



Exploring Teachers' Beliefs and Practices with Students Who Stutter

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Purpose and Background

Teachers have the potential to greatly influence their students' lives. Spending approximately 1,200 hours in a classroom each year, students can develop a deep sense of trust and comfortability with their teachers. The goal of this study was to identify teachers' current beliefs and teaching practices related to students who stutter in order to identify potential areas where more support and education on stuttering might be beneficial.

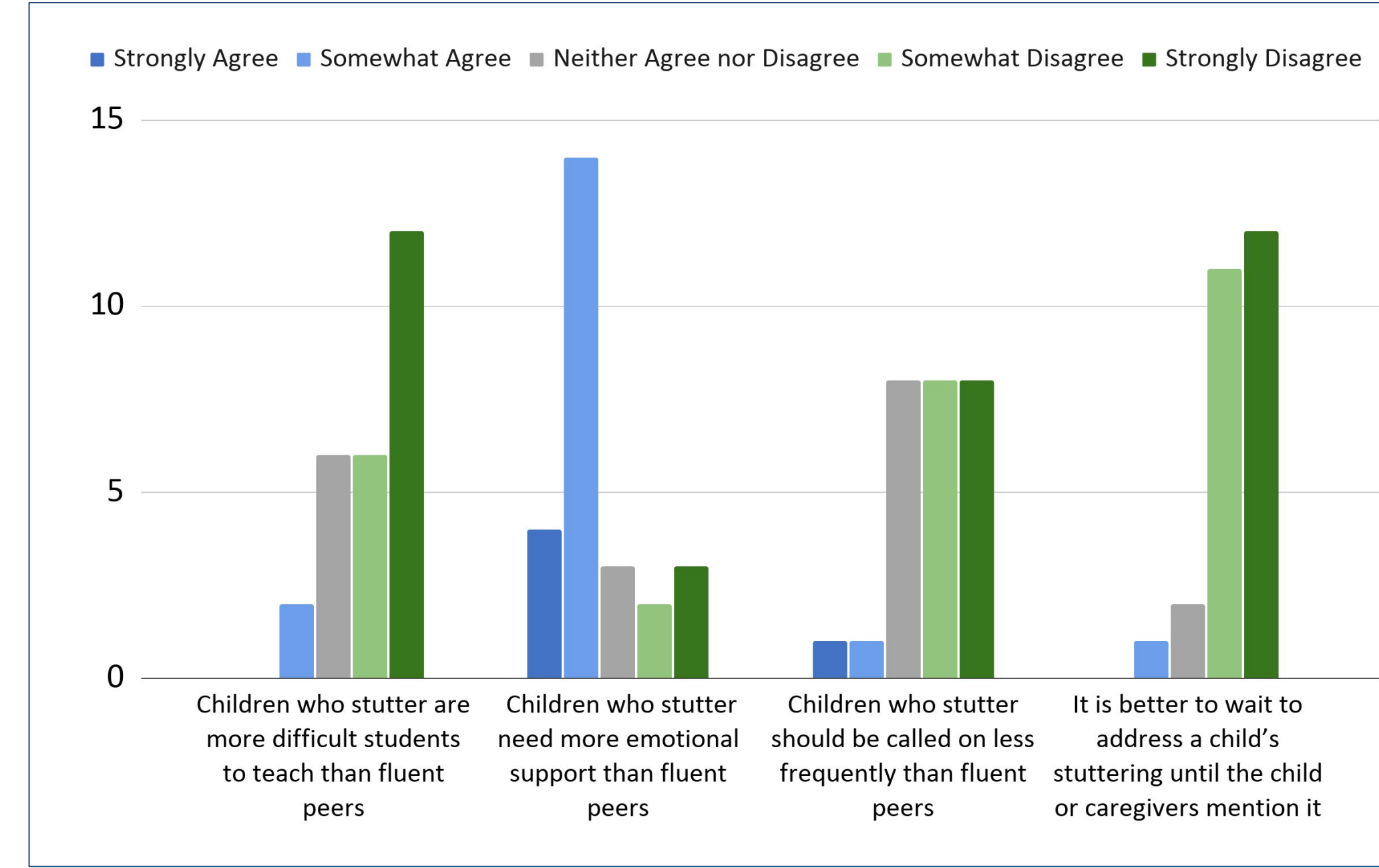
Previously, Irani and Gabel (2008) evaluated the attitudes of school teachers towards students who stutter. Teachers reported having little experience with students who stutter, as well as little formal education on stuttering during college. Additionally, teachers reported feeling comfortable working with students who stutter.

