

UVU Student's Attitudes about the Death Penalty

Keith W. McAndrews, Richard Nielson, and
Riley Williams



Implied Consent

Survey implied consent form.

Title of Study: UVU Student's attitudes about the death penalty.


Principal Investigator:

Name: Richard Nielson

Department: Criminal Justice

E-mail: richnielson84@msn.com

Background:



You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study. You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. If you need more information or if there is something not clearly understood ask the researcher for more information.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the attitude towards the death penalty. This study could represent how people feel about the death penalty and what action, if any, should be taken towards the death penalty.

Implied Consent

Continued

Study Procedure:

The expected time to take the survey is five minutes. It will be a study that will be accessed through the internet using an anonymous link. Nothing will link you to this study. It won't ask for your name or address, no personal information.

Risks:

The risks of this study are minimal. These risks are like those you experience when disclosing work-related information to others, (i.e. education, employment). The topics in the survey may upset some respondents. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose to do so.

Benefits:

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, we hope that the information obtained from this study could better the knowledge on the topic of the death penalty.

Implied Consent Continued

Alternative Procedures:

If you do not want to take part in this study, you may choose not to participate and leave your answers blank or close the survey.

Confidentiality:

Your responses will be anonymous. The researcher and the members of the researcher's committee will review the collected data. Information from this research will be used solely for this study and any publications that may result from this study. All participants involved in this study will not be identified and their anonymity will be maintained. There will be no way to link Participant's data to a name or subject. The results from this study will help increase the knowledge about how UVU students view the death penalty.

Person to Contact:

Should you have any questions about the research or any related matters, please contact the researcher, Richard Nielson at 10262584@my.uvu.edu or cell phone (435)864-7779.

Implied Consent

Continued

Institutional Review Board:

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Investigator, please contact the Institutional Review Board office at (801) 863-8156.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You are free to decline to answer any question or questions if you choose.

Unforeseeable Risks:

There may be risks that are not anticipated. However, every effort will be made to minimize any risks.

Costs to Subject:

There are no costs to you for your participation in this study.

Implied Consent Continued

Compensation:

There is no monetary compensation to you for your participation in this study.

Survey:

Taking and answering the survey that serves as consent.

Survey Questions



1. Which one of these people was sentenced to Death Row and was put to death in Utah? (Multiple Choice)
2. **Specific Deterrence** is a method of punishment in the criminal justice system intended to discourage criminal behavior within a specific individual charged with a crime. **General Deterrence** is a sentencing objective which aims to discourage individuals other than the offender, from committing a similar offense. Which do you feel is the best deterrence that the death penalty provides? (Multiple Choice)
3. I can name a person that was sentenced to death in the last ten years. (Scale question)
4. I am surprised that 19 States in the United States have abolished the death penalty. (Scale question)
5. I am surprised that white male defendants make up the majority of the gender and race that is executed in the United States. (Scale question)
6. Is the death penalty an outdated form of punishment?(yes or no)

Survey Questions

8. If abolishing the death penalty could save taxpayers' money would you support that? (yes or no)
9. Where does your criminal justice knowledge come from? (multiple choice)
10. The death penalty cruel or unusual punishment.(Scale Question)
11. Inmates have it too easy while serving time on Death Row. (Scale Question)
12. The death penalty should be abolished in case an innocent person ends up on death row. (Scale Question)
13. The average stay on death row for an inmate is 15-17 years until the execution date which is too long. (Scale Question)

Survey Questions

14. If the death penalty was abolished, what would be a good alternative punishment? (Multiple Choice)

15. Are you for or against the death penalty in the state of Utah? (Yes or No)

Demographic Questions

16. Specify your gender.

17. Are you currently employed?

18. What is your age?

19. Please specify your ethnicity (or race).



20. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

21. Which age demographic do you identify with?

Literature review

The articles that were found supported abolishing the death penalty. In the United States from 2007 to 2011, 17 inmates were found not guilty and their death sentences overturned. Seven of those inmates were from the state of Illinois. The Governor found that number to be high, and likely to send an innocent person to death. On March 9, 2011 the death penalty was abolished in the State of Illinois.



The cost of the death penalty was another consideration and was looked at heavily. In a report by Duke University found that it cost North Carolina 2.16 million dollars more per execution than murder cases with the sentence of life in prison without the chance of parole.

Research design

It was a survey administered through Qualtrics. Consisting of 16 questions. It was delivered by anonymous link to 500 students and 74 students responded. The data was collected by a report from Qualtrics. Problems that were encountered was getting the implied consent into the survey. Also, the project application was mailed to the IRB panel and to this day it's nowhere to be found. Not having done that before was a challenge but was defeated. For the short amount of time the survey was out, three to four days, that was a lot of responses.

Survey Sample Information


The survey was sent out to a sample size of 500 random individuals, male and female, old and young.

Questions were asked where specific answers would determine the knowledge level and the schema of the samples.

The survey was sent out in a time frame where slower responses would still be accepted. The survey was sent out to 500 peoples with the hope that the greater number of sample would provide the greatest number of responses. 44 of the 74 responses were within the first 3 days.




