

“Some Old, Some New, Some Borrowed”: Conversations with a Small Sample of Trinidadian  
Parents About Their Childrearing Practices

Neesha G. Cooper

A Thesis

In

The Department

Of

Education

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts (Child Studies) at

Concordia University

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

October 2019

Neesha G. Cooper, 2019

**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY****School of Graduate Studies**

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By:           Neesha Cooper

Entitled:     “Some Old, Some New, Some Borrowed”: Conversations with a Small Sample of  
Trinidadian Parents about Their Child-Rearing Practices

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Arts (Child Studies)**

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to  
originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair  
*E. Lo*

\_\_\_\_\_ Examiner  
*D. Pesco*

\_\_\_\_\_ Examiner  
*H. Recchia*

\_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor  
*H. Petrakos*

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

October 15, 2019 \_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of Faculty

### **Abstract**

“Some Old, Some New, Some Borrowed”: Conversations with a Small Sample of Trinidadian Parents About Their Childrearing Practices.

Neesha G. Cooper

Research on childrearing in the Caribbean has primarily focused on parents' use of physical punishment (Brown & Johnson, 2008; Roopnarine, Wang, Krishnakumar, & Davidson, 2013; Payne, 1989; Smith & Mosby, 2003) and little is known about the other practices that parents in the Caribbean use to discipline their children. The present qualitative study used a developmental niche model to examine the childrearing practices, especially the disciplinary strategies which parents in Trinidad use to correct their children's misbehavior. Six mothers and one father residing in various locations throughout Trinidad, participated in a 1-hour to 1.5-hour semi-structured interview regarding the childrearing practices, especially the disciplinary practices, which they used to guide their 3 to 17-year-old children. Participants reported that their discipline practices included repeated explanations, taking away privileges, fixed eye-contact, the naughty corner, and only an occasional slap or spanking; as most of the participants were not in favor of physical punishment. The findings provided insight into the various practices, which Trinidadian parents used to discipline their youngsters.

## Acknowledgments

This Vote of Thanks is in no way listed in order of importance.

Firstly, I want to say thank you to the parents who made this project possible. Without your responses and stories this thesis could not have been realized. Thanks for sharing with me the joys and challenges of parenting. You guys are dedicated parents.

Next, thank you to my advisor, and defense committee for the constructive feedback and helpful insight. It helped me to improve this project.

I also want to say a special thanks to my colleague Katie Boodhoo, for your assistance and motivating me straight to the finish line. It was appreciated.

Lastly, and in no way least, to my best friend and partner-in-crime, there aren't enough words in the dictionary to express my gratitude to you. From the day I came to you and said that I wanted to return to school, you supported me. You listened to my rants about the challenges and when I wanted to give up, you gave me a reality check. "Just BANG IT OUT!" you said, and guess what? "I BANGED IT OUT!" Our extended conversations about childrearing practices in Trinidad, and policies for the protection of children over dinner, sounded like those had during Parliament sessions. You truly understand and respect my love for the Human Service field. All I can say is: Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Oh, I almost forgot myself. To me I say, "You did it girl!" "You did it!"

## Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	v
List of Appendices .....	vi
Glossary .....	vii
<b>Statement of Problem.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Literature Review.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Trinidad.....	5
Guyana .....	9
Jamaica.....	12
Virgin Islands.....	16
Childrearing Practices in the Caribbean .....	17
<b>Present Study.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Methods.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Research Design.....	21
Setting.....	22
Recruitment.....	23
Participants.....	25
Data Collection.....	27
Procedure.....	28
Data Analysis.....	29
Data Authenticity.....	30
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>30</b>
Caregivers and Their Practices.....	31
Corporal Punishment.....	34

<b>Physical &amp; Social Setting</b> .....	38
Education.....	41
God.....	42
<b>Modelled Childrearing Practices</b> .....	43
Parenting Styles.....	46
Values.....	47
<b>Perceptions of Children</b> .....	49
Then vs. Now.....	52
<b>Discussion</b> .....	54
<b>Limitations and Recommendations</b> .....	59
<b>Implications for Practices</b> .....	60
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	61
References.....	62
Appendices.....	66

**List of Tables**

Table 1. Participant Demographic Information.....	26
---	----

## List of Appendices

Appendix A.....	66
<i>Information email to parents</i>	
Appendix B.....	67
<i>Parent information letter</i>	
Appendix C.....	68
<i>Parent consent form</i>	
Appendix D.....	71
<i>Parent demographic information form</i>	
Appendix E.....	73
<i>Interview protocol form</i>	
Appendix F.....	74
<i>Data analysis coding scheme</i>	



## Glossary

- West Indies- also known as the Caribbean
- West Indian- a native of the West Indies/Caribbean
- Trinidad & Tobago- a twin island sovereign nation of the West Indies
- Trinidadian- a citizen of Trinidad
- Afro-Trinidadians- people of African descent born in Trinidad
- Indo-Trinidadians- people of Indian descent born in Trinidad
- Mixed- Trinidadians- multiracial people born in Trinidad
- Asian- Trinidadians- people of Chinese descent born in Trinidad
- Licks, beating, flogging- spanking (corporal punishment)
- Slap- to hit
- Yuh- you
- Keep the children in line- to follow the rules
- Proper- sophistication
- Cyah- can't
- Will test you- to challenge someone
- Get yuh tail up- get up
- Maxi- minibus
- Trippin- angry
- Cutlass- machete

## Statement of The Problem

Studies of childrearing practices in the Caribbean have mainly highlighted caregivers' use of corporal punishment (Arnold, 1982; Brown & Johnson, 2008; Dede-Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2017; Lipps, Lowe, Gibson, Halliday, Morris, Clarke, & Wilson, 2012). Furthermore, researchers have concluded that physical punishment and public humiliation appear to be the main methods parents in the Caribbean use to ensure that their children conform to the rules (Griffith & Grolnick, 2013; Hopkinson & Janagan-Johnson, 2017; Lipps et al., 2012; Smith & Mosby, 2003).

Super and Harkness (2013), have expressed that childrearing varies across cultures and “the only shared parenting characteristic among cultures, is that parents everywhere love and want the best for their children.” However, the way this love is expressed varies across cultures (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993; Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003). The cultural context is of great importance to studying parenting within the Caribbean, as understanding the cultural context of a society can help ‘outsiders’ understand differences in parenting styles. In the literature on childrearing in the Caribbean, researchers have described Caribbean caregivers’ childrearing practices as harsh and punitive (Brown & Johnson, 2008; Burke & Kuczynski, 2018; Payne & Furnham, 1992; Ricketts & Anderson, 2008). Despite this view, some parents in the Caribbean view these stringent practices as necessary for their children’s success.

Since many of the existing studies on parenting in the region have mainly focused on corporal punishment, Brown and Williams (2006), along with other human development professionals in the Caribbean have expressed that the other practices, which parents in the Caribbean use to raise their children, is lacking in research. Given that the qualities that constitute a responsible member of society tend to vary across cultures, and as these cultural beliefs have been known to influence parenting (Lonner & Malpass 1994), the present phenomenological study

used a developmental niche framework to examine the practices, which parents in Trinidad used to guide their children's behavior.

The goal of this study is to examine the childrearing practices, especially the disciplinary practices that parents in Trinidad, use to guide their children's behaviour, and also to explore if said practices are inherited and rooted in culture.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Developmental Niche Model (Super & Harkness, 1986) is helpful for understanding how culture influences childrearing in the Caribbean, in that the framework focuses on three major components in children's culture, which includes a child's physical and social setting, the customs of childcare and child rearing, and the psychology of the caretakers (Super & Harkness, 1986).

Scholars have described parenting practices in the Caribbean as punitive and controlling (Griffith & Grolnick, 2013; Ricketts & Anderson, 2008; Roopnarine et al., 2013; Smith & Mosby, 2003); and said practices, such as parent's use of physical punishment has been associated with higher levels of aggression in some children in North America (Gershoff, 2002; Griffith & Grolnick, 2013; Stacks, Oshio, Gerard, & Roe, 2009). The Developmental Niche Model may provide a framework for understanding how physical punishment and parental dominance, is supported and viewed in the Caribbean as fitting for desirable children's outcome. Caribbean caregivers have subscribed to the old saying "spare the rod and spoil the child", and existing research on Caribbean parents/caregivers has suggested that great emphasis is placed on their children's display of obedience, respect and manners (Brown & Ince, 2008; Burke & Kuczynski, 2018; Smith & Mosby, 2003). It is believed that these principles have been shaped by a complex set of socioeconomic demographics, cultural and religious influences that are a

result of the Caribbean's history of slavery, colonialism and independence (Brown & Ince, 2008). In West Indian culture, there is belief that "manners maketh man" and the child who respects their parents will also be respectful to others; especially to the elders. According to the niche model, this emphasis is known as parental ethnotheories, which is defined as "the cultural ways of thinking and feeling held by parents and other caretakers" (Super & Harkness, 1994, p. 97). For example, Harkness (2013) expressed that every society has what it believes to be the right way to raise a child. Furthermore, Super and Harkness (1994) maintain that "these cultural beliefs underlie the customs of childrearing and validate the organization of the physical and social setting for children" (p. 98). As the Caribbean holds collectivist views, where value is placed on communities, groups, and mutual respect, it is expected that children are to obey their elders, and those who disobey should be disciplined, usually via strict practices (Brown & Johnson, 2008; Payne, 1989; Roopnarine et al., 2013; Smith & Mosby, 2003).

The Developmental Niche Model states that in order to understand the strategies that parents use to help their children grow and become successful members in society, one has to understand parents' cultural beliefs (Harkness & Super, 2006). Caribbean parents, just like all parents everywhere, strive to raise happy children, who are healthy, well-functioning members in society; however, they may differ from North American parents in their childrearing practices, in that they regard non-physical alternatives to disciplining children as giving authority to minors (Roopnarine et al., 2014). In the Caribbean, 'discipline' has often been loosely defined by physical punishment meted to the child to correct disobedience and misbehavior. Other forms of punishment have not usually been regarded as an effective tool to instill discipline. Within the Caribbean, parents/caregivers have relied on physical discipline to curb undesirable behavior and keep children in line (Lipps et al., 2012; Rohner, Kean, & Cournoyer, 1991; Roopnarine et al.,

2013), as discipline is highly regarded. As the developmental niche model specifies, ethnotheories help parents to form ideas by which they measure their performance as effective caregivers. The framework helps one understand that parental ethnotheories varies across cultures, and different countries value different qualities in their children. In studies conducted by Super and Harkness (2006; 2009), for example, Dutch parents placed emphasis on rest and regularity as a necessary aspect in childrearing, and these parents focused on creating a calm environment to help their children achieve this goal. Looking at valued qualities and what parents believe is best for their offspring, throughout the literature on childrearing in the Caribbean, the importance of discipline, respect, and obedience has been emphasized by parents, teachers, and parent surrogates (Bailey, Robinson, & Coore-Desai, 2014; Brown & Johnson, 2008; Ricketts & Anderson, 2008; Roopnarine et al., 2013; 2014). By utilizing a developmental niche framework, this study will examine the childrearing practices, especially the disciplinary practices of a small sample of parents in Trinidad.

### **Literature Review**

The old adage “to spare the rod is to spoil the child,” has been commonly endorsed in the West Indies, and corporal punishment has often been viewed as an acceptable form of discipline (Gopaul- McNicol, 1993; Smith & Mosby, 2003). According to clinical psychologist; Sharon Gopaul-McNicol, (1999), “what may be perceived by one cultural group as abusive may be viewed as a form of discipline by another cultural group” (p. 79). In the Caribbean corporal punishment has often been regarded as a means of training children to grow up in the right way, and apart from corporal punishment beliefs, sayings such as, “children should do as they are told,” have been culturally sanctioned (Whiteman, 2013).

## Trinidad

Throughout studies on parenting in the Caribbean, many parents who resided in impoverished communities have expressed using physical punishment as a means to protect their children from the ills of the community and correct their child's misbehavior, regardless of the child's age (Arnold, 1982; Krishnakumar et al., 2014). Super and Harkness's (1986) developmental niche framework explores how the physical and social environment, as well as the mindset of the caregivers, impact child development. As economic and social disparities are broad in the Caribbean region, researchers have examined the impact of economic disadvantage on child outcomes, and what role harsh punishment plays in socializing children to engage in culturally appropriate behaviors (Lipps et al., 2012; Krishnakumar et al., 2014). The investigators wanted to examine whether parental harsh punishment and parental monitoring could serve as a protective factor to shield children from the effects of community disadvantage (Krishnakumar et al., 2014). To examine if harsh punishment served as a mediator between family economic difficulty and children's behavioral outcomes, a sample of 1,337 caregivers with children between 3 and 6 years were randomly selected for the study throughout Trinidad and Tobago (Krishnakumar et al., 2014). Harsh punishment was assessed by the use of corporal punishment, and household earnings measured economic disadvantage, while behavioral outcomes were assessed using 25 items from the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. According to Krishnakumar et al., (2014), parents practiced stringent parenting in increased situations of economic disadvantage, because limited monitoring of their children's activities may expose them to undesirable events. Consistent with Super and Harkness's niche model, the role of the physical and social environment influenced childrearing among parents in Trinidad and Tobago. Krishnakumar et al., (2014) found that those children who lived in impoverished

neighborhoods and experienced lower parental discipline and monitoring, displayed higher levels of behavioral issues, compared to children who resided in communities with adequate resources.