Since over twelve years have passed since Gabel and Irani (2008) was published, we were curious to know if teachers' beliefs and practices have changed. Primary questions included:

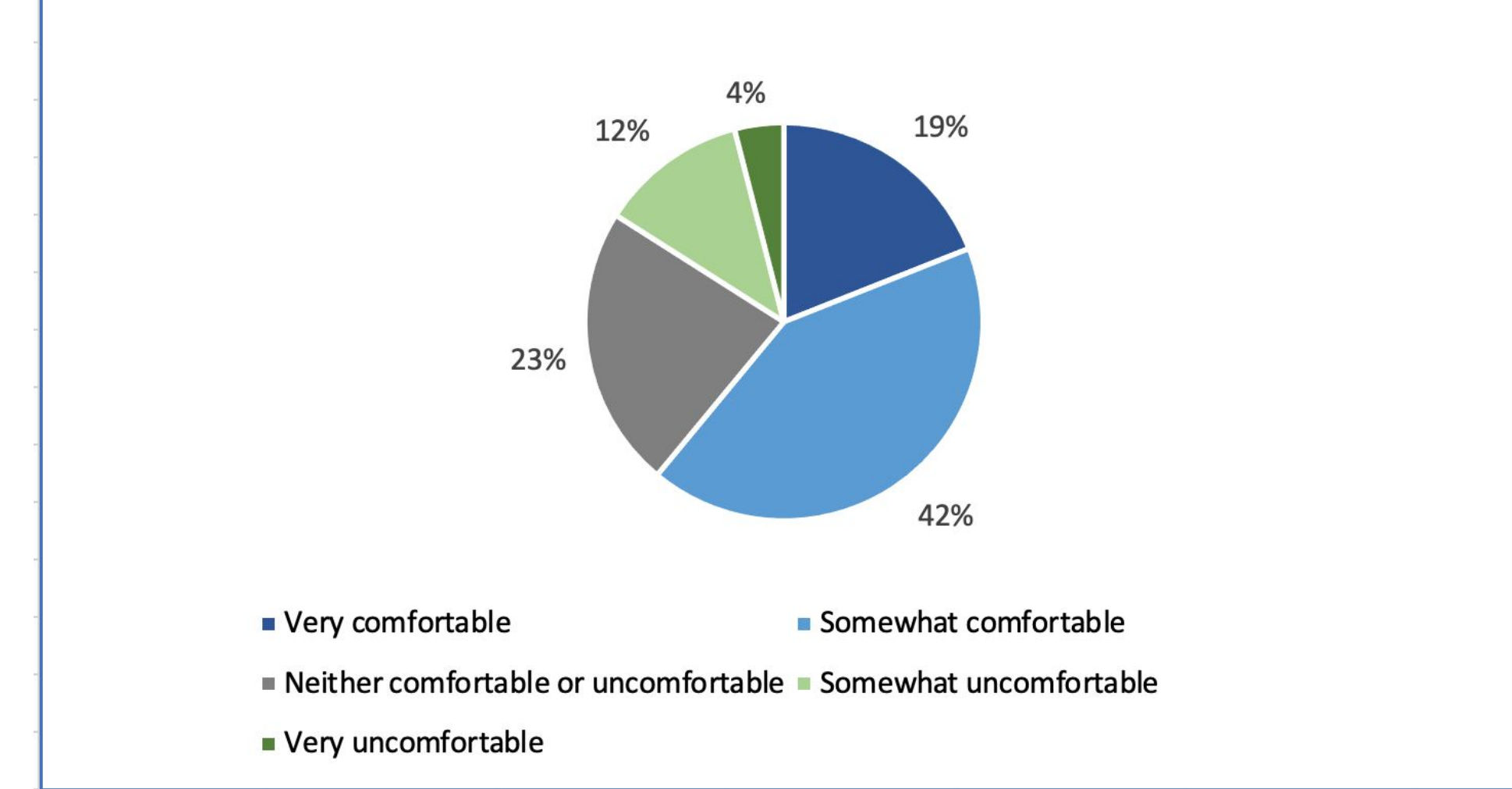
1. How do teacher practices differ when working with students who stutter vs fluent peers?
2. How comfortable do teachers feel addressing stuttering with their students?
3. How much formal education on stuttering do teachers have?
4. What are teachers' beliefs related to how well the speech-language pathologist includes them and supports them when working with students who stutter?

