



# The dinosaur effect: Assessing whether legislative abolition can lead to the complete extinction of corporal punishment

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## Abstract

In this research project, we probe the perceptions of secondary school teachers in the Tshwane North district of Gauteng about the abolition of corporal punishment via legislation. This legislation sends a clear message that corporal punishment is not an acceptable form of discipline. This could help to change social norms and attitudes towards the use of physical force as a means of punishment. However, changing ingrained social norms and attitudes towards corporal punishment can be a slow and contested process since it involves changing deeply ingrained beliefs and behaviours. We link this slow social change metaphorically to the extinction of dinosaurs. We used a structured questionnaire to obtain data from teachers from ten randomly selected secondary schools via questions about convictions and beliefs about corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure. A factor analytic procedure clustered the items into one factor which was named contradictory benefits of abolishing corporal punishment. The most important finding was that the mental models that guide perceptions about discipline are associated with time and that teachers raised and educated under a human rights culture disagree that there are any disadvantages to abolishing corporal punishment. In addition to legislation, other strategies such as education, awareness campaigns, and support for parents and caregivers can also play an important role in reducing the use of corporal punishment.

**Keywords:** corporal punishment, learner, public secondary school, teacher, paradox, factor analysis, systems theory

## Introduction

One of the Earth's largest changes occurred when a massive asteroid smashed into what is now Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and triggered cooling temperatures that were postulated to have wiped out the dinosaurs (Malory, 2014). The dinosaur's demise after meteor impact, using research based on high-precision dating techniques, suggests that these events occurred within 33,000 years of each other (Klotz, 2013) at the chronosystem level of environmental change.

On a much smaller scale of change, South Africa introduced in 1996 a new democratic dispensation with a transformational constitution based on Human Rights values at the macrosystem level of change. This spawned many changes such as the abolition of corporal punishment in all public schools. The Constitution has led to much legislation that has legalized changes concerning discipline. However, 27 years is a miniscule amount of elapsed time compared to the 33,000 years mentioned above and a meteor has a much greater impact on system-level change than legislation has. Large-scale change is a time-associated phenomenon. Similarly, mental models and the societal culture that underlies the beliefs, convictions, and values associated with discipline also need time to evolve into another more caring mode.

## Background to the problem

Kennedy (2017) submitted that corporal punishment in one form or another, has been around in public secondary schools for centuries. It is certainly not a new issue. For example, in the Roman family, "[L]earners learned by imitation, and corporal punishment." Religion has also played a role in the history of disciplining children by spanking them. Many people interpret *Proverbs* (13:24) "Spare the rod and spoil the child" in *The Holy Bible* (2013) literally.

Corporal punishment has been used in schools in the past. It is widely socially acceptable to educators, and supported, even encouraged, by parents. Current schools' management personnel, themselves, would probably have experienced it during their school days (End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2018). The Department of Basic Education (2018) specified that the percentage of learners who experienced corporal punishment at school in 2016 decreased nationally from 2011, and only 9.8% of learners reportedly experienced corporal punishment at public secondary schools in 2016. Corporal punishment was most common at public secondary schools in the Eastern Cape (17.9%), and KwaZulu-Natal (15%). In terms of metros, it was most common at public schools in eThekweni (14.2%).

## Corporal punishment

According to the Gauteng Department of Education (2014), corporal punishment is any deliberate act against a learner that inflicts pain or physical discomfort by way of punishment. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, paddling, or hitting a learner with a hand, or any other object, denying or restricting a learner's use of the toilet, denying

meals, drink, heat, and shelter, pushing, or pulling a learner with force, and forcing a learner to do exercise. It is, therefore, not just about thrashing, but also refers to an assault on a learner in any physical manner whatsoever.

