CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE AS A FUNCTION OF SOCIAL SITUATION AND TYPE OF INDUCTION

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by

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Nicole Kaye Horton, daughter of Dale and Bonnie Horton, was born June 23, 1974, in Portage, Wisconsin. She graduated in 1992 from Poynette High School in Poynette, Wisconsin. She attended Madison Area Technical College in Madison, Wisconsin for three years and graduated with an Associate's Degree in Science. After receiving her associate's degree she attended the University of Wisconsin – Stout in Menomonie, Wisconsin for two years and graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor's of Art degree in Psychology in May of 1997. In September of 1997 she entered Graduate School at Auburn University at Montgomery.

THESIS ABSTRACT

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF DISCIPLINE AS A FUNCTION OF SOCIAL SITUATION AND TYPE OF INDUCTION

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The present study examined influences on children's perceptions of parent-child discipline. Second-, third-, fifth-, and sixth-grade children evaluated two hypothetical peers in four discipline scenarios. Scenarios differed according to type of provocation (physical, psychological) and type of induction (parent-oriented, peer-oriented). Evaluations were assessed in terms of target's, mother's, and evaluator's affect, and effectiveness and fairness of discipline. Results indicated that children rated peer-oriented induction as being more appropriate and equitable than parent-oriented induction. Developmental trends emerged with younger children reporting the transgressor as feeling more upset towards the mother than older children. Younger children also perceived the transgressor as feeling more remorse toward the victim prior to discipline than did older children. Further, parent-oriented induction was evaluated as being more appropriate by younger children compared to older children. Girls evaluated parent-oriented discipline more positively than did boys. Girls were also more negatively

affected after evaluating each parent-child discipline scenario than were boys. Results are discussed in terms of how the present study replicates and extends previous research investigating children's perceptions of discipline.

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Children's Perceptions of Discipline as a Function of

Social Situation and Type of Induction

Parent-child discipline is important to the cognitive and social development of children (Sears & Sears, 1995). Through discipline, children learn right from wrong and what distinguishes appropriate from inappropriate behavior. As such, discipline can be a vehicle through which children internalize parental values and goals (Hoffman, 1983). Research in this area has focused on different types of parental discipline and the effectiveness of parental discipline (e.g., Hoffman, 1983). Research has also begun to examine children's perceptions of discipline (see Grusec & Goodnow, 1994, for review). This line of research shows that children's perceptions of discipline are related to future behavior (e.g., long term changes in behavior from discipline) (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994), the development of self-concept (Johnson, Shulman, & Collins, 1991; Noller, Seth-Smith, Bouma, & Schweitzer, 1992), social skills development (Baker, Barthelemy, & Kurdek, 1993; Denham, 1997), and current as well as future academic performance (Johnson, et al., 1991; Shek, 1997).

Given the importance of children's perceptions of discipline, research has also focused on factors that influence these perceptions. These influences include family environment (Johnson, et al., 1991), gender of the transgressor (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994), gender of the evaluator (Kagan, & Lemkin, 1990), gender of the parent (Kagan, & Lemkin, 1990; Scheck, & Emerick, 1976), and age of the child evaluator (Johnson, et al., 1991; Siegal, & Cowen, 1984). Extending these research efforts, the purpose of the

present study was to examine potential influences on children's understanding and perceptions of discipline. Of particular interest were the influences of different types of discipline (parent-oriented induction, peer-oriented induction) and different social contexts (physical transgression, psychological transgression). What follows is a review of the parenting styles literature, including the more common types of parental discipline followed by research into influences on children's perceptions of discipline.

Parenting Styles and Types of Discipline

Research on parenting styles (e.g., Baumrind, 1971; Johnson, et al., 1991) has revealed three broad types of parenting: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Authoritative parenting is sophisticated and complex, characterized by actively encouraging children to develop a sense of autonomy, while simultaneously having high expectations and control over their children (Johnson, et al., 1991). Children are allowed to express their feelings and voice their opinions in authoritative households (Baumrind, 1971). Authoritative parents remain warm and accepting towards their children, while at the same time setting firm standards for their children to follow (Baumrind, 1971; Johnson, et al., 1991). Children from authoritative households tend to be self-reliant, socially reliant, and independent (Baumrind, 1971). Both professionals and children rate authoritative parenting as the best parenting style (Baumrind, 1971; Magen, 1994).

Magen (1994) conducted a study on children's perceptions of what they considered a "good" parent. Eight-to-eighteen-year-olds were asked to answer the following open-ended question, "What is a good parent in your opinion?" Developmental differences emerged with young children rating warm feelings as being critical for good parenting and felt that parents should assume authority and purchase

gifts for them. Junior-high-school-children valued parents who acted as educators and as authority figures. Furthermore, junior-high-school-children felt it important for parents to understand that a child's interests and desires may not coincide with their parents' interests. In addition, junior-high-school-children wanted respect from their parents. For junior-high-school-students, respect included allowing privacy and promoting autonomy. Junior-high-school-children also felt that parents should trust them and express warm feelings towards them. High-school-children rated parental acceptance of differences between parent and child to be important, and also felt that parents should allow their children privacy and autonomy. High-school-children further valued friendship in their parents. It is important to note that all age groups emphasized parenting attributes that closely characterize authoritative parenting (e.g., assume authority, express feelings, allow autonomy).

Authoritarian parents on the other hand, are not child centered, do not promote autonomy or allow compromises to occur (Baumrind, 1971; Johnson, et al., 1991). Authoritarian parents are also less affectionate than authoritative or permissive parents. Children of authoritarian parents are required to follow strict rules and parental demands (Baumrind, 1971). Children reared in authoritarian families become anxious in social interactions, have difficulty initiating relationships, and are more aggressive than children reared in an authoritative or permissive household (Baumrind, 1971). Baker, et al.'s, (1993) research on children's social status in the classroom and perceptions of parenting styles support previous research (e.g., Baumrind, 1971), reporting that children from authoritarian households experience difficulties initiating and sustaining relationships. Baker and his colleagues reported that sociometrically defined rejected-status children

perceived their parents as providing less supervision and as being more authoritarian than average-status children. Although correlational, this research suggests that children reared in authoritarian households are often rejected by their peers. Perhaps children from authoritarian households are rejected because they refrain from initiating any contact. In return, their peers choose to reject them rather than initiate a relationship with them. Or, perhaps they are rejected for their aggressive behaviors. Another possibility is that children from authoritarian households are too rigid and perceived by their peers as not being fun, resulting in rejection from peers.

Unlike authoritative or authoritarian parents, permissive parents, by placing few demands on their children, allow their children to develop unlimited amounts of autonomy (Baumrind, 1971). Children reared in permissive households are typically dependent on others, have few friends, and experience difficulty in controlling their own behavior and setting goals for themselves (Baumrind, 1971). Cohen and Rice (1997), investigating eighth- and ninth-grade students, reported that children who smoked and drank alcohol perceived their parents as less authoritative and more permissive compared to students who did not partake in those behaviors. Perhaps lack of structure from parents facilitates the development of risk taking behaviors in their children. Often, parents perceive themselves as promoting unlimited autonomy in their children by not setting strict rules. In actuality, research (e.g., Sears & Sears, 1995) shows that children need structure and role models in order to make healthy decisions.

Specific parenting styles generally corresponded with distinct discipline techniques. Authoritative parents typically discipline their children by providing them with general principles to follow and use reasoning and explanations as the consequences

of their child's behavior. These techniques are collectively called inductive reasoning. Further, children in authoritative households are given opportunities to discuss their misbehavior with their parents. On the other hand, authoritarian parents allow no such event to occur. They expect children to obey requests and demands without discussion by imploring power assertive techniques. Considering they are minimally affectionate, authoritarian parents also have a tendency to use love withdrawal techniques. Rather than applying consistent discipline techniques, permissive parents refrain from employing any particular discipline method.

Researchers (e.g., Hoffman, 1983) have primarily distinguished three types of discipline techniques: love withdrawal, power assertion, and induction. Parents use love-withdrawal by ignoring and isolating their children from parental affection (Chilamkurti & Milner, 1993; Hoffman, 1970). The parent expresses heightened levels of anger and appears disgusted with his/her child (Mancuso & Allen, 1976). These parents also express a dislike for their children (Hoffman, 1970). Love withdrawal is further characterized by creating physical distance between the parent and child and a refusal to speak to the child (Hoffman, 1970). As a result of this isolation, the child feels heightened levels of anxiety (Hoffman, 1983). This anxiety is also a reaction to the perceived fear of losing the parent's love. As a result, the child will typically comply with the parent's request to prevent the loss of parental love (Hoffman, 1983).

Power assertion is characterized by physical punishment and verbal attacks on children (Chilamkurti & Milner, 1993; Hoffman, 1970). Parents who employ physical assertion tend to manipulate their children through the use of power and remove their children's privileges and materialistic possessions (Hoffman, 1970; Mancuso & Allen,

1976). Oftentimes, children exposed to power assertive techniques will refuse to comply or reluctantly comply with their parent's request. These children also become angry and will often displace this anger onto others. Furthermore, power assertion induces temporary fear in children (Hoffman, 1983). However, children who are disciplined with primarily power assertive techniques tend not to experience fear of consequences in the absence of authority because no external threat exists. This lack of fear may explain the heightened level of misbehavior in the absence of authority with children who experience primarily power assertive discipline. In the long run, power assertive techniques may be the least effective technique in terms of compliance.