Select Findings

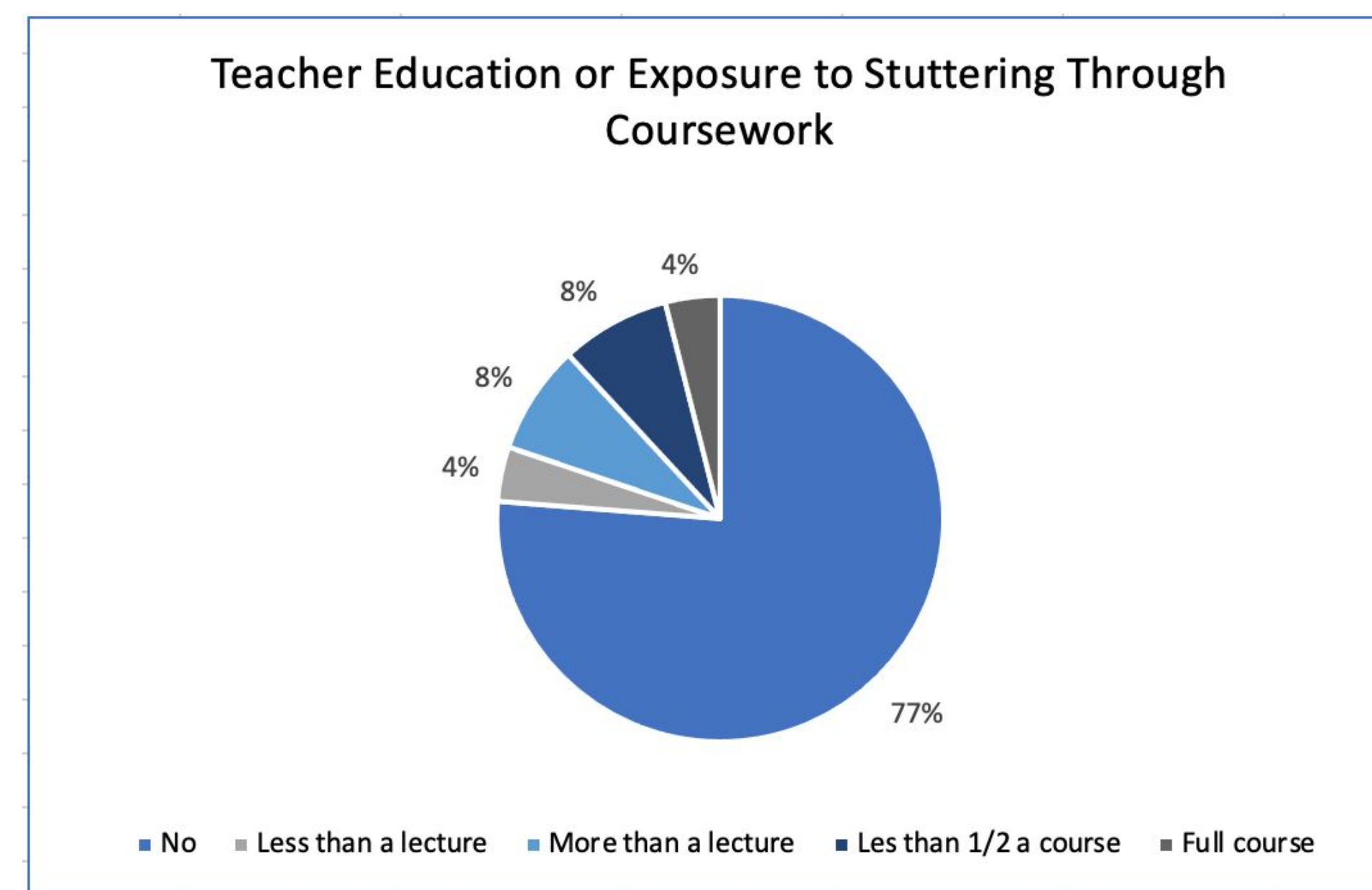
Comfort and Beliefs Related to Students Who Stutter



