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# Corporal Punishment as an Educational Practice for Burundian Children's Maladaptive Behavior: The Assessment of the Disposition of Children Education Stakeholders

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## Abstract

Our study aims to investigate the factors that produce and sustain the use of corporal punishment in education in Burundi. To collect data, we used a life story approach with semi-structured interviews and direct and indirect observation of educational actors. Analysis of the empirical corpus of 50 educational actors enabled us to highlight the social and educational experiences of our interviewees drawn from their childhood. Religious beliefs, the personality of the educators and psychic tensions linked to the general context are the main reasons for the use of corporal punishment. The majority of our interviewees, including teachers, support the use of corporal punishment, provided it does not exceed certain limits. Sensitivity to the effects of corporal punishment on children is generally low. It changes and rises to physical and economic effects, which arise when corporal punishment results in serious bodily harm, requiring prolonged hospitalization of the victim. For our respondents, not punishing children would be synonymous with cowardice, a violation of biblical scripture, with a high risk of exposing children to more dangerous consequences. Finally, to prevent and reduce the early onset of maladaptive behavior in children, the introduction of positive parenting programs is indispensable in Burundian education.

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**Keywords:** Corporal punishment, maladaptive behavior, transgenerational, violence, educational practices

## 1.0 Introduction

In many countries around the world, corporal punishment of children is still practiced as part of educational methods. In Africa in general, and in Burundi in particular, in addition to ratified international texts, national legislation has been drawn up to protect and deal with all forms of violence against children. In spite of this, parents and others involved in educational process still subject children to various forms of violence, known as corporal punishment, either to punish, correct or for other purposes.

The review of the literatures show that the aspect that affects parents and teachers in their mission to educate children has long remained uncharted territory. It was at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that methodical and rigorous research into this social and family phenomenon came to fruition ( Lachal, 2018). With the aim of changing mentalities regarding parent-child relations, and addressing the misunderstanding of childhood, "Korczak set out to deconstruct, on a daily basis, all the situations in which adults and society fail to show respect for children" ( AFJK, 2010). Enlightened by the results of this study, decision-makers in various countries became aware of the effects of corporal punishment on children's lives, and from 1979 onwards, some of them decided to ban it.

On the European continent, the first country to ban corporal punishment in 1976 was Sweden, followed by 46 countries in 2015 (Global report, 2015), *but* democratic states such as Canada, France, the UK and the USA have yet to ban corporal punishment in the family.

From this period onwards, differences of opinion arose as to whether or not corporal punishment should be used to educate children, but conclusions drawn from the results of scientific work settled the matter. According to these studies, there is no such thing as good and bad corporal punishment, because by dint of making this differentiation, it will be difficult to get away with it ( Lachal, 2018 b ). According to this author, nuancing ill-treatment from corporal punishment seems complex, as the disarticulation between the two aspects does not exist. It's more a question of degree, but not nature, as both produce the same effects.

A SOFRES survey in France (1999), proves that 84% of parents questioned hitting their children and 10 years later, a similar survey shows that 81% remain opposed to banning corporal punishment ( Lachal, 2018 c ). In China, when children of elementary school age begin formal schooling, their parents may be more inclined to use harsh discipline to motivate children, to achieve high social and academic goals (Fang & al., 2018). More

fundamentally, in this country, children of elementary school age are perceived as being able to understand, which is known as *dongshi* (Fang & al., 2018 b) and parental tolerance may decrease once children reach *dongshi* age. In Canada, studies of family violence have been carried out using a quantitative approach, and have shown the link between the reported frequency of severe violence experienced during childhood, and its legitimacy on the one hand, and minor violence and its legitimacy towards children within the modern family on the other ( Jamal & al., 2011). Some authors have shown that the more people have been confronted with violence in their childhood, the more they adopt violent behavior ( Gagné & al., 2007, Jamal & al., 2011), and the more likely they are to apply this type of discipline with their own children (Rodriguez & Price, 2004 ) .