As reviewed above, power assertion is related to fear arousal (Hoffman, 1983). Children who primarily receive power assertion discipline tend to concentrate on punishment that they will undergo (e.g., spanking) as opposed to the feelings of the individual for whom he/she offended. In comparison, induction techniques induce aversive feelings that cause the transgressor to consider the harm that has been inflicted on the victim. Induction has been classified as the most effective discipline technique for a variety of reasons. By implementing inductive reasoning techniques, parents provide their children with explanations about why their behavior was inappropriate (Barnett, Quackenbush & Sinisi, 1996; Chilamkurti & Milner, 1993; Hoffman, 1970). Through the use of induction, parents also teach their children principles by reasoning with them and informing them of their consequences (Hoffman, 1983). Eventually, these principles become internalized. Once the principles are internalized, the child's individualization becomes more whole and complete, making it easier for him/her to focus on the feelings of others, independent of parental discipline.

By focusing on the feelings of others, children begin to feel guilty for committing a transgression against another individual (Hoffman, 1970; Mancuso & Allen, 1976). By internalizing the principles that are taught to children during discipline situations, children gain the ability to empathize with other children. According to Hoffman (1983), humans naturally react to the pain and discomfort of others with empathic distress. Empathic distress serves as a positive motivator for people to help others, rather than inflict pain on them or ignore another person's pain. Induction tends to gear the child's attention towards their consequences on others, which forces the child to use his/her empathic abilities (Siegal & Cowen, 1984). Through the use of induction, principles become internalized and are generalized to situations that do not involve authority figures. As a result, misbehavior is often inhibited in future instances because the child has developed empathic feelings and understands the implications for his/her misbehavior.

In addition, induction facilitates children to use their cognitive abilities and think about the consequences of their actions (Lepper, 1983). Children eventually begin to rely on their feelings and cognitions in order to realize why their behavior was wrong. These feelings and cognitions are aroused when the child is tempted to commit a future transgression in the absence of authority. In contrast, external consequences, which are defining characteristics of power assertive techniques, usually occur in an isolated situation and may not be present in other situations. Researchers (e.g., Hoffman, 1983) hypothesize that this inconsistency and focus on the external world for self-control is why power assertion is less effective in achieving long term behavior changes.

Hoffman (1983) has described discipline as being multidimensional in nature, involving a combination of power assertive, love withdrawal, and induction techniques. Hoffman (1983) further emphasized that the predominant discipline technique in any situation should always be induction. If power assertion or love withdrawal is predominant, children may feel intense fear or anxiety and their attention will be focused on their own consequences (e.g., spanking from a parent) as opposed to the harm they inflicted on the victim. Furthermore, if too much fear and anxiety is aroused in children, their ability to listen and comprehend the parent's message is interfered, which may prohibit any learning or internalization of principles from occurring.

Researchers claim that every discipline situation involves to some extent, love withdrawal because parents express some dissatisfaction with the child's behavior and a desire for the child to behave differently (Hoffman, 1983). This message may be expressed directly through words (e.g., "I cannot believe you were so foolish.") or indirectly through gestures (e.g., rolling one's eyes back in disgust). According to Hoffman (1983), every discipline situation also involves power assertion in that the child's misbehavior is interrupted and a perceived threat is made directly or implicitly from past situations. For example, a parent may have threatened the child in the past by indicating that any future misbehavior would result in harsh punishment. Parents often express anger, hurt or upset feelings when their children commit a misbehavior, through posture, tone or rate of voice, or through facial expressions. In essence, parents may not intentionally use power assertion or love withdrawal, but children may perceive the situation as involving those discipline techniques. Love withdrawal and power assertion

may be useful for gaining the child's attention and motivating the child to alter his/her behavior, but the most predominant technique should be induction.

Children's Perceptions of Discipline

Children's understanding and evaluations of discipline have important social and cognitive developmental implications (e.g., Johnson, et al., 1991). First, a child's self-concept is related to their evaluations of parents (e.g., Johnson, et al., 1991; Noller, Seth-Smith, Bouma, & Schweitzer, 1992). Johnson et al. (1991) studied fifth-, eighth-, and eleventh-graders and their teachers to investigate the relationship between children's level of self-esteem and perceptions of their parents. Children completed two self-reports, the Child Report of Parental Behavior: An Inventory (CRPBI), which assesses children's perceptions of their parents, and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, which assesses their own self-esteem. The CRPBI assessed three parental behaviors based on children's perceptions: acceptance versus rejection, psychological autonomy versus psychological control, and firm versus lax discipline. These parental behaviors were clustered into different types of parenting styles: authoritative, permissive, and incongruent.

Results indicated that children with the highest self-esteem were those who perceived their parents as warm and accepting towards their interests. Furthermore, children reporting the highest self-esteem perceived both parents as authoritative in nature, rather than incongruent. Adolescents who reported the lowest self-esteem perceived their parents as incongruent in their parenting behaviors. These findings support past research (e.g., Baumrind, 1971) showing that authoritative parenting is the most effective and important parental rearing style. Children are often disturbed when an

incongruency exists between their parents' rearing styles. Both parents need to recognize the benefits of and implement authoritative parenting in order for children to feel comfortable with their identity.

Second, researchers (e.g., Denham, 1997; Johnson, et al., 1991) have found a positive relationship between children's perceptions of parental discipline and their academic performance. Johnson et al. (1991) reported that children who perceived both parents as authoritative were better adapted in school compared to children who perceived their parents as permissive. Boys who perceived their parents as permissive were rated especially low in school achievement by their teachers. Further, a study involving Chinese children reported that perceptions of family functioning were related to children's perceptions of their academic performance (Shek, 1997). Results indicated that the more negatively children perceived their family's level of functioning (i.e., competent vs. dysfunctional families), the more inadequate they perceived their own academic performance. Children who experienced heightened levels of conflict with their parents had lower perceptions of their academic performance compared to children who reported less conflict with their parents.

Third, social skills have also been associated with children's evaluations of discipline (e.g., Baker, et al., 1993; Denham, 1997). Denham (1997) found noticeable differences in children's capabilities to socialize with others, depending on their perceptions of parental discipline. Assessing children's ability to empathize with peers, children were asked to act out how they felt their parent would react to them if they experienced a particular emotion (e.g., anger). Results showed that children who evaluated their parents as comforting and who shared positive emotions with them were

also rated by their teachers as being more socially skilled, more cooperative, and more empathic towards their peers than children who evaluated their parents as sharing negative emotions with them. Further, children who felt their parents discussed emotions with them were rated by their teachers as more empathetic with their peers compared to children who perceived their parents as being reluctant to discuss emotions. Overall, children who perceived their parents as comforting, willing to share positive emotions and refrained from sharing negative emotions were able to act in a similar fashion with their peers.

Influences on Children's Evaluations of Discipline

Research on children's evaluations and understanding of parental discipline has revealed that evaluations are influenced by characteristics of the evaluator (e.g., age, gender) (Siegal & Cowen, 1984), gender of the parent (e.g., Kagen & Lemkin, 1960), and characteristics of the target being observed (e.g., gender) (Hoffman, 1970). Further, family environment and socioeconomic status has been shown to influence children's perceptions of discipline techniques (Dadds, Sheffield, & Holbeck, 1990; Johnson, et al., 1991; Scheck & Everick, 1976). Each of these influences are detailed below.

Children's perceptions of disciplinary situations differ for boys and girls (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Kagan & Lemkin, 1990). Kagan and Lemkin (1960) investigated gender differences in perceptions of discipline in children ranging from three to eight years of age. Results revealed that fathers were perceived as more fear provoking and prone to anger by girls compared to boys. In addition, girls rated fathers as being both more hostile and more affectionate than did boys. These results suggested that girls perceived fathers as the dominant authority figure and as more threatening than mothers.

Boys did not seem to perceive an imbalance between mother's and father's parental behaviors. Further, Barnett and his colleagues (1996) indicated that boys perceived power assertion and love withdrawal as representing more parental sensitivity and fairness compared to girls who rated inductive reasoning more favorably than power assertion or love withdrawal.

Investigating the discipline history of college-age-students, DeVet (1997) reported an interesting gender difference in students' perceptions of discipline. Specifically, results showed that physical punishment was negatively related to adolescent adjustment for girls, but not for boys. Thus, girls who had a history of receiving primarily physical punishment also had more adjustment problems (e.g., delinquent behavior). Perhaps girls were more sensitive to harsh, physical punishment compared to boys. Or, perhaps, boys accept the fact that physical punishment is commonly viewed as more acceptable compared to girls. Another possibility is that aggressive behavior is more acceptable for boys than girls given their play style differences (Maccoby, 1990). If aggressive behavior is more tolerable for boys than girls, boys may not perceive physical punishment to be as aversive as girls do. Hence, boys would be less negatively affected from physical discipline than girls.

