

Digitised Education of Parents for Children Protection Project

(DEPCIP)

“Project no: 2019-1-TR01-K204-077577”

Need Analysis Report



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O1: Need Analysis Report

1. Field Research Protocol

2. Sort Report on the Results of the Qualitative Research

1. Field Research Protocol

1. Introduction

The current protocol describes the research methodology for the collection of qualitative data from parents, whose children are between 2 to 17 years old, on children maltreatment.

2. Background

Regardless of the efforts to protect children around the world, child maltreatment remains a serious global problem (Stoltenborgh et al 2014). The prevalence of child maltreatment ranges from one-third to one-half lifetime of the child exposure to violence (Finkelhor & Turner, 2009; Stoltenborgh et al., 2014). According to the World Health Organization, there were an estimated 57 000 deaths attributed to homicide among children under 15 years of age in 2000. Global estimates of child homicide suggest that infants and very young children are at greatest risk, with rates for the 0–4-year-old age group more than double those of 5–14-year-olds.

However, since perception of maltreatment is subjective, therefore differing across cultural, racial, ethnic backgrounds, and developmental stages (Ashton, 2010; Shanalingwa, 2009), it is of particular interest to broaden the understanding of perceptions of maltreatment among adults. Child maltreatment is defined according to socially accepted norms that are largely dictated by culture. In particular, physical punishment is still a common and socially acceptable practice in many countries. This study highly acknowledges the necessity to broaden our knowledge of the parent's perceptions of physical abuse among the participant countries.

3. Operational definitions

In the current research protocol the following definitions has been adopted:

Child

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989), defines a child as 'every human being below the age of eighteen years, unless the law applicable to the child, is attained earlier. Biologically, child is any person who is in the developmental stage of childhood, between infancy and adulthood.

Violence against child

All forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

(UN General Assembly, article 19, Convention on the Rights of Child)

Child abuse or maltreatment

The International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect recently compared definitions of abuse from 58 countries and found some commonality in what was considered abusive (Bross et al.2000).

In 1999, the WHO Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention drafted the following definition: "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."



Physical abuse

The intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child’s health, survival, development or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating. Much physical violence against children in the home is inflicted with the object of punishing (WHO, 2006).

Corporal punishment

The Committee on the Rights of the Child in the General Comment No. 8 defines ‘corporal’ or ‘physical’ punishment as, “any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (“smacking”, “slapping”, “spanking”) children, with the hand or with an implement.

Neglect

Neglect refers to the failure of a parent to provide for the development of the child – where the parent is in a position to do so – in one or more of the following areas: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions. Neglect is thus distinguished from circumstances of poverty in that neglect can occur only in cases where reasonable resources are available to the family or caregiver (WHO, 2006).

Parents Attitude

Parent’s attitude is defined as the mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way, while perception is defined as the process by which people organize and interpret sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world (Lindsay & Norman, 1977).

4. Aim and Objectives of the qualitative study

The objective of the study is to explore, describe and understand the parents' knowledge, perceptions and beliefs regarding the violence against children in Turkey, Italy, Greece, Lithuania and Spain.

The current study aims to explore the following:

1. Explore the parents' knowledge regarding the phenomenon of violence against children
2. Explore the parents' perceptions and beliefs regarding maltreatment
3. Explore the parents' perception on the consequences/impact of this attitude to the children
4. Explore possible maltreatment episodes towards their own children
5. Explore differentiations on maltreatment between the parent-couple
6. Assess the needs for training, support or prevention

5. Methods of data collection

5.1. Research strategy

The overall approach is a qualitative inquiry consisting of five research studies, one conducted by each participant country. Qualitative methods (Robson, 1993; Marshall & Rossman 1995) allowed us to gain additional and deepen knowledge of the phenomenon. From a theoretical point of view, the field study is inspired from the phenomenological philosophical approach (Marshall & Rossman 1995; Lster, 1999) with the purpose to identify the specific phenomenon on how it is perceived by the participants. This means that we aim at gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through semi-structured interviews, and present these from the perspective of the research participants.¹ This approach allows an in-depth investigation of the