Durrant (2005) maintained that corporal or physical punishment is an action taken by school management, parents, or caregivers that is intended to cause physical pain or discomfort to a child. It is the application of punishment to the body. Typically, the purpose of parental physical punishment is to correct the child's behaviour and deter the child from repeating it. In public secondary schools, corporal punishment is administered as a penalty for a learner's transgression. Corporal punishment involves deliberately causing physical pain to change behaviour; such pain could be inflicted by punching, hitting, pulling an ear, or pinching and by using objects such as brooms, rulers, sticks, belts, and paddles to inflict pain (National Association Nurses' School, 2010).

Soneson (2005) defined corporal punishment as

hitting the child with the hand or with an object (such as a cane, belt, whip, or shoe); kicking, or throwing the child, pinching or pulling their hair, forcing a child to stay in uncomfortable or undignified positions, or to take excessive physical exercise; burning, scarring the child.

Stratus and Donnelly (2005) argued that corporal punishment implies the use of force with the intention of inflicting pain on an individual, not specifically to hurt the person but with the aim of doing away with undesirable behaviour. In other words, corporal punishment is the use of force targeted at causing pain in the name of attempting to achieve a desired behaviour.

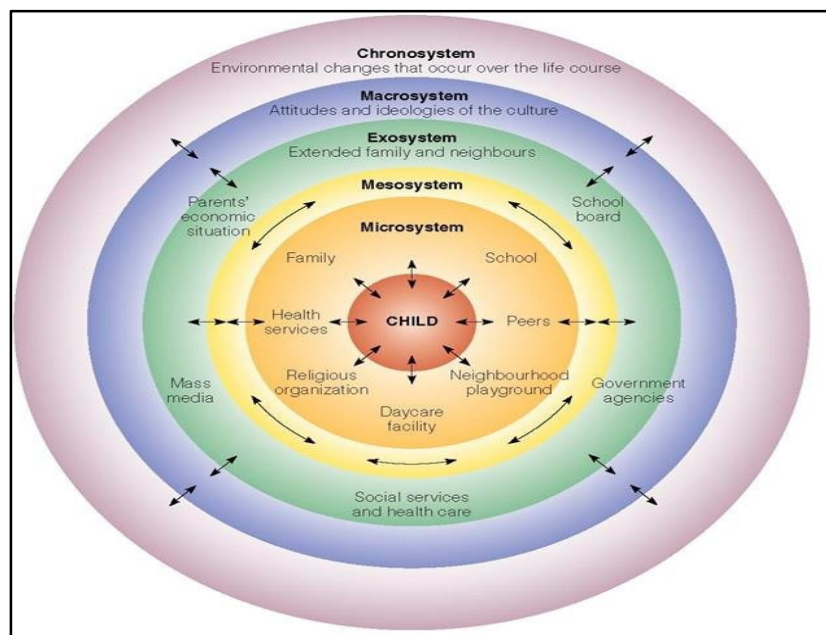
In this study, the term corporal punishment refers to physical punishment, especially by hitting. We discuss ways in which teachers use inhumane methods to punish learners in public secondary schools.

## Theoretical framework

We used Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory. The diagram in Figure 1 shows how the various systemic levels are inextricably linked to one another and shows how change at one level of the system has a so-called butterfly effect on the other levels (Anderson et al., 2014). The example above of the meteor striking the earth is about an event that influences the chronosystem, and the example of the transformational changes envisioned in the constitution and educational system affect the macro system. This macro-level change will filter down to the micro level since the various levels are interrelated and influence one another reciprocally.

**Figure 1**

Bronfenbrenner's various system levels showing the interaction between them (Copied from Anderson, et al. 2014)



Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory shows the child at the centre of the microsystem where interaction with family, peers, and teachers at school occurs. However, this micro-level where legislation about teaching and discipline is implemented, is interrelated to and interacts with the other levels. At the meso-level, the various Government agencies such as the Department of Education are also involved since they have a controlling function. The macro-system houses the attitudes, beliefs, and convictions of society or of the environment in which the school is located. These deeply held convictions give rise to certain values and attitudes about how children should be disciplined with the eventual goal of self-discipline. Hence, the espoused values of the government of the day such as, for example, human rights, are likely to give rise to legislation governing teaching and learning in public schools. However, large-scale change is inevitably a slow process, and the mental models formed before changes are introduced are likely to be resistant to change and any action to force such new change is likely to be met by a reaction from the individuals who must implement the legislated changes. Changing mental models such as believing in the use of corporal punishment to exact obedience requires time and patience and needs a multisystemic approach. All levels of the education system need to be involved. The macro-level, where policies are designed, must involve all concerned with teaching and learning, especially those at the micro-level since this is the level at which legislation must be implemented. Teachers must be allowed to voice the beliefs and attitudes of their mental models openly so that these can be debated and scrutinised by all. The promulgation of legislation to prevent something that is an accepted norm by some communities must not be seen to be something that is designed in heaven but needs to be implemented on earth. Designers and implementers work in the same system and all attempt to reach the same goal of effective teaching and learning. All need to remember that when we solve one problem, we sometimes create another that is even worse than the original one.

## Conceptual framework

The dependent variables in this research were 20 items that probed the perceptions of teachers about the contentious issue of the abolition of corporal punishment as a means of compliance with acceptable norms of behaviour. The items were clustered together using factor analysis and one dependent variable was formed and named FB1.0 – The contradictory advantages of the abolition of corporal punishment. This factor was used as a dependent variable and tested against the various independent groups in the research sample.

## Ethical considerations

Admission and acceptance, and informed consent are the two critical issues relating to the ethics of social research studies (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Admittance requires applying for and obtaining official permission to conduct the study in a specific location, or engaging with specific participants (Cohen et al., 2011; Gay et al., 2014). In this study, permission to conduct this research was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education, Director of Knowledge Management and Research of public secondary schools, Tshwane North district director, University of Johannesburg: Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, and all participants. All parties were informed about the objectives of the research project, the research methods, the nature of the participants, and the confidentiality, anonymity, and publication of the findings. The teachers completed and signed the informed consent forms before they participated. Respondents were all provided with an envelope in which completed questionnaires could be placed and those whose sealed envelopes were not collected could leave them on an arranged date in a wooden box, to which only one of the researchers had access.

## Data analysis of section B

Section B of the questionnaire asked respondents to give their perceptions about 20 statements regarding the controversial issue of the abolition of corporal punishment as a mode of discipline in schools. Each item was anchored by strongly disagree on one side of the interval scale, and by strongly agree on the opposite side of the scale. To achieve parsimony the researchers used the factor analytic procedure, PCA with Oblimin rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's sphericity value ( $p < .001$ ) suggested that the items would cluster in fewer groups. However, four items were removed because of loading onto two factors. The new KMO of 0.948 and Bartlett's sphericity of  $p = .000$  suggested that such a reduction would be plausible. One factor resulted which explained 65.70% of the variance present. The items loaded in the order given below:

FB1.0 – B18, B19, B15Rec, B1, B17, B16, B7, B12Rec, B11Rec, B5, B3, B14, B10, B6, B2. The factor was named "FB1.0 – The contradictory benefits of abolishing corporal punishment." The Cronbach- was 0.959 and the Omega reliability was 0.961. From the factor loadings it can be observed that converging validity was present apart from item B2.

The factor loadings, mean scores, and level of agreement with each item are given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

