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CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: OPINION VS. RESEARCH

A Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of requirements

for the degree of Master of Education

in the School of Education at

The University of Mississippi

By

Margaret Williamson

May 2011

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ABSTRACT

Corporal punishment is a heated topic, especially in Mississippi. The use of corporal punishment is deeply rooted in culture and religion for many. Many people feel that it is an acceptable method of disciplining children at home and in school although research has disproved this idea. In many families in the south, corporal punishment has been a trusted type of discipline for children for generations. With such a volatile subject matter, where culture and religion clash with reliable scientific research, what are the opinions of the teachers entering the field regarding this topic? Current research provides little insight into the opinions of education students regarding the use of corporal punishment. This study is designed to examine the opinions of Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI) students (students involved in an alternate teacher certification program in Mississippi) regarding the use, effectiveness, and appropriateness of corporal punishment. There is a definite gap in research regarding this topic. There is little to no research regarding the opinions of students in an alternate route to teacher certification about corporal punishment. This particular study will affect students, veteran teachers, new teachers, alternate route programs, principals, parents, teachers, students, administrators, alternate route faculty & instructors and anyone thinking of creating a new teacher licensure program. The results of the study prove that the majority of TMI II participants are in favor of the use of corporal punishment at school and believe that it is an effective practice to diminish unwanted behavior. TMI students are in favor of this practice despite the research that they were provided by TMI instructors that denounce the practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Another round of thanks goes to the Mrs. Paige Davis and Mrs. Anne Klingen in the Department of Independent Studies at the University of Mississippi. These women have guided me as a graduate assistant in the TMI program and helped me to understand the program better.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Sidney Rowland. She has been my mentor, my advisor, and my boss, and my friend throughout my time in graduate school. I could never have done any of this work without her help.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Is corporal punishment just legalized child abuse? That is the discussion topic during one of the units of an alternate route to teaching program in Mississippi called the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI). The prompt is worded in a way to inspire students to actively participate in discussions and contribute to the class conversation about the topic. The goal is to have students to candidly respond to the prompt, referencing the research that is available regarding the topic and considering personal opinions and experiences. Out of all of the discussions, this particular discussion is always the most heated. Students feel very strongly about this issue. The majority of students in the second component of the TMI program agree that corporal punishment is an acceptable and efficient form of punishment. TMI students believe in this form of discipline despite professors, textbooks, and numerous websites that are provided to students suggesting the ineffectiveness of this method. This shocking choice of opinion over scientific study has prompted a more in-depth look at corporal punishment and the opinions regarding its practice.

Definitions

Corporal punishment is a very complex issue. Many people have many different definitions of corporal punishment. There seem to be as many definitions of corporal punishment as there are articles about the subject. For the purpose of this article, corporal punishment is defined using the definition provided on the National Center for the Research of Corporal Punishment and Alternatives webpage (<http://www.ruane productions.com/NCSCPA/cp.html>).

They define corporal punishment as “causing someone to experience pain or discomfort in order to try and change their behavior. This includes a wide range of activities such as spanking, padding, pulling hair, washing a child's mouth with soap, or making someone stand outside in cold weather.”

It is also necessary to describe the Teach Mississippi Institute (TMI) program. The TMI program is an alternate route to becoming a certified teacher in Mississippi. It allows people with a bachelor degree in subjects other than education to become Mississippi licensed secondary (grades 7 – 12) and special education teachers. The program consists of two main components, TMI 1 and TMI 2. The first component (TMI 1) is comprised of two live seminars, 10 weeks of online participation (weekly discussions and quizzes), and 60 hours of observation & participation in a secondary or special education classroom environment. They will be paired with a mentor teacher and the mentor will be asked to turn in evaluations of the student’s performance in the classroom.

Once the applicant has finished TMI 1, he or she is given a 1-year temporary license. Once the applicant seeks and finds employment, he or she can enroll in the second component (TMI 2). Entry into TMI 2 is only available with completion of all components of TMI 1, and a job in a secondary or special education position at a school in Mississippi. TMI 2 is also comprised of 2 live seminars, 10 weeks of online participation, (weekly discussions and quizzes) and work with a mentor assigned by their principal. Applicants must also complete and pass the Praxis tests I & II (www.tmi.olemiss.edu). These are state mandated tests for every teacher across the state. In this study, the main focus will be on TMI 2 because these are students who are teaching in the classroom everyday.

Students who complete alternate route programs are often different from students who complete typical 4-year programs. Students in alternate route programs like TMI already have a bachelor's degree. They are often older students. Many have families and have worked in other jobs. The flexibility of an online program can be very attractive to many people. The TMI program has catered to stay at home moms, military families, retirees, and people who work other jobs while in the first component. People who have lost their jobs in a tough economy have come to TMI to start anew. TMI and other alternate route programs bring people with real world experience in specific fields into the classroom to teach and inspire students. TMI is able to place former bankers and accountants in classrooms teaching algebra and calculus, former microbiologists and chemists teaching biology and chemistry, and former social workers and psychologists teaching students with special needs. These real world experiences can enrich the classroom and bring passion to teaching.

Research Purpose & Questions

Why, despite concrete research to the contrary, would TMI II students still believe that corporal punishment was an acceptable and efficient form of punishment? Current research provides little insight into the opinions of education students regarding the use of corporal punishment. This study is aimed to study the opinions of TMI students regarding the use, effectiveness, and appropriateness of corporal punishment.

Limitations and Scope

Corporal punishment is a hot-button issue not only around the state and nation, but also around the world. Some countries have banned the practice completely and others, like the United States, allow the practice in schools districts (in some states) and at home. This issue

particular study will affect students, veteran teachers, new teachers, alternate route programs, principals, parents, teachers, students, administrators, alternate route faculty & instructors and anyone thinking of creating a new teacher licensure program. This study will be particularly of interest to teachers, principals, administrators, alternate route programs, and universities in Mississippi. If teachers, especially teachers that are entering the field, believe that corporal punishment is acceptable and effective, then the practice will continue throughout the state. If teachers believe the practice to be ineffective, then the practice is one step closer to being phased out of the schools in the state.

There is a definite gap in research regarding this topic. There is little to no research regarding the opinions of students in an alternate route to teacher certification about corporal punishment. This study is limited in its scope. It only examines one of the 3 alternate teaching route programs in the state. It is confined to only one state, Mississippi. Data was only collected from one group of TMI II students. The data is also limited in that students in the TMI II program are only entering positions in secondary and special education. Elementary education is omitted from the research. These limitations aside, this research will provide a starting place for other research of this kind.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A Brief History of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment has been a consistent part of our culture and education for centuries. The very first legislation and social commentary on corporal punishment occurred during the Victorian era. During this time, teachers were able to act “in loco parentis” or in place of parents. This allowed teachers to legally act as a parent while a child was in the classroom. This protected teachers when they used corporal punishment in the classroom. The teacher could simply explain that to ensure that the student was on the right path away from sin, the student needed to receive corporal punishment to be reminded about what the right and wrong choices were in a particular situation (Dupper, 2008).

A popular teaching guide of the late nineteenth century called *The Principals and Practice of Teaching and Class Management* advocated the use of corporal punishment to “induce him voluntarily to put forth his efforts”(Middleton, 2008). A teacher with a cane or stick administered most of the corporal punishment. The teacher would strike the student with the cane on the palms of the hands (Middleton, 2008). Corporal punishment at this time in history was not limited to school use. This was a time when children were being forced into the workplace to be exploited and abused. Children took jobs in factories, mills, and mines that, by today’s standards would clearly amount to child abuse. The social climate of the late nineteenth century was not very child-friendly, to say the least.

