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# Male Batterer Parenting Attitudes: Investigating Differences Between African American and Caucasian Men

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## Abstract

**Objective:** The purpose of the study was to investigate the differences between intimate partner violence (IPV) and parenting attitudes by race by comparing demographic, parenting, and IPV indicators for African American and White men. **Method:** The study employed a nonequivalent, control group design in a secondary analysis of 111 men. **Results:** Analyses indicated that (1) African American men had more children; (2) chi-square tests revealed no statistically significant differences between African American and Caucasian men with respect to IPV perpetration and parenting attitudes; and (3) a logistic regression model indicated that the number of children and a higher risk category for parenting attitudes were significant predictors of race group membership. **Conclusion:** These findings reveal that having more children is related to a higher level of stress on intimate partner relationships, and these stressors are not evenly distributed across racial groups. Batterer intervention programs should include parenting skills to help perpetrators better cope with such stresses.

## Keywords

intimate partner violence, batterers, parenting attitude, revised conflict tactics scales, male offenders

## Introduction

Several studies examine the co-occurrence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and child abuse (see Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, 2008; Renner & Slack, 2006; Simmons, Lehmann, & Dia, 2009; Sturge-Apple, Skibo, & Davies, 2012; Taylor, Hamvas, & Paris, 2011). Holt, Buckley, and Whelan (2008) in their recent study found such an overlap of IPV and child abuse occurring in 45–75% of reported incidents. Additionally, children of IPV perpetrators are at increased risk of experiencing emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (Holt et al., 2008). Further complicating this dynamic, an important meta-analysis indicates that the negative consequences of parental violence directed toward their children are just as damaging, and in some cases more damaging, for children who merely witness the violence but are not the targets of the parental abuse (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt, & Kenny, 2003). Both IPV perpetrators and victims have a heightened risk of abusing their children (Appel & Holden, 1998), and fathers who abuse their wives are 50% more likely to abuse their children (Straus, 1990). Despite the ample evidence that IPV and child abuse are significantly related, little research has been conducted investigating the relationship between IPV and attitudes about parenting (Burnette, Ferreira, & Buttell, 2015; Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2001), and no research has been conducted examining how the relationship between parenting and IPV differs across racial and ethnic groups.

## Literature Review

Although some research indicates no difference between racial and ethnic minority groups regarding the prevalence of IPV perpetration (Buttell, Wong, & Powers, 2011; Field & Caetano, 2004; Lipsky, Caetano, & Roy-Byrne, 2009; Rennison & Planty, 2003), the vast majority of research identifies race and ethnicity as indicators of IPV (Buttell & Carney, 2005, 2006; Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Field, 2005; Melander, Noel, & Tyler, 2010; West, 2012). In response to vast discrepancies in the prevalence of IPV between different racial and ethnic groups, researchers have examined particular personal, familial, cultural, and structural factors specific to batterers of different races and ethnicities. In particular, researchers have investigated the effects of socioeconomic conditions and racism on African American perpetrators' abusive behavior (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, & Hannan, 2002; Conwill, 2010; Feldman & Gowen, 1998; Scherzer & Pinderhughes, 2002;

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West, 2008). Conwill (2010) posits that internalized and institutionalized racism contributes to increased prevalence of IPV perpetration by men in African Americans households.

Additionally, research studies show significant differences in number of arrests and severity of sentencing between Caucasian, African American, and Latino perpetrators with African American groups experiencing significantly more arrests and harsher sentencing (Lipsky et al., 2009; Shernock & Russell, 2012) suggesting institutionalized racism. Other studies identify alcohol abuse, use of illegal drugs, unemployment, exposure to community violence, exposure to IPV within family of origin, impoverished neighborhoods, and economic distress (this variable proved most significant) as risk factors contributing to the prevalence of IPV within African American communities (Caetano, Cunradi, Clark, & Schafer, 2000; Cunradi, Caetano, & Schafer, 2002; Schafer, Caetano, & Cunradi, 2004; Williams, Oliver, & Pope, 2008). Furthermore, other studies suggest the lack of social and health support systems associated with lower socioeconomic statuses lead to an increase in social stress and thus function as predictors for IPV (Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Harris, 2010; Cunradi, Caetano, Clark, & Schafer, 2000; Rennison & Planty, 2003). Cultural factors particular to different racial and ethnic groups may also contribute to discrepancies in the prevalence of IPV reporting and arrests. For instance, empirical research points to racial and ethnic disparities in police-reported IPV, with Black and Hispanic women more likely than their White counterparts to report IPV to the police (Bachman & Coker, 1995; Lipsky, Cristofalo, Reed, Caetano, Roy-Byrne, 2012; Lipsky et al., 2009; Lipsky, Holt, Easterling, & Critchlow, 2005). This finding suggests that the perceived need for legal intervention may vary across different racial groups.