Numerous studies have found a difference in children's perceptions of discipline depending on their age (Barnett, et al., 1996; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Siegal & Cowen, 1984). Barnett et al. (1996) conducted a study on factors that affect children's, adolescents', and young adults' perceptions of parental discipline. Participants were placed in one of four conditions. The conditions varied according to various parent-child relationships: father-son, father-daughter, mother-son, and mother-daughter. Each group

was read a transgression scenario involving one of the previously mentioned relationship conditions. Afterwards, they were shown a videotape of the parent implementing one of three discipline techniques: power assertion, love withdrawal, or induction. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire assessing their perceptions of the discipline technique depicted in the story and the immediate impact it would have on the target's opinion of his/her misbehavior. Also assessed were children's perceptions of how effective each discipline technique was. Results revealed that second-graders rated parents who used inductive techniques as less sensitive and less fair compared to sixth-graders, high-school-students, and college undergraduates. Furthermore, second-graders rated love withdrawal more favorably than the three older groups.

Similarly, Grusec and Goodnow (1994) reported that second-graders perceived parents who used inductive reasoning as less sensitive and more unjust compared to sixth-graders. Considering young children's cognitive abilities are not developed fully, they may not understand the reasons and explanations that are provided with inductive techniques, which may explain their dislike for that particular discipline. That is, young children's preference for love withdrawal and power assertion may be due to the fact that young children depend on concrete reasons and expressions of discipline because they have difficulty understanding abstract concepts.

Siegal and Cowen (1984) examined children's preferred discipline techniques with preschoolers-, third-, sixth-, ninth-, and twelfth-graders. Preschoolers and half of the third graders were read stories about a child and a mother. The remaining third-graders, as well as the sixth-, ninth-, and twelfth-graders were presented with a situation and discipline technique in a questionnaire format. Five types of disobedience were

portrayed in the stories. Simple disobedience was portrayed by the child refusing to clean his/her room. Disobedience causing harm to others was evident with the hypothetical child punching and hurting another child. Disobedience causing harm to oneself was characterized by ignoring instructions to refrain from touching the stove. Causing psychological harm to another person was an additional type of disobedience in which the hypothetical child made fun of a person with a disability. Lastly, disobedience that involved harm to physical objects was portrayed by a child breaking a lamp while skipping inside the house.

In addition, four discipline techniques were implemented for each of the five types of disobedience: induction, physical punishment, love withdrawal, and permissiveness (no intervention). After listening to the stories, children were asked to rate the extent to which the parent was "right" or "wrong" for implementing a particular discipline technique. Results revealed that overall, children of all ages preferred induction. Preschoolers rated induction and power assertion equally positive. Also, preschoolers rated love withdrawal as more acceptable than no discipline except in events that involved simple disobedience. In these particular events, children did not feel that parents had the right to intervene. Third-graders also rated love withdrawal more acceptable than no discipline, but without any exceptions concerning the type of misbehavior. In contrast to the preschoolers and third-graders, twelfth-graders rated love-withdrawal less favorably than no discipline. Perhaps older children prefer no discipline because they seek more independence as they mature. However, they remain dependent on their parents' affection to feel confident in themselves and worthy, which may explain why they express a greater dislike for love withdrawal. Overall, these

results indicated that children rated physical punishment and love withdrawal more negatively as they matured.

Siegal and Cowen (1984) also reported that children's perceptions of discipline depended on the type of transgression committed. Preschoolers and third-graders rated permissiveness worse than love withdrawal with transgressions involving physical or psychological harm to oneself or others. Twelfth-graders rated love withdrawal worse than permissiveness with regards to physical self-harm.

Hoffman (1970) reported an interaction between the target's gender and type of discipline children perceived as most effective. In determining the likelihood that a child would comply with a parent's request in the absence of authority, children perceived induction to be the most effective discipline technique to use with daughters, but not necessarily with sons. Children also believed that boys were more responsive to power assertion compared to girls. In general, children thought that physical punishment was less harsh and more justifiable when used with boys than with girls.

As stated earlier, perceptions of discipline were related to children's ability to function in social situations. Children rejected by their peers most frequently reported having authoritarian parents who provided minimal parental supervision (Baker, et al., 1993). Furthermore, these children generally came from divorced families. Baker et al. (1993) explained these results by indicating that children from divorced families are often exposed to high levels of parental discord. Extensive exposure to discord, accompanied by minimal supervision, reinforces children to practice coercive strategies when they interact with others. These results suggest that lack of positive interactions with others, along with negative family attributes, often contributes to unsuccessful friendships.

Dadds et al. (1990) investigated the relationship between children's perceptions of marital discord and parental discipline. Participants' ages ranged from eight-to-thirteen-years-old. Children were asked to select the discipline technique that should be used in three different situations. The discipline methods included permissiveness, directed discussions, time out, and physical punishment. Responses were converted to coercion scores with permissiveness being the least coercive and physical punishment being the most coercive. Results revealed that children who reported high marital discord in their family perceived their parents as being more coercive and were more accepting of parental coerciveness than children who reported minimal marital discord in their family. Perhaps children from high marital discord families condone elevated levels of coerciveness because they witness it between their parents and feel that it is a common and acceptable technique to use. The results also showed that boys condoned higher levels of parental coerciveness than girls, which indicated that boys were more accepting of physical punishment than girls.

Scheck and Emerick (1976) also studied the relationship between family environment and children's perceptions of discipline with ninth grade boys. Investigating the effects of socioeconomic status and family size on boys' perceptions of parenting, adolescents were asked to reflect back on their childhood and rate their mother's or father's behavior towards them. Parental behaviors were measured in terms of how loving, rejecting, neglecting, protecting, demanding, or casual parents were with their children. The loving, rejecting, and neglecting scales represented parents' overall level of support that they provided and the protecting, demanding, and casual scales represented the amount of constraint parents exerted. A relationship was found between

family size and boys' perceptions of the support they received from their parents, degree of control their parents had over their behavior, and the extent to which their parents' discipline techniques remained consistent across situations. Specifically, boys from large families felt that their parents were minimally supportive of their personal interests and exerted little control over their behavior. Furthermore, boys from large families perceived their parents as alternating between numerous disciplinary techniques, rather than consistently using one or two types of discipline.

Scheck and Emerick (1976) also found that socioeconomic status had an impact on boys' perceptions of discipline. Boys from lower socioeconomic families tended to rate their mothers as less consistent in their disciplinary techniques compared to their fathers. Boys from lower socioeconomic status families also reported less parental control and support. Furthermore, boys reared in low socioeconomic status families perceived their mother and father to be more incongruent with their discipline strategies compared to boys in higher socioeconomic families. Overall, these results indicated that boys reared in low socioeconomic households reported more neglect and rejection from their parents. Scheck and Emerick (1976) indicated that perhaps larger families were more stressful for parents. As family size increases, parents may become less involved with each child, which may lead to more inconsistent parenting and discipline.

Grusec and Goodnow's (1994) review of discipline methods also reported that the disciplinarian's gender had an effect on children's perceptions of discipline. Inductive reasoning was rated most favorably when used by the father towards a daughter and power assertion was most acceptable from the father when disciplining a son. Kagan and Lemkin's (1990) study, investigating 3- to 8-year olds' perceptions of parental attributes,

also revealed perceptual differences according to the parent's gender. Children perceived their fathers as stronger, smarter, and also as the primary disciplinarian. Girls particularly rated their fathers as more powerful and competent with parenting compared to their mothers. Mothers were primarily rated as more generous than fathers and also as the parent who gave more materialistic gifts. Furthermore, children perceived their mothers as less punitive, fear provoking and competent than their fathers.

The Present Study

As outlined above, discipline is important to cognitive and social development (e.g., Hoffman, 1983). Research on this topic has revealed that induction is the most effective of the various types of discipline. Further, recent research (e.g., Johnson, et al., 1991) has documented the importance of children's perceptions of parental discipline and factors that influence children's evaluations of their own and other's discipline. Extending research into children's perceptions of discipline, the present study investigated the influences of different types of induction (parent oriented, peer oriented) and different social situations (physical, psychological) on children's perceptions of parent-child discipline. Hypotheses are listed below.

Hypotheses one and two. Past research (e.g., Grusec and Goodnow, 1994), has documented gender differences with respect to children's perceptions of discipline. Girls perceived inductive reasoning more favorably than power assertion and love withdrawal. Compared to girls, boys rated parents who use love withdrawal and power assertion as being more sensitive and fair. Given that girls generally perceive induction more favorably than do boys, it was hypothesized that girls would perceive different types of induction (parent-oriented, peer-oriented) more positively than would boys. Specifically,

girls would perceive both types of induction as more fair than boys. Further, given that girls are in general more relationship oriented than boys, it was hypothesized that girls would perceive the transgressor as feeling more sorry towards the victim after receiving discipline than boys.

Hypotheses three and four. Age differences in children's perceptions of discipline have been studied extensively (e.g., Johnson, et al., 1991). As reported previously, Barnett et al. (1996) indicated that second-graders rated parents who used inductive techniques as less sensitive and less fair than sixth-graders. Grusec and Goodnow (1994) also reported that second-graders rated parents who used inductive techniques as more unjust compared to sixth-graders. Thus, it was hypothesized that younger children would rate both types of induction as less fair than older children. Another important age difference is that young children receive more direct parental guidance than older children. As children mature, their social life expands beyond the family context and they gain more freedom. Although parents still exert a lot of influence on their children as they mature, peer relationships become increasingly important. Forming healthy relationships with one's peers is important for children's social development (Hartup, 1989). Given the increasingly important role of peers as children mature, it was hypothesized that older children would perceive peer-oriented induction as more effective than younger children. Specifically, older children would perceive the transgressor who received peer-oriented induction as less likely to commit the same transgression in the near future than would younger children.