In London in 1889, the idea and practice of caning as a reasonable method to punish students first arrived in court (Middleton, 2008). At first, the Magistrate sided with the parents who were against the practice. They declared, “caning on the hands was not proper punishment”(Middleton, 2008). Then, after an appeal, the Magistrate reversed its decision and endorsed caning. This gave the classroom teacher a large amount of power in the classroom that parents and students had to put up with on a daily basis. Dunning states that “corporal punishment was viewed as a necessary form of discipline for the following three reasons: (1) to produce people who would conform to accepted societal norms; (2) to “beat out the obstinacy” that was viewed as a syndrome of “original sin” and (3) to ensure that learning occurs. (Dunning).”

Dr. Sigmund Freud shed some of the first “sanity” on the issue of corporal punishment. In the 1920’s and 1930’s he looked at the relationship between corporal punishment and child development (Dunning). This has lead to many great articles, discussions, and studies on the topic. In a sense, Dr. Freud brought the effectiveness of corporal punishment to social consciousness where it has stayed.

In 1975 a court case was once again introduced. In this the case, *Ingraham v. Wright*, the courts considered if the use of corporal punishment in schools was a violation of the constitution and 14th amendment (Dupper, 2008). The courts found in favor of the school and have since then provided a precedent for states to continue the use of corporal punishment.

Positives

I want to start off the discussion about corporal punishment with the positives. I want to make sure that this paper addresses both sides of the issue and does not lean more to one side or the other. However, I found it extremely difficult to find scholarly articles backing the use of corporal punishment. From my own experience growing up in Mississippi, there are many parents, educators, administrators, and community members who endorse the use of corporal punishment. Many of my own peers have both used and been subject to corporal punishment. Their main thoughts about corporal punishment seem to be that they were subject to corporal punishment as a child, and they “turned out okay”, then corporal punishment must not be that bad. I did find one author, Chad Seifried, who did advocate for the use of corporal punishment. His area of expertise is in physical education. He states that the use of corporal punishment in the arena of physical education can be beneficial to students. His definition of corporal punishment greatly varies from my definition. His definition makes sure the reader knows the difference between discipline and punishment. He also includes things like running extra laps, doing push-ups, and running drills as corporal punishment. Seifried does make sure to mention that the overuse of any of these punishments can amount to abuse. He specifically cited gym teachers who expect classes to end in humiliation, vomit, and passing out as abuse. Seifried claims that this type of punishment is good for the students and for their moral (2010).

Negatives

Overwhelmingly the research that I was able to find was against the use of corporal punishment. There are, numerous scholarly articles, numerous webpages, foundations, and societies with the sole objective of educating, persuading, and changing the legislation regarding

corporal punishment. Some of the more notable websites are www.stophitting.com (Center for Effective Discipline), www.nospank.net (Project No Spank) and, <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org> (End All Corporal Punishment of Children). Why all the fuss about this topic? Why is corporal punishment such a bad thing? Admittedly 90% of American parents admit to having once used corporal punishment and 40% -70% admit to more recent use (Lansford, 2008). If so many parents are aware of corporal punishment and are using it in their homes, why are there so many articles and societies aimed at dismantling the practice? The research speaks volumes.

The first question that comes to mind about corporal punishment is does it really work? If the practice is proven ineffective, then all of the arguments about its use and legality are moot. The findings on this topic, interestingly enough, are harder to come by. Most studies are more willing to look at the various effects of corporal punishment rather than its actual accuracy. The common sense about corporal punishment is that it is a punishment that, on its own, deters behavior because the student wants to avoid the punishment. This does not cause the student to think about the broader implications of his or her actions. So if a young student is caught touching a fragile glass object and the only punishment is corporal punishment, then the student may not touch the glass again because the student fears getting caught and spanked. The student has not learned that the object is fragile and may have significant meaning to the parent or teacher. The student also did not learn that the fragile glass could break and hurt the student. This type of punishment is really only efficient in the short run and does not impose any morals or big picture lessons (Gershoff, 2007). Finally, “administering corporal punishment legitimizes the practice of violence by using violent means to solve behavior problems” (Dupper, 2008).

Not only has corporal punishment *not* been proven to be the most effective form of punishment but also, it has been linked to various detrimental side effects. Corporal punishment has been found to increase physical aggression, verbal aggression, fighting and bullying, antisocial behaviors (Gershoff, 2007) delinquency, and even criminality (Lansford, 2008). It has also been shown to increase the risk of mental health problems, problems with parent relationships and problems into adulthood (Gershoff, 2007). Some of the mental health issues include and are not limited to, depression, anxiety, general psychological maladjustment, and increased stress levels (Gershoff, 2007). Even more worrying is the fact that many cases of abuse by parents begin as an attempt at corporal punishment (Gershoff, 2007).

With all of the research pointing to the ineffectiveness and ill effects of the use of corporal punishment, many national associations have come out officially denouncing the use of corporal punishment. The National Education Association said, “corporal punishment should not be used” (NEA). The National Association of School Psychologists posted a statement, not only denouncing the use of corporal punishment but also announcing that it will, “seek the prohibition of corporal punishment in all schools” (NASP). The Journal of Adolescent Health posted a statement for the Society for Adolescent Medicine that referred to corporal punishment in the school setting “an ineffective, dangerous, and unacceptable method of discipline” (Journal of Adolescent Health). Many other organizations have officially denounced corporal punishment; this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Religion & Culture

Since corporal punishment has been officially denounced by numerous organizations, is associated with numerous ill side effects, and has been proven to be longitudinally ineffective,

then why do some people still advocate for this practice? The answer may lie in two very important issues, religion and culture. Lets begin with a look at how religion plays a part in the use of corporal punishment.

There is a very famous Biblical verse that is loosely translated as spare the rod, spoil the child. This implies that if a corporal punishment is not used as a way to discipline children, children will become “spoiled”. This one verse has proven very problematic for people against the use of corporal punishment and a fierce tool for its advocates. A handful of Christian religious sects believe in “Biblical literalism” or that every word of the Bible is to be read and interpreted literally (Owen, 2006). These religious sects are also known as Evangelical Protestants but as Owen and Wagner point out, it is hard to put an adequate label on these religious groups. This religious group, with its devoted group of followers, believes very strongly in the absolute literal translation of the Bible. This makes them extremely hard to convince.

Evangelical Protestants also tend to believe in a punitive god and believe that physical punishment is an acceptable form of punishment for sin (Owen, 2006). This group believes that since God is punitive, “behavior inconsistent with biblical teachings reflects weak character” and therefore should be punished (Owen, 2006). In a study out of the University of Oklahoma, researchers found that not only does religion impact the attitudes of parents, but also specifically, Evangelical Protestant parents were more supportive of corporal punishment (Grasmick, 1992). In the study, the effects of religion far outweighed all of the other factors when considering views about corporal punishment (Grasmick, 1992). Views about corporal punishment that are rooted in religion and literal translations of the Bible may prove hard to change.

