Global Families Project

Global Families Project Team

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1 Project Summary

Gender inequality perpetuates harmful norms that justify violence against women and children and is associated with higher rates of family violence.

Worldwide, parental physical abuse is a common form of family violence that children are exposed to at alarming rates. Parental engagement in physical abuse is linked to negative child outcomes including depression, anxiety, and aggression that may persist into adulthood. Globally, these continuing mental health and aggression problems may have high financial costs, with effects both on social service systems and developing economies.

Despite the substantial scholarship on parent- and family-level predictors of parent-to-child physical violence, important questions remain about societal-level predictors of parental physical abuse and its associations with young children's development in developing and transitional countries.

A further gap in prior literature is the lack of studies that have examined potential moderators such as child age and household economic status in the associations between gender inequality and parental violence against children.

Using data from over 520,000 families in 57 low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), the current project seeks to address these research gaps by examining the associations of country-level gender inequality and violent social contexts with caregivers' use of physically abusive behavior and child social-emotional development. We will employ multilevel models using data on parental physical violence against children, family socio-economic characteristics, and children's social-emotional development from the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and data on country-level gender inequality and violent social contexts from the United Nations Development Programme on Human Development and the World Health Organization Global Health Observatory.

The specific aims are to 1) examine the associations of gender inequality with parental child physical abuse in LMICs, and the moderating roles of child age and household economic status in these associations, 2) examine the associations of violent social norms and crimes with parental physical abuse in LMICs, and 3) examine the associations of parental physical abuse with child social-emotional development in the context of gender inequality and violent norms and crimes in LMICs, and whether country-level normativeness of physical abuse moderates these associations.

The proposed studies will advance the understanding of macro-level social and economic indicators that perpetuate caregivers' physical violence against children in international contexts.

Study findings will inform cross-cultural programs and policies that reduce gender disparities and prevent parental physical abuse to promote child social-emotional development across the globe.

In addition, these studies will provide rigorous research engagement opportunities to undergraduate students and graduate students and strengthen the research environment at the University of Michigan-Flint.

2 Research Team

Julie Ma, Principal Investigator

Associate Professor of Social Work, UM-Flint

Professor Ma's research interests center around the effects of neighborhood disadvantage and negative parenting on the well-being of children. Her research builds on her experience in parent education programs that serve families in marginalized communities in Michigan. Much of her current research focuses on the risks of negative contextual and family influences such as neighborhood poverty and disorganization, and parental corporal punishment on behavior problems and maltreatment in early childhood.

Andy Grogan-Kaylor, Co-Investigator

Sandra K. Danziger Collegiate Professor, Professor of Social Work

Professor Grogan-Kaylor's research focuses on knowledge development and intervention research on children and families with the aim of reducing violence against children and improving family and child wellbeing. Grogan-Kaylor's current research projects examine parenting behaviors such as physical punishment and parental expressions of emotional warmth and support, and their effects on children's aggression, antisocial behavior, anxiety, and depression.

Shawna Lee, Co-Investigator

Professor of Social Work

Professor Lee is a professor at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. She is the director of the Parenting in Context Research Lab and the director of the Program Evaluation Group at the School. Lee has published on topics related to child maltreatment, fathers' parenting, father-child relationships, parenting stress and family functioning, and parental discipline. Her recent research focuses on parenting and stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3 Simulated Multi-Country Data

This website makes use of simulated data. Data come from 30 hypothetical countries. Data contain measures of a few key aspects of parenting¹ or caregiving that have proven salient in the empirical literature on parenting to date. The outcome is aggression against other children.

Download The Data

- R format
- Stata Format
- SPSS

load("./simulate-data/MICSsimulated.RData")

3.1 Variables and Variable Labels

labelled::look_for(MICSsimulated)

pos	variable	label	<pre>col_type values</pre>
1	id	id	int
2	country	country	int
3	GII	gender inequality index	int
4	cd1	spank	int
5	cd2	beat	int
6	cd3	shout	int
7	cd4	explain	int
8	aggression	aggression	int

¹We use the term parenting throughout this site, but are aware that such parenting may come from biological parents, or from other caregivers.

3.2 A Sample Of The Data

A sample of the data is given below.

head(MICSsimulated)

			~	- 14	10	10	7.4	
	ıd	country	GII	cd1	cd2	cd3	cd4	aggression
1	1	1	20	0	1	0	1	1
2	2	1	20	0	0	1	0	1
3	3	1	20	0	0	0	1	1
4	4	1	20	1	1	0	1	1
5	5	1	20	0	0	1	1	0
6	6	1	20	1	0	0	1	1

4 A Quick Introduction to R

4.1 Why Use R?

R has a reputation for being difficult to learn, and a lot of that reputation is deserved. However, it is possible to teach R in an accessible way, and a little bit of R can take you a long way.