Although some citizens in the Caribbean have admitted to being spanked by their parents while growing up, those citizens, who are now parents, have expressed that while they understood that corporal punishment was used to manage their behavior, they did not like it. In Whiteman's (2013) study comprising of 10 middle-class families throughout Trinidad, she found that while these families made a conscious effort to abandon some of the stringent parenting methods which their parents used, they still managed in some instances to model past punitive parenting practices. One participant in this study expressed that she only spanked her child when she did not know what else to do to change her child's behavior, whilst another participant voiced that being affectionate to his child was difficult, since he was not provided with an example while growing up (Whiteman. 2013). Even though these parents faced challenges in discarding inherited stringent parenting practices they managed to adopt nurturing strategies with their children. Many of the parents in this study spoke of communicating with their children by engaging in daily conversations about their children's school day and friends (Whiteman, 2013). One participant stated that she tried to answer any questions which her daughter asked, while another parent expressed that he tried to participate in some of his daughter's favorite activities. According to the findings in Whiteman's (2013) study, these parents opted to use more nurturing childrearing practices to guide their offspring, even though they were aware of the punitive intergenerational childrearing practices in the Caribbean. Whiteman (2013), admitted that although the participants in her study were aware of non-positive childrearing practices, and practiced positive parenting practices, such as communicating with their minors and showing

overt affection to their child, these beliefs cannot be generalized, as these parents were representative of the middle-class group.

According to researchers Roopnarine, Logie, Davidson, Krishnakumar, and Narine, (2015), it has not been uncommon in the Caribbean for parents to display excessive amounts of pressure towards their children to display skills beyond age-appropriate levels. Roopnarine et al., 2015 further expressed that often in the Caribbean, children who show developmental delays are regarded as stubborn and troublesome, and this may be due to caregivers' lack of knowledge about child development. The researchers claimed that the culture-specific knowledge which parents possess about childrearing, helps them to frame socialization goals and developmental expectations for their offspring. Amidst difficult social and economic circumstances that affect Caribbean countries, parents in the Caribbean, if knowledgeable about child development, can provide information to medical, education, and human service professionals about their children's early developmental status and needs (Roopnarine et al., 2015). Furthermore, effective parenting can help children thrive amid social and economic circumstances, as positive parenting has been linked to children's performance and positive child outcomes (Lipps et al., 2012; Rohner et al., 1991).

In the literature on parenting in the Caribbean, it has been mentioned that among different ethnic groups parenting practices tend to vary, with Indo and Mixed-ethnic caregivers engaging in more nurturing parenting practices, compared to Afro-Caribbean caregivers who have engaged in more punitive parenting methods (Descartes, 2012; Roopnarine et al., 2015). In order to examine what factors impacted caregivers' knowledge about children's development, the investigators theorized that caregivers from upper-income backgrounds, older caregivers, and those caregivers with more than one child, will be more versed in identifying developmental



milestones in young children, compared to lower-income caregivers, younger caregivers, and those with fewer children. Roopnarine and colleagues also hypothesized that due to different socialization goals and practices amongst the ethnic groups, significant differences were expected to exist in Indo and Afro Caribbean caregivers' ability to identify the approximate age at which young children begin to demonstrate developmental milestones. Furthermore, the investigators also expressed that more similarities will exist between Indo and Mixed-ethnic caregivers in their ability to identify developmental milestones, compared to Afro-Caribbean caregivers (Roopnarine et al., 2015).

Due to the varying historic and sociocultural roots of parenting practices among the three ethnic groups, the Developmental Niche Model was appropriate for Roopnarine et al's., (2015) study, as the framework describes how childrearing is inherited by culture. Among some parents in the Caribbean, establishing nurturing relationships with their children can be challenging, as past experiences of being harshly parented hindered their efforts to openly show affection to their children (Smith & Mosby, 2003; Whiteman, 2013). Super and Harkness (1986) explained that the customs of childcare and childrearing are weighted in history; meaning that without thought, parents will raise their children with many of the same traditions with which they were raised. In Roopnarine et al's., (2015) study, the researchers assessed 1,117 caregivers' knowledge of their children's cognitive, social and psycho-motor skills, by administering parents with a comprehensive questionnaire. Included in the questionnaire were skills which parents with limited education attainment could comprehend, and also those skills that Caribbean parents often embraced and stressed during everyday socialization of young children (Roopnarine et al., 2015). For example, parents were asked, "at what age were children capable of doing simple math", and also," at what can children draw a square?" Generally, caregivers in the three ethnic

groups were better able to identify developmental milestones that were less complex such as linguistic skills observed during daily interactions, for example, children's use of short sentences; compared to more complex skills such as children's understanding of time concepts (Roopnarine et al., 2015). Caregivers from upper income brackets were better able to identify the age at which children begin to display milestones, while parents from Indo and mixed ethnicity were more likely to have earlier developmental expectations of their children (Roopnarine et al., 2015). However, Afro-Caribbean caregivers were more knowledgeable in identifying the age at which children demonstrated early academic milestones. Apart from Roopnarine et al's., (2015) findings, past research has suggested that caregivers in the Caribbean appear to lack understanding of child development (Evans & Davies, 1997), because they do not communicate with their children and have unrealistic expectations of their children; especially young children (Arnold, 1982; Smith & Mosby, 2003). In addition, researchers have expressed that children's questions are often unanswered, and parents talk "to" and "at" their children, instead of "with" their offspring (Arnold, 1982).

### **Guyana**

Super and Harkness have upheld that "the customs of care are seen by their users as the only reasonable solution to whatever need they address" (Super & Harkness, 1994, p. 97). Moreover, they explained that customs of care have served as a source of support for parents/caregivers' because they provide instant solutions for parents to protect their children from the ills in society. Some Caribbean parents have expressed that spankings/beatings are the preferred method to discipline their children, because they are blamed by the authorities when their minors are delinquent (Arnold, 1982). Notwithstanding the existence of stringent parenting practices in the Caribbean, Roopnarine, Jin, and Krishnakumar, (2014) sought out to examine the

cultural meaning of physical punishment among 139 Indo-Guyanese mothers and their preschoolers. As some researchers have suggested that parents in the Caribbean practice a combination of parenting styles, with structure and control combined with warmth (Griffith & Grolnick, 2013; Lipps et al., 2012), investigators explored how caregivers' warmth and affection could moderate the effects of harsh punishment (Roopnarine et al., 2014). It was determined that maternal warmth might mitigate the effects of punitive discipline on childhood social behaviors. Considering that children's viewpoints have been seldom acknowledged in Caribbean culture (Brown & Johnson, 2008; Burke & Kuczynski, 2018; Smith & Mosby, 2003), and the ages of the children in this study, the authors Roopnarine et al., (2014) relied on mothers' own reports of justness, to assess their beliefs about physical punishment. Because physical punishment has been associated with a variety of difficulties in preschool and early childhood within cultural communities, Roopnarine et al., (2014) focused on prosocial behaviors and anger in the preschool settings as "both prosocial behaviors and anger are outcome measures, as they are often connected to children's ability to successfully participate in social interactions and build friendships with their peers" (Roopnarine et al., 2014, p. 272).

According to Roopnarine et al., (2014), the findings on the effect of maternal warmth and its association on physical punishment and childhood behaviors have been conflicting, as some studies have implied that parental warmth may prevent those children who are subjected to physical punishment from expressing violent behaviors. Besides, spanking has not always produced the same behaviors in children. For example, physical punishment has been associated with aggressive behaviors in European-American preschoolers; but the opposite was found in Hispanic and African American preschoolers (Stacks et al., 2009). This discovery is not surprising, because the developmental niche model posits that in cultural environments the daily

messages, routines, and way of life are internalized over the span of development, and they form the core of the child's understanding of the world (Super & Harkness, 1986). Historically, in the Caribbean, children have been raised to believe that physical punishment is inflicted upon them because they are loved (Arnold, 1982; Payne, 1989). Even though some researchers have suggested that parents in the Caribbean raise their children with high amounts of control, demandingness and warmth, maternal warmth and affection did not temper the associations between harshness of physical punishment and children's social skills among the 139 Guyanese preschoolers (Roopnarine et al., 2014).

Since there has been some literature that has proposed that parents in the Caribbean discipline differently according to children's gender (Griffith & Grolnick, 2013), with boys being subjected to more physical punishment, while girls are subjected to more verbal humiliation (Smith & Mosby, 2003), the researchers hypothesized that parental warmth will moderate the associations between stringent punishment and justness of punishment and the behaviors of boys and girls differently (Roopnarine et al., 2014). However, according to the Roopnarine et al's., (2014) findings, there was no significant gender-of-child differences in mothers' mode of punishment, and mothers displayed the same level of affection to both genders. Although 93 mothers out of the 139 mothers surveyed indicated that they used physical punishment as a means to discipline their preschooler, Roopnarine et al., (2014) reported the display of maternal warmth during every day parenting was quite high. Similarly, researchers observed that in instances where parents used increased harsh discipline, mothers seemed to think deeply about whether their children deserved the severity of punishment (Roopnarine et al., 2014).

Given that parents have relied on their own socialization into parenting to raise their children, one study explored the modeled parenting practices of 10 Guyanese parents whose

juvenile children had wandered from home and ended up in the Social Services system.

Specifically, the researchers examined the parenting practices based on upbringing and the connection which these parenting practices had on children's inclination to wayward behaviors (Hopkinson & Janagan-Johnson, 2017). While the parents in this study admitted to practising harsh discipline with their children in the form of beatings, name calling, use of profanities and shouting. They acknowledged that all these stringent measures were learned from their upbringing.

### **Jamaica**

While human service professionals in the Caribbean have expressed that much of the existing literature on childrearing within the Caribbean region has been confined to Jamaica (Barrow, 2008, Brown & Williams, 2006), one researcher attempted to fill in the gap in the literature on child rights in Jamaica. Brown and Johnson (2008), examined child rights and protection within Jamaican families by interviewing 14 focus groups of both children and parents. Each focus group included eight parents and six children. According to the findings, the children who resided in middle-class communities reported more shared interactions with their parents. For example, they mentioned doing chores, playing games, helping with homework, and going out together with their parents. However, the children who resided in rural and inner-city communities reported activities such as, parent cooking something they liked, telling them to go pick up a book, or go and play. Overall, children in all the groups reported that their parents used harsh disciplinary practices at times to correct their behavior. Some of the harsh disciplinary methods which children mentioned were, beatings with objects, being made to stand out in the sun for extended periods, cursing and shouting.

While past findings have revealed that some children in the Caribbean have viewed their parent's harsh discipline methods as best for them (Lipps et al., 2012; Bailey et al., 2014), some of the children in Brown and Johnson's 2008 study, expressed anger and hurt at their parents' use of physical punishment. Instead, children expressed that disciplinary methods such as withdrawal of privileges and discussions would have been more sensitive alternatives to correct their behavior. Interestingly, a few of the children who resided in inner-city communities mentioned that they preferred beatings as it wore off quickly, and because they viewed spankings as necessary for children to learn (Brown & Johnson, 2008). This finding that children view spankings as necessary for their learning, is supported by the niche model, in that the daily messages in a child's environment forms the core of their understanding of the world.

Even though all the parents reported feelings of joy with parenting, they confirmed that they used harsh discipline methods on some instances to guide their children. Parents discussed the importance of their children being obedient, while they also highlighted their disapproval of discussion and negotiation with their minors. Their children's respect for others and those in authority and being mannerly were also values, which these parents emphasised. While most of the parents expressed that they wanted their children to experience less harsh upbringings than they were subjected to, they all defended the use of corporal punishment as justified for disciplining children (Brown & Johnson, 2008). Their support of corporal punishment, in spite of not wanting to adopt their parents' stringent practices can be explained by the inherited practices of parenting, as according to Super and Harkness (1992), parents tend to raise their children according to their own socialization.

In Super and Harkness's (1992) niche model, they explain that both the physical and social setting, and psychology of the child's caregivers, help shape a child's life. Across the

literature on parenting in the Caribbean, Jamaica has been highlighted as one of the Caribbean islands where stringent parenting practices have affected children's development. In a study conducted across four Caribbean islands, adolescents in Jamaica reported the highest cases of depression, with 71.9% reporting mild to severe symptoms of depression (Lipps et al., 1991). Ricketts and Anderson (2008), explained that families in Jamaica face numerous challenges, including early childbearing, unstable family units, economic instability, violence and several other issues. The researchers continued to explain that it is these challenges that have caused the reliance of stringent punishment in the form of 'beatings'; meaning when caregivers experience high amounts of stress from unsurmountable situations they may pass on the aggression to their children (Arnold, 1982; Payne & Furnham, 1992; Ricketts & Anderson, 2008). Ricketts and Anderson (2008) cited a study conducted by Samms-Vaughn (2004) which concluded that Jamaican parents experienced extreme levels of stress surpassing the stress levels of the United States population, with parents from low-socio economic households and those with older children experiencing higher levels of stress (Ricketts & Anderson, 2008). It is known that families who live in poverty often are not afforded basic resources and children who live in poor communities in many instances are exposed to violence (Krishnakumar et al., 2014; Lipps et al., 2012).

Ricketts and Anderson (2008) in their study of 480 Jamaican caregivers and their children under the age of 12, measured parent-child interaction, discipline methods used in the home and parental stress. Ricketts and Anderson (2008) were especially interested in examining parental stress and parent-child interaction between families above and below the poverty line. Many of the caregivers in the sample were young females, which is consistent with parenting in the island; as the authors point out, early childbearing across Jamaica is not uncommon. With

early childbearing comes challenges, because many young mothers do not reside with their partners resulting in absence of the child's father and inadequate financial support (Ricketts & Anderson, 2008). Aside from these challenges, Ricketts and Anderson (2008), have expressed that many Jamaican mothers have expressed positive feelings about their parenting role and reported great joy from being a parent. Despite their feelings of joy, 47% of caregivers expressed that they could not cope, while 25% of caregivers admitted feeling trapped by the demands of parenting (Ricketts & Anderson, 2008). Given that Ricketts and Anderson (2008) were concerned with the impact of stress on parent-child interaction and the type of discipline methods which these parents used, their finding that caregivers in poor households reported stress levels that were three times those of caregivers who lived above the poverty line was troubling. Similarly, only 27.3% of poor caregivers reported experiencing low stress in relation to the execution of their parenting role (Ricketts & Anderson, 2008).

