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We are seeking manuscripts that focus on a range of topics that address current issues in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Individuals working in criminal and justice juvenile are strongly encouraged to submit manuscripts for publication consideration. We believe that practitioners working in the field are knowledgeable and have the experience to make valid, logical, and realistic change recommendations that are not frequently heard by power brokers (administrators and legislators). In addition, educators, trainers, and consultants in the criminal justice are also encouraged to submit their perspectives on issues related to criminal justice. The overall goal is to provide a mechanism for all ideas to be voiced in an effort to improve the system and individuals working in the system can experience an opportunity to voice their innovative ideas.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Manuscripts are sought that address a range of topics related to issues in criminal and juvenile justice. Ways to enhance collaboration and team approaches to training, learning, working with offenders, or administrative challenges and solutions within criminal justice.

Completed manuscripts should be submitted by December 31, 2021. Submissions will be anonymously peer reviewed. The issue will appear June 2022. Authors must adhere to the submission guidelines posted at: [http://www.nccja.org/jcjp.html#submit](http://www.nccja.org/jcjp.html#submit)

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Evaluating Change in Sexual Norms Among College Students in the Era of #MeToo

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Evaluating Change in Sexual Norms Among College Students in the Era of #MeToo

Abstract

Between 2016 and 2018, the #MeToo movement dominated discussions regarding sexual assault. This progressive narrative is focused on believing survivors, advocates for consent, and shifts explanations for sexual assault from a victim-orientation to a structural-orientation centered around rape culture. Though the #MeToo movement has made headlines throughout the US, it is unclear if any meaningful change regarding attitudes towards appropriate sexual contact and consent is occurring. This is an exploration focused on whether college students’ attitudes toward sexual assault have been affected by the #MeToo movement. Specifically, attitudes regarding sexual consent, perceived peer norms regarding sexual violence and coercion, and perceived peer reactions to sexual assault were measured through a campus climate survey in 2016, before nationwide awareness of #MeToo, and after in 2018. Results indicate that despite increased dialogue about sexual assault issues, attitudinal change is not emerging as prominently as anticipated, especially regarding sexual consent. Though some change provides evidence for a #MeToo effect, other changes appear to move in a less progressive direction. Overall, the results indicate that attitudes and beliefs about sexual behavior to help prevent sexual assault are unlikely to change quickly without targeted, progressive educational programming.

Keywords: sexual norms, #MeToo, sexual assault, college student attitudes,

Introduction

In October of 2017, social media was filled with stories of sexual assault shared in solidarity through the #MeToo campaign. These posts, which were meant to illustrate how common sexual victimization is in the United States, seemed to align with more progressive attitudes toward female sexual behavior and led to resignations and criminal charges for some wealthy, powerful men (Corbin, 2018). Sexual assault is alarming to many and is commonly one of the most underreported crimes (Langdon, Berzofsky, Krebs, & Smiley-McDonald, 2012). Unawareness of frequency suggests that as many as 1 in 5 female college students will be sexually assaulted before they graduate (Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007).

This study seeks to address the question of how college students are being affected by #MeToo. This more progressive dialog regarding sexual norms and behaviors by examining respondents’ attitudes towards sexual consent, as well as perceived peer norms regarding rape myths and dating violence and peer responses to sexual misconduct will be explored. The current research
uses responses from two waves of a campus climate survey at a moderately sized, Southeastern, rural campus, administered in 2016 and 2018, to investigate if there are any measurable changes in the attitudes of college students regarding sexual norms and consent between these two periods. While the current study is not able to explore individual student change over time, it does assess mean attitudes from a sample of students at the same university at two different time periods, before and after the nationwide spotlight on the #MeToo campaign, to see if this movement has had any largescale effect on student attitudes regarding sex, with a particular focus on sexual consent, peer norms regarding sexual coercion, violence and assault, and peer responses to sexual victimization.

**Media Narratives for Sexual Behavior**

Widespread outrage regarding sexual harassment and assault spread across social media through digital feminist activism in 2016 and 2017. Prior to the use of #MeToo across social media, the #NotOkay hashtag was used in tweets on Twitter over 8,500 times between October 9th and October 11th 2016 in response to the Donald Trump *Access Hollywood* tape, which included lude comments regarding engaging in sexually aggressive behavior without consent (Maas, McCauley, Bonomi, & Leija, 2018). Largely, the content of the tweets contained acknowledgment and/or condemnation of rape culture, Donald Trump and the national sexual assault dialogue, and an effort to engage males to end violence against women (ibid). This progressive movement against rape culture and the sexual objectification of women became more visible when another hashtag – #MeToo – spread across Twitter on October 16, 2017. Though the phrase was initially used by women’s rights activist Tarana Burke in 2006, it became widespread when actress Alyssa Milano used it in a Twitter response regarding sexual assault allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018). Within 24 hours of Milano’s original tweet, which requested that anyone who has been sexually harassed or assaulted reply with ‘me too,’ the social media site Facebook reported the phrase was used over 12 million times (CBS News, 2017). By October 26, 2017, the hashtag #HowIWillChange also appeared across social media with over 3,000 tweets. This
hashtag intends to engage males in dismantling rape culture by encouraging an examination of participation in toxic (hegemonic) masculinity, calling out other men, listening to women’s experiences and promoting egalitarianism (PettyJohn, Muzzey, Maas, & McCauley, 2018).

There is no doubt that the #MeToo movement was noticed throughout the nation, but evidence of long term change from the movement is lacking (Blumell & Huemmer, 2019; Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2018). While the movement successfully held some powerful men accountable for their perpetrated violence (Corbin, 2018), researchers have raised concerns that #MeToo favors women exhibiting respectable femininity, and excludes women of color, the disabled, and those who are not heterosexual cis-gendered women (Gill & Orgad, 2018).

Researchers recognize that media outlets (i.e., movies, music, tv shows, the news) play an important role in human behavior, and have for over half a century (Anderson, et al., 2003). Indeed, what people see and hear from media outlets, which now includes social media, can have a dramatic impact on behavior and societal norms. As the development of sexuality is recognized as a bio-psycho-social process that is influenced by social elements of the environment (Kar, Choudhury, & Singh, 2015), it is expected that the media would play a role in guiding sexual expectations and normative behavior. Extensive research demonstrates that perceptions and attitudes towards sexuality are influenced by media portrayals of sex, relationships and gender roles (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Brown & L'Engle, 2009; Peter & Valkenburg, 2007). As such, it stands to reason that students’ sexual behavior, including their attitudes towards consent or rape myth acceptance, may be influenced by current nationwide narratives on the topic.

**Sexual Norms and Sexual Assault on Campus**

College campuses have recently been associated with “hook up culture,” which is generally defined as a casual sexual encounter between non-dating partners with no expectation of a long term, committed relationship (Heldman & Wade, 2010). Studies show as many as 50% to 85% of students have reported hooking up at some point during their college years (Currier, 2013; Garcia & Reiber, 2008; Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000), and though casual sex and one-night stands are not a new phenomenon on college campuses, the openness to display and discuss these activities, especially
among women, seems to be a unique characteristic separating the hookup culture from sexual attitudes of the past (Garcia & Reiber, 2008). While the sexual freedom exhibited by modern college students may appear to indicate increasingly progressive attitudes towards sex among college students, researchers have pointed out that hookups tend to revolve more around men and their desires, and reinforcement hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity which are ideologies rooted in the social dominance of men over women and encourage women to be receptive to men’s sexual advances (Connell, 1987; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Currier, 2013). Researchers also note that hookups may also increase the risk of sexual assault due to characteristics of the encounters, such as the finding that a large number of hookups tend to occur at parties and involve the use of alcohol, which are two risk factors for sexual assault (Abbey & McAuslan, 2004; Paul & Hayes, 2002). Additionally, level of hookup culture endorsement can be a strong predictor of rape myth acceptance (Reling, Barton, Becker, & Valasik, 2018), giving further evidence that sex norms on campus, while perhaps appearing progressive, may instead support rape culture.

As mentioned earlier, estimates of sexual assault on campus find that 1 in 5 female students are sexually assaulted while in college (Krebs, et al., 2007), and while casual sex increases the likelihood of sexual assault on campus (Flack, Jr., et al., 2007), it is not the only reason for these high rates. Some other risk factors converging on college campuses include age, with college-age students being in the highest risk categories (12-34 years old) for sexual assault (Planty, Langton, Krebs, Berzofsky, & Smiley-McDonald, 2013), parties and alcohol use (mentioned above), and Greek life (Mellins, et al., 2017), with sorority women more likely to report sexual assault victimization (Minow & Einolf, 2009), and fraternity men being linked to rape myth acceptance, hypermasculinity, and sexual aggression (Murnen & Kohlman, 2007).

**Current Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine what, if any, changes occurred in students’ attitudes and beliefs between 2016 and 2018, as the topic of sexual assault was placed in the national spotlight through the #MeToo movement. The research addresses the following questions:
Research Question 1: Did student attitudes towards sexual consent significantly change between 2016 and 2018?

Research Question 2: Did perceptions of peer norms regarding sexual coercion and violence significantly change between 2016 and 2018?

Research Question 3: Did perceptions of peer reactions to sexual victimization significantly change between 2016 and 2018?

Data & Methods

Data Collection

The data for the current study are drawn from a climate survey conducted at a small southeastern university in two separate years (February 2016 and April 2018) using the Administrator-Researcher Campus Climate Collaborative (ARC3) Campus Climate Survey (Swartout, et al., 2019). Student participation was solicited through an electronic survey link emailed to all enrolled students, along with information about institutional review board approval and anonymity of responses, and consent was attained for all participants. Each data collection period took place over the course of two weeks, with a reminder email sent to recipients about a week after the initial email. In 2016, the survey was emailed to 6,583 students, and in 2018, the survey was emailed to 6,989 students with a similar response rate for both surveys of about 9.5%. The sample for this analysis includes 623 responses from 2016 and 669 responses from 2019, yielding a total sample size of n = 1292 participants.

Descriptive statistics of the study sample are shown in Table 1. Demographic questions were at the end of the survey and were optional, with roughly 60% of the participants providing valid responses. For those that provided data, the samples in 2016 and 2018 were remarkably similar when comparing age, race and gender of respondents. Demographic information from the university found the overall population to be 61% female in 2016 and 63% female in 2018, and 82% White in 2016 and 80% White in 2018, indicating the sample to have a higher percentage of female (76.7% in 2016; 79.5% in 2018) and White (89.5% in 2016; 89.4% in 2018) respondents than the overall population (average age for population was not available). Though there were some demographic differences between the overall population and the sample, the consistency in response trends for both climate
surveys alleviates some concerns of response bias for the current analysis. Still, findings should be interpreted with a largely white and female sample in mind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables (Range)</th>
<th>2016 N (Valid %)</th>
<th>2016 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>2018 N (Valid %)</th>
<th>2018 Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>.76 (.42)</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>.80 (0.40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (0-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>88 (23.3)</td>
<td>76 (20.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>290 (76.7)</td>
<td>295 (79.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing (%)</td>
<td>245 (39.3)</td>
<td>298 (44.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (0-1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>334 (89.5)</td>
<td>330 (89.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>39 (10.5)</td>
<td>39 (10.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing (%)</td>
<td>250 (40.1)</td>
<td>300 (44.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (18-69)</td>
<td>22.00 (6.85)</td>
<td>22.31 (6.97)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>41 (10.9)</td>
<td>30 (8.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>88 (23.4)</td>
<td>79 (21.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>80 (21.3)</td>
<td>61 (16.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>64 (17.0)</td>
<td>81 (22.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22+</td>
<td>103 (27.4)</td>
<td>113 (31.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing (%)</td>
<td>247 (39.6)</td>
<td>305 (45.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consent index (0-4)</td>
<td>3.67 (.47)</td>
<td>3.69 (.48)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer norms index (0-4)</td>
<td>3.80 (.35)</td>
<td>3.79 (.42)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer response index (0-4)</td>
<td>3.22 (.67)</td>
<td>3.28 (.59)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measures**

While overall the measures utilized in the current analysis come from the ARC3 Campus Climate Survey, some background on the items used to measure beliefs about sexual consent, peer norms regarding sexual coercion, violence and assault, and peer responses to others’ sexual victimization are provided here. Beliefs about sexual consent were measured using items from the Sexual Consent Attitudes Scale (Humphreys & Brousseau, 2010; Humphreys & Herold, 2007). The questions asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with seven different sexual consent attitudes, with responses ranging from 0 – 4 with 0 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. Some items were reverse coded so that higher values represent more progressive attitudes for all measures. A few examples of questions include whether consent must be given at each step in a sexual encounter, and whether consent for sex one time is consent for future sex (individual items are listed in table 2). In addition to reviewing each individual item in the analysis, the 7 consent items were combined and
averaged to create a Consent Index. Factor analysis and reliability analysis on the index indicated it is moderately reliable ($\alpha = .55$) and unidimensional.

While the consent items measure the individual respondent’s attitudes towards that issue, to measure attitude’s towards sexual coercion, violence and assault, as well as responses to sexual victimization, respondents were asked to report their perceptions of their peers’ attitudes towards those issues. Prior research has illustrated a significant, positive relationship between individual behavior and perceived peer norms (Martens, et al., 2006). Berkowitz and Perkins (1986) term this “social norms theory”, and state that even if the peer attitudes are misperceived, people will adjust their behavior according to what they perceive of their peers. Social norms theory, previously developed as the concept of “pluralistic ignorance” by Katz and Allport (1931), has been used to explain several types of risky behavior on campus, like drinking (Rimal & Real, 2005) and risky sexual behavior (Scholly, Katz, Gascoigne, & Holck, 2005).

To assess peer norms for sexual coercion, 10 items from DeKeseredy & Kelly (1995) were adopted that asked about respondents’ peer values regarding sexual coercion, violence and assault. The questions asked participants to indicate the extent to which their friends would approve of certain behaviors, for example, getting someone drunk or high to have sex with them or hitting dates in certain situations (see table 2 for all items). All peer norm items were recoded so response choices ranged from 0 – 4, with 0 = Strongly Agree to 4 = Strongly Disagree, so higher values represent more progressive peer norms. In addition to reviewing each individual item in the analysis, the 10 peer norm items were combined and averaged to create a Peer Norms Index. Factor and reliability analyses indicated a reliable ($\alpha = .87$) and unidimensional index of averaged peer norms items.

Participants were asked to consider how their peers would respond to someone who had experienced sexual violence to measure peer responses to sexual violence. These items were also adapted from prior research (Ullman, Relyea, Sigurvinisdottir, & Bennett, 2017) and included questions about whether their friends would comfort them by telling them it would be alright or help get information in order to cope with the experience (see Table 2 for a full list of items). Item responses ranged from 0 = Never to 4 = Always, and some items were recoded so that higher values indicate
more progressive responses from peers for all measures. A Peer Response index was created by combining and averaging the 10 individual peer response items. This index was also reliable ($\alpha = .69$) and unidimensional.

Using the measures identified for Consent, Peer Norms for sexual coercion, and Peer Responses to sexual violence, the data were separated by year and means were calculated for each individual item and index. Independent Samples T-Tests were carried out to identify significant mean differences between 2016 and 2018, and Cohen’s d statistics were used to determine the effect size of any difference. All analyses were carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25.0.

**Results**

To address research question 1, an Independent Samples T-Test and Cohen’s d analysis was conducted for each consent measure, as well as the overall Consent index. Results illustrated no significant differences across year for any consent item or the consent index. Though six consent items and the index showed simple mean increases between years, none of these differences were statistically significant. Participants reported highly progressive attitudes towards consent for 2016 and 2018, with items averaging between 3.50 and 3.82 on a scale of 0 – 4 with 4 being the most consent oriented, progressive attitudes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consent items: Higher Means Indicate More Progressive Attitudes</th>
<th>2016 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>2018 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Consent must be given at each step in a sexual encounter</td>
<td>3.61 (.88)</td>
<td>3.67 (.71)</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>(-.17, .05)</td>
<td>-1.06</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) If a person initiates sex, but during foreplay says they no longer want to, the person has not given consent to continue</td>
<td>3.70 (.82)</td>
<td>3.73 (.78)</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>(-.14, .08)</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) If a person doesn’t physically resist sex, they have given consent (reverse coded - RC)</td>
<td>3.50 (.93)</td>
<td>3.51 (.92)</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>(-.15, .11)</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Consent for sex one time is consent for future sex (RC)</td>
<td>3.74 (.65)</td>
<td>3.70 (.80)</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>(-.06, .15)</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) If you and your sexual partner are both drunk, you don’t have to worry about consent (RC)</td>
<td>3.71 (.60)</td>
<td>3.70 (.67)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>(-.08, .10)</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Mixed signals can sometimes mean consent (RC)</td>
<td>3.58 (.80)</td>
<td>3.64 (.74)</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>(-.17, .04)</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) If someone invites you to their place, they are giving consent for sex (RC)</td>
<td>3.80 (.50)</td>
<td>3.82 (.51)</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>(-.09, .05)</td>
<td>-.60</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\(p < .05\); **\(p < .01\); ***\(p < .001\)
Research question 2 focusing on peer norms towards sexual coercion was explain using the same type of analyses, and results for the 10 individual peer norm items, as well as the Peer Norms index can be found in Table 3. Independent Samples T-Tests illustrated two peer norm items that were significantly different between survey years. For item 4, respondents in 2018 were more likely to report that their friends would disapprove of insulting or swearing at dates, indicating a progressive shift for that item ($t(1072.21) = 2.42, p<.05$). The Cohen’s $d$ statistic of .12 indicated the effect size for this difference to be small. However, item 5 which also had a significant mean difference between 2016 and 2018 indicated a less progressive shift. Respondents were less likely in 2018 to report that their friends would disapprove of using physical force, such as hitting or beating, to resolve conflicts with dates ($t(1243.54) = -2.10, p<.05$). The Cohen’s $d$ of .11 also illustrated a small effect size for this difference. Though the direction of this difference is unexpected, the mean score in 2016 for this item was 3.96, and the mean is 2018 was 3.91, indicating very strong disapproval overall of using physical force to resolve conflicts with dates (a 4 would be the highest level of disapproval). There were no other significant differences between 2016 and 2018 for the other peer norm individual items, or the composite Peer Norms index. In examining the overall means for the 10 individual peer norm items and the index, values were very high, indicating that respondents perceived their peers to hold attitudes strongly against rape myths, dating violence and sexual assault. Overall, the mean scores were highest (most progressive) for peer norms compared with the consent items or peer response items.
Table 3: Means Comparisons between 2016 and 2018 for Perceived Peer Norms Regarding Sexual Coercion, Violence and Assault

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Norm Items: Higher Means Indicate More Progressive Attitudes</th>
<th>2016 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>2018 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Getting someone drunk or high to have sex with them</td>
<td>3.77 (.61)</td>
<td>3.71 (.68)</td>
<td>.06 (-.01, .13)</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Lying to someone in order to have sex with them</td>
<td>3.75 (.60)</td>
<td>3.74 (.63)</td>
<td>.01 (-.06, .08)</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Forcing someone to have sex</td>
<td>3.94 (.31)</td>
<td>3.91 (.42)</td>
<td>.03 (-.01, .07)</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Using physical force, such as hitting or beating, to resolve conflicts with dates</td>
<td>3.96 (.24)</td>
<td>3.91 (.42)</td>
<td>.05 (.01, .08)</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Insulting or swearing at dates</td>
<td>3.62 (.71)</td>
<td>3.70 (.63)</td>
<td>-.08 (-.15, -.01)</td>
<td>-2.10*</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) It is alright for someone to hit a date in certain situations</td>
<td>3.85 (.52)</td>
<td>3.80 (.59)</td>
<td>.05 (-.01, .11)</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Someone you are dating should have sex with you when you want</td>
<td>3.51 (.89)</td>
<td>3.52 (.94)</td>
<td>-.02 (-.12, -.08)</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) When you spend money on a date, the person should have sex with you in return</td>
<td>3.81 (.55)</td>
<td>3.84 (.49)</td>
<td>-.02 (-.08, -.03)</td>
<td>-.86</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) You should respond to a date’s challenges to your authority by insulting them or putting them down</td>
<td>3.83 (.48)</td>
<td>3.82 (.53)</td>
<td>.01 (-.05, .06)</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) It is alright to physically force a person to have sex under certain conditions</td>
<td>3.93 (.34)</td>
<td>3.93 (.36)</td>
<td>.01 (-.03, .04)</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer norms index</td>
<td>3.80 (.35)</td>
<td>3.79 (.42)</td>
<td>.01 (-.03, .05)</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Focusing on perceived peer responses to sexual assault/violence, T-tests and Cohen’s $d$ statistics were once again used to address research question 3. An examination of the 10 peer response items revealed only one peer response item – item 1 – that showed significant differences between 2016 and 2018. Participants had significantly more progressive responses in 2018 to whether their friends would tell them that they were irresponsible or not cautious enough in response to experiencing sexual misconduct ($t(696.39) = -3.35, p<.001$). In other words, respondents in 2018 reported that their friends were less likely to place blame on the victim for sexual assault than the respondents in 2016. Once again, the Cohen’s $d$ value indicated this shift, albeit significant, had a small effect size ($d = -.17$). Analysis of the other 9 items and the Peer Response index showed no other significant differences between 2016 and 2018, and results for all peer response measures can be seen in Table 4. As with the Consent and Peer Norms items, the means for the Peer Response items were high, with most items averaging above 3 for each measure on a scale that ranges from 0 – 4. However, overall
the mean scores, both in 2016 and 2018, were lowest for the peer response measures when compared with the consent or peer norms items.

Table 4: Means Comparisons between 2016 and 2018 for Perceived Peer Response to Others’ Sexual Violence Victimization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer Response Items: Higher Means Indicate More Progressive Attitudes</th>
<th>2016 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>2018 Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Cohen’s d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Tell you that you were irresponsible or not cautious enough (RC)</td>
<td>3.37 (.102)</td>
<td>3.58 (.76)</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>(-.34, -.09)</td>
<td>-3.35**</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Reassure you that you are a good person</td>
<td>3.14 (1.21)</td>
<td>3.19 (1.14)</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>(-.21, .12)</td>
<td>-2.57</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Treat you differently in some way than before you told them that made you uncomfortable (RC)</td>
<td>3.32 (1.00)</td>
<td>3.37 (.91)</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>(-.19, .08)</td>
<td>-.77</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Comfort you by telling you it would be all right or by holding you</td>
<td>2.89 (1.37)</td>
<td>2.86 (.91)</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>(-.16, .21)</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Tell you that you could have done more to prevent this experience from occurring (RC)</td>
<td>3.34 (1.00)</td>
<td>3.44 (.85)</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>(-.23, .03)</td>
<td>-1.55</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Provide information and discussed options</td>
<td>2.50 (1.42)</td>
<td>2.56 (1.32)</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>(-.26, .12)</td>
<td>-.69</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Avoid talking to you or spending time with you (RC)</td>
<td>3.66 (.79)</td>
<td>3.69 (.69)</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>(-.13, .07)</td>
<td>-.58</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) Treat you as if you were a child or somehow incompetent (RC)</td>
<td>3.67 (.77)</td>
<td>3.73 (.63)</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>(-.16, .03)</td>
<td>-1.32</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Help you get information of any kind about coping with the experience</td>
<td>2.63 (1.43)</td>
<td>2.62 (1.39)</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>(-.19, .21)</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) Make you feel like you didn’t know how to take care of yourself (RC)</td>
<td>3.61 (.85)</td>
<td>3.66 (.73)</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>(-.15, .07)</td>
<td>-1.74</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer response index</td>
<td>3.22 (.67)</td>
<td>3.28 (.59)</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>(-.14, .04)</td>
<td>-1.19</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Discussion

Recent attention to the issues of sexual assault and consent mandates renewed consideration of how these issues are defined and interpreted. While shifts in discourse about these topics are not new, it remains imperative to understand if these dialogues give way to attitudinal change. Summarily, of the measures examined herein regarding students’ attitudes towards sexual consent, perceptions of peer norms regarding sexual coercion, violence and assault, and perceptions of peer responses to others’ sexual victimization, there were few instances that showed support for any significant progressive attitude change in line with the #MeToo movement. Of the 27 individual items and 3 index measures analyzed, only 3 items showed significant changes between 2016 and 2018, with only 2 of them in a more progressive direction in line with the #MeToo movement. These results are discussed in depth below.
There are a few noteworthy findings to reiterate here. Our findings pertaining to consent attitudes suggest that despite increased attention to the issue of sexual consent, there was generally no attitudinal shift between 2016 and 2018 in the samples surveyed. There were some interesting findings for peer norms and peer response. Respondents reported significantly more supportive peers in 2018, compared with 2016, when exploring victim blaming in terms of sexual assault victimization. Specifically, they indicate their friends would be less likely to say they (the victim) were irresponsible or not cautious enough if sexually assaulted. In other words, their friends were less likely to victim-blame during the second survey, after national awareness and discourse regarding #MeToo. This shift would align with messaging behind #MeToo which brings to light the widespread nature of sexual victimization. As Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller (2018) note, hashtag activism like #MeToo is making survivors feel heard and building networks of solidarity, which often transforms into a feminist consciousness allowing people to understand sexual violence as structural rather than personal.