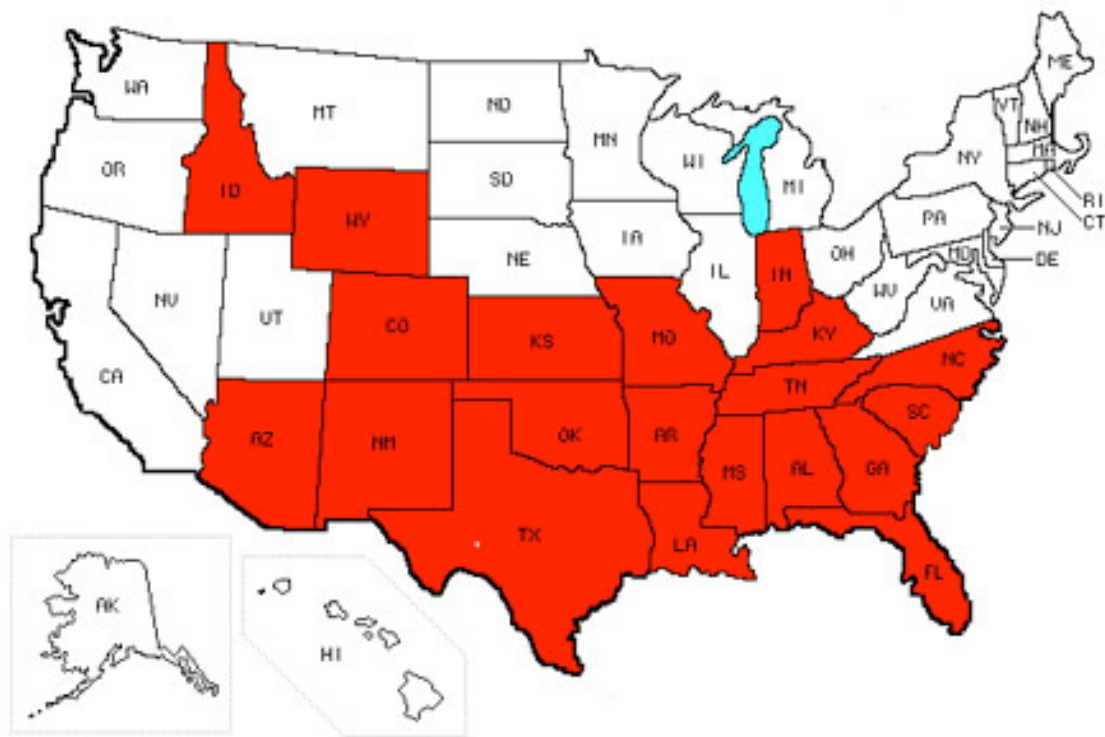
Culture is the other variable that must be considered when looking at the views regarding corporal punishment. The word culture can really encompass a lot of things. For the purpose of this study, a culture that promotes corporal punishment is one in which corporal punishment is accepted, a normal frequent practice, and no added stigma is placed on a parent, teacher, administrator, or child for administering or receiving corporal punishment. Many cultures continue the use of corporal punishment simply because it is an accepted practice and it has been used for generations. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. A 2008 study by Lansford and Dodge, looked at the correlation of culture and corporal punishment. The results are startling. “Within a cultural group, greater normalitiveness of corporal punishment weakens the link between a child’s individual-level experience of corporal punishment within that culture and his or her aggressive behavior; however, between cultural groups, greater normalitiveness of corporal punishment has now been empirically related to greater levels of societal violence and endorsement of violence” (Lansford, 2008). This provides a complicated paradox for both those pro and anti corporal punishment.

Legislation & Current Statistics

When our founders created this country and its constitution, they did a peculiar thing. They left the power to regulate and run education to each individual state. Each state looks to other states and to the government for a guideline regarding education but ultimately, the power resides with each state. That is why the issue of whether or not to use corporal punishment varies state to state and even school district to school district. Currently twenty states allow schools districts to use some form of corporal punishment. Usually the community, school board, principal and superintendent are involved in the decision to use or not use this type of punishment. It can vary greatly even in the same town. For example, Lafayette county

Mississippi has two public school districts within its borders. The Lafayette school district is the county school system and the Oxford school district is the city school system. Both school districts are in very close proximity of one another. Oxford city schools has chosen to not offer corporal punishment as an option for disciplining students but, Lafayette county schools do offer that option.

Figure 1
20 States Allow Corporal Punishment in Schools



As Figure A shows, most of the states that allow corporal punishment as an option are located in the southern half of the United States. Typically, the southern states have a culture that embraces and endorses the use of corporal punishment. It is common for families to have used

corporal punishment for generations. This decrease in social stigma might explain the high number of students that receive corporal punishment in these states.

Table 1 – Number and Percentage of Students who Received Corporal Punishment in 2005-2006 school year. (www.stophitting.com)

State	Number of Students Hit	Percentage of Total Students
Alabama	33,716	4.5
Arkansas	22,314	4.7
Arizona	16	<0.0
Colorado	8	<0.0
Florida	7,185	.3
Georgia	18,249	1.1
Idaho	111	.04
Indiana	577	.05
Kansas	50	.01
Kentucky	2,209	.3
Louisiana	11,080	1.7
Missouri	5,159	.6
Mississippi	38,131	7.5
North Carolina	2,705	.2
New Mexico	705	.2
Ohio	672	.04
Oklahoma	14,828	2.3
South Carolina	1,409	.2
Tennessee	14,868	1.5
Texas	49,197	1.1
Wyoming	0	0

Table 2. The 10 worst states, by percentage of students struck by educators in the 2005-2006 school year (www.stophitting.com)

Rank	State	Percentage
1	Mississippi	7.5
2	Arkansas	4.7
3	Alabama	4.5
4	Oklahoma	2.3
5	Louisiana	1.7
6	Tennessee	1.5
7	Texas	1.1
8	Georgia	1.1
9	Missouri	.6
10	Florida	.3

Chart 1 shows the number of students who received corporal punishment in the 2005-2006 school year. Mississippi has the highest percentage of students who received corporal punishment in the nation.

Many countries around the globe have banned corporal punishment from being used in their schools. Here is a list from the website www.stophitting.com of countries that have prohibited the use of corporal punishment in schools:

Afghanistan , Albania, Algeria , Andorra , Angola , Armenia, Austria , Azerbaijan , Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia, Herzegovina , Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, China, Congo, Republic of Costa Rica, Croatia Cyprus , Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic DR, Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador , Estonia, Ethiopia , Falkland Islands, Fiji, Finland , Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Greenland , Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Islamic Rep. of Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan,

Jordan, Kenya , Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Latvia , Libyan Arab, Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia Fed. States , Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Namibia , Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua , Norway, Oman, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sao Tome, Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan , TFYR Macedonia, Thailand, Togo , Tonga , Turkmenistan, UK, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay , Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela , Yemen, and Zambia.

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to determine the opinions of TMI 2 students regarding the use of corporal punishment in schools with the use of a survey. Working closely with Dr. Sidney Rowland at the University of Mississippi, a survey was developed for this particular application. The survey was submitted and approved by the University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The survey consists of 21 likert scale questions and 3 other short answer questions. The final question asks if the student is teaching or plans to teach in special education or regular education. The survey defines corporal punishment as the use of a paddle to inflict physical pain on the student as punishment for misbehavior. The survey directs students to answer questions according to their opinion.

