

# Analysis of awareness campaigns against the physical punishment of minors in Spain. Content and proposed strategies to change attitudes<sup>1</sup>

## *Análisis de las campañas contra el castigo físico a menores en España. Contenido y propuesta de estrategias para el cambio de actitudes*



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### **Abstract:**

The physical punishment of minors has been a common practice in parental discipline for centuries. In recent times, different strategies have been developed for its eradication. Among them, raising awareness among the population about the risks, and proposing alternative forms of discipline. In this paper, we analyse the context and the persuasive features used in awareness campaigns issued at the institutional level in Spain for this purpose and its effectiveness. We have concluded that there is a need to promote the development of campaigns of this type through the media, providing them with greater reach in order to improve their effectiveness, and offering educational strategies as an alternative to physical punishment for the purpose of making these types of strategies real instruments in changing attitudes.

### **Keywords:**

Corporal punishment of minors; Publicity campaigns; Raising awareness; Attitude changes; Content analysis.

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### **Resumen:**

*El castigo físico a los menores ha sido una práctica habitual de disciplina parental durante siglos. En los últimos tiempos se han desarrollado diferentes estrategias para su erradicación. Entre ellas, la de sensibilizar a la población sobre sus riesgos, proponiendo formas alternativas de disciplina. En este trabajo se analizan el contexto y los elementos persuasivos utilizados en las campañas publicitarias emitidas a nivel institucional en España para este fin y su efectividad. Se concluye sobre la necesidad de potenciar el desarrollo de campañas de este tipo a través de los medios de comunicación, dándoles una mayor difusión que permita mejorar su efectividad, y ofreciendo estrategias educativas alternativas al castigo físico para que se conviertan en un verdadero instrumento de cambio de actitudes.*

### **Palabras clave:**

*Castigo físico a menores; Campañas publicitarias; Sensibilización; Cambio de actitudes, Análisis de contenido.*

### **How to cite this article:**

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## 1. Introduction

Parental discipline includes the behaviour of parents aimed at avoiding and correcting inappropriate behaviour as well as achieving compliance and obedience from the child (Fauchier and Straus, 2007). When we talk about the physical punishment of minors, we are referring to a certain educational guideline of parenting that has to do with the strategies of parental discipline used by parents when it comes to educating their children by spanking, slaps in the face, etc.

Occasionally, these practices have been related to the characteristics of the families, so that those parents with fewer resources (low income, lower educational levels), seem to be more inclined to use severe physical punishment. In addition, those who are more likely to have been socialized in the use of violence were more predisposed to the use of harsh physical punishment with their children (Dietz, 2000, Fréchette and Romano, 2015, Juby, 2009).

The different parenting styles used with children have consequences for their behaviour (Baumrind, 1971, Musitu and García, 2004). Different investigations have tried to evaluate the effects of using different strategies on the behaviour of the minor, as well as on their psychosocial development (Gámez-Guadix et al., 2010a, Fergusson and Lynskey, 1997, Grogan-Kaylor, 2004, Torío, Peña and Inda, 2008). In general, it has been pointed out that more aversive strategies (for example, physical punishment or threats) are strongly related to numerous negative consequences, one of which is a greater risk of mistreatment and physical abuse of the child (Gershoff, 2002) or that the minor, in turn, whips or hits other children (Simons and Wurtele, 2010). Some authors also relate it to a decrease in the quality of parent-child relationships (Zolotor et al., 2011) and to the development of psychological adjustment problems (Landsford et al., 2014, Scott, Lewsey, Thompson and Wilson, 2013). : Smith, Springer and Barret, 2011).

In recent years, interest has been focused on knowing the circumstances that lead fathers and mothers to use physical punishment with their children. Often parents are ambivalent toward the use of physical punishment and often exhibit negative attitudes toward it, though they continue to use it despite not believing in its effectiveness (Bunting, Webb and Healy, 2010). Other more dynamic variables such as parental stress (Fréchette and Romano, 2015), and ethnic or cultural issues (Holden, Hawk, Smith, Singh and Ashraf, 2017, Khoury-Kassabri, Attar-Schwartz and Zur, 2014), are also important.

Hence the importance of influencing these practices in order to raise awareness among the population to the reasons that induce parents to use them, their risks, and possible alternative strategies to correct the behaviour of minors.

In this regard, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) declares in article 19 that “States must adopt all legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child against all forms of physical or mental violence”. (Hodgkin and Newell, 2002).

Similarly, the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2006) emphasizes that:

“Addressing the acceptance or tolerance of widespread physical punishment of children and its elimination within the family and in schools and other institutions, it is not only an obligation of the Convention Member States. It is also a key strategy in reducing and preventing all forms of violence in society” (Committee on the Rights of the Child, United Nations, General Comment No. 8, 2006, paragraph 11).

Some studies point to a decline in the use of physical punishment in some countries such as Canada (Fréchette and Romano, 2015), although the whip or the slap is still common practice with young children (Zolotor et al., 2011). Without wishing to be exhaustive, more recent studies like those of Hecker, Hermenau, Isele and Elbert (2014) in Tanzania, and

Enosh, Leshem and Buchbinder (2016) in Israel, or Umeda, Kawakami, Kessler and Miller (2015) in Japan, corroborate this fact.

Physical punishment of minors has also been a common practice in the repertoire of child-rearing guidelines of Spanish fathers and mothers. Prevailing studies conducted regarding the subject have shown that for a large part of society, it is still an effective, acceptable and recommended child-rearing method, although its acceptance has been declining in recent years (Bussmann, Erthal, and Schroth, 2009).