Hypothesis five. The effectiveness of induction compared to other discipline techniques (e.g., power assertion) has been studied extensively (e.g., Siegal & Cowen,

1984). Research (e.g., Hoffman, 1970) has begun to investigate induction more closely in order to identify various ways of implementing this discipline technique (i.e., peer-oriented induction versus parent-oriented induction). Peer-oriented induction promotes both guilt about and empathy for the victim's feelings. In contrast, parent-oriented induction primarily encourages the child to feel guilty for hurting the parent's feelings, but fails to promote empathic feelings towards the person for whom the child offended. The transgressor does not feel empathy towards the child who was hurt because the parent does not address the victim's (hurt child) feelings in parent-oriented induction. Considering peer-oriented induction involves more disciplinary qualities that facilitate induction (e.g., guilt and empathy) in terms of achieving compliance, it was hypothesized that children would perceive compliance more readily in peer-oriented situations than in parent-oriented situations.

Hypothesis six. Lastly, research has shown that boys tend to engage in more physical aggression (e.g., hitting) than girls, and girls tend to engage in more relational aggression (e.g., name calling) than boys (Crick, 1996). Further, boys tend to be more activity oriented and impersonal in their relationships with other children compared to girls who are more focused on interpersonal interactions. Thus, it was assumed that boys would identify more with the transgressor in the physical transgression scenario and girls would identify more with the transgressor in the psychological transgression scenario. It was hypothesized that boys would perceive the transgressor as being more affected by discipline in the physical transgression scenarios and girls would perceive the transgressor as being more affected by discipline in the psychological transgression scenarios. Specifically, boys would perceive the transgressor as being more upset after

receiving discipline for committing a physical transgression than would girls. In contrast, girls would perceive the transgressor as being more upset after receiving discipline for committing a psychological transgression than would boys.

To summarize, hypothesis one predicted girls would evaluate discipline more positively than boys. Second, girls were expected to evaluate the transgressor as feeling more sorry towards the victim than boys. The third hypothesis predicted that younger children would evaluate both types of discipline as less fair than older children. Hypothesis four predicted that older children would perceive the transgressor who received peer-oriented induction as less likely to commit the same transgression than younger children. The fifth hypothesis predicted that children would perceive peer-oriented induction as more effective than parent-oriented induction. Lastly, boys were expected to perceive the transgressor as being more upset after receiving discipline for committing a physical transgression and girls would perceive the transgressor as being more upset after receiving discipline for committing a psychological transgression.

Method

Participants

Participants were 79 boys and 80 girls from second-, third-, fifth-, and sixth-grades (N = 159). All children attended a public elementary school. While the ethnicity of participants was not a variable of interest in the current study, the racial composition of the school was approximately 50% African American and 50% European American. All participating children returned a parental consent letter and also gave their own written consent prior to the study (see Appendix A). All participants were told that while we appreciated their help, they did not have to participate if they did not want to and could stop at any time during the course of the interview.

Measures

Discipline Scenarios and Questionnaires. Four audio-recorded discipline scenarios were constructed (see Appendix B). Scenarios were also provided on paper for the participants to read. Scenarios varied according to the type of induction used (parent-oriented, peer-oriented) and type of transgression committed (physical, psychological). Thus, each scenario contained two components: a.) oriented towards the mother or oriented towards the peer and, b.) physical harm or psychological harm toward the peer, for a total of four discipline scenarios (see Appendix B).

Each of the four discipline scenarios were accompanied by a questionnaire composed of eleven questions. These questions assessed children's perceptions of: a.) the target's affect, b.) mother's affect, c.) evaluator's affect, d.) effectiveness of

discipline, and e.) fairness of discipline. Responses to each question were made using a six point Likert type scale (see Appendix C).

Procedure

Each child was individually interviewed by the experimenter in a quiet area outside of his or her classroom in a fifteen to twenty minute session. During the interview, each child was presented with all four hypothetical scenarios and corresponding questionnaires. First, each child heard a discipline scenario and then completed the corresponding questionnaire. Children filled out each questionnaire immediately following each discipline scenario. At the beginning of the second and all subsequent scenarios, children were instructed "Instead of this happening, let's pretend that this is what happens." Children requiring help (e.g., reading questionnaire items, defining words) were assisted by the experimenter. Some children requested, and were granted, a second time at listening to the parent-child discipline scenarios. In order to control for possible carry over and sequencing effects, order of presentation of the four discipline scenarios was counterbalanced. After completion of the last questionnaire, the child was thanked for their participation and asked if there were any questions regarding the project. After answering any questions, the child was accompanied back to the classroom by the experimenter.

Results

For all analyses, Grade and Gender of participants were between-subject variables and Transgression Type (Physical, Psychological) and Induction Type (Peer-Oriented, Parent-Oriented) were within-subject variables. To examine grade effects with ample group size, the four grade levels were collapsed into two levels forming a younger group (Grades 2-3), and an older group (Grades 5-6). Thus, a 2 (Grade: young, old) x 2 (Gender) x 2 (Transgression Type: physical, psychological) x 2 (Induction Type: peer-oriented, parent-oriented) mixed factorial analysis of variance was conducted on variables assessing the transgressor's emotional state, fairness of discipline, and evaluator's affect. For analyses on how upset and how sorry the transgressor was, an additional within-subject variable, Time (Before, After), was also used. Thus, questions pertaining to how upset and how sorry the transgressor was, a 2 (Grade: young, old) x 2 (Gender) x 2 (Transgression Type: physical, psychological) x 2 (Induction Type: peer-oriented, parent-oriented) x 2 (Time: before and after discipline) mixed factorial analysis of variance was conducted. Follow-up tests to statistically significant interactions were conducted as tests for simple effects followed by Newman-Keuls post hoc tests ($p < .05$) to determine sources of differences where appropriate. For purposes of analyses, some hypotheses have been combined in the following results section.

Hypotheses Analyses

Hypotheses one and three: analysis investigating the evaluations of parental fairness. Analysis for hypothesis one, investigating the main effect for gender on fairness, revealed no statistically significant effects, F (1, 154) = .68, $p > .05$. In addition, analysis for hypothesis three, investigating the main effect for grade on fairness, revealed no statistically significant effects, F (1, 154) = .00, $p > .05$. However, analysis did reveal a statistically significant Gender x Induction Type interaction, F (1,154) = 5.48, $p < .05$, as shown in Figure 1. For Parent-Oriented Induction, girls (M = 5.157, SD = 1.529) evaluated the transgressor's mother as being more fair than did boys (M = 4.790, SD = 1.665). No statistically significant gender differences emerged for Peer-Oriented Induction. Also, boys evaluated the transgressor's mother as being more fair when evaluating the Peer-Oriented Induction scenario (M = 5.225, SD = 1.385) than when evaluating the Parent-Oriented Induction scenario. No statistically significant differences with Induction Type emerged for girls (Ms and (SDs) = 5.178 (1.418), 5.157 (1.529) for Peer-Oriented Induction and Parent-Oriented Induction respectively). Thus, discipline focusing on how the child's negative behavior affected the parent was perceived as being more fair than discipline addressing how the child's negative behavior affected the victim, for girls only. Interestingly, while girls perceived both types of induction as equally fair, boys perceived discipline that focused on how the victim felt as more fair than discipline focusing on how the parent felt.

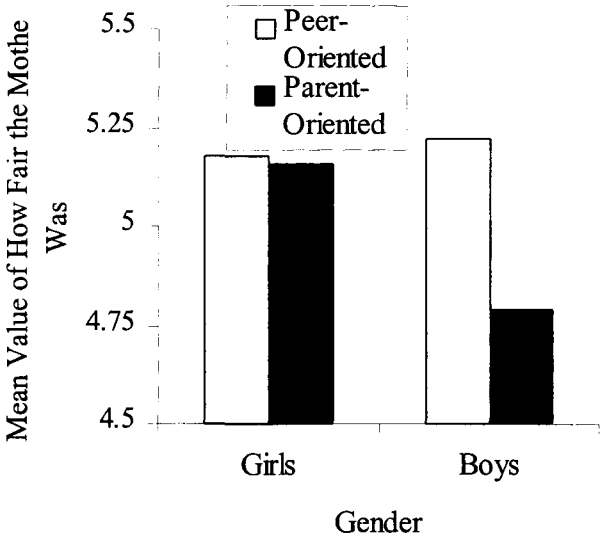

Figure 1: How Fair the Transgressor's Mother Was To Administer Discipline: Gender x Induction Type Interaction

Analysis also revealed a significant Transgression Type x Induction Type interaction, F (1, 154) = 5.11, $p < .05$, as shown in Figure 2. When evaluating Physical Transgressions, children reported the transgressor's mother as being more fair when using Peer-Oriented Induction (M = 5.310, SD = 1.281) compared to when using Parent-Oriented Induction (M = 4.911, SD = 1.679). No statistically significant differences emerged regarding the evaluations of the most fair Type of Induction for Psychological Transgressions (Ms and (SDs) = 5.095 (1.505), 5.044 (1.503) for Peer-Oriented Induction and Parent-Oriented Induction respectively). Thus, children's evaluation of fairness of parental discipline depended on the type of transgression committed. When the transgressor's negative behavior lead to a physical outcome for the other child, discipline focusing on how the victim felt was perceived as more fair than discipline addressing how the parent felt.