In Nigerian schools, the use of corporal punishment is often considered an integral part of education, and retains its place in teaching. Educators believe that corporal punishment has the power to reduce bad behavior among educated children, and increases the hope that the latter will adopt desired behaviors in the future, even in the absence of their caregivers (Ojo, 2018). In this Nigerian state, under the impulse of anger and through the use of the whip, some perpetrators have taken the practice very far, injuring, disabling and even leading to the death of some children in certain secondary schools (Olupohunda, 2013).

In the context of Burundi, there hasn't been significant research attention given to this issue thus far. The limited data we have comes from the 2016-2017 Demographic and Health Survey, and it paints a concerning picture. According to this survey, nearly all children between the ages of 1 and 14 (90%) have already experienced some form of violence. Among them, 66% have endured physical punishment, and 23% have suffered from psychological aggression. Moreover, adolescent girls aged 12 to 17 face a high risk of early marriage, despite its illegality, with rates reaching as high as 38%.

The absence of the diversity of reference studies does not deny the existence of this corporal punishment, because despite the implementation of the ministerial order of 17/07/2017 prohibiting this form of educational practice in schools, cases of violence related to it are reported in daily newspapers, by the media and associations working in child protection. On October 28, 2019, a pupil at Ecofo Carama lost her life after being beaten by her teacher. The teacher left the school and the principal was arrested for questioning (IWACU Journal, 2019).

If we return to the effects of corporal punishment on children's development, some are easily identifiable by externalized behaviors, while others vary according to, the child's personality.

In the course of a child's development, questions relating to sleep disorders, eating disorders and behavioral problems worry parents and their

surrogates, and consequently prompt them to reflect on how to respond to maladaptive behavior. In practice, when verbal reprimands fail, parents' resort to punishment ( Maigret & Gentaz, 2023 ). While the quantitative approach adopted by these studies offers a global view of the phenomenon as perceived by parents and teachers, the fact remains that their scope remains limited in terms of the issues faced by other educational players such as social workers. What's more, these studies ignore the psychosocial dimension in its ecological aspect in understanding the phenomenon.

### **1.1. Theoretical framework**

The following paragraphs presents the theoretical framework of the study, definitions, the material and methods, the results and discussion, and finally the conclusion.

This article is based on the ecological social model described by Bronfenbrenner (1979). In his theoretical explanations, the author emphasizes two key concepts formulated as follows: (a) individuals are nested in a multi-level environment and (b) these levels interact to produce outcomes. Bronfenbrenner goes on to say that the framework comprises four levels of factors affecting the individual. These are (1) the individual, (2) the microsystem, which describes the immediate setting (e.g., family, home, peer groups) and interpersonal relationships, (3) the exosystem, which includes institutions and social structures (e.g., work, neighborhood, social networks) and (4) the macrosystem, i.e., the cultural, historical and political context ( Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.277).

In its philosophy, this approach puts the child to be educated at the center of concerns, and aims to improve his or her well-being. For this work, this approach is relevant, as it will help us to meet our objective, which is to collect qualitative data on the factors that motivate educational actors to resort to corporal punishment and to maintain it in their educational practices.

### **1.2. Definitions**

Thus, in the context of our study, we consider corporal punishment to be a form of violence that results from a complex interaction of individual, relational, social, cultural and environmental factors. "Physical violence or abuse is the deliberate use of force against any part of a child's body, resulting in or having resulted in non-accidental injury" ( Trocmé & Wolfe, 2001 ). The scientific literature has identified five categories of physical abuse ( Larrivée & al., 2009).

- 1) Shaking, pushing, grabbing or throwing, where the abuser pushes or pulls a child or shakes a baby.
- 2) Hitting with the hand, including slapping or spanking.

- 3) Punching, kicking or biting, or any other blow given with another part of the body (e.g., with the elbow or head).
- 4) Hitting with an object, such as a stick or belt, or throwing an object at a child.
- 5) Other forms of physical abuse, where the abuser shakes, strangles, stabs, burns, poisons or uses excessive physical force.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child defines corporal punishment as "any punishment involving the use of physical force and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light" ( Report of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2007). Corporal punishment, on the other hand, encompasses any action taken with the aim of causing physical discomfort or pain to a child, in order to correct his or her behavior" (Durrant & al., 2004).