In fact, a study carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 1997, in which 3,500 Spaniards over 18 years of age were interviewed, pointed out that 2% of Spaniards said that hitting is essential “frequently” and 43.3% indicated that it was essential sometimes. The figure of 40.5% agreed that “sometimes a good slap is necessary to maintain discipline”. The figure of 30% acknowledged reacting from time to time by giving their son a slap on the face in a serious conflict. (Juste and Morales, 1998).

Subsequently, the data collected in Study 2621 from the Centre for Sociological Research (*Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, CIS, 2005), with the survey Attitudes and Opinions on Childhood (*Actitudes y opiniones sobre la infancia*), showed that 59.9% of the Spanish population considers that “a whip or a slap at the right time can prevent more serious problems later”.

The wide acceptance of the use of physical punishment as a disciplinary strategy was also reflected in another work carried out by the organization known as Save the Children in 2004, in coordination with the Platform for Children’s Organizations and the General Directorate of Children and Family of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Autonomous Regions of Castilla la Mancha and Madrid. This work showed that 47% of mothers and 46% of fathers considered themselves entitled to hit and shout at their children.

In the study carried out in 2007 by Bussmann, Erthal, and Schroth (2009), which examined the situation in five European countries: Sweden, Austria, Germany, France and Spain, five thousand parents (1000 from each country) were interviewed about the use and attitude toward physical punishment, their own experiences of violence, and their knowledge and beliefs about existing legislation. According to this study, more than half of Spanish parents (55%) said that they had lightly hit their children in the face, 80% in the buttocks, 31% acknowledged giving a “sharp” slap in the face, and 6.7% had hit them with an object. Even though 16% of Spanish parents had never used physical punishment, and 84% agreed that physical punishment of minors should be used as little as possible, these are very high figures, especially when compared to the prevailing data from other countries such as Sweden, where the acceptance of physical punishment of minors has not exceeded 8% since the 1990s (Jason, Jernbro and Langberg, 2012).

One of the most recent studies conducted in Spain (Gámez-Guadix et al, 2010b) with university students from the Autonomous Region of Madrid shows that 63% of men and 63.8% of women were physically punished when they were 10 years old. Mothers used this disciplinary practice somewhat more than father (42.9% of fathers and 50.1% of mothers had whipped, slapped, beaten, or swatted their children). On the other hand, Calvete, Gámez-Guadix and Orue (2010), in a work involving 1,371 adolescents, found that mothers use more disciplinary actions of all kinds than fathers, probably due to the fact that despite the increase in recent years of the involvement of fathers in bringing up children, fathers continue to play a smaller role than mothers in child-rearing. They also found greater use of this type of discipline with sons than with daughters.

Rosser (2015) carried out an investigation along the same line with the intention of evaluating the practices and attitudes that exist in the population in relation to physical punishment, more than 8 years after Law 54/2007 went into effect. To this end, an adaptation of the Discipline Dimensions Inventory (DDI, Straus and Fauchier, 2007), in its Spanish version for children and adults, was applied to a sample of 225 children between 11 and 18 years of age of which 44.9% were male and 55.1% female, and 96 adults, who were the fathers and mothers of the students evaluated. The figure of 77.1% were women and the rest, 22.9%, were men, with an average age of 44 years (SD = 5.6).

The results showed a relationship between the child-rearing experiences lived in childhood and child-rearing practices that they consider appropriate as adults, so that those parents who suffered punitive discipline in their childhood considered it appropriate to apply the same in bringing up their own children.

On the other hand, the results also indicated a certain change in this trend, due to the fact that physical punishment was no longer the most common parental discipline strategy when it came to correcting the behaviour of the children. This did not seem to reflect a greater use of positive discipline strategies, but adolescents indicated that they had frequently experienced punitive practices of a psychological nature, with shouting, berating, humiliation or withdrawal of affection.

For the organization Save the Children (2003), the social acceptance of physical punishment is a fact: "Men and women both beat, and people from different socio-economic or social backgrounds as well. The religious, political and judicial authorities have shown themselves in favour of physical punishment on various occasions". The popular arguments that justify hitting children are varied, from "we have all experienced it, and it hasn't caused us any lasting damage" to "it is a parent's right", as a way to "guide" their sons and daughters and make them strong. Even the popular culture speaks of "a good whipping", "a good beating", among other expressions that justify punishment as a positive resource.

Organizations such as the United Nations (1989), UNICEF (2002), The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (2009) or Save the Children (2003) have warned about the risks of this practice and the need to develop legislation for its eradication (Moya and Rosser, 2013).

In Europe, only 14 countries have explicitly prohibited physical punishment. These include Sweden, Finland, Norway, Austria, Latvia, Croatia, Germany, Bulgaria, Iceland, Ukraine, Romania and Hungary, as well as Italy and Portugal, whose Supreme Courts have declared corporal punishment illegal, even though it has not been reflected in the legislation. In Spain, specifically until 2007, the Civil Code established that "parents can (...) reasonably and moderately correct their children". This was considered ambiguous from a legal point of view by many experts and by these international organizations as well, because it could be interpreted that the right of correction included light physical punishment.

Consequently, the United Nations and the Council of Europe urged Spain, as well as countries that did not expressly prohibit corporal punishment of children, to modify their legislation to include the prohibition of this type of punishment.