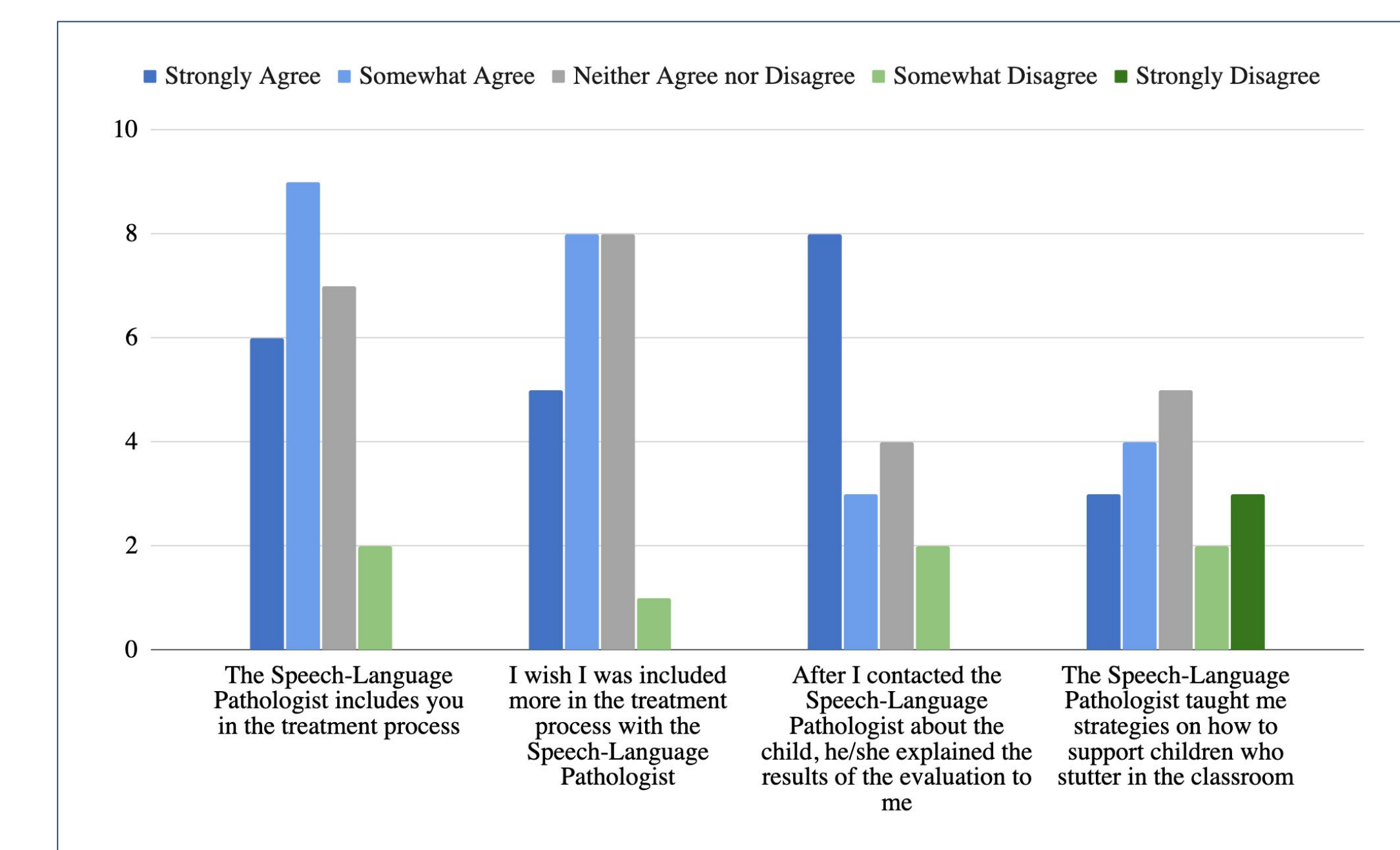
Teacher Comfort Level Addressing Stuttering with the Child