R is open source, and therefore free, statistical software that is particularly good at obtaining, analyzing and visualizing data.

R Commands are stored in a *script* or *code* file that usually ends in .R, e.g. myscript.R. The command file is distinct from your actual data, stored in an .RData file, e.g. mydata.RData.

A great deal of data analysis and visualization involves the same core set of steps.

Given the fact that we often want to apply the same core set of tasks to new questions and new data, there are ways to overcome the steep learning curve and learn a replicable set of commands that can be applied to problem after problem. The same 5 to 10 lines of R code can often be tweaked over and over again for multiple projects.

have a question \rightarrow get data \rightarrow process and clean data \rightarrow visualize data \rightarrow analyze data \rightarrow make conclusions

4.2 Get R

R is available at https://www.r-project.org/. R is a lot easier to run if you run it from RStudio, http://www.rstudio.com.

4.3 Get Data

Data may already be in R format, or may come from other types of data files like SPSS, Stata, or Excel. Especially in beginning R programming, getting the data into R can be the most complicated part of your program.

4.3.1 Data in R Format

```
load("./simulate-data/MICSsimulated.RData") # data in R format
```

4.3.2 Data in Other Formats

If data are in other formats, slightly different code may be required.

```
library(haven) # library for importing data
mydata <- read_sav("the/path/to/mySPSSfile.sav") # SPSS
mydata <- read_dta("the/path/to/myStatafile.dta") # Stata
library(readxl) # library for importing Excel files
mydata <- read_excel("the/path/to/mySpreadsheet.xls")
save(mydata, file = "mydata.RData") # save in R format</pre>
```

4.4 Process and Clean Data

4.4.1 The \$ Sign

The \$ sign is a kind of "connector". mydata\$x means: "The variable x in the dataset called mydata".

4.4.2 Recoding Data

Data sometimes need to be recoded. For example, outliers may need to be changed to missing, or a value that is supposed to indicated missing data (e.g. -9) may need to be changed to missing.

Recoding uses the following construction:

```
data$variable[condition] <- new value
```

For example, change an outlier value: When cd1 is 2 change it to missing (NA).

```
MICSsimulated$cd1[MICSsimulated$cd1 == 2] <- NA # outlier (2) to NA
```

Change variable cd1 to missing (NA) when it is -9.

4.4.3 Numeric and Factor Variables

R makes a strong distinction between *continuous numeric* variables that measure scales like mental health or neighborhood safety, and *categorical factor variables* that measure non-ordered categories like religious identity or gender identity.

Many statistical and graphical procedures are designed to recognize and work with different variable types. You often *don't* need to use all of the options. e.g. mydata\$w <-factor(mydata\$z) will often work just fine. Changing variables from factor to numeric, and vice versa can sometimes be the simple solution that solves a lot of problems when you are trying to graph your variables.

```
MICSsimulated$aggression <-
factor(MICSsimulated$aggression, # original numeric variable
levels = c(0, 1),
labels = c("no aggression", "aggression"),
ordered = TRUE) # whether order matters

# MICSsimulated$z <- as.numeric(MICSsimulated$w) # factor to numeric</pre>
```

4.5 Visualize Data

4.5.1 Histogram

```
hist(MICSsimulated$GII, # what I'm graphing
    main = "Gender Inequality Index", # title
    xlab = "GII", # label for x axis
    col = "blue") # color
```

Gender Inequality Index



Figure 4.1: Histogram of Gender Inequality Index



You often don't need to use all of the options. e.g. hist(mydata\$x) will work just fine.

4.5.2 Barplot

```
barplot(table(MICSsimulated$aggression), # what I'm graphing
    main = "Child Displays Aggression", # title
    xlab = "Aggression", # label for x axis
    col = "gold") # color
```

Child Displays Aggression

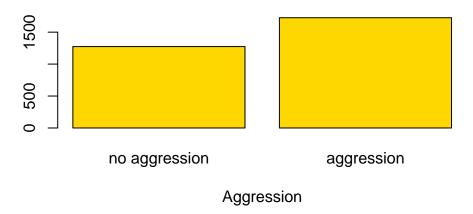


Figure 4.2: Barplot of Aggression



You often *don't* need to use all of the options. e.g. barplot(table(mydata\$z)) will work just fine.