To confront this situation, Law 54 of December 28, 2007 of International Adoption included in its final provision – first. 2. the elimination of the last loophole that allowed the use of physical punishment, modifying Article 154 of the Civil Code, which in its new wording went on to state that "Parental authority will always be exercised for the benefit of the children, according to their personality, and with respect to their physical and psychological well-being". In this way, the possibility for parents to correct their children reasonably and moderately, with this right being understood as light corporal punishment, was specifically abolished.

After the legislative changes described above took place, a broad media debate was opened in Spain on whether or not parents have the right to beat their children in order to correct their behaviour. In the press, numerous articles appeared that were written by both defenders and detractors of the measure, as well as other stories that sought to appease the reactions.

As an example of the first case we find headlines such that of *El País* (26 June, 2017), entitled “The slap loses force”<sup>2</sup>, in which the opinions of experts were gathered. They agreed that physical punishment is never a valid option. Another example, also from *El País* (12/14/2007), entitled “The slap still has defenders”<sup>3</sup>, in which it was pointed out that some political parties tried to block the prohibition that the UN had requested from the Government. A year later, also in *El País* on 4/12/2008, the news read, “45 days in prison for a mother who beat her son for not doing his homework”<sup>4</sup>, in which it was reported that a woman had been sentenced to 45 days in prison and could not go within 500 meters of her son for a year and 45 days for the crime of child abuse.

In this case, the mother was finally pardoned, but these interpretations have incited strong social rejection and citizens’ criticism of a law that seemed to leave parents and mothers without child-rearing tools.

The aforementioned legislative changes did not have the desired effect at the social level, which is why article 154 of the Civil Code was amended once again with the drafting of Law 26/2015, of July 28, on the Modification of the Childhood and Adolescence Protection System that indicates the following:

“Dependent children are under the custodial authority of the parents. Parental authority, as a responsibility of guardianship, will always be exercised in the interest of the children, according to their personality, and with regard to their rights, as well as to their physical and mental well-being” (Art.154.).

At the regulatory level, important steps have been taken in terms of considering the use of corporal punishment not justified or appropriate by law as a child-rearing measure within the framework of exercising parental authority. However, from the analysis of cases in Spain, it follows that there is still a sector of jurisprudential doctrine that considers it plausible to categorize mild corporal punishment within the “right to discipline” as an aspect of the child-rearing rights of parents within the framework of the power to exercise parental authority. For its part, another sector denies that there is a “right to discipline” that protects and/or legitimizes the corporal punishment of minors.

There are also important challenges to overcome at the sociocultural level due to the following reason. As pointed out in other countries by Roberts (2000), changes in attitudes toward physical punishment require other initiatives. Legislative changes are not enough. Proof of this has been the fact that the mere suggestion of prohibiting all corporal punishment of minors without exception generates a certain degree of alarm in parents. This alarm has its justification in social tolerance, for example, a slap on the face or cheeks used as a disciplinary and/or child-rearing resource when faced with disobedience and a lack of discipline from children.

<sup>2</sup> *El País* Newspaper (06/27/2007): The slap loses strength. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/2007/06/26/sociedad/1182808803\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2007/06/26/sociedad/1182808803_850215.html)

<sup>3</sup> *El País* Newspaper (12/14/2007). The slap still has defenders. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/2007/12/14/sociedad/1197586801\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2007/12/14/sociedad/1197586801_850215.html)

<sup>4</sup> *El País* Newspaper (4/12/2008). 45 days in prison for a mother who beat her son for not doing his homework. Available at: [http://elpais.com/diario/2008/12/05/sociedad/1228431602\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/diario/2008/12/05/sociedad/1228431602_850215.html)

Recognizing that physical punishment to minors continues to be a socially accepted practice (when used moderately), it is truly essential to raise society's awareness of its disadvantages, and in turn provide parents and professionals with enough knowledge about other strategies that are appropriate for controlling and correcting behaviour.

One of the most effective ways to influence behaviour is to change individual attitudes through persuasion (Rucker, Petty and Briñol, (2014).) However, the media has barely paid attention to the physical punishment inflicted on children in comparison with issues such as sexual violence and exploitation involving child labour. As pointed out by the Council of Europe,

“The media play a fundamental role in forging opinion and influencing social norms that in turn influence behaviour. The issue of corporal punishment should be brought into the public sphere; a space must be created to discuss the problem and find solutions. If there is no awareness, it will be difficult to achieve lasting prevention and a change of behaviour on a large scale”. Council of Europe, 2008.

This has been the objective of the project “PUNISH-ER: Eradication of the Use of Physical Punishment of Children Within Families and Institutions” (JUST/2010/DAP3/ AG/1337), carried out under the Daphne Initiative of the European Union, in which the participants included The United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Poland, Estonia and Spain, and for which the author of this article was an investigator. The PUNISH-ER project aims to contribute to the eradication of the corporal punishment of children through the proposal of guidelines for the development of programs along with awareness and training materials aimed at parents and professionals in the social and educational sectors with regard to alternatives to physical punishment.

Specifically, one of the sections of the project has been the analysis of advertising campaigns in Spain on the subject, including their strengths and weaknesses, in order to increase the impact of future initiatives.

In this sense, the author of this work is currently participating as the main researcher in Spain of a new European project known as “Hands Up”,- Promoting the Effective Elimination of Corporal Punishment Against Children (JUST/2015/RDAP/AG/CORP)<sup>5</sup>. This new project aims to delve into the strengths and weaknesses that were detected in the Daphne PUNISH-ER project, reviewing the legal framework, promoting positive discipline strategies in mothers and fathers, and developing more persuasive resources to raise society's awareness and act as an accompaniment for mothers and fathers in the nurturing process.