These terms are used interchangeably in the literature, and can also refer to any situation in which the child is put in a physically uncomfortable position. Spanking and slapping, often considered gentle gestures, are examples of corporal punishment in use in our country.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

In Burundian culture, there are several types of punishment administered to children, but in the case of our study, we will be talking about punishments known as corporal punishment, and its effects on child victims, as represented by the various actors in education.

Concretely, this study pursues the following objectives:

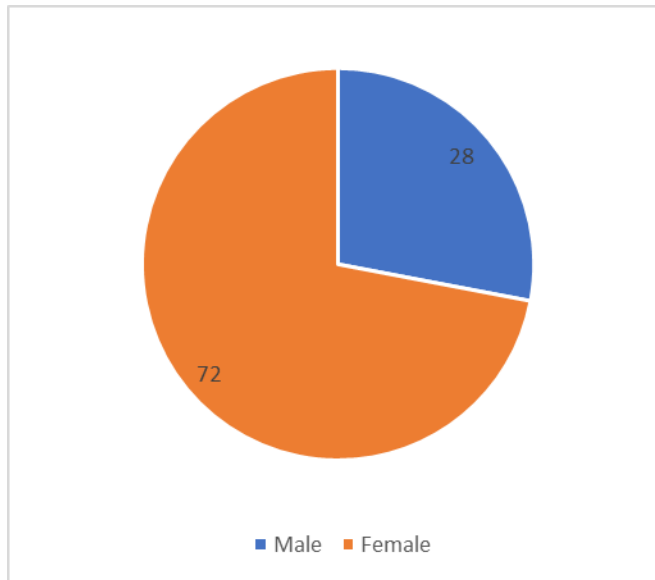
- To understand the logics that produce and maintain corporal punishment as an educational practice in Burundi.
- To understand the effects of corporal punishment on children, and the level of sensitivity of those involved.

## **2. Materials and methods**

### **2.1. Study population**

The people directly targeted by the research are those involved in education. They include parents, teachers and social workers. The sample of participants is not random. As our research is qualitative, it is not practical to establish a non-probabilistic sample. It seems appropriate to identify certain selection criteria so that the participants identified can provide data in line with the project's objectives. It also seems more realistic to envisage voluntary recruitment, so that participants are more inclined to share their opinions, conceptions and personal and professional experiences in relation to corporal punishment.

The data in this study was collected at three sites located in different environments. These sites are, respectively, the households of our respondents, the school environment where the teachers surveyed worked, and Sunshine Children’s Center ( CERES) located in the Buiza area, which temporarily houses street children waiting to be taken home. Our survey took place between November and December 2022, and the educational players who agreed to take part in these interviews numbered 50, including 36 women and 14 men. Our interviews lasted between 50 minutes and 1 hour. As the figure number 1 shows, women are more represented than men in our research work.



**Graph 1.** Distribution of respondent by sex

## 2.2. Sampling method

To select our respondents, we opted for the purposive sampling method (Thiétart et al, 1999). This method relies on the researcher's judgements to select sample elements. In fact, the latter authors state that the purposive sampling method performs just as well as the probabilistic method when the sample size is small. Thus, according to (Mayer & al., 2000), sources of information are chosen on the basis of their anticipated capacity to provide an interesting and relevant account of the object of study.

In practice, this method enabled us to select five people for the survey in the first instance. These respondents were then invited to recommend others for inclusion in our study, following the principle of snowball sampling.

Sample size takes into account the purpose of the study, the research and data analysis strategy, and the time and resources available( Mayer & al., 2000 b).

Given its qualitative nature, our research does not aim to constitute a statistical study with a representative sample of the target population. In fact, as this author confirms, the aim of sampling is to produce the maximum amount of information: it doesn't matter whether it's large or small, as long as it produces new facts" (Deslauriers, 1991, p.58).

Informed by this preliminary reflection, our sample size was determined according to the principle of saturation, which occurs when the addition of a source of information no longer

To take part in the study, the respondent should meet the criteria defined below according to the profile of the players.