### *Batterer Intervention Programs*

In an effort to develop interventions that consider structural and cultural factors particular to specific groups (e.g., racial and ethnic groups), researchers and practitioners have pushed for more culturally focused interventions and programs (Almeida, Woods, Messineo, & Font, 1998; Gelles, 2001; Gondolf & Williams, 2001). Currently, a feminist-informed, cognitive-behavioral group treatment approach informs the conventional framework for batterer intervention programs (BIPs). Widespread acceptance and implementation of these state-mandated conventional BIP standards result in interventions that were initially designed for a more homogenous group of perpetrators (ie, White, lower middle class, and male batterers) and implement a patriarchal analysis of male-female relationships leaving other racial groups and the Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community ineffectively reached.

The small amount of research that examines the effectiveness of state-mandated BIPs between different racial groups suggests that BIPs proved equally effective and equally ineffective for both African American perpetrators and Caucasian perpetrators (Buttelt & Carney, 2005, 2006; Buttelt & Pike, 2003). Some scholars have addressed the problems pertaining

to “one-size fits all” BIPs (Almeida et al., 1998; Eckhardt et al., 2013; Gelles, 2001; Goldenson, Spidel, Greaves, & Dutton, 2009; Hamel, 2014; Hines & Douglas, 2009; Kernsmith & Kernsmith, 2009). These scholars highlight the importance in developing culturally sensitive and relevant BIPs that reach an ethnically and racially diverse group of batterers. Proponents of more culturally sensitive interventions suggest broadening the frameworks applied in understanding IPV and the application of relevant interventions in BIPs to account for cultural differences among groups as well as structural hurdles faced at varying rates by different groups (Gelles, 2002; Hamel, 2014). In an effort to identify specific cultural and structural factors that may contribute to IPV across different racial groups, we investigate the relationship between parenting attitudes and IPV and how this relationship may vary between different racial groups. These findings could potentially inform the development of culturally focused programs that address factors contributing to the propensity of IPV among different racial groups, particularly as it pertains to parenting attitudes.

### *Racial Differences in Parenting Attitudes*

The vast majority of parenting research states that highly involved, nurturing, and supportive fathers are more likely to have children who thrive academically, emotionally, and socially (Dubowitz et al., 2001; Guille, 2004; Scott & Crooks, 2004). Research examining the differences in parenting attitudes and approaches among fathers of different races and ethnicities find connections between race and parenting attitudes and approaches (Cabrera, Hofferth, & Chae, 2011; Hofferth, 2003). In a study of a nationally representative sample examining parenting attitudes of fathers, results showed that Black fathers monitored their children more and exhibited less warmth than Hispanic and White fathers (Hofferth, 2003). Additionally, Hispanic and Black fathers exhibited more responsibility for child rearing than White fathers (Hofferth, 2003). Similarly, Cabrera, Ryan, Mitchell, Shannon, and Tamis-LeMonda (2008) found that White fathers were significantly less involved in their children’s lives than Black and Latino fathers.

Given that parenting attitudes are closely related to parenting behaviors (Simmons et al., 2009), it is surprising that few studies investigate differential impact of IPV on parenting attitudes (Holden & Ritchie, 1991; Levendosky & Graham-Bermann, 2001). Likewise, very little research exists concerning the parenting attitudes of fathers who perpetrate IPV leaving a lack of understanding in how to nurture positive relationships between fathers who perpetrate IPV and their children (Bancroft, Silverman, & Ritchie, 2011; Peled, 2000; Scott & Crooks, 2004). Over 30 years of research indicates that abusive parents exhibit significantly more abusive attitudes than nonabusive parents, and fathers with histories of being abused have significantly more abusive attitudes than fathers who had no history of being abused, thus the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory 2 (AAPI-2) was created to measure parenting attitudes (see Bavolek & Keene, 2010). Similarly, in

comparison to nonviolent fathers, violent fathers are less involved with children, less reliable, more authoritarian, and more likely to apply negative child-rearing practices (Bancroft et al., 2011; Peled, 2000; Simmons et al., 2009). Even less research exists examining the parenting attitudes of IPV perpetrators participating in BIPs and the impact of parenting attitudes on program completion (Burnette et al., 2015). Based on our survey of literature, no studies examine how differing parenting attitudes impact the propensity for violence of fathers among different races and ethnicities.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to (1) examine the relationship between parenting attitudes and IPV perpetration and how this relationship differs between African American perpetrators and Caucasian perpetrators and (2) investigate the ability to differentiate between African American and Caucasian male batterers through demographic variables, parenting attitudes, and IPV perpetration.