Even though past findings have indicated that some parents in the Caribbean do not engage in frequent conversation with their children (Arnold, 1982; Smith & Mosby, 2003), Ricketts and Anderson (2008) reported that 80% of caregivers in their study spoke daily with their children, while 84.5% of caregivers showed affection to the children, in the form of hugs and kisses. According to Ricketts and Anderson (2008), many of the caregivers in the study did not engage in recreational activities with their minors and the authors speculated that this may have been due to a lack of financial resources. Among the sample of the Jamaican caregivers, it was observed that poverty intensified the effect of stress on parent-child interaction. For example, 31.7% of poor caregivers reported high interaction with their children; whereas, 56.4% of caregivers who lived above the poverty line reported high interaction with their children (Ricketts and Anderson, 2008). Ricketts and colleague discussed that the type of punishment



which parents used to discipline their children, depended on their levels of interaction; noting that those parents who enjoyed high interaction opted for non-corporal punishment, while those parents who reported low interaction opted for corporal punishment. Consistent with past research on the discipline strategies which Caribbean parents use to guide their children, all caregivers admitted that they used physical punishment at some point to discipline their minors, as it is the norm throughout the Caribbean (Ricketts & Anderson, 2008). This finding was also supported in Whiteman's study, where some parents expressed that "corporal punishment can be effective, once it is used appropriately and in the right context" (Whiteman, 2013, p. 105). The developmental niche model states the customs of childcare and childrearing are inherited and parents carry out certain practices to protect their children. Parents in the Caribbean view corporal punishment as a way to safeguard their children (Krishnakumar et al., 2014; Payne, 1989).

### **US Virgin Islands**

Super and Harkness (1986) have posited that parents' beliefs about child development is shaped by culture. In a study carried out in the US Virgin Islands, the investigators were interested in discovering the factors that impacted language and literacy outcomes of children residing in the United States Virgin Islands (Jaeger, Macturk, & Nguyen, 2013). Specifically, the researchers examined if parenting styles were linked to literacy and language outcomes in children. Forty- one mothers with children between the ages of 6 and 10 years old were interviewed and asked to complete both the Modernity Scale, which measured authoritarian beliefs, and the Child- Parent Relationship Scale, which measured aspects of the mother-child relationship. Mothers were asked questions regarding their knowledge on children's literacy. For example, "at what age do you think children begin to learn to read?" Furthermore, to determine

parental ethnotheories the researchers presented questions such as, “what do you think is the best way a child learns to read?” The following findings emerged. First, more authoritarian attitudes were expressed towards their children when mothers had fewer years of schooling. Second, mothers who believed that children learned to read at 3 years and older practiced higher levels of control, compared to those mothers who believed that children learned to read at an earlier age (Jaeger et al., 2013). Also, the researchers found that those mothers who read for enjoyment with their children appeared to have warmer relationships with their minors, than those who did not read for enjoyment. A telling finding in this study is while the authoritarian style of parenting has been considered as the dominant style of parents in the Caribbean, the researchers in this study classified the style of parenting as a traditional style. They described a traditional style of parenting as one that has an emphasis on high control but also includes display of warmth and verbal give- and- take between parent and child.

### **Childrearing Practices in the Caribbean**

According to Barrow and Ince “Caribbean families have received poor press in the sociological literature” (Barrow & Ince, 2008, p. 28). From caregiver’s use of physical punishment, to caregiver’s lack of knowledge about child development, the bulk of the research has not focused on successful childrearing (Arnold, 1982; Payne, 1989; Rohner et al., 1991; Samms- Vaughn, 2004; Smith & Mosby, 2003). Williams and colleagues have mentioned that, “research which has documented what parents actually do in their childrearing practices and what actual beliefs inform these practices does not appear to exist” in research on West Indian parenting, and the collection of Caribbean studies that focus on childrearing approaches in the Caribbean “remain a work in progress” (Williams et al., 2006, p. 6). Because of the limited studies on positive childrearing practices in the Caribbean, the goal of this study is to fill the gap

in the literature. Through this study, information on the varied childrearing strategies, especially the disciplinary practices, which caregivers in Trinidad use to guide their minors, will be discussed.

Researchers have stated that stringent disciplinary measures have been practiced by parents in all socioeconomic groups, and “strict” parenting has been generally considered ideal within the Caribbean region (Brown & Johnson, 2008; Griffith & Grolnick, 2014). In parenting studies carried out in the West Indies, it hasn’t been uncommon for children to report that they were ‘flogged’ with a belt or an object (Brown & Johnson, 2008; Lipps et al., 2012), while some minors have admitted to being cursed and shouted at by their parents/caregivers (Brown & Johnson, 2008; Smith & Mosby, 2003). Parents have reported that punishment had been administered by slapping their child on the hand. Also, spanking with a shoe on the child’s buttocks was most often identified as the part of the anatomy to which ‘licks’ was administered (Payne, 1989). Clinical psychologist, Gopaul-McNicol conveyed that the greatest challenge advocates of child maltreatment face is identifying where along the scale appropriate discipline becomes child abuse when examining Caribbean parenting.

Although most of the literature on parenting practices in the West Indies has focused on corporal punishment (Payne, 1989; Rohner et al., 1991; Roopnarine et al., 2014; Smith & Mosby, 2003), there have been a few that have highlighted other childrearing practices (Burke & Kuczynski, 2018; Dede- Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2017; Whiteman, 2013). Apart from physical punishment, parents in the Caribbean have reported using other disciplinary methods to guide their children. In a study conducted throughout the Caribbean nations of Belize, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname, caregivers described other disciplinary strategies which they used to socialize their children. Disciplinary approaches such as taking away

privileges, forbidding the child to have something they liked, or not allowing the child to leave the house, while explaining to the child why his/her behavior was wrong, were all disciplinary strategies used by parents in this study (Dede- Yildirim & Roopnarine, 2017). While researchers have highlighted the punitive practices used by parents in the Caribbean, it is evident that parents in the West Indies have also use inductive disciplinary methods, just as parents in North America (Stacks et al., 2009).

### **The Present Study**

Given that a bulk of the research on parenting in the Caribbean has focused on parent's use of physical punishment, one may assume that parents within the region do not value parent-child closeness (Burke, Kuczynski, & Perren, 2017; Roopnarine et al., 2017; Smith & Mosby, 2003). Also, as culture has been known to influence parents' beliefs about childrearing and parenting styles are largely influenced by cultural patterns and parents' experiences (Descartes, 2012; Lipps et al., 2012; Smith & Mosby, 2003), it is important to examine and understand childrearing in the Caribbean.

In order to better understand parenting and its impact on children, American clinical and developmental psychologist Diana Baumrind, proposed four categories of parenting: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglectful. Each parenting style has been found to have certain psychological and behavioral outcomes in children and adolescents (Lipps et al., 2012). Various descriptions of parenting in the Caribbean have identified authoritarian parenting as the dominant style throughout the region. As authoritarian parenting, a style characterized by high demands and low responsiveness, has been found to have negative outcomes for children in North America (Smith & Mosby, 2003; Griffith & Grolnick, 2013), researchers have focused on how children in the Caribbean may be impacted by these parenting practices. Childrearing varies

across cultures and it is believed that the only shared parenting characteristic among cultures, is that parents everywhere love and want the best for their children (Harkness, 2013). The manner in which this love is expressed in the parent-child relationship depends on its cultural context (Lipps et al., 2012; Trommsdorff & Kornadt, 2003), and Descartes (2012), stated that the cultural context is of great importance to studying parenting in the Caribbean. Understanding the cultural context of a society can help ‘outsiders’ understand differences in parenting styles, because parenting styles are socially constructed and are not universal classifications, as suggested by Baumrind (Descartes, 2012). As author Descartes suggested, “the concept of Baumrind parenting frameworks is a product of the cultural context and it has not always generalized to other cultures” (Descartes, 2012, p. 61). Even though authoritarian behaviors, such as control and demandingness among European-American parents have been found to have negative outcomes for their children, the opposite was found for children in collectivists’ societies (Descartes, 2012; Griffith & Grolnick, 2013). For instance, children in the Caribbean have perceived high degrees of parental control as “care”. Furthermore, some research has suggested that Caribbean caregivers are harsh, but also exercise high levels of warmth (Gopaul- McNicol, 1993; Roopnarine, Wang, Krishnakumar, & Davidson, 2013). Although the authoritarian parenting style is linked with negative outcomes to a North American population, and thus not favored, Caribbean parents have not held the same belief, and view their control and demandingness as necessary parenting behaviors for their children’s success (Griffith & Grolnick, 2013; Krishnakumar et al., 2014).

Researchers Payne and Furnham (1991) have expressed that because childrearing practices in West Indian families have been mainly studied by North American investigators, many parenting practices within the region may have been misinterpreted. As feelings of love are

frequently not overtly expressed in the Caribbean, and love has been traditionally affirmed through certain actions; such as the parent affectionately referring to their children by nicknames, (Burke et al., 2017; Gopaul- McNicol, 1993; 1999), the goal of this study was two-fold.

Primarily, the researcher explored the childrearing practices, especially the disciplinary practices which ‘Trinidadian’ parents used to guide their children’s behavior and examined if these practices were inherited and rooted in culture. With the aforementioned goals in mind the following research questions guided the study.

1. Who are the caregivers?
2. Do the caregiver’s childrearing practices differ?
3. How do the physical and social setting impact parenting in Trinidad?
4. Is parenting modeled? How and Why?
5. How do cultural practices influence parenting in Trinidad?
6. What are some of the perceptions of children and childhood in Trinidad?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research study adopted a qualitative inquiry to examine the disciplinary practices used by seven parents in Trinidad to guide their children. It has been stated that qualitative inquiry “opens a window to greater understanding of a phenomenon” (Hays & Singh, 2012, p.22). Through applying the qualitative approach, the researcher aimed to gain an understanding of the varied childrearing practices of parents in Trinidad. Because the goal of the investigation was to gain an understanding of the childrearing practices that parents used to guide their children, the phenomenological approach seemed appropriate for this study as it helped the

researcher to understand the participant's viewpoints on why parents in Trinidad used certain childrearing practices to raise their children (Hays & Singh, 2012).

Given that previous literature has described childrearing strategies in the Caribbean as harsh and punitive, one may judge or label West Indian parents as uncaring. By adopting a phenomenological approach, with the use of in-depth semi-structured individual interviews, the researcher sought to put aside conclusions made in the existing literature on the topic and to extract parents' narratives and views on the practices they used to guide their children.

### **Setting**

The study was conducted in Trinidad, an island located in the Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago are a dual-island Caribbean nation located near Venezuela. Trinidad is the larger of the two islands, while Tobago, is much smaller. Trinidad and Tobago achieved independence from the United Kingdom in 1962 and became a republic in 1976 (Watts, Robinson, & Brereton, 2016).

Trinidad is deemed one of the most multicultural societies in the Caribbean region (Descartes, 2012). Indo- Trinidadians (40%) and Afro- Trinidadians (38%) are the two main ethnic groups in Trinidad. Afro-Trinidadians or Blacks descended from slaves who were brought to work on cotton and sugar plantations beginning in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Indo-Trinidadians or East-Indians descendants were mainly laborers who immigrated from the Indian subcontinent as plantation workers after slavery was abolished in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from these two dominant ethnic groups, other racial groups on the island are: Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Syrians and Mixed- Trinidadians (Descartes, 2012; Watts et al., 2016).

Although English is the official and national language of the island, other languages spoken are English- French- and Spanish- based Creole, Indian languages including Hindi, and

Chinese dialects (Watts et al., 2016). According to census data in 2016, the population figure was approximately 1.35 million. Christians represent the largest religious group in the country, with Roman Catholics representing approximately 26% of the country's population, and other Christian denominations representing roughly 31.6% of the population (Watts et al., 2016).

Hindus account for approximately 22.5% of the Trinidadian population, while Muslims account for about 6% of the island's population.

Traditionally among the East Indian population, family relationships tend to be the most important in their life, with multiple generations of the family residing together or in close proximity. However, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the extended family system began to decrease, and more nuclear family structures arose among Indo-Trinidadian families. In families of African descent on the island, the family unit is nuclear rather than extended, and may be based upon marriage or upon a stable common-law relationship. Also, many Afro-Trinidadians families are headed by women (Watts et al., 2016).

Trinidad and Tobago have been ranked in the high human development category according to the human development index. The Human Development Index (HDI) is a measure for assessing a country's progress in three basic dimensions of human development: life expectancy, education and income (hdr.undp.org). Survey data in 2006 showed that 1.7 % of the island's population, (roughly 23,000) people lived in poverty while another 0.5%, (roughly 6,000 people) lived near the poverty line (hdr.undp.org).