The survey was given to a group of 48 TMI II students during a mandatory seminar they attended in Oxford MS. A paper copy of the survey was handed out to each student. Each student was encouraged to be honest with his or her opinion and to fill out the entire survey. Dr. Sidney Rowland and Margaret Williamson were in the room when the students were filling out the survey. Students were asked to omit their name from the survey to ensure anonymity and to promote honest answers among the participants. Students in this study have already completed a unit of study about corporal punishment and its effects. They have been exposed to research denouncing the practice and listing the various side effects associated with the practice. A copy of the survey is included here.

Survey of Beliefs about Corporal Punishment

Please mark the column that reflects your opinion about each item related to corporal punishment. For the purpose of this survey, corporal punishment is defined as the use of a paddle to inflict physical pain on the student as punishment for misbehavior.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. My school allows the use of corporal punishment				
2. My school has policies regarding the use of corporal punishment.				
3. Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline.				
4. Corporal punishment is just legalized child abuse.				
5. Corporal punishment should be used as a disciplinary action within the school setting.				
6. Corporal punishment should be used as a disciplinary action in the home.				
7. I received corporal punishment when I was growing up.				
8. I would administer corporal punishment in the school setting.				
9. I would administer corporal punishment in my home.				
10. Corporal punishment is an effective method of decreasing unwanted behaviors.				
11. The use of a paddle is the only appropriate method of administering corporal punishment.				
12. The latest research points to the ineffectiveness of corporal punishment and suggests that it could cause long term harm to the student.				
13. Positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors is an effective method for diminishing inappropriate behaviors.				
14. Time-out or isolation is an effective method for diminishing inappropriate behaviors.				
15. School administrators are the only personnel who should administer corporal punishment.				
16. Corporal punishment should be administered by teachers.				
17. Corporal punishment perpetuates a cycle of child abuse.				

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18. Corporal punishment is harmful to the student's self-esteem.				
19. Corporal punishment is more appropriate for males rather than females.				
20. The use of corporal punishment is acceptable for all students, including students with disabilities.				
21. Racial minorities receive more corporal punishment than other students.				

23. Have you witnessed the use corporal punishment? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, do you agree with the way it was administered? Please explain.

24. Have you witnessed physical punishment other than paddling? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please describe.

25. If you were asked to write the guidelines for your school regarding the use or non-use of corporal punishment, what would your guidelines be?

26. What do you teach or plan to teach?

_____ Regular Education

_____ Special Education

4. RESULTS

The results of the survey are presented below in several charts and graphs. In Table 2, the results are displayed in total. Question number 24 was omitted because it was a short answer type of question. The chart shows the number of students who responded strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree to each question. Some of the students left some of the questions blank and that is recorded in the blank column. Some of the students marked more than one box or wrote words in the space provided. These have been recorded under the column marked other. Question number 25 asks students to identify themselves as either regular education teachers or special education teachers. Three students marked both boxes and that is recorded under the both column.

Table 2 Questionnaire Results

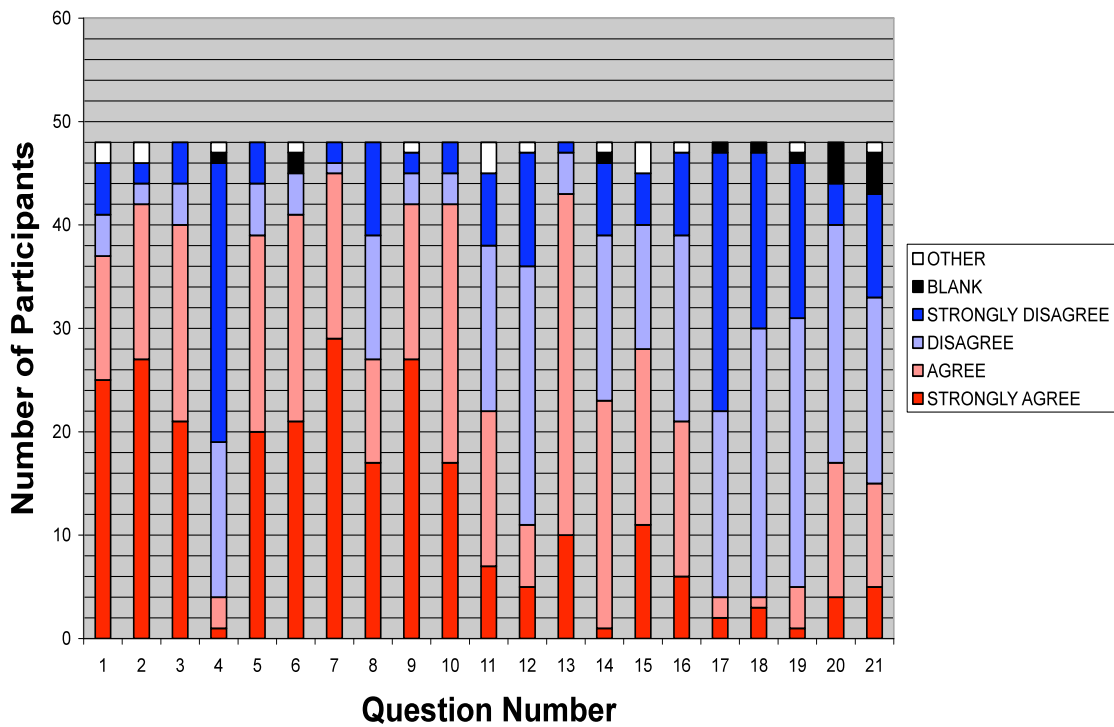
Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Blank	Other	Sum
1. My school allows the use of corporal punishment	25	12	4	5	0	2	48
2. My school has policies regarding the use of corporal punishment.	27	15	2	2	0	2	48
3. Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline.	21	19	4	4	0	0	48
4. Corporal punishment is just legalized child abuse.	1	3	15	27	1	1	48
5. Corporal punishment should be used as a disciplinary action within the school setting.	20	19	5	4	0	0	48
6. Corporal punishment should be used as a disciplinary action in the home.	21	20	4	0	2	1	48
7. I received corporal punishment when I was growing up.	29	16	1	2	0	0	48
8. I would administer corporal punishment in the school setting.	17	10	12	9	0	0	48
9. I would administer corporal punishment in my home.	27	15	3	2	0	1	48
10. Corporal punishment is an effective method of decreasing unwanted behaviors.	17	25	3	3	0	0	48
11. The use of a paddle is the only appropriate method of administering corporal punishment.	7	15	16	7	0	3	48
12. The latest research points to the ineffectiveness of	5	6	25	11	0	1	48

corporal punishment and suggests that it could cause long term harm to the student.							
13. Positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors is an effective method for diminishing inappropriate behaviors.	10	33	4	1	0	0	48
14. Time-out or isolation is an effective method for diminishing inappropriate behaviors.	1	22	16	7	1	1	48
15. School administrators are the only personnel who should administer corporal punishment.	11	17	12	5	0	3	48
16. Corporal punishment should be administered by teachers.	6	15	18	8	0	1	48
17. Corporal punishment perpetuates a cycle of child abuse.	2	2	18	25	1	0	48
18. Corporal punishment is harmful to the student's self-esteem.	3	1	26	17	1	0	48
19. Corporal punishment is more appropriate for males rather than females.	1	4	26	15	1	1	48
20. The use of corporal punishment is acceptable for all students, including students with disabilities.	4	13	23	4	4	0	48
21. Racial minorities receive more corporal punishment than other students.	5	10	18	10	4	1	48
	Yes	No			Blank	Other	Sum
22. Have you witnessed the use corporal punishment?	29	16			1	2	48
23. Have you witnessed physical punishment other	10	37			1	0	48

than paddling?							
	Regular Education	Special Education	Both		Blank	Other	Sum
25. What do you teach or plan to teach?	28	16	3		1	0	48

Further analysis of each question is located in graphs 2 – 24 in the appendix. Each graph corresponds to a particular question in the survey. It is included to give a better visual representation of each question. Graph number 1 is a bar graph of the information located in Table 2.