For parents: have one dependent child, with 3 years' experience in parenting. For teachers: Be a teacher in a public or private school, with at least two years' seniority. For CERES social workers: Have been a social worker for more than two years, and have already worked with the families and loved ones of street children, who are often temporarily housed at the center. Demonstrate a willingness to participate in the study, and be prepared to tell us about the factors that produce and maintain the use of corporal punishment in their educational practices, and the effects it has on children. After several interviews, we realized that the content of the interviews was no longer adding any new insights to our study, and we decided to stop at a fixed number. A total of 50 respondents from different backgrounds, including 36 women and 14 men aged between 30 and 55, were selected as the sample for our study, and in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted.

Parenting experience ranged from 5 to 20 years. These interviewees came from three different backgrounds: 48% were parents, 44% were teachers and 8 % were social workers at Sun Child Rehabilitation Center who temporarily house street children (victims of family abuse), before taking them home for social reintegration.

At each research site, we begin by taking our interviewees into our confidence, and asking them if we could talk to them, which they readily agreed to do. After explaining the aims of the survey, these respondents gave their verbal consent.

In order to conduct interviews with the first group of parents, we turned to a cell chief in the Kajiji district of the Kanyosha zone for information on families accused of abusing their children. This local administrator connected us with two women victims of gender-based violence, who often come to him to complain about the abuse they and their children have suffered at the hands of their husbands.

On the basis of these first two contacts, these two women helped us to find two other female parents, and the last two helped us to complete the list. So, in the parents' category, we contacted 24 ( 20 women and 4 man).

The second group of respondents was met at basic school of jabe and at basic school of Busoro.

In these schools, we first approached the heads of these schools, not only to grant us permission to carry out our research, but also to help us identify the teachers who could participate in our research according to the objective we were aiming for. Thus, in total, we interviewed 22 teachers, distributed as follows: 14 teachers (9 women and 5 man) at basic school of jabe, and 8 teachers ( 6 woman and 2 man) at basic school of Busoro. The third category of our respondents was contacted at the Sun Child Rehabilitation Center (CERES), and included 4 social workers (3 men and 1 woman). So, before the interview proper, we began with our presentation to put the study participants at ease, then the aim of our research, and finally, the rules of participation.

### **2.3. Instruments for data collection**

In order to better understand the logics that produce and maintain the use of corporal punishment in educational practices in Burundi, we used the life story as a data collection technique.

### **2.4 Analysis**

Thematic analyses of the transcripts were carried out with the aim of highlighting themes arising from the opinions of the educational players.

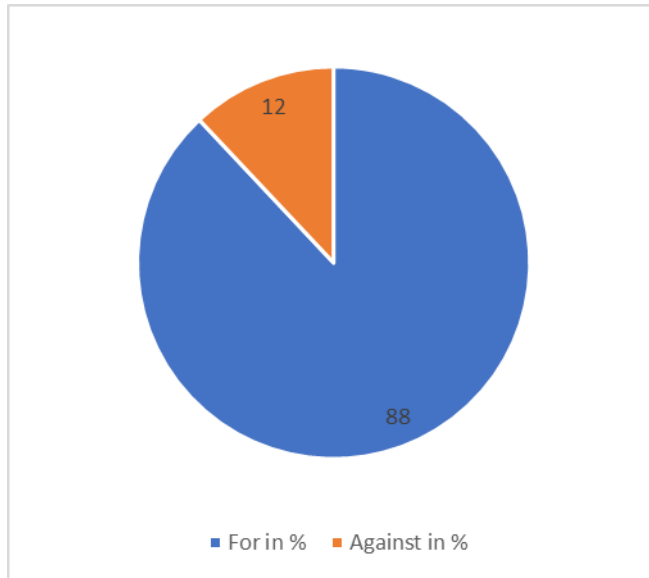
The aim was to answer the following questions: What is fundamental in their words? What does the discourse of educational actors tell us about their reality, their lives and their experiences? ( Goblet & Glowacz., 2021). The identification of themes broken down into sub-themes, and a focus on points of agreement, contradiction, agreement and disagreement, enabled us to access a delicate reflection on the phenomenon under study.