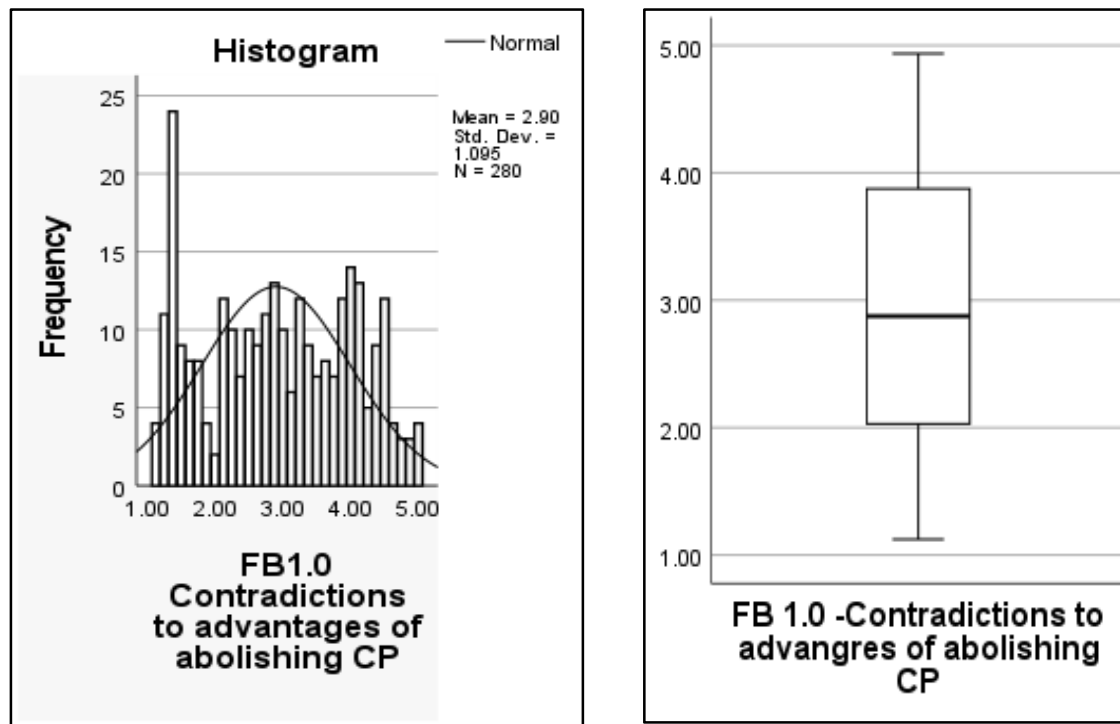
Items with factor loadings and mean scores in the factor FB1.0 – The contradictory benefits of abolishing corporal punishment (Mean scores interpreted after Pimental, 2019)

Item	Description	Loading	Mean	Level of agree
B18	I am aware that practicing corporal punishment is a less time-consuming, time-wasting, and effective way.	0.894	3.13	N
B19	I am hopeful that corporal punishment does not break the relationships between school management and learners.	0.887	2.79	N
B15R	I am aware that corporal punishment leads to learners dropping out of school.	0.878	2.99	N
B1	I have realized that corporal punishment does not teach accountability.	0.866	2.40	D
B17	I am hopeful that applying corporal punishment is not harmful to learners.	0.863	2.96	N
B16	I am aware that learners will be out of trouble, respect school management, if they receive corporal punishment.	0.862	3.12	N
B7	Corporal punishment encourages learners to do their schoolwork.	0.852	2.68	N
B12R	I am always intimidated in school when I want to understand more about corporal punishment.	0.847	3.33	N
B20R	I am sure that corporal punishment is not effective.	0.838	3.42	A
B11R	I am confident that corporal punishments have a negative impact on learners.	0.820	3.47	A
B5	I am certain that discipline in public schools will be enforced by applying corporal punishment.	0.806	2.38	D
B3	I am aware that, without corporal punishment, learners will not have discipline.	0.777	2.47	D
B14	I feel that corporal punishment should be used at public secondary schools.	0.755	3.12	N
B10	Corporal punishment teaches learners respect for authority in public secondary schools.	0.729	2.29	D
B6	Corporal punishment is the only language learners understand in public secondary schools.	0.727	2.31	D
B2	I am sure that corporal punishment will help to ensure future co-operation in public secondary schools.	0.464	3.24	N
Average		0.804	2.88	

The data distribution in the factors is displayed in a histogram and boxplot in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

Histogram and boxplot showing the data distribution in the contradictory advantages of abolishing corporal punishment.