Also, in line with the #MeToo movement was the finding that students perceived their friends to be less accepting of verbal abuse of a romantic partner in 2018 as compared with their 2016 responses, indicating evidence of a more progressive change. This was the only progressive peer change for the peer norms items, though overall the means for the peer norms measures were higher to begin with than the consent or peer response items, indicating the vast majority of respondents already perceived their peers as having progressive attitudes towards sexual coercion, violence and assault in 2016, prior to the widespread awareness of #MeToo.

Surprisingly, while respondents reported less perceived peer norms towards verbal abuse in 2018 than in 2016, the opposite was found for the use of physical dating violence. The 2018 sample reported significantly more permissive peer norms than the 2016 sample in terms of using physical force to resolve conflicts with dates, indicative a regressive movement not in line with the messaging behind the #MeToo movement. Thus, they report more peer support for violence against dates in 2018, believing their peers are more willing to condone violence in interpersonal relationships. While the cause of this counter-intuitive finding is unclear, it should once again be noted that overall, this measure in question had the highest, most progressive mean score in 2016 (M = 3.96), and the second
highest individual item mean in 2018 (M = 3.91). It is possible that the resulting change may simply be a regression to the mean.

While it was a bit unexpected to see very little attitudinal shift from 2016 to 2018, given the strong discourse in the media about these topics, it was perhaps optimistic to expect beliefs regarding sexual norms and behaviors to change so quickly considering they’ve been shaped and molded by society for decades. It may be the case that attitudinal shift takes more time to emerge after a critical event. As Gill and Orgad (2018) note “an entirely ‘new day’ of gendered and sexual relations still seems some way off” (p. 1320). However, recent scholarship may suggest another phenomenon to account for the lack of change: that attitudes do not always shift following critical events, but become more entrenched, affirmed, and defensible. This may be especially true with regard to strong predispositions on issues such as sexual assault (Rogowski & Tucker, 2018). The theory of “elite polarization” suggests that the more polarized the issue, the more likely people become more entrenched in their predisposed attitudes, and has been supported in research (Druckman, Peterson, & Slothuus, 2013).

It is also possible that the lack of change in overall attitudes may be due to exposure differences to competing discourses regarding sexual assault depending on one’s political affiliation, or more specifically, their chosen media outlets. While indeed coverage of the #MeToo movement was widespread in late 2017, prior research has illustrated that media outlets do not all share the same narrative and viewpoints on topics that can be perceived as partisan. Examining television, newspaper and online media coverage of issues related to the (then presidential nominee) President Trump Access Hollywood scandal in late 2016 and the #MeToo movement in 2017 showed that conservative sources were more likely to defend Trump more than sexual assault survivors and had the highest levels of rape myth acceptance in their dialogue (Blumell, 2019; Blumell & Huemmer, 2019). Indeed, some authors have speculated that the election of President Trump actually fueled #MeToo due to his record of misogynistic statements and assaultive behavior in a backlash against perceived regression on feminist topics (Pellegrini, 2018). So, it is possible that exposure to the various dialogues has had a meaningful impact on students’ attitudes, but the actual message that was portrayed varies by choice
of media outlets (driven by political ideology), which unfortunately was not measured by the current data. Future lines of research should focus on variables not included in the current models, including political affiliation, media consumption and exposure, as well as the interactions between peer norms, consent, and peer response.

Although the current data did measure some demographic variables of the respondents, the high level of respondents who opted to not provide that information (about 40% of the sample overall) led to the decision not to explore those variables in the current study and instead focus on overall trends. Still, as there is an abundance of research suggesting disparate attitudes between women and men on issues related to gender and relationship violence (Brown, Banyard, & Moynihan, 2014; Fabiano, Perkins, Berkowitz, Linkenbach, & Stark, 2003; McMahon, Postmus, Warrener, & Koenick, 2014), we would encourage future research to explore difference in attitude change related to gender and other relevant background factors.

Limitations of Study

As with most research on issues related to social science, there are limitations of the data utilized for the current study. The current data did not measure the same students in 2016 and 2018, and instead utilized different samples of students. We are unable to determine if there are ideological differences in the 2016 sample students versus the 2018 sample students that may influence the results presented herein. That being said, there is no reason to believe that the students who responded in 2016 are fundamentally different than those who responded in 2018 in a way that would question the validity of the findings any more than any other research that uses campus climate surveys to gain a broad picture of trends in students’ behaviors and beliefs. In fact, the limited available demographics for the respondents for each year show similarities in gender, race and age between 2016 and 2018. Still, we would recommend that future research explore ways to utilize longitudinal designs to measure these current issues. Another issue is that of low response rates and missing data. The response rate from the surveys utilized for our analyses was around 10% and some variables had more missing data than others. Though these rates are somewhat disappointing, they are not altogether unexpected, and research on sensitive topics tend to have lower response rates. Additionally, others
recognize that missing data is common in social, educational, and psychological research (Enders, 2003; Peng, Harwell, Liou, & Ehman, 2006). Future research should continue to explore methodologies that reduce missing data and increase response rates to increase the reliability and validity of estimates. Finally, these data represent students from only one university across the US. Samples taken from other universities providing more diversity both geographically and demographically would add significantly to this line of inquiry.

**Conclusion**

Despite these limitations, our research is among the first to consider an area in critical need of scholarship. Shifts in national discourse about sexual misconduct, including consent and sexual assault, present prime opportunities to determine if attitudinal change follows. The current findings illustrate that students’ attitudes and beliefs about sexual norms and behaviors are complex and slow to change. As universities strategize about how to decrease sexual assault on campus, it is important to recognize that meaningful change takes time and effort. And as students may be bombarded with mixed messages in the media regarding these issues, universities need to continue their efforts to clearly articulate what is considered acceptable sexual behavior, not only through official policies, but also through continuous educational programming and advocacy. More research is encouraged in this area to provide qualitative and quantitative data that will provide further perspectives on this very relevant and significant area of focus among college students and the era of #MeToo movement.

**Compliance with Ethical Standards**

**Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

**Ethical Approval**

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

**Informed Consent**

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.


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The Impact of Ethics and Moral Relativism on Integrity

Steven L. Brewer Jr, Scott Walfield, Mark Jones, Department of Criminal Justice, East Carolina University
Introduction

Criminal justice professionals are expected to function on a high moral and ethical level or somewhat higher than the general public (Eskridge and Ames, 1993). Therefore, it is essential to examine morality and ethical attitudes of those who seek criminal justice professions. Xu (2013) examined students' transition from college to their selected career path. She concluded congruence between students' academic majors and their occupational choices. Therefore, it is likely that many undergraduate students will work in their chosen field of study after graduation, even if they eventually take a different career path later in life. Criminal justice and criminology students follow a similar pattern. The discipline itself and the accompanying professions require high morality, ethics, and integrity. The absence of these traits in criminal justice professions can result in undesirable outcomes, which can have detrimental impacts. People employed in the criminal justice field must have a sound moral character. Respect for the law, and trust in its benefits toward the public by ensuring justice is served for all is a reasonable goal.

That raises the question, how should honesty be measured, and to what degree should future criminal justice practitioners be held with regard to ethics, morality, and integrity? Additionally, to what degree are future criminal justice practitioners guided by a moral relativist viewpoint instead of absolutism and how will their viewpoint influence their decisions in carrying out the law in the cases to which they are assigned? This question extends to other future professionals in business, mass communication, and education. In this project, we examine factors such as honesty, idleness, moral relativism, and integrity among a group of undergraduate students from four academic majors: 1) criminal justice (n = 201), 2) education (n = 67), 3) mass communication, i.e., journalism and public relations (n = 68), and 4) business (n = 168).

Since the 1970s, Gallup, Inc. has surveyed the general public on their confidence level in various United States institutions (i.e., military, businesses, organized religion, public schools). The lowest-ranked institution consistently is Congress, with only a 15% confidence level in 2020. The approval

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1 We considered including political science majors in this study but decided not to do so because there were too few majors.
rankings ranged from a high of 84% in 2001 to a low of 9% in 2013 (Brenan, 2021). Consistently, the most highly ranked institution is the military. The confidence ratings ranged from a low of 72% in 2015 having dropped only marginally from 82% in 2009 (Brenan, 2021).

As for public confidence in the areas under examination in this paper, the picture is mixed. According to Gallup (2021), the American public consistently reports a high level of confidence in small businesses, with confidence ratings of about 60% every year since 2008. Confidence in big business is consistently very low, hovering in the high teens and lower twenties and never getting above 29% since 2000. Confidence in banks is only slightly higher, ranging from a low of 19% in 2010 (just after the collapse of 2008 when banks enjoyed a much higher approval rating) to a high of 25% in 2018 (Brenan, 2021; Gallup, 2020). Confidence in public schools has fluctuated in recent years, but overall confidence is low relative to some other institutions. Since 2010, education has witnessed a confidence level ranging from a low of 26% in 2014 to 41% in 2020 (Gallup, 2020).

The opinions regarding journalism were mixed, but journalism confidence is declining. Since 2010, confidence in newspapers witnessed a high of 28% in 2011 and a low of 20% in 2016; the approval rating consistently in the twenties over the past decade (Brenan, 2021; Gallup, 2020). The level of confidence in television news is lower, with a high of 36% in 2000 to a low of 20% in 2016, rankings in the low twenties in most years (Brenan, 2021; Gallup, 2020).

Public confidence in criminal justice also has mixed opinions regarding the confidence of the system. The public generally expresses a great deal of confidence in the police, but not in the criminal justice system as a whole. Since 2000, public confidence in the police has been ranked higher than almost every other institution, except the military. Public confidence in police peaked at 59% in 2010 and reached its lowest rating of 48% in 2020, around the time of several high-profile cases of police misconduct (Gallup, 2020). Conversely, confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole is consistently very low, with a high of 29% in 2012 and a low of 22% in 2018 (Brenan, 2021; Gallup, 2020).

Similarly, the Gallup organization polls the public on the perceived honesty and ethical standards of twenty-two occupations. In a 2019 survey, nursing received the highest ratings, with
85% believing that nurses had very high ethical standards and engineers finishing a distant second. Members of Congress (12%) and car salespeople (9%) ranked lowest. Police officers (54%) ranked sixth, journalists (28%) ranked eleventh, and a variety of business professions ranked between twelfth and nineteenth ("Honesty and Ethics in Professions", 2020).

Are these perceptions well-founded? There are many ways to measure ethics and integrity indicators in these professions. The current study seeks to examine the degree of honesty and integrity among people preparing to enter these professions.

Prior Research

Prior research, which has examined honesty and integrity, can be placed in one of multiple categories: 1) cheating in the academic setting among all the majors examined in this study, 2) cheating and morality among criminal justice majors; 3) research comparing criminal justice majors to other academic areas, 4) research within the other three disciplines examined for this project. Additionally, we examine related research in business, mass communication, and education. The review of prior uses of the Measuring Morality instrument used in this study is presented below.

Researchers at Duke University (Ariely, Baker, Brown, Bryan, Danesh, Graham, Pickus, Schaad, Shanahan & Valilis, 2012) administered the Measuring Morality instrument to 2000 undergraduate students and published their results in 2012. The researchers found three dishonesty categories: 1) those who do not admit to acting dishonestly, 2) those who selectively act dishonestly, especially regarding inappropriate collaboration, and 3) those who act dishonestly across the board. Among the findings for cheating and dishonesty in the academic environment, they found that graduate business students admitted to inappropriate collaboration at a higher rate than other students. The researchers also suggested that millennials, those with birth years between 1981 and 1996, who have grown up in an age of social media may have different interpretations about what indeed constitutes inappropriate collaboration compared to older generations.

As for dishonesty outside the classroom, students reported perceptions of dishonesty at a greater rate than admitting to their dishonesty. Therefore, dishonest behavior in the academic environment does indeed carry over into other life areas. In contrast to some prior research, the
researchers from Duke University found no significant differences by gender; however, they found a very significant negative association between dishonesty and class standing. As class standing rose, so did levels of dishonesty across academic, civic, social, and work domains (Ariely et al., 2012).

**Communication**

Conway and Groshek (2008; 2009) surveyed communication majors and found an "ethics gap." They concluded that students were less tolerant of ethics breaches among journalism professionals (i.e., falsification, cheating, plagiarism) instead of similar acts of unethical conduct in the academic setting. The students report that they were far more concerned about professional journalists’ ethical misconduct than students failing to follow ethical standards at university. Conway and Groshek found that over 60% of students believed that a journalist should be fired for creating a false source, but less than 5% believed a student should be expelled for creating a fictitious quote. They also found a lower tolerance for journalistic cheating among students majoring in journalism than public relations and advertising, but that attitudes towards all kinds of cheating evolved into a less tolerant stance as they increase in age or class rank.

In her study of mass communication students, Shipley (2009) found that length of time spent in college and age were negatively associated with tolerant attitudes toward cheating in the academic environment. In other words, juniors and seniors tend to be less tolerant of cheating than freshmen and sophomores. Shipley also found that students on the ends of the political spectrum (i.e., students who were very liberal or very conservative) were less tolerant of cheating than political centrists.

**Education**

Trushnell, Byrne, and Simpson (2012) examined 47 education majors trying to discover the role of the Internet and online technology in academic cheating. They found that the use of the Internet was not associated with cheating, refuting the idea that the Internet's advent has increased the propensity to cheat. Undoubtedly, some academics would take issue with that suggestion, as many university professors find themselves constantly feeling the need to stay one step ahead of
students who purchase papers from the Internet or use assignments from prior courses in a current course.

**Business**

Of the four academic disciplines under examination here, business has the most empirical evaluations of ethical orientations students. Academic professions in business are cognizant that their academic area is often accused or is assumed to be among the worst offenders when it comes to cheating in the academic and the professional environment. Klein, Levenburg, Kendall, and Mothersell (2007) compared cheating behaviors and attitudes toward cheating among six academic majors: 1) biomedical, 2) business, 3) criminal justice, 4) engineering, 5) nursing, and 6) social work. Specifically, they compared business students' attitudes with the other majors combined (non-business students) rather than reporting each major's result. They found no significant differences between business and non-business students regarding actual cheating behaviors. They did find that business majors have more relaxed attitudes toward the ethics of cheating than their counterparts in other academic disciplines. Consequently, cheating was negatively associated with age and grade point average; i.e., younger students with poor grades were more likely to cheat. However, this contrasts with Ariely et al (2011) which reported students in graduate business programs were more likely to admit to inappropriate collaboration relative to non-business students. In a meta-analysis of studies on business students' honesty, Borkowski and Ugras (1998) found that female students and older students were more concerned about ethical issues than were male students.

**Criminal Justice Majors**

In a 2004 study, Bjerregaard and Lord (2004) compared criminal justice majors, with a particular focus on those interested in law enforcement, to non-criminal justice majors (those majors were not identified). They concluded that criminal justice majors were significantly more likely than non-criminal justice majors to view other people as trustworthy. Additionally, criminal justice majors scored higher on altruism measures. Students who were especially interested in law
enforcement were less likely to engage in ethical violations of moderate seriousness as defined in their study. Criminal justice majors were also more likely to perceive gratuities as an ethical issue.

Eskridge and Ames (1993) compared academic cheating among criminal justice majors and several other majors. They found no appreciable difference between the cheating attitudes and behaviors of criminal justice majors and other students. However, they reported that criminal justice majors were more likely than other students to identify specific behaviors (i.e., using crib notes, false citations) as cheating.

Unlike the prior findings, Tibbetts (1998) compared attitudes toward cheating on exams among criminal justice and non-criminal justice majors; he found that moral beliefs and anticipated shame were negatively associated with cheating among criminal justice and non-criminal justice majors. He found that factors internal to the individual (i.e., personal beliefs) are more significant inhibitors to cheating than the threat or severity of external sanctions. Perhaps most significantly, Tibbets found that peer influence was significantly associated with cheating among criminal justice majors but not with non-criminal justice majors. This finding raises the importance of criminal justice agencies' social environment and peer influence.

In a UK-based study, Stout (2011) examined academic integrity and the relationship between police agencies and universities with whom they officially affiliate. He examined both university and agency personnel's attitudes toward integrity and cheating, and solicited ideas on the best ways to ensure that people entering the police profession maintain the highest integrity standards possible. He argued that academic integrity in policing programs should be conceptualized and taught as professional ethics. Stout suggested that his findings have implications for other professional degree programs, specifically mentioning education as one such program. A qualitative study involving 14 students found that a character education program in high education would be beneficial in reducing academic dishonesty while increasing moral ethics and integrity (McCasland, 2020).

Stout’s (2011) suggestion is important given that Tooker (2012) addressed the irony of how some applicants for positions in law enforcement, a position that is charged with determining the truth and upholding fairness ideals, will resort to lying and deception in the application process. One
of the most common rationales for deception is avoiding punishment, but that reason would not typically apply to applicants for a job in law enforcement or other jobs. The most common reasons for this contradictory behavior are common to the general population and other professions: 1) to make a positive impression, 2) protect oneself from embarrassment or disapproval, and 3) to obtain an advantage in a situation.

**The Effects of Gender & Age**

Bjerregaard and Lord (2004) found that criminal justice majors scored significantly higher on altruism measures and were significantly less likely than students in other majors to engage in unethical behavior. These differences became non-significant when the model controlled for gender. In accordance with prior research, they found that being female was significantly associated with not engaging in unethical behavior. Kisamore, Stone, & Jawahar (2007) also examined the relationship between gender and academic misconduct. Contrary to previous literature, they concluded that males were less likely to cheat than female students. While Ariely and colleagues (2012) found minimal gender differences in academic dishonesty, there were several differences found in social, work, and civic domains of life. Tibbetts (1997; 1998) conducted a study involving 330 university students and found that personal beliefs had a greater influence on women's propensity to cheat than was the case with men. Men were more affected by peer influence. Low self-control, anticipated shame states, perceived external sanctions, and grade point average were also associated with cheating. In the study conducted at Duke, women were twice as likely to acknowledge cheating on a romantic partner but far less likely to report driving while under the influence.

In examining youth perceptions toward corruption and integrity, Sihombing (2018) concluded that youth (sample age 16-21) struggled conceptually in understanding integrity. The youth in the sample were unable to clearly define the concept based on a lack of exposure to situations that involved integrity. More than half of the respondents were not able to define integrity properly. Their lack of understanding of the concept could result from having limited experience with integrity.
Studies examining the effects of age on academic integrity have concluded that younger students are more likely to engage in immoral acts such as cheating or additional forms of academic dishonestly (Kisamore, Stone, & Jawahar, 2007; McCabe & Trevino, 1997; Kelly & Worrell, 1979; Smyth, Davism & Kroncje, 2009). Furthermore, as students age, they are less likely to consider misconduct, engage in academic misconduct, and report cheating violations (c.f., Ariely et al., 2012).

**Moral Relativism and Moral Absolutism**

One of the items measured in the current study instrument was moral relativism versus moral absolutism. Sometimes referred to as situational ethics, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2019) defines relativism as "any theory or doctrine asserting that knowledge, truth, morality, etc., are relative to situations, rather than being absolute," or that decisions not need be made in accordance with universal moral rules (Byers and Powers, 1997). By contrast, absolutism "holds that an objective, unconditioned, and universal reality underlies the objects of perception" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2019).

Byers and Powers (2006) compared ethical orientation between criminal justice and non-criminal justice majors and found that the ethical orientations of criminal justice majors were compatible with non-criminal justice majors. When controlling for gender, they found that males ranked higher than females in terms of ethical realism, but there was no difference in ethical relativism. This finding takes us to another area to be examined, whether criminal justice majors and their non-criminal justice counterparts are more inclined toward moral relativism or absolutism.

Furthermore, Catlin and Maupin (2002) compared new police recruits with one-year veterans and found that recruits tended to be more idealistic than those who had been on the job for a year. The one-year veterans were more inclined toward relativism. Those with more education scored lower on relativism, and age was negatively associated with relativism, even though the one-year veterans were more relativist than the recruits.
The current study examined whether or not there were differences in levels of integrity, morality, and ethics across majors. More specifically, the analysis examined various student demographics, morality, and ethics to predict the difference in integrity levels.

**Method**

*Data collection.*

Students from four academic majors (business, communication, criminal justice, and education) were recruited at a large, urban university in the South. The current sample is limited to undergraduate students only ($n = 519$). While graduate students were initially included, the vast majority represented one major. Student e-mail addresses were obtained from faculty involved in the study and other faculty members in the four departments. The 15-to 20-minute online survey was distributed via Qualtrics with respondent identities unknown to the researchers. Following the end of the survey, students were redirected to a separate questionnaire to earn extra credit for participation. Researchers have shown that online surveys' privacy not only has implications for the disclosure of sensitive information, resulting in more honest answers, but the quality of data is also enhanced and there is less likelihood of missing data (Kreuter, Presser, & Tourangeau, 2008). The university's institutional review board reviewed and approved the survey protocol and data collection instrument before administration.

*Measures and procedure.*

Participants completed a battery of scales, including measures of integrity, moral relativism, and religious beliefs. We utilized adapted standardized instruments with permission from Duke University's Kenan Institute for Ethics "Measuring Morality Survey" developed in 2013. Specifically, the scales included items from the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith, Moral Relativism (sub-scales measuring Divine Authority and Personal Relativism), the relativism subscale from the Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ); and Moralization of Everyday Life, Integrity, and Social Desirability. Each case was coded using Duke University's Kenan Institute for Ethics' data collection guidelines.

*Dependent Variable.*
The Integrity scale developed by Schlenker (2008) was the key dependent variable for the analysis. The scale measures people's claims or rationale for lying, cheating, stealing, commitment to moral conduct, and a failure to rationalize unprincipled behavior. This 10-item summative scale includes both positive and negative statements; higher scores indicate greater integrity. Respondents rated statements measuring integrity ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Respondents received the following instruction: "Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements using the following scale." Two example items include "If done for the right reasons, even lying or cheating is OK," which was reverse coded, and "One's principles should not be compromised regardless of the possible gain." The Cronbach's alpha for this variable is 0.72.

**Independent variables.**

To control for demographics, the following three variables were used: age, gender, and major. The current study utilized scales measuring strength of religious faith, divine authority, moral relativism, personal relativism, ethics position, and moralization of everyday life. Two scales were used to assess religiosity: the short-form version of the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith (Plante & Boccaccini, 1997) and Divine Authority (Vaisey, 2012). Both scales utilized a seven-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly agree to (7) strongly disagree. To measure the former, three items were used, and the mean derived: "My faith is extremely important to me," "My religious faith impacts many of my decisions," and "I look to faith for meaning and purpose in my life." Higher scores indicate low religious faith. Cronbach's alpha was high (0.96). The mean of the two items were used to assess Divine Authority, which was reverse coded: "Right and wrong should be based on God's law" and "American children should be raised to believe in God." Internal consistency was also high (0.90).

Three constructs were utilized to measure ethics and morality, the relativism subscale from the Ethics Position Questionnaire (Forsyth, 1980), Personal Relativism (Vaisey, 2012), and the Moralization of Everyday Life Scale (Lovett, Jordan, & Wiltermuth, 2012). Similarly, the first two scales were measured using an identical seven-point Likert scale. The following three items were used from the relativism subscale from the EPQ: "Moral standards should be seen as individualistic:
what one person considers to be moral may be judged as immoral by another person," "Questions of what is ethical for everyone can never be resolved because what is moral or immoral is up to the individual to decide," and "Moral standards are simply personal rules that indicate how a person should behave, and should not be used when making judgments of others." Internal consistency was 0.82. Higher scores indicate the rejection of universal moral rules in favor of relativism. Personal relativism is measured using a single item, "What is right and wrong is up to each person to decide."

