> =0.04)	<i>t</i> =-0.53(<i>d</i> =0.06)	<i>t</i> =0.18(<i>d</i> =0.02)
Experienced Psychological Abuse?					
	No (<i>n</i> = 455)	20.66(6.55)	15.60(6.33)	7.88(4.01)	31.59(14.69)
	Yes (<i>n</i> = 331)	20.45(4.68)	15.34(5.66)	7.53(2.84)	30.44(13.23)
		<i>t</i> =0.54(<i>d</i> =0.04)	<i>t</i> =0.60(<i>d</i> =0.04)	<i>t</i> =1.43(<i>d</i> =0.10)	<i>t</i> =1.14(<i>d</i> =0.08)
Experienced Physical Abuse?					
	No (<i>n</i> = 587)	20.39(5.84)	15.52(6.11)	7.76(3.72)	31.34(14.32)
	Yes (<i>n</i> = 199)	21.10(5.80)	15.40(5.92)	7.69(3.06)	30.43(13.43)
		<i>t</i> =-1.48(<i>d</i> =0.12)	<i>t</i> =0.24(<i>d</i> =0.02)	<i>t</i> =0.34(<i>d</i> =0.03)	<i>t</i> =0.81(<i>d</i> =0.06)
Experienced Sexual Abuse?					
	No (<i>n</i> = 657)	20.48(5.74)	15.50(6.11)	7.69(3.58)	31.33(14.41)
	Yes (<i>n</i> = 129)	21.05(6.31)	15.43(5.78)	7.98(3.46)	29.94(12.39)
		<i>t</i> =-0.95(<i>d</i> =0.10)	<i>t</i> =0.14(<i>d</i> =0.01)	<i>t</i> =-0.88(<i>d</i> =0.08)	<i>t</i> =1.14(<i>d</i> =0.10)

Table 7*Full ANOVA Results*

	Physical Abuse			Psychological Abuse			Sexual Abuse			Parental Alienation		
	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
<i>Predictors</i>												
Ethnicity	3.67	<.01	.02	2.72	.03	.01	0.83	.51	<.01	3.06	.02	.02
Gender	5.19	<.01	.01	7.02	<.001	.02	2.41	.09	<.01	5.31	<.01	.01
Age	0.77	.38	<.01	1.27	.26	<.01	6.67	.01	<.01	0.07	.79	<.01
Highest Year of School Completed	2.05	.09	.01	2.06	.08	.01	2.32	.06	.01	1.50	.20	<.01
Income Range	4.19	<.01	.02	3.75	<.01	.02	3.75	<.01	.02	1.88	.11	<.01

Table 8

Full Multilevel Model Results

	Physical Abuse		Psychological Abuse		Sexual Abuse		Parental Alienation	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
<i>Level 1 Predictors</i>								
Ethnicity								
African American (Reference)	18.36***	0.57	9.41***	0.52	6.20***	0.35	23.89*	1.38
Asian American	0.52	0.43	2.64***	0.44	-0.27	0.27	4.09***	1.05
Hispanic/Latino American	-0.25	0.47	2.34***	0.48	-0.41	0.29	5.42***	1.13
Non-Latino White/European American	-1.42***	0.33	0.41	0.33	-0.63**	0.20	0.58	0.79
Other	-2.06**	0.67	0.04	0.70	-0.75	0.42	-2.13	1.63
Gender								
Female (Reference)	18.36***	0.57	9.41***	0.52	6.20***	0.35	23.89*	1.38
Male	1.40***	0.22	2.36***	0.23	0.71***	0.14	3.56***	0.54
Non-Binary/Non-Conforming and Transgender	-0.83	0.57	0.85	0.60	0.07	0.35	0.87	1.38
Age	0.03	0.01	0.05***	0.01	0.03*	0.01	0.05	0.02
Highest Year of School Completed	0.22**	0.07	0.43***	0.08	0.11*	0.05	0.48*	0.18
Income Range	0.32**	0.10	0.33**	0.10	0.15	0.06	0.77**	0.24
Are You a Parent?	-0.23	0.24	-0.36	0.25	-0.03	0.15	-1.00	0.58
Experienced Physical Abuse?	0.97***	0.29	0.12	0.30	0.03	0.18	-0.20	0.70
Experienced Psychological Abuse?	-0.58*	0.26	0.20	0.27	-0.24	0.16	-0.52	0.62
Experienced Sexual Abuse?	0.98***	0.29	0.75*	0.31	0.56**	0.18	0.11	0.71
<i>Variance</i>								
Level 2	8.09		8.96		3.08		47.70	
Level 1	<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	
<i>Model Fit</i>								
AIC	-34716.2		-45924.6		-36536.5		-26997.1	