Using data in Table 1 it can be observed that Item B18 (I am aware that practicing corporal punishment is a less time-consuming, time-wasting, and effective way) has the highest factor loading, and is therefore the most representative of what this factor is about. The only real observable advantage of corporal punishment is that it saves time. Discipline has now also become a time-related issue and with all the bureaucratic procedures that accompany other disciplinary procedures, this merely adds more pressure to effective teaching time. These researchers made use of the adjusted Likert scale of Pimentel (2019) to analyse the mean scores obtained

A = Agreement, N= Neutral, D = Disagreement, Items with Rec. had scales inverted

**Table 2**

Adjustment to a five-point Likert scale (From Pimentel, 2019)

Likert scale	Interval	Difference	Description
1	1.00 – 1.79	0.79	Strongly Disagree
2	1.80 - 2.59	0.79	Disagree
3	2.60 – 3.39	0.79	Neutral/Undecided
4	3.40 – 4.19	0.79	Agree
5	4.20- 5.00	0.80	Strongly Agree

The factor mean was 2.90, the median was 2.88, and the SD was 1.09. Respondents thus had neutral perceptions regarding the contradictory advantages of abolishing corporal punishment in public schools in the Tshwane North District. If one uses the suggestions made by Pimental regarding a Likert five-point interval scale, then nine items fell between 2.60 to 3.39 on the scale, (52.9% of the items) placing these items in a neutral perception category. There were five items, (31.25% of the items) that fell in the 1.80 to 2.59 zone on the scale, and hence respondents disagreed with them. There were two items (12.50% of the items) that could be placed in the agreed zone (3.40 to 4.19).

From the histogram it can be observed that there was a disparity of perceptions about the contradictory advantages factor as one would expect regarding a controversial topic. The abolition of corporal punishment could have met much resistance from many parents and teachers alike. In addition, the latest crime statistics in South Africa (2023) as reported by Scrolla Africa (2023), former police Minister Bheki Cele presented the quarterly crime statistics for the fourth quarter of 2022/2023. The report states,

Violent crimes have seen a 4% increase during the period between January and March this year (2023) compared to the same period in 2022 in South Africa. The statistics reveal a total of 6,289 reported murders, indicating a rise of 3.4%. Attempted murders surged by 8.4% with 6,192 cases reported during the fourth quarter of 2022/2023. Furthermore, cases of assault with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (GBH) increased by 0.7% with 43,090 reported incidents. Common assault cases also experienced a significant surge of 7.6%, reaching a total of 49,266 cases during the fourth quarter. The leading factors contributing to murder, attempted murder, and assault with bodily grievously harm appear to be arguments, misunderstandings, road rage, and provocation.

This dramatic increase in violence probably has many possible causes but no doubt the persons against corporal punishment in schools will blame this increase in violent crime on the use of corporal punishment while those who advocate its use in schools will see the crime statistics as a further argument to support their belief of that if we “spare the rod [we will] spoil the child.”

The factor mean score of 2.90 suggests a neutral opinion with respect to all respondents but the histogram shows a disparity of perceptions, and the various independent groups were tested to see where differences are present.

## Gender as independent variable

Since this variable consists of two groups the independent t-test can be used. The researcher also used BCa bootstrapping using 1000 samples to overcome any data distribution issues. The results for gender were:



$$\begin{aligned}
 &FB1.0 \text{ versus Gender} - \bar{X}_M = 2.63, SD = 1.141, N = 136; \bar{X}_F = 3.15, SD \\
 &= 0.990, N = 144; t(278) = 267.59, p < .001, \text{Mean difference} \\
 &= -.531; BCa 95\% CI[L = -.782, U = -.270]d = 0.49
 \end{aligned}$$

The result shows that female respondents agreed significantly more strongly with the paradoxical advantages of the abolition of corporal punishment factor than did males. The mean difference of -.513 fell between the lower and upper confidence intervals and is thus likely to apply also to the population. Of the six items where disagreement was present item B10 (Corporal punishment teaches learners respect for authority in public secondary schools) was the item with the lowest mean score. Hence, gender as independent variable was tested against the factor of contradictory perceptions regarding the advantages of abolishing corporal punishment. Since the data in this factor was positively skewed the Mann-Whitney U-test was used. Results were:

$$[B10 \text{ vs. } FB1.0 - \bar{R}_M = 125.20, \bar{R}_F = 154.95, z = -3.178, p = .001, d = 0.19]$$

Female respondents agreed significantly more strongly with the irony of the advantages of banning corporal punishment than did male respondents. This was also true of Items B1, B5, B3, and B6 although the effect size differences were smaller.

