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Determinants of the use of violence against children

Evidence from Peru

by

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Abstract

This research carried out an assessment on the socioeconomic factors related to the use of violence (psychological aggression and physical assault) against children within the family context, and the extent to which childrearing patterns can be transmitted across generations. The sample under study consisted of 13,205 observations from mothers in all regions of Peru and their children aged 1 to 5 years old. The findings indicated that family wealth and mother's occupation were the main socioeconomic predictors in the likelihood of the use of violent childrearing patterns, and that the psychological aggression and physical assault experienced by mothers while growing up, had a significant influence on their own disciplinary methods used against their children.

Keywords: Children, Violence, Childrearing patterns, Socioeconomic determinants, Peru

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Problem

It may be easy to take a strong stance against child maltreatment given the worldwide known set of rules and regulations concerning this issue. Nonetheless, the social perception of violence and the actual use of violent disciplinary methods could vary according to country-specific beliefs and values. Research concerning violence in Peru has exposed the link between domestic violence, socioeconomic conditions, and the use of physical punishment against children (Gage & Silvestre, 2010); however, violence could also be executed without using physical force against children and still have severe consequences on them.

There are different ways in which violence can affect children's well-being and development. Several authors have argued that the negative outcomes of violence on children could derive from direct experiences (parent-child maltreatment) but also from the indirect impact of having been exposed to violent patterns at home (domestic and spousal violence). Concerning the first, having been a victim of violence during childhood has been associated with anger, anxiety, depression in adulthood, brain development, personality and psychiatric disorders, and greater risk for suicide (Bernet & Stein, 1999; Johnson, Cohen, Brown, Smailes & Bernstein, 1999; Johnsona, Kotch, Catellier, Winsor, Dufort, Hunter & Amaya-Jackson, 2002; Teicher, Samson, Anderson & Ohashi, 2016; Teicher & Samson, 2013). Likewise, the exposure to violence while growing up has been linked with health, cognitive, and behavioural problems (Ybarra, Wilkens & Lieberman, 2007; Yount, DiGirolamo & Ramakrishnan, 2011). Besides the serious repercussions that violence can cause on children's health, growth, and development over their life course, the consequences can also be reflected in negative externalities at schools, which could affect other children's behaviour and learning skills (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010).

In 2019, more than 200,000 cases of domestic violence were registered in Peru, suggesting a great threat to children (Kaiser, 2020). In addition to this, the high prevalence of intimate partner violence affecting women in Peru (The World Bank, 2022; United Nations Women, 2022) would also indicate that children's well-being may be at increasing risk. Taking into account that violence can have a negative impact on the health and development of children, as well as long-term effects in adulthood, it is considered of special importance to identify possible determinants within family structures in Peru. This study will therefore address the use of violence perpetrated by mothers against their children, and will expand the field of research by considering not only physical assault but also psychological aggression.

1.2 Aim and Scope

This work aims to use micro-level data to examine the factors associated with the probability that mothers use violent disciplinary methods against their children aged 1 to 5 years old. The source of information chosen collects data with respect to child discipline directly from mothers, thus, they are the principal agents assessed in this study. In addition, the focus on ages 1 to 5 of the children is due to the fact that the survey section regarding domestic violence offers information on children living with their mother only in that age range. Therefore, as the actions evaluated will be those taken in response to the children's misbehaviour, it is important to make use of this data that considers mother-child coexistence.

The purpose of this work will be to shed some light on what could possibly determine mothers to use physical and psychological violence against their children, to try to identify areas where social policies could take preventive measures. In this sense, the study will assess how the use of violence perpetrated by mothers is a type of behaviour influenced by socioeconomic factors and to what extent it is transmitted across generations. Namely, conditions related to educational levels, family wealth, or occupation could have some influence on mothers' actions against children, and, on the other hand, those childrearing patterns may have been shaped by mothers' experiences concerning punishments received during their own upbringing.

Overall, the scope of the research is to examine the socioeconomic determinants of the use of violence against children by mothers, and the probability that violent childrearing patterns are replicated by mothers from their own experiences while growing up. By estimating the factors associated with the use of violence against children, it is expected to raise some awareness about such detrimental issue among the population in general.

The following questions will guide the study:

- Which socioeconomic factors are associated with the use of violence against children?
- To what extent are violent actions against children influenced by intergenerational transmissions?

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

The first Chapter of this thesis presents the research problem, the aim and scope, and the questions posed. Chapter 2 reviews the theories and previous research related to the driving forces concerning child maltreatment and domestic violence. Chapter 3 shows relevant information about children's rights in Peru and their recent situation regarding violence. Chapter 4 contains the hypotheses. Chapter 5 provides specific information about the data source and collection, selection of the sample, variables, and limitations. Chapter 6 describes the methodology undertaken in the study. Chapter 7 presents the findings and discussion, and lastly, the main conclusions are presented in Chapter 8.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Approach

The use of violence against children has been largely studied over, at least, the past five decades. As one of the first efforts to analyse social and family characteristics associated with child maltreatment in the United States (US), Gil (1970) suggested that violence against children was strongly linked with childrearing practices which, in turn, were shaped by cultural beliefs, and that it was more likely to occur among fragmented families, with low socioeconomic levels, and with a relatively large number of children.

In a later work based on his previous findings, Gil (1971) developed a conceptual framework that helps to shed some light on what could be the influencing factors of physical child abuse. The author argues that cultural norms of childrearing within society and the degree of acceptance of using physical force towards children, play a crucial role in determining the use of violence against them. On the other hand, he also supports the idea that there are marked differences in childrearing patterns according to socioeconomic levels and ethnic groups. He claims that childrearing practices vary depending on the social and economic family strata and, in this sense, violence rates are negatively correlated with education and income. Furthermore, and according to his findings in the US, ethnic minority groups tend to be associated with higher incidence of corporal punishment of children. However, the author also highlights that non-white minorities and other groups tend to encounter more difficulties in life and, therefore, face many stressful experiences which coupled with a deteriorated state of mind of the child's caretaker, could possibly favour the occurrence of aggressive episodes against children.

Social norms and differences between population groups could, therefore, hold potential causes to be able to study the use of violence against children. Concerning the cultural aspect of societies and the acceptance of violence, it is important to note that it may contemplate not only how children are treated at home but how they are expected and required to be treated at places like schools or care facilities. In general, the perception of how necessary or acceptable the use of violence is when disciplining children could possibly give an indication of the type of behaviour that a child's caretaker may have over time. Likewise, the assessment of parental educational level, family earnings, and being part of presumably marginalised social groups could give insights into what might be the strongest drivers of violence against children in Peru.

From a broader view, Garbarino (1977) argued that due to the complexity of child maltreatment, the most appropriate procedure to address it was an ecological approach. He claimed that an ecological approach on the issue allows to observe the interaction between the organisms and the environment, and its gradual evolution. In this context, organisms can be understood as individuals. According to his perspective, the approach considers the environment as a collection of interconnected systems that shape the social context that organisms experience.

Moreover, it is focused on environmental quality, and puts special emphasis on the relevance of political, economic, and demographic factors to the improvement of children's life.

The dynamism that the ecological approach offers to examine the potential causes in relation to the use of violence against children will help to carry out the study considering different angles. This standpoint will involve the examination of characteristics at the individual and family level but, will also consider some elements from the parental life history like their own childhood background as it could possibly be linked with the childrearing patterns that they developed over time. As other scholars have mentioned, child maltreatment is not the result of one unique influence but is rather the result of the interaction between different factors (Friedman, 1976; Lutzker & Newman, 1986; Paxson & Waldfogel, 1999).

Following Garbarino's ecological perspective (1977), child maltreatment is largely driven by the cultural approval of the use of physical force against children, and the lack of good family support systems. These conditions give a clear idea of how crucial the social and family environment is in relation to violent parenting practices. Furthermore, this view will allow to address the issue taking into consideration the parental approval of the use of violence against their children but also the violent experiences that perhaps parents had during their own upbringing and that might have shaped their childrearing patterns. This is where the assessment on intergenerational transmissions takes place. Namely, the parental approval of violent practices against children and having been exposed to violence during their own childhood might be correlated, and therefore, it is relevant to consider the use of violence in the family history.

Garbarino's (1977) work offers a conceptual model for research on the human ecology of child abuse and neglect, which will be taken into account for the development of this thesis and the selection of variables. It is important to highlight that his framework can relate not only to the use of physical force against children but also to neglect or even other type of damaging behaviour that could affect children. This provides an opportunity to consider and assess not only physical violence against children but also the type of violence that is perpetrated verbally or through other psychological means.

Table 2.1 (adapted from Garbarino, 1977) shows the three main pillars in the scholar's model: the community context of child maltreatment, neighbourhood support systems, and family characteristics. The first section refers to all socioeconomic factors at the community level that can be associated with the construction of specific childrearing patterns, such as economic and housing conditions, work patterns, etc. Demographic and ideological factors are also included in this section, and encompass family and age structure of the population, and values and attitudes about community characteristics, correspondingly. Lastly, historical factors like developmental trends concerning features of the community and individual relationships to local residence are also considered in this part. The second section implies the availability of services for families like child and health care, feedback for families in trouble, and neighbouring patterns, such as neighbourhood associations, among others. Finally, the section of family characteristics comprehends stressful situations in the course of life, and supports. The first subsection includes events that require adaptation, adjustment or change, family members with "special needs", socioeconomically and demographically problematic factors such as low incomes or single parenthood, and the timing of major events like marriages or

births. The second subsection includes social networks, and involvement in enduring institutional and organization affiliations, such as church groups, child study groups, clubs, etc.

Table 2.1 Model for research on the human ecology of child abuse and neglect

I. The community context of child maltreatment	A. Socioeconomic factors	
	B. Demographic factors	
	C. Ideological factors	
	D. Historical factors	
II. Neighbourhood support systems	A. Availability of services for families	
	B. Feedback for families in trouble	
	C. Neighbouring patterns	
III. Family characteristics	1. Events requiring adaptation, adjustment or change	
	2. “Special needs” of family members	
	A. Stresses in the life course	3. Socioeconomically and demographically problematic factors
		4. Timing of major events in life course and family career
	B. Supports	1. Social networks
		2. Involvement in enduring institutional and organisation affiliations

Due to the availability of data, this study will mainly address the socioeconomic factors shown in the third pillar of Table 2.1, but, it will also try to assess the ideological elements in the first pillar, relating to how the use of violent measures can be transmitted from one generation to the following, and the collective acceptance of physical punishment against children. In this sense, education, wealth, occupation, marital status, and other socioeconomic characteristics will be considered in the study. Likewise, the reproduction of violent childrearing patterns across generations, and the regional opinion regarding the need of physical punishment for the upbringing of children, will be analysed.

Overall, the model proposed by Garbarino (1977) points out that in order to address the complexity of child maltreatment, it is necessary to employ an ecological perspective. In his view, child abuse and neglect arises from family asynchrony. In the first place, due to the mismatch between parent and child, derived from difficult situations and problematic conditions between them, but also between the family and the community. His perspective proposes that violence is strictly linked to behaviours and family patterns, but also, formed in the community.

To provide further thoughts on what can be the factors related to the use of violence against children and its persistence in society, the work of Carlson (1984) concerning domestic violence displays some clear dimensions that can certainly be taken into consideration. Figure 2.1 (adapted from Carlson, 1984) shows her framework and the four categories in which the scholar classified the potential causes of domestic violence. Although her work considers domestic violence as violence that occurs between partners, she certainly offers a firm position on what

could cause and maintain violence at the individual, family, social, and cultural levels. Taking into account this precision, the potential determinants of the use of violence will be assessed with a focus on the individual and social aspects.

The four levels proposed by Carlson (1984), according to her framework, are the following: individual, family, social structural, and sociocultural. The first is related to characteristics at the individual level that can be generally attributed to attitudes, values and beliefs learned in one’s family of origin, personal features, perceptions, and weaknesses. The author argues that one’s family history is a strong determinant in regards of violence, and claims that childhood experiences can contribute to the development of violent patterns of behaviour. The second level focuses on the dynamics of relationships and the potential conflicts that may arise. The third is based on economic factors, employment, neighbourhood characteristics, and community attitudes and organisation. The last refers to societal norms and cultural values that shape the behaviours of population in society.

The main concepts that emerge from the reviewed theory indicate that factors at the individual, family and collective level are possibly what could determine the likelihood of using violent childrearing practices. Socioeconomic characteristics, approval of violence within society, and childhood experiences can be expected to be associated with the use of violence against children. This study will assess the contribution of these aspects in the use of violence perpetrated by mothers against their children aged 1 to 5.

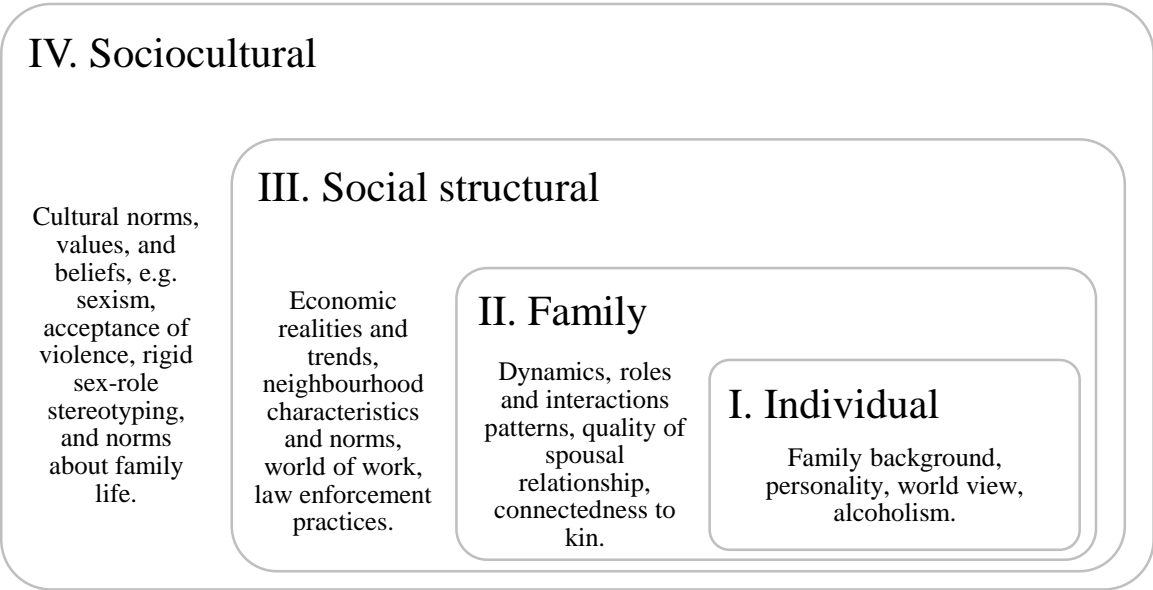


Figure 2.1 Ecological framework of causes and maintenance of domestic violence

2.2 Previous Research

2.2.1 Socioeconomic determinants of the use of violence against children

Violence against children is a worldwide problem that could worsen over time if policies do not recognise and aim at controlling the main driving forces. According to the theory, unsatisfactory socioeconomic conditions are associated with the probability of using violent childrearing patterns against children. In this sense, indicators such as low incomes, unemployment, single parenthood, among others, have been pointed out as determinants concerning child abuse and neglect.