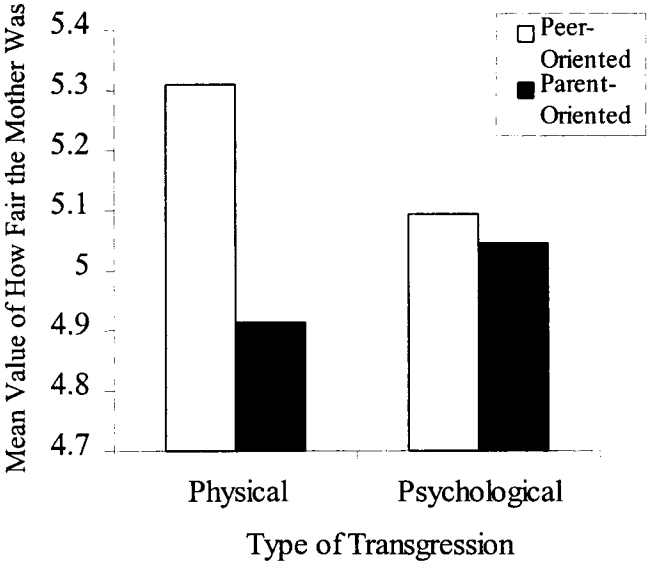

Figure 2: How Fair the Transgressor's Mother Was To Administer Discipline: Transgression Type x Induction Type Interaction

Hypothesis two: analysis investigating evaluations of how sorry the transgressor felt before and after discipline. Analysis for hypothesis two, investigating the main effect for gender on feelings of remorse, revealed no statistically significant effects, F (1, 154) = .05, $p > .05$. Analysis did reveal a statistically significant Grade x Time interaction, F (1, 154) = 8.18, $p < .01$, as shown in Figure 3. Both younger and older children evaluated the transgressor as more sorry after the discipline occurred (Ms and (SDs) = 5.092 (1.302), 4.927 (1.213) for younger and older children respectively) than before it happened (Ms and (SDs) = 3.075 (1.946), 2.212 (1.622) for younger and older children respectively). Also, before the discipline occurred, younger children evaluated the transgressor as being more sorry towards the victim than did older children, while no statistically significant differences emerged between younger and older children after the

discipline occurred. Thus, children evaluated the transgressor as feeling more remorse for his/her negative behavior toward the victim after receiving discipline than before the discipline occurred, regardless of the Type of Transgression committed or Type of Induction received. And, while no statistically significant differences emerged between younger and older children after discipline occurred, younger children perceived the transgressor as feeling more sorry for his negative behavior toward the victim before discipline happened than did older children.

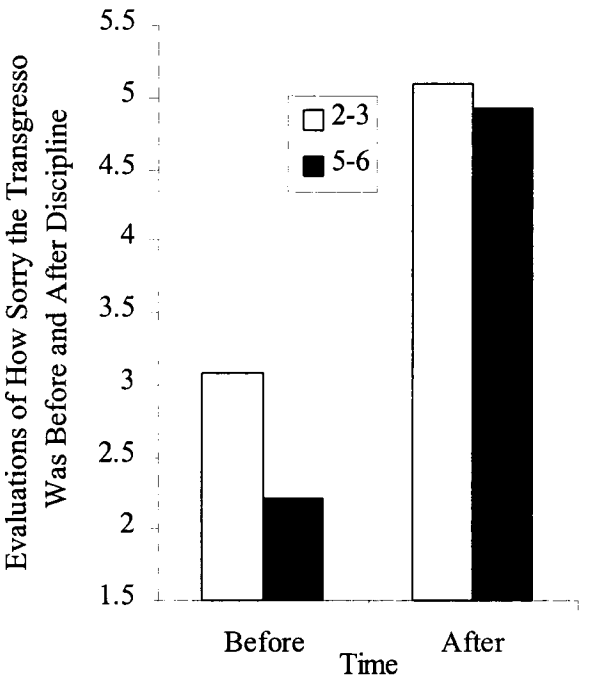

Figure 3: How Sorry the Transgressor Was: Grade x Time Interaction

Hypotheses four and five: analysis investigating the effectiveness of each discipline method. Analysis for hypothesis four, investigating the main effect for grade on effectiveness of discipline, revealed no statistically significant effects, F (1, 154) = 1.30, $p > .05$. Furthermore, analysis for hypothesis five, investigating the main effect for

type of induction on effectiveness of discipline, revealed no statistically significant effects, F (1, 154) = .05, p > .05. Thus, both types of discipline were evaluated as being equally effective in receiving long term compliance by younger and older children.

Hypothesis six: analysis investigating the relationship between gender and type of transgression. Analysis for hypothesis six, investigating the effect for gender and type of transgression on feeling upset, revealed no statistically significant effects, F (1, 153) = 2.65, p > .05. However, analysis did reveal a statistically significant Grade main effect, F (1, 153) = 33.24, p < .001. Younger children (M = 3.667, SD = 1.751) evaluated the transgressor as being more upset than did older children (M = 2.882, SD = 1.491). Analysis also revealed a statistically significant Gender x Time x Induction Type interaction, F (1, 153) = 13.53, p < .001. For ease of interpretation, Figure 4 shows this interaction as 2 two-way (Time x Induction Type) interactions, one for each gender. Both boys and girls evaluated the transgressor as more upset after the discipline occurred (Ms and (SDs) = 4.327 (1.536), 4.445 (1.560) for boys and girls respectively) than before it happened (Ms and (SDs) = 2.288 (1.765), 2.040 (1.623) for boys and girls respectively). For both Peer-Oriented and Parent-Oriented Types of discipline, children evaluated the transgressor as more upset after the discipline occurred (Ms and (SDs) = 4.220 (1.675), 4.465 (1.559) for Peer-Oriented Induction and Parent-Oriented Induction respectively) than before it happened (Ms and (SDs) = 2.077 (1.730), 2.166 (1.761) for Peer-Oriented Induction and Parent-Oriented Induction respectively). No statistically significant Gender by Induction Type interactions emerged. Thus, both boys and girls reported the transgressor as being equally upset in both the Peer-Oriented Induction and Parent-Oriented Induction scenarios. In general, children evaluated the transgressor as

being more upset after the discipline occurred than before it happened, regardless of the Type of Transgression situation or Type of Induction scenario.

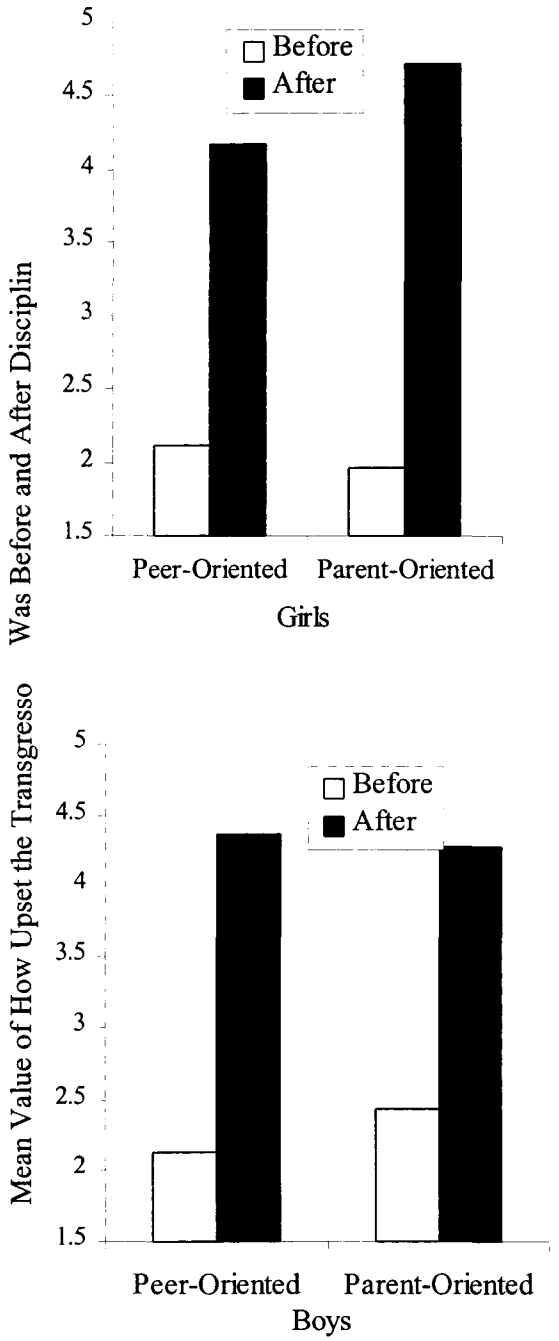

Figure 4: How Upset the Transgressor Was: Gender x Time x Induction Type Interaction

Additional Analyses

Analysis investigating the evaluations of how upset the transgressor was about mom. Analysis revealed a Grade main effect, F (1, 153) = 15.25, $p < .001$. Younger children (M = 4.762, SD = 1.457) evaluated the transgressor as more upset with the mother than did older children (M = 3.999, SD = 1.644). Thus, regardless of the type of discipline or type of transgression evaluated, younger children perceived the transgressor as being more negatively affected by the discipline than older children.