The Moralization of Everyday Life Scale was measured using a seven-point scale. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they would judge behavior to be construed as immoral. Respondents' choices ranged from: (1) Not at all wrong; has nothing to do with morality, to (7) Very wrong; an extremely immoral action. This 12-item scale is comprised of six subscales, each with two items and acceptable internal consistency: deception (0.80), norm violation (0.62), laziness (0.89), failure to do good (0.92), bodily violations (0.79), and disgust (0.89). The mean of the two items was used for each subscale. An example of a norm violation is "Parking in a handicapped parking spot when not handicapped". The principal component analysis was used to ensure the items represented six distinct constructs which were confirmed, each elucidating at least 10% of the variation explained.

To control for social desirability (SD), a shortened form of the scale developed initially by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) was used. Individuals were presented with 11 true-false statements, with higher scores indicating good behavior exaggeration. The summative scale ranged from 0 to 11. An example item is "I sometimes feel resentful when I do not get my way" - answering falsely on this item would result in a higher SD score. **Missing data.**

Listwise deletion was used for respondents who were missing demographic information ($n = 15$). While the amount of missing data was minimal concerning the scales and primarily limited to one or two items overall, removing participants for any scales that had missing data would have decreased the sample size. As a result, multiple imputation was performed. Imputation is a standard method in which a "complete" data set is created by using the observed data, including auxiliary variables. As Graham (2009, p. 55) argues, multiple imputation of data "are always at least as good
as the old procedures (e.g., listwise deletion, except in artificial, unrealistic circumstances), and MI/ML [Multiple Imputation-Maximum Likelihood] methods are typically better than old methods, and often very much better." The R package "Amelia II" 1.7.6 was used to create ten data sets with imputed values for all missing data (Honaker et al., 2011). Amelia II uses an expectation-maximization with a bootstrapping (EMB) algorithm to produce the maximum likelihood and allows for logical bounds on the imputed data (e.g., to produce integers only for missing scale items). To ensure the imputation process produced sensible results, a sensitivity analysis was performed in addition to various diagnostics (Allison, 2001). A single data set was selected at random for the analyses.

**Analytical procedure.**

All data cleaning and analyses pertaining to the survey data were performed in R 4.0.4 using the base packages unless otherwise indicated (R Development Core Team, 2020). A single imputed data set chosen at random was used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics and psychometric properties are presented along with ANOVA to test for any differences across the four disciplines. The Spearman-Brown formula was used to estimate internal reliability for two-item measures (Eisinga, te Grotenhuis, & Pelzer, 2013) and Cronbach's alpha for all other measures, the latter of which were estimated using the package "psych" 2.0.12 (Revelle, 2020). Following this, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted, and variables were entered in three stages: demographics, religiosity scales, and ethics scales. As the dependent variable is continuous and normality distributed, based on the descriptive statistics and visualization of the data (e.g., histograms and the normal Q-Q plot), the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is used for the multivariate analysis.

**Results**

Participants ranged in age from 18 to 58 years, with a mean age of 23.3 (SD = 5.9) and the median age of 21. Of the participants, 75.0% identified as white\(^2\), and there were slightly more female than male students (n = 268; 52.8%). Demographics were similar to the undergraduate

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\(^2\) While five categories were used to assess race, due to small cell counts, this was collapsed to a binary variable.
student body. A plurality of students were criminal justice majors \((n = 201; 39.9\%)\) followed by business majors \((n = 168; 33.3\%)\). There were a similar number of communication \((n = 68)\) and education \((n = 67)\) majors, approximately 13% each.

Table 1 presents the summary statistics of the scales used and results from the one-way ANOVAs to test for any differences across majors. Concerning our dependent variable, the four majors were similar in their integrity scores, \(F(3, 500) = 1.145, p = .331\). There were four significant main effects: ethics position, \(F(3, 500) = 2.712, p = .044\), deception, \(F(3, 500) = 2.727, p = .043\), laziness, \(F(3, 500) = 2.757, p = .042\), and social desirability, \(F(3, 500) = 2.751, p = .042\). For each of the significant one-way ANOVA tests, corresponding Welch's \(t\)-tests were done for each intergroup pairing. Due to multiple comparisons, which increases the likelihood of a Type I error (i.e., inflating the probability of finding a significant difference when it is not present), Tukey's 'Honest Significant Difference' method was used, which adjusts the \(p\)-value accordingly. No significant differences were found across the majors for any intergroup pairing (results not shown).

The hierarchical regression analysis predicting integrity is presented in Table 2 and revealed significant main effects. When entering only the demographic characteristics of the respondents in Model 1, males reported significantly less integrity, \(B = -2.12, t(498) = -4.22, p < .001\) and older individuals reported higher levels of integrity, \(B = 0.22, t(498) = 5.41, p < .001\). However, a student’s major was trending towards significance with individuals majoring in business reporting less integrity than criminal justice majors, \(B = -0.95, t(498) = -1.69, p = .092\). While significant, the model only explained 8.3% of the variance, \(F(5, 498) = 10.13, p < .001\).

In model 2, when adding the two religious variables, it produced a statistically significant better fit \((X^2(2) = 7.45, p < .001)\) though the amount of variance only increased to 10.6% \((\Delta R^2 = .023)\). There were similar findings for older individuals and males though business majors were no longer trending towards significance. There was a positive relationship between divine authority and integrity, \(B = 0.39, t(496) = 2.05, p = .041\); individuals who placed more emphasis on their morality deriving from God reported higher levels of integrity. However, one's strength of religion was not associated with one level of integrity.
Model 3 presents the full model, nearly tripling the variation explained to 33.8% ($\Delta R^2 = .232$) and producing a better fit ($X^2(9) = 20.26, p < .001$). Both demographics remained significant: older students, $B = 0.08, t(487) = 2.20, p = .029$, and men, $B = -1.63, t(487) = -3.76, p < .001$, and relative to criminal justice models, education majors reported lower levels of integrity, $B = -1.43, t(487) = -2.09, p = .037$. The magnitude of the relationship between divine authority and integrity increased slightly as well, $B = 0.41, t(487) = 2.23, p = .026$. Individuals who did not base their ethics position on individuals reported higher levels of integrity, $B = 0.66, t(487) = 3.35, p < .001$. Of the moralization of everyday life, only one subscale did not reach statistical significance: failure to do good. The laziness subscale exhibited the large effect, $B = -1.38, t(487) = -6.98, p < .001$; followed by deception, $B = 0.60, t(487) = 2.92, p = .004$; and norm violations, $B = 0.59, t(487) = 3.58, p < .001$. Bodily violations was positively associated with higher levels of integrity, $B = 0.43, t(487) = 2.63, p = .009$, whereas disgust was negatively associated with integrity, $B = -0.34, t(487) = -2.47, p = .014$. In addition, respondents who answered in a socially desirable way reported higher levels of integrity, $B = 0.19, t(487) = 2.18, p = .030$.

Discussion

Moral relativism is an increasingly growing area in social science disciplines. Historically, the study of morality was grounded in sociology and psychology; this has expanded to philosophy, political science, and criminology. The current study attempts to contribute to the body of literature by understanding the variance of integrity and morality across popular academic disciplines. Existing measures fail to directly assess the variance in integrity levels across university academic disciplines. Undergraduate students at this university were similar across all three domains: integrity, religiosity, and morality. While there were some significant differences based on the ANOVA tests, bivariate tests indicated no intra-major differences. However, all three majors reported less integrity in the multivariate analysis, though this only reached statistical significance for education majors relative to criminal justice majors.

In conjunction with prior research, older individuals reported higher integrity levels (Beyers & Powers, 2006; Decety, Michalska, & Kinzler, 2012). Using neurophysiological measures from a
development perspective, Decety et al. (2012) found moral reasoning changes with age. Likewise, male students were more likely to report lower levels of integrity. While one's strength of religion did not predict their level of integrity, those who placed greater agreement that God determines morality reported higher levels of integrity. While the two measures were strongly correlated \( r = .71, p < .001 \), the variance inflation factors did not indicate multicollinearity was an issue. As Nelson et al. (2017) found, students whose religion played a major role in their life were negatively associated with attitudes towards cheating and cheating behavior.

Similarly, individuals who believed that ethics should be determined by society and not oneself also reported higher integrity levels suggesting a more utilitarian view. Likewise, individuals who disagreed that deception was justified and were against norm violations that harmed other community members reported higher integrity levels. Collectively, this suggests that individuals follow deontological ethics in whether an action is right or wrong based on a moral code, whether derived from society and/or God.

Surprisingly, individuals who disagreed that laziness was wrong had higher levels of integrity as it may be assumed that lazy individuals may take shortcuts which in some contexts may be wrong but illegal (e.g., criminal justice) and can threaten their integrity. As Lovett et al. (2012, p. 254) note, laziness's "primary connection to mainstream ethical thought is through the sin of sloth in Christian thought, which connects behavioral laziness to mental and moral laziness in which one does not consider other people and their needs as motivators to action. Empirical researchers have also stressed the role of self-control as a 'moral muscle,' conferring success in forcing oneself to perform morally important behaviors."

**Methodological Considerations and Directions for Future Research**

While the current study has taken great care in reducing methodological issues, there are some methodological considerations. The sample, itself, may hinder the ability to determine the effects of morality and the effects on varying levels of integrity. The method may also raise the issues of generalizations beyond the current sample. The current study assessed morality and integrity for a unique sample of undergraduate students in the United States. This sample's perspective may differ
from students in other countries or various regions of the United States. Undoubtedly, cross-sectional designs always incur a risk of changing attitudes or behavior over time. The design fails to measure the fluidity of morality over a period of time and fails to establish long-term trends. As previous research has found, attitudes in morality change as individuals age (Kisamore, Stone, & Jawahar, 2007; McCabe & Trevino, 1997; Kelly & Worrell, 1979; Smyth, Davism & Kroncje, 2009). Therefore, the current findings are limited to the college-age students.

Our suggestions for future research focus on addressing some of the more immediate limitations of the chosen methodology. The absence of cross-culture or larger sample hampers the understanding of phenomena relating to integrity and moralization of everyday life. Additional research based on a more robust sample may better understand the links between morality and integrity. Future research based on a longitudinal analysis rather than a cross-sectional design can increase our understanding of the connection between age and integrity over the life course.

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The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Probation and Parole Systems in North Carolina

Implications for Practice

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Abstract

The current COVID-19 pandemic crisis has caused the need for every aspect of American life and lifestyle to change. Corrections is no different as significant changes have occurred. Moreover, these changes have occurred on both the macro (systemic changes) and the micro (individual) levels. Presentence Investigation and supervising individuals on parole have shifted to new practice models due to the need to reduce incarceration overcrowding, early release of inmates, limited community resources, and staff burnout. In addition, the duties can include offenders on probation. The purpose of this article is to revisit the responsibilities, roles, and challenges that probation and parole officers face in the 21st century during this pandemic crisis and to delineate an effective model of practice. Other challenges are recruiting quality candidates for the PPO positions, increasing the workforce, training expenses, recruiting, and retention.

Keywords: probation, probation officer, presentence investigation, parole supervision

Introduction

Historically, the Federal Parole act passed legislation on June 25th, 1910 Meyer (1953). Overcrowded prisons, cost of incarceration per inmate, and staff were deciding factors for the Federal Parole Act. In 1913, Congress amended the law to reduce imprisonment for inmates with life sentences. The inmate eligibility for parole after serving 15 years is now a possibility based on behavior and attitude. The penalties for crimes were severe, and life sentences were common. Each federal prison had its parole board. The board consisted of the prison doctor, warden, and the superintendent of prisons in Washington D.C. The Attorney General had to approve all parole. These institutions had a parole officer that would follow up with the parolee to ensure compliance. The increase of inmates receiving parole and the distance away from the prisons created new challenges for the parole officers assigned to the federal prisons. Probation officers started fieldwork to supervise the parolees in 1930 Meyer (1953). The Department of Justice held the responsibility of employing and training the probation field officers, and the Attorney General administered the Department of Justice.

Probation & parole systems in North Carolina

The Department of Public Safety secretary oversees the Department of Public Safety and reports to the Governor. There are 65,343 individuals on probation and 11,102 individuals on parole,
according to the *North Carolina Department of Public Safety* (2021). Probation and Parole Officers' duties are similar, but there are distinctions. Often citizens confuse probation and parole as the same; however, probation typically implies that the individual has not been sentenced to prison and parole occurs when there has been a prison time served. The following information will describe offenders' definition, timing, authority, and characteristics for probation and parole.

### 1. Probation

According to Gaines & Miller (2018), *"An alternative to imprisonment in which a person who has been convicted of a crime is allowed to serve his or her sentence in the community subject to certain conditions and supervision by a probation officer"* (p 306). If the offender violates the probation conditions, then the offender could carry out the rest of the time incarcerated.

Probation falls under the authority of the court system. If an offender violates the conditions of probation, a judge will determine if there is a violation and incarceration is needed. The individual is usually a first offender and committed non-violent crimes.

### 2. Parole

According to Gaines & Miller (2018), *"An early release from a correctional facility, in which the convicted offender is given a chance to spend the remainder of her or his sentence under supervision in the community"* (P 306). Parole is an early release from incarceration. The parole board has the authority to determine if an inmate is eligible for an early release for parole.

#### Requirements of Probation Officer

To apply as a probation officer, the individual needs to have a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, psychology, or related fields. The candidate must not have any felony convictions. He or she must demonstrate expertise in report writing, have excellent communication skills, understand interview techniques, and be multicultural, according to Gaines & Miller (2018). Many probation officers use autocratic leadership styles. The probation officer will rely on authority to lead the offender to compliance with their probationary period since trust is often obsolete. The
Probation/Parole Officer (PPO) and the individual establish trust based on the individual's adherence to probation or parole guidelines and interaction with the PPO. Probation officers are bound to follow the rules that could lead to revocation of probation and causing the offender to serve time in jail or prison, depending on the length of time for incarceration. Probation officers have many challenges. They have to establish case files, testify in court, perform a drug test for offenders, perform residence checks, and juggle multiple offenders at one time. The ideal candidate would focus on building trustworthy professional relationships through interaction and the offender's compliance to release rules and guidelines. The PPO's primary goal would be the rehabilitation of the offender. One challenge is supervising an offender who has mental health needs. Gayman et al. (2018) state that the PPOs supervising offenders with mental health needs cause negative mental health issues with the probation officer. The caseload and number of offenders that the PPOs have to manage cause fatigue and stress. The PPO needs to have multitasking ability. The officer needs to be organized, have time management skills, be personable, and be determined.

PPOs will also have to testify in court, so they need to possess the ability to speak effectively in front of an audience. The PPO needs to understand the audience and how to communicate efficiently. The offenders will range from different ethnicities, different belief systems, different morals, and ethics. The PPO has to know how to relate to each. People gravitate to others who share values in common, such as mannerisms, belief structure, and appearance are a few commonalities to establish a rapport with the offender. Tactics of avoiding trigger words will also create a rapport. The PPO must display an ability to communicate with individuals who are illiterate as well as those having a college education. The PPO needs to understand how to communicate with each individual utilizing active listening skills and body language.

**Parole Duties**

Gaines & Miller (2018) state that the definition of parole is the defendant released early from incarceration penalty to carry out the rest of the sentence in the community. It is important to note
that the offender has already spent time incarcerated in prison or jail. There are several standard
terms and conditions for parolees: no alcohol or drugs, cannot possess any weapons, and notify the
PPO within 24 hours if arrested. The PPO or law enforcement officer (LEO) does not need a search
warrant or permission to search the offender on probation or parole. However, there are a few
restrictions regarding the search of the residence. The conditions of parole are on a contractual
parole agreement that the parolee and the PPO must sign. Violations that occur based on the parole
conditions can result in an administrative hearing. The administrative hearing is different than the
court hearing in that the administrative hearing is a less informal process, but the sanctions can be
equally harsh as court sanctions. The administrative hearing officer is typically not a judge, but an
administer. The hearing is not in a courtroom but can be held in an office in the community. The
offender can have witnesses questioned and cross-examination at the hearings, as long as it is safe
for the witness to do so. Administrative hearings can be mechanisms to assist the offender with
compliance to conditions terms as well as a vehicle to revoke the offender's community status and
return to incarceration status.

It is the responsibility of the PPO to drive to the home to ensure the offender complies with
the parole contract and set meetings at the office to conduct interviews and perform drug tests.
Technical violations are discussed at a revocation hearing. The parole and probation systems are
under the Department of Safety for North Carolina. Some of the challenges for the PPO are high
recidivism rates, high caseloads, overcrowding in prisons, and the Covid-19 virus pandemic. Due to
the current pandemic crisis, many of the offenders are released early and placed on probation.
Unfortunately, twenty-five percent of offenders on parole will have parole revoked because of
committing a new crime or technical violation Gaines&Miller (2018). Statistically, men are twice as
likely to violate parole than women (Gaines & Miller (2018). Individuals on parole can face culture
shock, especially many of the early release offenders. They may not have received appropriate
release counseling, and the family may not be prepared for their early return. This can cause stress
and frustration in a situation that should be rejoiceful. However, lack or limited preparation for the
early release can be detrimental to the mental health of all (e.g., offender, family, PPO, and
community). For offenders who had lengthy incarceration time, being out in society can overload the offenders' senses and cause anxiety or stress. The offender can be overwhelmed and commit another crime or parole violation to result in incarceration, which may be a coping strategy for the offender.

Revocation of Probation

There are two ways that the probation period ends. The first is when the offender complies with the court's conditions for probation, and the other outcome is a violation of probation. The technical term is called a technical violation. Technical violations range from a positive drug screening, failure to report a change in occupation, moving, violating curfew, and committing another crime are a few scenarios. The probation officer will attend a three-stage procedure to determine if the offender committed a technical violation. The three stages are; preliminary hearing, revocation hearing, and revocation sentencing. Technical violations do not always mean incarceration and could result in increased conditions of probation. The PPO does have some discretion. If an offender tests positive for a drug test, the PPO could use their discretion not to revoke the offender for a technical violation.

Challenges

Recidivism

The challenge of recidivism for probation and parole is high. The challenge for the PPO is to rehabilitate the offender. The offender will state that the system is against them and designed for them to fail. PPOs can take a mentor approach to leadership and give the offender a better chance of success. Goal setting, education, sense of accomplishment, respect, and pride are detrimental to reducing recidivism. Heaney (2013) states that mentoring decreased the recidivism rate, and the process was accomplished by having five offenders and one mentor. PPOs that understand how to motivate an individual, help the individual with short-term and long-term goals, and empathy would reduce the recidivism rate and lower the workload for the PPO and the courts.
Mentoring involves modeling behaviors and attitudes as well as introducing the offender to alternative methods of problem-solving. This method can be effective; however, with the large caseloads, there are times when mentoring is not a reasonable alternative for the PPO. Therefore, a community mentor would serve the purpose. Resources in the community can be utilized to obtain mentors with a call to churches, re-entry programs, and other community organizational resources to assist with obtaining a list of potential mentors that can be used for early release offenders. Constant and consistent contact can be made with mentors and mentees via WebX or Zoom. The positive, constructive interaction between the mentor and mentee can become the impetus that will reduce recidivism. The major challenge in this issue is to ensure that the offender has access to a computer and internet service. Many academic programs can provide surplus computers to those who are unable to afford the computer. Internet services can be temporarily used at fast-food restaurants until the offender is able to secure home internet services. The primary aim is to assist the early release offense with employment or education as soon as released.

**Limited Community Resources (education & drug treatment/homelessness)**

Education can lead to a better opportunity for employment with higher pay. Some offenders do not understand how to read, write, or perform simple arithmetic. GEDs and some colleges offer free learning to obtain GED and even a high school diploma. The PPO should have a list of resources to help the offender in the county that they reside. Some programs could be beneficial for drug abuse, alcohol abuse, anger management, and how to create a resume. These challenges might seem to fall on the offender, but in the long run, the PPOs will benefit also. Accomplishing these challenges would give the PPO a sense of pride, satisfaction, and joy, knowing that they have given an offender the ability to be a productive citizen and maybe the ability to help others through their experiences with the court system.

Parolees will face homelessness and challenges with employment opportunities Eroy (2009). The pandemic's beginning resulted in businesses going bankrupt, forced companies to close that were deemed not a necessity, and taxed the United States government for welfare and
unemployment benefits. The individual states also suffered the same effects. These issues exhausted all resources for the American people and caused hardships for parolees since they had to meet the criteria for a stable residence and employment. Many of the offenders violate parole and end up back in incarceration. Offenders on supervised probation faced the same dilemmas as the entire country—employment challenges and resources that are depleted. One year later (2021), businesses are begging for help. The issue is unemployment benefits. The average worker is making more money from unemployment than working their regular jobs. The restaurant and retail businesses are needing employees. The downside is that these employees have access to handling cash and property. Trust issues for individuals on probation and parole cause challenges when being evaluated for these jobs.

**Limited training opportunities for PPOs**

Society has taken a negative view of law enforcement and the judicial system. Training and education will be the most effective way to overcome this challenge. Psychology, sensitivity training, understanding mental conditions, and how to deal with these challenges are a must in the 21st century. The issue is not with the crime but with the change in society and the offender. Continued education, annual training, and staying up to date on current events are ways to help the offender. Consideration of hiring these offenders will make a major difference in reducing not only crime but also the recidivism rate as well.

We have seen a pandemic cause critical increases with probation and parole offenders being released or serving their sentences in the community last year. Overcrowding jails and prisons will also increase the offenders’ chances of being released early into society. The numbers will increase the PPOs’ workload and increase stress. The introduction of these offenders should cause an increase in PPO jobs. Micromanagement will not work for the amount of probation and parole offenders placed back into society. The recruitment of potential PPOs is scarce. The job calls for a sense of duty instead of monetary motivation. The job criteria are high, mentally challenging and complex. Expanding the workforce of the PPOs can eliminate the feelings of anxiety and having the need to
engage in case overloads. Learning different coping skills and support staff for mental challenges would give the PPO.s critical thinking skills to help deal with stress and understand how to help their clients. Benefits for continuing education courses in the social sciences (e.g., criminal justice, psychology, and social work) would provide additional tools in relating and building a rapport with their clients. Research for available resources in the community would help the clients with recidivism by establishing a mentoring network and groups to communicate needs and support for clients, and the PPO.s would clarify where to focus for resolutions.

Conclusion

PPOs have a high caseload, must hold a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice, outgoing, time management skills, organization, presentation skills, and report writing skills. The PPO must be personable, can build a rapport with an offender, and have interviewing skills. These factors play a vital role in the success of the PPO and will assist when going to multiple places to conduct their duties. The mental stress is high, and it is crucial to remember the main focus is rehabilitation for the offender. PPO.s will face higher workloads due to early release and probation. The Covid-19 virus has minimally reduced the number of inmates incarcerated, but overpopulation will play a major role in the future. Community outreach programs will be a resource to help offenders. Still, there will be a need for additional programs and resources to give the PPO.s the knowledge and the ability to provide the offender with the best chance for success.

References


**About the Author**

Allen Ray Forbes, III, grew up in Asheville, North Carolina, and have been affiliated with the law enforcement community since 1982. He has three children and a beautiful, supportive wife who has been his motivation and reason to continue with pursuing his M.S. in Criminal Justice.
An Examination of African Americans’ Fear of Police Among Citizens

Eighteen to Twenty-Five Years of Age

By

James R. Jones, PhD
The purpose of this study was to examine the level of fear African Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five have of police. The population for this research consisted of African Americans between the ages of 18 and 25 and resided in the United States of America. From this population, a sample size of 105 participants were constructed for the study. The research compared the level of fear Blacks have of police when grouped by age, gender, education level, region of the country, and community of residence. Random sampling was used for participant selection, and a series of non-parametric ANOVAs (i.e., Kruskal-Wallis tests) were conducted to analyze the data. The results of the study suggested that most Black citizens between the ages of 18-25 were moderately fearful of the police in the United States of America. The study did not find any significant differences in levels of fear of law enforcement based on age, gender, region of residence, or education level. However, community of residence did yield a difference in fear level. The data suggested there was a significant difference in fear of police between suburban and rural communities ($p = .029$), indicating that participants residing in suburban communities ($M = 3.17, SD = 0.71, Median = 3.00$) had higher levels of fear compared to participants residing in rural communities ($M = 2.00, SD = 1.16, Median = 2.00$).