As Petty, Briñol and Priester (2009: 125) point out, the success of publicity campaigns depends in part on whether the information transmitted is effective in changing the attitudes of the recipients in the desired direction, and on the other hand, on whether or not such modification of attitudes influences the behaviour of people. Hence the importance of knowing the processes responsible for changing attitudes through the media.

Any variable involved in the persuasion process (whether from the sender, the message, the receiver, the channel or the context) can affect the capacity and/or motivation of the receiver to process the persuasive message, or in the same sense, according to his or her capacity and motivation, the receiver will have a more or less deep understanding of the message (Briñol and Petty, 2006; Briñol, Horcajo, Valle and de Miguel, 2007).

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<sup>5</sup> European Project “Hands Up” - Promoting the effective elimination of corporal punishment against children. Web site: <http://www.handsupchildren.org/es/home>

Consequently, the objective of this work has been the review of the institutional publicity campaigns carried out in Spain up to the present date for the purpose of raising awareness among the population regarding the negative effects of physical punishment on minors. As this problem is the object of study, campaigns are analysed with special attention being paid to factors related to the source, message, context, channel, and the effect of these messages.

After updating the state of the issue, we proceeded to analyse the information. Value was placed on whether or not the campaigns meet the objectives of raising awareness and changing attitudes, both of which were set forth in this work with the aim of eradicating the use of corporal punishment from the Spanish population, and providing answers to the deficiencies detected.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Data search of existing institutional awareness campaigns

A documentary search was conducted regarding institutional campaigns carried out in Spain against the physical punishment of minors, starting with the first in 1999 until 2017. The search resulted in the analysis of 6 national campaigns supported by the government in addition to various training programs subsidized by the same for the eradication of corporal punishment of minors through the development of positive discipline strategies (Tables 1 to 6). The last campaign analysed was in 2008, as government campaigns related to this particular issue have not been carried out subsequently.

Afterward, campaign data sheets were developed in which the date of each campaign was taken into account, who the promoter was, the objective, what type of dissemination means were used, methodology, scope, and the population to which it was addressed.

**Table 1: Data file of the campaign ‘Teach, don’t hit’ (Educa, no pegues).**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>1. Teach, don’t hit ( Educa, no pegues)</b>
<b>Campaign date:</b>	1999
<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.savethechildren.es/publicaciones/educa-no-pegues">https://www.savethechildren.es/publicaciones/educa-no-pegues</a>
<b>Who was the promoter:</b>	Save the Children. UNICEF, CEAPA (Spanish Federated Associations of Mothers and Fathers of Students) y CONCAPA (National Catholic Alliance of Parents of Students). With the collaboration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>Objective:</b>	To raise awareness among the population, and especially mothers, fathers, and professionals responsible for the care of children, with regard to the consequences associated with physical punishment. Promote positive and non-violent forms of child-rearing and child care in the family. Inform girls and boys about their rights.

<b>Dissemination means used:</b>	Activities in educational centres, in universities, in different types of childhood associations, and in the media.
<b>Methodology used:</b>	Development of materials for diffusion. – Training courses for mothers and fathers structured in six sessions (includes one specific to the campaign), with theoretical content and corresponding practical activities. - Guide for mothers and fathers (first edition, January 2001). – Dissemination of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. – Promotion of public debates, conferences and seminars.
<b>Scope:</b>	The campaign develops activities at the national and regional level
<b>Target population:</b>	Parents, professionals, and minors.

Source: created by the author

**Table 2: Data file of the campaign entitled, 'Hitting is not correcting'.**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>2. Hitting is not correcting (<i>Corregir no es pegar</i>)</b>
<b>Campaign date:</b>	2006
<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.ceapa.es/content/corregir-no-es-pegar-1">https://www.ceapa.es/content/corregir-no-es-pegar-1</a>
<b>Who was the promoter:</b>	Save the Children and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
<b>Objective:</b>	To eradicate physical punishment and any other forms of violence against children within the family. Create spaces for reflection, training, debate and support that promote healthier and non-violent forms of child-rearing.
<b>Dissemination means used:</b>	Schools for parents, hospitals and social services
<b>Methodology used:</b>	Preparation of leaflets and brochures in which guidelines were offered to address the issue of physical punishment and alternatives to this type of castigation in child-rearing in the family were presented. Talks were held - colloquiums for mothers and fathers, and training-debate workshops for professionals.
<b>Scope:</b>	National
<b>Target population:</b>	Parents and Professionals.

Source: created by the author

**Table 3: Data file of the campaign 'My well-being is your responsibility'.**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>3. My well-being is your responsibility (<i>Mi bienestar es tu responsabilidad</i>)</b>
<b>Campaign date:</b>	2006

<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQqPYPwAjbI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQqPYPwAjbI</a>
<b>Who was the promoter:</b>	Federated Associations for the Prevention of Child Abuse (FAPMI). Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
<b>Objective:</b>	To raise awareness among citizens regarding all types of violence directed at minors.
<b>Dissemination means used:</b>	Publicity on Internet.
<b>Methodology used:</b>	video
<b>Scope:</b>	National
<b>Target population:</b>	General public