Furthermore, countries going through unstable situations may possibly impact negatively on the living conditions of their population and family dynamics, which could indirectly foster environments prone to the use of violence. A cross-sectional study in Afghanistan addressed violence against children from a wide perspective, considering its extent, the possible settings, parental forms, and regional differences (O’Leary, Cameron, Lakhani, Osborne, de Souza, Hope, Naimi, Khan, Jawad & Majidi, 2018). This research considered three main locations in the country (Jalalabad, Kabul, and Torkham) and used interviews to collect information about the issue from parents, caretakers, and children and adolescents aged 12 to 18 years. It is important to mention that the samples of child and adult participants were independent and unrelated. The main findings showed that around 71% of children reported some kind of physical aggression such as being pushed, grabbed or kicked. Almost 79% reported being aggressively screamed at, and approximately 75% claimed that they have been called names. Home was found as the main place where violence occurred, with percentages of 71%, 86%, and 70% for physical aggression, aggressive screaming, and name-calling, respectively.

Regarding the connection between violence, whether it was physical or verbal aggression, and parental occupation, O’Leary et al. (2018) found an increasing trend that linked children reporting being subject of physical violence and households with unemployed fathers or with an unskilled/unqualified position. On the other hand, the largest proportions of children and adolescents that were subject of aggressive screaming and name-calling were accrued in the parental group of skilled/qualified position. These results suggest that occupation and possibly education, due to its relationship with employment possibilities, are factors that are to a certain extent associated with the type of actions taken against children during parenting.

In a similar study concerning socioeconomic factors associated with the use of violence against children in India, the level of family income was found significant. Deb and Modak (2010) collected data from 320 children (aged 14 to 19) in the state of Tripura in 2008, and examined their family background, socioeconomic information, and experiences of violence (psychological, physical, sexual). Their findings showed that 50% of fathers and around 35% of mothers of the children had completed college education. Almost 38% of fathers and 28% of mothers had completed postgraduate education, and the rest of parents had not attained the graduate level. Concerning parents’ occupation, the scholars’ results revealed that 70% of fathers and 41% of mothers worked in the service sector, while 25% of fathers and 10% of mothers belonged to the business field. Also, almost 29% of mothers were housewives, and the

rest of parents had either a temporal job or were unemployed. Regarding the occurrence of violence, around 20.9% of the children in the sample reported having been subjected of psychological violence, 22% reported having been physically abused, and lastly, 25% and 11.3% of female and male children, respectively, reported having been victims of sexual violence.

According to the analysis of Deb and Modak (2010), family incomes are an important factor linked with the use of violence against children. They argue that children from families with a high income level experienced more physical violence, whereas those from low-income families experienced more psychological violence. These results are interesting, as it could have been expected that the results were the other way around, however, they should be interpreted carefully because cultural norms and values might probably be involved. In this context, physical punishment and psychological aggression against children may be regarded as negative actions at different levels. The contrast between the prevalence of physical and psychological violence in high and low-income families is therefore likely to vary in societies with different social values, beliefs, and child protection policies.

With data from the US, Berger (2005) also tested the way in which the distribution of resources within families can have some influence on the use of physical abuse against children. He used the 1985 National Family Violence Survey (NFVS) and even though it was data from past decades, it was valuable for the examination of physical violence against children because it contained detailed micro-level information regarding demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

Berger's (2005) main results showed that incomes played an important role in relation to the use of violence against children, with particular relevance in single-parent households than in those with two-parents. It was found that parents of low-income single-parent families were more likely to use violence. On the other hand, education was also pointed out as a driving factor. The author argued that for single-parent families, having low educational attainments was a predictor of physical violence against children, however, for two-parent families with contrasting levels of education between parents, their involvement with violence could be lower. These results suggest that there could be differences in the use of violence depending on the family structure, which could also be related to stresses in the life course and lack of support. In addition, Berger (2005) also noted that the fact that parents who experienced violence, such as being hit by their own parents during adolescence, was also associated with the use of violence against their own children, particularly in two-parent families. He suggests that future research could further examine this possible intergenerational transmission of violence.

2.2.2 Intergenerational and cultural transmission of violence

Experiencing violence in any of its forms during childhood has shown to be detrimental to the proper and healthy development of children. It has often been associated with health and mental disorders but, it can also be related to an increase in the probability of using violent childrearing patterns during parenting. The fact that people who experienced violence during childhood could replicate this behaviour and make it a cycle across generations would imply that family well-being may be endangered over decades. This possibility constitutes an important concern

and it is partly what motivates this study to explore the intergenerational relationship in regards to violent childrearing patterns.

In a relatively recent study with data from Burundi, Crombach and Bambonyé (2015) showed that violence could be transmitted across generations through behavioural patterns. They analysed information collected from 282 people (141 men and 141 women) aged 13 to 45 years, and assessed the connection between childhood maltreatment, experienced partner violence, perceived partner intimidation, and the use of violence against children and partner. With regard to the intergenerational transmissions of violence, the study results revealed a strong association between maltreatment experienced during people's childhood and the use of violence against their children. The findings showed that 94% of people in the sample reported having experienced maltreatment during childhood (physical or emotional violence), and also that from those who had experienced any type of maltreatment during their childhood, 65% admitted having used violence against their children. It should be noted that 55% of men and 70% of women had children, but even though not all of them had children, the correlation was found to be significant. Additionally, the results also indicated that childhood maltreatment was strongly associated with violence perpetrated against partners.

Results from this study suggest that violence during childhood can lead to the continuation of maltreatment with future generations, and furthermore, may be a predictor of domestic violence against romantic partners. In this sense, the negative implications of the use of violence during childhood seem to spread not only through the persistence of violent childrearing patterns, but would also enable aggression between couples, and possibly, within the households in general.

One study in the Philippines also addressed the issue of intergenerational transmissions of violence and supported the idea that violent experiences may favour the future use and acceptance of intimidation and physical abuse. Mandal and Hindin (2015) studied the correlation between witnessing violence between parents and the use and experience of family intimidation and physical abuse among young adults. Although witnessing violent actions is different from experiencing physical or corporal punishment, it can be argued that even being exposed to aggressions could influence future behaviour patterns, and thus, the assessment of this study helps to have a better understanding of the transmissions of violence.

Mandal and Hindin (2015) made use of the Cebu Longitudinal Health and Nutrition Survey (CLHNS) to analyse a cohort of Filipino mothers who had their children between 1983 and 1984, and examined information from mothers and their children in the 2005 survey. The main findings in this research indicate that being exposed to violence between parents led young adults to a high risk of using and experiencing intimidation and physical abuse with family members. One important aspect to highlight from these findings is the fact that males and females were more likely to use violence (family intimidation and physical abuse) after being exposed to violence perpetrated by fathers, and in contrast, more likely to experience family intimidation and physical abuse after exposure of violence perpetrated by mothers.

In the case of Peru, Benavides, Leon, and Ponce de Leon (2015) made use of data from 2011 from three regions in Peru (Huancavelica, Lima, and Loreto), and found that women who experienced domestic violence within the household environment were more likely to use violence against their children. The authors considered a sample of 598 children aged 1 to 7,

and 447 women from urban areas of the three selected regions. The socio-cultural norms concerning accepted disciplinary practices against children were estimated from survey questions where mothers reported in which cases the use of physical violence, categorised as severe or moderate, could be used against children. The main results showed a higher occurrence of violence against children in households where women were also victim of violence perpetrated by their current or previous partner. Occurrence of physical violence against children was 37% in households where there was violence against women, while it was 26% where women did not report being a victim of violence in the last year from the date of the survey. Overall, it was reported that around 32% of children were subject of violent disciplining within the households.

The research of Benavides et al. (2015) does not follow the same common thread that proposes that violent parenting patterns can persist for generations but, it shows that the use of violence against children in Peruvian households is relatively accepted in urban societies, and that it could even be fostered through a different channel, which is partner abuse. This thesis, however, will undertake an analysis considering a unique conductive channel: mothers experience violent disciplining from their parents and replicate those childrearing patterns with their children over time.

3 Background

3.1 Legal Framework

Peru has taken various actions in order to protect the well-being of children over the years. The national legislation on this subject has followed the leadership and the proposals put forward by global organizations, and has shown a constant commitment to defending children's rights and safety.

In 1989, the Organisation of the United Nations, through its General Assembly, agreed and approved an international treaty in which children's rights were recognised. This worldwide agreement is called the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its main focus is to highlight the special relevance and individuality of the childhood stage, and to protect and enforce the rights of children (Unicef, n.d.). It is important to note that this pact considers that children lack mental and physical maturity and, therefore, need protection and special care, including legal guidelines. In this sense, the global reach of the Convention and its rules can be regarded as a major step in ensuring the care and protection of children in many countries.

The following year, in 1990, the Congress of Peru ratified this agreement by means of the Legislative Resolution No. 25278, and committed the government to the principles established by the Convention in favour of children (Congreso de la República del Perú, 1990). Some of the principles adopted from the Convention comprehend the right to identity, protection, no discrimination, freedom of thought and beliefs, access to health and education, and possibly one of the most important guidelines: the principle of the best interest of the child.

As specified in Article No. 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the best interest of the child entails that in all measures concerning children, whether they are implemented by public or private social welfare institutions, court of law, administrative or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child have to be a prime consideration (Congreso de la República del Perú, 1990). In light of this definition, this principle can certainly be considered essential because it demands that in any situation involving children, their needs and well-being must always be put first.

The agreement on children's rights suggests that the welfare of children was from early on a main concern in Peru. However, the strength of this commitment to children's welfare could be questioned due to an apparent slow legal development in childhood matters. It was only in 2015 that the Congress of Peru approved a law that prohibited the use of physical and humiliating punishment against children and adolescents (Law No. 30403). This instruction basically bans the use of physical force and any kind of offensive, degrading, or devaluing conduct against children, under any circumstance related to child raising, disciplining, or other actions associated with altering the behaviour of children (Congreso de la República del Perú, 2015).

This prohibition extends to all areas and contexts in which childhood and adolescence evolve, not only in households, but also in schools, communities, workplaces, among others. Furthermore, it confirms that all children and adolescents, without any exception, have the right to be treated in a caring, protective, socialising, non-violent, and educational environment, whether it is provided by parents, tutors, caretakers, teachers, authorities, or any other person.

Similarly, almost three decades after the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Congress of Peru approved a law that established parameters and procedural guarantees for the primary consideration of the best interest of the child (Law No. 30466). This law, published in 2016, reinforced the principle of the best interest of the child, and fostered its use with measures that would ensure its timely and most effective application (Congreso de la República del Perú, 2016). Moreover, the law stated that the best interest of the child should be considered in all circumstances, including those that may affect them directly or indirectly.

Also regarding the system of justice administration, Peru has a special code that applies to children and adolescents under 18 years of age. The Code of Children and Adolescents in Peru establishes that in case of violation of the criminal law, children and adolescents under age 14 will be subject to protective measures, and adolescents over 14 years old will be subject to socio-educational measures (Congreso de la República del Perú, 2000). This indicates that Peru has a particular contemplation and special management for children and adolescents that may have even committed law violations, and, furthermore, that it is focused on preserving and caring for their development at such early stage in life.

Overall, Peruvian legislation regarding childhood appears to be solid and with clear objectives aimed at protecting children's rights and safety, however, it could be discussed whether actions should have been taken earlier. The time frame between the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the development of norms in favour of children seems rather large. Several decades passed before the government of Peru took ownership of developing legal arrangements and structures to safeguard the well-being of children and adolescents.

On the other hand, in spite of all the legal guidelines established to protect children's welfare and development, it is important to contrast the reality of childhood in Peru with actual facts. The following section will give a glimpse of what seems to be a sort of disconnection between what can be expected from the instated rules and what actually happens in society.

3.2 Violence against Children in Peru

In Peru, the type of actions that are often taken to control and discipline children do not seem to strictly follow the legal guidelines. It seems that the level of protection established by the legislation is not really reflected in what has been going on among the population. Current facts show that both the acceptance and the incidence of the use of violence against children and adolescents are relatively high. Especially, the approval or the sense of need for using violent actions during the upbringing and development of children can be quite worrying, because this could imply that laws are being intentionally disregarded by the population and that the problem could worsen later on.

Taking into consideration that this research focuses on the experiences of children within the family context, it is necessary to first contemplate who is the main character when it comes to disciplining children and what are the thoughts about the use of violence. In relation to the first question, the report of the 2019 Demographic and Family Health Survey (ENDES), conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) of Peru, shows that mothers had a clear leading role in parenting.