The two items with the highest mean scores were B11Rec. and B20Rec. Item B20Rec. had the largest score for mean differences namely,

$$[B20Rec \text{ vs. } FB1.0 - \bar{R}_M = 123.57, \bar{R}_F = 156.49, z = -3.497, p = .001, d = 0.21]$$

Female respondents agreed significantly more strongly with B20Rec. (I am sure that corporal punishment is not effective) than did male respondents. Note that the scale was inverted since most items were in the direction of agreement with the items and B20 was negatively correlated with most of the other items, thus suggesting a scale inversion. This makes the item difficult to interpret because it is negatively worded in that the phrase “it is not effective” is used. Hence, females agreed that it is not effective more strongly and the advantage of abolishing corporal punishment could be the irony. In theory, it is abolished but it still happens.

## Age groups as an independent variable

There were four initial age groups from the youngest (20 to 29 years) to the oldest (50 to 65 years). When the independent variable has more than two groups ANOVA can be used as a test at multivariate level to see if the age groups differ significantly from one another. However, since the homogeneity of variance was problematic we used the non-parametric alternative of Kruskal-Wallis followed by a Mann-Whitney pairwise comparison with Bonferroni correction of the p-values. The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

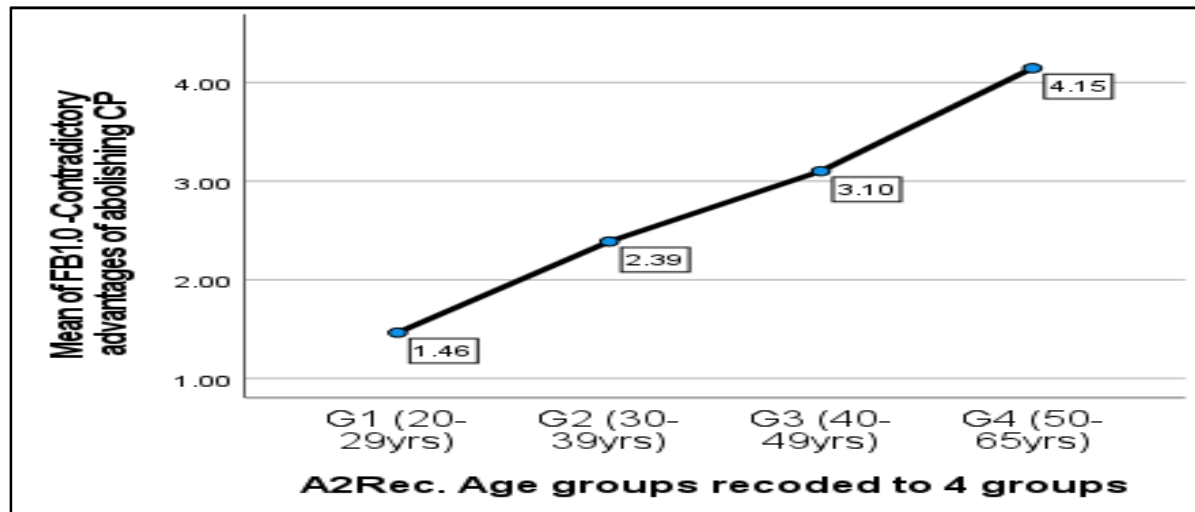
Calculating the effect sizes for the various pairwise comparisons for age groups.