Analysis investigating the evaluations of how right the transgressor's mother was to administer discipline. Analysis revealed a statistically significant Transgression Type x Induction Type interaction, F (1, 155) = 5.93, $p < .05$, as shown in Figure 5. When evaluating Physical Transgressions, children evaluated the transgressor's mother as more right using Peer-Oriented Induction (M = 5.447, SD = 1.010) compared to using Parent-Oriented Induction (M = 5.157, SD = 1.394). No significant differences emerged regarding the evaluations of how right the transgressor's mother was in the Psychological Transgression situations (Ms and (SDs) = 5.296 (1.235), 5.340 (1.168) for Peer-Oriented Induction and Parent-Oriented Induction respectively). Thus, while no statistically significant differences emerged regarding Psychological Transgressions, children perceived discipline that focused on the victim's affect as being more appropriate for Physical Transgressions as opposed to discipline that focused on the parent's affect. Children's evaluations of how right the transgressor's mother was in administering discipline was similar to the above findings with regard to evaluations of how fair the mother was in administering discipline. In both evaluations, children perceived Peer-Oriented discipline more positively than Parent-Oriented discipline.

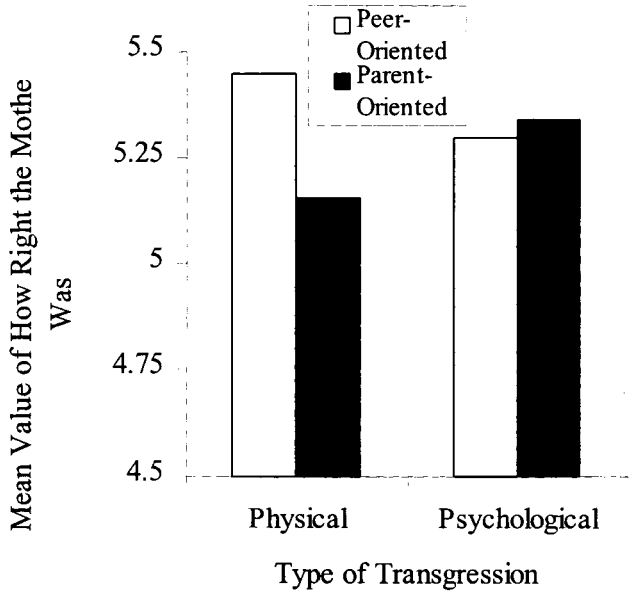

Figure 5: How Right the Transgressor's Mother Was To Administer Discipline: Type of Transgression x Type of Induction Interaction

Analysis investigating the evaluations of how upset the evaluator was after watching each scenario. Analysis revealed a statistically significant Gender main effect, F (1, 155) = 5.41, $p < .05$. Girls (M = 4.825, SD = 1.442) reported being more upset after evaluating each scenario than did boys (M = 4.314, SD = 1.739). Thus, regardless of the type of transgression or type of induction evaluated, girls were more negatively affected by the scenarios than boys.

Analysis investigating the evaluations of how the evaluator would feel about receiving the different types of induction. Analysis of how children as evaluators would feel about receiving either Peer-Oriented or Parent-Oriented Induction revealed no statistically significant differences. Thus, children reported that they would feel the same regardless of the type of transgression they committed or type of discipline they received.

Analysis investigating the evaluations of how good each type of punishment was with regards to the type of transgression committed. Analysis revealed a statistically significant Grade x Transgression Type x Induction Type interaction, F (1, 155) = 4.05, $p < .05$. For ease of interpretation, Figure 6 shows this interaction as 2 two-way (Transgression Type x Induction Type) interactions, one for each grade. Younger children (M = 4.886, SD = 1.548) evaluated Parent-Oriented induction as a better type of discipline than did older children (M = 4.384, SD = 1.688), however no statistically significant differences emerged for Peer-Oriented discipline. Further, older children evaluated Peer-Oriented Induction (M = 5.003, SD = 1.423) as a better type of discipline compared to Parent-Oriented Induction (M = 4.384, SD = 1.688), while no statistically significant differences emerged for younger children. Also, for both Physical and Psychological Transgressions, children evaluated Peer-Oriented Induction (Ms and (SDs) = 4.868 (1.531), 4.943 (1.451) for Physical Transgression and Psychological Transgression respectively) as a better type of punishment than Parent-Oriented Induction (Ms and (SDs) = 4.560 (1.694), 4.642 (1.643) for Physical Transgression and Psychological Transgression respectively). No statistically significant Grade by Transgression Type interaction emerged. Thus, younger and older children evaluated both Peer-Oriented and Parent-Oriented Induction equally, regardless of the Type of Transgression. Overall, children evaluated Peer-Oriented Induction as better than Parent-Oriented Induction, regardless of the Type of Transgression. Specifically, older children evaluated Peer-Oriented Induction as a better type of punishment than Parent-Oriented Induction, and younger children evaluated Parent-Oriented Induction as a better type of punishment than did the older children.

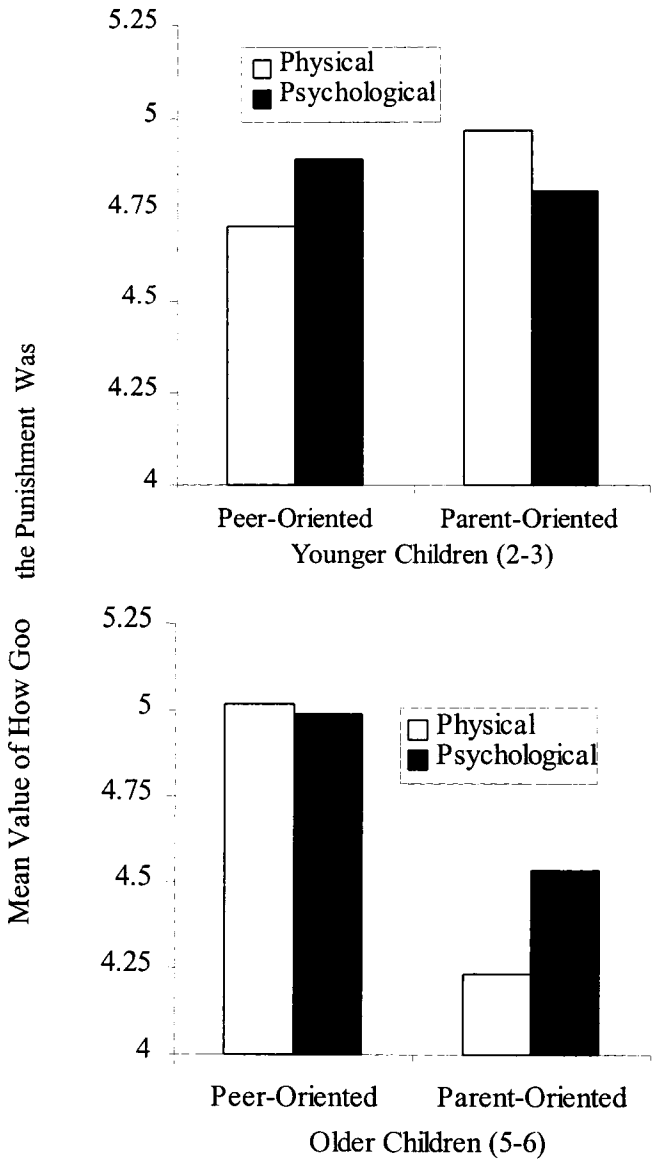

Figure 6: How Good Each Type of Punishment Was: Grade x Transgression Type x Induction Type Interaction

Discussion

Discipline is vital to children's cognitive and social development (Sears & Sears, 1995). Much work has been done investigating children's perceptions of discipline (see Grusec & Goodnow, 1994, for review). These efforts have revealed a variety of factors (e.g., age) that influence children's evaluations of discipline. Research has shown that the social situation in which discipline is administered is a contributing factor influencing children's conceptions of discipline (e.g., Siegal and Cowen, 1984). Most research (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996) in this area has focused on children's perceptions of three popular types of discipline (power assertion, love withdrawal, inductive reasoning). Research has shown that inductive reasoning yields the most compliance from children (e.g., Hoffman, 1983). Interestingly, little work has been directed toward understanding children's perceptions of various types of induction. Thus, the present study investigated influences on children's perceptions of discipline as a function of different social situations (physical and psychological transgressions) and different types of induction (peer-oriented, parent-oriented). Below is a detailed discussion of the findings.

The prediction that girls would perceive both discipline methods more fairly than boys was not supported. Interestingly, girls evaluated parent-oriented discipline as being more fair than boys. However, contrary to the original prediction, boys actually evaluated peer-oriented discipline as fair as did girls. That girls perceived parent-oriented induction as more fair than boys supports previous research (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996), reporting that girls perceived inductive reasoning more favorably than did boys.