Data from the 2019 ENDES indicate that in 94.2% of the households surveyed, the mothers were those in charge of controlling and ensuring the obedience of children aged 1 to 5 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2020a). Although the fathers were mentioned in 63.7% of the households, which shows that they also play a role in parenting, it becomes evident that mothers accrue, in general, more responsibility concerning children. It can then be assumed that mothers are the main character within the household and that they have a key role in childrearing patterns. Therefore, what they believe about the use of violence and even their childhood experiences could have some influence on their actual behaviours.

Following this line of thought, the 2018 ENDES report published information concerning the opinion of women on how necessary is the use of physical punishment in the upbringing of children. Previously, mothers were pointed out as main characters within the household, thus, the female perception about the need of violence during parenting could give an indication of what may be the future general perspective on this issue. It is certainly shocking that the use of violence could be considered as a way of ensuring children's obedience but, it has to be borne in mind that this is the manner in which the questions of demographic surveys in Peru were designed to collect information.

According to this, 80.1% of the women interviewed claimed that physical punishment was not necessary in the upbringing and disciplining of children (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2019). However, the survey also showed that almost 20% of the women in the sample confirmed that the use of physical punishment against children was needed. This would, unfortunately, suggest that one out of five women might be willing to use violent measures against their children.

On the other hand, although a great percentage of women in 2018 did not support the use of physical punishment against children as a disciplinary method in the upbringing of children (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2019), there seems to be a mismatch with a more general acceptance of the use of violence against children, and the real actions that have been affecting children and adolescents.

Findings from the 2019 National Survey on Social Relations (ENARES), also conducted by the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) of Peru, have shown that there was a high level of acceptance of violence among population. According to the social tolerance index, almost 59% of the population in the survey sample tolerated violence against children and adolescents (Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables, 2020). It is important to note that the target population for this survey was men and women over the age of 18, and approximately 77% had children, thus, it can give a good general perspective on violence and the family environment with children.

Furthermore, the 2019 ENARES provides a wide range of additional information that can help understand the standpoint of people regarding the use of violence against children in Peru. Figure 3.1 (adapted from Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2020b) shows some striking facts. First of all, 88.9% of people agreed that violence against children was unacceptable and should be punished, however, at the same time, 46.1% approved that parents hit their children, and almost 35% agreed with the idea that children become spoiled and lazy if they are not hit. Additionally, 22% agreed with the belief that physical punishment is used as soon as a child stops being a baby, and nearly 21% supported that physical punishment could be used to raise successful children.

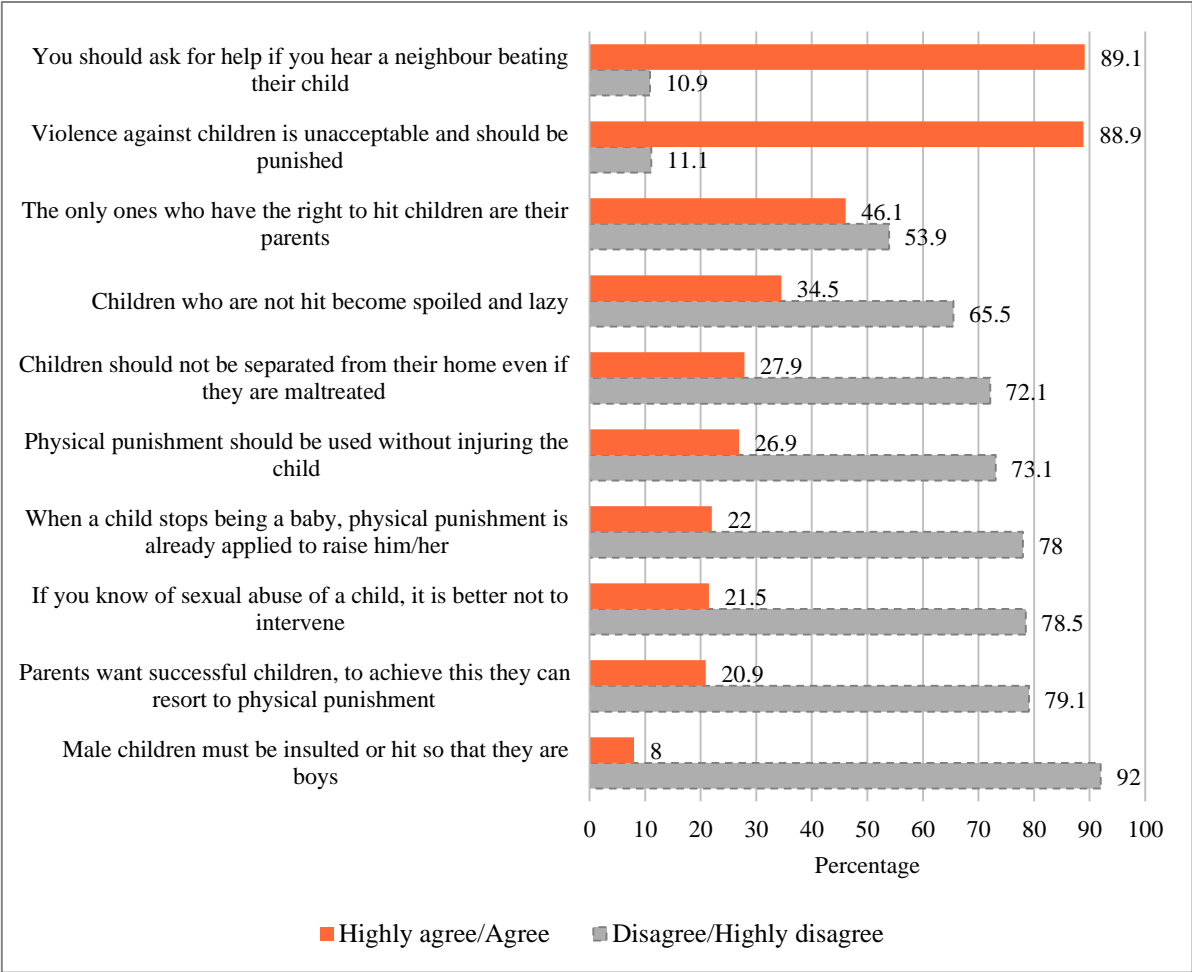


Figure 3.1 Tolerance of violence against children and adolescents, 2019

Lastly, the 2019 ENARES also offers information about the incidence of violence against children and adolescents in households and schools. Information is collected from children aged 9 to 11, and adolescents from 12 to 17 years of age, and although these age intervals are older than the focus of this study, statistics from the younger group will provide insight into the occurrence of violent experiences in the households. Also, it is valuable information as this is the only data source that can provide information directly gathered from children.

The results of the survey indicate that in 2019, almost 53% of children aged 9 to 11 experienced physical violence at home at least once in the course of their life, and approximately 24%, experienced it in the last 12 months (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2020b). With regard to psychological violence, about 55% of children in this age group experienced it at least once in their life time, and 29%, in the last 12 months from the survey. The prevalence of physical and psychological violence is considerably high, and implies a harmful frequency. Despite the fact that violence against children may seem to be rejected by the population, the incidence of both physical and psychological violence shows that the issue persists in society. Moreover, psychological violence seems to be even more used than physical violence.

All in all, it could be said that there is an incongruence between the rejection of violence against children and the actual perception of need and use of violence during parenting, which suggests that violence may be, to a certain extent, culturally accepted in Peru. Furthermore, it seems that violent actions, whether it is physical assault or psychological aggression, have been normalised in society when it comes to ensuring children's obedience; and therefore, there is a mismatch between what people believe about the use of violence and the importance that they actually give to it for the upbringing of children.

With regard to potential factors driving violence affecting children in Peru, Ames, Anderson, Martin, Rodriguez, and Potts (2018) have outlined that demographic processes, gender norms, socioeconomic stratification, and the lack of social protection and support for the families are some of the underlying elements within the family environment. Demographic processes like migration imply that children may have higher financial demands in the cities which could lead to conflicts within the household. Particular gender beliefs can regard the acceptance and use of violence against children differently. Socioeconomic difficulties and the lack of social support to deal with children's issues could cause strains and add more pressure on the family dynamics. Overall, their article suggests that stressful situations and the lack of support from the community or government account for the high rates of violence that affect children.

To develop a more in-depth understanding of the use of violence against children perpetrated in the family environment, it is therefore important to study different possible determinants jointly. On the one hand, socioeconomic factors such as education, family wealth, and occupation will be considered. While, on the other hand, potential intergenerational transmissions of violence and the cultural perception of physical punishment will be assessed, which will help to complete the outlook.

4 Hypotheses

The study aims at testing the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: Low socioeconomic conditions related to education, family wealth, and occupation are strong determinants of the use of violence against children perpetrated by their mothers.
- Hypothesis 2: The use of violent childrearing patterns against children is largely influenced by intergenerational transmissions in violence.

5 Data

This chapter presents the source of information, the procedure performed for the construction of the dataset, detailed information about the variables, and reflections on the data restrictions.

5.1 Data Source

The 2019 Demographic and Family Health Survey (ENDES) of Peru is the main data source in this research given that it provides information about childrearing patterns, socioeconomic conditions, and history of mothers, and because it contains the most recent records from women and their children, excluding the years 2020 and 2021 due to possible covid-19 effects on the parent-child interaction. This survey is carried out annually by the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) of Peru to gather information about demographic dynamics and health of women and children, and all modules can be freely downloaded through the institutional website (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2022).

This investigation made use of the following 3 modules: Module 66 Basic information of women of fertile age, Module 71 Nuptiality-Fertility-Partner and woman, and Module 413 Child discipline. The first module provided data concerning women's age, education, residence, ethnic identity, family wealth, violent experiences during their own upbringing, and acceptance of physical punishment to raise children. The second module contained records about marital status and women's occupation, and the third, information about the type of action taken against children aged 1 to 5 when they misbehave.

The ENDES of 2019 aimed at collecting information from 43,257 women aged 12 to 49 years from all regions in Peru but, the survey section related to domestic violence was meant to be applied only to a sample of those aged 15 to 49. From this group, as the survey provides specific information of mothers living with their children only in the age range of 1 to 5 years, it accounted for 16,556 observations (within Module 413). To avoid bias due to mothers with greater numbers of children aged 1 to 5, only one child per family was selected for the analysis: the youngest in the age range. This set out a sample of 14,668 observations, and allows the assessment on violence against children at the earliest age possible. Then, observations were dropped according to three cases: where it was reported that no one applied disciplinary measures towards children (698 observations), where the disciplining agent was not the mother (292 observations), and where the action taken was simply reported as "other" (27 observations), which left 13,651 observations. Lastly, the dataset was merged with the corresponding information from Module 66 and 71, keeping the cases id that matched, and this composed a final dataset with a sample of 13,205 observations, where mothers were only considered once.

The use of micro-level data will give important insights about the potential individual-level differences that could be associated with the use of violence against children, which will allow to draw some conclusions about the determinants of this occurrence. Following this approach, a detailed explanation of the chosen variables can be found below.

5.1.1 Selected variables

- Disciplinary method

This is the outcome variable of the analysis. In order to categorise the alternatives shown in the ENDES questionnaire and to assess the actions that mothers claimed taking when their children misbehave, this study made use of the Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales (CTSPC). This scale, developed by Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore, and Runyan (1998), helps to classify disciplinary methods into three main groups: non-violent discipline, psychological aggression, and physical assault.

According to Straus et al. (1998), non-violent discipline implies the explanation of conduct, time out, deprivation of privilege, and the substitution of activity. Psychological aggression could be any verbal or symbolic act performed by parents which are intended to cause psychological pain or fear in the child. Finally, physical assault includes corporal punishment (e.g. spanking, hitting in the bottom), severe assault (e.g. slapping on the face/head/ears, kicking), and very severe assault (e.g. beatings, burning on purpose). The correspondence between the ENDES alternatives and the CTSPC was done using these concepts.

This variable is based on the actions that mothers report taking against their children aged 1 to 5 when they misbehave. This information is collected directly from mothers and considers children that live with their mothers at the moment of the survey. Mothers are main actors in the upbringing of children therefore, despite the possible response bias, it is important to explore their information about childrearing patterns. Understanding what could be the determinants of physical and psychological aggression against children at such early stage of life will be of great relevance as several scholars have disclosed the detrimental effects that violence has on children throughout their life course (Dunn, McLaughlin, Slopen, Rosand & Smoller, 2013; Schechter, Willheim, Suardi & Rusconi Serpa, 2009).

The variable will take the value of “1” when mothers reported using non-violent discipline, “2” when they reported using psychological aggression, and “3” for physical assault. The mothers often reported using a combination of disciplinary measures against their children. This implied that some measures could classify as non-violent while others, as psychological aggression or physical assault. In this sense, the classification was done by considering the action from the highest to lowest level of the scale, as predominant. Therefore, if mothers declared using one non-violent measure, one psychological aggression but, at least, one action of physical assault, then it would be placed in the physical assault category. The same logics apply if a mother declared using a non-violent measure but also psychological aggression; it would be classified as psychological aggression. Table 5.1 (adapted from Straus et al., 1998) shows the correspondence done between the disciplinary methods in the CTSPC, the alternatives in the ENDES questionnaire, and the disciplinary methods considered in the analysis.

Table 5.1 Correspondence between the ENDES alternatives and Disciplinary method

ENDES alternatives	Disciplinary method	Code
Forbidding them something they like		
Talk to him/her and explain his/her behaviour	Non-violent discipline	1
Verbal scolding		
Depriving them from food		
Leaving them locked up	Psychological aggression	2
Ignoring them		
Leaving them out of the house		
Spanking		
Beatings or physical punishment	Physical assault	3
Pouring water on them		
Taking off their clothes		

It is important to mention that despite “Ignoring them” could be regarded as innocuous, it has been categorised as psychological aggression because of the related negative effects that several scholars have disclosed (Bastian & Haslam, 2010; Zadro & Gonsalkorale, 2014). According to Williams and Nida (2011), being ignored and excluded affects four psychological needs: sense of belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence. Moreover, they argue that it can intensify anger and sadness. Likewise, it is assumed that “Verbal scolding” includes shouting, swearing, or cursing, which would reasonably imply a negative impact on children, and therefore, it has been considered as psychological aggression.