¹ Phenomenology refers to the meaning of the 'lived experience' of several individuals on a particular concept or in other words a phenomenon. Through phenomenology, the researcher can deeply understand the experience that several individuals have had on a certain phenomenon. The major aim of phenomenology is to "reduce" the experience individuals have about a certain phenomenon

phenomenon under study and reveals the meaning that the participants' attach to their experiences (Bowling, 2002).

5.2. Data collection method

Qualitative data was collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews in Turkey, Italy, Greece, Lithuania and Spain. The method allowed us to yield rich sources of data on people's experiences, opinions, aspirations and feelings (May,1993). Additionally, semi-structured interviews allowed us to securely explore similar themes and asking similar questions while at the same time allow the interviewer to remain open to unexpected information (May,1993). Furthermore this type of interview facilitates the analysis procedure that follows. A complementary form (**Appendix I**) was used at the end of the interview to collect information on the participants' socio-demographic profile (age, education, family status, family members, parents' educational level, number and age of their children etc.).

5.3. The interview guide - Main thematic areas

The interviews has been structured on 7 main thematic areas. Those are:

THEMATIC AREA 1: Description of a typical week for the family members

THEMATIC AREA 2: Knowledge regarding the phenomenon of violence against children

THEMATIC AREA 3: The perceptions and beliefs the parents hold regarding maltreatment

THEMATIC AREA 4: The parents' perception on the consequences/ impact of this attitude for/to the children

THEMATIC AREA 5: Possible maltreatment episodes

THEMATIC AREA 6: Differentiations on maltreatment between the parent-couple

THEMATIC AREA 7: Assess the needs for support

so that finally the description of the universal essence is created which means "to grasp the very nature of the thing" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 177).

5.4. Participant recruitment

A sample of 12 parents from each partner country has been interviewed in semi-structured model for the determination of the current situation. They were interviewed through face to face interviews. In total 62 interviews were conducted.

The participants were drawn from the general population, or with the help of stakeholders, or with a snowball technique, or finally participants were drawn from the researchers' personal networks.

The study inclusion criteria were comprised the following: a) be of both sex, b) their children were between 2-17 years old, c) a variety in the ages of their children existed, d) Roma, refugees, migrant families are included as well as families with disable children.

An interview record with basic demographic/background information was fulfilled **(Appendix III)**.

5.5. Description of the process

Researchers in each country were contacted potential participants by phone or in person to arrange the date and time of the interview. Written information regarding the DEPCIP project as well as informed consent was received prior to participation **(Appendix IV)**. The interview were tape recorded.

A list of support services was provided to the participants for those affected by the discussion of recalling unpleasant experiences.

5.5.1. Introduction to the interview process– Ethical considerations

The researchers/interviewers introduced themselves, welcome the interviewee and thank them for their participation. They introduced the topic of the discussion and provided an overview of the procedure and the thematic areas we are interested in discussing with them. The researchers/interviewers then informed the interviewee that the content of the discussion is confidential and that the material will only be



used for the purposes of the study. Additionally, the researchers/interviewers informed the participant that there are no wrong or right answers, and that they only want to understand their personal experience, feelings and thoughts. They requested their consent to tape record the discussion. The interviewees were also informed that they have the right to withdraw from the interview at any point.

6. Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis followed the principles of **thematic analysis** (Braun, & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is historically a conventional practice in qualitative research which involves searching through data to identify any recurrent patterns. Thematic analysis aims at discovering themes, concepts and categories. It attempts to represent a view of reality through systematic work based on the text to identify topics that are progressively integrated into higher order themes, via processes of de-contextualization and re-contextualization. A theme is a cluster of linked categories conveying similar meanings and usually emerges through the inductive analytic process which characterizes the qualitative paradigm.