Source: created by the authors

**Table 4: Data file of the campaign ‘My well-being is your responsibility – It hurts, doesn’t it?’.**

<b>Title:</b>	4. My well-being is your responsibility – It hurts, doesn’t it? ( <i>Mi bienestar es tu responsabilidad- ¿A que duele?</i> )
<b>Campaign date:</b>	2007
<b>Link:</b>	Blog: <a href="https://todoscontraelmaltratoinfantil.blogspot.com.es/2010/06/02antecedentes-de-la-iii-campana.html">https://todoscontraelmaltratoinfantil.blogspot.com.es/2010/06/02antecedentes-de-la-iii-campana.html</a>
<b>Who was the promoter:</b>	Federated Associations for the Prevention of Child Abuse (FAPMI). Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
<b>Objective:</b>	To raise awareness among citizens regarding all types of violence directed at children.
<b>Dissemination means used:</b>	Advertising on public streets and Internet. Bus advertising was hired in Madrid, the greater Madrid area, Oviedo, Leon, Santander, Sevilla and Murcia.
<b>Methodology used:</b>	Poster advertising
<b>Scope:</b>	National
<b>Target population:</b>	General population
<b>Poster advertisement:</b>	

Source: created by the author

**Table 5: Data file of the campaign ‘My well-being is your responsibility – It hurts, doesn’t it?’**

<b>Title:</b>	5. My well-being is your responsibility – You can avoid it ( <i>Mi bienestar es tu responsabilidad- Tú puedes evitarlo</i> )
<b>Campaign date:</b>	2008
<b>Link:</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Todos-contra-el-Maltrato-Infantil-144332125593990/?ref=ts">https://www.facebook.com/Todos-contra-el-Maltrato-Infantil-144332125593990/?ref=ts</a> <a href="http://todoscontraelmaltratoinfantil.blogspot.com.es/">http://todoscontraelmaltratoinfantil.blogspot.com.es/</a>
<b>Who was the promoter:</b>	Federated Associations for the Prevention of Child Abuse (FAPMI) Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
<b>Objective:</b>	To raise awareness among citizens regarding the need to report all types of violence directed at minors.
<b>Dissemination means used:</b>	Advertising on public streets and Internet. Bus advertising was hired in Madrid, the greater Madrid area, Oviedo, Leon, Santander, Sevilla and Murcia.
<b>Methodology used:</b>	Poster advertising, blog and facebook
<b>Scope:</b>	National
<b>Target population:</b>	General public
<b>Poster advertisement:</b>	

Source: created by the author

**Table 6: Data file for the campaign, ‘Raise your hand against physical punishment, your hands are to protect’.**

<b>Title:</b>	6. Raise your hand against physical punishment, your hands are to protect. ( <i>Levanta la mano contra el castigo físico. Tus manos son para proteger</i> ).
<b>Campaign date:</b>	2008
<b>Link:</b>	Spot <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=248AQHLSqTo">www.youtube.com/watch?v=248AQHLSqTo</a>
<b>Who was the promoter:</b>	Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport.
<b>Objective:</b>	To raise awareness regarding the need to suppress child-rearing techniques based on physical punishment, heightening the consciousness of parents, educators and adults in general to the fact that children have rights, and they should not be subject to behaviours such as slapping the face, swatting the buttocks, whipping, screaming, harassment, etc., which is something that no adult would tolerate.

<b>Dissemination means used:</b>	Television, Internet.
<b>Methodology used:</b>	Publicity spot “Your hands are to protect” (“ <i>Tus manos son para proteger</i> ”), Poster advertising.
<b>Scope:</b>	National, European
<b>Target population:</b>	General public, parents
<b>Poster:</b>	

Source: created by the author

## 2.2. Categorical content analysis of the publicity resources used

Following in the footsteps of authors such as Vázquez Sito (1997), Andreu (2002) or Oliveira (2008), a categorical content analysis of the materials and videos of the campaigns was carried out.

The analysis of thematic categorical content consisted of trying to identify the elements of the publicity messages, then later proceeding to group them into categories where the similarities and likenesses between them were considered, based on pre-established criteria according to research objectives. An advertisement may possess one, or none, of the variables, and therefore the number of times a variable appears is shown in relation to the total number of campaigns analysed.

Focusing on the objective of the study, the categories have been arranged for the purpose of trying to answer the questions that will allow for the definition of a suitable model to describe a certain act of communication. Specifically, Who?; What is said?; and How is it stated?; Through what channel is it said?; To whom?; and With what effect? Moreover, with regard to the variables, these have been pointed out as key elements in persuasive communication) (Briñol et al., 2007, Moya, 2000):

### 1. WHO SAYS IT

#### 1.1. Promoters

#### 1.2. Characters involved in the communication: victims, protectors, punishers, experts.

#### 1.3. Narrator: these were divided into two categories.

1.3.1. The narrator in third person: when it is impersonal, known as a “voice over”. The “voice” of the narrator can also be text.

1.3.2. Characters: when the people who appear in the communication are the ones who speak (either in recordings or by gathering their testimonies into texts).

## 2. WHAT IT SAYS

2.1. What is communicated? : The objective of the campaign.

2.2. How is it communicated? (persuasive elements of the message):

2.2.1. The conclusions are clear and explicit, or on the contrary, ambiguous, with the public having to draw their own conclusions.

2.2.2. The messages are unilateral, only with arguments in support of the position defended by the speaker, or bilateral, which contain points of view contrary to that of the speaker.

2.2.3. Organization of the message. The best arguments go at the beginning (Primacy) or at the end (Recency)

2.2.4. Probability of occurrence of the consequences contained in the message.

2.3. Tone of the communication: Refers to the different perspectives of the narrative from which a speech can be produced, and the way of communicating the message.