### **Participant Recruitment & Ethics**

The purposeful sampling method was used to recruit participants for this study, as this method is used to select participants based on a selected criterion. Initially, the researcher aimed to recruit six to eight participants from different socio-economic backgrounds and various



locations throughout Trinidad. This criterion was important, since past studies conducted in the Caribbean (Brown, 2008; Krishnakumar et al., 2014; Ricketts & Anderson, 2008), suggested that caregivers who live below the poverty line reported high stress levels in parenting and exercised harsh practices. Apart from differences in parenting according to socio-economic background across the Caribbean, the researcher also sought to include parents from various ethnic groups in the study as Trinidad is a multi-ethnic nation. Of the seven participants recruited, three parents were of Afro-Trinidadian background, two parents of Indo-Trinidadian background, and two parents of Mixed-Trinidadian background. This criterion was important because researchers have suggested that although strict parenting is the norm in Caribbean society, Afro-Caribbean parents tend to practice more punitive parenting than other ethnic groups (Payne & Furnham, 1992; Roopnarine et al., 2013). Because participants were selected based on various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, this type of selection is known as purposeful sampling. Inclusion criteria for the proposed study were as follows:

1. Parent/s must be citizens of Trinidad & Tobago
2. Parents must be either Afro, Indo or of Mixed-Trinidadian heritage
3. Parent/s must have children between ages 2 to 18 years

The study received full ethics approval on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Concordia University and a Certification of Ethical Acceptability was granted. Although the researcher was able to recruit participants according to the three-criterion listed above, a few challenges were faced during the recruitment process. Initially, parents/caregivers across all socio-demographics were sought but recruiting parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds proved a challenge, as these parents seemed hesitant to partake in the study. As a result, the parents who partook in the study were from mainly middle-class backgrounds.

Another challenge the researcher encountered, was recruiting families where both parents were of the same ethnic background. For example, family 2 consisted of a mother of Indo- Trinidadian descent and an Asian- Trinidadian father. However, after consulting with my advisor, it was determined that finding a balance in the participants' ethnic background would suffice for the proposed study. As the researcher had proposed to recruit six to eight participants for the study in the initial proposal, when those six participants who met most of the criteria were recruited, the researcher began interviewing the participants for the study.

Through the researcher's position as a Volunteer in an after-school sports club, access was granted to six families. The researcher spoke with the After-School Sports Coordinator about the proposed study and asked if it were possible to recruit families from the sports club. After verbal approval was given by the coordinator, the researcher approached families giving them a synopsis about the proposed study. After this process, the families who were interested provided the researcher with their email address for further explanation of the proposed study. The researcher contacted the families via email to provide a brief explanation of the study (see Appendix A for Recruitment email). After the six families received the informative email, several telephone correspondences occurred between the prospective participants and the researcher, and a date, time and location were arranged for the interviews.

### **Participants**

Six families were recruited for the study. The participants were mainly mothers, (M age= 42.33, range 36-48 years; SD= 4.03). In Family 1, both mother and father participated in the interview. Table 1 contains information of the participants age, marital status, ethnicity and occupation, followed by a brief summary of each family.

Table 1

*Participant Demographic Information*

Pseudonym	Type of Family	Participant's Age	Marital Status	Ethnic	Occupation
Family 1 (mother & father)	Extended	39 & 39	Married	Mixed/ Indian	Manager/ Inspection Technician
Family 2	Blended	48	Married	African	Project Officer
Family 3	Nuclear	43	C/Law	Indian	Junior Accountant
Family 4	Extended	37	Single	Mixed	Officer
Family 5	Nuclear	42	Married	African	Teacher
Family 6	Extended	46	Divorced	African	Housewife

**Family 1** can be described as an extended family, consisting of mother, father, two children and in-laws. The mother, father and two children lived in one house on the compound, while the father's parents lived in an adjacent house on the same compound. At the time of the study, the children ages range from 3 to 9 years old. The boy was 3 years old, and the girl was 9 years old. The mother is of Mixed-Trinidadian origin and the father is of Indo-Trinidadian origin.

**Family 2** described themselves as a blended family, with a mother, father and two children. Their son, who was 10 years old at the time of the study, lived with the couple, while the other child lived abroad. The mother explained that their 17-year-old child, her husband's daughter, from a previous relationship, lived with her mother in United States and visits Trinidad for one month every year. Both parents were of Afro-Trinidadian descent.

**Family 3** was a nuclear family, which consisted of mother, father, and four children. The children ages ranged from 9 years to 17 years old. The eldest boy was 17 years old, while the second boy was 16 years old. The two girls were 11 years and 9 years old. The mother was of Indo-Trinidadian descent, and the father was of Asian-Trinidadian descent.

**Family 4**, an extended family, included mother, child, and mother's both parents. The mother described herself as a single mother who resided with her daughter, and her parents. At the time of the study, the child was 11 years old. The mother was of Mixed-Trinidadian descent.

**Family 5**, a nuclear family, consisted of mother, father and two children. The eldest boy was 13 years old, and the younger boy was 11 years old. Both parents were of Afro-Trinidadian descent.

**Family 6** considered themselves an extended family. The mother explained that apart from herself and her two children, her stepfather and niece also lived in the home. At the time of the interview, the eldest child was a 24-year old boy, while the younger child was a 12-year-old girl. The mother was divorced and described herself as a single parent. She identified as Afro-Trinidadian descent.

### **Data Collection**

The qualitative study used individual semi-structured interviews to gather data from the participants (see Appendix D for parent interview protocol). Semi-structured interviews do not only allow participants to share information, but it includes more of their voice and provides a richer picture of a phenomenon under inquiry (Hays & Singh, 2012). Because parenting can be complex, semi-structured interviews seemed ideal for this study as it allowed the participants to discuss aspects of parenting that had not been included in the interview questions. The semi-structured interview format allowed the interviewer to amend and add questions at any time to “create a unique interview catered to fully describe the interviewee's lived experience” (Hays & Singh, 2012, p. 239). Participants were interviewed individually. Individual interviews seemed appropriate for this study as it permitted parents to describe their childrearing practices without judgement from other parents while also allowing the researcher to clarify any vague responses

(Hays & Singh, 2012). Demographic information forms were also used to collect data from the participants (see Appendix E for demographic information form) and field notes were taken during the interview to capture participants' reactions that could not be voice recorded.

### **Procedure**

Following the informative email to the prospective participants describing the proposed study (see Appendix A), the six families responded to the researcher indicating their interest to participate in the study. In their response email, the participants included their mobile numbers in order to facilitate further communication with the researcher. The researcher contacted each participant by phone to confirm a date, time and location that was convenient. All participants agreed to sign consent forms (see Appendix C for parent consent form) on the day of the interview.

Before beginning the interviews, participants were asked to read the information letter (see Appendix B for informative letter), then fill out the demographics form (see Appendix E for demographic information form) and sign the parent consent forms (see Appendix C for parent consent form). After completing these forms, the researcher informed the participants that they were free to answer the questions in anyway they wished as their identities (real names) would not be revealed in the final paper. The interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 60 minutes to 90 minutes. At the end of each interview, any responses that seemed vague were clarified by the researcher. For example, participants were asked, "can you clarify, or can you elaborate on your response to question 2, etc.?" This approach was used to clarify participant's initial responses. After the interviews were completed, the audio recordings were transcribed, and each participant's name was changed to a number to maintain anonymity.

## Data Analysis

The data for this study consisted of six transcribed interviews and six completed demographic forms, as well as field notes. In order to analyze the interviews, the audio-recordings were transcribed with the O-TRANSCRIBE software. Next, the transcriptions were transferred to a Microsoft Word document to be coded. In order to highlight the various codes, Track changes on Microsoft Word was used.

The responses were coded using the Developmental Niche Model as a framework by matching the responses in each transcript to a component of the niche model. Next, the matched and the unmatched passages (which were few) were coded using In-Vivo codes. Although there is no “best” way to code qualitative data (Saldana, 2016), as the present study adopted a phenomenological approach, several codes were used to analyze the participants responses. Given that the primary goal of the study was to examine the childrearing practices, which parents in Trinidad used to guide their children, In-Vivo coding seemed ideal to capture and prioritize the participants voice as it allowed the researcher to quote the parents’ exact responses (Saldana, 2016). Apart from In-Vivo codes, during the first cycle coding, various codes emerged. Values codes emerged as participants spoke of important attributes, which they tried to instill in their children. For example, when participants discussed the importance of their children being mannerly, this response was coded as a Value code. Also, Emotion codes emerged, as the participants spoke of the whole parenting experience.; while Versus codes were evident as participants expressed differences in current childrearing practices, compared to childrearing practices in the past. Lastly, in the first cycle coding, Process codes were also evident as parents explained how their parenting styles changed according to each child’s temperament.

Overall, In-Vivo codes were used to express the participant's values, emotions, childrearing practices of then and now, and the process of childrearing.

In order to capture similarities and differences in the participants responses, thematic analysis was carried out in the second cycle coding. Pattern codes helped the researcher identify emergent themes in the data. Lastly, Axial coding was carried out to explore relationships between the themes. Interestingly, a relationship between the themes manners and discipline was found, as parents viewed the mannerly child as a disciplined child (see Appendix F for coding sample).

### **Data Authenticity**

While In-Vivo codes were used to preserve the participants' actual words, several other methods were implemented to ensure credibility in the study. Member checking was carried out by submitting typed-up audio recorded transcribed interview via email to each participant for their clarification. Each participant was asked to read the transcribed interview and indicate if it was a true expression of their views. All participants expressed that they were in favor of their responses. Apart from member checking, the primary investigator shared the audio recordings with her advisor. Also, the primary investigator liaised with her advisor to discuss the coding, findings and emerging themes. During these meetings various viewpoints were expressed, which ensured that different interpretations of the data were considered.

### **Findings**

The qualitative analysis of six transcribed interviews addressed five principal inquiries: 1) the caregivers and their childrearing practices; 2) the impact of the physical and social setting on parenting; 3) modelled parenting; 4) cultural practices influencing childrearing; and 5) perceptions of children and childhood. Each section will present the themes that were revealed

along with quotes from the participants that illustrate the themes. It is important to present the participants words verbatim to maintain the validity of the narratives.

### **The Caregivers and Their Practices**

In the following section, the caregivers, and their childrearing practices are discussed. The goal of this section is to discuss how children are cared for, as the developmental niche model states that the childrearing practices which caregivers use are deemed to be the “right way” to raise children.

**Family 1 (Mother & Father).** Mr. and Mrs. Uno had two children, a girl who was nine years old and a boy who was three years old at the time of the interview. Mrs. Uno’s in-laws, her husband’s parents, live on the same compound in an adjacent house. Although her in-laws live on the same compound, she stated that they did not provide care for her children. Mrs. Uno expressed that her children were more familiar with her parents’ childrearing practices, as they were similar to hers and her husband’s. She believed that her in-law’s childrearing practices were a bit lax. For example, she said:

When they are going to the garden, because they have a garden across the road, and they will give them like a little cutlass (machete), but they will be dull. But growing up, sharp things like that were never allowed. His parents will say, no let him go with it, we are watching him. My parents will be like a knife is a knife, and he is not going to play with it.

Overall, Mrs. Uno stated that her in laws childrearing practices were more relaxed than her parents, and she preferred that in their absence that their children stayed with her parents as they were strict and would “keep the children in line.” She also expressed that she was more disciplinary with their children, compared to her husband.



**Family 2 (Mother).** Mrs. Dos considered her family a blended one, as her husband had a child from a previous relationship. At the time of the interview, her stepdaughter was 17 years old, and their son was 10 years old. Mrs. Dos spoke of her ‘tribe’ who provided care for their son. She explained that she came from a large family and her mother, aunts and cousins all provided care for her son, in the absence of her and her husband. She added that her husband’s mom also provided care for their son. Mrs. Dos expressed that she and her husband were rather fortunate to have many family members who provided support and care for their child, and while some of the caregivers’ childrearing practices differed from hers and her husband’s, she believed that it took a village to raise a child. She discussed that her son could get away with anything when in the care of her mother; however, when her husband’s mother babysat their son, it would be the opposite. “My husband’s mother lets our son know where the boundaries are, and he has received licks from her before.” Despite her mother-in-law’s strict measures with their son, Mrs. Dos explained that, “I am not of the view of asking people to care for your children and then trying to restrict what they do.” She elaborated that I tell our son, “it’s a village, and you have to get accustomed to various people in charge in the village.” She iterated, “my tribe has the authority to correct and discipline.”

**Family 3 (Mother).** Mrs. Tres lived with her husband and four children. Their four children ranged from 9 years old to 16 years old. Apart from herself and her husband providing care for their children, she stated that her in-laws also helped out with the children in their absence. “My in-laws are very proper, and well-mannered.” “They raised their children properly and well-mannered.” She expressed that her husband was calm and not forceful with their children. Furthermore, she added, “most of the times they tend to get away with a lot of things with him, because he is not aggressive enough.” However, she elaborated that her childrearing

practices were more aggressive as she adopted those strategies from her father and held the view that sometimes you need to be aggressive to get children to listen.

**Family 4 (Mother).** Ms. Quatro lived with her daughter and her parents. She mentioned that her parents provided care for her daughter in her absence. However, she explained that although her parents used strict childrearing practices when they were raising her, they now act like peers with their granddaughter. “My parents rarely scold or punish my daughter.” “Instead, they are there playing with her.” She further expressed that her parents were lenient with her daughter and when she tried to discipline her, they often intervened. Ms. Quatro also explained that her daughter’s father allowed their child to do as she pleased, but she ensured that their child was managed and cared for, while setting proper morals and values. She iterated that, “I am not strict as my parents were, but I am not lenient.”

**Family 5 (Mother).** Mrs. Cinco lived with her husband and two sons, and at the time of the study their children were 13 and 11 years old. Mrs. Cinco stated that apart from herself and her husband, her mother provided care for both boys. “Granny...my Mom... provides care when we can’t do it.” Mrs. Cinco jokingly explained that her Mom is very laid-back with her grandsons, which differed from how her Mom raised her and her siblings. She elaborated that her mother allowed her grandsons to play video games all day and lay in bed, if they wished. “Very different to how she brought us up.” She also stressed that her husband was the more laid-back parent, and as a result she tended to be the stricter parent. However, she concluded that both her and her husband parented in unison and consulted each other a lot in regard to disciplining their children.