Keywords: African Americans, Generation Z, policing
Police engagement with members of the community often does not result in use of force. When examined further, it is even less likely that a police officer would use deadly force when coming in contact with citizens. Despite being true on a macrolevel, this is misleading as it relates to African Americans in the United States of America. African Americans make up only 13.2% of the United States’ population (United States Census Bureau, 2021), but have a greater probability of having forced used against them during interactions with law enforcement than any other race/ethnicity. “More specifically, African American males make up approximately 6.5% of the U.S.’ population but are more likely to be shot by police officers than their Caucasian counterparts who make up approximately 21% of American citizens” (Jones, 2017, p57).

While the presence of social media has created a fallacy that unjustified shootings of African Americans at disproportionate rates compared to their counterparts is new due to the ability for the acts to be recorded and quickly shared, statistics indicate that African American citizens have continuously been killed by police at alarming rates dating as far back as the Reconstruction Era (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2018). However, despite the continued presence of such acts over centuries, many studies only focus on African Americans’ attitudes toward police, and comparisons between African American and Caucasian American levels of receptiveness of law enforcement. Past and current research have failed to examine fear level Black citizens have of police in the United States (Ekins, 2016). Furthermore, the body of knowledge also has not explored the aforementioned as it relates specifically to African Americans between the ages of 18 and 25. The focus of this population is important because there are many variables that can be contribute to their level of fear of police such as social media, education level, region of residence, and community where one resides.
Alternative Arguments

While many studies suggest that African Americans are killed at higher rates than their Caucasian counterparts, detractors of the argument contend there may be other factors that contribute to the issue. Some argue that national and local data is flawed because use of force record keeping has produced insufficient data, there is a lack of transparency in data reporting, and when adjusting for crime (rather than population proportion) there is no systematic evidence of anti-Black disparities in fatal shootings, (The United States Commission on Civil Rights, 2018; Cesario, et. al., 2018; Fryer, 2016). In addition, other research examines the thought process, and how police officers feel when they encounter aggressive and or noncompliant people. Nix (2019) suggests that it is important to know what thoughts occur in an officer’s head when interacting with noncompliant people (regardless of race) to progress training on decision making and understanding of police interactions with the community.

In addition to the argument of flawed data, and lack of transparency, some argue that Blacks’ fear of police can be attributed to social media and other media outlets (Jones, 2017). Prior to the age of technology, it was believed that social transmission, also referred to as word of mouth, contributed to this trepidation. The majority of American citizens use social media to keep in contact with family and friends, as well as to get information on politics, and crime. For many, social media is their primary source for obtaining national, and international news (Jones, 2017). In addition, traditional media outlets such as television, radio, and periodicals provide viewers, listeners, and readers with continuous coverage of negative police/citizen interaction in
local areas. However, coverage does not always reflect the accuracy of the relationship between
the two groups (Jones, 2017). Often, the media creates an idea that every interaction between
police and the African American community is contentious resulting in use of force. This fallacy
is due to the repeat airing of encounters that results in uses of force (both physical and deadly) on
a regular basis. In addition, social media outlets such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter also
contribute significantly to citizens’ perception of how often force is used during a police
interaction with African American citizens. The ease of sharing immediately, abundantly, and
repetitively such footage via social networks like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat,
coupled with saturated airtime on traditional media outlets creates a fallacy that manipulates the
perceptions and levels of fear African Americans have for the police.

**Problem Statement:** The problem to be addressed by this study is to understand if level
of fear of police differs among African American citizens 18-25 years of age when grouped by
age, gender, education level, region of country, and neighborhood of residence.

**Purpose of Study.** The purpose of this quantitative methodology using non-experimental
research in a survey approach in a cross-sectional design study was to examine if Blacks’ fear of
police among U.S. citizens 18 to 25 years of age differs based on gender, region of residence,
education level, and or community in the United States of America. At this stage in the study,
fear was defined as the belief that the presence of a police officer would result in danger, pain,
threat, or death. The level of fear was measured by using a Likert Scale.

**Background of Study**

The first group of slaves were captured from the countries of West Africa and forcibly
transported across the Atlantic Ocean to Jamestown, Virginia in August of 1619 to be enslaved
for the next 246 years. This was the birth of African/African American fear of American
authority. Throughout the course of slavery, the social construct of race was created to reflect
a system of hierarchy as a means of control by slave masters to eliminate the possibility of an uprising by slaves and poor White plantation workers. Property owners recognized the bonding between Black slaves and White plantation workers and identified the risk of a takeover due to slaves being forced to provide free labor and poor White plantation workers providing it for little to nothing in return. In response, plantation owners created a system of supervision where White plantation workers, supervised slaves thereby creating the social construct known today as race in America.

As the Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1863, and slavery legally and physically ended in 1865, many African Americans rejoiced. However, for the next 156 years from the Reconstruction Era to present, Blacks in America have experienced a strained relationship with law enforcement resulting in their death [Blacks] at the hands of police/authority. While many groups have experienced some form of conflict with police during their existence in the United States, the strained relationship between Blacks and law enforcement has been present for longer than the conflicts between law enforcement and all other racial/ethnic groups. In addition, African Americans are disproportionately represented in nearly all categories of the criminal justice system as it relates to use of force, deadly use of force, arrests, incarceration, length of incarceration, and the death penalty—all of which begins with law enforcement as the entry point into the criminal justice system. As with the ending of slavery, each era in American history brought hope for Black citizens of better opportunities and fair treatment; however, the reality of every new era birthed another sense of trepidation.
Reconstruction Era. The Reconstruction Era began in 1865 and ended in 1877 (the generally accepted period). During this time America criminalized nearly all behaviors of newly freed slaves. The country adopted Black codes which were designed to control Blacks and implement the old social structure resembled in slavery. Individual states created their own more restrictive Black Codes which many historians argue closely mimicked slavery as it related to forced labor for different offenses of which was legal via the 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Many of the Black Codes restricted Blacks from owning property, conducting business, buying or leasing land, and required Blacks be in possession of documents to provide to authorities to avoid being charged with vagrancy. Many southern states engaged in convict leasing. The aforementioned created an incentive for state authorities to arrest Blacks, thereby enacting the legal loophole created by the 13th Amendment to re-enslave African Americans.

Jim Crow Era. The Jim Crow Era began in 1877 and continued until 1954 with the Supreme Court decision on the court case Brown vs. Board of Education which desegregated public schools. However, despite the ruling, many historians argue the Jim Crow Era did not end until 1964 with the signing of the Civil Rights Act (as with the Reconstruction era, the beginning & end of Jim Crow are theoretical or subjective proclamations). Jim Crow was a time-period where laws allowed for the segregation and discrimination of Blacks in the United States. Many of the laws that were present during the time of the Reconstruction Era were enacted in the laws that were rewritten during the Jim Crow Era. Legal segregation during this time included the segregation of public schools, parks and beaches, transportation, water fountains, bathrooms, and restaurants. It is important to note, not only was it illegal for Blacks to frequent these places, but the laws were also enforced via violence by police.

Civil Rights Era. The Civil Rights Era began in 1954 through 1968. The goal of the Civil Rights Movement was to obtain constitutional rights for Black Americans that were written
in the United States Constitution. During his final speech before his assignation, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated

“All we say to America is to be true to what you said on paper. If I lived in China or even Russia or any totalitarian country, maybe I could understand some of these illegal injunctions; maybe I could understand the denial of certain basic first amendment privileges because they haven’t committed themselves to that over there. But somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of press. Somewhere I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for rights; and so just as I say we aren't going to let any dogs or water hoses turn us around, we aren't going to let any injunction turn us around…” (King, 1968).

He was killed the next day. As in the Jim Crow Era, Blacks protesting for equal rights during this time were met with violence by police and other government authority that resulted in incarceration, serious injury, and death. Some notable protests that ended in Black protesters incarcerated or physically injured by police include the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1961 Albany Movement, 1963 Birmingham Campaign, 1963 March on Washington, 1965 Bloody Sunday (the march from Selma, Alabama to Montgomery, Alabama), 1965 Chicago Freedom Movement, and 1968 Poor People’s Campaign.

Mass Incarceration Era. The mass incarceration era began in the 1970s and continues until today. More African Americans are disproportionately represented in jails, prisons, and criminal justice supervision than any other race/ethnic group in the country. Presently, there are more African Americans under criminal supervision than there were Black slaves during slavery (Alexander, 2011; Booker, 2019).
African American men make up approximately 6.5% of the United States population (Jones, 2020). Despite their small percentage, one out of three will be incarcerated. Many criminal justice researchers and practice professionals attribute this staggering statistic to the over policing in minority neighborhoods, systemic racism in the court system, discriminatory hiring practices, criminalizing minority behaviors, and the school to prison pipeline.

**Significance of Study**

The strained relationship between the police and minority-communities dates back far before the Civil Rights Movement. In fact, the history of this relationship can be traced as far back as the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877). Today, 2021, minorities still experience some of the same fears of police as they did in the 1800s. While America’s history of terroristic culture against members of the African American community at the hands of law enforcement is well documented, recent events that have resulted in the death of Black citizens due to unjustified use of deadly force by police has caused memories of the past to resurface and rational fears of Blacks’ to be heightened. Many of these recent incidents include the deaths of Trayvon Martin, Michael Ferguson, Tamir Rice, Botham Jean, Jordan Edwards, Eric Gardner, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Jacob Blake to name a few. Many studies have been conducted that explore the rate at which African Americans are killed by police compared to other racial and ethnic groups. Some studies suggest the only thing that was significant in predicting whether an unarmed person was shot and killed by police was whether or not they were Black...Crime variables did not matter in terms of predicting whether the person killed was unarmed (Lowery, 2016). Another study found evidence of a significant bias in the killing of unarmed African Americans relative to unarmed Whites, in that the probability of being Black, unarmed, and shot by police is about 3.49 times the probability of being White, unarmed, and shot by police on average (Ross, 2015).
While previous studies have examined the comparison between the level of fear African Americans have of police compared to their fear of police in other countries (Jones, 2017), the level of receptiveness of African Americans to police compared to the level of receptiveness of Whites to police (Cheurprakobkit, 2006), reasons for unfavorable attitudes toward law enforcement, the influence of race and ethnicity (Gabbidon, & Higgins, 2008), and the influence social class has towards attitude of the police (Schuck, Rosenbaum, & Hawkins, 2008), there is still a gap in the current body of knowledge that does not study if Blacks’ fear of police differ based on age group (18-25), gender, region of residence, education level, and or community. The results of this research provide an understanding of the level of fear of specific groups within the African American community. It also confirms the impact negative police interaction has on members of the Black community.

**Barriers and Issues**

While the surveys used for data collection for the participants remained confidential, due to the level of fear many African Americans have of the police, it is speculated many people refused to complete the survey because of concern of retaliation. In addition, while the researcher may have had immediate access to participants in his geographical region, obtaining participants in regions and communities outside of his own proved to be challenging. In an attempt to address these two issues, confidentiality statements were provided with each survey to ensure the participants that their identities would remain confidential. In addition, surveys did not require the participants to provide any identifying information. As a result, all surveys were de-identified.
To address the challenge of participants being outside of the immediate geographical location and community of the researcher, electronic surveys were used as a form of data collection. This allowed the researcher to obtain data without having to be physically located in the region which the participants resided. Access to the completed surveys was password protected to ensure safety of the data and to protect the participants (as a second level of protection after de-identification). Upon completion of the study, all data was secured, and was deleted and destroyed to honor the confidentiality statement included on the survey for the participants.

**Theoretical Framework**

Coined in the mid to late 1980s by Derrick Bell Jr., Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence Mari Matsuda, and Patricia Williams, critical race theory explores society and culture, racial class, law, and power. It posits that issues in society are a direct result of social structure, and ethnocentrism rather than psychological factors. Its birth occurred in law schools in America building on to the initial theory of critical legal studies which focused on race. Critical race theory has two primary themes. They are (1) the law is a primary factor in society that is used to ensure white supremacy, and racial dominance is sustained, and (2) that the future of eradicating such a social structure lies in breaking the relationship between law and racial power and progressing towards a societal structure that embraces and ensures rights such as economic, social, political, and equality for disenfranchised groups-specifically African Americans.

Although some states have banned the teaching of critical race theory (e.g., Idaho, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Iowa, New Hampshire, Arizona, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Florida), it is a significant theoretical perspective for discussion and application. Understanding the contentions of critical race theory, it was used as the theoretical framework
for this study as law enforcement in the United States is the executive branch of the government responsible for enforcing the law. In addition, dating back to the Reconstruction Era, it can be argued that it has been used as a vehicle responsible for the continued presence of racial dominance by ensuring the disproportionate representation of Blacks in areas such as criminal justice supervision, incarceration, and victims of deadly use of force at the hands of law enforcement. As a result, this theory was used to guide this study as the hypothesis for the research is the level of fear of police will be consistent across all categories when grouped by gender, age, education level, region of country, and neighborhood of residence.

**Literature Review**

The relationship between police and the African American community in the United States of America has been strained for many centuries. While progress has been made to repair the lack of trust African American citizens have for law enforcement, many still remain fearful of the executive branch of the government (or that branch which executes and enforces the laws). The discussion is due to past events that damaged African Americans’ perception of police and police credibility.

Studies have been conducted on this issue to assist criminal justice professionals and other disciplines to better understand the dynamics of the relationship between these two groups. The focus of much of the past literature concentrated on African Americans’ attitude towards the police, and or compared the level of Blacks’ receptiveness of police to that of other races/ethnicities. However, despite previous research, there is still a gap in the body of knowledge that fails to examine fear of police as it relates to subgroups within the African American community such as citizens 18 to 25 years of age, those that reside in different regions of the United States, different communities for which African Americans reside, and African Americans of different education levels. It is important to note that while African Americans/Blacks in the United States are all identified as one category on the United States
Census, they are a broad range of people with different experiences that can contribute to their differing levels of fear of law enforcement.

This literature review explores previous studies with the intention of identifying what past researchers have said, drawing similarities between related topics, and recognizing central issues within the greater problem. In addition, this review of the literature will also assist in guiding the research by revealing gaps in the body of knowledge. Finally, it will help the researcher understand appropriate methodologies for rigor and success during the research process.

**Blacks’ Attitude Towards Police**

In this instance, we are utilizing the concepts of Black and African American as synonymous concepts. For centuries, the use of violence against members of the African American community has been prevalent and well documented. Each era in the United States has recorded rates of police brutality against Blacks that is significantly higher than the rates of their [Blacks] counter parts. These eras include the Reconstruction Era, Jim Crow, Civil Rights, and present. Agnus & Crichlow (2008) conducted a study examining race and power perspective on police brutality in America. The purpose of this research was to review past cases in the media between the years of 2011 and 2016 of unarmed Black men that were shot and killed by police. It was considered archival research that reviewed previously published data to compare findings. Data was collected from the Washington Post and New York Times to analyze the outcomes, effects, and the repercussions of the incidents in the African American community (Angus, & Crichlow, 2018). The study used Critical Race Theory (CTR) as the theoretical framework for the study.

In the cases that were sampled, the results found all police officers involved were acquitted following decisions from grand juries or district attorneys (Angus, & Crichlow, 2018). The data revealed a pattern of acquittal. The results of the study further found the protection of qualified immunity allows officers’ misconduct to be dismissed without fair trial. These rulings
have a grave impact on the criminal justice system and is one of the primary reasons why officers are able to engage in violence and unjustified deadly uses of force against minorities with very little or no consequences.

Similar to the study conducted by Angus & Crichlow (2018), Brown & Benedict (2002) examined a similar topic as it related to Blacks and law enforcement. Like many other analyses on the topic, the strength of the research identified African Americans’ attitudes towards the police, and could generalize the findings beyond one geographical location, and population. The study also examined previously written articles on citizens’ perceptions of the police in the United States. However, the research did not explore if Blacks’ fear of police differed based on age group, gender, region of residence, education level, and or community. The researchers used a quantitative research design that was longitudinal in nature and reviewed 100 studies which focused on factors such as race, age, neighborhood, and contact with the police. The research reviewed spanned from 1965 to 2000. The results of the study indicated that African Americans viewed police less favorable than Whites (Brown, & Benedict, 2002). The findings also suggested a precipitous decline in approval ratings occurred after each major incident of police brutality (Brown & Benedict, 2002).

Unlike many of the other studies that used specifically a quantitative research design to examine African American’s attitudes of police, Chaney & Robertson (2013) chose to explore racism and police brutality in America through a mixed methods design. The purpose of this study was to examine how citizens perceived the police and how much did race impact the perception. The researchers reviewed both statistical data from the National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project (NPMSRP), and narratives from 36 contributors to the NPMSRP site. The questions answered in the study were (1) What do findings from the NPMSRP suggest about the rate of police brutality in America? and (2) How do individuals perceive the police department, and what implications do these perceptions hold for Black men in America? (Chaney, & Robertson, 2013). The results of the study found there were 5,986 reports of 382
fatalities linked to misconduct, settlements and judgments that totaled $347,455,000, and 33 % of misconduct cases that went through to convictions, and 64 % of misconduct cases that received prison sentences (Chaney, & Robertson, 2013). It further found that most Black citizens perceive police negatively, were not trusting of them, and viewed them as actors of police violent acts/police brutality against Blacks.

Most research conducted in the area of African Americans’ perception of police are generally conducted via a quantitative research design using a Likert scale or via a qualitative design to obtain the lived experience of Black citizens when engaged by police. Peck (2015) uniquely conducted an archival study on minority perceptions of police. The purpose of her research was to examine perceptions of police attitudes among racial and ethnic groups. The focus was to identify if racial groups perceived police differently. While the research was an archival study, it was also longitudinal in nature as the researcher explored studies from 1985 to 2002 and updated the data based on research completed after 2002. She reviewed 92 past studies that met a specific criterion. The researcher reviewed studies that examined racial comparisons of Black/White, Non-White/White, and Black/Hispanic/White. The results of the study suggested overall, individuals who identified themselves as Black, Non-White, or minority were more likely to hold negative perceptions and attitudes toward the police compared to Whites (Peck, 2015).

Studies in the United States that examine African Americans’ perceptions of police are often limited to America. However, Jones (2017) examined Blacks’ fear of police in America and other countries. In the United States African Americans have a long history of victimization at the hands of police. Because of the aforementioned, many Black citizens in America are fearful of contact with law enforcement. As a result, the purpose of this study was to compare the level of fear Black citizens have of police in the United States compared to their fear of police abroad. The research used a quantitative research design. In order to obtain the data for the study the researcher used a closed ended electronic survey that was delivered via email and
text message. To adequately obtain the participants for the study Convenience Sampling/Availability Sampling was used. Traditionally no inclusion criterion is identified prior to the selection of participants when using this method of sampling, but due to the nature of the study and the need for a specific ethnicity for the research, a criterion was assigned. This form of sampling produced 414 participants. To participate in the study, one had to be an American citizen, and eighteen years of age or older. The researcher conducted a multinomial logistic regression to analyze the data. The results of the research suggested overall, people of African Descent are more fearful of encountering law enforcement in the United States of America and felt safer coming in contact with police in other countries (Jones, 2017). The research further recommended for future studies that are qualitative and or mixed methods research designs be explored to understand why American citizens feel safer encountering police in different countries.

Unlike much of the literature that specifically examines race and perception of police, Oliveira, and Murphy explored race, social identity, and views of police. They used a quantitative research design, and the research was conducted in Australia. The purpose of the study was to determine if there was a correlation between race/ethnicity and perception of police. In order to answer the research questions, the researchers surveyed 1,204 participants. The surveys were closed ended and were designed to answer the question “Does social identity processes impact people’s views of police”. The researchers constructed this question for the study because previous literature suggested that racial minorities from middle-class communities
tend to have a perception of police that is equally as receptive as non-minorities. The analysis of the data for this research suggested that social identity is a more important predictor of attitudes toward police than race/ethnicity (Oliveria, & Murphy, 2015).

Much of the research on attitudes toward police concentrate on race and ethnicity. However, Schuck, Rosenbaum, and Hawkins (2008) included social class and neighborhood as variables to examine. They conducted a study on the influence of race/ethnicity, social class, and neighborhood context on residents’ attitudes toward the police. The purpose of the study was to examine how race/ethnicity, social class, and neighborhood context interacted to influence four different dimensions of attitudes: neighborhood, global, police services, and fear of the police (Schuck, Rosenbaum, & Hawkins, 2008). The population for the study was derived from the city of Chicago of which 461 participants made up the sample. The research subjects consisted of 168 Caucasian participants, 131 were African American participants, and 162 were Hispanic participants. The study used a quantitative research design. The results suggested:

“Significant racial/ethnic variation in perceptions of the police, with African Americans reporting the most negative attitudes. The magnitude of the racial/ethnic gap, however varied across the different dimensions with the largest difference between African Americans and Whites in terms of fear of the police. The findings also suggested that African Americans’ and Hispanics’ perceptions of the police are moderated by the interaction of social class and neighborhood socioeconomic composition. Middle-class African Americans and Hispanics who resided in disadvantaged neighborhoods reported more negative attitudes towards the police than those who resided in more advantaged areas. Overall, the study’s findings highlighted the complex interplay between experiences, community context, social class, and type of attitudinal assessment in understanding within and across racial and ethnic variation in residents’ perceptions to the police” (Schuck, et. al., 2008, p 515).
Black Citizens’ Experience with Police

Between January 1, 2015 and August 2021, 1,549 Black men and women (Black Men-1,496; Black Women-52) were killed by police (Washington Post Police Shooting Search Database, 2021). Often when police kill African American citizens there is a lack of punishment that occurs. In most instances, officers are not charged criminally. As a result, Chaney & Robertson (2015) conducted a study to examine if police involved killings of Black citizens between the years of 1999 and 2015 resulted in an indictment. The research was a quantitative research design. Through the study, the researchers would also answer the following questions: (1) How does the murder of unarmed Black people by police support White Supremacy? (2) What do non-indictments of police suggest about the lives of unarmed Black people? (3) How does the murder of unarmed Black people escalate individual, familial, and communal mistrust of police? (Chaney, & Robertson, 2015). The results revealed in 63% of the cases where a police officer killed a Black citizen, an indictment did not occur. The researchers argued non-indictment undermines the confidence members of this group have in police and increases the likelihood they will regard law enforcement as a threat to their individual, family, and communal safety (Chaney, & Robertson, 2015).

Rarely has there been a study that researched the impact of the words of a person and how their statements perceived created a perception of oneself and the world. After the violent beating of Rodney King on March 3, 1991, by police in Los Angeles, California, four police officers were ordered to stand trial. At this time, Rodney King was called to the stand as a witness for the state.

Multiple times during his testimony King would state “Can’t we all just get along.” The purpose of this study was to examine the public quotes made by Rodney King, as well as what these quotes revealed about the world paradigm of King, as well as how he perceived himself and his place in the world (Chaney, & Robertson, 2014). The study was a qualitative research design.
The researchers used Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the theoretical framework to guide their research. They explored 20 quotes that were made by Rodney King during the trial and after to see how they influenced society’s perception of the police. They also, sought to identify how Rodney King’s words during this time define the state of police minority relations. The results of the study found that the quotes of King indicate he was thankful for the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement that allowed for the progression he experienced in the 1990s but was also annoyed with the biased and unfair treatment of Blacks by the legal system and law enforcement. The results of the research further found the feelings of other Blacks aligned with his thinking and the sentiments of his quotes.