Comparisons (age groups.)	<i>z</i>	Adjusted p-value	$\sqrt{N}$	$r = \frac{z}{\sqrt{N}}$	Rank of <i>r</i>
20-29 vs. 30-39y	-4.319	.000	$\sqrt{126}$	$\frac{-4.319}{11.22} = -0.38$	5
20-29 vs. 40 – 49y	-8.444	.000	$\sqrt{131}$	$\frac{-8.444}{11.45} = -0.74$	3
20 - 29 vs. 50- 65y	-15.443	.000	$\sqrt{165}$	$\frac{-15.443}{12.85} = -1.20$	1
30 - 39 vs. 40 – 49y	-3.776	.001	$\sqrt{115}$	$\frac{-3.776}{10.72} = -0.35$	4
30 - 39 vs. 50-65y	-9.733	.000	$\sqrt{140}$	$\frac{-9.773}{11.83} = -0.83$	2
40 -49 vs. 50 – 65	-5.734	.000	$\sqrt{154}$	$\frac{-5.734}{12.41} = -0.46$	6

The data in Table 3 shows that the largest difference in mean ranks was between the youngest (20–29-years) and oldest group (50–65-years). This is followed by the second youngest age group (30–39-years) and the oldest group. The third largest effect size was between the youngest age group (20–29-years) and the second oldest group (40–49-years). The factor dealing with the perceptions of the contradictory advantages of the abolishment of corporal punishment is a time-related construct. If one considers that some of the present respondents started teaching at 22 years of age, then they should be in the age group 49 years or older. It is also 27 years ago that South Africa promulgated the Constitution and hence teachers who are 49 years and older would have taught under a different educational system which was more authoritarian and that sanctioned corporal punishment. This difference in mean scores is best represented by a line graph and age is directly proportional to the contradictory perceptions of the advantages of abolishing corporal punishment. The older respondents are probably still functioning under the authoritarian mental model in which corporal punishment was the accepted way of ensuring discipline and agree with the contradictory nature of abolishing corporal punishment. The changing of mental models may take less time than other large-scale changes at the chronosystem level, but this research shows that the legislative changes are effective albeit over a period. The various mean scores obtained by the different age groups are represented in a line graph in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

Line graph showing the mean scores of the four age groups regarding the perceived advantages of abolishing corporal punishment.



One would expect a similar finding regarding teaching experience.

## Teaching experience as independent variable

The four teaching experience groups were collapsed into two groups namely 1 to 20 years and 21 to 40 years of experience. The homogeneity of variance was problematical, so the Mann-Whitney U-test was used. Results were:

$$[\textit{Experience vs FB1.0} - \bar{R}_{1-20y} = 80.04, \bar{R}_{21-40y} = 212.30, z = -13.619, p < .001, r = 0.81]$$

The more experienced group agreed significantly more strongly with the contradictory advantages of abolishing corporal punishment than the less experienced group. This finding is like the age group finding and the older respondents agree more strongly with the contradictions arising from the advantages from abolishing corporal punishment

The researchers selected the four items with which respondents had disagreed (see Table 1) and using non-parametric pair-wise comparisons found that the youngest age group (20–29 years) differed statistically significantly on all four of the items from the oldest group, but the largest difference was in B6 (Corporal punishment is the only language learners understand in public secondary schools) where the effect size difference  $r=1.03$ . The youngest respondents strongly disagreed with B6 whereas those in the oldest age group agreed with it.

## Recommendations

The 16 items used in this research could be used by the school management teams at schools as a means of self-perception since this could favour an honest opinion. Then using the scale of Pimentel each person could determine their position on the scale and possibly align this

with their dominant mental model regarding discipline. This would also assist in seeing whether this finding correlated with one's espoused view of discipline. The Johari window could, for example, be used to assist one to "bring [one's] mental model to the surface" where one could use it as a tool to understand one's behaviour towards others and improve one's self-and others- management more effectively. The SMT can also make use of some of the many videos about the Johari window available on YouTube as a stimulating means of involving staff in open discussions about issues in teaching and learning.