**Family 6 (Mother).** Mrs. Seis was a divorcee and lived with her son, daughter, and stepfather at the time of the interview. Her adult son was 24 years old, and her daughter was 11

years old when she participated in the study. Mrs. Seis explained that even though she was divorced, her ex-husband also provided care for their daughter, but in his absence, her older son would also help out in caring for his sister. She highlighted that her son used a particular tone of voice to express disapproval with his sister's misbehavior. She stated that her ex-husband was like a "yes parent," in that he did not question their daughter about anything. For example, she explained:

If (child's name) wants to go there, he does not ask any questions. He just wants to please her because she asked. However, I do not allow her to go everywhere. Instead, I will ask, who is going to be there? I will tell her, no, you can't go. But her father does not ask any questions.

### **Corporal Punishment Views**

Even though participants were not directly asked about whether they practiced corporal punishment, many parents voiced their views on physical punishment when discussing the childrearing strategies which they used, or did not use, to guide their children. While many of the participants were not in agreement with the statement, "spare the rod and spoil the child," they admitted that practicing corporal punishment was dependent on the child's temperament. For example, one mother stated:

I don't think you have to beat children, that saying is rubbish, I think people interpret things from the bible to suit themselves. You can be disciplined without licks and be just fine, but some children do need licks, but it's not your go-to thing. Each child is an individual and you have to figure out what each child responds to.

Furthermore, she admitted that she had only used physical punishment with her son on one occasion, "(child name) is 10 and he has only gotten licks once, proper licks, what they call

proper licks in Trinidad.” Instead of spanking, Mrs. Dos stated that she and her spouse used explanations and gave their son numerous chances to correct his behavior, as her husband tried not to spank their son because he received a lot of corporal punishment while growing up. She explained, “if we speak to you a million times and you still not doing it because you feel you could do whatever you want, then you are going to get licks.” However, she also stated that despite her husband’s hesitance to spank their child, he believed that “I am your father and you need to get that information registered in your brain, because two of we cyah be big man in here, because it don’t work and that’s the way it has to be.” She concluded that she and her spouse felt it was impossible to raise children without consequences and then expect them to respect boundaries when they reached adulthood.

Likewise, Mrs. Uno voiced many of Mrs. Dos’s beliefs. Mrs. Uno stated that she did not get a lot of licks while growing up because she tried to obey and follow the rules. But she stressed that there must be some form of disciplinary action when children misbehave, because the child has to understand that there are consequences for their actions. She explained that while spankings were one of the typical discipline practices that her parents used while she was growing up, she and her spouse have opted to use the naughty corner with their youngster. Moreover, she added that any discipline practice that allowed the child to think about their wrongdoing should serve as a consequence for bad behavior.

Mrs. Tres explained that growing up she received a lot of physical punishment as her father was aggressive. She admitted that she tried not to use licks with her children, but she resorted to beating one of her children as he was stubborn and opposed the family’s rules. She elaborated that even when she spoke to her son nicely, he did not listen. She stated that she took away some of his privileges and his behavior got worse. She admitted that after not knowing

what other discipline practices to use, she spanked him. Yet, she stated that not even corporal punishment worked, and when her son turned 15, he told her, “yuh ain’t see yuh licks never work.” Mrs. Tres uttered, “it didn’t work,” “it didn’t work with him.” On the contrary, she mentioned that her other three children responded to threats of physical punishment. “I didn’t have to hit the other three hard because I just rest the belt on them, and they got scared one time.” She stressed that she did not believe in licks, but at times she and her husband were tired, and they did not want to deal with their children’s misbehavior, “so we used the belt to scare them fast.”

The fourth participant to be interviewed revealed, “at 11 years I have never hit my daughter.” Although, Ms. Quatro stated that she was subjected to numerous instances of corporal punishment as a child, she did not agree with corporal punishment. She explained that she found her parents childrearing methods very harsh and she did not want the same for her child. “With my parents, it was Licks, Licks.” But she further explained that she had drifted from the way her parents raised her in that she allowed her daughter to explain the reason why she behaved in a particular manner.

Similarly, Mrs. Cinco also discussed that she was raised in her home where corporal punishment was the norm, and as a result she has made a concerted effort not to do the same with her children. She explained, “I try hard not to be like mummy, not to be like daddy, because I got a lot of licks; I got a lot of licks for nothing.” Unlike her parent’s harsh childrearing practices, she stated that instead of using corporal punishment with her children, she communicated with them. For example, she said:

When my son ask why he has to do something, I would explain why it is important for him to do it. But we could not have asked our parents why, because their response would have been, because I said so.

She stated it was important to explain to her children the logic. However, she admitted:

If I tell you once to do something, twice to do something, three times, and you have not done it, you will get a slap. But to say I taking out the belt and beating because you didn't put the plate back, that doesn't happen.

She confessed that she found explaining to her boys why things were wrong to be an exhausting discipline practice, but she believed that corporal punishment was not an effective approach to correct misbehavior.

Even though Mrs. Seis had voiced that she never used corporal punishment with her two children, she believed that some children needed spanking. She explained that some children, "will test you to see if you will use the rod." Another participant also shared this same view in that she expressed that some children tend to push and push the boundaries to see what will happen. Mrs. Seis expressed that she was fortunate in that her children never tested her rules, and discipline strategies like using a stern voice or giving them the 'look', worked to stop her children's misbehavior. "I sit them down and talk about what happened and try to understand why and come up with a solution because I don't believe you have to beat to teach discipline." She admitted that while her Mom was a loving mother, she found that her Mom could have communicated with her and siblings more when they were growing up. "She could have sat us down and say, well this why I am beating you." However, Mrs. Seis uttered, "we got so much licks growing up we became immune to it."

## **The Physical and Social Setting**

In the subsequent section the aspects of each family's daily life will be highlighted, as each participant spoke of their regular daily activities and how it influenced parenting.

Mrs. Uno stated that her family had a hectic schedule, since they left home at 6:30 am., and often did not return home until around 7 o' clock at night. She stressed that due to their busy lifestyle, it was important that balance be implemented to keep their household functioning. For example, she stated that she and her husband often altered their children's bedtime, as it was dependent upon the time at which they arrived home. They had to be mindful that their children had to be given dinner, and allowed to settle in, while the older child who was 9 years old at the time of the interview, had to complete homework assignments. Mrs. Uno also expressed that it was important for them to have family time, and for her and her husband to spend time together.

According to Mrs. Uno, "every new child is a new experience." She explained that children are different, and she and her husband used different discipline strategies with their two children. "Our son is a typical boy." She elaborated that their son wants to climb walls, while their daughter was the opposite. Therefore, she stated, they had to alter their parenting style and try and remain calm and communicate with their son as much as possible. For instance, when he refused to go to bed, we explained to him that if he did not go to bed, he would be unable to wake up in the morning. Usually, she stated, "we try to find smart ways of not saying NO to him."

Mrs. Dos explained that in order for there not to be chaos in the household, the family had to wake up early in the mornings and leave the house by 6:00 am, as the commute from their home to her office and child's school was a lengthy one. She said, "we live in the center of Trinidad, and we work in the city." She elaborated that they had to maintain a certain amount of

structure, otherwise all systems would fail. Mrs. Dos. stated that while only one of their children lived with them permanently, their lives were still hectic. “He has to reach to school at 8 o’clock, otherwise we get called in,” “why is he not reaching to school at 8?” She iterated that they had a responsibility to teach their child the importance of being on time. She also discussed that children needed some sort of framework or structure to raise them up in the right way. Mrs. Dos mentioned that while her son was being raised in a two-parent middle-class household, this was not every child’s reality in Trinidad, and raising her son with an awareness of others situation was of great importance for her and her spouse. “We are raising an aware child with rules and boundaries, so that he can survive in society.”

Mrs. Tres admitted that having four children was challenging. She explained that other parents constantly remarked about her raising four children. She stated that her life consisted of driving to numerous curricular activities. “My son has swimming, and then the younger boy has to be dropped off to somewhere else.” “I am always driving to drop them off somewhere.”

While Mrs. Tres discussed the many activities which her children had to attend, she spoke of how her children’s temperament influenced her discipline strategies. She stated that her children were stubborn, but her eldest son in particular was the most challenging to raise, as he refused to listen to his parents. Therefore, she stressed that to discipline him, she often adopted aggressive methods to get him to comply with the rules of the household. She explained, “with the other three, I could just show them the belt and they would behave, but not with the eldest boy.”

Ms. Quatro believed that her choice to have one child was the best decision. She uttered, “I always tell my daughter if I have more children, it means that you are going to get less out of me.” She explained that she was able to accompany her child to the mall and movies on the weekends and was appalled at the behavior of other youngsters in the absence of their parents.



However, she was mindful of those single-parent households where the mother or father were struggling to provide for their minors, and as a result may not have the time to spend with their children at activities, the way she could. Ms. Quatro believed that her daughter was fortunate, in that apart from her role in her daughter's life, her grandparents were also in the home and they watched over her.

Mrs. Cinco expressed that as a teacher, she may have higher expectations of her two sons, compared to other parents. "I am a teacher; how will it look if my children do not do well?" According to Mrs. Cinco, as an educator, people expect that your children achieve a certain level of success. Due to this pressure, she admitted that at times she maybe placed added burden on her children to behave in a certain way and achieve certain results. She explained, "my husband and I have no life of our own." "We provide them with a lot of extra curricular activities because it is all about them." Mrs. Cinco explained their weekends included dropping the boys to tennis, chess lessons, swimming lessons among other activities. She viewed herself as somewhat of a strict parent, because being a teacher she was aware of the misbehavior that happens in a classroom. She admitted to constantly questioning her children about their behavior, and elaborated that her husband thought she was paranoid, in that she questioned their children way too much about their behavior in her absence.

Mrs. Seis was the only participant who expressed that the childrearing process was a simple one. She explained that because her daughter was very understanding and loving, it made parenting simple. Mrs. Seis added that she was not forced to use harsh discipline strategies with her daughter as her child was an easy child to raise. Though, she added that as a single mother, her eldest son often reprimanded his sister when he did not appreciate the manner in which she

spoke to her. Generally, she expressed that both of her children were easy to raise, and she viewed her role as not only their Mom, but also as their friend.

### **Education**

Many of the parents discussed the importance of education and how it can enhance their children's lives. Specifically, a few of the participants spoke of the significance of their children attending good schools.

Mrs. Uno explained that it was important for her daughter to excel in her upcoming high school entrance examination. According to Mrs. Uno, both she and her husband wanted their daughter to gain entrance to a good high school, so that she would have access to opportunities. Mr. Uno interjected, "it's ok if they want to go to a better school than the schools Mummy and Daddy attended." Mrs. Uno added, "we want to make sure both of them end up going to good schools so they will be exposed to opportunities." She elaborated that she did not believe that studying ever really ended, as in order to succeed one had to continue their studies. While Mrs. Uno believed that good schools afforded her daughter certain opportunities, Ms. Quatro highlighted that she tried not to put emphasis on what school her daughter attended. Instead, she stated "I encourage her to understand the work that she is learning and to be able to apply the information she has learnt." She explained that many parents were focused on particular schools for their children to attend, as they viewed those schools as prestigious institutions, but she believed there was more to life than the school her daughter attended. Another mother who participated in the study claimed that education was very important, and she iterated, "I just want my children to get an education because I see how it affected my life not finishing A-levels."

Mrs. Cinco acknowledged that being a teacher she placed a lot of pressure on her sons when they wrote the high school entrance examination. She expressed that she wanted them to

pass for a good school and she jokingly stated, “I told them, how will it look if they failed the exam?” Mrs. Cinco explained that unlike her parents, she and her spouse checked their children’s homework and also helped their sons with any homework assignments with which they struggled. She mentioned that her parents and some old-school parents just demanded that their children picked up their books, but there was no supervision of the children’s homework. She iterated that education was important, but she also believed that a child must have a balanced life, which meant extra-curricular activities as well. It was important for Mrs. Cinco that her sons surpass her, and her spouse and she voiced, “I would like them to get their doctorate.” Just as the other parents, Mrs. Seis expressed that education was a must for her children. She explained that she did not want her children to stop learning, and she encouraged them to seize every educational opportunity that was available.

### **God- The Higher Power**

A few of the participants referenced God either when they spoke of expectations for their child, or when they discussed childrearing challenges. Along with parents stressing the importance of education for their children to lead successful lives, they also mentioned the importance of their youngsters knowing God.

Even though one mother stated that she did not have any expectations for her child, she did express that if she parented effectively her son would fulfill his desires and achieve his dreams, whatever those may be. However, she expressed that she felt that even if she did not parent effectively, God would take control. She added, “I am always thankful for God’s grace because I think if I don’t do it properly his grace will intervene. Mrs. Tres stated that even though she viewed education as paramount for her children’s success, she expressed that it was also important for her children to know God. She said:

It's so important to know God because sometimes you have all the intelligence and when you are in trouble you don't know where to go, especially when you are faced with situations and things that you don't know how to deal with it. Sometimes you don't want to go and talk to nobody, but you could go to God, and when God can't come, he will send somebody to help and give you some caring advice.

She admitted that she called upon God a lot to help her with childrearing, as when her children did not listen to the rules, she found that speaking to God helped her control her anger. She ended, "I ask God to show me a way."