### **3.0. Results and Discussion.**

Analysis of the various accounts given by the education players reveals the following explanations: Social factors showing the basic upbringing of parents during their childhood: religious beliefs, the personality of the education actors, and finally the psychic tension linked to the general context, which motivates the use of corporal punishment.

As we can see from this graph, the majority of our respondents are in favor of the use of corporal punishment. The results in this graph show that 88% of those interviewed were in favor of the use of corporal punishment, compared with 12% who were against it (See Fig.2).





**Fig.2.** Proportion of our respondents expressed as a percentage of the use of corporal punishment

The results of our study are similar to those of previous authors, because with the demographic and legislative changes in societies since the 1970s, an ideal of egalitarian division of care and education tasks (Coulon & Cresson, 2007) followed. Nevertheless, the pace of realization of men's participation in childcare and education on the one hand, and the gender division of parental labor on the other, is slowly changing (Brugeilles & Sebille, 2009). In order to help explain why the ideal of egalitarian sharing does not materialize in practice, an analysis of the division of childcare and education tasks between parents was carried out. The results of this study show the complexity of conjugal alignments and discussions attached to organizational references, as well as the superimposition of cultural, social and economic factors. Parental involvement seems profoundly influenced by representations of their gendered roles and identities, which hinder the renewal of the sharing of parental tasks. The result is the production and reproduction of gendered socialization, a source of inequality (Brugeilles & Sebille, 2009 b).

### **3.1. Educational violence and intergenerational transmission**

The results of our research show that almost all our interviewees give socio-educational explanations as factors behind the use of corporal punishment to discipline their children (See Fig.2).

Let's consider how this respondent expresses himself:

"I think the factors may depend on how the parent themselves was educated during their early childhood. If the parent has been brought up to use violence since childhood, they too will certainly resort to these means, as they will not have experienced other positive models of upbringing of positive types".

Nevertheless, if a parent has been able to endure these punishments and grow up according to the wishes of his caregivers, it is on the basis of the societal values of the time, more tolerant of child abuse, that he has been able to become resilient and get on with his life. We wonder about the reactions of the educated to the use of caning in the digital age and the age of children's rights, where today's children are faced with several channels of education from diverse, sometimes contradictory sources. We say to ourselves that today's children need censorship, on modes of punishment that can't harm their children.

### **3.2. Effects of corporal punishment on children**

Although the results of our research show that the negative effects of corporal punishment are minimal, almost all our respondents are against the excessive use of corporal punishment. Thus, 12% of our respondents consider that all corporal punishment can have negative effects, against 88% who see that there are no effects in the case of moderate punishment. However, when corporal punishment is abused, all the education professionals interviewed were unanimous (100%) in saying that the more excessive the punishment, the more the child is exposed to physical injury, ranging from the simple to the serious, to economic effects linked to long-term hospitalization, to psychological trauma and to the aggravation of certain maladaptive behaviours, up to and including delinquency.

### **3.3. Psychological effects Behavior modification**

According to the parents we interviewed, punishment plays an important role in children's upbringing, as it encourages the child to immediately change behavior deemed inappropriate by adults. Let's listen instead to this parent's account of his past, based on the upbringing he received as a child.

*"I had a dad who very rarely punished us. Nevertheless, when we got into mischief, he couldn't refrain. One day, he punished me severely because I'd gone on an unauthorized outing. That day, I was in unusual physical and mental pain. And I remember that every time I got ready to commit other misdeeds, I*

*immediately meditated on that previous punishment, and abandoned my faults." And besides, I only became a responsible man thanks to the strict education I received from my parents".*

Similar studies have been examining the short- and long-term effects of corporal punishment on children's psychological development for many years. In a meta-analysis, it had been confirmed that one of the immediate effects of corporal punishment is the child's rapid obedience to what the parent wants (Gershoff, 2002). In fact, this is the primary aim of parents who use this type of educational practice. The child's immediate reaction is the result of a fear reaction and generates deleterious stress in the child. In the longer term, the results show a clear significant link between corporal punishment (frequency and intensity) and later disturbances in children's psychological development, including antisocial behaviors such as aggression, delinquency and other forms of maladaptive behavior of externalized types.