The recorded discussions was transcribed verbatim and analyzed in the original language. A process of categorization followed within a thematic analysis, framed around the seven thematic areas or new ones that may emerged from the data. Data then was organized by theme and each theme was assigned to categories (and some may fit more than one).



2. Report on the Results of Qualitative Research

Participants

A total of 62 parents participated in the study. Their level of education ranges from no education to doctoral studies. As far as the employment is concern, there are housewives, unskilled workers, free launchers, private and public sector employees, teachers, researches and university teachers. The language spoken at home in almost all cases is the local one. Most families, but not all of them, own a car, they have shared or single rooms for their children, and own a computer. The majority of the families have traveled with their family at least once. Demographic details are demonstrated in Appendix III

THEMATIC AREA 1: Description of a typical week for the family members

Description of a typical day/week for the family members:

Almost all families begin to describe their "typical day" with:

- The time of waking up, which in most cases is together with their children. Most of the parents say they wake up their children
- Breakfast time is also mentioned by almost half of respondents, most of whom say they do it together with the whole family.
- School and work are named by almost all families, except for the very young children who do not go to school
- Taking children to school also seems to be a moment that everyone remembers
- Usually parents bring and pick up their children. In many of the cases, grandparents or neighbours are also involved

- Lunch time is usually is not the same for all family members, since at list one of the parents arrive at home later
- Diner time differs in importance between the participant counties

After-school activities:

- They mainly talk about outdoor activities (playground)
- Sports activities
- Foreign languish lessons
- Cycling, swimming, dancing
- Homework
- In the evenings watching tv or playing in the internet are also mentioned for the older children, or reding fairy tales or playing games for the youngest.

The **weekend** is described as an occasion where parents can spend leisure time with family or do activities with their children, such as trips, walks, workshops, going to the library, theatre, museums, dinners with friends and Sundays at grandparents' house, going picnic, visiting relatives, going shopping centre, spending time at the garden.

As regards the **responsibilities** shared within the family, it seems that children are called to:

- Take care of their room
- Hygiene routine
- In many cases they joint activities with other members of family in preparing meal, cleaning up rooms, taking care about pets, go for groceries and definitely to do their homework.

This is an area of **often conflicts** between parents and children.

It seems that **parents responsibilities** are not the same in every county. Housewives take care of all domestic works in Turkey, while mothers, in Greece take more responsibilities with the growing of the children, while fathers undertake to drive children in the different activities.

Difficult and pleasant situations with their children:

More than specific difficult moments, which vary from family to family, during the interviews a certain homogeneity emerges in identifying the causes that lead to **difficult situations** during daily family life.

For example,

- When there are times to be respected and when in a hurry
- When the parent has to make the child do something he does not like - such as setting the table or doing homework, washing hair, sleeping
- When they spend a lot of hours playing video games
- To "remove" the child from something he likes to do - such as television, the playground, video games, internet
- When the parent does not pay attention to the child
- When children make a lot of noise

- When parents are in bad mood
- Tense situation between the siblings
- Difference between parents
- When academic achievements worsen
- Failing to reconcile work and family duties, time planning
- When they do dangerous things

How parents face these difficult moments

- They try to calm themselves
- They try to calm the child
- They try to communicate and discuss with the child
- They raise their tone of voice to scold their children or give some spanking on the butt, and often they ask for forgiveness
- They also tell of physical constraints, for example if the parent "removes" the child from a game or they take the mobile phone or the computer
- They send the child to his her room
- If they are small kids they make use of the "silent chair" or the "anger bottle"

Pleasant moments spent with their children:

- Hugs and cuddles and the time in which the family is together are identified by several interviewees as the most pleasant moments with their children.
- When children say "I love you mum"
- When they play all together
- Laughing a lot
- Jumps over mother and hugs
- Having lunch and dinner together
- Singing and dancing playing