Results



		Which age demographic do you identify with?				Total
		18-25	26-35	36-45	46+	
Is the death penalty an outdated form of punishment?	Yes. Please explain.	8	3	1	0	12
	No. Please explain	20	12	6	1	39
Total		28	15	7	1	51

The explanations for this question are not as remarkable as the yes and no responses. To see the ages that stated the death penalty was outdated was interesting due to the fact the 18 -25 year olds think the death penalty is still good.

Results




	Specify your gender.			Total
	Male	Female	Other	
Which court sentence do you feel would bring more justice to the victim's family and friends?				
The death penalty. Please explain why.	26	8	1	35
Life in prison without the chance of parole. Please explain why.	9	10	1	20
Total	35	18	2	55

This Cross Tab show interesting data in seeing that males feel the death penalty is a just way to give justice to families and friends of victims.

Results

Q1 - Which one of these people was sentenced to Death Row and was put to death in Utah?

Category		Desired Proportion (%)	Response Co
John Wayne Gacy		15	10
Arthur Gary Bishop		22	14
Ted Bundy		63	41
Herman Webster Mudgett		0	0
Total		100	

This question was a great question to throw people off and see if people knew the history of the death penalty in Utah. Ted Bundy was an obvious name to think of but not the correct one. Arthur Gary Bishop was in Utah.

Results

Q15_1 - The United States Court System is likely to convict an innocent person and sentence them ...

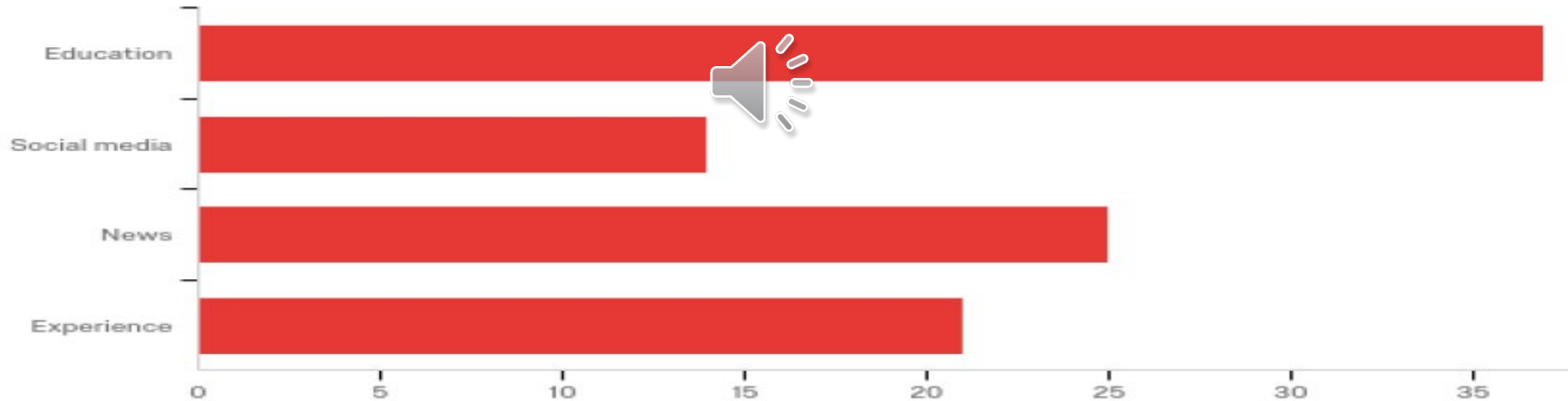
Category	Desired Proportion (%)	Response Co
Definitely Yes	10	6
Probably Yes	23	14
Probably Not	60	36
Definitely Not	7	4
Total	100	

The majority of the samples taking this survey feel the court systems most likely won't convict an innocent person out of 7,482 death sentences handed down from 1973 to 2004 1.6 percent were exonerated.

Results

Q7 - Where does your criminal justice knowledge come from?