BIC	-34619.3	-45827.7	-36439.7	-26900.3
Log-Likelihood	17374.1	22978.3	18284.3	13514.6
Deviance	-34748.2	-45956.6	-36568.5	-27029.1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 9

Frequency Statistics for Qualitative Response to “What else would you want to know about the abuse behavior to consider it abusive?”

		Number (%)
Physical Abuse (N = 756)		
	Intention/Cause of Behavior	290 (38.4%)
	Severity	116 (15.3%)
	Context/More Details	96 (12.7%)
	Involvement of Other Forms of Abuse	39 (5.2%)
	Consequences for Child	30 (4.0%)
	Background of Parent	20 (2.7%)
	Age of Child	10 (1.3%)
	Nothing (N/A)	252 (33.3%)
	Other (Did Parent Seek Help, Is Child Disabled)	2 (0.3%)
Psychological Abuse (N = 713)		
	Intention/Cause of Behavior	191 (26.8%)
	Severity	32 (4.5%)
	Context/More Details	185 (26.0%)
	Involvement of Other Forms of Abuse	11 (1.5%)
	Consequences for Child	35 (4.9%)
	Background of Parent	116 (16.3%)
	Age of Child	14 (2.0%)
	Nothing (N/A)	236 (33.1%)
	Other (Actions of Parents Afterwards, Involvement of Authorities)	6 (0.8%)
Sexual Abuse (N = 673)		
	Intention/Cause of Behavior	36 (5.4%)
	Context/More Details	71 (10.6%)
	Involvement of Other Forms of Abuse	11 (1.6%)
	Consequences for Child	13 (1.9%)
	Background of Parent	16 (2.4%)
	Age of Child	12 (1.8%)
	Nothing (N/A)	531 (78.9%)
	Other (Consequences for Parent, How to Address, Severity)	12 (1.8%)

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APPENDIX

Section A:

1) Gender:

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Transgender
- d. Non-Binary/Non-Conforming

2) Ethnicity/Cultural Background:

- a. Asian American
- b. African American
- c. Hispanic/Latino American
- d. Non-Latino White/European American
- e. Other (Please Specify)

3) Age: _____

4) Socioeconomic Status – Highest year of school completed:

- a. Less than High School Completion
- b. High School Graduate
- c. Associate Degree
- d. Trade School Certificate/Degree

- e. Bachelor's Degree
- f. Post-graduate Degree

5) Socioeconomic Status – Income Range (Individual or Family Depending on Situation):

- a. Less than \$30,000
- b. \$30,000 to \$64,999
- c. \$65,000 to \$99,999
- d. \$100,000 to \$200,000
- e. Higher than \$200,000

6) Are you a parent?

- a. Yes
- b. No
 - i. Age range of your child?
 - 1. Over 18 years old
 - 2. Under 18 years old

7) Have you experienced Childhood Maltreatment/Abuse?

- a. **Psychological/Emotional Abuse** – Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often swear at you, insult you, put you down humiliate you? Or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

- b. **Physical Abuse** - Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? Or ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

- c. **Sexual Abuse** - Did an adult person at least 5 years older than you ever touch, fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? Or attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

AC (Attention Checker) 1: What color is grass?

- a) Blue
- b) Green
- c) Red

Section B (a): Physical Abuse

In your opinion, how often does each of the following parental behaviors have to occur to be considered child physical abuse (within the past year)?