It is also recommended that Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is presented to the staff in visual form and then discussed as applicable to classroom discipline (Wieman et al., (2023). For example, there are numerous videos on YouTube such as "Sprout Schools" (Bronfenbrenner, 1964) and "Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory: 5 Forces impacting our lives." This video is easy to follow and shows clearly the interaction between and among the various levels of the system. Hence, its application to corporal punishment and breaking existing mental models is a powerful practice for individuals and leaders alike but requires time and patience and a multisystemic approach. All levels of the education system need to be involved. The macro-level, where policies are designed, must involve all concerned with teaching and learning, especially those at the micro-level since that is the level at which legislation must be implemented. Teachers must be allowed to voice their mental models openly so that they can be debated and scrutinized by all. The promulgation of legislation to prevent something that is an accepted norm by some communities must not be seen as something that "is designed in heaven but needs to be implemented on earth." Designers and implementers work in the same system and all attempt to reach the same goal, namely effective teaching and learning. We all need to remember that when we solve one problem, we sometimes create another that is even worse than the original one.

The system scenario below can be used by school management teams in all secondary schools because it provides some insight into the multisystemic system.

- In the microsystem center are the teachers with certain teaching demands placed on them, like the academic performance of the learners and the maintenance of order and good discipline. The teacher must use their teaching skills to meet these demands. Among other things, the teacher must see that the curriculum is completed and that the legislative mandates of the Department of Basic Education are met. At this level, it can be observed that corporal punishment to instill obedience occurs, even if deemed illegal by the Government in power. There is also interaction with the family, school governing body, and school management team of the school at this level and both school culture and climate play a role in this micro level.
- The mesosystem encompasses the interaction of the different microsystems in which children find themselves. It is, in essence, a system of microsystems and involves linkages between home and school, peer group and family, and family and community. Hence, any corporal punishment received at school will also be deemed to have been administered by family, community, and peers.

- The Exo-system in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model pertains to the linkages that may exist between two or more settings, one of which may not contain the developing children but may affect them indirectly, nonetheless. Among other things, the Department of Basic Education sees that the mandated legislation is enforced as do other government agencies at this level.
- The macro system in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is the largest and second-most distant collection of people and places from the children that still have significant influences on them. This ecological system is composed of the children's cultural patterns and values, specifically their dominant beliefs and ideas, as well as political and economic systems. Children exposed to corporal punishment as a means of discipline will experience a different kind of development than children in an environment in which they are protected against such acts of violence.
- The chronosystem is the last system level and may include a change in family structure, address, and parent's employment status, as well as immense societal changes such as economic cycles, wars, and other cataclysmic events. One could probably also argue that the Education system of South Africa resides here since there was a huge systematic change with a human rights culture enshrined in the Constitution when the democratic Government was elected. Hence, when the new democratic Government came into power legislation controlling new behavioural norms also came into being. However, the mental models of the maintenance of discipline did not change despite providing alternative means to maintaining discipline in the classroom. Researchers have likened it to the demise of the dinosaurs from the earth, which was estimated to have taken place 33,000 years after the meteor strike.

The systems theory of Bronfenbrenner thus explains the various complex interactions at the various levels showing the complexity of a change such as a legislative mandate banning corporal punishment the change initiated at the macro level would probably take much time to infiltrate the micro level.

## Conclusion

The abolition of corporal punishment via legislation is an important step towards its extinction. The legislation sends a clear message that corporal punishment is not an acceptable form of discipline and can help to change social norms and attitudes towards the use of physical force as a means of punishment. The South African Schools Act (1996) abolished the use of corporal punishment in schools 29 years ago, yet it is still used in schools (Statistics South Africa, 2023).

However, legislation alone may not be enough to eradicate completely the use of corporal punishment. Changing social norms and attitudes towards corporal punishment can be a slow and challenging process since it involves changing deeply ingrained beliefs and behaviours. In addition to legislation, other strategies such as education, awareness campaigns, and

support for parents and caregivers can also play an important role in reducing the use of corporal punishment.

In summary, while the abolition of corporal punishment via legislation is an important step towards its extinction, it may not be sufficient on its own. A multifaceted approach that includes legislation, education, and support for parents and caregivers may be more effective in reducing the use of corporal punishment and promoting positive forms of discipline.

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