## **Method**

### *Data Collection*

The current study sample included all men referred to the BIP at the Domestic Abuse Center (DAC), a nonprofit agency in Columbia, South Carolina, between the periods of June 2013 and December 2013. By virtue of their inclusion in the BIP program, all men had by definition perpetrated some form of IPV, making this sample an ideal match for this study. Clients who attended the DAC outside this date range were excluded.

### *Sampling and Procedures*

The current study utilized a secondary analysis of data collected by the DAC. Since 1982, the DAC has been providing batterer intervention services based on agency and court-based referrals. The majority of the 111 (41%) sampled BIP participants were referred by a summary court processing misdemeanors, criminal domestic violence court (20%), or were participants in a pretrial intervention program (25%). A small percentage (10%) reported being referred from a governmental agency, such as probation or Department of Social Services, or listed "other" as the referral source. It should be noted that each of these referral sources has a different level of client supervision and different consequences for program dropout.

The BIP is cognitive-behavioral in orientation and is consistent in organization and focus to those programs described in the literature (Buttelle & Carney, 2005). The intervention program is a structured, intensive, 26-week, group treatment program that focuses primarily on anger management and skills development. The intervention program incorporates three phases: (a) orientation and intake interview—2 sessions, (b) psychoeducational classes—20 sessions, and (c) group therapy regarding termination—4 sessions. Groups consist of approximately 15 batterers, male only, and meet one night each week

for approximately 2 hours. This batterer treatment program incorporates confrontation, therapy, and educational components. In this setting, the common proximal events of domestic violence are directly addressed with clients, and they are given an opportunity to make changes that will positively affect their personal relationships with others.

Prior to participating in the BIP, clients completed the following assessment process in the first two intake sessions, which is focal to this research. The purpose of the assessment process is to assist agency staff in creating a pretreatment profile of clients. During these sessions, the DAC staff interviewed clients, collecting demographic information as well as completing the following two instruments: the revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) and the AAPI-2 (Bavolek & Keene, 2010). Researchers received deidentified and anonymous data, protecting client privacy and anonymity, ensuring individual responses could not be linked to client identities.

### *Measures*

Along with the demographic variables, including race, relationship status (single, married, unmarried, divorced, separated), number of children, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), educational level, employment status, military background, and referral source, which were collected as part of the DAC intake procedures, the primary measures for this study included the CTS2 and AAPI-2.

*The revised CTS2.* The CTS2 (Straus et al., 1996) is the most recent version of the original Conflict Tactics Scales (Straus, 1979, 1997), which is a widely used self-report measure of psychological and physical assaults as well as negotiation in domestic relationships (Straus, 2007; Straus et al., 1996). The CTS2 has been used in a variety of settings with individuals from varying races, cultures, and ethnic background, including the minority groups represented in this study: African Americans (e.g., Cazenave & Straus, 1979; DuRant, Cadenhead, Pendergrast, Slavens, & Linder, 1994; Hampton, Gelles, & Harrop, 1989) and Hispanics (Kaufman, Jasinski, & Aldarondo, 1994). According to Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman (1996), the CTS2 consistently demonstrates sound psychometric properties, with internal consistency reliability ranging from .79 to .95. Moreover, the measure has shown construct validity in a number of studies (Straus et al., 1996).

According to Straus et al. (1996), the CTS2 was designed to measure the range and frequency of tactics used in response to conflict with a family member. The CTS2 is a comprehensive 39-item (78 question), self-reported inventory designed to measure five scales: Negotiation (which includes two subscales, emotional and cognitive), Psychological Aggression, Physical Assault, Sexual Coercion, and Injury, each of which include two subscales (minor and severe). Negotiation includes the actions taken to resolve conflict through discussion; psychological aggression measures nonverbal aggressive acts; Physical Assault includes physical violence; Sexual Coercion focuses on

coercing a partner into unwanted sexual activity; finally, Injury includes partner-induced physical injury (Straus et al., 1996).