- **Mother’s educational attainment**

The ENDES provides the educational attainment of mothers according to four categories: “0” for no education, “1” for primary, “2” for secondary, and “3” for higher education. Each category will indicate which was the highest educational level attained by mothers at the moment of the survey. Education could be one of the most commonly influencing factors studied by scholars in different fields. In fact, the role of education has been found of great importance in relation to women’s reproductive output and children’s health care (Huber, Bookstein & Fieder, 2010; Saldūnaitė, Bendoraitienė, Slabšinskienė, Vasiliauskienė, Andruškevičienė & Zūbienė, 2014). Therefore, the examination of the educational levels reported by mothers is appropriate in this study.

- **Family wealth**

This variable measures the level of wealth as cumulative living standards of the households. It consists of the type of assets and resources at the family level, and it helps to classify mothers according to established wealth groups. It is likely to be correlated with the educational attainments and occupation groups of mothers but, it gives an indication of the socioeconomic status within the family. The data source provides this differentiation in the following categories: “1” for poorest, “2” for poorer, “3” for middle, “4” for rich, and “5” for richest.

- **Mother's occupation**

The data source collects and classifies the occupation of mothers according to a wide range of groups. To have a more standardised and straightforward view on the mothers' type of employment, this variable will take the value of "1" for blue collar jobs, and "2" for white collar ones. While, it will take the value of "0" for those unemployed. Table 5.2 shows the different categories.

Table 5.2 Correspondence between the ENDES alternatives and Mother's occupation

ENDES alternatives	Mother's occupation	Code
Unemployed	Unemployed	0
Agriculture, independent		
Agriculture, employee		
Housekeeper		
Services	Blue collar	1
Skilled manual job		
Unskilled manual job		
Professional, technical, managerial		
Clerical	White collar	2
Sales		

- **Mother's age group**

The age of mothers is registered at the moment of the survey. By examining what could determine the use of violence against children, some differences between mothers of different age groups may arise. Mother's age is probably correlated with the educational levels, however, the consideration of this variable aims at capturing potential differences in childrearing patterns or trends in child discipline between younger and older mothers. The age groups are the following: "15 - 20", "21 - 30", "31 - 40", and "41 - 49" years of age.

- **Marital status**

This variable will try to identify whether marital status is associated with different childrearing patterns. It is important to note that all women in the sample have, at least, one child aged 1 to 5, therefore, the assessment will be merely on the marital condition of mothers. It would show if mothers, depending on their marital relations, have different behaviours towards their children. Although this data represents a point in time, as it is registered at the moment of the survey, it will give an indication of some of the family dynamics, and how they may influence disciplinary measures against children.

The marital status variable will therefore take the following values: "0" for never married, "1" for married, and "2" for those previously married. The first category refers to those mothers who never held a civil or religious marriage. The second includes married and cohabitating mothers, and the third, those widowed, divorced, and separated.

- Mother’s ethnic group

Due to the fact that certain sociocultural norms or beliefs could possibly be correlated with the use of violence against children, this variable will help to identify if there is any particular ethnic group with a higher likelihood of using violent childrearing patterns. According to the survey, each mother states her ethnic identity bearing in mind her ancestors and traditions. This means that it is an ethnic self-identification.

Since the Peruvian ethnic background is quite varied, the ENDES alternatives were merged into fewer categories (Table 5.3). Consequently, the variable contemplates the following groups: “1” for native origin, “2” for black, “3” white, “4” for mestizo, and “5” for other or unknown.

Table 5.3 Correspondence between the ENDES alternatives and Mother’s ethnic group

ENDES alternatives	Mother’s ethnic group	Code
Quechua Aimara From the Amazon Member of another indigenous group	Native origin	1
Black/Brown/Zambo/Mulatto/Afro Peruvian or afrodescendents	Black	2
White	White	3
Mestizo	Mestizo	4
Other Doesn’t know	Other or unknown	5

- Residence

The ENDES provides information about the area of residence of each mother in the sample. This variable will take the following values: “1” for rural areas, and “2” for urban ones.

- Disciplinary method received by mothers

To examine possible intergenerational transmissions of violent disciplinary methods against children, this variable will measure whether the mothers in the sample were subject of violent actions perpetrated by their own parents. The question in the survey did not specify a point in time, however, since it inquires about the type of punishment that they received from their parents, it is assumed that it was during their childhood or upbringing.

The type of actions that mothers in the sample reported receiving as punishment, were classified according to the CTSPC and to the same procedure that was carried out for the assessment of the disciplinary methods used against children. The variable will, consequently, take the value of “1” for non-violent discipline, “2” for psychological aggression, “3” for physical assault, and “4” for other or unknown (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Correspondence between the ENDES alternatives and Disciplinary method received by mothers

ENDES alternatives	Disciplinary method received by mothers	Code
Forbidding her something she likes Taking away her belongings Taking away financial support	Non-violent discipline	1
Verbal scolding Depriving her from food Leaving her locked up Ignoring her Putting more work on her Leaving her out of the house	Psychological aggression	2
Spanking Beatings or physical punishment Burning her on purpose Pouring water on her Taking off her clothes	Physical assault	3
Other or unknown	Other or unknown	4

- Regional acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing

According to the literature, the acceptance and use of violence could stem from norms and beliefs within societies. Violent childrearing patterns, in this sense, could be regarded differently depending on the values built in different cultures. The purpose of this variable will be to evaluate to which extent the use of violence against children can be influenced by the regional level of acceptance of physical punishment as disciplinary measure.

For this purpose, one clear and direct question from the ENDES questionnaire offers information about the mothers' beliefs regarding the need of physical punishment for the upbringing of children. This variable will be calculated based on the regional average of mothers in the sample who agreed, either sometimes or frequently, with the use of physical punishment to raise children. By using the median value of acceptance (around 22.6%), the regional averages were then classified as: "1" for low acceptance, and "2" for high acceptance. Regions with an acceptance of physical punishment below 22.6% were in the first group, and those where it was accepted in such a percentage or more, were part of the second group. The analysis considers, for each mother, the level of acceptance of violence in her region of residence.

5.2 Data Limitations

First of all, since the study uses survey data, some degree of response bias can be expected. This is a relatively typical limitation when working with data that is collected directly from individuals because people could distort the information when providing their answers. In fact, given that the Peruvian legislation protects children's rights and safety, and prohibits the use of physical and humiliating punishment against children, it could be that parents in general may not admit that they use violence even if they actually do so. This bias could lead to an underestimation of the outcome variable concerning psychological aggression and physical assault. Nonetheless, depending on the social acceptance of the use of violence for the upbringing of children, it could also be that mothers do not realise that the type of actions that they reported can be classified as psychological aggression or physical assault.

Secondly, the study results related to the socioeconomic factors would possibly be limited to the defined conditions in the year analysed. Namely, the selected variables were measured at the time of the survey, which would principally indicate how the explanatory factors were associated with the use of violent disciplinary methods but, possible changes in them and their effects may not be captured. For instance, educational attainment, family wealth, and occupation could be strong determinants of the use of violence against children but, how violent childrearing patterns might change due to less economic restraints would remain uncertain. According to the literature, stressful situations are related to the use of violence, however, the impact of either prolonged or temporal struggles could be further assessed.

The third limitation concerns the possible influence of the fathers in the disciplinary method perpetrated by the mothers. The research is focused on the type of actions executed by mothers as the main protagonists in childrearing but, it may also be that the family history of the fathers has helped shape certain thoughts in them that led to the development of certain childrearing patterns in the households under study. This might be particularly relevant as the fathers' beliefs could be highly influential on the discipline implemented by mothers. In this regard, the data source only allowed to focus on mothers.

Furthermore, the intergenerational transmission of violence is assessed through a unique conductive channel: disciplinary methods received by mothers during their own upbringing and the reproduction of these actions against their own children. This entails a direct transmission and repetition of harmful childrearing patterns but, it may also be that violent measures taken against children are due to the influence of damaging upbringing experienced by the fathers. In this case, however, it should be necessary to have information directly collected from fathers, which is not available in the survey.

Concerning the history of violence experienced by the mothers during their own upbringing, the question in the ENDES questionnaire was not specific about who (mother or father) was the one who punished them. It merely asked about what type of punishment she was subjected to by her parents; therefore, it was not possible to differentiate violent patterns executed by the fathers and mothers of the mothers in the sample. Also, given that the question asked for the type of punishment executed by the mothers' parents, the information collected from it was assumed to be part of the mothers' experiences while growing up.

With regard to how frequently violent disciplinary methods were used against children aged 1 to 5 living with their mothers, this type of information was not available. The ENDES questionnaire implied that the actions taken against children were motivated by misbehaviour and disobedience but, there were no specifications about the frequency of use. In this sense, it could only be assumed that the categorisation between non-violent discipline, psychological aggression, and physical assault were childrearing patterns repeated over time. The same applied to how often mothers received violent punishments from their parents.

Lastly, the evolution of childrearing patterns might be overlooked because the study considered only one child per mother. Overall, selecting only one child is appropriate to avoid bias but, it might also reflect the behaviour of mothers in a certain point in time. Namely, the childrearing patterns performed by mothers could differ from the first to the last child born, either for better or for worse, due to perhaps more experience in parenting, personal growth, or other factors out of the scope of this study. Likewise, disciplinary methods could also change as the child under study grows older; however, this study finds it important to examine violent patterns at the earliest stage possible. Further longitudinal research would be needed to evaluate possible changes in the type of disciplinary methods implemented with the oldest and youngest children within the same family, as it may be uncertain whether the use of violent methods increase, decrease, or stay constant throughout all children.

6 Methodology

Since the aim of the study is to evaluate possible determinants of the use of violence against children, a quantitative methodology was selected. The influence of socioeconomic factors will be assessed, and the intergenerational transmission of violent childrearing patterns and its collective acceptance will be tested as well. Bearing these factors in mind, this cross-sectional study will estimate the likelihood that mothers use violent childrearing patterns against their children aged 1 to 5 years. A multinomial logistic regression was selected as it is thought as the most suitable method given that the outcome variable refers to three different options (non-violent discipline, psychological aggression, and physical assault), and the collection of explanatory variables are mostly categorical.

To estimate the influence of the different factors, independently, three models will be used. Model 1 considers socioeconomic variables; Model 2, the intergenerational transmission in violence and collective acceptance; and Model 3 contemplates all factors jointly as a robustness check. Mother's age, marital status, ethnic group, and residence will be considered as control variables. Consequently, the regression models will be as follows:

$$(1) \quad Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \beta_4 X_{4i} + \beta_5 X_{5i} + \beta_6 X_{6i} + \beta_7 X_{7i} + u_i$$

$$(2) \quad Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_8 X_{8i} + \beta_9 X_{9i} + \beta_4 X_{4i} + \beta_5 X_{5i} + \beta_6 X_{6i} + \beta_7 X_{7i} + u_i$$

$$(3) \quad Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \beta_8 X_{8i} + \beta_9 X_{9i} + \beta_4 X_{4i} + \beta_5 X_{5i} + \beta_6 X_{6i} + \beta_7 X_{7i} + u_i$$

Table 6.1 Description of the variables

Variable	Description	Type
Y_i	Disciplinary method	Categorical: non-violent discipline, psychological aggression, physical assault
X_1	Mother's educational attainment	Categorical: no education, primary, secondary, higher
X_2	Family wealth	Categorical: poorest, poorer, middle, rich, richest
X_3	Mother's occupation	Categorical: unemployed, blue collar, white collar
X_4	Mother's age group	Categorical: 15-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-49 years
X_5	Marital status	Categorical: never married, married, previously married
X_6	Mother's ethnic group	Categorical: native origin, black, white, mestizo, other or unknown
X_7	Residence	Binary: rural, urban
X_8	Disciplinary method received by mothers	Categorical: non-violent discipline, psychological aggression, physical assault, other or unknown
X_9	Regional acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing	Binary: low acceptance, high acceptance

7 Empirical Analysis

7.1 Main Results

7.1.1 Descriptive statistics

According to Table 7.1, non-violent measures towards children were the least used disciplinary methods among mothers in the sample. Non-violent discipline reached around 29%, while violent childrearing patterns were predominant in approximately 71% of the cases. Psychological aggression against children accrued 40.5% of the mothers, and physical assault, about 30.2%. It can be said, then, that the use of violence against children is widespread in Peruvian homes, either through psychological aggression or physical assault; both implying negative outcomes in the children's life course.

With regard to the mother's educational attainment, it was found that 46% and 34% reached secondary and higher levels, respectively, which represents 80% of the sample. The 18% of mothers got to primary education, and roughly 1.5% had no education. Although the vast majority of mothers had secondary education or higher, there is still a gap to be closed in primary education and, in general, ensuring completion of schooling for all.

The examination of the data also revealed that most mothers in the sample tended to be in the poorest, poorer, and middle family wealth levels. Almost 27% and 28% of mothers were in the poorest and poorer levels, correspondingly, which already represents more than half of the sample. The middle wealth level comprised around 20% of women, and finally, the rich and richest levels accounted for 15% and 10%, respectively. Concerning occupation, there were less marked differences across categories. Nearly 33% and 38% of mothers had blue and white collar jobs, respectively; while, around 29% were unemployed.

Considering the age groups, 45% of mothers had from 21 to 30 years of age. This was followed by mothers aged 31-40 which accounted for 40% of the sample. The smallest age groups were: 41-49 and 15-20, which represented around 9% and 5% of mothers, respectively. One strong characteristic among mothers in the sample is that 85% of them were married (or cohabitating), while only 11% and 4% were previously married and never married, correspondingly. This suggests that most mothers in the sample had a partner and possibly support or validation in the upbringing of children.