2.3.1. Emotional: there is an allusion to scenes or affective behaviours with which people can identify. Appeals to feelings and emotions.

2.3.2. Informative: its main characteristic is to inform, objectively showing a fact or situation.

## 3. CHANNEL

3.1. Media used: TV, Radio, Press, etc.

## 4. TO WHOM IT IS DIRECTED

4.1. Recipients: Minors, Parents, Professionals, Society in general, Administration.

## 5. IN WHAT CONTEXT IS IT PRODUCED

5.1. Whether or not it responds to incidences that occurred during its preparation

## 6. WITH WHAT EFFECT

6.1. Activities report

6.2. Impact on social networks: information on the number of visits on Internet of the videos and/or materials of the campaigns.

Results for the different types of advertisements have been unified. They are valued as 1 = yes; 0 = no; and they are counted in a table where the frequency total of each variable studied appears.

### 3. Results

From the original descriptive analysis carried out by the Spanish team of the PUNISH-ER project, along with the new data collected in this work, we proceeded to quantify these parameters in order for us to visualize trends that were presented in the campaigns and will be analysed later (Table 7).

**Table 7. Categorical content analysis of persuasive resources used in the campaigns.**

	Campaign		1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	
<b>WHO:</b>	Characters	Victims (the minors)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	
		Adult Aggressors (the parents)			1		1		2	
		Protective adults			1				1	
		Experts							0	
	Text type	Institutional narration	1	1	1	1			1	5
		Characters		1						1
<b>WHAT:</b>	Campaign objective	Prevent slapping the face or swatting the buttocks			1				1	
		Encourage reporting				1	1		2	
		Promote other forms of child-rearing	1	1					1	3
		Inform regarding consequences	1	1						2
	Content	Explicit conclusions	1	1		1				3
		Implicit conclusions			1				1	2
		Unilateral messages	1	1		1	1	1	1	5
		Bilateral Messages			1					1
		Primacy	1	1						2
		Recency			1	1	1	1	1	4
		Probability of occurrence	1	1				1	1	4
	Tone	Emotional			1				1	2
		Informative	1	1					1	3
<b>TO WHOM:</b>	Target groups	Children	1			1			2	
		Parents	1	1	1				1	4
		Professionals	1	1						2
		Administration								0
		Society in general			1	1	1	1	1	4

<b>CHANNEL:</b>	Dissemination medium	T.V.						1	1
		Press				1		1	2
		Outdoor advertising				1			1
		Internet	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
		Direct mail							0
		Flyers	1	1		1		1	4
		Expositions				1			1
		Educational activities	1	1					2
		Didactic materials	1						1
<b>EFFECT:</b>	Impact evaluation	Activity report				1		1	
		Prevalence studies			1			1	

Source: created by the authors based on the study prepared by the research team of the European project PUNISH-ER in Spain (Dominici, Henao and Rico (coords.), 2013)

From the analysis of the campaigns carried out in Spain for the purpose of eradicating corporal punishment, different conclusions can be drawn regarding both their content and their impact.

The timing of the campaigns demonstrates a growing interest in the issue in the years following the legal modification of 2007, only to disappear from the government's agenda from 2008 onward.

Table 7 shows that in most cases the issuer is the government together with entities of recognized international prestige, who through voice-overs or written texts denounce and/or induce action (5 of the 6 analysed campaigns). This strategy confers credibility to the message and facilitates its acceptance.

The protagonists in all cases are the minors themselves, the victims (5 of the 6 campaigns), although the aggressors also appear on occasion and in some cases the adults have a protective role. This reveals the harm of physical punishment but not the reasons for its application or alternative strategies.

In slogans that reflect the intention of the message, the positive messages and the call for child-rearing strategies that are alternatives to physical punishment stand out (in 3 of the 6 campaigns) such as: ("Teach, don't hit", your hands are to protect"). Likewise, the convenience of avoiding methods of physical discipline such as a slap on the face or a swat on the buttocks is shown.

The weight of other strategies aimed at providing information regarding the consequences of physical punishment of minors is important, as well as encouraging citizens to denounce these actions (4 of the 6 campaigns).

Regarding the types of messages used in the campaigns, Table 7 shows a predominance of unilateral messages (in 5 of the 6 campaigns) and explicit conclusions (3 of the 6 campaigns). Initially, these strategies would ensure the attention of a less motivated public with fewer skills. However, by looking specifically at the campaign known as "Your hands are to protect", which has been the most far-reaching campaign due to the use of mass dissemination channels such as television, this campaign uses implicit conclusions and is therefore more difficult for the general public to comprehend.

The best arguments usually appear at the end of the message (in 4 of the 6 campaigns) which seems to favour comprehension of the message if the potential recipients are poorly motivated.

On the other hand, the majority (4 of the 6 campaigns) report a high probability of occurrence of positive consequences if the recommendations in the message are followed.

Finally, informative tones predominate (in 3 of the 6 campaigns analysed) when compared to those that are emotional. As the main objective is to change beliefs that sustain attitudes favourable to the use of physical punishment, this persuasive strategy seems adequate initially, although its use might be constrained by the use of materials in paper format in many cases.

The campaigns are directed mainly at mothers and fathers (4 of the 6 campaigns), and to a lesser extent to the minors themselves, so that they know how to recognize and defend their rights (2 of the 6 campaigns), as well as professionals (2 of the 6 campaigns) in order to help them guide their involvement.

It has also been observed that while the first campaigns issued had a clear educational content aimed at parents and children, the most recent aim to raise awareness of the problem among the population in general.