Respondents rate each item for the aforementioned scales on a 7-point Likert-style frequency scale (0 = *this has never happened before*, 1 = *once in the past year*, 2 = *twice in the past year*, 3 = *3–5 times in the past year*, 4 = *6–10 times in the past year*, 5 = *11–20 times in the past year*, 6 = *more than 20 times in the past year*, and 7 = *not in the past year, but it did happen before*). To create interpretable scores, Values 1 and 2 remained the same, and Values 3 through 6 were recoded to be the mid-points (3 = 4, 4 = 8, 5 = 15, 6 = 25; Straus et al., 1996).

**AAPI-2.** The AAPI-2 is an inventory to assess the parenting and child-rearing attitudes of adult and adolescent parent and preparent populations (Bavolek & Keene, 2010). Based on the documented parenting and child-rearing behaviors of abusive parents, the AAPI-2 assesses the level of agreement or disagreement with maladaptive parenting behaviors (Bavolek & Keene, 2010). Based on responses, the AAPI provides an indicator of high-, medium-, or low-risk parenting attitudes in relationship with child abuse and neglect (Bavolek & Keene, 2010). The AAPI-2 consists of five scales assessing parenting attitudes that are thought to be associated with cases of child abuse and neglect (Bavolek & Keene, 2010): (a) inappropriate expectations of children; (b) parental lack of empathetic awareness toward children's needs; (c) strong belief in the use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline; (d) parent-child role reversal; and (e) oppressing children's power and independence. With over 30 years of research, the AAPI-2 is regarded as a validated and reliable inventory of parenting attitudes relating to child abuse and neglect (Bavolek & Keene, 2010).

## Results

The following results are organized according to the heading of each respective research purpose.

### *Understanding Parenting Attitudes of African American and Caucasian Male Perpetrators of IPV*

The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. Among the total sample of 111 males, Caucasians accounted for 51.4% ( $n = 57$ ), while 43.2% ( $n = 48$ ) were African Americans, and the remainder of the sample was made up by a small percentage of other (5.4% [ $n = 6$ ]; i.e., Latino/Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian). Educational attainment (high school completion or higher educational) between the two major racial groups comprising the sample was highest among African Americans (68.7%;  $n = 33$ ) followed by Caucasians (64.9%;  $n = 37$ ). Caucasians had higher levels of employment with 80.7% ( $n = 46$ ) being employed compared to 64.6% ( $n = 31$ ) for African Americans. Marital status indicated that Caucasians (49.2%;  $n = 28$ ) reported they were either living with a partner or were married, compared to 41.7% ( $n = 20$ ) among African Americans. Reported experiences of ACEs were highest among Caucasians with 17.5%

( $n = 10$ ) compared to 4.2% ( $n = 2$ ) African Americans reporting ACE. Caucasians had the highest percentage of program completion with 78.9% ( $n = 45$ ) compared to African American (72.9%;  $n = 35$ ). The mean age for Caucasian men in the study was 37.5 years ( $SD = 10.5$ ) compared to 33.5 years ( $SD = 11.3$ ) for African American men and 38.5 years ( $SD = 10.2$ ) for Other men.

Among the sample, only 2.7% ( $n = 3$ ) tested within the low-risk category for the AAPI-2, with roughly 55% ( $n = 61$ ) testing in the medium-risk category and 42.3% ( $n = 47$ ) within the high-risk category for the AAPI-2. Caucasian men had 5.3% ( $n = 3$ ) in the low category, 59.6% ( $n = 34$ ) in the medium category, and 35.1% ( $n = 20$ ) in the high-risk parenting category. African American males had no representation in the low-risk category, with 43.8% ( $n = 21$ ) in the medium category followed with 56.3% ( $n = 27$ ) in the high category.

Descriptive statistics for the CTS2 are presented in Table 1. Most notably based on descriptive information, there were few differences between the racial groups on CTS2 total scores. African American males had a score of 22.6 ( $SD = 17.2$ ), followed by Caucasian males 22.1 ( $SD = 14.0$ ) and the other group 20.8 ( $SD = 13.5$ ).