Regarding ethnic groups, having a native origin and being mestizo were the most representative categories. The first encompassed approximately 34% of mothers, and the latter, the 42%. Black, white, and other or unknown could be considered the minorities with only 10%, 6%, and 8%, respectively. In relation to the area of residence, 72% of mothers in the sample lived in

urban areas, and 28% in rural ones. While there is a clear predominance of urban areas in the sample, the ethnic groups give an indication of different cultural backgrounds.

Regarding the disciplinary methods received by mothers during their own upbringing, physical assault was reported by 68% of mothers in the sample, while 19% of them claimed being subject of psychological aggression. Non-violent discipline was reported only by approximately 6% of mothers, and 7% reported other or unknown. This contrasts sharply with the disciplinary methods used against children, as for them, psychological aggression was used more than physical assault.

On the other hand, non-violent discipline was reported to a much greater extent in children than in mothers, which may suggest that childrearing patterns could have been shifting from violent measures towards non-violent ones, however, forecasts are probably uncertain. This is, nonetheless, an opportunity to examine the extent to which childrearing patterns can persist across generations.

Lastly, 52% of mothers were in regions with low acceptance of physical punishment for the upbringing of children, and 48% were in those with high acceptance. The regional acceptance of physical punishment in childrearing will help evaluate the influence of beliefs in specific places on the use of disciplinary methods.

Table 7.1 Frequency distribution per variable

Variable	Freq.	Percent
Disciplinary method		
Non-violent discipline	3,873	29.33
Psychological aggression	5,346	40.48
Physical assault	3,986	30.19
Mother's educational attainment		
No education	196	1.48
Primary	2,405	18.21
Secondary	6,104	46.22
Higher	4,500	34.08
Family wealth		
Poorest	3,509	26.57
Poorer	3,689	27.94
Middle	2,702	20.46
Rich	1,940	14.69
Richest	1,365	10.34
Mother's occupation		
Unemployed	3,906	29.58
Blue collar	4,308	32.62
White collar	4,991	37.8

Variable	Freq.	Percent
Mother's age group		
15-20 years	701	5.31
21-30 years	5,941	44.99
31-40 years	5,333	40.39
41-49 years	1,230	9.31
Marital status		
Never married	498	3.77
Married	11,287	85.48
Previously married	1,420	10.75
Mother's ethnic group		
Native origin	4,484	33.96
Black	1,382	10.47
White	775	5.87
Mestizo	5,542	41.97
Other or unknown	1,022	7.74
Residence		
Rural	3,736	28.29
Urban	9,469	71.71
Disciplinary method received by mothers		
Non-violent discipline	741	5.61
Psychological aggression	2,563	19.41
Physical assault	8,965	67.89
Other or unknown	936	7.09
Regional acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing		
Low acceptance	6,916	52.37
High acceptance	6,289	47.63
Total number of mothers	13,205	100

Additionally, as the study considers the different opinions of mothers concerning physical punishment against children, at the regional level, the following figure (Figure 7.1) shows the levels of acceptance for each of the 25 regions in Peru. Overall, it can be seen that the values range from approximately 11% to 57%, which indicates marked regional differences in this regard. Also, there is a drastic contrast between the four regions with the highest acceptance of physical punishment (Junín, Ucayali, Apurímac, and Madre de Dios), and the rest within the high acceptance group, which could be a matter of further study.

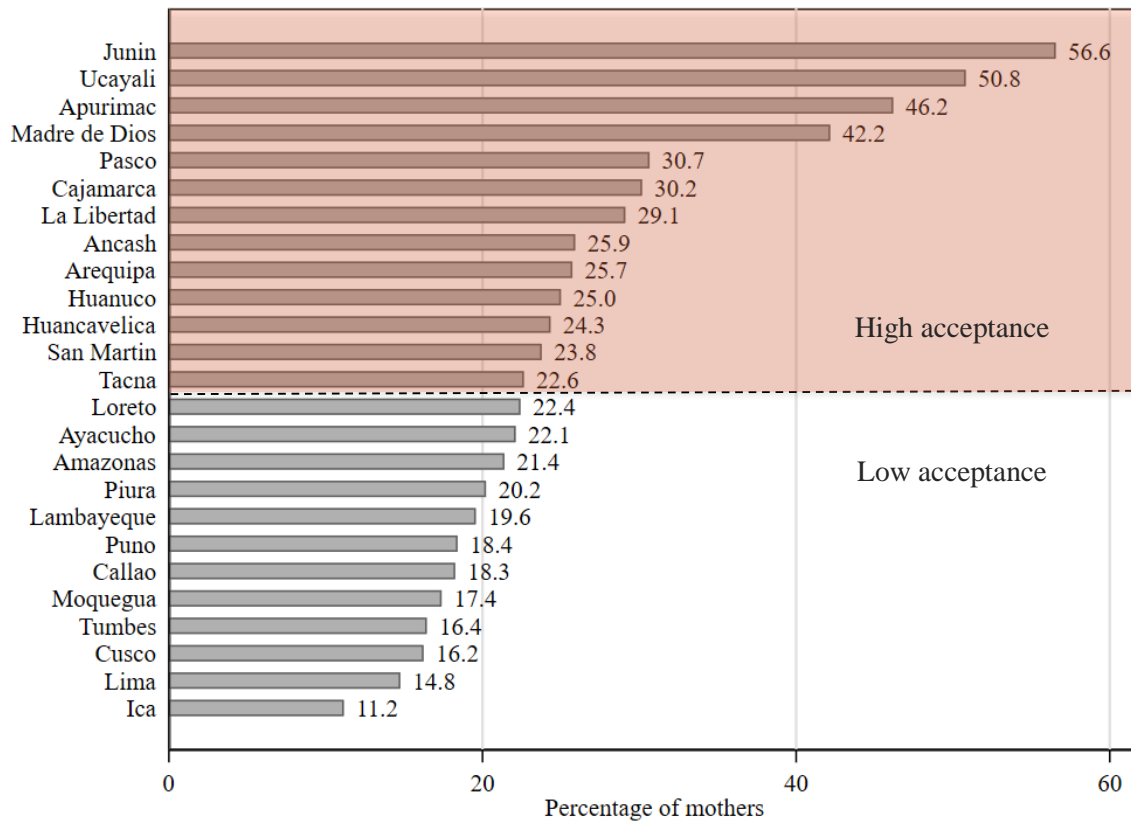


Figure 7.1 Acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing according to regions

7.1.2 Bivariate analysis

To examine the relationships between the disciplinary methods used against children (outcome variable) and the explanatory variables, the following figures will give an indication of the strength and the direction of the associations. Concerning education, Figure 7.2 suggests that the use of non-violent disciplinary measures diminishes as the mothers' educational attainments become higher, which may be fairly counterintuitive. The use of physical assault increases from mothers with no education to those with secondary level. It lowers to 29% among mothers with higher education but, psychological aggression becomes overriding at 43%. According to the Chi-square test, this association between the disciplinary methods used and the educational level attained by mothers was statistically significant ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$).

Regarding wealth levels, greater use of psychological aggression was present within the highest family wealth levels (Figure 7.3). Comparing the middle and richest levels, the use of non-violent discipline remained at 27% for both but, for the first, psychological aggression and physical assault was reported in 42% and 30% of the cases, respectively; while for the latter, they reached 46% and 27%, correspondingly. This relationship concerning disciplinary methods and family wealth levels was statistically significant ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$ according to Chi-square test).

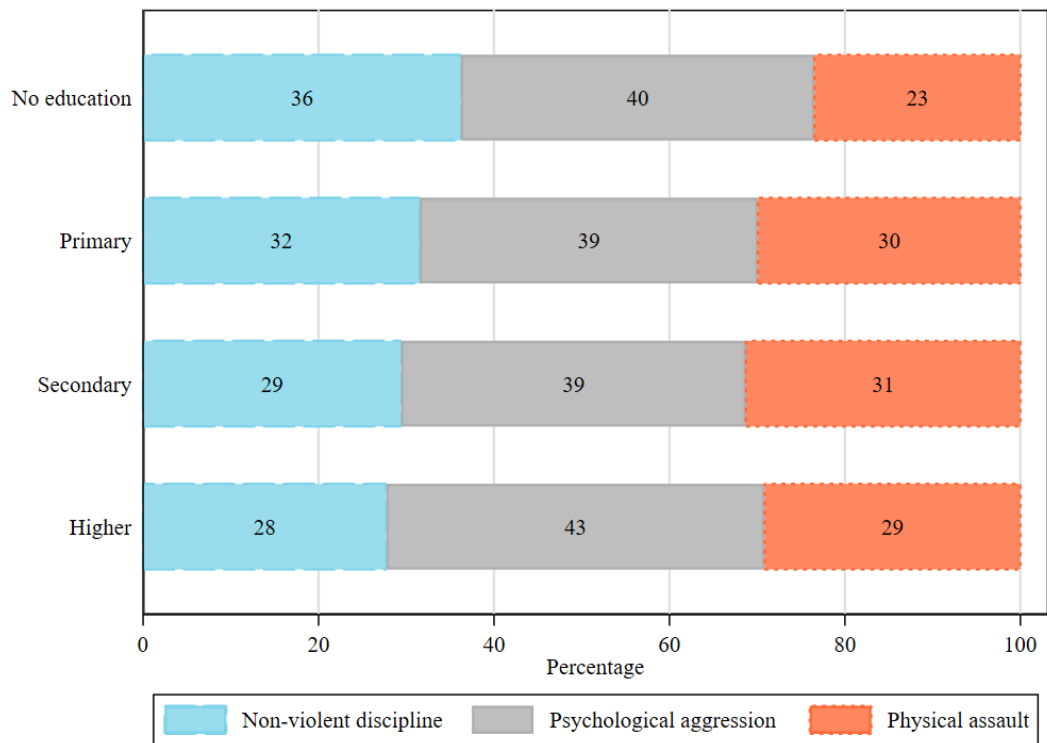


Figure 7.2 Disciplinary methods according to Mother's educational attainment

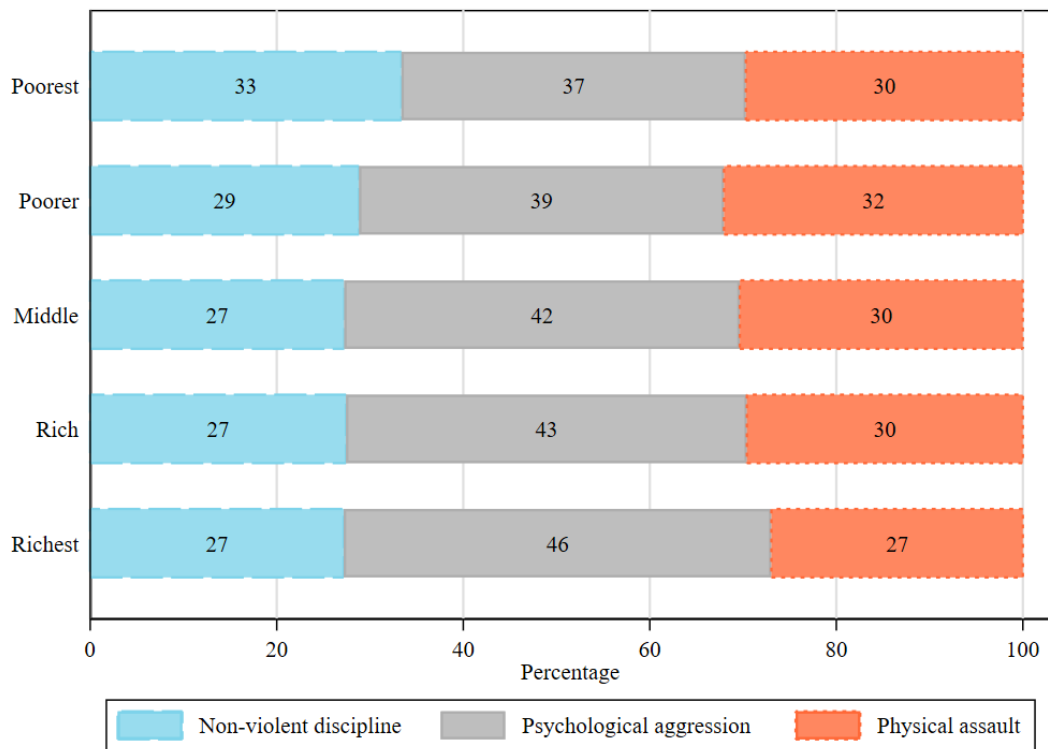


Figure 7.3 Disciplinary methods according to Family wealth

According to mother's occupation, those with blue collar jobs had the highest usage of non-violent discipline towards their children (33%). The use of psychological aggression and physical assault was 41% and 31%, respectively, for mothers in white collar jobs; while, these percentages were 43% and 29%, correspondingly, for those unemployed. It could be argued that unemployed and mothers with white collars jobs have a more similar tendency to use violent childrearing patterns, compared to those with blue collar jobs (Figure 7.4). The association between mother's occupation and disciplinary methods was statistically significant (p -value <0.05 according to Chi-square test).