THEMATIC AREA 2: Knowledge regarding the phenomenon of violence against children

Knowledge regarding the phenomenon of violence against children:



- The parents say that their knowledge on the topic results from information read on books, heard in conferences or courses, or watched on the news.
- They define mainly the physical, lectical, emotional and sexual abuse
- Few made a difference between emotional and physical violence, indicating that emotional abuse causes more sequelae and negative effects in time than a hit or push
- Participated parents describe Physical violence and corporal punishment as serious bodily injury,
- Say that physical violence and corporal punishment is the same,
- Physical and emotional violence go together,
- Few know circle of violence.
- Neglect is leaving minor alone, not meeting physiological, emotional and social needs.

THEMATIC AREA 3: The perceptions and beliefs the parents hold regarding maltreatment

The perceptions and beliefs the parents hold regarding maltreatment:

- Most parents openly declare themselves **against the use of violence with their children.**
- However, many parents declare that they have used physical or verbal violence on several occasions and, even if they are against violence, they express their **difficulty in "refraining" from raising their voices with their children** (something that often happens for many parents) **or from using physical violence** (something that happens much more rarely almost for all the parents).

Experiences from other parents:

They were referred to:

- Episodes of physical violence, such as a slap
- Some parents also remember some reproaches from other parents they witnessed,
- or punishments considered unfair: for example, the child is closed in his bedroom
- Episodes of lectical and emotional violence



The reasons found by the interviewees on **why some parents use violence** are different:

- Some parents can see slapping as a more effective method than verbal reprimand
- The use of violence may be the only known educational strategy, especially for parents with a low level of education
- The parent's mood: in this way the parent would vent his anger or his anxiety
- Violence is often used when a parent has the idea of losing control over the child.
- These parents may be abused children themselves
- They cannot control their emotions

THEMATIC AREA 4; The parents' perception on the consequences/impact of this attitude for/to the children

The parents' perception on the consequences/impact of this attitude for/to the children:

- Violence could lead to children reproducing the violence suffered or to suffer further violence in the future.
- There is a concern in some parents that children may imitate or suffer some violent situations because they are considered the only answer to the problems.
- Some parents also think that children who have suffered violence report not only physical signs (in cases of physical violence), but also psychological ones
- The interviewees say that this could also have repercussions in relations with others, including those with their parents, both because the child does not feel free to express himself for fear of punishment and because using violence there is a risk of not creating a relationship with the parent
- Loss of the opportunity to communicate,
- Disrupts proper socialization and it leads toward aggression to others.
- Trauma to a child that includes psychological trauma, hinders socialization and it involve a child in circle of violence.
- Changes of relationships reflects in loss of relationship with yourself (low self-confidence), loss of trust in parents (lack of safeness) and loss of trust in others (in general).
- Psychological impacts: intimidation, humiliation, blocked at the level of emotions, feel apprehension and insecurity, become more rebels, their development can be decreased, can become adults with fear and insecurity, can become more violent, if they see violence at home, they will imitate it, affect them psychologically.



- Few interviewees shared the idea of repeating the violent behaviour if they suffer it, because parents are their model.

BUT some parents believe that punishment episodes may have a positive impact :

- A child becomes more conscious and corrects behaviour in the case of discussions and agreements (in advance agreed rules).
- It helps for a child to adjust to situation (in the case of obedience a child will avoid penalties or will be rewarded, at the same a child learns to manipulate).