Barnett and his colleagues suggested that children's perceptions of discipline are influenced by the type of discipline they are most familiar with receiving. Whereas boys tend to receive more controlling and punitive types of discipline, girls receive more conversational types of discipline. Perhaps girls evaluated parent-oriented induction more favorably than boys because they are more familiar with discipline involving conversations, which is characteristic of induction. Furthermore, Barnett and his colleagues (1996) reported that boys perceived power assertion to be more sensitive and fair compared to girls. This finding indicated that boys are more tolerant of physical punishment than girls. That boys are quite tolerant of power-assertive techniques involving physical reprimands provides one possible explanation for their elevated positive evaluations of peer-oriented induction compared to parent-oriented induction. Although peer-oriented induction is not considered a physical discipline technique, it is a reprimand that requires more physical activity on behalf of the transgressor than does the parent-oriented induction. For example, the transgressor was required to approach the victim and apologize in the peer-oriented induction as opposed to the parent-oriented induction in which the transgressor simply had to sit down and think about his/her behavior and the mother's affect.

Another possibility why discipline focusing on the mother's affect was evaluated as being more unjust for boys than discipline focusing on the victim's affect may be related to parent-child socialization. Mothers socialize their daughters in an interpersonal approach style, at an earlier age, and in different ways compared to their sons (Cervantes & Callanan, 1998). This interpersonal approach style encourages girls to form connections with their mothers and to be emotionally sensitive to others. In contrast,

boys are taught at an early age to control their emotions and to approach social situations from a problem-solving orientation. Boys are also more oriented toward distancing themselves from their mothers as opposed to forming bonds with them. Perhaps boys evaluated peer-oriented induction as being more fair than parent-oriented induction because it required the transgressor to solve the presenting problem by making amends with the victim.

The hypothesis that boys would perceive the transgressor as being more affected by discipline in the physical transgression scenario and girls would perceive the transgressor as being more affected by discipline in the psychological transgression scenario was not supported. Thus, neither girls' nor boys' evaluations of the transgressor's affect were significantly affected by any particular type of transgression. In addition, the hypothesis that girls would perceive the transgressor as feeling more empathy toward the victim after receiving discipline than boys was also not supported. However, the present study did reveal a gender difference regarding the evaluator's affect after evaluating each scenario. Girls became more disturbed with the transgressor's behavior after evaluating each story than did boys. Previous research (e.g., Belle, 1989) has shown that girls are more emotionally sensitive and empathic in their relationships than boys. Hoffman (1988) explains how girls experience heightened levels of guilt after committing a moral transgression, whereas boys experience feelings of fear for their external consequences. Furthermore, girls tend to express more nurturing and supportive characteristics in their friendships than do boys (Belle, 1989). In contrast to boys whose primary interests are engaging in activities with their friends, girls prefer to be more intimate and self-disclosing in their friendships (Belle, 1989). These gender differences

in friendships may explain why girls became more disturbed after observing each scenario than did boys. Girls may have experienced feelings of guilt and remorse, that they so often experience in their own personal relationships, while evaluating the hypothetical scenarios.

Although past research (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996) indicates that younger children consider induction to be less fair than older children, the present study did not support those findings. In fact, younger children evaluated parent-oriented discipline as being a better type of punishment than did older children. A possible explanation may be related to the amount of social activity that children engage in outside of the home. Parents are the most influential people in a young person's life. Young children continually refer to and depend on their parents for advice and guidance and have a limited social life in the absence of their parents. Parents serve as significant role models, especially to young children. The present study revealed how important parents are to young children, and how concerned young children are about hurting their parents' feelings.

That young children evaluated parent-oriented induction as being a more appropriate method of discipline than older children suggests that younger children felt the transgressor had a moral duty to maintain a positive relationship with his/her mother. However, as children mature and their social arena broadens, peers become increasingly important and influential, possibly explaining why older children evaluated peer-oriented induction as being a more appropriate type of discipline than parent-oriented induction. Perhaps older children felt the transgressor had an extra sense of duty and desire to make amends with his/her peer, the victim, after discourse occurred because of the increased importance of peers. Thus, older children may have felt that the opportunity for the

transgressor to apologize in the peer-oriented situation was more important than younger children.

Although younger children perceived parent-oriented induction as being a more appropriate method of discipline than did older children, they also felt that the transgressor expressed higher levels of animosity toward the mother than older children. Perhaps younger children perceived the transgressor as having more negative feelings towards his/her mother because they perceive inductive reasoning to be less sensitive and more unjust than do older children, as was revealed in past research (e.g., Barnett et al., 1996). Furthermore, young children's cognitive abilities may not be developed to the level of being able to understand such hypothetical messages as those that were sent to the transgressor in the present study (Piaget, 1929). This inability to fully comprehend the message may contribute to younger children becoming frustrated with the mother.

The hypothesis that older children would perceive the transgressor who received peer-oriented induction as less likely to commit the same transgression in the future than would younger children was not supported. And, although the hypothesis that children would perceive compliance more readily in peer-oriented situations than in parent-oriented situations was not supported either, discipline that focused on the victim's affect was evaluated more positively than discipline focusing on the parent's affect. Children evaluated peer-oriented induction as the most fair and the most appropriate type of discipline as opposed to parent-oriented induction. From this result, it appears that children felt a misbehavior should be punished according to the act that was committed, which was evident in the peer-oriented induction situations. Indeed the transgressor's mother did focus punishment on the actual transgression by addressing the victim's

feelings in the peer-oriented discipline and refrained from positioning herself in the middle of the situation. Furthermore, children may not have felt that the transgressor intended to hurt his/her mother's feelings, which made the mother's comment in the parent-oriented induction unjustified.

Another possibility why children evaluated peer-oriented discipline more favorably than parent-oriented discipline relates to their feelings and emotions. Past research (Lamb, 1988) has revealed that affect serves to motivate people to act empathetically toward others by assisting and/or communicating with them. After hearing the stories about the transgressor's behaviors, children in the present study may have thought that the transgressor felt remorseful and regret. As a result, the children felt a desire to have the transgressor directly apologize for his/her actions, rather than sitting in quiet solitude, because that is how they would act had they committed a similar transgression.

Previous research has shown that children's evaluations of others are guided, in part, by how they themselves would react in similar situations (Ray & Cohen, 1997), possibly explaining why children perceived the transgressor as experiencing heightened levels of distress after discipline occurred. Evaluators indicated that the transgressor felt more remorse and distress after discipline occurred compared to before it happened. Perhaps children in the present study considered how they would feel (e.g., upset) after being punished for misbehaving. Considering there were no consequences before the discipline situation occurred, evaluators may have felt there was no reason for the transgressor to feel upset until after being disciplined. Whereas after the discipline occurred, the transgressor was forced to think about his/her misbehavior. While

considering the other child's emotional state, children may have thought that the transgressor developed negative feelings (e.g., remorse) about treating the other individual with disrespect. Hoffman (1983) explained how inductive reasoning encourages children to feel empathy for the victim and guilt about harming another person in a social situation. That children evaluated the transgressor as being more empathetic towards the victim after discipline occurred as opposed to before it happened illustrates how feelings of concern for the victim are often aroused in children after being disciplined with an inductive reasoning technique.

The present study also showed that although induction was evaluated as the most effective and appropriate discipline method, the diverse ways of implementing it were evaluated differently according to the social situation in which the transgression occurred. The present study revealed that peer-oriented induction was evaluated more positively compared to parent-oriented induction in situations involving physical transgressions. The evaluators' gender and age were also contributing factors that influenced their evaluations of different types of induction. Although peer-oriented induction was overall evaluated as the best type of induction, parent-oriented induction was perceived differently for boys and girls. Girls felt that the mother was more just in administering discipline that emphasized the parent's affect, as opposed to the victim's affect. Furthermore, girls were more negatively affected than boys after observing each discipline situation. Younger children also appeared to be more affected after evaluating the social situations than older children. Not only did younger children perceive the transgressor as being more upset overall and more repentant towards the victim than

older children, they also evaluated the transgressor as feeling more agitated towards the mother than did older children.

Limitations of the current study include the fact that children were presented with hypothetical scenarios, which may have minimized the reality of the experiment for the evaluator's. Children's responses to hypothetical situations may not coincide with how they would respond in actual discipline situations. In addition, children were asked to evaluate each story using a forced choice questionnaire. Allowing children to respond more freely and independently to situations involving discipline may have provided a more complete understanding of children's perceptions of discipline. The present study focused on mother-child discipline only. Future research into children's perceptions of discipline needs to consider discipline that is administered by the father also. Additionally, there are various other types of inductive reasoning (e.g., self-oriented) that could prove important in future research. Furthermore, previous research (e.g., Siegal & Cowen, 1984) has revealed that numerous social situations exist which influence children's perceptions of discipline. The present study investigated children's perceptions of discipline as a function of two social situations (physical and psychological transgression). Future research into children's understanding of discipline should investigate other types of social situations (e.g., accidental transgression) in which discipline occurs. Lastly, a comparative analysis of parents and their children's perceptions of various types of induction and social situations would be beneficial.