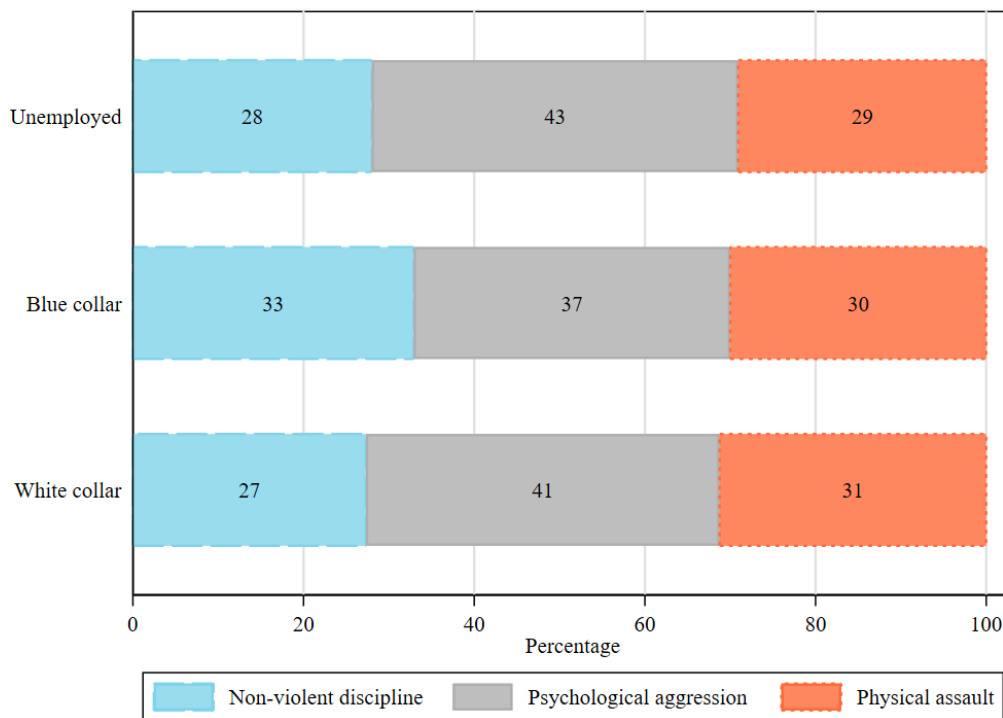


Figure 7.4 Disciplinary methods according to Mother's occupation

Figure 7.5 shows the distribution of disciplinary methods used against children according to mother's age group. In the youngest group (15-20 years), 25%, 42%, and 33% of mothers reported using non-violence measures, psychological aggression, and physical assault, respectively; in contrast, percentages in the oldest group (41-49 years) were 31%, 39%, and 30%, correspondingly. This indicates that older mothers were associated with higher use of non-violent discipline, which could be due to maturity, life experience, the interaction with other variables like educational attainment, or other unobserved characteristics. This association was statistically significant (p -value <0.05 according to Chi-square test).

With regard to the relationship between marital status and disciplinary methods, it was likewise found statistically significant. Married (or cohabitating) mothers had higher use of non-violent measures against children (30%), compared to those never married (26%) and previously married (25%). In this sense, having a partner could be associated with less usage of violence in the upbringing of children, whether it is psychological aggression or physical assault (Figure 7.6). Nevertheless, the vast majority of mothers (85%) in the sample classified as married, thus, the comparison between groups might not be determinant.

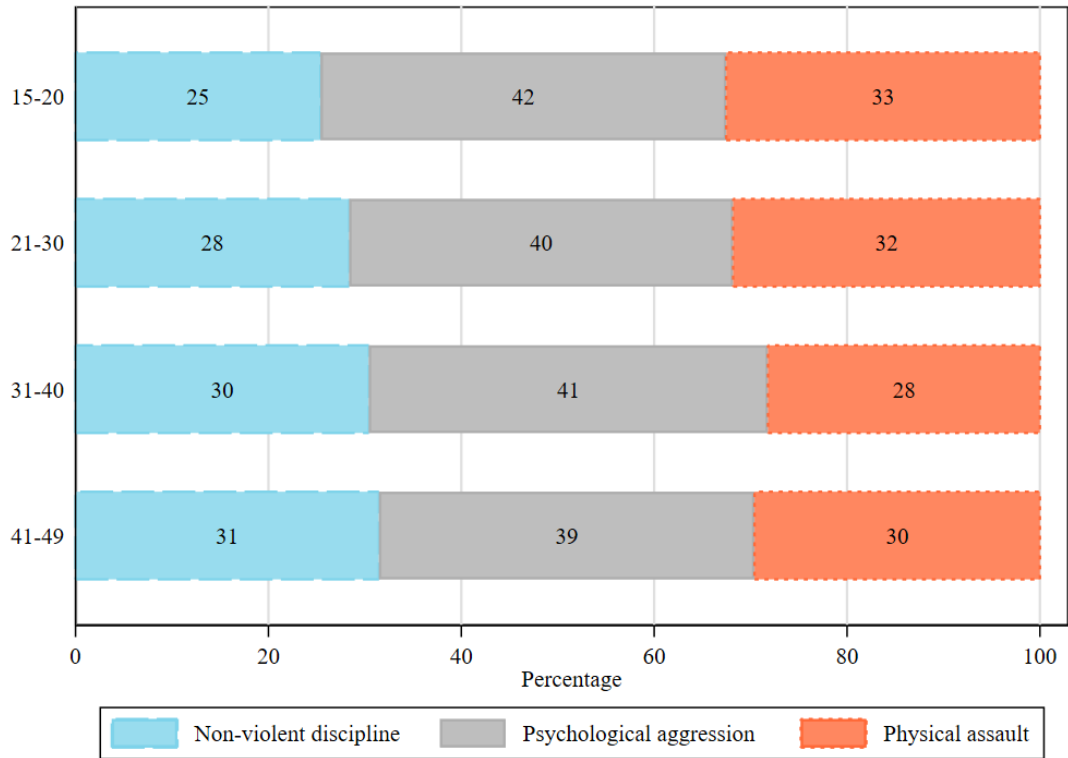


Figure 7.5 Disciplinary methods according to Mother's age group

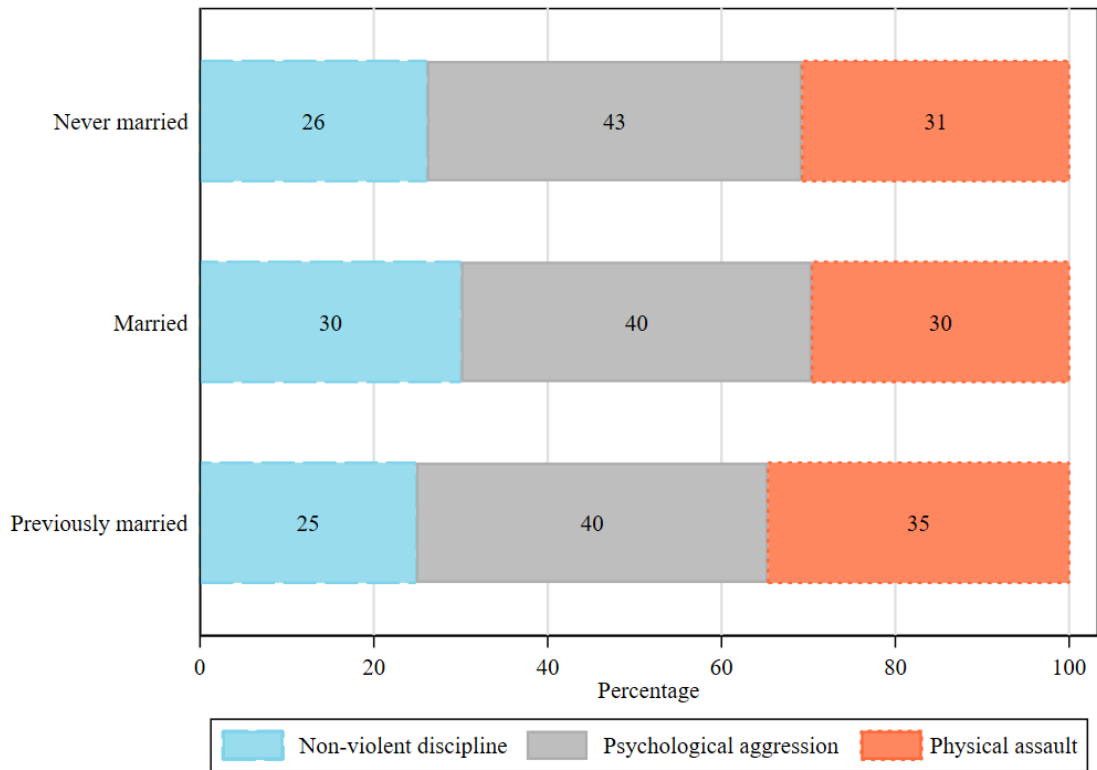


Figure 7.6 Disciplinary methods according to Marital status

Figure 7.7 displays the association concerning disciplinary methods and ethnic groups (statistically significant according to Chi-square test). Since most of the mothers in the sample self-identified as either of native origin (Quechua, Aimara, From the Amazon, Member of another indigenous group) or mestizo, it is important to note and compare their childrearing patterns. Overall, mothers of native origin reported using more non-violent measures towards their children, and thus less violence, than mestizo mothers. The percentage of mothers who claimed using non-violent discipline reached 38% for those of native origin, while it was 23% for those mestizo. Concerning violent measures, 36% and 27% of the native origin group reported using psychological aggression and physical assault, correspondingly; whereas, in the case of the mestizo group, these numbers climbed to 44% and 33%, respectively.

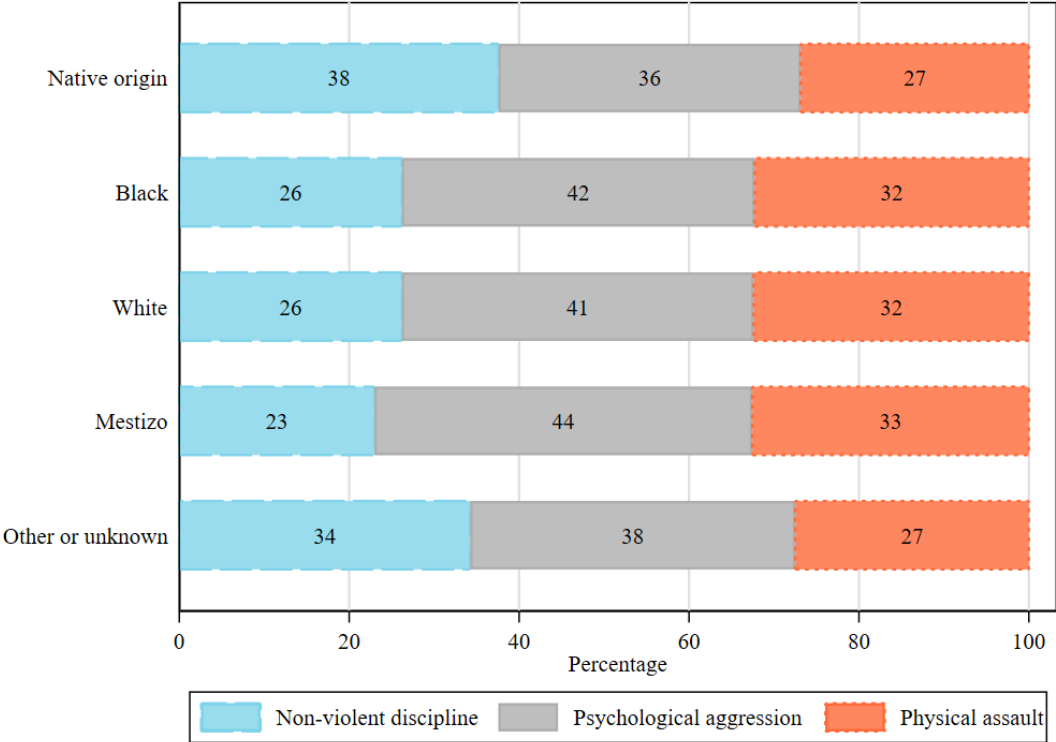


Figure 7.7 Disciplinary methods according to Mother's ethnic group

Regarding area of residence and disciplinary measures (statistically significant relationship), it was found that rural mothers reported using more non-violent discipline than urban ones (Figure 7.8). 42% and 31% of urban mothers reported using psychological and physical violence, respectively, while these percentages were 38% and 29% for rural mothers. Figure 7.9 shows the relationship between the disciplinary measures against children and the type of punishments experienced by the mothers during their own upbringing (statistically significant). From the group of mothers who experienced non-violent discipline, 45% reported using this type of discipline towards their children. From those who received psychological aggression, 53% claimed using that type of violence against their children. Lastly, mothers who reported having been victims of physical assault during their own upbringing, 38% and 35% reported using psychological and physical violence, respectively. These results suggest that mothers may tend to replicate the type of discipline that they experienced during their own upbringing. Non-violent discipline, and violence (psychological aggression or physical assault) against children seem to be significantly associated with the mothers' experiences while growing up.

Additionally, 43% of mothers who stated having experienced other or unknown disciplinary method, reported using non-violent discipline against their children. However, the use of violent measures was also high in this group, as 34% and 23% of mothers reported using psychological and physical violence, respectively, which meant more than half of mothers in the group.