THEMATIC AREA 5: Possible maltreatment episodes

Possible maltreatment episodes:

When interviewed parents were asked to talk about one or more episodes that they experienced as violent towards their children:

- Some of them reported that they **never use any kind of violence** against their children,
- Most of them reported **physical violence** (slapping, spanking) that usually does not occur frequently.
- Some parents also tell about **screams and high tones of voice to scold their children.**
- They also report punishment (see Theme 1 How parents face these difficult moments).
- Types of punishments: physical violence, emotional violence and punishments with conditions: restrictions, isolation, elimination of consequences.
- Punishment also may include Prevent spending time on the Internet (phone-PC), Not letting him/her out, Not giving pocket money, Sending dormitory, Prevent watching TV
- Blackmail or menaces
- Silent chair

THEMATIC AREA 6: Differentiations on maltreatment between the parent-couple

Differentiations on maltreatment between the parent-couple:

- Most parents reported that they share common views, practices and educational strategy
- Few reported difference in the use of violence between the couple
- In some case mothers are more severe than fathers are

THEMATIC AREA 7: Assess the needs for support

The content of a training program for parents on the prevention of violence against children:

Regarding the **contents** of a possible training:

- What is violence against children
- What falls within the sphere of violence against children
- The reasons that lead to violence,
- The effects of violence on children,
- How to deal with conflicts between the siblings
- How to control and manage their anger
- To have a dialogue both with experts and with other parents.
- It would be useful to have experts who can select and propose appropriate texts and materials
- A sharing of experiences to understand that some situations happen to everyone
- To learn useful strategies to deal with some difficult situations
- Suggestions to improve listening and communication with their children
- To be able to understand some children's attitudes and signals.
- Courses taking into account the age of the children
- Knowledge about child development (various needs in different development stages) and parenting.
- The management of feelings and negative moments
- The word emotional intelligence is something repeated
- The relationships between parents and children, how to build a positive one,



- General topics: cyberbullying, sexuality, children's rights, bullying problems
- Tools for the child to detect and prevent violence against him

METHODS

- Lecturing by competent experts, consulting on parenting in searching effective ways of a child education, psychological support, sharing of parenting experience, practicing/exercising.
- **The training should be in workshops** or talks with other parents are very interesting.

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Appendix I

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Fill in and tick off but if there are questions that have been answered in the interview do not ask them again.

1. Age:
2. Gender: male female
3. Educational level: Non Primary school Lower Secondary school
Upper secondary school Bachelor Master PhD
4. Vocational training
5. Place of residence: Deprived urban Affluent urban Deprived rural
Affluent rural
6. Work situation:
7. Children

gender	age	studies' level



8. What language do you speak at home?
9. Do your family own a car?.....
10. Does your children have their own room at your house?
11. The last 12 months how many times have you travel as family?.....
12. How many computers do you have at your family?.....

Appendix II

INTERVIEW GUIDE

NOTE

As it is mentioned in section 5.3, this interview guide is mainly for consolidating and ensuring that all the necessary information will be collected, rather than a schema that must be followed strictly. The purpose is to allow all interviews to have a conversational style while focusing on the predetermined thematic areas, and, to allow flexibility on capturing any unexpected information.

The interview guide is a support for the interviewer. It describes the areas and topics the researcher should ask and what he or she wants to know. There is no need for the questions to be asked exactly according to the protocol and the same applies for the answers. It should be more of a conversational style of interview than a question-answer-ping-pong. The mutual understanding between the interviewer and the interviewee is very important if the interview is more a talk where the interviewee sets the order of the topics.

In general, we should take into consideration that this interview deals with a sensitive issue thus we have to be aware of the participants' feelings.

Introduction

As an introduction to the interview we may say something like this, or something similar: "You are here with me, because I want to tell me about your experience of being parent. I know that being a parent is not an easy job. I want to learn about good and unpleasant moments you have with your children and how do you and your partner/ husband deal with such moments. I also want to discuss with you your perceptions and views on the corporal punishment, physical punishment or maltreatment in general, sometimes the parents exert upon their children as a

discipline method. Your thoughts and your experience will help us to learn more about the reasons that lead a parent to exert physical or emotional punishment on their children. Please feel free to take a break at any point.”

THEMATIC AREA 1: Description of a typical week

To begin with I would like you to describe a typical week.

What do you usually do, what do the children do, what activities do the children have, what do you do with them as a parent or as a family? Do you have pleasant and difficult situations with your children?