When it comes to the behavior of children with deviant behaviors living in the centers, adults intervene to separate children who are bickering. Let's examine what this social worker has to say.

“In certain circumstances, we are obliged to resort to corporal punishment. For example, when we find a child in the center hurting another child. In this case, we act directly. It's a form of correction for the child perpetrator, but also a kind of appeasement for the child victim and other potential victims.”

This punishment has a direct effect, such as stopping the fight immediately, but does not play a major role in the child's behavior.

On the other hand, the more the child has specific needs and is punished, the more his externalized behaviors are reinforced and become repetitive, extending his verbal and physical aggression towards adults, his violations of societal values and norms, and his path ends with an early entry into delinquency.

In analyzing the content of this testimony, we understand that the use of corporal punishment on children with special needs does nothing to help them. On the contrary, it risks entrenching them in their negative behavior.

Researchers have tested the use and frequency of spanking on externalized behaviors, and the results show that there is a difference between children who were not spanked and those who were spanked only with their hands and less than once a week, and those who were spanked more frequently and given an object. Children who had received severe spankings showed significantly more antisocial behavior than children in the other two groups (Lansford & al., 2012). Finally, there was no difference between children who

were never spanked, and those for whom this punishment was rare and given with the hand, suggesting that exceptional use of spanking has no significant effect on children's aggressive behavior (Baumrind & al., 2002). These results therefore underline the importance of distinguishing between the frequency and degree of severity of corporal punishment and spanking ( Paolucci & Violato, 2004 ). In addition to these psychological consequences, there are physical effects that often require specific care.

### **3.4. Physical and medical effects**

In most cases, repetitive corporal punishment takes place in the context of maltreatment, where the perpetrators are no longer able to control the extent of its effects. In this way, we can find traces left on the body by intense, repetitive ill-treatment. Most often, on the bodies of child victims, we find indelible marks all over the body, with the parts most affected by these lesions being the face, the upper and lower limbs, and the posterior part of the trunk. Let's examine how our respondent testifies about the medical effects that lead to economic losses.

"... Carried away by anger, my neighbor severely punished her child by pouring hot water on her legs. She accused her daughter of going on unauthorized outings. As a result, the child was hospitalized for 3 months at the Prince Regent Charles Hospital for treatment adapted to her injuries"

Every time I visited her, this mother was filled with feelings of regret and guilt, and admits that he won't be able to resume this form of punishment. Today, her daughter is cured, but she still has scars on her lower limbs and holds grudges against her mother".

Indeed, in her understanding, she wanted not only to punish the child, but also the leg that helps her walk.

By analyzing the content of this testimony, we wonder whether this mother wanted to punish the maladaptive behavior or simply wanted to stop it by burning the legs that help her walk.

If parents are very angry with their children when it comes to anti-social behavior, they do it out of love, not hatred, but they don't often measure the negative effects that can arise.

Let's examine more from this parent:

"I punish my children too. I try to use less forceful means, like my hands, slaps, and in case of excess, I also use canings and I whip them on the buttocks. It's not out of hatred that I hit them, but out of parental love, because I want them to grow up in the best ways".

Generally, very short-tempered, he will use any object.

“One day, my husband punished our 7-year-old child. That day, he had taken his phone and broken it. My husband took the cable from our charger and used it to punish this child. That day, the charger left marks on his lower limbs. Today, all you have to do is show these children a charger to call them to order, and they immediately stop what they were doing”.

The marks on the child-victim's body vary according to the objects used to punish. In the case of bound children, for example, the knots of the rope or the thorns of the stick are sometimes imprinted in the flesh. Tore ears, tore hair and crushed fingers are very common. Other types of injury can occur at the same time on various parts of the body, such as head wounds, fractures of all kinds and other forms of disability that often arise after the use of severe corporal punishment (Tardieu, 2008).