Similarly, another participant explained that in order not to use physical punishment to correct her child's wrongdoing, she spoke to the higher power to avoid practicing overt aggression. She stated:

I really have to speak to the Lord because I will be so upset and she will be there and I will be telling her, hold on God, tell me what I should do with her? Because if I take it upon myself, she will be six feet under (she laughs)!

### **Modeled Childrearing Practices**

In the following section, each participant discussed whether their childrearing practices were adopted from their parents. This finding is important as the developmental niche model's second component is based on the customs of care and the inherited childrearing practices, as often parents tend to raise their children similarly to how they were raised.

Mrs. & Mr. Uno specified that while she and her spouse used childrearing practices that fit their busy lifestyle, they both saw many similarities in their childrearing practices and the ones that their parents used. According to Mrs. Uno, her parents were focused on discipline, and

she emphasized the same with her youngsters. She uttered, “I am big on manners and discipline.” I was raised to believe that “manners and discipline is everything.”

Mrs. Dos jokingly exclaimed, “I can hear my mother.” She explained that she used the same statements and threats, which her mother used to correct her misbehavior when growing up, with her own children. She elaborated, “I channel my mother ever so often.” For example, I tell my son, “don’t make me come there!” or “don’t lose the key to your brain!” So, threats like those she explained were directly copied from her mother. Besides, Mrs. Dos believed that while her mother’s threats may have been harsh, they were effective because it stopped her misbehavior, and she voiced that when she used those threats with her son, it appeared to work.

Mrs. Tres without hesitation stated that she adopted her father’s childrearing practices. She explained that her mother was laxed, and she and her siblings did not listen to her when she tried to guide them. For instance, when my mom told us to brush our teeth, we would say, “no” and she would not struggle with us. Nonetheless, when my father ordered us to brush our teeth and we did not listen, he would yell, “get yuh tail up and go brush yuh teeth!” After he yelled, we listened. Mrs. Tres admitted that while she spoke calmly to her children and explained why certain behavior was not acceptable, she adopted her father’s aggressive parenting practices because her children were stubborn, and she believed that being laxed was not always the best approach to guide them.

Ms. Quatro was one of the participant’s who admitted that she did not adopt most of the childrearing practices her parents used. She explained that she was not in favor of many of the discipline practices that her parents used to guide her and her sister during their childhood. She further iterated, “I have drifted from the way they raised me to being, from do as I say and not as I do.” Instead, she voiced that she allowed her daughter to speak and communicate with her. She

believed that her parents were too aggressive in their childrearing practices, and she made a conscious effort not to emulate punitive practices with her child. She stated that the only similar discipline practice which she inherited from her parents that she used with her daughter, was the manner in which she called her daughter's name when she was involved in wrongdoing. For example, she explained, "if my daughter is doing something wrong, I just need to call her name in a certain way and she would know that she is to stop doing whatever she is doing, because it is wrong." According to Ms. Quatro this discipline strategy was effective both for her in childhood, and also for her daughter. Unlike Ms. Quatro's parents, who she stated spanked her and her sister for almost everything, she voiced that she never spanked her daughter. She explained, "my daughter is 11 and I have never hit her."

Mrs. Cinco was another participant who expressed that she tried not to inherit many of the discipline strategies, which her parents used to guide her and her siblings during childhood. She acknowledged that her childhood was somewhat of a dysfunctional one, in that "there were problems between my parents, and I got a lot of licks." "I got a lot of licks for nothing." She further revealed, "you know there was one time I got so much licks I got my hand broken." However, she expressed that she made a conscious effort not to practice stringent behavior. While she sought not to practice corporal punishment, she considered herself somewhat of the stricter parent. She added, "I tend to be the stricter parent and I think I got that from my Mom." She also ascribed many of her childrearing practices to a neighbour whose parent-child interactions she witnessed when she was a newly wed living in her first residence away from her childhood home. She explained:

I remember when I lived in (name of place), another woman had a child and we didn't have any children as yet, but she had a child and I was amazed at how she would talk to

this child. Spend time with him and there was never any licks involved. So, I guess growing up, I saw that, and I try to model it after that, rather than from what I knew. It's strange, but that's how it happened.

Mrs. Seis believed that while her mother was really strict, it helped prepared her for parenthood. She explained that even though she did not follow her Mom in terms of practising corporal punishment, she did adopt "the look." According to Mrs. Seis, "my mother just had to look at me, and I knew I was doing something wrong." She elaborated, "I use the look with my children." "The eyes have different styles." "If they do something really extreme, my eyes will open really wide." She ended, "the look, that was one of the main practices I adopted from my mother."

### **Parenting Styles**

Three of the participants expressed that their parenting style was dependent on the temperament of the minor. One mother pointed out that every new child was a new experience, so she had to adapt her parenting style to suit the particular child's needs. Another participant explained that she believed her parenting style was a combination of practices emulated from her parents and new practices she adopted from her colleagues and research. She voiced, "I think my parenting is a mix of my experiences and if you take a one-size fits all approach with children you're going to end up in problems." Ms. Quatro, the fourth participant to be interviewed, shared similar views with the two other participants, in that it was important for parents to adapt their parenting styles. Besides, she affirmed:

And the thing about it is, with parenting there isn't just one style, you test different practices to see what works. If you realizing this approach isn't working, find something else, but don't let the child just run wild or lose them to the ills of society.

## Values

Each parent spoke of the importance of their child being mannerly and respectful. Moreover, participants expressed that children were considered mannerly and respectful when they were disciplined. They regarded a disciplined child as an obedient child.

**Manners.** Some of the participants discussed the importance of their children being mannerly. The parents believed that acknowledging others by use of salutations were basic requirements of a good human being. Mrs. Uno mentioned that manners were important when she was growing up and it is still important. She voiced, “that’s one thing I try to instill in them yuh know, good morning, good afternoon. You enter a room, maxi, a taxi, whatever it is, you say thank you, please, excuse me, and that sort of thing.” Mrs. Uno elaborated that she has held this belief as she was raised to understand the importance of manners, and even when others did not use salutations, she still practiced it. She uttered, “I told my daughter even if someone does not say good morning, you say it.” She explained that in instances where her daughter neglected to greet others, she quickly disciplined her.

Sometimes my daughter will just walk into a room and start talking and I tell her, go back out and come back in. I do this to teach her that the next time she comes into a room, she has to remember her manners.

She believed this discipline practice worked because she stated that her daughter now remembers when she walks into a room, she has to acknowledge the people who are there. Ms. Quatro also shared these beliefs, in that manners were very important. She explained, “I tell my daughter that you say good morning, good afternoon, whether they answer or not.” She jokingly uttered that “I also tell her you must say good morning, even to the neighbor that I do not speak to.” She believed that her strong belief in acknowledging others were adopted from her parents, as when



she was a child her parents spanked her for not greeting a neighbour. Mrs. Tres shared these same sentiments and added that she emphasised to her children the reason for greeting others. She felt that by teaching her children the importance of saying good morning or good afternoon were basic lessons to ensure that they enjoyed a fulfilled life. “It’s the little things like these that help you throughout life she said.”

**Discipline.** Many of the parents expressed that discipline was everything and that they viewed the disciplined child as a good child. As the word discipline was constantly used to describe desired behaviors in their children, the parents were asked to define discipline. All of the participants specified that discipline meant being obedient (following rules) and respecting authority. Mrs. Dos explained that discipline meant “coming into alignment with the rules.” She elaborated that the rules were put in place by families to create a certain kind of order and structure, and she stressed that when her son did not comply with the family’s rules, they took away all his technological devices. Ms. Quatro viewed a disciplined child as one who was respectful. She stated, “I hate rudeness.” “A child who is rude could get me trippin and I tell my daughter what you do at 11, you do at 21, 31 and 41.” She explained that she told her daughter being disciplined involved doing the right thing regardless if an authority figure was present or not. Mrs. Cinco, the parent who uttered that she may be biased as she is a teacher, stated that she has dealt with many undisciplined children on a regular basis, and stressed that she did not allow disobedience in her home. She elaborated that non-adherence to rules and regulations were not accepted in her home and when her boys were disobedient, she and her spouse took away things from their children. She explained, “so it means taking away things so that you can suffer (she chuckled) and understand that you need to do what you are supposed to do, that’s what we do.”

She added that they tried not to resort to spanking, but instead, they took away their children's Xbox, iPad and phones for a period of time.

Mr. Uno, the only father who participated in the study believed that children copied adults' behavior. He believed that children who were undisciplined, were surrounded by undisciplined adults. He also expressed that young children may not be aware of their misbehavior because of their age, and often they may be acting on behavior they saw being portrayed by the adults in their surroundings. He stated, "they are young, they don't have control over their emotions." While Mrs. Uno agreed with her partner, she expressed that, "it has to be all about understanding that disobedience or that type of ill- behavior should not be tolerated within the home or society." Furthermore, she explained that:

We would not always be around to see what they are doing, so when I discipline you at home you would know that when you go out there, mummy and daddy spoke to me about this type of ill-behavior, and I should not be demonstrating it.

The last participant in the study held similar views to Mrs. Uno, in that, "whether your parents are around or not you should always maintain that respect for family, friends or strangers." She echoed many of the sentiments of the other parents where discipline meant having respect for others.

### **Perceptions of Children & Childhood**

Much of the existing research on childrearing in the Caribbean has indicated that a hierarchy relationship exists between the adult and the child, as the adult believes that the child must comply with their orders (Anderson, 2007; Barrow, 2008; Smith & Mosby, 2003). The developmental niche model's third component deals with the cultural ways of thinking and feeling held by the parents and other caregivers, which influences childrearing. In the following

section, the participants discussed some generally held perceptions of children and childhood in Trinidad.

Generally, all of the seven participants expressed that children were not respected by adults in Trinidad. Mrs. Uno, the first participant to be interviewed, explained that there has always been a socio-cultural norm in Trinidad that children must respect their elders, but in terms of adults respecting children she uttered, “I don’t know if that’s understood.” Furthermore, she made a biblical reference and explained that although the bible stated that children should honor their parents, she pointed out that the bible also included a scripture, which stated that parents should not antagonize their children. She acknowledged that both she and her spouse respected their children.

Mrs. Dos, the second participant in the study, expressed that in Trinidad, some adults have treated children like “carriers.” She stated that when adults did not want to get up to get an object, they called upon the child to get the object. She stressed, “that has always been one of my pet peeves, because the poor child has no agency of his or her own.” Mrs. Dos also believed that many times children were not allowed to ask adults questions, and she viewed this as not respecting children’s rights. Generally, she said children are expected to comply with orders, and she believed that some parents and adults would respond to children’s questions with a “because I said so response.” However, she believed that as many parents/caregivers were burdened with numerous responsibilities, this may be a reason why they view their youngsters’ questions burdensome.

While Mrs. Tres voiced that in recent times the perception of children has started to change for the better in Trinidad, she felt that children were still not respected by adults. She expressed that adults wanted children to be quiet. She stated, “I still feel there is that kind of *keep*

*yuh mouth shut and do what I say* mentality with some parents, adults.” However, Mrs. Tres elaborated that this type of behavior was dependent on the child’s environment as all parents/adults did not react with children in this manner.

Ms. Quatro openly expressed that she thought children were not respected in Trinidad. She stated, “in Trinidad parents just lay rules without allowing children to be children.” She also agreed that there was emphasis on youngsters respecting adults, but not the other way around. She also believed that in some single-parent households, parents/caregivers expected children to take on the role of an adult by helping with the younger children. She voiced that “sometimes adults are so frustrated with the whole system that we don’t remember that it is a child we are dealing with.”

Mrs. Cinco believed that the norm of the adult is the boss still existed in Trinidad. She explained, “we still do have some inherited perceptions of what a child should be in terms of the parent is the boss and you are the child, so, hush!” However, she stated that with the Western influence in the form of magazines and technology it has made things a bit different, because parents/adults are now willing to listen to the child. She elaborated that adults in the Caribbean were now willing to listen to the child because they have been influenced by the big Western countries.

Mrs. Seis, the last participant to be interviewed, held many of the same beliefs as the other parents. She said, “we as Caribbean people think that once you are a child, you don’t have an opinion.” She shared that some persons were of the view that because children were minors, they could not have an opinion. She explained that small children may not be able to fully express their viewpoints, but they should be heard and respected by adults.

### **Then vs. Now**

Many of the parents discussed the views which the older generation held regarding childrearing practices. They stated that while many of the older generation views on childrearing may have been practical in the era in which their parents were raising children, many of those views were not suitable to raise children currently. However, while participants were mindful that some of their parents' views on childrearing may not be favored nowadays, they admitted to maintaining and practicing some of the old-school beliefs as they saw the importance of those practices for their children's success.

One parent explained that she and her spouse did not adopt the "my way or the highway," or, "you can't do this", or "you can't do that" attitude approach to parenting, as her parents did. She discussed that there was usually a reason why a child misbehaved, and the parent should communicate with their child to find out the reason for the behavior. While Mrs. Uno was not in agreement with some of her parents' parenting practices, she stated, "it was different back then and that's something we take into consideration and do as we see fit with our kids." However, she mentioned that she inherited their views on manners and discipline as she believed that when a child was disciplined and mannerly, they would be able to prosper in society. She voiced that when one was disciplined and had a good attitude, they were coachable in the workplace.

Another parent voiced that although she and her spouse practiced many new-age discipline methods, she respected the elder's childrearing style. She said that she upheld one of her grandmother's beliefs, in that the child would always test the adult and at some point, the adult had to demonstrate to the child that the adult's willpower was stronger. According to the mother, "there has to be a line of authority in a house, just as there is a line of authority in a

community or in a society.” Nevertheless, she explained that she communicated with her son more than her parents did with her and her brother when they were growing up. She elaborated:

I explain the why’s of things to my son because the why’s was never really explained to us. My mother’s response was always, because I said so, and we did a lot of things because we were told to do it.