Graph 1 - Bar Graph of Table 2



Questions 22, 23, and 24 all ask for a short written response. Every student didn't respond to these questions but a few did. Table 3 is a sampling of the responses given for each question.

Table 3 Questions 22,23, & 24

Question	Example Response	Example Response	Example Response	Yes	NO	Blank	Other	Sum
22. Have you witnessed the use corporal punishment? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, do you agree with the way it was administered? Please explain.	“Yes, I witnessed my principal administer corporal punishment to one of my students.”	“Yes, my principal does use corporal punishment if parents have indicated it is okay to do so. He talks to the child first to make sure they know why they are getting a paddling and they have to use their own words to explain.”	“No, because the use of corporal punishment doesn’t stop the unwanted behavior, and I felt that it embarrassed the student.”	26	16	1	2	48
23. Have you witnessed physical punishment other than paddling? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please describe.	“a teacher punched a student”	“student became aggressive w/a teacher”	“I punish my student who play football with grass drills and gators.”	10	37	1	0	48
24. If you were asked to write the guidelines for your school regarding the use or non-	“No corporal punishment”	“Teachers may perform witnessed by another certified teacher.”	“My guidelines would be to first give students a warning and then allow parent the	N/A	N/A	13	0	48

<p>use of corporal punishment, what would your guidelines be? 24. If you were asked to write the guidelines for your school regarding the use or non-use of corporal punishment, what would your guidelines be?</p>			<p>choice of whether the child receive a paddling or out of school suspension.”</p>					
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The majority of TMI II participants are in favor of the use of corporal punishments at school and believe that it is effective in diminishing unwanted behavior. Students are in favor of this practice despite the research that they were provided by TMI instructors that denounce the practice.

5. DISCUSSION

Implications

The implications for this study are interesting. This study shows that TMI II teachers, who are currently teaching in their first year, are largely in favor of corporal punishment. They believe, regardless of research to the contrary, that corporal punishment is effective in diminishing unwanted behaviors and is an acceptable form of punishment in the school setting. If beginning teachers in Mississippi, who have recently been exposed to scientific research condemning corporal punishment, are still very much in favor of the practice then it will be very hard to eradicate the practice from our schools. If these teachers are actively ignoring research based discipline approaches, what other types of research-based approaches are they ignoring because of religious or cultural bias? During the course of this study and in grading discussions in the TMI program about this topic, one student responded in the discussion stating that the real problem with teachers is that they rely too much on research based approaches. If teachers truly feel this way, this might be a clue as to why Mississippi is ranked one of the lowest states in education in the country. These TMI students are endorsing a practice that is not acceptable for guards to use on prisoners and pet owners to use on pets. One might think that teachers that come directly from an educational program like TMI to teaching might be the best to introduce new research based approaches to schools but, if these teachers reject the research, how will schools improve?

Further Study

There is a multitude of further study that could be done using this research as a base. This survey could be conducted for more than one semester of TMI II. This would give the researcher some longitudinal results to compare. It would also be beneficial to compare results from TMI to other alternate certificate routes around the state and country. This would give the researcher an idea as to whether the attitudes are limited to TMI and therefore TMI could change or alter the content to alter the beliefs of their students. This survey could also be given to other preservice teachers at 4-year university programs. This might provide some data about the beliefs of preservice teachers in alternate certificate route verses 4-year university programs. The increased amount of time in school, face-to-face classes with professors, and access to more research may have an impact on beliefs. In the future, it would also be advisable to add a question to the survey asking if the participant is a believer in the literal translation of the Bible and what the participant thinks about the verse “spare the rod, spoil the child.” This would help researchers determine if the cause of the participants’ opinions regarding corporal punishment is due to religion or other variables. As previously discussed, if religious beliefs are the foundation of the participant’s opinion, then the opinion may be difficult to change.

Once the researcher has data on the opinions regarding corporal punishment, the next logical research is about how to change the attitudes and opinions of students who still believe corporal punishment is an effective and appropriate form of discipline. Research could be done to prove if additional seminars, additional research, or expert testimony could sway opinion. Researchers might also ask bigger picture questions regarding the opinions of teachers about other research-based practices. What other research-based practices are teachers ignoring based

on religion, culture, or personal bias? If there are many, what does this say about the state and national educational system as a whole? What kinds of reform might be needed for alternate certificate route programs, traditional 4-year university programs, staff development, and other teacher training programs?

Conclusion

Corporal punishment is a heated topic, especially in Mississippi. The use of corporal punishment is deeply rooted in culture and religion for many. Many people feel that it is an acceptable method of disciplining children at home and in school. In many families in the south, corporal punishment has been a trusted type of discipline for generations. The phrase often heard by children from parents or an administrator is “this will hurt me more than it will hurt you”. Many parents and administrators feel that this punishment is effective and in order to make sure children will learn right from wrong, it is a necessary form of discipline. There are also a large number of adults who believe that their religion advocates this type of punishment. They feel that if they did not use corporal punishment, their child or student would become “spoiled”.

While it is important to acknowledge and embrace religious and cultural beliefs of a community, a school setting should adopt its practices and policies based on research based educational practices. Overwhelmingly research has shown that not only is corporal punishment not effective in diminishing unwanted behaviors but, it can be detrimental to the student. Teachers should adhere to the science and not the cultural myths or religious beliefs of the community. If teachers and educational administrators begin putting aside research based educational practices, for any reason, our schools will continue be the last in the country in academic progress. The only way for Mississippi and the entire nation to succeed in education is

to implement the latest research based educational practices and put aside methods that do not work.