Behavior	Never Abusive	Once	Two to Five Times	Six to Ten Times	Eleven to Twenty Times
<i>Kicking</i> the child					
<i>Shaking</i> the entire body of the child					
<i>Dragging</i> the child (e.g., down the stairs)					
<i>Hitting</i> the child					
<i>Beating</i> the child via multiple hits					
<i>Smothering</i> – Covering child to reduce breathing					
<i>Pulling</i> the child by their hair					
<i>Burning</i> the child’s skin using a hot object					
<i>Scalding</i> - Burning child via hot water or steam					
<i>Biting</i> the child					
<i>Stabbing</i> the child					
<i>Poisoning</i> the child					
<i>Shoving</i> the child (aggressive manner)					
<i>Pushing</i> the child					
<i>Punching</i> the child					
<i>Throwing</i> the child (e.g., like an object)					
<i>Strangling/Choking</i> the child					
<i>Dropping</i> the child intentionally					

You were asked in this survey how often these behaviors need to occur before you would consider it physically abusive to a child. Aside from the frequency of behaviors, what else would you want to know about the behavior to consider it abusive?

AC (Attention Checker) 2: What is $6+2$?

- a) 5
- b) 0
- c) 8

Section B (b): Psychological Abuse

In your opinion, how often does each of the following parental behaviors have to occur to be considered child psychological abuse (within the past year)?

Behavior	Never Abusive	Once	Two to Five Times	Six to Ten Times	Eleven to Twenty Times
<i>Blaming</i> the child for something they did not do					
<i>Intimidating</i> – Attempting to frighten or threaten child					
<i>Spurning</i> – Rejecting the child with disdain					
<i>Exploiting</i> – Using the child in an unfair manner					
<i>Terrorizing</i> – Causing extreme fear in child					
<i>Confining</i> – Restricting the child within a space or area					
<i>Degrading</i> – Humiliating the child					
<i>Isolating</i> – Making child feel alone					
<i>Corrupting</i> – Causing the child to become immoral					
<i>Belittling</i> – Dismissive of the importance of the child					
Parent asking child if they like them more than the other parent					
Parent encouraging child to spend less time with the other parent					
Parent making child feel guilty if they enjoyed time with the other parent					
Parent telling child that their relationship with the other parent is not important					
Parent testing child to see if they are on their side					
Parent encouraging child to be defiant with the other parent and not follow their rules					
Parent coaching child to file a false abuse report with authorities, like the police, against the other parent					
Parent withholding love, affection, or desired possessions if a child communicates with the					

other parent or expresses desire to be in the other parent's life					
Parent asking child to keep secrets from the other parent					
Parent encouraging child to ignore the other parent in public					
Parent influencing child to spy on the other parent					
Parent telling child that they are the only parent who loves them and has their best interest at heart					
Parent refusing to allow the child to have photographs or gifts from the other parent					
Parent encouraging child to call another adult mother or father (who is not their other parent)					
Parent referring to the other parent by their first name rather than "mom" or "dad", when speaking to child					
Parent belittling the other parent in front of child					
Parent making child believe something negative happened with the other parent that never occurred					
Parent telling child their other parent never loved them, abandoned them or is unsafe when they are not					
Parent blocking communication between the other parent and child					

You were asked in this survey how often these behaviors need to occur before you would consider it psychologically abusive to a child. Aside from the frequency of behaviors, what else would you want to know about the behavior to consider it abusive?

AC (Attention Checker) 3: Which of the following is “WAKE” spelled backwards?

- a) EKAW
- b) AKEW
- c) ALAN

Section B (c): Sexual Abuse

In your opinion, how often does each of the following parental behaviors have to occur to be considered child sexual abuse (within the past year)?

Behavior	Never Abusive	Once	Two to Five Times	Six to Ten Times	Eleven to Twenty Times
<i>Sexual Contact (Intentional Touching)</i>					
<i>Voyeurism – Pleasure from watching others in a sexual context</i>					
<i>Pornography – Material displaying sexual activity</i>					
<i>Intentional Exhibitionism – Pleasure from intentional exposure of genitals</i>					
<i>Filming in a sexual manner</i>					
<i>Sexual Harassment – Unwelcome sexual requests or advances in a work/school environment</i>					
<i>Prostitution – Engaging in sexual activity for compensation</i>					

You were asked in this survey how often these behaviors need to occur before you would consider it physically abusive to a child. Aside from the frequency of behaviors, what else would you want to know about the behavior to consider it abusive?