Depending on the physical and psychological trauma suffered, excessive corporal punishment can alter a child's initial body, and sometimes he or she can spend a lifetime suffering from the handicap associated with corporal punishment. In the case of cruel punishment (an unusual form of violence), the immediate and/or long-term death of victims is common, according to the findings of these authors (Tardieu, 2008 b).

Studies of over 4,000 European schoolchildren in six countries show that corporal punishment is associated with adverse effects on children's mental health, and that this association is stronger among children from countries that have adopted explicit policies banning the practice (Du Rivage & al., 2015).

These data are consistent with earlier US studies correlating corporal punishment with mental health problems, including earlier studies reporting an increase in aggression, and other externalizing problems ( Mahomey & Donnelly, 2000, Frick & al., 1999) as well as an increase in childhood depression and anxiety and, later in life, a tendency to commit suicide (Wu, 2007 & Rodriguez, 2003). Finally, other research clearly shows that corporal punishment exposes children to negative risks, including increased mental health problems risk of negative consequences, including increased mental health problems (Gershoff, 2008 ).

### **3.5. Corporal punishment in care centers**

The family and school are not the only places where children can be subjected to physical violence. Children's centers, too, can use brutality and humiliation. In most cases, these children beaten in institutions have even less chance of being heard than in the family.

In addition to the school environment, where children can be physically brutalized, foster care centers, day-care centers, orphanages and the

Soleil child reintegration center for our study are no exception to this rule. In the above-mentioned centers, the perpetrators of physical aggression are not always adults, as current practice shows. In these centers, the adult often intervenes to separate the children in a fight or to inhibit the children's behavior, which is deemed antisocial and detrimental to the smooth running of the center.

Let's examine the testimonies of this social worker:

*'In certain circumstances, we have to resort to corporal punishment. So, when we find a child staying at the center hurting another child, we act directly. It's a form of correction for the child perpetrator, but also a kind of appeasement for the child victim, and other potential victims'.*

This punishment has a direct effect on children's behavior, but doesn't play a major role in their behavior. On the other hand, the more the child has specific needs and is punished, the more his externalized behaviors are reinforced, and become repetitive. Generally, they extend verbal and physical aggression towards adults, violate societal values and norms, and end with early entry into delinquency.

By analyzing the content of this testimony, we understand that the use of corporal punishment with children with special needs does nothing to help them. On the contrary, it runs the risk of reinforcing their negative behavior. In other contexts, the school environment can be the scene of violence: it's no longer adults, but other children or gangs of children who terrorize, bully and tyrannize. Similar results have been found in previous studies carried out in Gabon, showing that the practices of childcare workers are marked by various forms of violence against children (physical, psychological, moral, and even sexual) (Quentin De Mongaryas & al., 2020). Moreover, in this country, the school climate "tends to decline and deteriorate more and more, because confronted with recurrent acts of violence (...) among others, brawls between pupils, aggression against teachers, violence by security forces against demonstrating pupils, etc." (Quentin De Mongaryas & Bibalou, 2021).

Authors inspired by the national observatory study, specify that child abuse is also a social scourge (Demba, 2012 & Matari, 2014). Indeed, the results of the study carried out by the national observatory for children's rights show that 77.7% of Gabonese children were victims of violence. According to these studies, this violence is progressive, starting in the family, then in the community and finally at school. In addition to ritual crimes against children, physical, psychological, moral and sometimes sexual violence are the most common forms. The effects of corporal punishment on children are not always confined to the family and/or the institution. As we shall see, it also has negative implications for school children's learning.

### **3.6. School failure as a result of corporal punishment**

Although the use of corporal punishment in schools is increasingly prohibited by law, its use continues to be heard and recorded in cases of serious injury, and in some circumstances, students die from the pain of caning.

Let's examine the testimony of this teacher:

“There are teachers who still use sticks to punish. But this has consequences for the child's learning, as he or she develops a great fear, and immediately loses motivation. And when the child loses interest in school, academic and often repetitive failure ensues. “

Although this teacher doesn't expressly admit to using corporal punishment as a means of punishment, he does testify that there are teachers who manage to seriously hurt children.