4.6 Analyze Data: Descriptive Statistics

```
summary(mydata$x) # for continuous or factor variables
table(mydata$z) # especially suitable for factor variables
summary(MICSsimulated$GII)

Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max.
15.0 22.0 24.0 24.2 27.0 31.0

table(MICSsimulated$aggression)
```

no aggression aggression 1274 1726

5 A Quick Introduction To ggplot2

5.1 Why Use ggplot?¹

A great deal of data analysis and visualization involves the same core set of steps: get some data, clean it up a little, run some descriptive statistics, run some bivariate statistics, create a graph or a visualization. **ggplot2** can be an important part of a replicable, automated, documented workflow for complex projects.

```
have a question \rightarrow get data \rightarrow process and clean data \rightarrow visualize data \rightarrow analyze data \rightarrow make conclusions
```

Given the fact that we often want to apply the same core set of tasks to new questions and new data, there are ways to overcome the steep learning curve and learn a replicable set of commands that can be applied to problem after problem.

The same 5 to 10 lines of ggplot2 code can often be tweaked over and over again for multiple projects.

5.2 The Essential Idea Of ggplot Is Simple

There are 3 essential elements to any ggplot call:

- 1. A reference to the data you are using.
- 2. An aesthetic that tells ggplot which variables are being mapped to the x axis, y axis, (and often other attributes of the graph, such as the color fill). Intuitively, the aesthetic can be thought of as what you are graphing.
- 3. A geom or geometry that tells ggplot about the basic structure of the graph. Intuitively, the geom can be thought of as **how you are graphing it**.

You can also add other options, such as a *graph title*, axis labels and overall theme for the graph.

 $^{^{1}} More \ information \ can \ be \ found \ here: \ https://agrogan1.github.io/R/introduction-to-ggplot2/introduction-to-ggplot2.html$

5.3 Get Started

5.3.1 Call Libraries

```
library(ggplot2) # beautiful graphs
library(ggthemes) # nice themes for ggplot2
```

5.3.2 Get Data

```
load("./simulate-data/MICSsimulated.RData") # data in R format
```

5.4 Some Examples²

5.4.1 One Continuous Variable

```
# anything that starts with a '#' is a comment

ggplot(MICSsimulated, # the data I am using
    aes(x = GII)) + # the variable I am using
    geom_histogram() # how I am graphing it
```

²Changing variables from factor to numeric (e.g. aes(x = as.numeric(outcome))), and *vice versa* can sometimes be a simple solution that solves a lot of problems when you are trying to graph your variables.

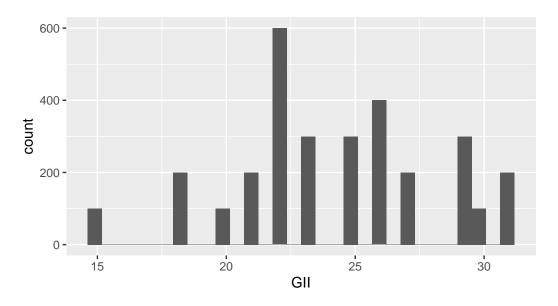


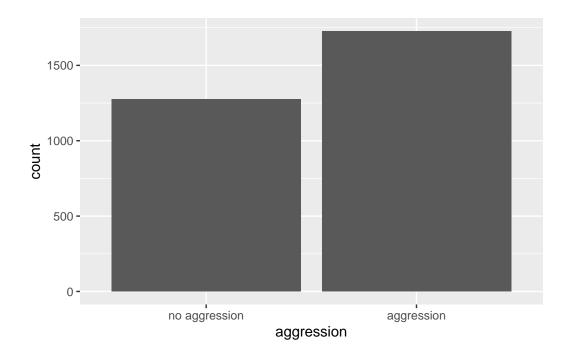
Figure 5.1: Histogram of Gender Inequality Index

5.4.2 One Categorical Variable

Make sure R knows this is a categorical variable.

```
MICSsimulated$aggression <-
  factor(MICSsimulated$aggression, # original numeric variable
    levels = c(0, 1),
    labels = c("no aggression", "aggression"),
    ordered = TRUE) # whether order matters

ggplot(MICSsimulated, # the data I am using
    aes(x = aggression)) + # the variable I am using
    geom_bar() # how I am graphing it</pre>
```