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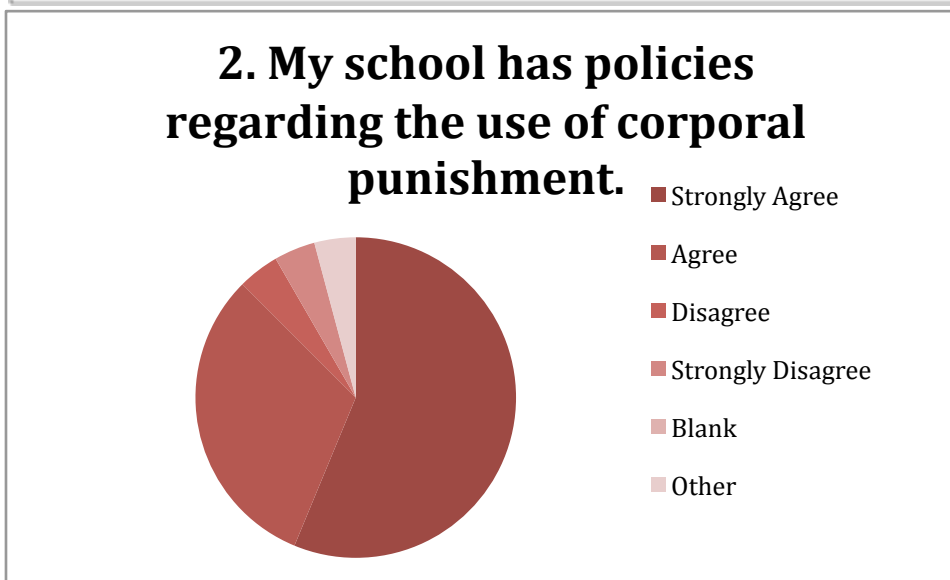
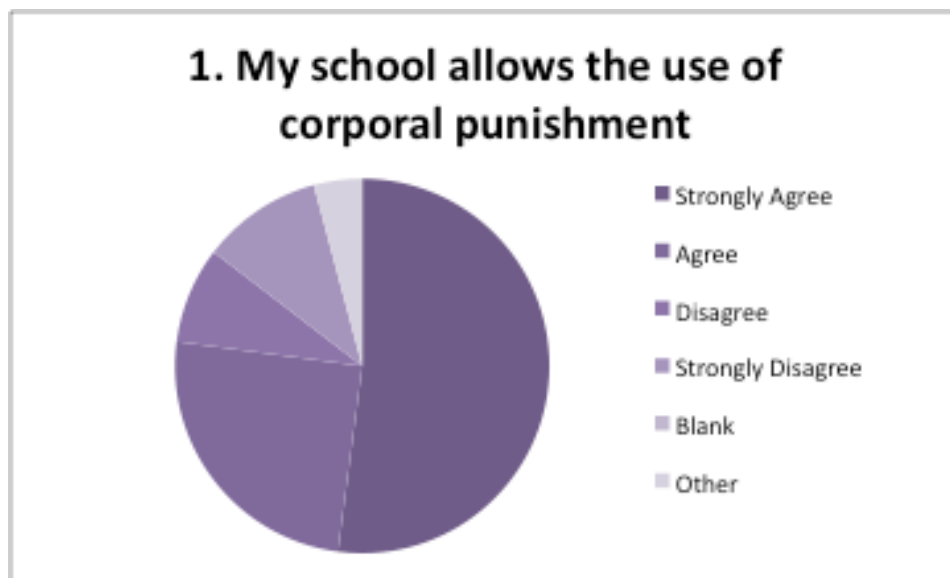
Phi Kappa Phi

Kappa Delta Pi

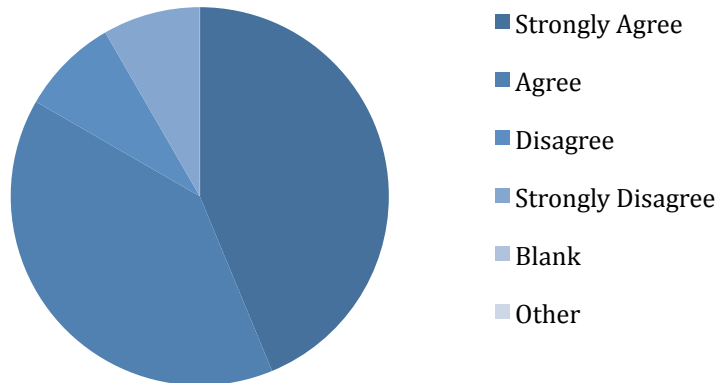
Outstanding Master's Degree Student in Special Education

APPENDIX

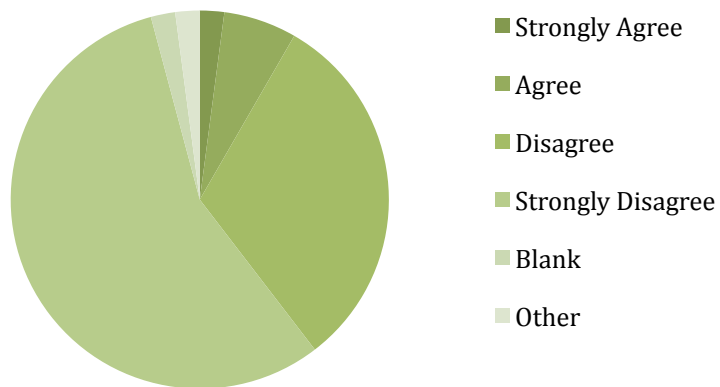
Figure 4 Detailed Analyses of Survey Questions



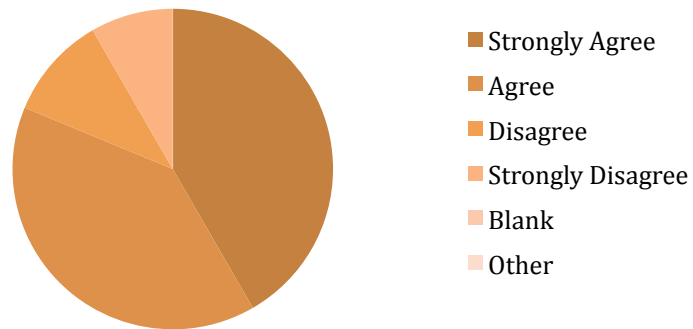
3. Corporal punishment is an acceptable form of discipline.



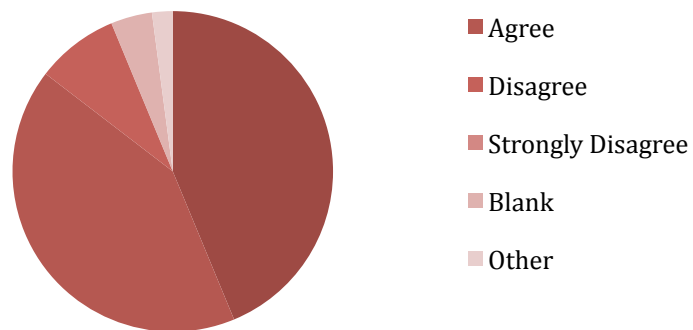
4. Corporal punishment is just legalized child abuse.



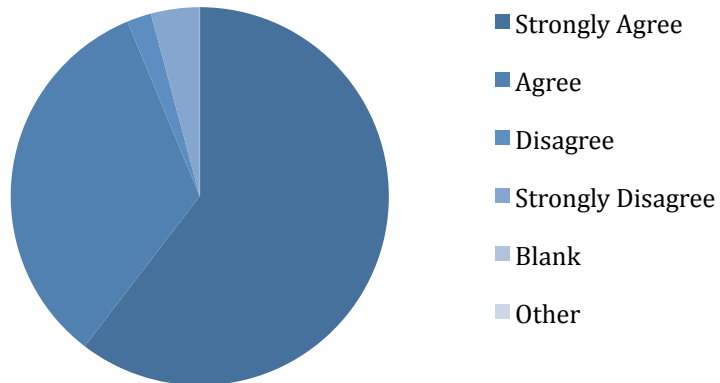
5. Corporal punishment should be used as a disciplinary action within the school setting.



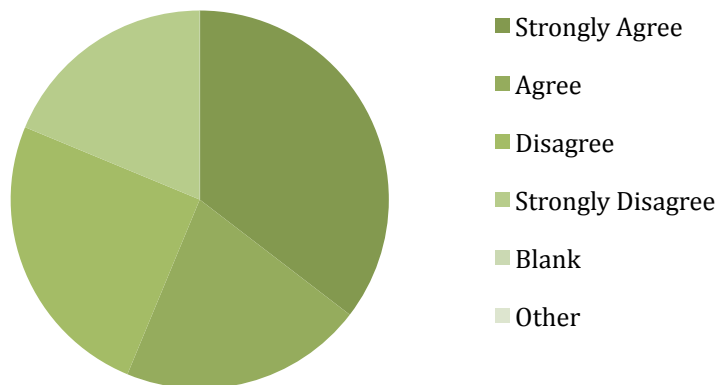
6. Corporal punishment should be used as a disciplinary action in the home.