### *Determining Any Differences on Parenting Attitudes and IPV Perpetration Between African American and Caucasian Male Perpetrators of IPV*

To determine the group differences between BIP African American and Caucasian males on parenting attitudes and IPV perpetration, a set of chi-square and independent  $t$ -tests were conducted. The first test investigated differences between racial group membership and parenting attitudes. A chi-square test did not indicate a significant difference between African American and Caucasian racial group membership and parenting attitudes. To determine whether there was a difference between African American and Caucasian racial group membership and IPV perpetration (CTS2 Negotiation, CTS2 Psychological Aggression, CTS2 Physical Assault, CTS2 Injury, CTS2 Sexual Coercion, and CTS2 Total Score), a set of independent  $t$ -tests were conducted. None of the independent  $t$ -tests indicated any significant differences between the two groups and IPV perpetration.

### *Investigation of Relationship Between Parenting Attitudes and Race*

To investigate the relationship between parenting attitudes and racial group membership, a Phi Coefficient was conducted. The Phi Coefficient is a statistical test that determines the association between two categorical variables (in this case, Race—Caucasian, African American; and AAPI-2 Risk Category—Medium and High). Based on the analysis, nearly 65% of Caucasians are within the medium-risk group compared to 43% of African American men. African American men had 57% within the high-risk group compared to 35% of Caucasians. The observed difference was not statistically significant based on the Phi Coefficient.

**Table 1.** Male Batter Demographics.

Characteristic	Program Participants (N = 111)			
	Caucasian, % (n)	African American, % (n)	Other, % (n)	Total, % (N)
Race	51.4 (57)	43.2 (48)	5.4 (6)	100 (111)
Age				
M	37.5	33.5	38.5	35.8
N	57	48	6	111
SD	10.5	11.3	10.2	10.90
Relationship status				
Single	26.3 (15)	47.9 (23)	16.7 (1)	35.1 (39)
Married	40.4 (23)	29.2 (14)	50.0 (3)	36.0 (40)
Unmarried partners	8.8 (5)	12.5 (6)	16.7 (1)	10.8 (12)
Divorced	10.5 (6)	2.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	6.3 (7)
Separated	14.0 (8)	8.3 (4)	16.7 (1)	11.7 (13)
Children				
0	19.3 (11)	20.8 (11)	33.3 (2)	20.7 (23)
1	33.3 (19)	22.9 (11)	16.7 (1)	27.9 (31)
2	17.5 (10)	16.7 (8)	33.3 (2)	18 (20)
3	19.3 (11)	16.7 (8)	16.7 (1)	18 (20)
4	7 (4)	16.7 (8)	0.0 (0)	10.8 (12)
5	3.5 (2)	4.2 (2)	0.0 (0)	3.6 (4)
11	0.0 (0)	2.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.9 (1)
Education level				
<High school graduate	35.1 (20)	31.3 (15)	0.0 (0)	31.5 (35)
High school graduate	26.3 (15)	43.8 (21)	33.3 (2)	34.2 (38)
Some college	24.6 (14)	12.5 (6)	50 (3)	20.7 (23)
College	10.5 (6)	12.5 (6)	16.7 (1)	11.7 (13)
Grad school	3.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.8 (2)
Employed				
Yes	80.7 (46)	64.6 (31)	83.3 (5)	73.9 (82)
No	19.3 (11)	35.4 (11)	16.7 (1)	26.1 (29)
Military				
Yes	17.5 (10)	12.5 (6)	16.7 (1)	15.3 (17)
No	82.5 (47)	88.5 (41)	83.3 (5)	84.7 (94)
Referral status				
CDV CT	15.8 (9)	22.9 (11)	33.3 (2)	19.8 (22)
Regular court	36.8 (21)	50.0 (24)	0.0 (0)	40.5 (45)
PTI	28.1 (16)	18.8 (9)	50.0 (3)	25.2 (28)
PPP	3.5 (2)	4.2 (2)	0.0 (0)	3.6 (4)
DSS	3.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1.8 (2)
Other	12.3 (7)	4.2 (2)	16.7 (1)	9 (10)
AAPI-2 risk category				
Low	5.3 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.7 (3)
Medium	59.6 (34)	43.8 (21)	100 (6)	55 (61)
High	35.1 (20)	56.3 (27)	0.0 (0)	42.3 (47)
CTS2 negotiation				
M	22.1	22.5	20.8	22.1
SD	14.0	17.2	13.5	6.5
CTS2 psychological aggression				
M	14.9	15.2	13.7	14.9
SD	10.0	9.7	9.8	9.8
CTS2 physical assault				
M	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.0
SD	5.5	6.3	5.5	5.8
CTS2 injury				
M	2.3	2.3	1.5	2.3
SD	4.2	5.3	1.5	4.6