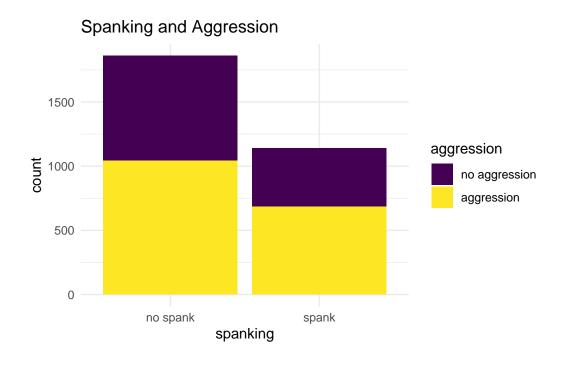
5.5 Add Some Options³

Make sure R knows this is a categorical variable.

```
MICSsimulated$cd1 <-
  factor(MICSsimulated$cd1, # original numeric variable
    levels = c(0, 1),
  labels = c("no spank", "spank"),
    ordered = TRUE) # whether order matters

ggplot(MICSsimulated, # the data I am using
  aes(x = cd1,
    fill = aggression)) + # the variables I am using
  geom_bar() + # graph with bars
  labs(title = "Spanking and Aggression",
    x = "spanking",
    y = "count") +
  theme_minimal() # theme</pre>
```

³Notice how use of fill governs both the use of color in the graph below, as well as the legend that is produced in the graph.



6 Quantitative Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

A great deal of data analysis and visualization involves the same core set of steps.

have a question \rightarrow get data \rightarrow process and clean data \rightarrow analyze data

6.2 Some Tools for Analysis

Below we describe some simple data cleaning with R. We begin, however, by comparing several different tools for analysis including: Excel, Google Sheets, R, and Stata.

Tool	Cost	Ease of Use	Analysis Capabilities	Suitability for Large Data	Keep Track of Complicated Workflows
Excel	Comes installed on many computers	Easy	Limited	Difficult when $N > 100$	Difficult to Impossible
Google Sheets	Free with a Google account	Easy	Limited	Difficult when $N > 100$	Difficult to Impossible
R	Free	Challenging	Extensive	Excellent with large datasets	Yes, with script
Stata	Some cost	Learning Curve but Intuitive	Extensive	Excellent with large datasets	Yes, with command file

6.3 Working With R

6.3.1 Our Data

We take a look at our *simulated* data.

aggression aggression

```
load("./simulate-data/MICSsimulated.RData") # data in R format
 labelled::look_for(MICSsimulated) # look at data
pos variable
               label
                                         col_type values
1
    id
               id
2
    country
               country
                                         int
3
    GII
               gender inequality index int
4
    cd1
               spank
                                         int
5
    cd2
               beat
                                         int
6
    cd3
               shout
                                         int
7
    cd4
               explain
                                         int
```

6.3.2 Cleaning Data

8

There are some basic data cleaning steps that are common to many projects.

- Only keep the variables of interest. Section 6.3.2.1
- Add variable labels (if we can). Section 6.3.2.2
- Add value labels (if we can). Section 6.3.2.3
- \bullet Recode outliers, values that are errors, or values that should be coded as missing Section 6.3.2.4

int

Much of R's functionality is accomplished through writing *code*, that is saved in a *script*. Notice how—as our tasks get more and more complicated—the saved script provides documentation for the decisions that we have made with the data.

6.3.2.1 Only keep the variables of interest.

We can easily accomplish this with the subset function

head(mynewdata)

	id	country	aggression
1	1	1	1
2	2	1	1
3	3	1	1
4	4	1	1
5	5	1	0
6	6	1	1

6.3.2.2 Add variable labels (if we can).

Adding variable labels is still somewhat new in R. The labelled library allows us to add or change variable labels. However, not every library in R recognizes variable labels.

```
library(labelled)
var_label(MICSsimulated$id) <- "id"
var_label(MICSsimulated$country) <- "country"
var_label(MICSsimulated$cd4) <- "explain"</pre>
```

6.3.2.3 Add value labels (if we can).

In contrast, value labels are straightforward in R, and can be accomplished by creating a factor variable. Below we demonstrate how to do this with the happy variable.

```
MICSsimulated$cd4 <- factor(MICSsimulated$cd4,

levels = c(0, 1),

labels = c("Did not explain",

"Explained"))

head(MICSsimulated)

id country GII cd1 cd2 cd3 cd4 aggression
```