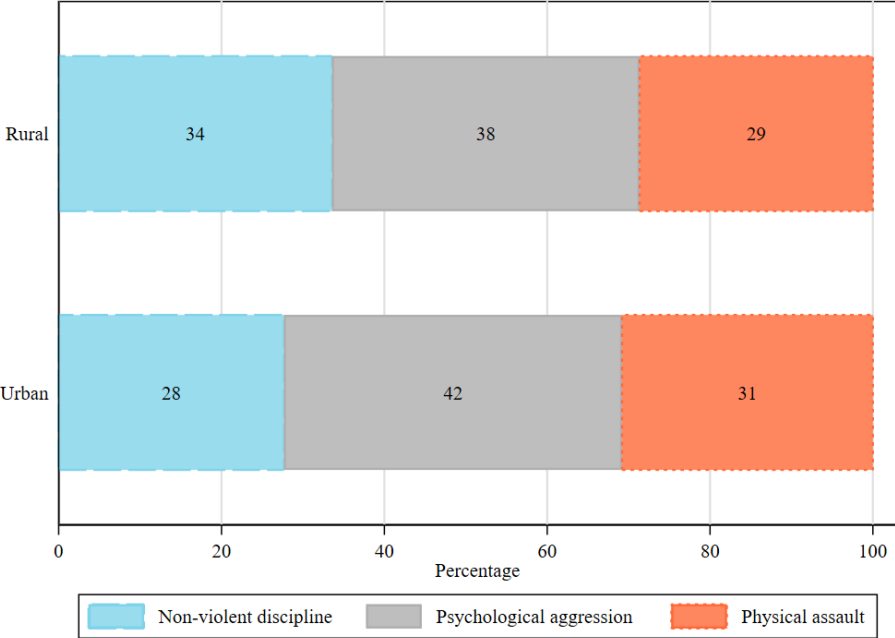


Figure 7.8 Disciplinary methods according to Residence

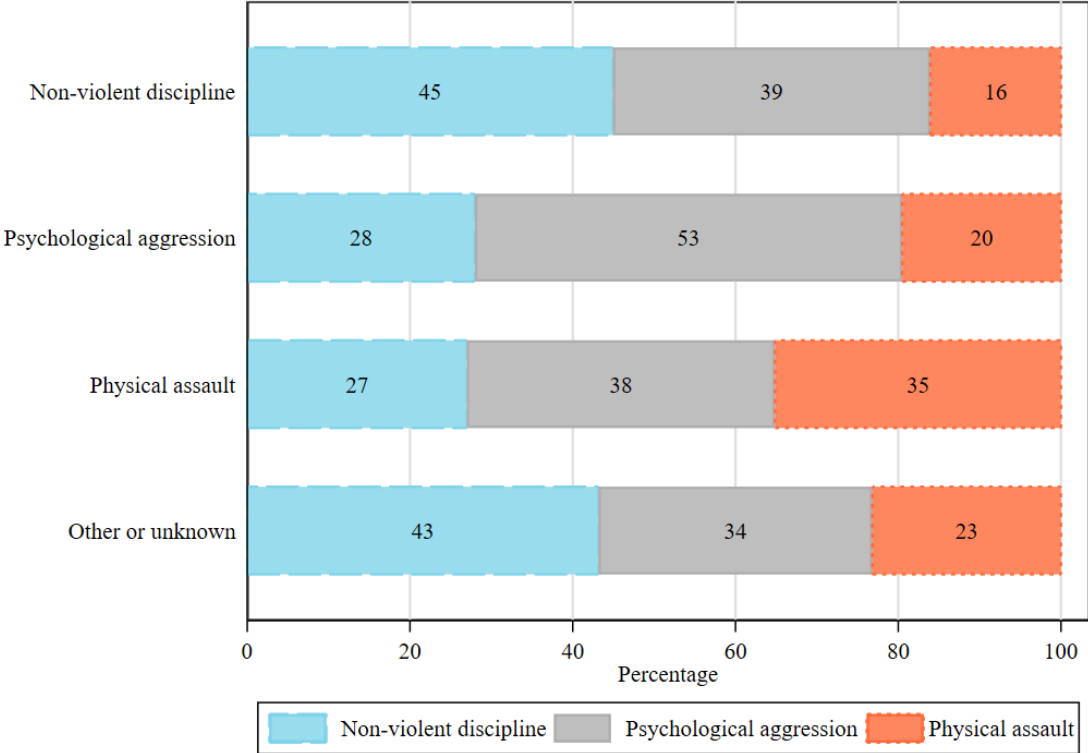


Figure 7.9 Disciplinary methods according to Disciplinary method received by mothers

Lastly, Figure 7.10 shows that, probably as expected, violent measures against children were to a larger extent used among mothers in regions where physical punishment for childrearing was more accepted. Only 26% of mothers in regions with high acceptance of physical punishment reported using non-violent discipline, while this percentage reached 32% for those in regions where physical punishment was less accepted. Similarly, 33% of mothers in regions where physical punishment was more accepted claimed using methods classified as physical assault, whereas this percentage was 28% in regions with a low acceptance of physical punishment. The use of psychological aggression was similar in both groups, 40% and 41% of mothers in regions with low and high acceptance of physical punishment, respectively, reported using it. This relationship was also found statistically significant according to the Chi-square test.

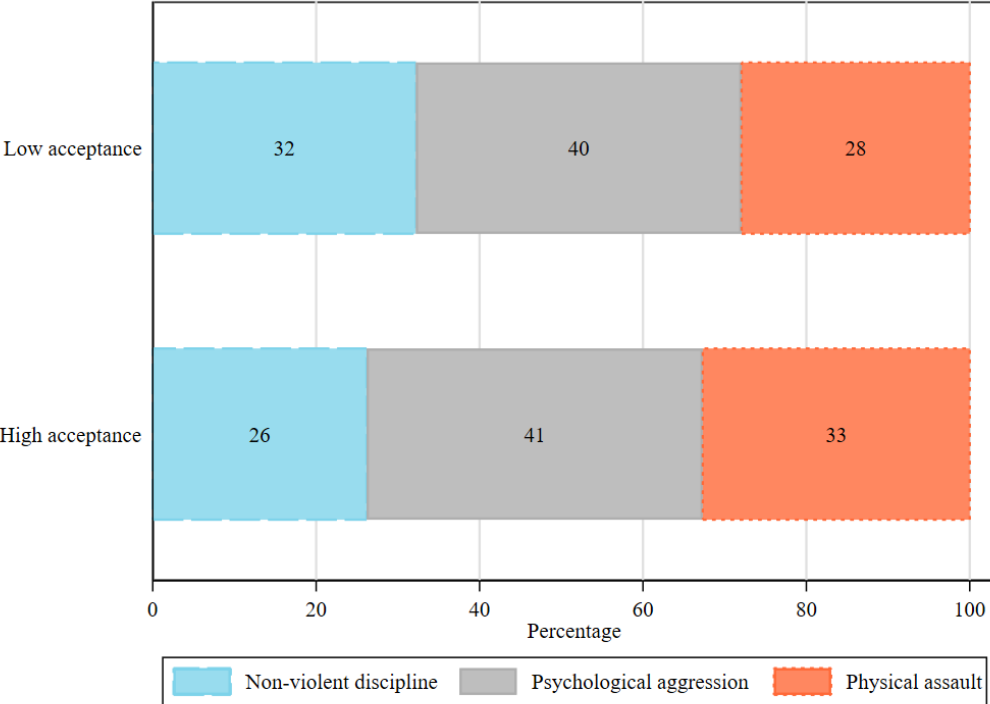


Figure 7.10 Disciplinary methods according to Regional acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing

7.1.3 Multivariate analysis

As stated previously in Chapter 6 (Methodology), three regression models were developed to capture and analyse the influence of the socioeconomic factors, the intergenerational transmission in violence coupled with the regional acceptance of physical punishment against children, and lastly, all the explanatory factors together. The following tables will present the relative risks ratios of using psychological aggression or physical assault instead of non-violent discipline, according to each of the selected variables.

Table 7.2 Influence of socioeconomic factors on the use of violence against children

Variable	Non-violent discipline (Base outcome)	Psychological aggression	Physical assault
Mother's educational attainment (ref. Secondary)			
No education		1.21 (0.21)	0.87 (0.17)
Primary		1.10 (0.07)	1.06 (0.07)
Higher		1.01 (0.06)	0.93 (0.06)
Family wealth (ref. Poorest)			
Poorer		1.11 (0.08)	1.04 (0.08)
Middle		1.20** (0.10)	0.97 (0.09)
Rich		1.15 (0.11)	0.90 (0.09)
Richest		1.18 (0.12)	0.80** (0.09)
Mother's occupation (ref. Unemployed)			
Blue collar		0.80*** (0.04)	0.94 (0.06)
White collar		0.95 (0.05)	1.12* (0.07)
Mother's age group (ref. 21-30 years)			
15-20 years		1.23** (0.13)	1.14 (0.12)
31-40 years		0.94 (0.04)	0.83*** (0.04)
41-49 years		0.86* (0.07)	0.85** (0.07)
Marital status (ref. Married)			
Never married		1.21 (0.14)	1.15 (0.14)
Previously married		1.19** (0.09)	1.33*** (0.10)
Mother's ethnic group (ref. Mestizo)			
Native origin		0.52*** (0.03)	0.51*** (0.03)
Black		0.84** (0.07)	0.85** (0.07)
White		0.82** (0.08)	0.86 (0.09)
Other or unknown		0.59*** (0.05)	0.56*** (0.05)

Variable	Non-violent discipline (Base outcome)	Psychological aggression	Physical assault
Residence (ref. Urban)			
Rural		0.97 (0.06)	0.85** (0.06)
Constant		1.84*** (0.16)	1.61*** (0.14)
Observations	13,205	13,205	13,205

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

The previous table (Table 7.2) presents the estimated results for the socioeconomic factors and control variables. With regard to education, although the estimations were not statistically significant, they suggest that mothers with no education or primary educational attainment were more likely to use psychological aggression, relative to the non-violent discipline (base outcome), compared to those with secondary education; and concerning physical assault, mothers with primary education were more likely to use that type of actions than those with secondary education.

In relation to the family wealth level, two estimates were found statistically significant with a 95% confidence level. First, the risk of using psychological aggression, relative to using non-violent discipline, for mothers with a middle wealth level was 1.20 times that of mothers in the poorest level. Second, mothers at the richest wealth level showed lower risk, than those at the poorest level, of falling into the physical assault category in comparison with the non-violent discipline (factor of 0.80). This indicates that mothers at the middle wealth level had a higher probability of using psychological aggression, and those at the richest level, lower probability of using physical assault, both compared to mothers in the poorest level.

Comparing mothers with blue and white collar jobs with those unemployed, it can be said that the risk of using psychological aggression against their children, relative to the base outcome, for mothers with blue collar jobs was lower (factor of 0.80) than those unemployed, with a 99% confidence level. For mothers with white collar jobs, the risk of using physical assault, relative to non-violent discipline, was 1.12 times that of unemployed mothers (90% confidence level). This suggests that mothers with white collar jobs were more likely to use physical assault than those unemployed, and these, in turn, would be more likely to use psychological aggression than those with blue collar jobs.

Concerning mother's age group, it was found that the risk of employing psychological aggression, relative to non-violent discipline, for mothers aged 15-20 years was 1.23 times that of mothers aged 21-30 (95% confidence level). On the contrary, the corresponding relative risk for mothers aged 41-49 was lower than those aged 21-30 (factor of 0.86) with a 90% confidence level. Regarding physical assault, the risks of falling in this category, relative to the base outcome, were lower for mothers aged 31-40 (factor of 0.83 with 99% confidence level) and aged 41-49 (factor of 0.85 with 95% confidence level), than for those in the 21-30 age interval. The estimates point to a higher likelihood of use of psychological and physical violence in the younger groups.

Regarding marital status, the findings seem solid. The risks of using psychological aggression and physical assault against children, relative to the base outcome, for mothers previously married were 1.19 and 1.33 times that of married ones, respectively. These estimates had 95% and 99% confidence level, correspondingly, and would indicate that having been previously married (widowed, divorced, and separated) was more likely to be associated with the use of violent disciplinary methods.

Referring to ethnic groups, mestizo mothers seemed to be the most likely to use violent disciplinary methods. The risks of employing psychological aggression and physical assault, relative to the non-violent discipline, for mothers with native origin (Quechua, Aimara, From the Amazon, Member of another indigenous group), black, white, and other or unknown, were lower than those in the mestizo group, with confidence levels of 95% and 99%. This comparison is quite interesting as mestizo was the largest ethnic group in the sample, closely followed by those of native origin. Lastly, the risk of using physical assault, relative to the base outcome, for mothers in rural areas was lower than those in urban areas, which was statistically significant with a 95% confidence level. The assessment was similar for psychological aggression but the estimate was not statistically significant.

The following table (Table 7.3) provides the estimated likelihoods of using psychological or physical violence, related to the transmission of violent childrearing patterns and the regional acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing, together with the control variables. First, regarding how childrearing patterns can possibly transfer from one generation to the following, the results showed that the risk of using psychological aggression, relative to the base outcome, for mothers who received psychological aggression as well during their own upbringing, was 1.31 times that of mothers who received physical assault, with a 99% of confidence level. On the other hand, mothers who received non-violent and other or unknown disciplinary methods were less likely to fall into the psychological aggression category, than those who received physical assault while growing up (factors of 0.57 and 0.58, respectively). This suggests that psychological aggression patterns were quite likely to transfer from the history of mothers to their own childrearing actions.

Similarly, the risks of using physical assault against children, relative to the base outcome, for mothers who received non-violent discipline, psychological aggression, and other or unknown were lower than those who reported having been victims of physical assault while growing up (factors of 0.25, 0.52, and 0.43, respectively), with a 99% of confidence level. This indicates that mothers who experienced physical assault by their own parents had higher risk of replicating these patterns against their own children, which would confirm the intergenerational transmission of both types of violence.

Secondly, concerning how the regional level of acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing could be related to the disciplinary methods used by mothers, the results confirm that a higher acceptance is associated with the use of violent actions against children. As expected, ideas and beliefs within societies could influence parenting methods. The findings showed that the risks of falling into the psychological aggression and physical assault categories, relative to the base outcome, for mothers in regions with a high acceptance of physical punishment were 1.45 and 1.57 times that of those in regions with low acceptance, respectively (99% of confidence level). These results are consistent with the theories that argue

that the sociocultural aspect within the children's context matters for the development of parenting and disciplinary methods.

With respect to the control variables (mother's age group, marital status, ethnic group, and residence), the results are quite similar to those in Table 7.2. This shows the relevance and consistency of these variables in both Model 1 and Model 2. To sum up some control estimations, first according to age groups, the likelihoods of using psychological and physical violence were higher in the youngest group (15-20 years), 1.20 times that of those between 21-30 years (90% confidence level). Similarly, the risks of using psychological aggression and physical assault, relative to the base outcome, for previously married mothers were 1.16 and 1.36 times that of those married, respectively (95% and 99% confidence level).

In relation to ethnic groups, results with 99% of confidence level showed that the risks of using psychological and physical violence against children for mothers of native origin and other or unknown ethnic group, were lower than those of the mestizo ethnic group. This would imply that mestizo mothers were more likely to use violent disciplinary measures. Lastly, mothers in rural areas were less likely to use violent disciplinary methods, relative to the base outcome, compared to those in urban areas (99% confidence level).