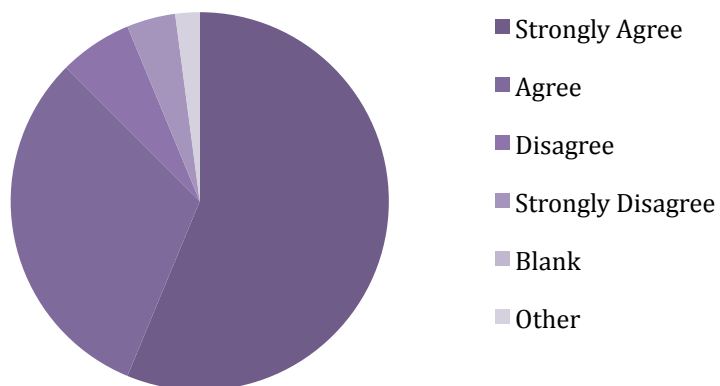
7. I received corporal punishment when I was growing up.



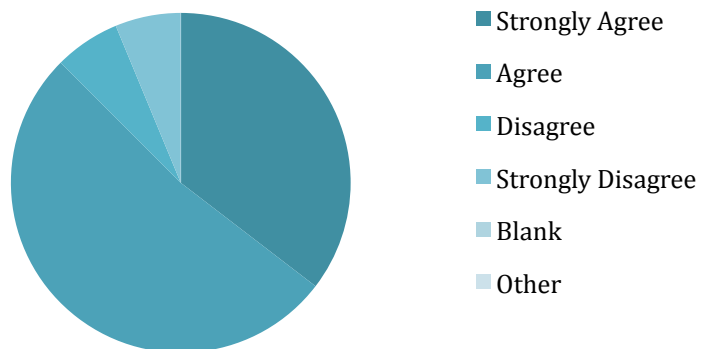
8. I would administer corporal punishment in the school setting.



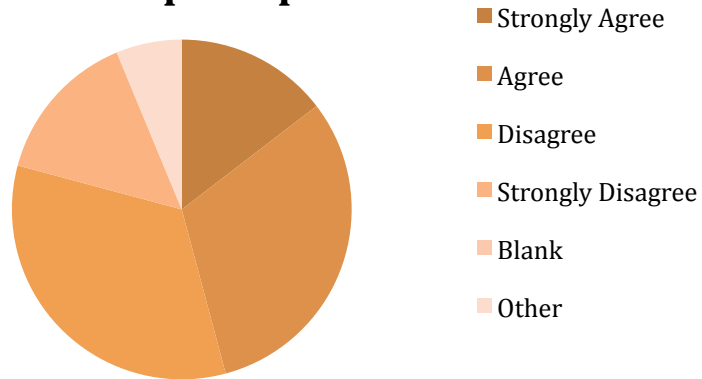
9. I would administer corporal punishment in my home.



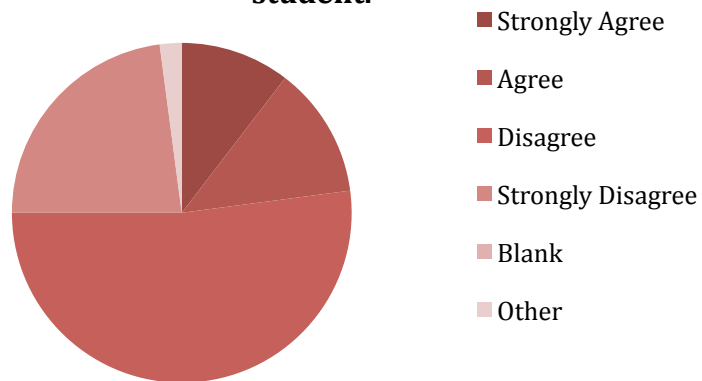
10. Corporal punishment is an effective method of decreasing unwanted behaviors.



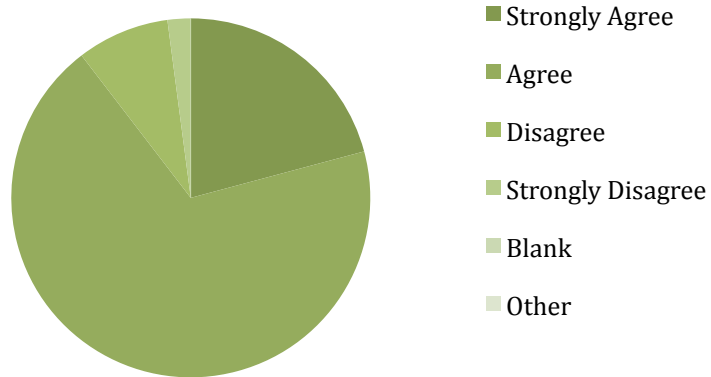
11. The use of a paddle is the only appropriate method of administering corporal punishment.



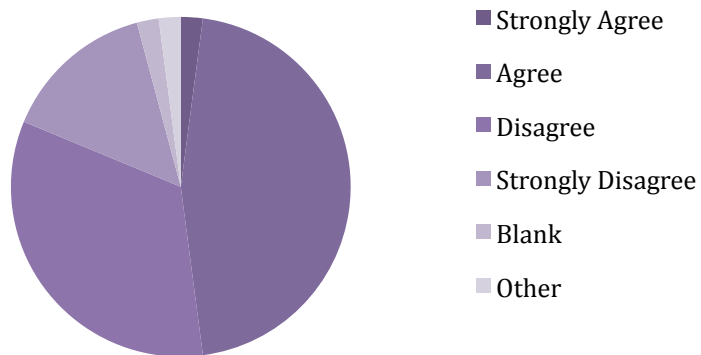
12. The latest research points to the ineffectiveness of corporal punishment and suggests that it could cause long term harm to the student.



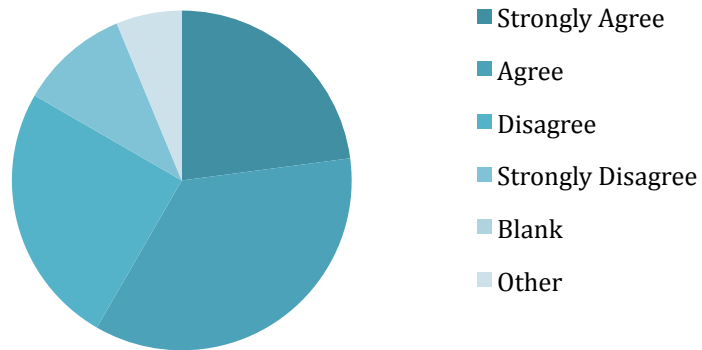
13. Positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors is an effective method for diminishing inappropriate behaviors.