(continued)

**Table 1.** (continued)

Characteristic	Program Participants (N = 111)			
	Caucasian, % (n)	African American, % (n)	Other, % (n)	Total, % (N)
CTS2 sexual coercion				
M	1.0	0.9	1.3	1.0
SD	4.8	3.8	2.1	4.2
CTS2 total score <sup>a</sup>				
M	22.1	22.6	20.8	22.2
SD	14.0	17.2	13.5	15.3

Note. CDV CT = criminal domestic violence conflict tactics; PTI = pretrial intervention; AAPI-2 = Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2; CTS2 = Conflict Tactics Scales; PPP = Department of Probation, Pardon, and Parole; DSS = Department of Social Services; CDV CT = County Domestic Violence Court.

<sup>a</sup>Total score for CTS2 includes psychological aggression, physical assault, and injury and sexual coercion.

**Table 2.** Logistic Regression Analysis of African American and Caucasian Males for Demographics, Parenting Behavior (AAPI-2 High Risk), and Conflict Tactics (CTS2).

Characteristic	B	SE	Wald	Sig.	Exp (B)	95% CI	
						Lower	Upper
Age	-.043	.026	2.837	.092	.958	.910	1.007
Relationship status	-.169	.173	.955	.329	.844	.601	1.186
Education	.243	.237	1.049	.306	1.275	.801	2.028
Children*	.368	.177	4.335	.037	1.445	1.022	2.044
Employment	-.089	.069	1.680	.195	.915	.800	1.047
AAPI-2 high-risk category*	1.254	.497	6.368	.012	3.503	1.323	9.276
CTS2 Negotiation	-.046	.038	1.486	.223	.955	.886	1.029
CTS2 Total Score	.002	.016	.013	.908	1.002	.971	1.034
Program participation	-.207	.552	.141	.707	.813	.276	2.397
Referral	-.309	.187	2.725	.099	.734	.509	1.060
Adverse childhood experience	-.702	.508	1.909	.167	.496	.183	1.342
Constant	2.500	1.548	2.607	.106	12.177		

Note. AAPI-2 = Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory 2; CTS2 = Conflict Tactics Scales; CI = confidence interval. N = 102; df = 11.

\*p < .05.

### *Investigate Differential Impact of Demographic Variables, Parenting Attitudes, and IPV Perpetration to Differentiate Between African American and Caucasian Male Batterers in a 26-Week Community-Based BIP*

To further investigate the differential impact of demographic, parenting attitudes and conflict tactics (CTS2) for African American and Caucasian male batterers in a community-based BIP, the current study employed logistic regression to predict racial group membership. Given the very small number of men in the low-risk parenting category for parenting, the remainder of the analyses used the AAPI-2 medium- and high-risk groups as the dependent variable in the model. The model consisted of demographic predictors (age, relationship status, education, children, employment, program participation, and referral), parenting behavior predictors (AAPI-2 high-risk category), and conflict tactic predictors (CTS2 Negotiation, CTS2 total score, ACE). The study employed an analysis strategy that allowed for simultaneous entry of the independent variables. All assumptions of logistic regression

were met. The estimated coefficients of the logistic regression model are presented in Table 2.

A test of the full model against a constant-only model was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 24.722$ ;  $df = 11$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The model Cox and Snell  $R^2$  indicates that the model accounted for 28.7% of the total variance. This suggests that the set of predictors successfully discriminates between African American men and Caucasian men. Prediction success for the cases used in the development of the model was high, with an overall success rate of 72.5%, and prediction rates of 68.8% for the African American male group as opposed to 75.9% for those in the Caucasian male group.

When racial group membership was modeled to be dependent on the 11 factors of the model, 2 of the predictive variables were significant. Number of children (Wald  $\chi^2 = 4.335$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95% confidence interval [95% CI] = [1.022, 2.044]) and AAPI-2 risk parenting behavior (AAPI-2 high-risk parenting behavior as the reference category; Wald  $\chi^2 = 6.368$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95% CI = [1.323, 9.276]) were significantly related to predicting racial group membership. Based on the model,



there is an increased likelihood of .368 times to be in the African American group for an increase in every 1 child. AAPI-2 high-risk group membership are 1.254 times more likely to be within the African American group compared to the Caucasian group.