She stated that during her childhood when she misbehaved, her mother would threaten her with a slap, but she decided to use the naughty corner to discipline her son when he was younger.

Mrs. Tres expressed that while growing up her father would spank his children when they did not follow the rules. She said, “if he told us something once and he had to come and tell us the same thing again...is straight to the belt.” But, she added, “I don’t do that with my children.” Moreover, she said, “a lot of older folks say we are spoiling the children and that’s why there are so many unruly children because they not getting enough licks.” She continued, “parents now talk to their children more because they realize is children they dealing with, and not adults.” Another parent explained that while she now understands why her parents used certain stringent discipline methods to guide her and her sibling, she voiced “I think they could have spoken to us, instead of beating us at that point in time.” She viewed childrearing practices of the past as unbalanced, and she specified, “that’s not what I want for my daughter.”

Mrs. Cinco mentioned that while both her and her spouse worked, they dedicated a lot of time to their children’s schoolwork and extra-curricular activities. But she voiced that she found her parents were focused on being the breadwinners, and there was no emphasis on extra-curricular activities for their children. She joked about having a weight problem due to the lack of extra-curricular activities when she was a child. She continued to explain that in terms of affection, “we will say good morning and we will hug once in a while but to say that I will kiss

mummy and daddy every day, that did not happen.” However, she acknowledged that she kissed her children even though they were teenagers, and she uttered, “we will say I love you, and that is different to what I know growing up because we were not like that at home.” She highlighted that some views on rearing children have changed in Trinidad, as corporal punishment is no longer legal, and she expressed that some parents and teachers have disagreed with the ruling. Lastly, she explained that in the ‘old’ days, parents made children kneel down when they were disobedient, but modern-day parents tend to talk to their children. Now she mentioned, “we talk, and we get weary of talking.” To sum up, Mrs. Seis believed that it was challenging to raise children currently due to the decline of the extended family and she iterated that back in the day the extended family would pick the children up from school, “but now grannies and aunties are doing their own thing, and parents need some me time, so they send the children off to the mall and wherever else.”

### **Discussion**

As existing research on parenting within the Caribbean region has focused on caregivers’ use of physical punishment and other harsh practices, which parents use to raise their children. (Krishnakumar et al., 2014; Roopnarine et al., 2013; Smith & Mosby, 2003); human service professionals in the Caribbean have voiced that other practices that caregivers use to raise their children have not been adequately researched. The findings of this study contribute to a more detailed understanding of the varied discipline practices that parents in Trinidad use to guide their children. Utilizing the developmental niche model which views culture as informing parenting, this study examined the childrearing practices, especially the disciplinary practices of parents in Trinidad, and if said practices were inherited and culturally rooted.

In spite of previous research that has indicated Caribbean parents' use of stringent discipline practices to correct their children's misbehaviors, participants in this study revealed that they used several non-punitive methods to guide their children's behavior. Overall, taking away privileges and repeated explanations were the primary disciplinary approaches which parents in this study used to correct their children's wrongdoing. This finding is not surprising as in Barrow and Ince's (2008) publication, the researcher mentioned that childrearing across the Caribbean region is becoming less regimented and more caring, as caregivers are beginning to understand that the early years of a child's life impacts their holistic development. It should be mentioned that the range of inductive disciplinary practices that parents reported using in this study were similar to the practices of those reported in North American childrearing studies (Stacks et al., 2009).

Similar to past studies where Caribbean parents admitted to practicing physical punishment, some of the parents in this study conveyed using physical punishment in the form of a slap or 'licks', but in rare instances. Typically, parents stated that they did not believe corporal punishment was necessary but might be used as a last option when all other discipline approaches failed to correct the child's behavior. This is an important finding as the participants' responses pertaining to physical punishment in this study matched the responses of those participants in Whiteman's (2013) investigation, another study conducted in Trinidad. Just as the parents in Whiteman's (2013) study explained that their use of corporal punishment was carried out when all other discipline approaches failed, the parents in this study echoed the same sentiments. Interestingly, two of the single mothers in the study admitted to never using physical punishment with their children. One of the mothers further explained that she never spanked her daughter, who was 11 years old at the time of the interview, although she was subjected to



countless instances of corporal punishment as a child. She added that growing up in somewhat of an impoverished neighborhood with parents who worked long hours, she and her sibling were left at home without any adult present. To protect her and her sibling from any negative influences in their impoverished community, she explained that her mother practiced physical punishment. This discovery is consistent with the finding in another study done in Trinidad & Tobago on the mediating role of parenting control behaviors in the association between neighborhood conditions and young children's behavioral outcomes (Krishnakumar et al., 2014).

Relative to discipline, the mothers in this study emphasised its importance and also the significance of respect. All of the participants held strong beliefs that discipline was essential for their children's success. Once more, this finding is consistent with previous studies conducted on childrearing within the Caribbean (Barrow & Ince, 2008; Brown & Johnson, 2008). While many researchers have speculated on the importance that Caribbean caregivers' place on their children being disciplined, one possible explanation for its significance may be found in the nation's watchwords, which states, "Discipline, Tolerance and Production." These watchwords have been engrained in the Trinidadian population for over four decades, and although these watchwords are specific to Trinidad, as the Caribbean region has held similar guiding principles in other areas over the years, it may be safe to assume that the bywords are also engrained in the other Caribbean islands beliefs.

The finding regarding mainly an authoritative parenting style used by caregivers in this study was contrary to the discovery in past literature, where researchers categorised parenting styles in the Caribbean as mostly authoritarian and permissive, (Hopkinson & Johnson, 2017; Lipps et al., 2012; Smith & Mosby, 2003). Consistent with the authoritative style of parenting, parents in this study admitted to enforcing rules, but also expressed that they communicated with

their children. Furthermore, parents in this sample were aware that every child was unique, and a one-size fits all approach to childrearing was not the best practice. Moreover, they explained that they altered their childrearing approach to accommodate each child. Hence, this outcome is not surprising, as the developmental niche model posits that the age, gender, energy level and temperament of the child can influence the parent. Parent's willingness to adapt their childrearing approach may be due to parents' understanding of child development. If so, it would suggest that parents are beginning to question their inherited practices and cultural beliefs.

The importance of education to ensure their children's success is another main theme of the findings. Many of the parents highlighted the significance of their children attending a good school, as they believed that the opportunities that their children would gain by attending these prestige institutions would propel them into various activities, which in the end with result in their minors receiving a holistic education. This thinking is supported by the development niche model, in that the physical and social setting impacts child development, because as children attend good schools, they gain access to endless opportunities. The concern for education expressed by participants in this study is in no way novel, as parents in other childrearing studies conducted in Caribbean revealed the same thoughts (Griffith & Grolnick, 2013; Johnson & Descartes, 2017). While many of the parents in this study spoke of the importance of good schools, interestingly, Mrs. Dos and Ms. Quatro did not express as much importance on their children attending top schools. Their non-focus on the importance of their child attending a prestigious educational institution may be explained by the fact that due to them having one child they may be financially able to allocate more resources to their child's education than the other parents in the study who had more than one child.

Another important finding that emerged was spirituality, as a few of the participants spoke of God when they mentioned the expectations for their children, or when they admitted to calling upon ‘his grace’ to guide them in not exercising harsh practices to deal with their children’s defiance. The discovery of spirituality among participants in this current study is not surprising as Trinidad is a multi-religious nation and its national anthem and pledge includes the reverence of God. One mother however did acknowledge that while the culture conforms to many biblical sayings, for example, *spare the rod and spoil the child* adage, she explained that some parents did not seem to adhere to the other parts of the scripture, which held that parents should not antagonize their children.

Grandparents’ use of non-punitive childrearing methods emerged as an unanticipated theme, as most parents in the study expressed that their parents ‘childrearing practices differed with their grandchildren. For example, mothers stated that their parents raised them with physical punishment and other stringent measures, but currently practiced non-punitive measures with their grandchildren. The mothers further explained that their parents allowed their grandchildren a lot of freedom, and they admitted to not understanding how their parents’ views on childrearing changed from punitive to warm. This is an area that is worth exploring, as in the Caribbean the extended family assist in childrearing. The grandparents in this study use of non-punitive and lenient practices may imply that they view their children as the sole authorities on discipline. However, two participants indicated that their parents still used stringent practices with their grandchildren, and they did not disagree with these strict measures because it kept their children in line. Furthermore, the mothers believed that the time their children spent with the grandparents was more important than restricting their childrearing approach. This finding is important because in past studies, some parents, especially in impoverished communities across the

Caribbean, have stated that their use of stringent measures to discipline their children, was to avoid them (the parents) from being blamed by the authorities and the community for the children's delinquent behaviour. As grandparents are not held responsible by the authorities for their grandchildren's misbehavior, perhaps this allows them to be lenient. This may be an area for further research given the role of grandparents in childrearing in the Caribbean.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

Though this study contributes to research on the childrearing practices, especially the discipline practices that parents in the Trinidad use to guide their children, a few limitations may have impacted this study. Primarily, the sample size consisted of six mothers and one father, which is considered a small sample and therefore the findings cannot be generalized. Future studies that include a larger sample size will include varied childrearing practices and allow the reader to further understand the range of practices that parents in the Caribbean use to guide their children.

Secondly, there is evidence that states that parents disciplinary methods vary by social class, and that low-income parents tend to use punitive practices (Anderson, 2007; Descartes, 2012; Roopnarine et al., 2014). The findings in this study cannot be generalized as the participants were middle-class families. The inclusion of low-income families in the study may have included different childrearing practices, especially different disciplinary practices, compared to those practiced by middle-income families.

Thirdly, mainly mothers participated in the study which resulted in the absence of fathers' views on childrearing. In the instance where one father partook in the study, he was not present for the entire interview, and as a result some of his opinions were not shared. By

including the other fathers, the study may have generated different responses in terms of the childrearing practices used.

Fourth, although most of the sought-after ethnic groups participated in the study, the researcher was unable to recruit families where the two parents were of Indo-Trinidadian descent. This criterion is important as the literature has suggested that Indo-Caribbean families engaged in higher levels of positive parenting compared to Afro-Caribbean families (Roopnarine et al., 2012; 2014). The inclusion of a two-parent Indo-Trinidadian family may have revealed different parenting practices.

Finally, more qualitative studies that examine the disciplinary and other childrearing practices of not only parents, but grandparents as well, within all the islands in the Caribbean are needed, as this approach produces detailed narratives. Through qualitative studies, new topics can emerge on areas not initially considered by the researcher (Hays & Singh, 2011). In the end, the depth and detail of qualitative inquiry will help inform parent educators and other human service professionals interventions throughout the Caribbean region.

### **Implications for Practice**

This qualitative phenomenological study on childrearing practices, especially their disciplinary practices contains implications which warrant further research. Parent Educators in the Caribbean may need to develop preventative and supportive programs, if they do not already exist, which educate parents on solutions to deal with the disobedient child. This information may help parents take the emphasis off rules and boundaries and focus on helping their children to channel their defiance in socially acceptable ways. A significant finding is that most of the parents discussed their hectic lives and this discovery is important because while educational programs can help these parents deal with their defiant youngsters, it is necessary that these

programs be created on platforms that can be accessible when one is on the move. A few of the participants in this study spoke of the time at which they had to leave their homes every morning in order for everyone to get to their destination. In this age of technology, I would suggest given these parents busy lives, leveraging media such as podcasts or mobile applications that cater to effective parenting may be a viable and suitable resource for them.

### **Conclusion**

This study indicates that in spite of parents being exposed to physical punishment and other stringent practices while a child, they vowed to not continue the harsh discipline practices with their children. While some parents practiced physical punishment on the rare instance, they opted to use mainly non-punitive methods to guide their children's behaviors. Even though parents in the Caribbean have been viewed as tough and unaffectionate, parents in this sample showed overt affection to their children in an attempt to not adopt inherited practices. However, their emphasis on their children's obedience and respect for elders' is somewhat comparable to those views expressed by parents in other childrearing studies conducted throughout the Caribbean (Barrow, 2001; Brown & Johnson, 2008; Rickets, & Anderson, 2008). It is important that future research examines why obedience and respect is so valued among caregivers in the Caribbean.

## References

- Arnold, E. (1982). The use of corporal punishment in child rearing in the West Indies. *Child abuse & neglect*, 6(2), 141-145.
- Bailey, C., Robinson, T., & Desai, C. C. (2014). Corporal punishment in the Caribbean: attitudes and practices. *Social and Economic Studies*, 63 (3&4), 207-233.
- Barrow, C. & Ince, M. (2008). Early childhood in the Caribbean. Working Paper 47. The Hague, The Netherlands: Bernard van Leer Foundation.
- Brown, J. & Johnson, S. (2008) Childrearing and child participation in Jamaican families. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 16(1), 31-40.
- Burke, T. & Kuczynski, L. (2018) Jamaican Mothers' Perception of Children's Strategies for Resisting Parental Rules and Requests. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9.
- Burke, T., Kuczynski, L., & Perren, S. (2017). An Exploration of Jamaican Mothers' Perceptions of Closeness and Intimacy in the Mother–Child Relationship during Middle Childhood. *Frontiers in psychology*, 8.
- Dede Yildirim, E., & Roopnarine, J. L. (2017). Positive discipline, harsh physical discipline, physical discipline and psychological aggression in five Caribbean countries: associations with preschoolers' early literacy skills. *International journal of psychology*.
- Descartes, C. (2012). The social construction of demographic variables and parenting styles in Trinidad. *Journal of the Department of Behavioral Sciences*, 1(1), 51-70.
- Evans, H., & Davies, R. (1997). Overview of issues in childhood socialization in the Caribbean. *Caribbean families: Diversity among ethnic groups*, 14.
- Gopaul-McNicol, S. A. (1993). *Working with West Indian families*. Guilford Press.