1	1	1	20	0	1	0	Explained	1
2	2	1	20	0	0	1	Did not explain	1
3	3	1	20	0	0	0	Explained	1
4	4	1	20	1	1	0	Explained	1
5	5	1	20	0	0	1	Explained	0
6	6	1	20	1	0	0	Explained	1

6.3.2.4 Recode outliers, values that are errors, or values that should be coded as missing.

We can easily accomplish this using Base R's syntax for recoding: data\$variable[rule] <- newvalue.

```
MICSsimulated$aggression[MICSsimulated$aggression > 1] <- NA # recode > 1 to NA
MICSsimulated$GII[MICSsimulated$GII > 100] <- NA # recode > 100 to NA
head(MICSsimulated)
```

	id	country	GII	cd1	cd2	cd3	cd4	aggression
1	1	1	20	0	1	0	Explained	1
2	2	1	20	0	0	1	Did not explain	1
3	3	1	20	0	0	0	Explained	1
4	4	1	20	1	1	0	Explained	1
5	5	1	20	0	0	1	Explained	0
6	6	1	20	1	0	0	Explained	1

6.3.3 Simple Analysis

Our first step in analysis is to discover what kind of variables we have. We need to make a distinction between *continuous variables* that measure things like mental health or neighborhood safety, or age, and *categorical variables* that measure non-ordered categories like religious identity or gender identity.

- For continuous variables, it is most appropriate to take the average or mean.
- For categorical variables, it is most appropriate to generate a frequency table.

As a mostly command based language, R relies on the idea of do_something(dataset\$variable).

```
summary(MICSsimulated$GII) # descriptive statistics for GII
```

Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max. 15.0 22.0 24.0 24.2 27.0 31.0

table(MICSsimulated\$cd4) # frequency table of cd4

Did not explain Explained 671 2329

References

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- Raudenbush, S. W., & Bryk, A. S. (2002). *Hierarchical linear models: Applications and data analysis methods* (pp. xxiv, 485 p.). Sage Publications.
- Singer, J. D., & Willett, J. B. (2003). Applied longitudinal data analysis: Modeling change and event occurrence. In *Applied longitudinal data analysis: modeling change and event occurrence*. Oxford University Press.

A Simulating MICS Data

This appendix details the process of creating the simulated MICS data that is employed in the examples on this website.

MICS data are freely available, but usage of MICS requires completing a user agreement, and registering for a user account, on the MICS website, and thus MICS data should not be shared openly on a public website.

This Appendix is highly technical. It is not necessary to understand this Appendix to benefit from the rest of this website. However, the details of creating this simulated data may be of interest to some users.

A.1 Call Relevant Libraries

We need to call a number of relevant R libraries to simulate the data.

```
library(tibble) # new dataframes
library(ggplot2) # nifty graphs
library(labelled) # labels
library(haven) # write Stata
library(tidyr) # tidy data
library(dplyr) # wrangle data
library(lme4) # multilevel models
library(sjPlot) # nice tables
```

A.2 Setup Some Basic Parameters of the Data

Because simulation is a random process, we set a *random seed* so that the simulation produces the same data set each time it is run.

We are going to simulate data with 30 countries, and 100 individuals per country.

```
set.seed(1234) # random seed

N_countries <- 30 # number of countries

N <- 100 # sample size / country</pre>
```

A.3 Simulate Data Based on MICS

This is multilevel data where individuals are nested, or clustered, inside countries. Excellent technical and pedagogical discussions of multilevel models can be found in Raudenbush & Bryk (2002), Singer & Willett (2003), Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal (2022), Luke (2004), and Kreft & de Leeuw (1998).

A.3.1 Level 2

Simulating the second level of the data is relatively easy. We simply need to provide the number of countries, and then generate random effects for each country. Random effects are discussed in the above references, but essentially represent country level differences in the data.

We also create GII, a gender inequality index variable, since this is a country level, or Level 2 variable.

```
country <- seq(1:N_countries) # sequence 1 to 30

GII <- rbinom(N_countries, 100, .25) # gender inequality index

u0 <- rnorm(N_countries, 0, .25) # random intercept

u1 <- rnorm(N_countries, 0, .05) # random slope

randomeffects <- data.frame(country, GII, u0, u1) # dataframe of random effects</pre>
```

A.3.2 Level 1

Simulating the Level 1 data is more complex.

We uncount the data by 100 to create 100 observations for each country. We then create an id number.

We create randomly simulated parental discipline variables with proportions similar to those in MICS.