## Discussion and Application to Social Work Practice

These findings provide key insights into similarities and differences among African American and Caucasian male perpetrators of IPV in an urban setting in the Southeastern United States. Consistent with previous studies (Buttelt & Carney, 2005, 2006), there was little difference in the rate at which African American men and White men completed the program. Although African American men had a slightly higher level of educational attainment than White men, 80% of White men were employed, while only 65% of Black men identified as employed (see Table 1). This may be due to the prevalence of structural racism within the urban local in the Southeastern United States (see Ferreira & Buttelt, 2014). Additionally, a higher percentage of White men had an ACE than African American men. One explanation for this finding could be the use of differing definitions of what constitutes an ACE. Taylor, Hamvas, and Paris (2011) found that African American mothers are more likely than White mothers to use corporal punishment. Thus, Black fathers in the sample may not consider such experiences “adverse.” While results indicated a higher percentage of White men in the medium-risk parenting category, there was a higher percentage of African American men in the high-risk parenting category. Perhaps due to the added structural stress of being Black in a racist society, African American men were more likely to be in the high-risk parenting category. Theoretical support for this argument is predicated on the Diathesis Stress Model, in which a person who experiences more stress is more likely to realize their potential for violence (see Roberts, McLaughlin, Conron, & Koenen, 2011; Taylor, Guterma, Lee, & Rathouz, 2009; Taylor, Hamvas, Rice, Newman, & DeJong, 2011). In brief, the Diathesis-stress Model proposes that there is a latent propensity for a problem that will be realized, or not, depending on the type and number of stressors the individual experiences. This model has been the dominant paradigm in medical training for at least the last decade in terms of explaining the development of many medical conditions like diabetes. In this context, we think it helps explain the increased risk experienced by African American men who have more children than their counterparts. As the number of kids increases, along with the enhanced stress of being African American in the South, they are more likely to endorse negative parenting behaviors (e.g., spanking) than their BIP program counterparts who are Caucasian and have fewer children. However, more research is needed to identify the precise mechanisms of societal pressures that Black fathers experience.

Given only three participants scored in the low-risk category, these findings further support the proposition that males who have perpetrated IPV are at increased risk of poor child-

rearing practices and potentially child abuse (Appel & Holden, 1998; Bancroft et al., 2011; Burnette et al., 2015; Peled, 2000; Simmons et al., 2009). Although the response rate for income ( $n = 73$ ) was too low for inclusion in the binary logistic regression, descriptive statistics revealed that 75% of people who earned less than US\$25,000 are Black, whereas 25% of those who earned less than US\$25,000 are White. This finding, along with those mentioned earlier, may lend support to the idea that intergenerational cycle of violence is situated within a context of intergenerational cycle of poverty and racism. Both IPV and child maltreatment are forms of family violence that are themselves situated within a larger system of stressors. More research is necessary to understand the precise mechanisms of this relationship. Furthermore, given African American men and White men had comparable total scores on the CTS2, we suggest that Black men are not more violently inclined than White men, and thus the propensity for violence is informed, in part, by environmental and structural variables not accounted for in these models.

Contrary to previous research on race and parenting attitudes (Cabrera et al., 2011; Eitle, 2005; Hofferth, 2003), we found no statistically significant differences between White men and Black men in terms of parenting attitudes. We expected to find a significant difference in parenting attitudes due to race (see Taylor, Guterma, et al., 2009; Taylor, Hamvas, et al., 2011), however the lack of such a difference may be due to demographic similarities within the sample (e.g., educational attainment, age, and client status) and the relatively small sample size ( $n = 111$ ). Given this finding, we do not find support that, culturally, Black fathers and White fathers develop different parenting attitudes. This finding stresses that White fathers are more similar to Black fathers than different in their parenting attitudes.

Adding to the literature on race and IPV (e.g., Caetano et al., 2005; Carney & Buttelt, 2005, 2006; Lipsky et al., 2009; Melander et al., 2010; Rennison & Planty, 2003; West, 2012), and contrary to what we expected given the importance of culturally sensitive treatment and the findings of Burnette, Ferreira, and Buttelt (2015), there were also no statistically significant differences between Black men and White men with respect to IPV. The finding that there were no differences between the two groups when it comes to parenting attitudes and perpetration of IPV suggests that other sociocultural factors may be at play. For instance, socioeconomic status may play a more important role than race in determining differences within the sample (see Caetano et al., 2010). Similar to our concerns mentioned earlier (i.e., small sample size and demographic similarities, see Table 1), it is possible that these similarities obscured the effect of race on parenting attitudes and IPV perpetration in our sample.