As many variables such as Blacks’ perception, and attitude towards police had been tested in previous studies, Chaeurprakobkit (2006) researched other areas that could be responsible for the strained relationship between the two groups. The researcher conducted a study on the impact of race, experience, and feelings of safety on attitudes toward the police. The researcher explored citizens’ perception of police demeanor, how well officers performed the duties of their job, and if there was a correlation between race and feeling of safety in one’s neighborhood as it related to police presence. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact race had on police attitude towards citizens and the citizens’ feeling of safety in their communities. This study used a quantitative research design to examine three primary factors. In order to evaluate the aforementioned, the researcher created a sample size of 393 participants and provided them with closed ended surveys. The criteria to be a participant was that one had to be either a victim of a crime, or a complainant in the jurisdiction of the study. The research was conducted in Marietta, Georgia in 2004. The results of the study suggested that overall (1) the majority of respondents felt safe in their neighborhood and were satisfied with the police who handled their case; (2) the same number of Blacks and Whites reported negative experiences with the police; and (3) although all three factors greatly affected attitudes, contact experience with the police was the most influential (Cheurprakobkit, 2006).
While many studies on police and community relations (concentrating on Black citizens and police relationships) often derive from the negative treatment of the Black community, Desmond, Papacharistos, & Kirk (2016) were inspired by the police interaction of a single individual. The purpose of the study was to examine the experience of Black men that endured violence against them by police officers. The study occurred in Milwaukee and the goal was to determine if violence against Black men affected police related 911 calls. The interest for this research came as a result of the beating of a Black man named Frank Jude. The research used a quantitative design that examined every 911 call over a longitudinal period. They reviewed 1,104,369 calls for service between March 1, 2004 and December 31, 2010. The data provided by the Milwaukee police department included the “date, address, city code and description of each call, and a disposition code reporting how the call was resolved (Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016). The results of the study found that due to the earlier beating of Frank Jude, the police department failed to receive nearly 22,000 calls for service. The results of the study also found that “other local and national cases of police violence against unarmed Black men also had a significant impact on citizen crime reporting in Milwaukee. Police misconduct can powerfully suppress one of the most basic forms of civic engagement: calling 911 for matters of personal and public safety” (Desmond, Papachristos, & Kirk, 2016).

Most researchers for purposes of efficiency limit the location of their studies. However, Gabbidon & Higgins (2008) did the opposite. The data for the research was not specific to one area of the United States. The purpose of the study was to determine if race and ethnicity was a predictor for how Blacks are treated by police. The researchers used secondary data to examine how race relations impacts public opinion of the treatment of Black citizens by law enforcement. The source of the data was from recent gallop polls. The data collected from the gallop polls examined if there was a correlation between race and ethnicity and if the aforementioned guided citizen views on the treatment of Blacks and Whites by police. The independent variables in the study were race, age, gender, education, employment status, region, and political ideology. The
results suggested that all of the independent variables were significantly related to public opinion regarding the perceived treatment of Blacks by the police (Gabbidon, & Higgins, 2008).

Criminal justice professionals are aware that African American citizens are disproportionately represented as victims in police shootings. However, understanding to what extent race was a primary factor had been previously unknown. The purpose of the study conducted by Cody Ross (2015) was to analyze police shootings to determine the extent to which racial bias was a predictor. The data examined was from 2011 to 2014 for all of the United States. The reason for the interest in the research was due to the increased number of minorities that had been killed by police over the past decades. This study used secondary data to analyze police shootings to determine the extent to which racial bias was a predictor. The data was obtained from the U.S. Police-Shooting Database (USPSD) which is responsible for recording police involved shootings in the United States. The data was examined from multiple counties across the country from years 2011-2014. In an earlier study data was obtained from the FBI’s Supplemental Homicide Reports of which is largely self-reported (as such the data would not expect to show any bias). To analyze the data from the USPSD, a multi-level Bayesian model was used. Researchers considered variables such as 1) whether suspects/civilians were armed or unarmed, and 2) the race/ethnicity of the suspects/civilians. The results of the study found evidence of a significant bias in the killings of unarmed Black Americans relative to unarmed White Americans, in that the probability of being \{black, unarmed, and shot by police\} is about 3.49 times the probability of being \{white, unarmed, and shot by police\} on average (Ross, 2015). The findings of the data also found:

“multi-level modeling showing that there exists significant heterogeneity across counties in the extent of racial bias in police shootings, with some counties showing relative risk ratios of 20 to 1 or more. Finally, analysis of police shooting data as a function of county-level predictors suggests that racial bias in police shootings is most likely to emerge in police departments in larger metropolitan counties with low median incomes and a sizable
portion of Black residents, especially when there is high financial inequality in that county” (Ross, 2015, p. 1).

Police and Community Relations in the Black Community

African Americans intensified their protesting for equal rights in the United States during the Civil Rights Movement. Since then, there has been many movements created championing equality and equal protection under the law. Cline (2017) conducted a study on poverty, race, and police. This study explored the lived experience of participants in the Black Lives Matter movement and their use of the hashtag. The Black Lives Matter movement was birthed after the killing of Trayvon Martin. The hashtag was used to spread information and photos on the internet and social media. The study also examined the counter use of the hashtag #AllLivesMatter. This study used a qualitative research design that examined the role of the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter in the Black Lives Matter movement. To obtain the date for the study, the researcher conducted multiple open-ended interviews. More striking than the slogan’s ability to express so much in so few words is how painful it is that its message needs to be asserted” (Petersen-Smith, 2014). Through the interviews the data suggested that:

1. "Protesters and their supporters were generally able to circulate their own narratives on Twitter without relying on mainstream news outlets.

2. Evidence that activists succeeded in educating casual observers on Twitter came in two main forms: expressions of awe and disbelief at the violent police reactions to the Ferguson protests, and conservative admissions of police brutality in the Eric Garner and Walter Scott cases.

3. The primary goals of social media use among our interviewees were education, amplification of marginalized voices, and structural police reform" (Cline, 2017).

As with the Black Lives Matter Movement, recording police to capture wrongdoing is relatively new. While police brutality against African Americans is an old occurrence, phone recordings and the ability to share the footage quickly and abundantly creates a fallacy that it has only recently become a practice at high rates by police. Farmer, Sun, and Starks conducted
research on the willingness to record police–public encounters. The purpose of their study was to assess racial and nonracial factors that influence citizen willingness to record police–public encounters (Farmer, Sun, & Starks, 2015). The researchers used a quantitative research design and closed ended surveys to obtain the data for analysis. The data for the research was collected over the course of two semesters (Fall/2012 and Spring/2013). Two Universities were used as the population for the research. However, for reasons of confidentiality the names of the institutions were not released. They were referred to as two public universities in a mid-Atlantic state. The sample size for the study consisted of 644 total participants breaking down into 375 minorities and 269 Whites. The researchers conducted a bivariate analysis focused on the comparison of the mean scores of willingness to record the police across racial/ethnic minorities and majorities (Farmer, Sun, & Starks, 2015). The results of the study suggested that minority students and those who believed that recording served social justice, had a deterrent effect on the police, and was legally justified were more likely to engage in such behavior (Farmer, Sun, & Starks, 2015). The findings also indicated that past recording experience and negative encounters with the police also led to higher levels of willingness to record police activity. Implications for policy and future research were discussed (Farmer, Sun, & Starks, 2015).

Throughout the history of the United States minority groups (especially African Americans) have been victims of unfair police treatment—specifically police brutality. Many would argue the aforementioned dates back to the 1800s during the time of the Reconstruction Era after slavery. The current relationship between the African American community and police is built on a history of unfair treatment and police misconduct. To explore the fracture in the relationship further Weitzer and Touch conducted a study on police-community relations in a majority-Black city. The purpose of this research was to examine the role of each factor in shaping citizens’ perceptions of police misconduct, racial differences in these perceptions, and the reasons underlying them (Weitzer, & Touch, 2008). The study occurred in Washington, D.C. To get the data needed for the research two surveys were given to residents. One survey was
administered between June 1998 and August 1998 and the second was given between December 1999 and January 2000. Random sampling was used via an electronic digital dial phone call system which allowed for telephone interviews to be conducted. The response rates were approximately 60%. The first survey produced 2,216 participants and the second survey produced 2,420 participants. The total sample size was 4,636. The racial demographics of the participants were 2,640 African Americans, 1,495 non-Hispanic Whites, 176 Hispanics, and 185 others (140 respondents did not identify their race). The independent variables in this study were race, education, age, marital status, gender, parenthood, and year the survey was taken. The dependent variable was perceived police misconduct. The results of the study found that Blacks were about twice as likely as Whites to believe the city’s police stop too many people without good reason, that they are too tough on people whom they stop, and that they are verbally or physically abusive toward citizens (i.e., seeing each type of abuse either as a big problem or as some problem in their neighborhoods) (Weitzer, & Touch, 2008).

Summary of Literature Review

Numerous studies on African American’s attitudes toward police have been conducted in the last fifty years due to the history of events that have occurred against Black citizens by law enforcement in the United States. Most studies are limited in their focus and concentrate on variables such as participants over the age of eighteen, or specific geographical areas. While most related studies focus on African Americans’ attitudes toward police as well as their perception of law enforcement, there are very little studies that examine how fearful are Black American citizens of police. Thus, there is a significant gap in the literature that has not explored fear of police as it relates to African American citizens between the ages of 18 and 25, gender, region of residence, education level, and community of residence. Future studies analyzing how fearful these groups are of police will provide an understanding of the level of trepidation specific groups have of law enforcement within the African American community. It
will also confirm the impact negative police interaction has on members of the Black community.

Methodology

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of citizens in the United States that identified as Black or African American and were between eighteen and twenty-five years of age. Males and females were eligible to participate in the research. A sample size of 105 was constructed. The largest proportion of participants were between 24-25 years of age (n = 41, 39%). The majority of participants were women (n = 64, 61%), and the largest proportion of participants had a high school education (n = 46, 44%). The largest proportion of participants resided in the South Atlantic region (n = 43, 41%), and most participants resided within suburban communities (n = 63, 60%). Finally, most participants indicated that they were moderately fearful of the police (n = 55, 52%). The participants for the study were a smaller segment of the greater population in that they were selected from people born between the years of 1996 and 2002. Random sampling was used to obtain the participants for this research. Random sampling is a form of sampling where each participant is selected by chance and each member of a population has an equal opportunity of being selected. This form of sampling is best to protect against sampling bias.

Due to many of the participants not being in the same region as the researcher, electronic surveys were used to collect the data for the study. Mechanical Turk (MTurk) was used as the subject recruitment and data collection tool. “Amazon.com’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) has the potential to facilitate low-cost experiments in political science with a diverse subject pool. MTurk is an online web-based platform for recruiting…Not surprisingly, scholars across the social sciences have begun using MTurk to recruit research subjects.” (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2011, p. 1).
Instruments

To reach participants in multiple regions of the country without having to physically be in the location an electronic survey was created and distributed. The survey was created through an electronic survey tool called Qualtrics. Qualtrics is a web-based survey tool that allows researchers to create surveys to collect data for their studies. The survey consisted of six questions. The questions and answer selections for each are below:

1. **What is your age?**
   - 18-20
   - 21-23
   - 24-25

2. **What is your gender?**
   - Male
   - Female

3. **What region of the country do you reside?**
   - Middle Atlantic- New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania
   - East North Central- Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin
   - West North Central- Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas
   - South Atlantic- Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida
   - East South Central- Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi
   - West South Central- Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas
   - Mountain- Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada
   - Pacific- Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii
4. **In what type of neighborhood do you reside?**

   Urban- Area of high-density population; inner city.

   Suburban- Residential neighborhood located on the outskirts of a city. Area occupied by primarily single-family homes and apartments occupied in buildings not considered high rise structures.

   Rural- a low density population area that has very little homes, buildings, and large plots of land.

5. **What is your formal level of education?**

   High School- Completion of 4 years with a high school diploma received or having obtained a GED (General Equivalency Diploma).

   Associate Degree- Completion of 60 (post-secondary) credits with an Associate Degree received at the community college level in any discipline.

   Bachelor’s Degree- Completion of 120 (post-secondary) credits with a bachelor’s degree received at the College or University level in any discipline.

   Graduate Degree- Completion of 36 (graduate) credits or more with a master’s or Professional Degree received at the College or University level in any discipline.

   Doctorate Degree- Completion of a Doctorate or Doctorate Level Professional Degree received at the College or University level in any discipline.

6. **How fearful are you of the police?**

   Not fearful at all.

   Minimally fearful (Your level of fear is 1-3 on a scale to 10)

   Moderately fearful (Your fear level is 4-6 on a scale to 10)

   Extremely fearful (Your fear level is 7-10 on a scale to 10)
The validation of the survey questions occurred by first having them reviewed by social science researchers in the disciplines of sociology and criminal justice, then running a pilot test using a second electronic survey tool (Survey Monkey) for the said pilot test. Following completion of the test run, the data was cleaned to check the internal consistency. Minimal revisions were made to the final survey and entered into Qualtrics for distribution.

**Procedures**

The design selected for this study included the use of quantitative methodology using non-experimental research in a survey approach in a cross-sectional design. Furthermore, meaningful comparisons among various dependent variables were also conducted. This research design allows the researcher to compare levels of the study’s independent variables on the dependent variable of fear.

**Consent.** Prior to beginning the survey the participants read and electronically acknowledge an informed consent form that ensured the participant was aware of any risks associated with the study, that the study was completely voluntary and could be stopped at any time, that their personal information would remain confidential (de-identified, password protected, and only the researcher would have access to the data), and that all data would be permanently deleted and destroyed upon completion of the research.

**Data Collection.** In an attempt to obtain data from the participants, a closed ended survey was constructed using MTurk. Once the survey was made, it was uploaded to the MTurk website where workers of the platform distributed the survey to participants that met the study criteria. The survey was able to be sent via text, email, social media, or listed on a website created for the study. Each survey was administered electronically and consisted of six closed ended questions. All the responses of the participants were confidential. Information received from the survey was the participant’s gender (coded as 1 for male, and 2 for female), age (coded as 1 for 18-20, 2 for 21-23, 3 for 24-25), region of residence (coded as 1 for Middle Atlantic, 2
The regions of the country identified for which to collect data from was selected to examine fear level across the entire continental United States. Likewise, all education levels were also chosen to explore level of fear of police among every education level. Finally, the study focused specifically on Black citizens between certain ages. As a result, this only included participants eighteen to twenty-five years of age.

Data Analysis

In this study the independent variables were age, gender, region of residence, education level, and community of residence. The dependent variable was level of fear. A non-parametric ANOVA (i.e., Kruskal-Wallis tests) was conducted to determine the extent to which level of fear was related to the outcome measured. In the results section of the study, descriptive statistics is provided, and the selectin of ANOVA (i.e., Kruskal-Wallis tests) applies to all research questions in the study.

Research Questions

The research questions constructed for this study are:

RQ 1: Are there differences in fear of police based on age (18-25)?

RQ 2: Are there differences in fear of police based on gender?

RQ 3: Are there differences in fear of police based on region of residence?

RQ 4: Are there differences in fear of police based on education level?

RQ 5: Are there differences in fear of police based on community of residence?
Results

The purpose of this quantitative methodology using non-experimental research in a survey approach in a cross-sectional design study was to examine if Blacks’ fear of police among people eighteen to twenty-five years of age differed based on age, gender, region of residence, education level, and community of residence in the United States of America. The sample for this study consisted of citizens in the United States that identified as Black and were between eighteen and twenty-five years of age. Members of the sample were recruited via MTurk to complete an online survey asking for their demographic characteristics, and level of fear. This section contains the results of the data collection and statistical analysis to answer the research questions.

Demographic Characteristics

An initial total of 113 participants responded to the survey. Eight participants were removed from the data set because they did not answer all the survey questions, leaving a final total of 105 participants included in the analysis. Table 1 displays the characteristics of the sample. The largest proportion of participants were between 24-25 years of age ($n = 41, 39\%$). The majority of participants were women ($n = 64, 61\%$), and the largest proportion of participants had a high school education ($n = 46, 44\%$). The largest proportion of participants resided in the South Atlantic region ($n = 43, 41\%$), and most participants resided within suburban communities ($n = 63, 60\%$). Finally, most participants indicated they were moderately fearful of the police ($n = 55, 52\%$).
Table 1

*Frequency Table for Study Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>60.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region of residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Atlantic</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Atlantic</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East North Central</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East South Central</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West North Central</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West South Central</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community of residence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fear of police</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not fearful at all</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimally fearful</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Fearful</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Fearful</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

In order to answer the research questions, a series of non-parametric ANOVAs (i.e., Kruskal-Wallis tests) were conducted. The Kruskal-Wallis test is appropriate to conduct when the research involves determining if differences exist between groups on an ordinal outcome variable (Conover & Iman, 1981). Because level of fear is an ordinal variable, the Kruskal-Wallis test is appropriate to conduct. Additionally, because the Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric test, distributional assumptions such as normality and equality of variances do not need to be tested (Conover & Iman, 1981).

Research Question 1

RQ 1: Are there differences in fear of police based on age?

To address RQ1, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted with age group as the independent variable and fear of police as the dependent variable. The results of the test were not significant, $\chi^2(2) = 1.33, p = .513$, indicating that participants’ levels of fear of the police did not differ between age groups. Table 2 displays the results of the test and the mean ranks for levels of fear for each age group.

Table 2

*Kruskal-Wallis Rank Sum Test for Fear of Police by Age*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>47.46</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-23</td>
<td>55.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-25</td>
<td>54.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 2

RQ 2: Are there differences in fear of police based on gender?

To address RQ2, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted with gender as the independent variable and fear of police as the dependent variable. The results of the test were not significant, $\chi^2(1) = 0.02$, $p = .877$, indicating that participants’ levels of fear of the police did not differ between men and women. Table 3 displays the results of the test and the mean ranks for levels of fear for each gender.

Table 3

*Kruskal-Wallis Rank Sum Test for Fear of Police by Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52.66</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3

RQ 3: Are there differences in fear of police based on region of residence?

To address RQ3, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted with region of residence as the independent variable and fear of police as the dependent variable. Because there was only one participant in the East South-Central region, this category was grouped with the East North Central region to create one category for the East region for the present analysis. Likewise,
because there was only one participant in the West North Central region, this category was
grouped with the West South-Central region to create one category for the West region for the
present analysis. The results of the test were not significant, $\chi^2(5) = 6.87, p = .230$, indicating that
participants’ levels of fear of the police did not differ between regions. Table 4 displays the
results of the test and the mean ranks for levels of fear for each region.

Table 4

Kruskal-Wallis Rank Sum Test for Fear of Police by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Atlantic</td>
<td>56.65</td>
<td>6.87</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Atlantic</td>
<td>52.78</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>65.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>39.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>56.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>35.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 4

RQ 4: Are there differences in fear of police based on education level?

To address RQ4, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted with education level as the independent variable and fear of police as the dependent variable. The results of the test were not significant, $\chi^2(3) = 0.17, p = .983$, indicating that participants’ levels of fear of the police did not differ between education levels. Table 5 displays the results of the test and the mean ranks for levels of fear for each education level.
Table 5

*Kruskal-Wallis Rank Sum Test for Fear of Police by Education Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>52.35</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>55.22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>53.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate Degree</td>
<td>50.17</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 5

RQ 5: Are there differences in fear of police based on community of residence?

To address RQ5, a Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted with community of residence as the independent variable and fear of police as the dependent variable. The results of the test were significant, $\chi^2(2) = 6.51, p = .039$, indicating that participants’ levels of fear of the police significantly differed between community types. Pairwise comparisons were conducted to determine the exact nature of the differences. The pairwise comparisons revealed there was a significant difference in fear of police between suburban and rural communities ($p = .029$), indicating that participants residing in suburban communities ($M = 3.17, SD = 0.71, Median = 3.00$) had higher levels of fear compared to participants residing in rural communities ($M = 2.00, SD = 1.16, Median = 2.00$). No other comparisons were significant. Table 6 displays the results of the test and the mean ranks for levels of fear for each community type.
Table 6

*Kruskal-Wallis Rank Sum Test for Fear of Police by Community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>57.56</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>48.26</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

African Americans fear of police in the United States has been a well-documented issue for centuries. However, the level of fear experienced by this racial group was never clear. Past research often focused on the comparison between how receptive Blacks and Whites were to police presence and overlooked how fearful their [police] presence made Blacks. The purpose of this study was to examine if Blacks’ fear of police among people eighteen to twenty-five years of age differed based on gender, region of residence, education level, and or community of residence in the United States of America. For brevity purposes, region of residence was categorized as Middle Atlantic (New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), East North Central (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin), West North Central (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas), South Atlantic (Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida), East South Central (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi), West South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas), Mountain (Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada), and Pacific (Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, and Hawaii). Level of education was categorized as High School (Completion of 4 years with a high school diploma received or having obtained a GED (General Equivalency Diploma)), Associate Degree (Completion of 60 (post-secondary) credits with an
Associate Degree received at the community college level in any discipline), Bachelor’s Degree (Completion of 120 (post-secondary) credits with a Bachelor’s Degree received at the College or University level in any discipline), Graduate Degree (Completion of 36 (graduate) credits or more with a Master’s or Professional Degree received at the College or University level in any discipline), and Doctorate Degree (Completion of a Doctorate or Doctorate Level Professional Degree received at the College or University level in any discipline). Community of residence was categorized as Urban (Area of high-density population; inner city), Suburban (Residential neighborhood located on the outskirts of a city; area occupied by primarily single-family homes and apartments occupied in buildings not considered high rise structures), and Rural (a low-density population area that has very little homes, buildings, and large plots of land). Finally, level of fear was measured as not fearful at all (level of fear is 0 on a scale to 10), minimally fearful (level of fear is 1-3 on a scale to 10), moderately fearful (level of fear is 4-6 on a scale to 10), and extremely fearful (level of fear is 7-10 on a scale to 10). This section focuses on findings of the research, strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and implications of the study. It also provides recommendations for future research.

The study was designed to explore if level of fear differed based on different variables. As a result, the research was guided by the following five research questions:

RQ 1: Are there differences in fear of police based on age (18-25)?

RQ 2: Are there differences in fear of police based on gender?

RQ 3: Are there differences in fear of police based on region of residence?

RQ 4: Are there differences in fear of police based on education level?

RQ 5: Are there differences in fear of police based on community of residence?

The study analyzed survey responses from (N=105) Black participants between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five across different regions of the country, neighborhood types, education levels, and male and female genders. A third-party data collection agency (MTurk)
was used to recruit participants for the study and collect the data. Random sampling was used by the data collection agency. Random sampling was used because it protects against sampling bias.

The results of the research suggested that most Black citizens between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five were moderately fearful of the police in the United States of America. The study did not find any significant differences in levels of fear of law enforcement based on age, gender, region of residence, or education level. However, community of residence did yield a difference in fear level. The data suggested there was a significant difference in fear of police between suburban and rural communities ($p = .029$), indicating that participants residing in suburban communities ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.71$, Median = 3.00) had higher levels of fear compared to participants residing in rural communities ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 1.16$, Median = 2.00).

While the results of this study are largely consistent with previous research, generalizing the results, and the external validity may be challenged due to the small sample size. As a result, it would be strongly recommended that researchers attempting to duplicate this study ensure a larger number of participants. Also, when results are significant, it would be beneficial to understand why. This means including questions in the survey that would allow the researcher to glean an understanding of the cause of the relationship.

Ultimately, the history of the research on Blacks relationship with American law enforcement has been largely quantitative. To better understand why Blacks are fearful of police in the United States of America, more studies that use a qualitative research design or mixed methods needs to be employed. The implications in utilizing a qualitative research design would allow for true understanding of the problem, and changes to be made.
Strengths of the Study

The major strengths of the study included the examination of the level of fear Black citizens between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five have of police—the age group most involved in current protests and activism against police brutality on Black citizens in the United States. In addition, the study was able to explore the varying levels of fear among this group as it related to gender, region of the country, neighborhood of residence, and highest level of formal education completed. Finally, the use of a third party to collect the data for the research proved to be a significant strength of the research by ensuring random sampling transpired, which contributes to strong external validity in studies. This sampling method ensured sampling bias did not occur when selecting participants.

Previous studies conducted on African Americans’ fear of police in the United States have not specifically examined the eighteen to twenty-five age group, or considered variables such as region of the country, type of neighborhood, and level of education. As a result, this study contributed to the body of knowledge generated by scholars, and criminal justice professionals that attempt to understand the impact the fractured relationship between Blacks and police in the United States has on Black citizens. In the past, studies examined how receptive American citizens were of law enforcement, and compared race, gender, and education level.

Weaknesses of the Study

One of the weaknesses of the study was the sample size consisted of 105 participants. Initially, the study was designed to have a minimum of 250 participants. However, for unknown reasons many refused to complete the surveys and or answer all the questions on the surveys.
rendering many [surveys] unusable. Given this challenge, the researcher considered recruiting additional participants outside the use of the third party (MTurk). However, by doing so, the sampling method would have changed from random sampling to convenience sampling. As a result, the final decision was to move forward analyzing the data that was collected using random sampling (105 participants). The reason for the aforementioned is because random sampling protects against sampling bias, thereby protecting the integrity of the study, while convenience sampling makes it difficult to generalize findings, and creates significant challenges to a study’s external validity.