Let's examine what he has to say:

“I'm the teacher in charge, and I frequently receive complaints from parents who come to see me to mediate between the conflict between pupil and teacher on the one hand, and parent and child on the other, as the latter wants to change schools because of this open conflict between teacher and pupil". Some cases succeed in restoring trust, while others fail. In some cases, complaints can lead to the teacher being prosecuted for assault and battery, as this is an offence under the Burundian penal code.”

When children come into conflict with their teachers over punishments deemed unjust, this has harmful effects on the quality of relationships and learning, as this teacher testifies:

*In my experience, students who are frequently punished by teachers rarely succeed. When punished students perceive that these punishments are unfair, some of them don't even wait until the end of the school year. Those who persevere play truant and participate only moderately in the regular assessments organized by the class".*

The results of our study are similar to those of previous authors who have studied this subject in schools. Focusing on the problem of the use of humiliating punishment, and its repercussions on academic success, this shows a negative side to the relationship between teachers and pupils (Demba, 2012). This view is close to that of another, insofar as understanding the phenomenon of school failure is inseparable from pupils' relationships to school knowledge (Merle, 2002). The latter is an extension of a lack of positive

communication between teachers and students, a form of expression of a denial of the latter's rights in Gabon ( Demba, 2012 ). He agrees with other authors that a school that beats and humiliates failing pupils is certainly not a just school ( Demba, 2012 ). In the same logic, another study provides guidance by returning to professional ethics and deontology, and finally insists on teachers' duties towards the child, considered as a deposit entrusted to them by society (Tsafack, 2018).

### **Conclusion and recommendation**

We have now achieved our research objective. The results show that the factors that lead Burundian education professionals to resort to corporal punishment are rooted in traditional practices and religious beliefs. Parents who were punished as children don't understand why they can't correct their children, even though biblical scripture recommends doing so. Corporal punishment is forbidden in schools, but still authorized in families. Such a formulation opens up margins of maneuver for those involved in education, which everyone uses as they see fit, with the aim of escaping the use of corporal punishment, informally forbidden to teachers. This shows that there is still a long way to go, as school regulations on sanctions remain ambivalent. A pupil who is not punished at school by his teacher will not escape punishment at home, or a parent may use corporal punishment to punish his own child at school.

In addition to its impact on many areas of children's lives, this form of violence is passed down from generation to generation. There is a link between the traces of severe physical violence experienced by educators and its justification in reproduction. To reduce the cycle of intergenerational transmission, prevention programs are needed. We believe that the various players in education need awareness-raising sessions on the effects of corporal punishment, the merits of not using corporal punishment, and the mechanisms of positive parenting as an alternative to violence. The community and other education professionals should benefit from ongoing parenting courses, and other initiatives to combat domestic violence and manage conflict.

In addition, policy-makers should set up improved services for child victims, and develop policies and legislation to protect children. Despite the identification of the factors that lead educational actors to use corporal punishment to educate, the issue of respect for children's dignity and rights remains problematic in our country. However, the lessons drawn from our research can serve as a basis for future researchers wishing to undertake studies in this field.



### ***Recommandations***

As national legislation does not formally prohibit the use of corporal punishment ( End Violence Against Children, 2018 ), our study suggests that

- The Burundian government to take measures to ban corporal punishment in schools and at home.
- Ensure that all schools have clear policies to prevent violence,
- Introduce confidential reporting and complaint procedures that will serve as a database, and thus organize interventions that take into account the real needs of child victims.

Finally, effective multi-sectoral collaboration to end violence against children is essential, and must involve both governmental and non-governmental players. Each sector must have clear responsibilities, with coordination overseeing the articulation of different actions (World Health Organization, 2020).

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This research complied with ethical principles concerning studies involving human subjects. Before starting, we requested authorization from University of Burundi Research and Innovation Department. This institution issued us with a research certificate and closely monitored the entire process, right up to the validation of its conclusions. **This study has been approved by** University of Burundi Research and Innovation Department and the principles of the Helsinki Declaration were followed.

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