Regarding dissemination means, only two of the campaigns were disseminated through television advertisements, with the others being directed at educational and civic environments through the use of leaflets (4 of the 6 campaigns), activities, and didactic manuals (3 of the 6 campaigns), outdoor advertising (1 campaign), and even in one case, an exhibition with drawings created by the minors themselves. The Internet has repeated all of these actions by circulating videos on YouTube, materials through the websites and blogs, and also through social networks like Facebook.

Regarding the context in which they were issued, the precedent for the 2006 campaigns was the study of the aforementioned CIS, and the last two campaigns were disseminated after Law 54 of December 28, 2007 went into effect, which prohibited the use of physical punishment. The new legislative amendments of 2015 have not brought with them any new institutional campaigns.

The analysis of the impact of the campaigns studied is complicated due to the fact that since 2005 there have been no prevalence studies of this disciplinary practice to allow us to assess a hypothetical decrease in the use of physical punishment. If such studies had been carried out they would have influenced this study. There is also no report of activities related to the implementation of the campaigns except in one case, the 2007 campaign. However, the reactions of the population against the entry into force of Law 54 of December 28, 2007, which prohibited the use of physical punishment, reflect the low level of social awareness regarding the harm of this practice.

In the absence of an impact evaluation on the part of the promoting institutions, and by using tools such as Woorank ([www.woorank.com](http://www.woorank.com)) and Website SEO analysis (<https://iwebchk.com>), Table 8 takes into account certain indicators such as the number of visits received on the websites, videos and/or social networks related to these (View Per Channel or VPC), the number of followers on Twitter or 'shared' on Facebook.

**Table 8: Analysis of the impact on Internet.**

Campaign name	VPC	Followers in Twitter	'Shared' on Facebook
<b>Teach, don't hit:</b>	13,267		973
<b>Hitting is not correcting:</b>	913	6,208	178
<b>My well-being is your responsibility:</b>	346		
<b>My well-being is your responsibility. It hurts, doesn't it?:</b>	1579		14
<b>My well-being is your responsibility. You can avoid it:</b>			1989
<b>Your hands are to protect:</b>	253,076		478

Source: created by the authors

In terms of monitoring the population, the last campaign stands out the most, probably due to the fact that the dissemination means chosen was the mass media of television along with attractive elements such as music and colour. On the other hand, its impact might have been limited by other factors that may have impeded the development of the message, such as its ambiguity.

#### 4. Discussion

Eradicating the use of corporal punishment in child-rearing is proving to be an arduous task. Although prevalence figures seem to have declined in many countries in the last decade (Zolotor et al., 2011), a look at the reactions provoked by the 2007 legislative change in our country aimed at prohibiting the use of corporal punishment as a tool of parental discipline, as well as the latest studies carried out for this purpose (Calvete, Gámez-Guadix and Orue, 2010, Gámez-Guadix et al., 2010b), indicate the extent to which there is social tolerance toward this action as a way of correcting children within the family, and a discrepancy between beliefs and parental behaviour. However, this also shows how the change of trend is not directed toward the development of positive disciplinary strategies, but toward the substitution of physical punishment for other punitive tactics more closely linked to emotional abuse, such as insulting, threatening, humiliating, etc. (Rosser, 2015).

No new surveys have been conducted at the national level, and the issue has disappeared from sociological barometers.

In spite of this, the research has revealed the risks involved in this child-rearing practice in the psycho-social development of minors (Fergusson and Lynskey, 1997, Gámez-Guadix et al, 2010a, Grogan-Kaylor, 2004, Landsford et al, 2014; Scott, Lewsey, Thompson and Wilson, 2013; Simons and Wurtele, 2010, Smith, Springer and Barret, 2011, Torío, Peña and Inda, 2008, among others).

The commitment of prestigious international organizations such as UNICEF and Save the Children has been supported by the scientific evidence on the damage of this child-rearing practice for the purpose of its eradication and for the development of positive discipline strategies together with the legal mandate fostered by the most recent legislative changes in Spain on child protection issues.

However, what could be a beneficial framework for the development and impact of these campaigns has clashed with the attitudes of the population, where deeply held beliefs and customs persist in society with regard to the “usefulness” of a slap on the face or swat on the buttocks as a means of correction, and with the social alarm provoked by the policy changes.

The fact that it is not a priority issue for the population to which these campaigns are directed, together with the controversy and/or lack of agreement expressed by those responsible for ensuring compliance with the legal regulations on what should and should not be done in the field of child-rearing, transforms this issue into a threat that may be having an influence on the scarce presence of campaigns related to this issue in the media.

Thus, what remains is to evaluate existing campaigns according to what they are like how they have worked in persuading society to avoid the use of physical punishment in Spain.

To change the habits and attitudes of individuals is difficult (Briñol et al., 2007), but publicity can help develop persuasive strategies that facilitate this change of attitude through campaigns that raise awareness.

In order to achieve this attitude change, and in order for the campaigns to become a primary prevention mechanism by raising awareness, they must be directed at society in general and be launched through the mass media, which will allow for a change of opinion that is contrary to the use of physical punishment as a child-raising strategy.

With regard to the results of this work, on one hand it confirms that the media have in fact paid very little attention to the physical punishment inflicted on children, which was denounced by the Council of Europe (2008). This issue only achieved some degree of importance in Spain between 2006 and 2008, but the problem requires determined action that is sustained over time in order to show results (Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8, paragraphs 45-49).