Limitations of the Study

Internal validity is the ability to confirm the independent variable caused the outcome of the dependent variable. This is often referred to as statistical significance in statistics of which is determined by .05. There are seven threats to internal validity. They are history, maturity, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, mortality, and sample size. For this study, the threat to internal validity was sample size. The purpose of a sample is to reflect the population being studied. However, the researcher had trouble obtaining participants in regions and communities outside of his own. In addition, while the survey used for data collection for the participants remained confidential, due to the level of fear many African Americans have of the police, it is hypothesized that a lot of people refused to complete the survey because of concern of retaliation. As a result, the aforementioned challenges limited the sample size for the study which made it difficult to generalize the findings of the research to the greater population. In an attempt to address these two issues, confidentiality statements were provided with each survey to ensure the participants their identities would remain
confidential. In addition, surveys did not require the participants to provide any identifying information. As a result, all surveys were de-identified.

To address the challenge of participants being outside of the immediate geographical location and community of the researcher, electronic surveys were used as a form of data collection. This allowed the researcher to obtain data without having to be physically located in the region of which the participants resided.

External validity is the extent to which the findings of a study can be generalized beyond the sample. As stated above, obtaining participants for the study proved to be challenging due to fear and distance. As a result of the possibility of a small sample size the study ran the risk of having poor external validity. In an attempt to control for this limitation, the provisions discussed above assisted in ensuring the strongest possible sample size.

In addition to the aforementioned, another limitation of the study was while the results provided insight on the level of fear Blacks in America have of the police, it did not provide an understanding of why Blacks fear law enforcement. The research used a quantitativemethodology using non-experimental research in a survey approach in a cross-sectional design, and an ANova to analyze the data. Quantitative data only provides an understanding to how often, or at what rate something occurs. Quantitative research designs are invaluable when used to gather and analyze objective information.

The information gleaned from the research did not provide any qualitative findings. As a result, there still remains a gap in the literature that does not explain why Blacks that are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five experience the level of trepidation cited in the
study. Ultimately, the greatest limitation of the study was not understanding the qualitative factors that contribute to the phenomenon.

Future Research

While the quantitative research design was invaluable in identifying the level of fear African Americans feel about the police, understanding specifically why could not be answered. As a result, it is recommended that future researchers use a qualitative research design to answer more specific questions that would yield comprehension of why African Americans are fearful of police in the 21st century. Finally, this study focused on citizens eighteen to twenty-five years of age. It is recommended that future research explore the differing levels of fear African Americans have of police for different generations based on the same variables tested in this research—gender, region of residence, education level, and community of residence in the United States of America.

References


About the Author:

My name is James R. Jones. I possess a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice, and a master’s degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. In addition, I also have two PhDs. My first PhD is in Public Safety specializing in Criminal Justice, and my second PhD is in Criminal Justice with a specialization in Behavioral Sciences which was conferred in April of 2021 from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I have published three criminology textbooks, as well as several peer reviewed research articles. My research interest includes criminal justice issues in the area of social justice.
An Examination of Rates of Sexual Assault Against Members of the LGBT Community

By

James R. Jones, Ph.D. & Johnice Gooden, M.S.

Abstract

Although the Me Too Movement (better known as #MeToo) is a faction within the greater movement of social justice that gained worldwide recognition as a reaction to sexual harassment and sexual assaults on women victimization studies on sexual assault and rape often focus on heterosexual women and ignore members of the LGBT community. As a result, there is a gap in the current body of knowledge on the frequency of the aforementioned against gay, lesbian and bisexual male and female citizens in the United States. The purpose of this article is to examine the rate of sexual assaults and sexual harassment occurring against members of the LGBT community. The research consisted of seventy-five participants. A closed ended survey was provided to answer the research questions “Have you ever been the victim of a sexual assault; how many times have you been a victim of sexual assault; what type of sexual assault victimization did you experience; who was the offender; and what was the sexual orientation of the offender”. An ordinal logistic regression was used to determine the extent to which sexual assaults were related to the outcome measured.

Key Words: LGBT, Sexual Assault, Rape, Sex Crimes
Introduction

The Me Too Movement (better known as #MeToo) is a faction within the greater movement of social justice that gained worldwide recognition as a reaction to sexual harassment and sexual assaults on women. The action taken has been largely supported by both sexes to bring awareness to the problem and gained momentum in October of 2017. Since its inception, men have also divulged their victimization. However, the majority of victims still remain to be ciswomen. While many citizens have experienced being sexually assaulted, much of the media coverage associated with the Me Too Movement focuses on heterosexual celebrity women. In addition, both quantitative and qualitative studies on the rate that sexual assaults occur, and the lived experience of the victims, escapes the Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgender (LBGT) community.

As it relates to sexual assaults in the United States, pervious literature concentrates primarily on heterosexual citizens, leaving a gap in the current body of knowledge on how often members of the LGBT community experience sexual assaults. While the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) is the primary method of reporting crime and delinquency statistics in America, it does not distinguish between the victim’s sexual orientation when recording a sexual assault. Also, because the Uniform Crime Report is only as accurate as what is reported (using a voluntary reporting system), the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is designed to capture what is not reported on the UCR. However, like the UCR, the NCVS does not record the sexual orientation of the victim. As a result, it is unknown at what rate members of the LGBT community are victims of sexual assaults.

The purpose of this study was to examine at what rate sexual assaults and sexual harassment occur against members of the LGBT community. This research will assist with
contributing to and advancing the current body of knowledge by bridging the gap between the presentely known overall number of sexual assaults that occur per year in the United States, and the sexual assault statistics that are specific to the victimization of members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender community (LGBT). Due to the lack of or limited research in this area, this study generated new data and statistics for a group that has been previously ignored on the topic.

**Literature Review**

Sexual assault is identified as unwanted sexual contact with a person absent their consent, as well as coercion or physically forcing someone to engage in any act of sex against their will. The representation of this definition is considered sexual violence. Previous literature has examined the rate at which rapes, and sexual assaults occur. However, much of the research explores rapes and sexual assault rates between heterosexual men and women. While recording the statistical occurrence of sexual violence experienced by this group is important, it is equally vital to understand how often members of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community experience sexual assaults. Presently, there is a gap in the current body of knowledge between what researchers already know about the rate at which heterosexual men and woman experience sexual assaults, and what they do not know in reference to how often gay and lesbian men and women are victims of the same behavior.

Coulter, Mair, Miller, Blosnich, Matthews, and McCauley (2017) explored the independent and interaction effects of sexual identity, gender identity, and race/ethnicity on past-year sexual assault among college students. The purpose of their research was to identify the level of threat of sexual assault for certain groups. To obtain their data, the researchers used cross-sectional surveys completed by 71,421 undergraduate students from 120 American post-
secondary academic institutions. A logistic regression analysis was used to measure the rates of sexual assault between the different groups. The research examined data from years 2011 to 2013. The results suggested that

“Compared to cisgender (i.e., non-transgender) men, cisgender women (adjusted odds ratios [AOR] = 2.47; 95% confidence interval [CI] 2.29, 2.68) and transgender people (AOR = 3.93; 95% CI 2.68, 5.76) had higher odds of sexual assault. Among cisgender people, gays/lesbians had higher odds of sexual assault than heterosexuals for men (AOR = 3.50; 95% CI 2.81, 4.35) but not for women (AOR = 1.13; 95% CI 0.87, 1.46). People unsure of their sexual identity had higher odds of sexual assault than heterosexuals, but effects were larger among cisgender men (AOR = 2.92; 95% CI 2.10, 4.08) than cisgender women (AOR = 1.68; 95% CI 1.40, 2.02). Bisexuals had higher odds of sexual assault than heterosexuals with similar magnitude among cisgender men (AOR = 3.19; 95% CI 2.37, 4.27) and women (AOR = 2.31; 95% CI 2.05, 2.60). Among transgender people, Blacks had higher odds of sexual assault than Whites (AOR = 8.26; 95% CI 1.09, 62.82). Predicted probabilities of sexual assault ranged from 2.6 (API cisgender men) to 57.7% (Black transgender people). Epidemiologic research and interventions should consider intersections of gender identity, sexual identity, and race/ethnicity to better tailor sexual assault prevention and treatment for college students” (Coulter, Mair, Miller, Blosnich, Matthews, and McCauley, 2017).

While the data from this study was able to provide an understanding of the probability of sexual assault victimization for members of the LGBT community, its focus was limited to traditional college age students. As a result, the findings could not be generalized to the greater population of gay, lesbian, and bisexual citizens outside of the age range examined. This limitation in the
research leaves a gap in the current body of knowledge of both the probability of sexual assault victimization and the rate at which the aforementioned occurs for the greater population of LGBT citizens in the United States.

Duncan (1990) examined the prevalence of sexual assaults on college campus. However, Duncan’s study explored how often sexual assault victimization occurred between gay/lesbian and heterosexual college students. However, similar to Duncan (1990), Coulter et al. (2017) studied the probability of victimization between heterosexual students and students that were members of the LGBT community. Another vast difference of their research is Coulter et al. results were more recently published in 2017, and Duncan’s findings were produced in 1990 yet, their findings were similar in nature.

Duncan administered surveys to 427 students over a time period of two semesters at a Midwestern University. The average age of the participants was 21.2 years old. The results of the study suggested that sexual victimization was significantly more common among females than males, and among gay and lesbian than heterosexual students (Duncan, 1990). While Duncan’s study provides researchers with comparison data on sexual assault victimization between gay, lesbian, and heterosexual students of both genders, the study remains applicable as a springboard for other researchers to use as a foundation to engage in conducting their research activities.

Although recent studies have not examined the rate at which members of the LGBT community are victims of sexual assaults/rapes, Johnson, Matthews, and Napper (2016) explored the relationship between sexual identity and four measures of self-reported sexual victimization. The four measures they studied were (1) sexually touched without consent, (2) sexual penetration without consent attempted, (3) sexually penetrated without consent, and (4) in sexually abusive
relationship. The data was obtained from National College Health Assessment records. The results suggested that

“gay men and bisexual men and women were more likely compared to heterosexuals to report all four victimization types, and unsure students were more likely to report three types. However, lesbian students were no more likely than heterosexual students to report any sexual victimization. Also, transgendered students were more likely compared to female students to report three victimization types” (Johnson, Matthews, & Napper, 2016).

The study provided great insight on reporting patterns of sexual victimization but did not examine the rate of which the aforementioned occurred. The absence of literature on the topic of LGBT sexual assault victimization leaves a gap in the knowledge between what researchers and criminal justice professionals know about rates of sexual assaults against members of the LGBT community. Although citizens that belong to this group are a smaller segment of the larger population in the United States, knowing the statistics are equally as important and needed to decrease this behavior against them.

Unlike previous studies, Gold, Marx, and Lexington (2007) examined the relations among internalized homophobia (IH), experiential avoidance, and psychological symptom severity in a community sample of 74 gay male sexual assault survivors. Internalized homophobia was defined as “a set of negative attitudes and affects toward homosexuality in other persons and toward homosexual features in oneself” (Shidlo, 1994, p. 178). The results suggested that experiential avoidance partially mediated the relation between IH and both depressive and PTSD symptom severity (Gold et. al., 2007).
While the data from their research focused on relations among internalized homophobia as it related to adult male sexual assault survivors, there still remains a gap in the literature confirming the rate at which members of the LGBT community experience sexual assaults. Although the study confirms that sexual assaults among this population are present, what is unknown is the probability of occurrence. As a result, it is imperative for future studies to examine the aforementioned.

Marx, and Lexington (2009) attempted to duplicate their 2007 study by examining the psychological impact sexual assault had on lesbian sexual assault survivors. The researchers studied seventy-two lesbian sexual assault survivors. They explored the relations among internalized homophobia (IH), experiential avoidance, and psychological symptom severity (Dickstein, Marx, & Lexington, 2009) within a small community of lesbian sexual assault survivors. For brevity purposes, internalized homophobia was operationalized as a set of negative attitudes and affects toward homosexuality in other persons and toward homosexual features in oneself” (Shidlo, 1994, p. 178). The results of the study suggest

“IH is associated with both experiential avoidance and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptom severity. In addition, experiential avoidance is related to both PTSD and depression symptom severity. Finally, experiential avoidance completely mediated the relation between IH and PTSD symptom severity” (Dickstein, Marx, & Lexington, 2009).

Data from Dickstein, Marx, and Lexington’s 2009 study provided insight on the psychological injury experienced by lesbian sexual assault survivors. However, the rate at which sexual assaults occur specifically against this population is still unknown.
While many previous studies failed to examine sexual assault victimization rates of the LGBT community, Ford and Soto-Marquez (2016) explored the differences between sexual assault victimization between LGBT and heterosexual college students. Their inspiration for the research was due to many studies primarily focusing on heterosexual female victims and the population of male victims (both gay and straight), and lesbian and bisexual female victims being ignored. Their study consisted of secondary data from the Online College Social Life Survey (OCSLS). The aforementioned data was collected via a cross-sectional survey of 21,000 students. Their results suggested that

“around one in every four hetero- sexual women experience sexual assault after four years in college. Gay and bisexual men report sexual assault at frequencies similar to those reported by heterosexual women. Bisexual women were the most vulnerable to sexual assault in college, as nearly two out of every five bisexual female college students had experienced sexual assault after four years in college. Greek life (e.g., membership in fraternities or sororities) proved to be strongly associated with higher prevalence of sexual assault for most groups of students. Sexual assault survivors also reported having participated in their college hookup culture at higher levels” (Ford & Soto-Marquez, 2016, p. 112).

While the sample of surveys for this study were relatively large, the focus on only college students does not allow for the findings related to LGBT sexual assault victimization to be generalized to the greater population of members of the LGBT community.

As many researchers focus on the majority (heterosexuals), as it relates to sexual assault victimization, there is a gap in the current body of knowledge on how often members of the LGBT community experience being victims of the same sexual predatory behavior as their
straight counterparts. Over the years, the LGBT community has been either forgotten or ignored by researchers, and politicians leaving them vulnerable to victimization, resulting in injury and PTSD from sexual assaults. As a result, the purpose of this study was to examine at what rate sexual assaults and sexual harassment occur against members of the LGBT community. The results of the research can be used to assist politicians with policy development to assist in keeping this group safe via the creation of legislation targeting deterrence of this type of behavior and assist law enforcement with statistics-based policing by understanding the frequency in which this type of behavior occurs against members of the LGBT community.

Methodology

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine at what rate sexual assaults and sexual harassment occur against members of the LGBT community. Previous studies on sexual assault and rape often concentrate on the victimization of heterosexual women and ignore members of the LGBT community. As a result, this study bridges the gap in the current body of knowledge and the literature on the frequency that rape and sexual assault occurs against gay, lesbian and bisexual male and female citizens in the United States. For brevity purposes, the term gay was used to identify and refer to a homosexual male’s sexual orientation, lesbian was used to identify and refer to a homosexual woman’s sexual orientation, and bisexual was used to identify both men and women who are attracted to both sexes. Transgender relates to gender identity or the gender expression that may be different than the biological birth gender.
Target Population and Participant Selection

The population for this study consisted of gay, lesbian, and bisexual men and women that are citizens of the United States. In addition to sexual orientation being a qualifier for participation, only people eighteen years of age or older were eligible for inclusion in the sample. Transgender citizens were not included in the study because the focus of the research was on sexual orientation. While transgender men and women are part of the LGBTQ community, they do not identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. The sample for this study consisted of seventy-five participants.

Sampling Procedure

The sample consisted of seventy-five gay, lesbian, and bisexual citizens of the United States. Convenience Sampling/Availability Sampling was used to obtain the participants for the research. While traditionally, no inclusion criterion is identified prior to the selection of participants when using this method, due to the nature of the study and the focus on sexual orientation for the research, a criterion was assigned.

Data Collection Procedures

Closed ended surveys were provided to the participants. Each was administered electronically and consisted of ten closed ended questions with three of the ten questions allowing for elaboration in addition to answer selections being provided. All the responses of the participants were confidential. Information received from the survey was the participant’s age (coded as 1 for 18-24, 2 for 25-34, 3 for 35-44, 4 for 45-54, and 5 for 55-64), race/ethnicity (coded as 1 for Black/African American, 2 for White/Caucasian, 3 Lainx/Hispanic, 4 for Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5 for American Indian or Alaskan), gender (coded as 1 for female
and 2 for male), sexual orientation (coded as 1 for gay, 2 for lesbian, and 3 for bisexual), have the participants ever been a victim of sexual assault (coded as 1 for yes, and 2 for no), number of times of sexual assault victimization was experienced (coded as 1 for never, 2 for 1-2 times, 3 for 3-5 times and 4 for more than five times), type of victimization (coded as 1 for rape, 2 for unwanted sexual touching, 3 for coerced sexual intercourse, 4 for never sexually assaulted, and 5 for other (please specify)), relationship of offender (coded as 1 for family member, 2 for friend, 3 for stranger, 4 for boss, 5 for teacher/professor, 6 for clergy, 7 for law enforcement officer, 8 for never sexually assaulted and 9 for other (please specify)), sexual orientation of the offender (coded as 1 for heterosexual, 2 for bisexual, 3 for gay, 4 for lesbian, 5 for never sexually assaulted, and 6 for other (please specify)), and gender of offender (coded as 1 for male, and 2 for female, and 3 for never sexually assaulted).

**Data Analysis**

The questions constructed for this study were: Have you ever been sexually assaulted, How many times have you been sexually assaulted, What type of sexual assault victimization have you experienced, Who was the sexual offender responsible for your victimization, What was the sexual orientation of the sexual offender responsible for your victimization, and What was the gender of the offender responsible for your victimization. The independent variables were age of victim, race of victim, gender of victim, sexual orientation of victim, relationship between offender and victim, gender of the offender, and sexual orientation of the offender. The dependent variable was rate of victimization. Data was inputted and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A multinomial logistic regression was conducted to determine the extent to which sexual assault victimization was being measured.
Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

**Frequencies and Percentages.** Frequencies and percentages were calculated for Age, Race, Gender, Orientation, Type of Victimization, Rate of Victimization, Ever Been Victimized, Relationship of Offender, Sexual Orientation of Offender, and Gender of Offender. The most frequently observed category of Age was 25 to 34 ($n = 28, 37\%$). The most frequently observed category of Race was Black or African American ($n = 38, 51\%$). The most frequently observed categories of Gender were Male and Female, each with an observed frequency of 37 (49\%). The most frequently observed category of Orientation was Gay (Selection for Men) ($n = 31, 41\%$). The most frequently observed category of Type of Victimization was Never Have Been Sexually Assaulted ($n = 33, 44\%$). The most frequently observed category of Rate of Victimization was Never ($n = 32, 43\%$). The most frequently observed category of Ever Been Victimized was Yes ($n = 42, 56\%$). The most frequently observed category of Relationship of Offender was Never Have Been Sexually Assaulted ($n = 32, 43\%$). The most frequently observed category of Sexual Orientation of Offender was Never Have Been Sexually Assaulted ($n = 31, 41\%$). The most frequently observed category of Gender of Offender was Male ($n = 38, 51\%$). Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Table 1

*Frequency Table for Nominal and Ordinal Variables*
### Race
- **White / Caucasian**: 28 (37.33%)
- **Black or African American**: 38 (50.67%)
- **Hispanic**: 2 (2.67%)
- **American Indian or Alaskan Native**: 2 (2.67%)
- **Asian / Pacific Islander**: 4 (5.33%)
- **Missing**: 1 (1.33%)

### Gender
- **Male**: 37 (49.33%)
- **Female**: 37 (49.33%)
- **Missing**: 1 (1.33%)

### Orientation
- **Gay (Selection for Men)**: 31 (41.33%)
- **Lesbian (Selection for Women)**: 22 (29.33%)
- **Bisexual**: 22 (29.33%)
- **Missing**: 0 (0%)

### Type of Victimization
- **Never Have Been Sexually Assaulted**: 33 (44%)
- **Unwanted Sexual Touching in a Sexual Area of the Body**: 15 (20%)
- **Coerced Sexual Intercourse or Sexual Acts by Person of Authority**: 6 (8%)
- **Rape**: 11 (14.67%)
- **Other**: 10 (13.33%)
- **Missing**: 0 (0%)

### Rate of Victimization
- **Never**: 32 (42.67%)
- **1-2**: 24 (32%)
- **3-5**: 14 (18.67%)
- **More than 5**: 5 (6.67%)
- **Missing**: 0 (0%)

### Ever Been Victimized
- **No**: 32 (42.67%)
- **Yes**: 42 (56%)
- **Missing**: 1 (1.33%)

### Relationship of Offender
- **Never Have Been Sexually Assaulted**: 32 (42.67%)
- **Family Member**: 8 (10.67%)
- **Stranger**: 7 (9.33%)
- **Friend**: 9 (12%)
Other 19 25.33
Missing 0 0

Sexual Orientation of Offender
Never Have Been Sexually Assaulted 31 41.33
Heterosexual (Straight) 30 40
Gay (Male) 6 8
Other 8 10.67
Missing 0 0

Gender of Offender
Never Have Been Sexually Assaulted 23 30.67
Male 38 50.67
Female 2 2.67
Missing 12 16

Note. Due to rounding errors, percentages may not equal 100%.

Ordinal Logistic Regression

Assumptions.

Variance inflation factors. An Ordinal Logistic Regression was conducted to determine if the odds of observing each response category of Rate of Victimization could be explained by the variation in Age, Race, Gender, and Orientation. Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were calculated to detect the presence of multicollinearity between predictors. High VIFs indicate increased effects of multicollinearity in the model. VIFs greater than 5 are cause for concern, whereas VIFs of 10 should be considered the maximum upper limit (Menard, 2009). All predictors in the regression model have VIFs less than 10. Table 2 presents the VIF for each predictor in the model.

Table 2

<table>
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</tbody>
</table>
Results. The model was evaluated based on an alpha of 0.05. The results of the model were significant, $\chi^2(11) = 26.08, p = .006$, suggesting the observed effects of Age, Race, Gender, and Orientation on Rate of Victimization were unlikely to occur under the null hypothesis. Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected. McFadden's R-squared was calculated to examine the model fit, where values greater than .2 are indicative of models with excellent fit (Louviere, Hensher, & Swait, 2000). The McFadden R-squared value calculated for this model was 0.14.