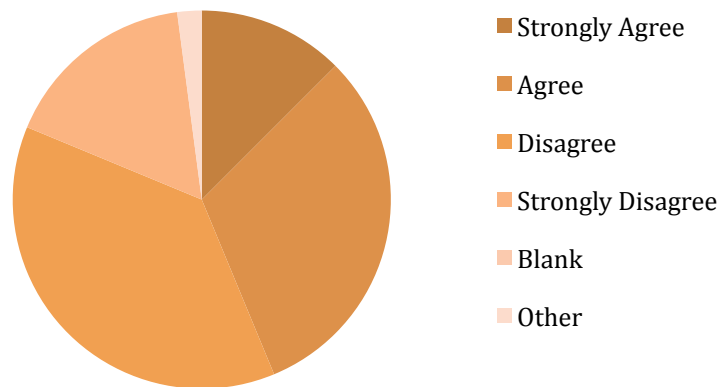
14. Time-out or isolation is an effective method for diminishing inappropriate behaviors.



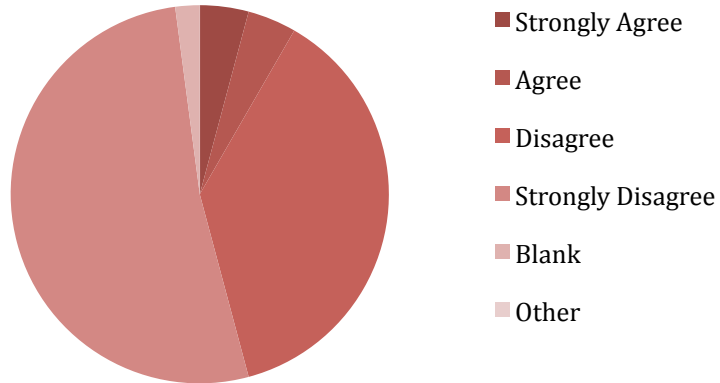
15. School administrators are the only personnel who should administer corporal punishment.



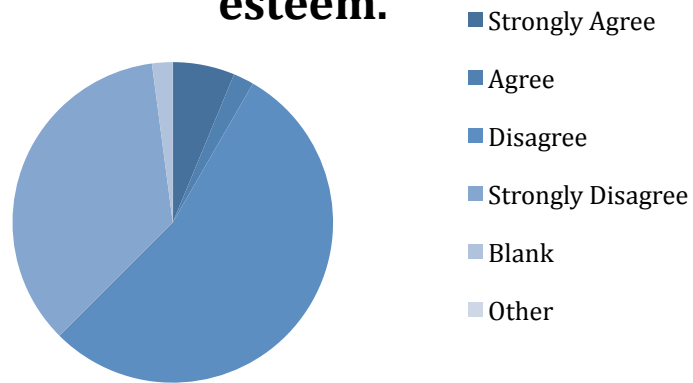
16. Corporal punishment should be administered by teachers.



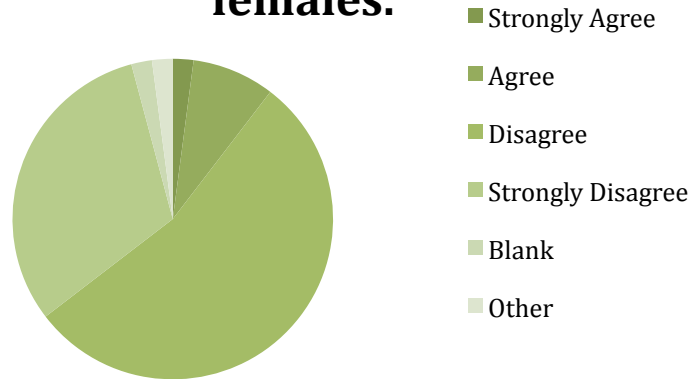
17. Corporal punishment perpetuates a cycle of child abuse.



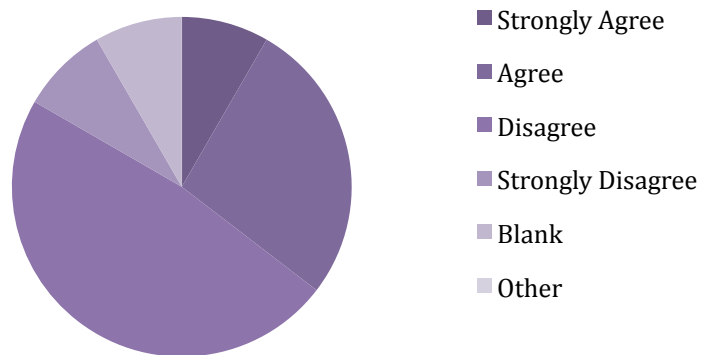
18. Corporal punishment is harmful to the student's self-esteem.



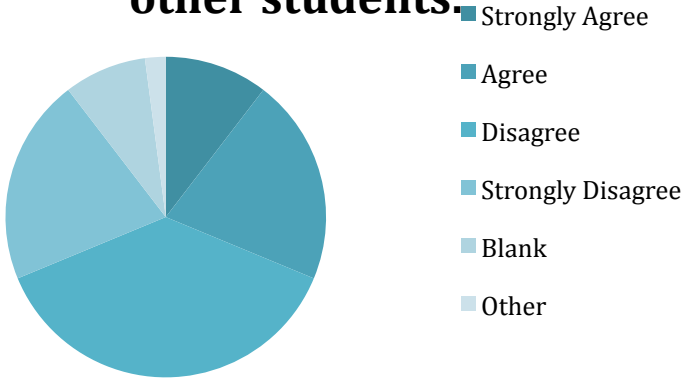
19. Corporal punishment is more appropriate for males rather than females.



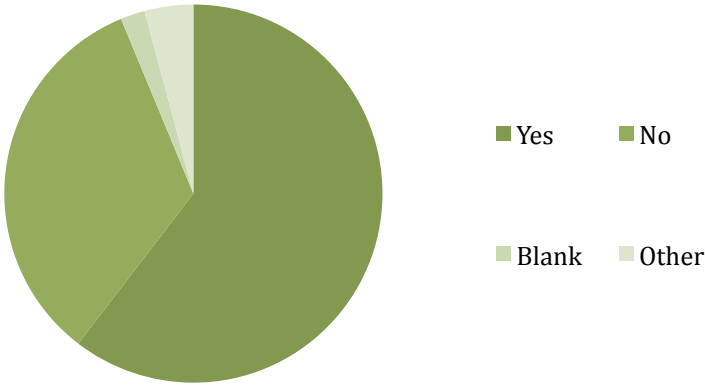
20. The use of corporal punishment is acceptable for all students, including students with disabilities.



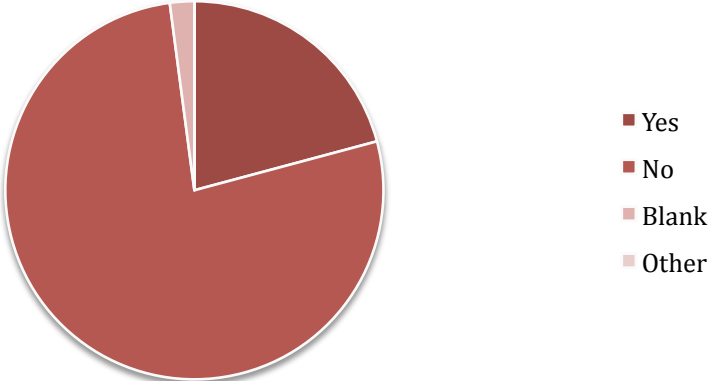
21. Racial minorities receive more corporal punishment than other students.



22. Have you witnessed the use corporal punishment?



23. Have you witnessed physical punishment other than paddling?



25. What do you teach or plan to teach?