Lastly, we need to create the dependent variable. Because this is a dichotomous outcome, the process is somewhat complex. We need to craete a linear combination **z**, using regression weights derived from MICS. We then calculate predicted probabilities, and lastly generate a dichotomous aggression outcome from those probabilities.

```
MICSsimulated <- randomeffects %>%
  uncount(N) %>% # N individuals / country
  mutate(id = row number()) %>% # unique id
  mutate(cd1 = rbinom(N * N countries, 1, .38), # spank
         cd2 = rbinom(N * N_countries, 1, .05), # beat
         cd3 = rbinom(N * N_countries, 1, .64), # shout
         cd4 = rbinom(N * N_countries, 1, .78)) %>% # explain
  mutate(z = 0 + # linear combination based on MICS)
           .01 * GII +
           .23 * cd1 +
           .52 * cd2 +
           .42 * cd3 +
           -.21 * cd4 +
           u0) %>%
  mutate(p = exp(z) / (1 + exp(z))) \%\% # probability
  mutate(aggression = rbinom(N * N_countries, 1, p)) %>% # binomial y
  select(id, country, GII,
         cd1, cd2, cd3, cd4,
         aggression)
```

A.3.3 Variable Labels

We add variable labels to the data which will help us to understand the data as we analyze it.

```
var_label(MICSsimulated$id) <- "id"</pre>
```

Table A.1: ?(caption)

```
pos variable
               label
                                        col_type values
               id
1
    id
                                        int
    country
              country
                                        int
3
    GII
               gender inequality index int
4
    cd1
               spank
                                        int
5
    cd2
               beat
                                        int
6
    cd3
               shout
                                        int
7
    cd4
               explain
                                        int
    aggression aggression
                                        int
```

```
var_label(MICSsimulated$country) <- "country"

var_label(MICSsimulated$GII) <- "gender inequality index"

var_label(MICSsimulated$cd1) <- "spank"

var_label(MICSsimulated$cd2) <- "beat"

var_label(MICSsimulated$cd3) <- "shout"

var_label(MICSsimulated$cd4) <- "explain"

var_label(MICSsimulated$aggression) <- "aggression"

labelled::look_for(MICSsimulated) # list out variable labels</pre>
```

A.4 Explore The Simulated Data With A Graph

Exploring the simulated data with a graph helps us to ensure that we have simulated plausible data.

```
ggplot(MICSsimulated,
    aes(x = cd1, # x is spanking
    y = aggression, # y is aggression
    color = factor(country))) + # color is country
geom_smooth(method = "glm", # glm smoother
    method.args = list(family = "binomial"),
```

```
alpha = .1) + # transparency for CI's
labs(title = "Aggression as a Function of Spanking",
    x = "spank",
    y = "aggression") +
scale_color_viridis_d(name = "Country") + # nice colors
theme_minimal()
```

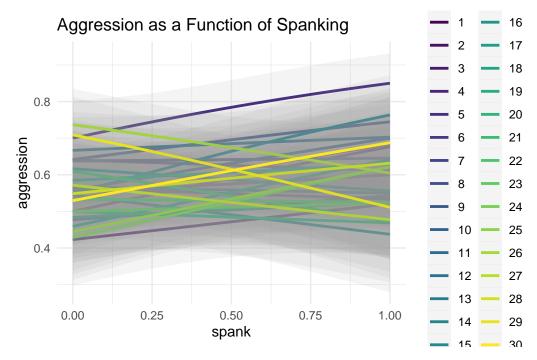


Figure A.1: Graph of Simulated Data

A.5 Explore The Simulated Data With A Logistic Regression

Similarly, exploring the data with a logistic regression confirms that we have created plausible data.

A.6 Write data to various formats

Lastly, we write the data out to various formats: R, Stata, and SPSS.

Table A.2: ?(caption)

```
aggression
          Predictors
          Log-Odds
              CI
               p
          (Intercept)
             -0.42
         -1.05 - 0.21
             0.190
             spank
             0.16
          0.01 - 0.32
            0.034
             beat
              0.61
          0.25 - 0.96
            0.001
             shout
             0.35
          0.20 - 0.51
            < 0.001
            explain
             -0.41
         -0.59 - -0.23
            < 0.001
   gender inequality index
             0.03
          0.01 - 0.05
            0.015
       Random Effects
             3.29
            00 country
              0.03
             ICC
              0.01
           N_{country}
              30
         Observations
             3000
Marginal \mathbb{R}^2 / Conditional \mathbb{R}^2
         0.029 / 0.037
```