Coefficients. The regression coefficient for Age=18 to 24 was significant, $B = 2.66, \chi^2 = 8.21, p = .004$, suggesting that those in the 18 to 24 age group had 0.20 the odds of being in a higher category of Rate of Victimization. Table 3 summarizes the results of the ordinal regression model. The regression coefficient for sexual orientation of the victim--bisexual was significant, $B = 2.66, \chi^2 = 8.21, p = .004$, suggesting that those in the bisexual category of sexual orientation were 14.27 times more likely to be in a higher category of Rate of Victimization. In simple terms, being bisexual significantly increased the probability of victimization. Table 3 summarizes the results of the ordinal regression model.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$OR$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept):1</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>[-0.15, 1.96]</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept):2</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>[1.5, 3.94]</td>
<td>19.12</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept):3</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>[3.08, 6.13]</td>
<td>34.92</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age=18 to 24</td>
<td>-1.63</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>[-3.1, -0.15]</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ages 35 to 44  -0.36  0.57  [-1.49, 0.76]  0.40  0.526  0.69
Ages 45 to 54  0.20  1.18  [-2.12, 2.51]  0.03  0.869  1.22
Ages 55 to 64  -0.86  1.97  [-4.72, 3]  0.19  0.662  0.42
Race=American Indian or Alaskan Native  -0.92  1.92  [-4.69, 2.85]  0.23  0.632  0.40
Race=Asian / Pacific Islander  1.52  1.06  [-0.55, 3.59]  2.06  0.151  4.56
Race=Hispanic  1.99  1.54  [-1.03, 5.01]  1.66  0.197  7.29
Race=White / Caucasian  1.00  0.62  [-0.22, 2.22]  2.57  0.109  2.72
Gender=Female  0.04  0.96  [-1.85, 1.92]  0.00  0.969  1.04
Orientation=Bisexual  2.66  0.93  [0.84, 4.48]  8.21  0.004  14.27
Orientation=Lesbian  1.64  1.20  [-0.71, 3.98]  1.87  0.171  5.13

**Ordinal Logistic Regression**

**Assumptions.**

*Variance inflation factors.* An Ordinal Logistic Regression was conducted to determine if the odds of observing each response category of Rate of Victimization could be explained by the variation in Age, Race, Gender, Orientation, Type of Victimization, Relationship of Offender, Sexual Orientation of Offender, and Gender of Offender. Participants who indicated “never” for Ever Been Victimized were excluded from this analysis. Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were calculated to detect the presence of multicollinearity between predictors. High VIFs indicate increased effects of multicollinearity in the model. VIFs greater than 5 are cause for concern, whereas VIFs of 10 should be considered the maximum upper limit (Menard, 2009). All predictors in the regression model have VIFs less than 10. Table 4 presents the VIF for each predictor in the model.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age=18 to 24</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age=35 to 44</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age=45 to 54</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Variance Inflation Factors for Age, Race, Gender, Orientation, Type of Victimization, Relationship of Offender, Sexual Orientation of Offender, and Gender of Offender*
Results. The model was evaluated based on an alpha of 0.05. The results of the model were not significant, $\chi^2(20) = 31.30, p = .051$. Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

McFadden's R-squared was calculated to examine the model fit, where values greater than .2 are indicative of models with excellent fit (Louviere, Hensher, & Swait, 2000). The McFadden R-squared value calculated for this model was 0.39. Table 5 summarizes the results of the ordinal regression model.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>OR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept):1</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>[-3.15, 3.39]</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>.941</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept):2</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>[-0.29, 6.6]</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age=18 to 24</td>
<td>-2.60</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>[-6.43, 1.23]</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age=35 to 44</td>
<td>-1.78</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>[-4.14, 0.57]</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age=45 to 54</td>
<td>-20.93</td>
<td>8798.10</td>
<td>[-17264.89, 17223.03]</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age=55 to 64</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race=American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race=Asian / Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race=Hispanic</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race=White / Caucasian</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender=Male</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation=Gay</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation=Lesbian</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Victimization=Coerced Sexual Intercourse or Sexual Acts by Person of Authority</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Victimization=Other</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Victimization=Rape</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Offender=Family Member</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Offender=Friend</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Offender=Stranger</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation of Offender=Gay (Male)</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation of Offender=Other</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation of Offender=Female</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Conclusion

After conducting an ordinal logistic regression, the model found that straight men were most responsible for sexual offending against members of the LGBT community. In addition, the results of the study also identified two primary predictors for sexual assault victimization. A person that identified as bisexual was 14.27 times more likely to experience a higher frequency of sexual assault than anyone that identifies as gay or lesbian. While age was not a predictor of sexual assault victimization, the results suggest that if a member of the LGBT community was between the ages of 18 and 24, they had a lower probability of being victimized.

### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>LR Chi Sq</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Odds Ratio 95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age=55 to 64</td>
<td>-18.73</td>
<td>[ -18.73, -18.73]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race=American Indian or Alaskan Native</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>[ -0.01, -0.01]</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race=Asian / Pacific Islander</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>[ 0.01, 5.58]</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.891</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race=Hispanic</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>[ 0.01, 5.58]</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.891</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender=Male</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>[ -1.11, 8.87]</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>48.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation=Gay</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>[ -3.36, 7.52]</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation=Lesbian</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>[ -2.43, 3.62]</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Victimization=Coerced Sexual Intercourse or Sexual Acts by Person of Authority</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>[-3.4, 3.13]</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>.936</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Victimization=Rape</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>[ 0.01, 5.58]</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.891</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Offender=Family Member</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>[-1.68, 2.86]</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Offender=Friend</td>
<td>-2.26</td>
<td>[ -5.18, 1.06]</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Offender=Stranger</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>[-6.16, 3]</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>.498</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation of Offender=Gay (Male)</td>
<td>-1.17</td>
<td>[-6.07, 3.74]</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation of Offender=Other</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>[-4.47, 2.81]</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>.655</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation of Offender=Female</td>
<td>-19.17</td>
<td>[-19559.5, 19521.15]</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.998</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Indicates statistic could not be estimated due to low category membership.
While the research provided usable results, one of the limitations of the study was its small sample size. Due to the sensitive nature of the data requested, many potential participants declined to be included in the research. As a result, the findings may not be able to be generalized to the greater community. It would be recommended for future studies that a larger sample size be obtained to consider the extent to which these findings can be generalized.

References


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My name is Johnice Gooden. I possess an undergraduate and graduate degree in Criminal Justice. My professional background includes juvenile justice, child welfare and criminal justice instruction. My research interest includes criminal justice issues in the areas of juvenile justice and social justice and child welfare issues.
Entrepreneurship Best Practices for Criminal Justice Professionals Seeking a Second Career

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ABSTRACT

The criminal justice profession has experienced much criticism and many changes over the last decade. This article is a focused effort to examine the trend and divergence of criminal justice professionals to the endeavor of becoming an entrepreneur. This is a specific change in the profession that has been the topic of much dialogue amongst criminal justice peers but has had very little corporate analysis across the multitude of professionals in the criminal justice field and in the research literature. The article begins with a look at several recognized and understood sentiments that are causing the otherwise career minded criminal justice professionals to leave the field of criminal justice entirely. Those issues have been the topic of much study and are not the focus of this article. Those issues are however a much-needed base line to help in understanding why the risky prospect of entrepreneurship is so attractive to those in the criminal justice field—those professionals who are already well known for their aptitude for risk taking. This article will define how the term entrepreneurship is applied will provide a review of the limited literature that has been dedicated to this topic. There is limited research dedicated to the matter of criminal justice professionals seeking a second career through the pursuit of entrepreneurial enterprises. This article delineates some of the perceived pitfalls that are contributing to the career change in law enforcement professionals. Finally, this article will provide a cursory overview on what it takes to begin to think like an entrepreneur and provide a summarized roadmap of a few of the basic first steps when developing a business structure and plan. The overall goal of this article is to provide information that can begin the discussion and analysis, on this growing trend within criminal justice. Hopefully, this information will not only inform the professional who can identify with this trend, but will also provide basic how-to knowledge.

Key words: Criminal Justice Professionals, Entrepreneurship, Best Practices.
INTRODUCTION

As we embark on what is now the third decade in the 21st century after a tumultuous and taxing 20 years now in our rearview it is important to take an inventory and reflect on the lessons we learned. The quote originating from the philosopher George Santayana (1905), "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," needs to be a sentiment emphasized in many facets of our culture. This article will attempt to address a trend in the criminal justice profession that began in the not-too-distant past and has received little to no attention or study as to why it is occurring. In addition, mechanisms that can be imparted to those criminal justice professionals seeking more information on the subject are also extremely limited. The criminal justice profession has seen an increasing amount of its professionals leaving the field of criminal justice and venturing out in a private venture by starting their own businesses and exploring the possibilities that may be afforded to them by taking on the risk and possible rewards of entrepreneurship. This article will begin with assessing the insights that can be gleaned from the last 20 years and its impact specifically on law enforcement officers changing careers to start a new venture and then provide information and tools to the criminal justice professional who may be contemplating going down the path of potential entrepreneurship. This initial article is intended to begin a discussion and bring to the surface an examination that needs to be accomplished as well as serve as a reference to those in the criminal justice profession who identify with the sentiment of this topic so that they may be more fully informed when scrutinizing if they should, and are they, poised for a career move.

Those with any exposure to the criminal justice field and profession have undoubtedly noticed that there has been a “dysfunctional turnover” rate of individuals leaving the profession (Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2018). Schuck & Rabe-Hemp, 2018; Olson & Wasilewski, 2014; and Cloherty, 2021 provide several models to describe this exodus from The following factors attributable to the criminal justice departures are: (1) there has been an attitudinal and behavior shift in the criminal justice profession, (2) an increase in dis-satisfaction with organizational commitment to its employees, (3) increased number of individualized negative experiences, such as stress, traumatic events, emotional exhaustion, and burnout; (4) difficulty acclimating to the shifting standards of the profession and altered corporate social norms within the profession; (5) lack of accommodations for family obligations; (6) working conditions within the agency; (7) insufficient compensation for the rigorous and dangerous demands that the job requires; (8) the number of new entrants into the profession who are lacking in the real-world and practical knowledge of the appropriate tried and true criminal justice standards; (9) decrease in comradery among criminal justice professionals; and (10) increased disappointment in the repeated denial of specialty assignments and promotional opportunities.

While the above list is not exhaustive, and there are other identifiable metrics that can be discussed as the cause for the departure from the criminal justice profession, the list does provide a cursory picture of much of the complaints voiced and subsequently studied within the criminal justice profession as an explanation for the departures. Many law enforcement officers now find
themselves supplementing their disappointment with such an emotionally invested career, as is often required in criminal justice, by investing their efforts in volunteer activities, a side job, or by starting their own business. This investment by the criminal justice professionals in their ancillary endeavors often times leads them to find additional strengths of character and marketable skills that allow them the opportunity to explore other options outside the criminal justice field. (Olson & Wasilewski, 2014). Many criminal justice professionals work some form of extended shifts which allow them to have a number of days off throughout the week and work, on average, only 14-16 days out of the month. The newfound discovery of strengths and skills outside of the criminal justice profession combined with the benefit of having the time to grow in these discoveries allow the criminal justice professional to explore the opportunities of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are traditionally thought of as business majors wanting to make more money, but more and more we are seeing entrepreneurs coming from all walks of life. One current trend is the introduction of criminal justice professionals entering the world of start-ups. As criminal justice professionals explore the possibility of a second career, it is important to understand common terms and phrases. These include entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship, for profit, non-profits. These concepts will be delineated throughout the article and more specifically in the literature review section.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Entrepreneurship is nothing new. The world runs on the backs of small business owners. Creating a business and bringing it to scale is the American dream. Entrepreneurship has historically been defined as someone who creates and runs a business. (Mariotti, 2014). However, in 2021 we see a new definition of entrepreneurship emerging. Entrepreneurs wanting to transform the world by solving big, and small, problems. Perhaps this is why we see the shift away from the traditional business major steeped deep into the capitalistic mindset on the theory of “more is more”.

Entrepreneurship can be divided into two classifications: for profit and non-profits. For the most part both businesses are started in the same manner – what is the problem we are trying to solve. For profit businesses are usually driven by dollars. Bringing the business to scale and seeing how much wealth it can create. One only need to think of Walmart or Amazon to understand the model. Social entrepreneurs create wealth in order to bring about social change. They are typically nonprofits that operate businesses in order to generate income to fulfill their missions. Although the tax structure may differ and the core mission and vision for these entities will differ but from the outside, all of these endeavors will look surprisingly familiar. Social enterprises differ from a true nonprofit in that they have a product or service that they sell in order to generate funding.

Social Entrepreneurs have this inability to create social value that brings sound business practices to innovation (Morris, Santos, & Kuratko, 2020). According to Lumpkin, Moss, Gras, Kato, & Amezuca, (2013), social entrepreneurship and nonprofit management are both missions driven; however, in the world of social entrepreneurs, social value without innovation is not
enough. A true nonprofit, from tradition business theory, would suggest they receive their funding through fundraising, grants and donors. Which are funding areas that are shrinking and are more difficult to secure.

According to a Fidelity Investments survey (2012), 88% of millionaires in the US are safe-made entrepreneurs. There are 582 million entrepreneurs around the world. Most startup entrepreneurs are between 4-60 years of age. Although it is too early to tell, but it would appear that the global pandemic has created a shift in the way we work and the way in which we want to work. Most entrepreneurs cite the desire to be their own boss and control their own destiny. A feeling most of us can relate to given the upheaval of the Covid 19 crisis, but that does not answer the question as to why we see so many professionals leaving the criminal justice field in hopes of greener pastures elsewhere. There is no doubt that the cries of “defund the police” shifting societal views and questions revolving around “qualified immunity” have put many law enforcement individuals in a “tight spot.” They must consider whether to continue with what they have a great passion for in law enforcement or shift that passion into something else that will allow them more control over their destiny therefore many are seeking other opportunities. According to Duffin (2021) there were 697,195 law enforcement officers in the United States in 2019, down from a peak in 2008 of 708,569. So, where are these professionals going?

According to Charman (2021), the numbers of officers voluntarily resigning from police service is rising; from 1158 ending in March 2012 to 2,363 to the same time in 2020. Three factors were cited in this study which looked at one-medium sized police force from 2014 to 2019. The data from this survey of 46 police officers and 27 interviews revealed three areas of concern:

1. Poor leadership and management were cited as the most consistent theme in answers as to why officers left the force.
2. Overriding sense of organizational “injustice”. Participants felt that they had little to no control or autonomy over their job, or their future.
3. Personal factors. Relentless working hours. Over half of the participants cited this reason for leaving the field.

Other factors noted were the different respective preferences among generational cohorts (Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2014), low salary (Hilal & Litsey, 2020), dangerous and stressful profession (Jetelina, Beauchamp, Gonzelaz, Molsberry, Bishop, & Lee, 2020), a strong economy (PERF), 2019), and constant scrutiny (Butler 2018). Studies have also shown that there has been a marked change in the presumption that law enforcement officers are acting in good faith towards the communities of which they serve (Whal, 2017). This societal shift of perception on law enforcement has further exacerbated the idea that there now exists a war on cops, a war that has been increasingly raging between the communities and the officers that are tasked with serving and protecting those communities (Omeed & Frank, 2021).

For the first time in 27 years of measuring attitudes towards the police, Jones and Saad (2021) along with Gallup News Service, found that a majority of American adults do not trust law enforcement. The survey, conducted by Gallup from early June to mid-July 2020 found that the
confidence in police had fallen five points, to 48%, from the year before. Gallup conducted telephone interviews with a random sample of 1226 adults for the poll. This margin size has a sampling error of plus or minus four percentage points. (Meaning the differences are statistically insignificant). The drop in confidence came after the killing of George Floyd, an African American man in Minneapolis police custody May 25, 2020. However, distrust of the police is nothing new. Confidence has been falling since the 2013 acquittal of the security guard that fatally shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, a young, African American male walking through a Florida neighborhood.

The Gallup poll also found that the gap between white and black Americans has never been greater. The survey found that 56 percent of white adults were confident in the police, whereas only 19 percent of black adults said the same. That 37 percent gap is the largest it has historically been, according to Gallup. Gallup also found a divide in American’s trust in the criminal justice system as well. (Jones & Saad 2020).

A few contributing factors that have played a role in the increased animosity between law enforcement and the communities to which they serve are the following: differing ideas on how to abate the divide, a societal challenge to the long-standing notion that law enforcement officers have a basic desire to do good, and prominent figures and public action groups consistently vocalizing negative attitudes toward law enforcement. (Omeed & Frank, 2021; Steinberg, 2015; Whal, 2017).

Couple the consistent barrage of news media highlighting the few officers who have committed atrocities in the profession with the factors listed above and what you have are those aspiring individuals who have the desire to enter the field of criminal justice and law enforcement deciding to choose a different career path. (Cloherty, 2021).

A review of the existing literature showed that generational cohorts have different preferences and values that have either caused criminal justice professionals to resign or lure them completely away from the criminal justice field. Aboim and Vasconcelos (2014), defined generational cohorts by its members shared collection of beliefs, values, and norms shaped by any historical or significant event that dominated society during their formative years.

Generational cohorts are different, largely because they are influenced by multiple factors that play a role in shaping their preferences, values, and attitudes (Malier, Tavanti, Bombard, Gentile, & Bradford, 2015). These factors include but are not limited to, geography, cultural shifts, economic fluctuations, and demographic changes (Young, Sturts, Ross, & Kim, 2013). Never has there been a time in history where leaders had to manage four generations in the workplace. According to Fry (2018), the United States workforce is comprised of baby boomers (25%), Generation X (33%), Millennials (35%), Generation Z (5%). Researchers suggest the different preferences and values among the generational cohorts and baby boomers retiring have caused a decline in the criminal justice field (Challenges, 2017).

Baby boomers in the workplace are loyal to the organization, goal-oriented, prefer face to face communication, respect authority, possess strong work ethics, familiar with workplace hierarchies due to their military background (Arrington & Dwyer, 2018; Venter, 2017).
Generation X works independently, strive for workplace balance, are skeptical of authority, dislike bureaucracy, rigid rules, and hierarchal organizational structure (Zabel, Biermeier-Hanson, Baltes, Early, & Shepard, 2017. They are extremely loyal to their direct supervisor but not the organization, unlike their predecessors (Arrington & Dwyer, 2018; Zabel, Biermeier-Hanson, Baltes, Early, & Shepard, 2017). Generation X mentality shifted from the baby boomers live to work mindset to balancing work and life; thus, loyalty became irrelevant.

Millennials have little interest in a career in law enforcement (Meese & Malcom, 2018). Although millennials are a diverse cohort, they value work life balance, community, a sense purpose, open-communication, and flexibility (Naim & Lenka, 2018; SHRM, 2016; Venter, 2017). Additional, while open communication is appreciated by millennials, they have a hard time embracing a centralized organizational hierarchy. Instead, they prefer a shared decision-making culture where their voice counts (Venter, 2017). Finally, millennials are very confident in their abilities and are constantly looking for career development through opportunities such as training and education in order to remain marketable (Naim & Lenka, 2018).

RECRUITMENT/HIRING TRENDS/RETENTION

There is a shortage of qualified law enforcement officers in the United States. Although the severity of shortages varies from agency to agency, the national trend showed the number of full-time sworn police officers decreased from 1997-2016 (Bank, Hendrix, Hickman, & Kyckelhahn, 2016). According to Hyland (2018), the United States population increased by 21% from 1997-2016. During this time, the number of full-time sworn police officers only increased 8%. In 1997, the number of police officers per capita decreased, from 2.42 per 1,000 residents to 2.17 officers per 1,000 residents in 2016 (down 11%). The 2016 rate of full-time sworn officers per 1,000 residents was also lower than the rates in 2000 (down 7%), 2003 (down 8%), and 2007 (down 7%). These findings are based on the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) surveys from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Hyland, 2018).

The Center for State and Local Government Excellence, in coordination with the International Public Management, Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR), and the National Association of State Personnel Executives (NASPE) conducted a survey on work force issues facing state and local employers. Researchers found that 82% of the participants considered recruitment and retention their highest priority, and 27% acknowledged policing as one of the most difficult positions to fill (Center for State and Local Government Excellence, 2018, p. 4).

The review of literature revealed that small, midsize, and large law enforcement organizations face recruitment and retention issues (Police Executive Research Forum, 2019). In 2018 the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) surveyed 411 small (33%) midsize (40%), and large (27%) law enforcement organizations in the United States and found several major problems impacting law enforcement personnel: police agencies are receiving fewer applicants, officers are resigning before retirement age, and an increasing number of officers are eligible to retire (Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), 2019).
Other contributing factors to low recruitment and retention are lateral hires, a strong economy, increasing educational requirements, baby boomers retiring, low salaries, and competition with the military and higher paid organizations (Maciag, 2018; Meese & Malcolm, 2018; & Morrison, 2017).

According to Kapoor and Solomon (2011), the strong economy may have enticed good candidates and experienced officers away from law enforcement into better paying jobs. Research suggested that economic and social changes have made it harder for law enforcement leaders to keep their organizations fully staffed (Challenges, 2017). Wilson and Grammich (2009) found that the economy created more opportunities to become entrepreneurs thus discouraging potential applicants from working in policing jobs that generally offer low salaries, inflexible work schedules, and long hours. As the labor market expands, criminal justice professionals gain confidence and high expectations as they seek career opportunities with other organizations in the private sector or Corporate America (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). While looking back at their experiences, many law enforcement officers agree that their lives as entrepreneurs have brought them greater fulfillment than their policing days. According to Seery (2020), entrepreneurs are considered successful because they help others. The reward of overcoming barriers and serving others has proven to be beneficial for many. Success is not reserved for only the elite, but for anyone who grabs an opportunity and is willing to take action and a risk (Seery, 2020).

Seery (2020), noted ten benefits for making the transition from policing to entrepreneurship. These benefits are freedom, age doesn’t matter, profits over wages, no politics, no sacking or suspensions, you are never bored, you get paid your worth, creativity, constant personal growth, and legacy. Several entrepreneurs stated that the top three benefits for starting their own business were 1) autonomy; 2) being able to help more people; and 3) leaving a legacy for their children. Additionally, many others felt becoming an entrepreneur gave them the opportunity to earn and sustain a level of income, while experiencing less stress and enjoying more freedom and flexibility (Seery, 2020).

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP BEST PRACTICES**

Simply having an idea is not good enough. Starting a small business requires more than enthusiasm and a great idea. Capital, a solid plan, and management are the key ingredients to launching a startup and surviving in the market. Everything starts with a plan. Without a plan, it is easy to focus on the day-to-day pressures of the operation. This can cause momentum to be lost in tremendous ways. A plan involves setting goals and how to achieve them, but it also helps an entrepreneur deal with uncertainty and eliminate risk. According to Kinicki & Williams (2018), a plan is defined as a document that outlines how goals are going to be met. There are two types of plans; a business plan and a business model. Although the business plan outlines an organization’s goals, strategies, and how each will be measured, a business model outlines the industry being entered, product differentiation, the need the firm will fill, and how you will finance your business.
Gurel and Tat (2017) suggested that strategic management is the continuous process of creating, implementing, and evaluating decisions that helps an organization achieve goals. During this stage, managers can be proactive and not reactive in shaping the future of the organization. The strategic management stage allows an organization to undertake important steps in order to achieve and sustain competitive advantage.

A crucial part of this process includes establishing the mission, vision, and values of the organization. The mission (purpose) or the organization. The strategic goals, tactical goals, and operational goals should align with the mission. The vision (what the organization will become) will dictate what direction the organization will go in. The values of an organization will not only emphasize core competencies, but will also serve as a compass that will guide the actions and behaviors of the company and its employees (Kinicki & Williams, 2018). Another crucial step is to access current reality. This is also called environmental scanning or a SWOT analysis. Assessing your environment both internal and external is a must. An internal analysis helps an organization identify strengths and weaknesses, and understand resources that will assist the organization with competitive advantage (Gurel & Tat, 2017). The external analysis helps an organization identify opportunities and threats in the competitive environment (Gurel & Tat, 2017).

Strategy formulation and strategy implementation are also best practices for entrepreneurs. Strategy formulation is deciding on a plan and strategy implementation is following through on that plan. Oyedele, Sotunde, Oyedele, Oladokun, Makinde, Fabinu, (2018) defined strategy formulation as taking a deep look into the environment in which it operates while deciding how to compete with its competitors. Strategy formulation always ends with a set of goals, benchmarks, and performance measures for the organization to pursue (Oyedele et al, 2018). These resources include staff, processes, leadership, communication, incentives, rewards, and strategic evaluation to track progress towards goals and objectives (Oyedele et al, 2018).

Second, effective strategic implementation is a powerful source of competitive advantage (Tawse, Patrick & Vera, 2019). According to Broekhuizen, Bakker, and Postma (2018), leveraging the power of implementation serves as a catalyst to outperform your competitor and is the foundation for developing new business models. Additionally, strategy implementation involves the resources of an organization and how those resources are aligned and structured towards the goals and objectives of the organization (Oyedele et al, 2018).

Strategic control is an important stage for assessing strategies and goals, and how well your organization has performed. It is one of the four managerial functions of a manager (Kinicki & Williams, 2018) During this stage, it is important to reflect on accomplishments, shortcomings, and provide feedback in order to take corrective action if needed.

**DETERMINING TYPE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP, ORGANIZATION, STAFFING**

Startups- The role of small startups has driven innovation trajectories and economic growth in society (Cantamessa, Gatteschi, Perboli, & Rosano, 2018). Small startups have been
celebrated and recognized for its contributions; however, research showed there was a lack of business development strategies that led to the failure of the majority of small startups (Cantamessa, Gatteschi, Perboli, & Rosano, 2018). An interesting analysis through the SHELL model identified the two main reasons for failure during the first year are the lack of business model and business development (Cantamessa, Gatteschi, Perboli, & Rosano, 2018). Other reasons noted were lack of capital, no traction, and inexperienced management. In order to avoid the pitfalls of failure, entrepreneurs should be responsive to customers, provide a quality product, be innovative, and effective (Kinicki & Williams, 2018). Moreover, an organization needs valuable and competent staff with the right skill set to move the organization in the right direction (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2019).

**LEGAL STRUCTURE AND CONSIDERATION**

When venturing out to tackle the hurdles of entrepreneurship the consideration of how one structures their business can then dictate a number of follow-up steps and impact a business's organization in a drastic way. This cursory outline of the most common business structures with brief explanations and insights can help guide the would-be entrepreneur in the often-times befuddling process of picking the best legal structure of their business. The explanations may help in developing the necessary questions about what effect the alternatives in structure may have on a business model and assist in formulating tentative thoughts about what is appropriate for a given business model or idea contemplated by the entrepreneur.