The statistical evidence provided by the binary logistic regression model points toward the added societal and family stressors Black fathers face compared to White fathers. Program participants with a higher number of children were more likely to be in the African American group. In addition, participants who were considered “high-risk” parents were more

likely to be in the African American group. These findings support previous research that illustrates connections between race and parenting attitudes and approaches (Cabrera et al., 2011; Eitle, 2005; Hofferth, 2003). These results are also consistent with previous studies suggesting that having more children increases the likelihood of exercising negative parenting attitudes and behaviors (Burnette et al., 2015; Kitzmann et al., 2003). Since Black fathers were more likely to have more children, and since higher numbers of children result in more stress and a higher propensity for domestic violence (Kitzmann et al., 2003), this may explain why fathers in the African American group are more likely to be categorized as high-risk parents. Relevant studies (Caetano et al., 2000; Conwill, 2010; Cunradi et al., 2002; Schafer et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2008) that demonstrate African American families experience disproportionate stressors due to racism and socioeconomic inequality and, therefore, result in a higher propensity for domestic violence may explain African American men's likelihood to be in the high-risk parenting category. When all other variables are held constant, Black men are more likely than White men to fall in the high-risk category for parenting attitudes. This suggests that Black men navigate added stressors (e.g., more children, racism, and poverty) when maneuvering through attendant consequences of IPV arrests, the court system, and BIPs.

Although further research should be conducted to determine the specific nature of the relationship between stressors particular to race, number of children, parenting attitudes, and family violence, our findings support the notion that these variables are intrinsically linked. Given the negative psychological and emotional outcomes for children who witness or experience violence (see Kitzmann et al., 2003) and the relationship between IPV and child abuse (Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, 2008; Ross, 1996; Simmons et al., 2009; Taylor, Hamvas, et al., 2011), the inclusion of parenting curricula in BIPs would benefit program participants and, in this case, particularly African American fathers, given the added stressors they face. Furthermore, BIPs should take into account these community-level stressors that disproportionately affect Black men and may contribute to their likelihood to fall in the high-risk parenting group (Caetano et al., 2010; Cunradi et al., 2000; Lipsky et al., 2009; Rennison & Planty, 2003). These findings further corroborate the argument for examining alternative variables (e.g., parenting attitudes) that may impact the propensity for IPV.

## Limitations

Although the data presented in this study fails to account for structural variables that may impact differential results between racial groups, we examine parenting attitudes and the number of children to better understand cultural variables particular to different racial groups that may impact the prevalence of IPV. Furthermore, we draw from previous research that illustrates structural challenges faced by particular racial

groups (e.g., racism) and how these challenges are related to risk factors associated with IPV.

## Conclusions and Future Research

Adding to the scant literature on parenting and IPV, this study contributes a greater understanding of fathering and IPV by comparing demographic, parenting, and IPV indicators for African American men and Caucasian men. Given the uniqueness of these data that combines parenting and IPV indicators, we find that more studies of this kind are necessary for uncovering the tangled relationships between stress and violence within the family system. We observed support for arguments that children add to relational stress but that African American men and Caucasian men are differentially situated to handle this stress. More research is necessary to isolate the specific mechanisms between relational stress, violence, parenting attitudes, socioeconomic status, and race. Such research will provide a more refined analysis of the triggers and protective factors within the family context and prove meaningful in developing more adequate interventions that reduce both IPV and exposure of children to such violence.

Within the context of wider society, Black and White fathers are treated differently creating different stressors for each (Caetano et al., 2000; Cunradi et al., 2002; Lipsky et al., 2012; Schafer et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2008). In light of these differences, this study suggests that it may be beneficial to create curriculum that not only approaches IPV interventions through the lens of parenting attitudes and behaviors but also considers the specific cultural and societal stressors of African American fathers. Furthermore, given the important role fathers' play in their children's lives and given the prevalence of medium and high-risk parenting attitudes among male BIP participants, it is necessary to assist male perpetrators with developing skills to cope with the added stress of children to their intimate partnerships. Furthermore, key parental skills for navigating such family stressors should also be taught.

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