Formal Education on Stuttering



Beliefs Related to Speech-Language Pathologists



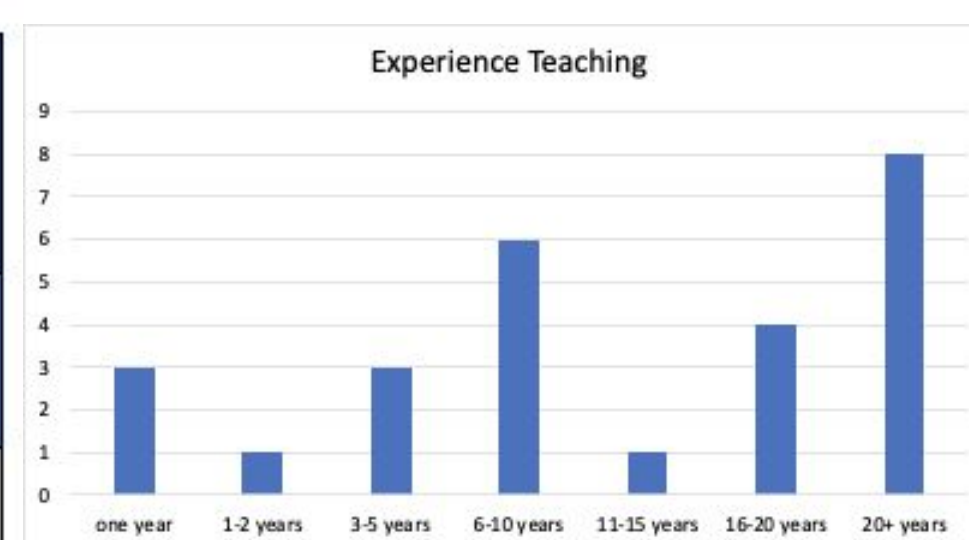
Method

An online survey was designed using Qualtrics Software. Questions included respondents' demographics, experience with students who stutter, views on the needs with students who stutter, and overall knowledge and education on stuttering. The survey was distributed in March 2019 to superintendents (2 per state at random) and was also posted in various Facebook community groups.

Participants

A total of 26 participants (23 Females; 3 Males) completed the survey. Demographics are reported below:

Highest Level of Education	Teaching Setting			Teaching Level			Have Had a Student Who Stutters				
	BA	MA	Public	Private	Other	Pre K	Elementary	Junior High	High School	Yes	No (or hard to say)
	54%	46%	77%	11.5%	11.5%	4%	50%	27%	19%	19	7



Conclusions

- Teachers believe that children who stutter need more emotional support than their fluent peers
- Teachers reported that speech-language pathologists included them in the treatment process, but that they still wanted to be included more
- Teachers feel comfortable addressing stuttering with their students, but may not address it for various reasons, such as a fear that the child will feel insecure and/or the child will perceive the teacher's attitude towards stuttering as negative.
- 85% of teachers reported having little or no formal education on stuttering.
- COVID-19 likely impacted recruitment. Many school districts weren't participating in research due to the school shutdowns.
- Findings suggest that inservices on stuttering may help provide needed education related to supporting children who stutter that is not often included in college programs.

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