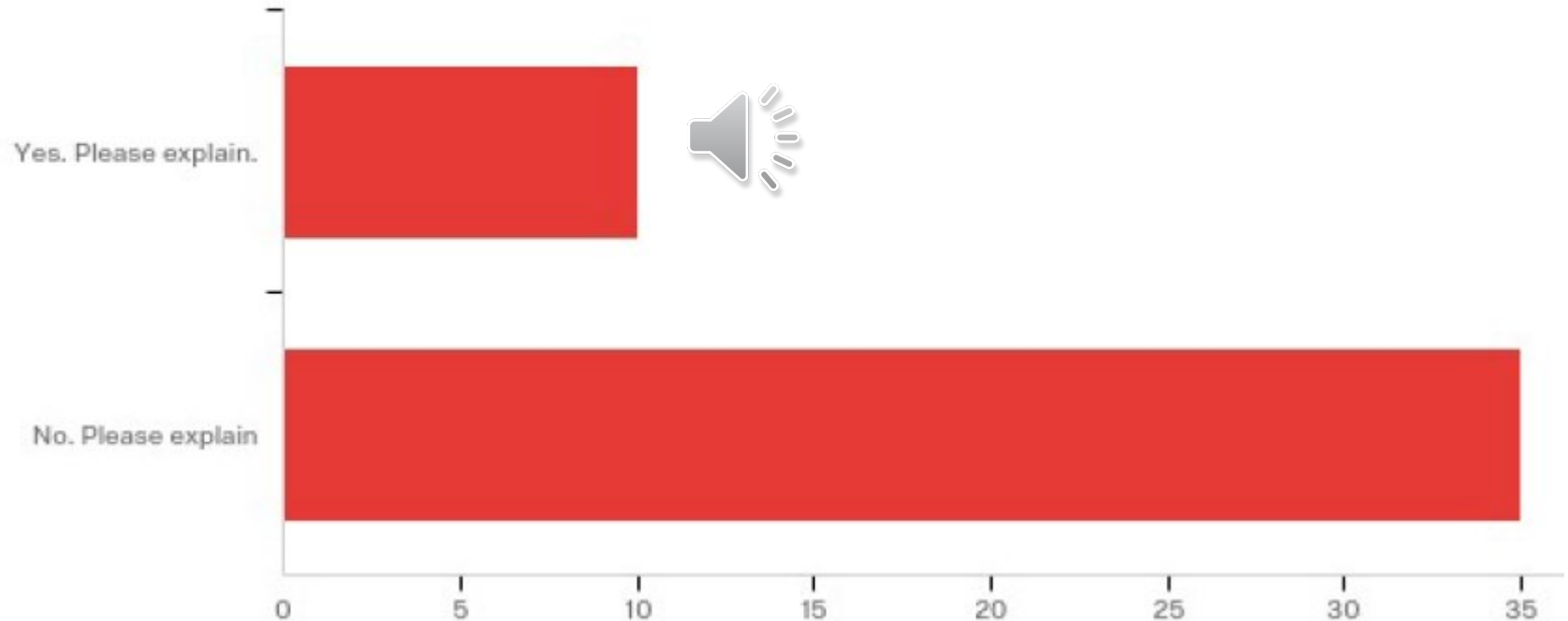
Select all that apply.



Education has a big impact on the samples that answered the survey. Education and the news were thought before hand to be the high points in this category.

Results Question 4

Q4 - Is the death penalty an outdated form of punishment?



Results Question 4 Cont.

No. If no please explain

No. I feel that it is still a fair punishment but only for very vicious crimes thst deserve such a punishment.

Today we have more and more ways of being able to make definite convictions using evidence such as DNA. As long as we have honest and fair judges the death penalty is an affective way of removing dangerous individuals from our society without continuing to overcrowd our prison systems.

There are certain people that are just going to be a drain on society. Either the criminal should have to provide for themselves or society should be released from the burden of supporting them.

The justice system takes a long time and needs a lot of criteria in order to actually exercise the death penalty. It is not something used casually, however there are situations whne it is necessary. It also can serve as the ultimate punishment to deter individuals from committing crime; knowing that the death penalty could quite possibly happen.

The punishment should fit the crime...we have as much crime in this country because of the liberal hippies and homosexuals that have victimized the criminal and criminalizes the justice system. The only deterrent for crime is swift and extremely harsh punishment that is equivalent to the crime

Eye for an eye... If you commit a terrible crime than you should pay for that with your life.

Some people just deserve to die if they feel no regret for their actions

I think it can continue to help show publicly the punishments involved for specific crimes and hopefully help deter others from committing those crimes.

no. if someone is in prison for life it would be cheaper to sentence them to death

Sometimes, people just won't change, and they will keep committing serious crimes and won't make a good contribution to society, but will hurt it.

Results Question 4 Cont.

Yes. If yes please explain.

Yes. If yes please explain.

Yes. It doesn't stop someone from killing in passion or in the moment.

I don't think it helps the situation; maybe they could be taught to contribute to society while they are in prison instead

Who are we to decide death for another human being? Aren't we just as bad as them by killing them?

Yes, it is cruel and we as humanity can do better.

Yes. I believe it is not up to us to decide when the life of another person should come to an end. It is a cruel punishment and I believe there are better options available.

We have the resources in this age to educate people about their mistakes. Each life has meaning, and it is not fair to just end someone life cause of an action, no matter what it is.

Maintaining the prisoners dignity and humanity, regardless of the crime, is important. It is traumatic and expensive to utilize the death penalty now that we must do more than hang a person.

No-one should have the power over life or death except that own individual. It is not a big enough deterrence and is inhumane.

It is because it is very barbaric

Results Question 4 Reflection

This question is remarkable which is why it is examined twice. In this second result page that was just looked at we can read some of the sample's thoughts to the death penalty being outdated or not. We previously saw that 18-25 years old led the way with thinking it was not outdated. Being able to read their responses allows us to understand their thought processing a little more.



Final Conclusion

From this survey, one can conclude that a majority of UVU students believe in the Death Penalty and that it should not be abolished. The average UVU also believes that the time those sentenced to death spend on death row is too long. The average survey participant is Male, White, Employed, and is 27 years old. Also, it is interesting to note that even though they feel it should not be abolished, the majority would abolish it if it would save taxpayer money.