To change deeply-held attitudes takes time and requires continuous investment that involves activities at various levels, and for that reason campaigns of this type should have a greater and more continuous presence in the media. As Benet and Nos Aldas (2003) point out, “social publicity must follow a long, profound process in order to modify beliefs and ideologies and to change long term attitudes”. However, revision of the campaigns that is the focus of this work shows a low level of diffusion through mass media channels such as television, as well as scarce continuity.

On the other hand, selling intangibles such as positive child-rearing strategies or non-violence can become a difficult task if there is no clear motivation to awaken the interest of the community (Orozco, 2010), and the analysis of the reactions that the legislative changes provoked in their day, or the data of the CIS (2005), do not reflect the existence of this motivation in Spanish society. This study also indicates that the campaigns have not had a large presence in the media.

If we adhere to the results of the research carried out in our country, its impact has also been limited in changing the attitude of the population (Calvete, Gámez-Guadix and Orue, 2010, Gámez-Guadix et al., 2010b), or it has veered towards another type of punitive practice of a more emotional nature (Rosser, 2015).

If these types of obstacles are present in the scenario and prevent the messages from reaching the population, then it is necessary to have powerful persuasive strategies to strive for a change of attitude in society.

In this sense, we know that in order for social publicity campaigns to be effective in the development of their objectives, they must be clear with what they want to say (the message), the purpose of the communication (why and for what purpose), and the audience to which the communication is directed (Orozco, 2010). The choice of elements such as the source, type of message, etc., will be determined by the kind of audience to be addressed (Moya, 2000, Morales, Moya, Gaviria, and Cuadrado, 2007).

In order to advance in the eradication of moderate physical punishment of minors, the campaigns that are the object of study in this work should inform parents who use such punitive actions of its harm, and by way of their messages, persuade them to change their child-rearing practices. Therefore, it is important to know the target audience (Moliner, 1998, Orozco, 2010), which implies, with regard to the subject at hand, gaining knowledge as to the reasons why parents resort to corporal punishment, and from there establish objectives and a way to achieve them in order to prepare the materials and tools necessary to promote positive parenting (Global Initiative to end all corporal punishment towards children, and Save the Children, 2010).

Social publicity campaigns can modify deeply rooted attitudes by acting directly on beliefs; in other words, they provide additional information in a way that changes the opinion of the viewer (for example, broadening or deepening the previous view of a problem), or offering new points of view, so that when the perspective of the focus is changed, the assessment of the problem also changes (Condeluppi, 2007).

In general, we know that fathers and mothers who use corporal punishment do so because they observed their elders doing the same thing, and because they intend to teach and correct their underage children's behaviour, and for that reason, campaigns should question these beliefs that are so deeply rooted and show parents that they can get the same result by using other methods.

However, a critical analysis of the content of the campaigns studied indicates that the messages analysed were intended to arouse emotions in the spectators (affective component). An example is, "It hurts, doesn't it?" Another tries to change the way of acting (conative component) of the victims ("Teach, don't hit"), or that of society ("You can avoid it"), all of which were intended to change their attitudes, but the messages did not influence the reasons that lead parents to use physical punishment as a child-rearing tool, offering other points of view that show the advantages or benefits of replacing those practices with positive discipline strategies.

Therefore, the messages do not affect the cognitive component of the attitudes that we want to change. They resort instead to strategies of a heuristic nature, striking images, attractive characters, unilateral messages, explicit conclusions, etc., which allow an audience to be reached that is not very involved, but that hardly generate thoughts in response to the proposal. Therefore, they will produce a weaker attitude change in terms of resistance, stability, and prediction of future behaviour (Briñol et al., 2007).

Finally, it should be noted that it is not enough only to make the population aware of this prohibition. Although it is necessary to educate people about the negative consequences of the corporal punishment of children, it is also essential to give child-rearing alternatives. In addition, it is necessary to carry out the intense promotion of positive, non-violent and participatory methods of discipline (Global Initiative to end corporal punishment towards children, 2009).

In this sense, some of the campaigns analysed in this paper propose strategies to develop other types of child-rearing guidelines through manuals, training workshops, etc. However, as these actions are not due to social demand, their effectiveness is jeopardized due to the fact that only when a certain level of interest and concern has been generated can other types of strategies aimed at a specific population (secondary prevention) be effective, through the use of didactic materials, lectures, workshops, etc., directed at professionals, parents, and the minors themselves.

To conclude, it is necessary to point out that in order to achieve a change in attitude, it is necessary to promote the issue of awareness-raising campaigns against the use of physical punishment as a strategy to correct behaviour of minors. However,

it is important to do so while at the same time taking into account the psychological processes that will encourage a strong and long-lasting change of attitude, which at the same time will generate a change of behaviour, thus allowing corporal punishment to be eradicated.

Consequently, it is suggested that the design of these campaigns should include a preliminary investigation in which the target audience is studied, as well as the places where the campaign will be carried out, and the media to be used, in order to establish suitable objectives and an appropriate relationship between strategies and tactics (Orozco, 2010). On the other hand, the media should assume a more active role in defending the rights of children, as promoted by its Code of Self-regulation of television content and childhood when it points out, among its objectives, the aim of impelling the hosts of live programs to give warnings with regard to situations that may affect the protection of minors, so as to minimize any possible harm they may be caused (García Galera, 2008). A suggestion is also made that in the field of publicity, as well in the child-rearing and legal spheres, an entire range of actions should be developed that aim to discredit physical punishment as a parenting strategy and seek alternatives for the upbringing of children.

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