- Gopaul-McNicol, S. A. (1999). Ethnocultural perspectives on childrearing practices in the Caribbean. *International Social Work, 42*(1), 79-86.
- Griffith, S. F., & Grolnick, W. S. (2014). Parenting in Caribbean families: A look at parental control, structure, and autonomy support. *Journal of Black Psychology, 40*(2), 166-190.
- Harkness, S., & Super, C. M. (2006). Themes and variations: Parental ethnotheories in Western cultures. *Parenting beliefs, behaviors, and parent-child relations: A cross-cultural perspective, 61-79*.
- Harkness, S., Super, C. M., Moises, R., Bermudez, U. M., Rha, J. H., Mavridis, C. J., & Palacios, J. (2009). Chapter four parental ethnotheories of children's learning. *The anthropology of learning in childhood, 65*.
- Hays, D. G., & Singh, A. A. (2011). *Qualitative inquiry in clinical and educational settings*. Guilford Press.
- Hopkinson, D. P., & Johnson, E. J. (2017). Exploring practices of Guyanese parents based on their upbringing: the connections to their children's wayward and wandering behaviors. *Early child development and Care, 1-15*.
- Jaeger, E., MacTurk, K., & Nguyen, J. (2013). Parenting in West Indian families: Relationship to their literacy beliefs and practices. *Interamerican Journal of Psychology, (2), 287*.
- Johnson, E. J., & Descartes, C.H. (2017). Parental influence on academic achievement among the Primary School Students in Trinidad. *Early Childhood Development and Care, (187), 7, 1221-1227*.
- Lonner, W. J., & Malpass, R.S. (1994). *Psychology and culture*. Allyn and Bacon.
- Krishnakumar, A., Narine, L., Roopnarine, J. L., & Logie, C. (2014). Multilevel and cross-level effects of neighborhood and family influences on children's behavioral outcomes in Trinidad



- & Tobago: The intervening role of parental control. *Journal of abnormal child psychology*, (42), 6, 1057-1068.
- Lipps, G., Lowe, G. A., Gibson, R. C., Halliday, S., Morris, A., Clarke, N., & Wilson, R. N. (2012). Parenting and depressive symptoms among adolescents in four Caribbean societies. *Child and adolescent psychiatry and mental health*, 6(1), 31.
- Payne, M. A. (1989). Use and abuse of corporal punishment: A Caribbean view. *Child abuse & neglect*, 13(3), 389-401.
- Payne, M.A., & Furnham, A. (1992). Parental self-reports of childrearing practices in the Caribbean. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 18(2), 19-36.
- Ricketts, H., & Anderson, P. (2008). The impact of poverty and stress on the interaction of Jamaican caregivers with young children. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 16(1), 61-74.
- Rohner, R. P., Kean, K. J., & Cournoyer, D. E. (1991). Effects of corporal punishment, perceived caretaker warmth, and cultural beliefs on the psychological adjustment of children in St. Kitts, West Indies. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 681-693.
- Roopnarine, J. L., Wang, Y., Krishnakumar, A., & Davidson, K. (2013). Parenting practices in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago: Connections to preschoolers' social and cognitive skills. *Interamerican Journal of Psychology*, 47(2).
- Roopnarine, J. L., Jin, B., & Krishnakumar, A. (2014). Do Guyanese mothers' levels of warmth moderate the association between harshness and justness of physical punishment and preschoolers' prosocial behaviors and anger? *International Journal of Psychology*, 49(4), 271-279.

- Roopnarine, J. L., Logie, C., Davidson, K. L., Krishnakumar, A., & Narine, L. (2015). Caregivers' knowledge about children's development in three ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago. *Parenting, 15*(4), 229-246.
- Saldaña, J. (2015). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.
- Samms-Vaughn, M., Williams, S., & Brown, J. (2004). Disciplinary Practices among Jamaican Parents of Six-Year-Olds. *University of the West Indies*.
- Smith, D. E., & Mosby, G. (2003). Jamaican child-rearing practices: The role of corporal punishment. *Adolescence, 38*(150), 369.
- Stacks, A. M., Oshio, T., Gerard, J., & Roe, J. (2009). The moderating effect of parental warmth on the association between spanking and child aggression: A longitudinal approach. *Infant and Child Development, 18*(2), 178-194.
- Super, C. M., & Harkness, S. (1986). The developmental niche: A conceptualization at the interface of child and culture. *International journal of behavioral development, 9*(4), 545-569.
- Trommsdorff, G., & Kornadt, H. J. (2003). Parent-child relations in cross-cultural perspective. *Handbook of dynamics in parent-child relations, 271-306*.
- Watts, D., Robinson, A. N. R., & Brereton, B. (2016). Trinidad and Tobago. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Trinidad-and-Tobago>
- Whiteman, L. (2016). *Adopting nurturing and sensitive child rearing practices in Trinidad: an exploration* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield).
- Williams, S., & Brown, J. (2006). Research approaches and findings on childrearing and socialization of young children (from birth to eight years of age) in the Caribbean. In *Caribbean Support Initiative/Bernard van Leer Foundation for meeting of researchers, Dominica*.

## Appendix A

Hello (*parent name inserted here*),

As you may know, I am currently doing a master's program in Child Studies at Concordia University, Montreal. I am now in Trinidad doing data collection for my thesis which focuses on 'Understanding Parenting in the Caribbean'. I am interested in exploring the child-rearing practices which Trinidadian parents use to guide their children's behavior, as well as explore how parents engage and build relationships with their minors.

I would love the opportunity to interview you for my study; I believe you can provide valuable information, which when assessed among other interviewees, would give a fair understanding of parenting among our generation in Trinidad and Tobago. Please note, your personal information, including you and your family's names, will not be disclosed in the study and remain confidential.

I will really appreciate your assistance; looking forward to your response.

Thank you,

Neesha G. Cooper

## Appendix B

### INFORMATION LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parent (s):

I am a graduate student in Department of Education at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec. I am interested in examining what childrearing practices and what actual beliefs inform these practices among parents in Trinidad. The goal of the study is two-fold. Firstly, I will explore the childrearing practices, especially the disciplinary practices which Trinidadian parents use to guide their children, plus I will examine how parents engage and build relationships with their minors.

When you consent to participate in this study, I will have one interview with you the parent, which is expected to last approximately 1 to 2 hours. During this interview, I will ask you questions about your childrearing practices and parenting beliefs. At the end of the interview a brief sync will follow to provide clarification on any responses that may have been unclear.

All the information in this study will remain confidential and your real name will not be included in any of the results reported in the study.

Participating in this study will allow for more information on the parenting practices of parents in the Caribbean.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions or concerns please free to contact me, Neesha G. Cooper at **514-713-4107** or ([cooperneeshatt@gmail.com](mailto:cooperneeshatt@gmail.com)), or my supervisor Dr. Petrakos at **514-848-2424**, ext. **2013**.

## Appendix C

### INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

**Study Title:** Understanding Childrearing Practices in Trinidad: Using a Developmental Niche Model

**Researcher:** Neesha G. Cooper

**Researcher's Contact Information:** [cooperneeshatt@gmail.com](mailto:cooperneeshatt@gmail.com)

**Faculty Supervisor:** Dr. Hariclia Petrakos

**Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information:** [hariclia.petrakos@concordia.ca](mailto:hariclia.petrakos@concordia.ca)

**Source of funding for the study:** Global Mobility Award

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

#### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to learn about the childrearing practices which parents in Trinidad use to guide their children's behavior, and what actual beliefs inform these practices. The general goal of the study is to better understand how parents in Trinidad engage and build relationships with their children.

#### B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to partake in an individual semi-structured interview where you will be asked a series of questions on your parenting practices, your childhood experiences, and your cultural beliefs pertaining to how children are viewed, and what disciplinary practices are used in your home.

In total, participating in this study will take 1-2 hours. You will be briefed about the proposed study during the orientation session. During this meeting, you are free to ask any questions which you may have about the study. Once you agree to partake in the study, you will participate in up to two one-on one interviews in a conversation-

like manner. The first interview is expected to last approximately 1 to 2 hours and will take place in a quiet location of your choice (home, office, club house). The second interview is expected to last approximately 45 minutes and will be a follow-up interview. During this meeting you will be asked a series of clarification questions to summarize and clarify previous responses during the first interview. At the follow-up interview, you can add or amend any responses which you believe did not capture your responses fully. I understand that all my responses from both interviews will be audio-recorded.

I understand that I will be asked permission to use any quotes from my interview in the reporting of the findings. I understand that all information that I share during the study will be kept confidential by not including names or identifying information in the reporting of the findings and in the thesis

### **C. RISKS AND BENEFITS**

You might face certain risks by participating in this research. These risks may include feelings of guilt and emotional feelings regarding topics related to your own childhood. I understand that participation in this study could allow for an opportunity to gain access to educational resources and professional supportive services that can assist me with parenting challenges.

### **D. CONFIDENTIALITY**

I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity). All information I share will be kept confidential and private, unless the researcher thinks that the children are unsafe in any way. In that case, then the researcher will report her concerns to the appropriate authorities in Trinidad (Children's Authority of Trinidad & Tobago).

I understand that the data from this study may be published, however, no names or identifying information will be associated with the findings. I will be asked for my permission if the researcher decides to use quotes in the final report of the study.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be coded. That means that the information will be identified by a code. The researcher will have a list that links the code to your name.

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

## F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018**.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

## G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print)

---

SIGNATURE

---

DATE

---

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or [oor.ethics@concordia.ca](mailto:oor.ethics@concordia.ca).

## Appendix D

### PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewer: -----

Interviewee: -----

Date: -----

#### **Interviewer script:**

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study on understanding childrearing practices in Trinidad. The goal of this study is to help readers understand how parents engage and build relationships with their children. You are free to discuss your views on your childrearing practices, and other practices, which you feel are important. Your identity will be kept private and all the information that you share will be kept confidential and only used for research purposes.

Do you have any questions before we start?

#### **Family Composition:**

- 1) Tell me a bit about your family. Who lives at your home?
- a) Apart from yourself/partner, who else provides care for your child/children?

#### **Child-rearing Practices:**

- 2) What is it like to raise your children?
- 3) What childrearing practices have you adopted?
- 4) What are the other childcare providers (e.g. family members, daycare) childrearing strategies like?
  - a) Do they differ from yours or your partners? Explain.
- 5) Tell me about your relationship with your parents? What was it like when you were young?
- 6) Would you say that all or some of your parenting practices (discipline, communication, affection) have been passed on from your parents? Tell me about more about that?

#### **Perception of Childhood**

- 7) What are your expectations for your child?
- 8) In your opinion, what would a good child be like?
- 9) Do you believe, there is a such a thing as a bad child? What type of behavior would you deem as bad in a child?



**Caribbean Culture, Beliefs & Childhood**

10) How has your opinion of the ideal child been influenced by Caribbean culture or your own beliefs? How did these beliefs come about? Tell me more.

11) Do you think that children are treated with respect in Trinidad?

12) “Spare the rod and spoil the child,” What are your views on this long-standing saying?

13) Given the current economic downturn in Trinidad, how do you think it has impacted parenting?

**Appendix E****PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM****LAST NAME:** ----- **FIRST NAME:** -----**PHONE:** -----**EMAIL:** -----**ADDRESS:** -----**AGE:** -----**OCCUPATION:** -----**ETHNICITY:** -----**MARITAL STATUS:**

- Single, never married
- Separated
- Married
- Common-law
- Divorced
- Widowed

**SEX OF CHILD:**

- Male
- Female

**NUMBER OF CHILDREN:** -----**AGES OF CHILDREN:** -----

**Appendix F**  
**Coding Sample**

<b>Quotes</b>	<b>In Vivo</b>	<b>Values</b>	<b>Emotion</b>	<b>Versus</b>	<b>Pattern</b>	<b>Axial</b>
<p>Mother: Well you know dysfunctional meaning there were problems between my parents and I got a lot of licks. I got a lot of licks for nothing. You know there was one time that I got so much licks that I got my hand broken... Yes</p> <p>Interviewer: Ok, so you said you had a dysfunctional childhood because you got a lot of licks, from both parents, both mom and dad?</p> <p><u>Parent: Well more from dad, not from mom</u></p> <p>Interviewer: Ok, so more from dad and not from mom. So the practices that you practice with your children now because you try not to use those dysfunctional methods, where do you think you learned about the practices that you now use with your two boys?</p> <p><u>Parent: I would say it's really from colleagues. I remember when I lived in Aranguez, where I lived before, another woman had a child, we didn't have any children as yet, but she had a child and I was amazed at how she would</u></p>	<p>“I got a lot of licks; I got a lot of licks for nothing.”</p>		<p>(shakes head) (repeating words)</p>	<p>Her parents parenting style (punitive) vs. the neighbor's parenting style (warm)</p>	<p>Parent's use of stringent punishment</p>	<p>Feelings of hurt</p>

<p><u>talk to this child, talk to this child. Spend time with him and there was never any licks involved. So I guess in growing up I saw that and I try to model it after that rather than from what I knew. It's strange but that's how it happened and then to, I just wanted to be different. I wanted to be different</u></p>	<p>“I just wanted to be different, I just wanted to be different.”</p>	<p>Wanting to parent differently</p>				
---	--	--------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