In conclusion, research within the field of discipline has led to great advances in our understanding of the various factors influencing children's perceptions of discipline. Grusec and Goodnow's (1994) reconceptualization of the parental socialization literature

indicated that children must accurately perceive and accept the parental message in any discipline situation in order for internalization to occur. The present study illustrated that children evaluated various types of induction differently, which would undoubtedly influence the likelihood that they would internalize the principles taught to them. In addition, Grusec and Goodnow's (1994) analysis of discipline techniques suggested that the effectiveness of a particular discipline technique, in terms of receiving long term compliance, was affected by how appropriately children evaluated the discipline situation. While past research shows that induction is perceived as the most effective form of discipline, it has failed to provide a thorough analysis of how children perceive the numerous ways of implementing induction. The present study illustrated that children do not perceive different types of induction as being equally appropriate. In addition, the present study showed that children's perceptions of induction were influenced by the social situation in which the transgression occurred. So, although induction was rated as the most effective of the three most popular methods of discipline (physical assertion, love withdrawal, induction), the social context in which the transgression occurs will indeed cause variations in children's evaluations of the different types of induction. Given the fact that induction is considered the most effective method of discipline, literature analyzing discipline would indeed be enhanced from further studies investigating children's perceptions of inductive reasoning techniques. Thus, by showing that children do in fact perceive various types of inductive reasoning differently, the present study serves as a base from which other research can explore additional factors that may influence children's understanding of discipline, particularly involving inductive reasoning.

The scientific applications of the present study are important; however, so too is being able to use the results to assist clinicians and caregivers with improving their therapeutic and discipline techniques. The present study provided a more thorough understanding of how induction is perceived differently by children depending upon the gender and age of the observer, type of induction, and type of transgression. The gender and age of the observer should be considered when working with children. Clinicians and caregivers can benefit by differentiating between inductive reasoning techniques on a case-by-case basis depending upon the individuals involved. The type of transgression will have an effect on children's perceptions of discipline also. By considering the type of transgression when deciding an appropriate discipline technique, caregivers can increase the likelihood that children will comply with their requests. Thus, with a better understanding of the impact that the transgression, gender and age of the child, and type of induction applied has on children's perceptions of discipline, clinicians and caregivers can increase long term compliance and be more effective in instilling principles in children.

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Appendix A

Dear Parent:

At AUM we are studying children's understanding of social situations. We are going to interview children about imaginary discipline situations between other people. All second-, third-, fifth- and sixth-grades at your child's school will be invited to participate. Children will hear short stories and then fill out questions about what they heard. We would like for your child to participate in this project. Your child will be interviewed in a quiet area outside of their classroom. The interview will last about fifteen minutes. At no time will your child leave the school building. The project will be completed during times approved by the classroom teacher. All names will be held strictly confidential and will not appear in any written reports. There are no perceived risks to participants. Children will evaluate imaginary situations involving hypothetical people. Only group analysis of answers will be conducted. The project has been approved by the principle, Mr. Armistead. We need your permission to continue. Please complete this letter and have your child return it to his/her home room teacher. Your child will be informed before the project that they may decline to participate in the project, and that they may stop any time. In addition, your child will be asked to sign this form giving his/her permission. Thank you very much for your help.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE, HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

Sincerely,

Nicole K. Horton 244-3306 (AUM)

Dr. Glen E. Ray, Supervisor 244-3690

Child's name:_____

_____ Yes, my child may participate in the project mentioned above

_____ No, my child may not participate in the project mentioned above

Parent's signature: _____Date:_____

Child's signature: _____Date:_____

Appendix B

Physical Transgression + Peer Induction

Pat is walking home from school in a good mood. Along comes Jamie, who is carrying an art project. Jamie is very proud of the art project and is excited to show it to other family members. Pat's mother is watching out the window. Suddenly she sees Pat push Jamie into a big mud puddle. Jamie falls down and the art project lands in the mud puddle. Pat runs home. When Pat gets home, Pat's mom says, "Pat, I saw what just happened and I want to talk to you about it. I saw you push Jamie into the mud puddle. I cannot believe you did that. I'm really disappointed in you. Just think about what you did and how sad and upset Jamie must feel. Now, I want you to go over to Jamie's house and apologize. And when you get back, I want you to sit down and think about what you did and what you can do to make it up to Jamie. And the next time you think about doing something like that to someone else, I want you to stop and think about the other person's feelings first, OK?"

Psychological Transgression + Peer Induction

Pat is walking home from school in a good mood. Along comes Jamie, who is carrying an art project. Jamie is very proud of the art project and is excited to show it to other family members. Jamie is walking slower than Pat and asks Pat to slow down. Pat's mother is watching and listening out the window. Suddenly she hears Pat say, "No way, you are embarrassing to walk with. You look like a clown with those clothes on. Why don't you wear something that matches? Those clothes are ugly." Pat runs home yelling, "Jamie's a clown!" When Pat gets home, Pat's mom says, "Pat, I heard what you just said and I want to talk to you about it. I heard you tease Jamie in a mean way. I cannot believe you did that. I'm really disappointed in you. Just think about what you did and how sad and upset Jamie must feel. Now, I want you to go over to Jamie's house and apologize. And when you get back, I want you to sit down and think about what you did and what you can do to make it up to Jamie. And the next time you think about doing something like that to someone else, I want you to stop and think about the other person's feelings first, OK?"

Physical Transgression + Parent Induction

Pat is walking home from school in a good mood. Along comes Jamie, who is carrying an art project. Jamie is very proud of the art project and is excited to show it to other family members. Pat's mother is watching out the window. Suddenly she sees Pat push Jamie into a big mud puddle. Jamie falls down and the art project lands in the mud puddle. Pat runs home. When Pat gets home, Pat's mom says, "Pat, I saw what just

happened and I want to talk to you about it. I saw you push Jamie into the mud puddle. I cannot believe you did that. I'm really disappointed in you. That made me very sad when I saw you do that. I am responsible for you and the way you treat other people. I thought I taught you to be nice to other children. You hurt my feelings when you are mean to other people. I want you to sit down here and think about what you did and how much it hurts my feelings when you misbehave. And the next time you think about doing something like that to someone else, I want you to stop and think about how sad and upset it will make me feel when I find out about it. O.K.?"

Psychological Transgression + Parent Induction

Pat is walking home from school in a good mood. Along comes Jamie, who is carrying an art project. Jamie is very proud of the art project and is excited to show it to other family members. Jamie is walking slower than Pat and asks Pat to slow down. Pat's mother is watching and listening out the window. Suddenly she hears Pat say, "No way, you are embarrassing to walk with. You look like a clown with those clothes on. Why don't you wear something that matches? Those clothes are ugly." Pat runs home yelling, "Jamie's a clown!" When Pat gets home, Pat's mom says, "Pat, I heard what you just said and I want to talk to you about it. I heard you tease Jamie in a mean way. I cannot believe you did that. I'm really disappointed in you. That made me very sad when I heard you do that. I am responsible for you and the way you treat other people. I thought I taught you to be nice to other children. You hurt my feelings when you are mean to other people. I want you to sit down here and think about what you did and how much it hurts my feelings when you misbehave. And the next time you think about doing something like that to someone else, I want you to stop and think about how sad and upset it will make me feel when I find out about it. O.K.?"

Appendix C

Name:_____ **Grade: 2 3 5 6 Boy Girl** **Teacher:**_____

Today's Date ____/____/____ **Age** _____

Your Birthday ____/____/____

1. Before getting in trouble, how upset was Pat about what happened?	1 Not Upset	2 Little Upset	3 Somewhat Upset	4 Pretty Upset	5 Really Upset	6 Very Upset
2. Before mom talked with Pat, how sorry do you think Pat felt towards Jamie?	1 Not Sorry	2 Little Sorry	3 Somewhat Sorry	4 Pretty Sorry	5 Really Sorry	6 Very Sorry
3. How fair was Pat's mother?	1 Not Fair	2 Little Fair	3 Somewhat Fair	4 Pretty Fair	5 Really Fair	6 Very Fair
4. After getting in trouble, how upset was Pat about what happened?	1 Not Upset	2 Little Upset	3 Somewhat Upset	4 Pretty Upset	5 Really Upset	6 Very Upset
5. How upset does Pat feel about mom after this happened?	1 Not Upset	2 Little Upset	3 Somewhat Upset	4 Pretty Upset	5 Really Upset	6 Very Upset
6. How long will it be before Pat does something like this again?	1 Not Long	2 Little Long	3 Somewhat Long	4 Pretty Long	5 Really Long	6 Very Long
7. Pat's mother did the right thing	1 Do not Agree	2 Agree Little	3 Agree Somewhat	4 Agree A lot	5 Really Agree	6 Strongly Agree
8. How upset does watching this happen make you feel?	1 Not Upset	2 Little Upset	3 Somewhat Upset	4 Pretty Upset	5 Really Upset	6 Very Upset
9. After mom talked with Pat, how sorry do you think Pat felt towards Jamie?	1 Not Sorry	2 Little Sorry	3 Somewhat Sorry	4 Pretty Sorry	5 Really Sorry	6 Very Sorry
10. This was a good type of punishment for what Pat did to Jamie.	1 Do not Agree	2 Agree Little	3 Agree Somewhat	4 Agree A lot	5 Really Agree	6 Strongly Agree
11. If this type of punishment happened to you how would you feel?	1 Not Bad	2 Little Bad	3 Somewhat Bad	4 Pretty Bad	5 Really Bad	6 Very Bad

Order: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Phs. Peer____ Phs. Par____

PG Peer ____ PG Par ____