Table 7.3 Influence of intergenerational transmissions and regional acceptance of physical punishment on the use of violence against children

Variable	Non-violent discipline (Base outcome)	Psychological aggression	Physical assault
Disciplinary method received by mothers (ref. Physical assault)			
Non-violent discipline		0.57*** (0.05)	0.25*** (0.03)
Psychological aggression		1.31*** (0.07)	0.52*** (0.03)
Other or unknown		0.58*** (0.05)	0.43*** (0.04)
Regional acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing (ref. Low acceptance)			
High acceptance		1.45*** (0.06)	1.57*** (0.08)
Mother's age group (ref. 21-30 years)			
15-20 years		1.20* (0.12)	1.20* (0.13)
31-40 years		0.96 (0.04)	0.79*** (0.04)
41-49 years		0.88* (0.07)	0.79*** (0.07)
Marital status (ref. Married)			
Never married		1.19 (0.14)	1.20 (0.15)
Previously married		1.16** (0.08)	1.36*** (0.10)

Variable	Non-violent discipline (Base outcome)	Psychological aggression	Physical assault
Mother's ethnic group (ref. Mestizo)			
Native origin		0.48*** (0.02)	0.48*** (0.03)
Black		0.86* (0.07)	0.93 (0.08)
White		0.85* (0.08)	0.90 (0.09)
Other or unknown		0.60*** (0.05)	0.59*** (0.05)
Residence (ref. Urban)			
Rural		0.80*** (0.04)	0.76*** (0.04)
Constant		1.78*** (0.09)	1.71*** (0.09)
Observations	13,205	13,205	13,205

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Finally, the following table (Table 7.4) will present the results for the model that considers all the variables together. According to this, the focus will be on analysing whether the estimations made so far change or remain the same when encompassing the socioeconomic factors, the transmission of violence across generations, and the regional acceptance of physical punishment. In the first place, the results related to the mother's educational attainment remained not statistically significant, thus, no conclusions could be drawn from them.

Secondly, when examining family wealth levels, the results were statistically significant only for the use of psychological aggression. In this regard, the risks of using psychological aggression against children, relative to the non-violent discipline, for mothers in the poorer, middle, rich, and richest levels were 1.13, 1.25, 1.21, and 1.29 times that of mothers in the poorest level, respectively. This indicates that mothers at the poorest wealth level were less likely to use psychological violence against their children than those at higher levels.

Referring to mother's occupation, the likelihood of using psychological aggression against children, in relation to non-violent discipline, for mothers with blue collar jobs was lower than that of unemployed mothers (99% confidence level). Results for physical assault were not statistically significant, yet they suggest that mothers with white collar jobs were more likely to apply physical violence against their children than unemployed ones, similar to Table 7.2.

In relation to the intergenerational transmission of violent childrearing patterns, all estimations were again statistically significant with 99% confidence level, as in Table 7.3; hence, it can be said that connection between the use of violent disciplinary methods against children and the type of punishments that mothers received while growing up, was not by chance, but rather, that they are strongly associated elements. The likelihood of using psychological aggression,

relative to non-violent discipline, for mothers who were victim of the same type of violence while growing up was 1.30 times that of mothers who experienced physical assault. In contrast, the probabilities of applying physical assault against children, relative to non-violent discipline, for mothers who experienced either non-violent discipline, psychological aggression, or other or unknown, were all lower than that of those who suffered physical assault during their own upbringing (factors of 0.25, 0.52, and 0.43 respectively). One main conclusion can be drawn from these results: psychological aggression and physical assault experienced by mothers during their own upbringing would probably be reproduced in the disciplinary methods they use against their own children.

The regional acceptance of physical punishment against children confirmed having an influential role in the use of psychological aggression and physical assault, as in Table 7.3. The risks of using these types of violent measures, relative to the non-violent discipline, for mothers living in regions with high acceptance of physical punishment were 1.45 and 1.56 times that of those from regions with lower acceptance, respectively (99% confidence level).

Concerning the estimations for the mother's age groups, there were slight variations compared to those in Table 7.2 and Table 7.3, yet the results point to the same conclusion: mothers in the youngest age interval (15-20) were more likely to use psychological and physical violence, relative to non-violent discipline, than those aged 21-30 years. Likewise, mothers in the oldest group (41-49 years) were less likely to use violent disciplinary measures. Regarding marital status, the estimations for previously married mothers seem to be the most consistent results throughout the analysis. The findings indicate that the likelihoods of using psychological and physical violence, relative to non-violent discipline, for previously married mothers were 1.21 and 1.36 times that of married ones.

In relation to ethnicity, the results for mothers of native origin, black, white, and other or unknown ethnic group, signalled lower probabilities of using psychological aggression, relative to non-violent discipline, compared to the mestizo group. On the other hand, mothers of native origin and other or unknown ethnic group showed statistically significant lower probabilities of using physical assault against their children, compared to mestizo mothers. Finally, the results regarding residence remained statistically significant only for physical assault. Mothers in rural areas were less likely to use physical violence against children than those living in urban areas.

Table 7.4 Influence of socioeconomic factors, intergenerational transmissions, and regional acceptance of physical punishment on the use of violence against children

Variable	Non-violent discipline (Base outcome)	Psychological aggression	Physical assault
Mother's educational attainment (ref. Secondary)			
No education		1.23 (0.21)	0.86 (0.17)
Primary		1.09 (0.07)	1.02 (0.07)
Higher		1.00 (0.06)	0.94 (0.06)

Variable	Non-violent discipline (Base outcome)	Psychological aggression	Physical assault
Family wealth (ref. Poorest)			
Poorer		1.13* (0.08)	1.06 (0.08)
Middle		1.25*** (0.10)	1.03 (0.09)
Rich		1.21** (0.11)	1.00 (0.10)
Richest		1.29** (0.14)	0.97 (0.11)
Mother's occupation (ref. Unemployed)			
Blue collar		0.81*** (0.05)	0.93 (0.06)
White collar		0.95 (0.05)	1.09 (0.07)
Disciplinary method received by mothers (ref. Physical assault)			
Non-violent discipline		0.56*** (0.05)	0.25*** (0.03)
Psychological aggression		1.30*** (0.07)	0.52*** (0.03)
Other or unknown		0.58*** (0.05)	0.43*** (0.04)
Regional acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing (ref. Low acceptance)			
High acceptance		1.45*** (0.07)	1.56*** (0.08)
Mother's age group (ref. 21-30 years)			
15-20 years		1.23** (0.13)	1.20* (0.13)
31-40 years		0.94 (0.04)	0.79*** (0.04)
41-49 years		0.85** (0.07)	0.80*** (0.07)
Marital status (ref. Married)			
Never married		1.22* (0.14)	1.21 (0.15)
Previously married		1.21** (0.09)	1.36*** (0.10)
Mother's ethnic group (ref. Mestizo)			
Native origin		0.50*** (0.03)	0.48*** (0.03)
Black		0.88* (0.07)	0.92 (0.08)
White		0.84* (0.08)	0.89 (0.09)
Other or unknown		0.60***	0.59***

Variable	Non-violent discipline (Base outcome)	Psychological aggression (0.05)	Physical assault (0.05)
Residence (ref. Urban)			
Rural		0.92 (0.06)	0.79*** (0.06)
Constant		1.60*** (0.14)	1.68*** (0.16)
Observations	13,205	13,205	13,205

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

7.2 Discussion

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge surrounding child maltreatment and its driving factors. The study revealed that a large proportion of mothers in the sample applied violent disciplinary methods against their children aged 1 to 5 years old. Approximately 40.5% and 30.2% of mothers reported using psychological aggression and physical assault, respectively. Despite the fact that the Peruvian legislation has established clear rules against violence and damaging punishment against children, it is clear that violent childrearing patterns remain commonly used which continues to threaten children's well-being and future development.

Concerning the socioeconomic characteristics of the mothers in the sample, most of them reached secondary (46%) or higher education (34%). Also, they mainly classified at the poorest (27%), poorer (28%), or middle (20%) family wealth levels. Regarding occupation, almost 38% and 33% of mothers had white and blue collar jobs, correspondingly, and lastly, approximately 30% were unemployed. These conditions give an indication of the limited economic opportunities that are faced by mothers in Peru, and suggest that their families might be more susceptible to struggles in the course of life. Comparing these facts with what the literature indicates about how stressful situations within the family context, could impact the use of violence, it may be thought that Peruvian families were more exposed to these effects. However, the findings in this study showed rather vague relationships between socioeconomic factors and the use of violent disciplinary methods.

According to the regression outputs, mother's educational attainment was not statistically significant in the models, while family wealth and mother's occupation were indeed found statistically significant, which points to their relevance as socioeconomic determinants. Concerning the estimations relating to family wealth, first, it was found that mothers at the middle level were more likely to use psychological aggression than those at the poorest; and the richest, less likely to use physical assault. However, when controlling for all variables jointly, only the results for psychological aggression were reinforced. Poorer, middle, rich, and richest mothers had higher likelihoods of using psychological aggression against their children than those at the poorest level.

Regarding mother's occupation, there was also a more consistent relationship with psychological aggression when controlling for all variables. Essentially, the results indicate that unemployed mothers were more likely to use psychological violence against their children than mothers with blue collar jobs. This could point to the fact that being unemployed may add concerns and stress to mothers, which, according to the literature, would be associated with the use of violence.

Nevertheless, the findings for family wealth and mother's occupation are not conclusive. First, because the probabilities of using physical assault remained uncertain, and it would not be possible to assume that higher likelihoods of using psychological aggression could suggest lower for physical assault. Also, there were not enough statistically significant results for mothers with white collar jobs to allow for a comparison between the two types of employment (blue and white collar jobs) and the possible work-related stress.

It is important to mention that mother's educational attainment, occupation, and family wealth may be correlated. Changes in the level of educational attainment are likely to expand opportunities in the labour market and, as a result, have a positive impact on occupation. Likewise, improvements in the type of employment would probably lead to superior family wealth levels. Nonetheless, the study required the use of these variables to assess education and occupation at the individual level, and wealth to gauge the economic strains at the family level.

In relation to the intergenerational transmission of violent childrearing patterns through the experiences of mothers during their own upbringing, the study revealed more concrete findings. The 68% of mothers in the sample reported having been victims of physical assault by their parents but, reported using it against their children to a lesser extent. This might seem that childrearing methods have been shifting, over time, from a high use of physical violence to psychological aggression and non-violent discipline. However, it is uncertain whether the use of psychological aggression will diminish to a point where non-violent discipline becomes predominant, and most importantly, the estimations rather point to an ongoing problem regarding violence.

The results showed solid and statistically significant associations between the type of punishments received by mothers and their own disciplinary methods used against their children. Namely, mothers who experienced psychological aggression while growing up, were more likely to replicate this type of violence against their own children, and those who suffered physical assault, had higher likelihoods of using the same type of violent measures when their children misbehave. This certainly points to a clear connection between violent childrearing patterns across generations. Furthermore, this would suggest constant reproduction and persistence of violent disciplinary methods against children in the near future. In this regard, it would be of great importance to examine what factors could possibly be related to the discontinuation of violent childrearing patterns.

Additionally, as social values and beliefs were pointed out as factors associated with the use of violence, this study assessed and confirmed their effects on the use of violent disciplinary methods against children in Peru. According to the study results, mothers living in regions with high acceptance of physical punishment for childrearing, had higher likelihoods of using either

psychological or physical violence against their children, compared to those living in regions with low acceptance.

This analysis revealed that, in Peru, the effects of the intergenerational transmission variables and the level of regional acceptance of physical punishment, were more consistent and stronger than the effects of the socioeconomic factors. It became clear that mother's experiences during their own upbringing and the acceptance of violent measures at the regional level, were strongly associated with the use of violence against children. This agrees with the fact that sociocultural factors play an important role in the type of actions taken when children misbehave but, most importantly, this evidence could help lead to a policy-making more directed towards the improvement of values in society regarding child protection, and encourage a better support system for families in relation to childrearing patterns. Lastly, the control variables indicated, in general, that mothers in the youngest age interval (15-20), previously married, mestizo, and living in urban areas, were more likely to use violent disciplinary methods against their children. These overall characteristics could also be good opportunities for the development of further research that may help clarify what specifically could make mothers, under these features, more prone to use violent disciplinary methods against their children.

8 Conclusions

The findings of this research agreed with some of the concepts proposed by the theoretical approaches. With respect to the influence of problematic socioeconomic conditions on the use of violent disciplinary methods, family wealth and mother's occupation were found statistically significant, yet the educational attainment of mothers was not. However, the study results indicate that mothers in levels of family wealth above the poorest, were associated with higher risks of using psychological aggression against their children. On the other hand, mothers with blue collar jobs were found to be less likely to use psychological violence against their children, compared to unemployed mothers. Therefore, according to these mixed results, and considering that mother's education was not statistically significant in any of the models, Hypothesis 1 (Low socioeconomic conditions related to education, family wealth, and occupation are strong determinants of the use of violence against children perpetrated by their mothers) was rejected.

On the contrary, Hypothesis 2 (The use of violent childrearing patterns against children is largely influenced by intergenerational transmissions in violence) was fully accepted. Violent childrearing patterns were likely to be replicated by mothers, on the basis of their own experiences with their parents. According to the results, mothers who experienced either psychological aggression or physical assault were associated with higher probabilities of applying the same type of violence against their own children. It became clear that a violent upbringing experienced by mothers, had strong influence on the way in which they raise their own children. Additionally, the regional acceptance of physical punishment against children also played a significant role in the use of violent childrearing patterns, confirming the relevance of social values and beliefs in this regard.

Taking into account that this research undertook a study of the use of violence against children in Peru, encompassing the socioeconomic and sociocultural aspects explained by the theories, it can be said that, in this case, the intergenerational transmission of violence and the regional acceptance of physical punishment, were more determining factors than low socioeconomic conditions. Finally, with respect to how policies could tackle the use of violence against children, it could be argued that efforts on changing the mother's acceptance of violent discipline and making them more aware of the detrimental outcomes that violence can have (directly and indirectly) on the children's life course, may prevent them from using and replicating violent childrearing patterns with their own children.

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