What we need to know

- What makes a typical day?
- What his/her partner does
- What makes a typical week?
- What roles does he/she undertake?
- What the children do
- What tasks do they have to perform and how do they respond
- How much time does he/she spends with the kids
- How much time they spend together as a family
- Pleasant and difficult situations with their children

THEMATIC AREA 2: Knowledge regarding the phenomenon of violence against children

What do you know about violence against children?

What we want to know

Do they know what is physical violence?

Do they know what is corporal treatment?

Do they know what is neglect?

Do they know what is emotional abuse?

Do they know what is sexual abuse?

THEMATIC AREA 3: The perceptions and beliefs the parents hold regarding maltreatment

Many parents exert a kind of violence against their children. What do you think about it?

Do you know people who exert violence against their children?

What we need to know

- What is his /her opinion on corporal punishment or any kind of punishment?
- If he/she considers punishment as an effective measure.
- To their opinion, why some parents use punishment?
- If he/she sees a parent smacking his/her child what he/she think about it?
What would you do if you saw the scene?
- What kind abuse the people you know exert upon their children?

THEMATIC AREA 4: The parents' perception on the consequences/impact of this attitude for/to the children

What effect do you think that violence against children has on the children themselves?

What we need to know

- He/ She believes that the child complies and socializes better
- It protects the child it from dangerous behaviors
- It makes child a better person
- It hurts - it creates trauma to the child
- It breaks the relationship of trust and love with its parent

THEMATIC AREA 5: Possible maltreatment episodes

Do you ever have the feeling that you have exerted a kind of violence against your own children?

Can you narrate two or three episodes you felt that?

What we need to know

Why do you usually punish your child?

(When he/she doesn't listen to me

When he/she doesn't do his/her homework

When he/she doesn't pick up his room

When he/she fights with his/her brothers/sisters

When he comes home late

When I have bad mood

Without a specific reason

Other

What are some of the punishments you use to use?

(Emotional ill-treatment

Yell at him/her

Use of physical force against a child (hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating)

Corporal punishment (involves hitting, smacking, slapping, spanking children, with the hand or with an implement).

Neglect health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions

Commercial or other exploitation

Other)

THEMATIC AREA 6: Differentiations on maltreatment between the parent-couple

(this thematic area will not be discussed with single- parent families)

On the issue of children punishment, do you share the same opinions with your partner?

What we need to know

Both parents agree on this way of dealing with children

If there are disagreements about it

If this causes friction in the couple

What does he/she do about it?

THEMATIC AREA 7: Assess the needs for training and support

To your opinion, which should be the content of a training program for parents on the prevention of violence against children?

FINISHING

Would you like to add something else?

Thank you very much for your time!

Appendix III

INTERVIEWEES' RECORD

Interviewee code	Date of interview	Sex	Age	Place of residence	Education Level	Number of children	Age of the children
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							

10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							

Appendix IV

“DIGITISED EDUCATION OF PARENTS FOR CHILDREN PROTECTION” (DEPCIP PROJECT)

Information note

Dear participant,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. We would like to inform you that this research is part of a European collaborative project called *“Digitised Education Of Parents For Children Protection”- DEPCIP*, funded by the European Commission under the ERASMUS PLUS program. The overall aim of the project is the deepen our understanding on the phenomenon of child maltreatment and the development of tools that will help parents education. This research is expected to offer information useful in understanding the phenomenon and in developing programs for preventing it. Prior to participation in the research, you will need to know the following:

- Your contribution in this research is optional.
- The information that you will provide to the researchers will be confidential, will only be available to the working group of this research and will be used exclusively for the purpose of this study.
- The interview discussion will be recorded for purposes of data analysis (only) by ensuring that an accurate account of your narrative is available for analysis.
- You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any moment.

The duration of the interview will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes.



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Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



We invite you to contribute to this effort through participating in this study.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely yours,

The DEPCIP team