**Alternatives Available**

There are several types of business entities, the most common being sole proprietorships, general partnerships, limited liability partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, S corporations, and C corporations. But absent unique state law considerations, most start-up businesses are organized as sole proprietorships, limited liability companies, or S corporations.

**Sole Proprietorship**

New businesses are often short on cash, and a sole proprietorship is an inexpensive way to organize and operate a business. No formalities or filings are required to create a sole proprietorship—an individual simply begins operating the business. A sole proprietorship must obtain business licenses like other businesses and may want to preclude others from using a similar name by registering an assumed business name, but it does not have an obligation to register with the state and keep the registration current and decision-making need not follow any formal structure (Qun Lin v. Cruz, 2020).
The tax treatment of a sole proprietorship is also favorable. The profit or loss of the business is reported on the owner’s individual tax return (Qun Lin v. Cruz, 2020). If the business incurs losses in its formative years, they can be deducted against income received by the owner from other sources.

A sole proprietorship does, however, have two disadvantages. First, this form for doing business presupposes that the business has one owner. If there are two or more owners, another form must be used. Second, the owner of a sole proprietorship is personally responsible for all the debts and liabilities of the business. If the business fails or if its operations or products injure a customer or other person, the personal assets of the owner, including personal bank accounts and investments, are at risk for payment of claims (Qun Lin v. Cruz, 2020).

**Partnership**

Partnerships have the same advantages as sole proprietorships—they are inexpensive to create and operate, and their income and losses pass through and is reported on the individual income tax returns of the partners (N.C.G.S § 59, Article 2). This allows partners to use start-up losses to reduce their income from other sources. In addition, partnerships can accommodate more than one owner.

Unfortunately, partnerships have the same disadvantage of sole proprietorships in terms of liability exposure. Partners are jointly liable for all partnership debts and liabilities (N.C.G.S § 59, Article 2). A creditor of the partnership can satisfy its claims out of the assets of a single partner, although a partner who pays more than her share has a right of reimbursement from the other partners (N.C.G.S § 59, Article 2).

There are types of partnerships that provide liability exposure, but they are not suitable for most businesses. For example, limited partners in a limited partnership are not personally responsible for the partnership’s obligations (N.C.G.S § 59, Article 1). But limited partnerships are used almost exclusively as vehicles to make gifts of interests in investment assets to family members in connection with individuals’ estate planning and for widely held interests in mineral or other property syndications. Limited liability partnerships provide partners with limited liability except for claims arising out of their negligence or that of persons under their control (N.C.G.S § 59, Article 1). Limited liability partnerships are used primarily to operate professional practices of doctors, lawyers, and others.

**Limited Liability Company**

Limited liability companies (LLC) can have one member like a sole proprietorship or more than one member like a partnership. But unlike a sole proprietorship or partnership, they provide limited liability to their members. An LLC is an entity separate from its owners and as such is responsible for its debts and liabilities (N.C.G.S § 57D). If the business fails or the claims against
it exceed its assets, the members may lose their investment in the LLC, but their personal assets generally are safe (N.C.G.S § 57D).

Because they offer limited liability protections for all owners, LLCs have supplanted both general and limited partnerships as a form for operating new active businesses (N.C.G.S § 57D). They are also used frequently in lieu of sole proprietorships.

An LLC provides the same favorable income tax treatment as a sole proprietorship and partnerships—all income or loss of an LLC is divided between its members and is reported on their individual tax returns (N.C.G.S § 57D). As a result, losses may be used to offset against other income of the owners.

The primary disadvantage of an LLC is that it is more expensive to create and operate than a sole proprietorship or partnership. Creation of an LLC requires filing with the state and filing fees, and sometimes taxes, must be paid. Annual reports must be filed with the state to maintain an LLC’s existence, and fees and taxes are due with those reports (N.C.G.S § 57D). In most states, the fees and taxes payable by an LLC are relatively low, but they can be considerable in some states and may be a consideration if you intend to do business in one of those states.

**Subchapter S Corporation**

The advantages and disadvantages of an S corporation are similar to those of an LLC. Both can have one or more owners, all of whom enjoy the protection of limited liability. Both are created by filing documents at the state level and must file annual reports, making the cost of their creation and operation similar. But S corporations must follow corporate formalities and hold annual shareholder and director meetings, which adds to the cost of their operation (N.C.G.S § 55). S corporations feature pass-through income tax treatment, and their income or loss is reported on the individual tax returns of its shareholders, so start-up losses can be claimed by the shareholders (26 U.S. Code § 1361-1379). But there are some differences in the tax treatment of S corporations and that of sole proprietorships, partnerships, and LLCs that I will discuss later.

**C Corporation**

The last form of business entity used by small businesses is a C corporation. This is a corporation that has not elected to be taxed as an S corporation. C corporations provide limited liability for all of their owners and are comparable to LLCs and S corporations in terms of creation and maintenance costs (N.C.G.S § 55).

But a major difference is that a C Corporation is not a pass-through entity for income tax purposes. A C corporation reports its income or loss on its own tax returns. This means that startup losses cannot be used by shareholders to offset income from other sources. It also means that C corporation income is subject to a double tax. The corporation pays tax on its income when it is earned and, if the income is distributed to shareholders as a dividend, they have taxable income and pay a second tax. If corporate earnings are accumulated rather than being distributed, they...
may increase the value of the corporation’s stock and the shareholders will have taxable gain when they sell their stock or the corporation is liquidated (26 U.S. Code § 1361-1379). This double tax deters most small businesses from using the C corporation form.

Selecting a Form of Entity

A sole proprietorship is a viable way to operate your business if you will be the sole owner and are not concerned about the consequences of being exposed to its liabilities, believe that insurance or other protections will be available to cushion the blow from any conceivable losses, or are concerned that the additional cost of using another form of entity could substantially limit the chances that the business will be successful.

If a sole proprietorship is not appropriate, you will need to decide between an LLC and an S corporation. They share common attributes, but there are important differences that may determine which entity is best for your business.

Advantages of LLCs

1. Transparent Income Tax Treatment

   Although both LLCs and S corporations feature pass-through treatment for income tax purposes, an LLC is more transparent. For example, a member can generally transfer assets to an LLC tax-free and an LLC can often distribute assets to members tax-free. The transfer of assets to an S corporation is tax-free when the corporation is created, but shareholders may be taxed if they transfer assets other than money later. Moreover, all distributions of hard assets by an S corporation to its shareholders have the potential to create taxable gain (N.C.G.S § 57D, 15 U.S. Code § 662).

   An S corporation’s lack of tax transparency makes this form of entity particularly unsuitable for the ownership of investment real estate or other property that is likely to appreciate in value. After the corporation acquires the property, it may be difficult to restructure the ownership of the property without incurring a tax (26 U.S. Code § 1361-1379).

2. Inclusion of LLC Debt in Basis

   Start-up businesses often operate at a loss initially, and an LLC may allow a greater amount of these losses to be passed through to its owners for deduction on their current income tax returns than an S corporation can. Neither LLC members nor S corporation shareholders are allowed to deduct losses that exceed the tax basis in their membership interests or stock, but the basis of LLC members is increased by the amount of the LLC’s obligations owed to third parties, while third-party indebtedness does not affect the basis of S corporation shareholders’ stock, even if they guarantee its payment (26 CFR § 301.7701-3).

3. Variety in Owner’s Interests

   Owners of a business can have different financial or tax goals, and differences can be accommodated more easily with an LLC than with an S corporation. For example, an LLC can
have members who participate actively in the business and have interests similar to common stock and members who are mere investors and have interests similar to preferred stock (N.C.G.S § 57D). An S corporation can only issue one class of stock.

If some owners of a business are in higher income tax brackets than others, it may be possible to allocate a disproportionate share of an LLC’s deductions or losses to them, thus minimizing the combined income tax burden on all members (N.C.G.S § 57D). The one class of stock rule prevents S corporations from making special allocations.

An LLC member’s receipt of an interest in profits in exchange for services is not typically a taxable transaction as long as the member receives only a profits interest and no interest in capital (N.C.G.S § 57D). An interest in S corporation stock transferred in exchange for services is, on the other hand, compensation income to the recipient.

An LLC can also have a greater number of owners and more diverse owners than an S corporation (N.C.G.S § 57D). S corporations cannot have more than 100 shareholders and all shareholders must be individuals who are citizens or residents of the United States, estates, certain types of trusts, or tax-exempt organizations (N.C.G.S § 55, 26 U.S. Code § 1361-1379). Corporations, partnerships, and LLCs cannot own stock in an S corporation. Neither of these restrictions applies to LLCs.

4. **Flexible Management Structure**

An LLC can elect to be managed by its members and have decentralized management like a partnership (N.C.G.S § 57D). Alternatively, it can be managed by managers and have centralized management similar to a corporation or limited partnership. There is also a good deal of flexibility to tweak the chosen management structure under the terms of an LLC’s operating agreement (N.C.G.S § 57D).

An S corporation must adhere to strict rules for the management of corporations. The shareholders elect directors who are responsible for the management of the corporation, and the directors appoint officers who carry out their management policies. Some small businesses consider this overly rigid and formalistic (26 U.S. Code § 1361-1379).

5. **Securities Law Exemption**

Stock, including that of S corporations, is considered to be a security subject to state and federal securities laws. Some states specifically treat LLC members’ interests as securities, but most follow the federal rule that makes such interests securities only if they are “investment contracts” (26 U.S. Code § 1361-1379). With an investment contract, an investor relies on managers to produce income and make the investment valuable. This occurs in a manager-managed LLC, and interests in such entities are securities. But members of a member-managed LLC have the right to participate directly in management, and their interests are not generally considered to be investment contracts. Therefore, interests in LLCs do not need to be registered as securities or qualify for any of the narrow exemptions.
Advantages of S Corporations

1. Employment Tax Treatment

S corporations enjoy favorable employment tax treatment, which can be quite valuable in some circumstances. Most income of LLCs taxed as partnerships is treated as earnings of the members from self-employment and is subject to self-employment tax in the year earned, even if it is not distributed. In contrast, S corporation income that passes through to shareholders is not treated as earnings from self-employment (26 U.S. Code § 1361-1379). It is subject to employment tax, in the form of FICA and hospital insurance taxes, only to the extent used to pay compensation to shareholder-employees. S corporation income retained as working capital, used to acquire capital assets, or retained for future use is not subject to employment tax, nor is income distributed to shareholders as dividends (26 U.S. Code § 1361-1379).

The self-employment tax and the combined FICA and hospital insurance taxes imposed on employers and employees are imposed at the same rates. The rate is 15.3% on earnings up to the social security wage limit, and additional amounts are taxed at lower rates. Employment taxes can be substantial and merit consideration in selecting a form of business entity.

2. Familiar Management Structure

Although the management structure of an S corporation may be considered rigid and formalistic, the corporate law of most states is based on model legislation that has been widely adopted or on long-standing legal concepts recognized in other states. In contrast, LLC laws are of relatively recent origin and there is a good deal of variation between states’ laws. As a consequence, the rules necessary to quickly and efficiently resolve disputes involving LLCs and their members may not be settled as easy as would be available in an alternative choice of entity.

Choosing Between an LLC and S Corporation

The form of entity that is appropriate for your business will depend upon which of the advantages and disadvantages of the likely alternatives is the most important. A business interested in attracting outside investors will, for example, typically be organized as an LLC because of the absence of rules limiting types and numbers of investors and the ability to structure ownership interests that are attractive to many different people. On the other hand, a business that will be owned and operated by its members may find the employment tax savings available with an S corporation compelling, especially if a large share of the business’s income will be used to provide working capital or make capital investments.
CONCLUSION
To address challenges with law enforcement shortages, leaders must focus on retention strategies and organizational development to decide who and what they need, in addition to, adapting to a changing environment, both internally and externally. There is a crisis in the United States with a shortage of law enforcement. It is imperative to focus on strategic problems while enhancing recruiting strategies with an integrated approach to reduce the shortage in the field. However, for individuals that decide to leave the Criminal Justice Profession, their future looks bright. Those who become entrepreneurs enjoy more flexibility and freedom, have the potential for higher earnings, and continued opportunities to address societal issues. However, causation must be exercised to ensure that the appropriate business model has been selected. Many skills from the criminal justice field are easily transferable into the entrepreneurship field, such as, discipline, working long hours, team cohesiveness. Since there is limited research regarding this topic, future research should include Criminal Justice Professionals working directly with the researchers or functioning as a change agent consultant. This will ensure effective and sound research. In addition, teaming with criminal justice professionals can also ensure certain pitfalls are avoided and a solid business model and environmental analysis can be created by entrepreneurs before launching start-up enterprises.

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Effects of Workplace Bullying on the Individual and the Institution

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Abstract

Bullying in the past has been viewed as a problem reserved for children in schools. Bullying however, also occurs among adults in the workplace, and is a problem that affects a wide range of employees in jobs in the United States and abroad. It can be found in all types of agencies and organizations. Bullying can cause physical and psychological distress not only for the victim but can also cause financial harm to the organization. Workers can also leave the organization due to awareness of bullying environment and victimization caused by the act of bullying. Mobbing is a form of bullying that is typically found in the workplace environment. Prevention and intervention strategies should be considered and implemented so that bullying tactics of any kind cannot be continued and the message of zero tolerance can be the organizational message. This literature review takes an inter-perspective look at the various terms for workplace bullying and provides an all-encompassing definition of this phenomenon. A general overview of the effects of bullying on bully-victims, non-bullied employees, as well as the organization at large is explored. Anti-bullying strategies are identified in terms of state legislative actions. General prevention and intervention strategies are also addressed.

Keywords: workplace, bullying, incivility, violence, behaviors, victims
Effects of Workplace Bullying on the Individual and the Institution

Bullying is not a phenomenon reserved for the school playground or the school classroom setting. On the contrary, bullying is a wide-spread issue that crosses over the childhood and adolescent phase of development, and reaches into the realm of adulthood. Workplaces for adults parallel classrooms for children, in that it can be a hostile environment in which peers and superiors can inflict harm through damaging communication and actions. In a study of residents in Michigan, who were randomly selected to complete a survey, researchers found that 16.7% of the respondents had been affected by workplace violence. Which equates to approximately one in six workers experiencing victimization (Name, 2003).

Workplace bullying is a phenomenon that needs serious attention. Workplace bullying, sometimes noted as workplace violence, began obtaining recognition due to range a of violent behaviors from assault to homicide. The U.S. Justice Department reported from 1993-1999 an average of 1.7 million workplace violent incidents with 95% of them being simple or aggravated assault. Most workplace violence is not representative of murder or some heinous act. “Contrary to popular opinion, sensational multiple homicides represent a very small number of workplace violence incidents. The majority of incidents that employers/managers have to deal with on a daily basis are lesser cases of assaults, domestic violence, stalking, threats, harassment (to include sexual harassment), and physical and/or emotional abuse that makes no headlines” (U.S. Department of Justice, p. 12). Workplace bullying is regarded as workplace violence that is primarily free of assaultive behavior (WBI U.S. Workplace Bullying Survey, 2014). The umbrella of workplace bullying is large; it encompasses many names and has great effects on the individuals targeted. Not only does workplace bullying influence the victim, but the work
environment at large. Workplace bullying is of grave importance, and it is imperative that this issue is defined, the effects are acknowledged, and policies are developed and implemented.

**Definition of Workplace Bullying**

Workplace bullying is a matter that is characterized various ways by numerous different terms. The expression “workplace bullying” was devised by Andrea Adams, a journalist and anti-bullying activist, in England in 1992. She utilized this term to describe harassment actions, displayed among employees that were perpetual in nature, which often resulted in harmful consequences for the worker(s) singled out (Adams, 1992). Workplace bullying is a phenomenon that is known by interchangeable labels to include but not limited to harassment, mobbing/psychological terror, bullying, workplace violence/aggression and incivility.

Harassment is a common description of workplace bullying that is characterized as a person making unwanted gestures toward an individual. In one case, Harris v. Forklift System, Inc., a female employee complained that the president of the company constantly insulted her and made sexual innuendos toward her. He made “snide” comments, threw things on the floor for her to retrieve and made vulgar comments directed toward her body. In this case, harassment was characterized as an abusive and hostile work environment, which harms the employee psychologically, or in which the victim subjectively feels affected by the behavior inflicted (Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc., 1993).

Mobbing, is a word commonly used to describe a herd of animals, attacking a predator or something that is imposing threat. In much the same way, in the workplace, employees join forces and inflict pain on their counterparts, who seemingly appear to be a threat. According to Leymann (1996) the definition of mobbing in the workplace also known as psychological terror
is “hostile and unethical communication, which is directed in a systematic way by one or a few individuals mainly towards one individual who, due to mobbing, is pushed into a helpless and defenseless position, being held there by means of continuous mobbing activities” (Leymann, 1996, p.168). Leymann (1996) also notes that the incidence of bullying behavior is at least once a week over at least a period of six months.

Rayner & Hoel (1997) view workplace bullying through the lens of the wide-ranging term bullying, and indicates that the parameters of bullying are broad, and encompasses several tactics. The phenomenon of workplace bullying is a “status blind interpersonal hostility that is deliberate, repeated and sufficiently severe as to harm the targeted person’s health or economic status” (Namie, 2003, p. 1). Bullying creates a psychological power imbalance while simultaneously rendering the targeted person defenseless. Workplace bullying also causes problems in targeted persons’ physical health and produces psychological harm. Workplace bullying also creates monetary losses for employers (Mattice, n.d.). Bullying behaviors can be grouped in five specific classifications: “ (a) threat to professional status (e.g. belittling opinion, public professional humiliation, accusations regarding lack of effort); (b) threat to personal standing (e.g. name-calling, insults, intimidation, devaluing with reference to age); (c) isolation (e.g. preventing access to opportunities, physical or social isolation, withholding information); (d) overwork (e.g. undue pressure, impossible deadlines, unnecessary disruptions); and (e) destabilization (e.g. failure to give credit when due, meaningless tasks, removal of responsibility, repeated reminders of blunders, setting up to fail)” (Rayner & Hoel, 1997, p. 183).

Mattice (n.d.) uses an alternative approach to viewing bullying actions by dividing them into the categories of aggressive communication, acts aimed at humiliation and manipulation at work, and asserts that most bullying actions fit into these categories. The examples of bullying
behaviors are similar to the Rayner and Hoel (1997) lens on bullying. A table is displayed below presenting the Mattie (n.d.) examples of the types of bullying behavior broken into the three categories.

The Three Types of Bullying Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acts Aimed at Humiliation</th>
<th>Manipulation of Work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Humiliating or ridiculing, teasing</td>
<td>• Removing tasks imperative to job responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spreading rumors or gossip</td>
<td>• Giving unmanageable workloads &amp; impossible deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ignoring peers when they walk by</td>
<td>• Arbitrarily changing tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Playing harsh practical jokes</td>
<td>• Using employee evaluations to document supposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Taunting with the use of social media, intranet,</td>
<td>decreased quality of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Purposely withholding pertinent information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leaving employees out of email correspondence or</td>
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</table>

Workplace bullying also is known by the nomenclature of workplace violence/aggression. Workplace violence is characterized as severe assault and could potentially result in murder. However, workplace aggression/violence is normally displayed as a less intense form of aggression that can be physical in nature but is generally verbal (Baron & Neuman, 1996).

Yet another term for workplace bullying is incivility. Workplace bullying is an intensified form of incivility which includes rudeness, teasing, belittling impoliteness, embarrassment, annoyance, gossiping and negative interpersonal behavior. Bullying is hardly ever violent in nature (i.e. assault, battery, murder) but rather non-violent (Namie, 2003). Workplace bullying can be conceptualized using a continuum with incivilities on the lower end...
of the spectrum, followed by bullying which significantly interferes with job performance in the middle and battery/homicide at the end of the continuum characterizing it as the most severe form of workplace bullying (Namie, 2003).

The Effects of Workplace Bullying

Psychological and Physiological Effects

The Workplace Bullying Institute conducted a survey in 2012 with a sample of approximately 1,000 self-selected individuals bullied at work to determine stress-related physical and psychological health challenges experienced after exposure to workplace bullying. The study found that victims suffered a wide range of psychological and physiological problems. In 80% of bully targets the most prevalent psychological symptom was anxiety (WBI Instant Poll D, 2012). The overall stress level for bully targets relative to witnesses and non-bullied persons was higher (Vartia, 2001). Other psychological effects reported were panic attacks (52%) and agoraphobia (17%). Approximately 50% of the people were diagnosed with depression while 30% were diagnosed with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (WBI Instant Poll D, 2012). The targets of bullying have substantially greater levels of job induced stress, depression and anxiety. Clinical levels of anxiety and depression are also more common in those who have been bullied over those who have not (Quine, 1999). Prolonged exposure to workplace bullying is associated with higher risks of depression (Kivimaki et al., 2003). If an employee has been exposed to bullying in the last year they are at a greater risk for depression and if bullying exposure has occurred in less than 12 months employees are at an even greater risk for depression (Niedhammer et. al, 2006). Other symptoms indicated were sleep disruption (77%), loss of concentration or memory (76%), and uncontrollable mood swings (70.3%). Some of the targets of bullying contemplated suicide (29%), others had a thought-out plan (16%). Roughly 22% who experienced bullying for
the first time were prescribed psychotropic medication and 39% had to get their medication augmented because of bullying (WBI Instant Poll D, 2012). Bully victims also tend to use psychotropic sleep medication at higher rates than those who witnessed bullying and non-bullied individuals (Vartia, 2001).

Bullying not only causes psychological effects for victims of this destructive behavior but also has significant physiological effects as well. The bully targets report having illnesses intensified by stress which includes tension headaches (44%), migraine headaches (48%), fibromyalgia (31%), chronic fatigue syndrome (33.3%), irritable bowel disease (36.9%) and sexual dysfunction (26.9%). Cardiovascular problems were also noted with heart palpitations (61%) and hypertension (60%) (WBI Instant Poll D, 2012). Kivimaki et. al (2003) indicated that obesity along with psychosocial stress plays a role in the relationship between workplace bullying and cardiovascular issues. Although obesity is not a direct result of the bullying, it appears to influence victimization, which may, in turn, influence cardiovascular diseases as well. Furthermore, workplace bullying effects the health and results in absences from work (Quine, 1999). Bullied employees try not to miss extended amounts of time as this may result in increased victimization (Varita, 2001). Not to mention smokers, smoke cigarettes at a higher frequency while alcohol consumption for drinkers is augmented as well (Quine, 1999).

**Organizational Effects**

Workplace bullying has an adverse effect on its victims, non-bullied employees and the organization. This hostile behavior not only increases the incidence of depression for those victimized, but also for non-bullied individuals, who observe the bullying behavior (Niedhammer et. al, 2006). Employees who observed bullying behaviors inflicted on their counterparts, also experience stress and stress reactions, as a result of being innocent bystanders.
(Varita, 2001). Aside from depression and stress, many non-bullied employees experience much of the same physical and mental ailments as those bullied (Mattice, n.d.).

There are also effects for organizations because of bullying occurring in the workplace. The effects that this hostile behavior has on the bullied employee, spills over to the organization, and causes substantial destruction. Employees who are bullied may generally be some of the most driven and talented employees (Namie, 2003); however, bullying “leads to poor quality work product, low job satisfaction, eroded job attachment, greater intention to leave, and more” (Mattice, n.d. p. 6). This, in turn, has an adverse effect on the organization as it may create a fear-driven workplace characterized by poor morale (Namie, 2003). Workplace bullying also causes absenteeism for the bully-victims and non-victims working in hostile bullying environments (Kivimaki, Elovainio & Vehtera, 2000). The organization loses revenue (Mattice, n.d.) because of the effects of bullying behavior, and the hostile environment that it causes, and also makes employee recruitment and retention problematic, as well as, puts the employer’s reputation in question (Namie, 2003).

**Preventions and Interventions for Workplace Bullying**

The phenomenon of workplace bullying is an enormous exploit to tackle. Workplace bullying is a feat not just to be undertaken by the employee alone but also by the organization. Employees victimized can utilize active strategies, such as confronting their perpetrator, or passive approaches, such as avoiding them or being absent from work which is unsuccessful (Zapf & Gross, 2001). In a survey conducted by the Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute, targets of bullying reported the abusive behavior inflicted to the bully’s manager, which was often not resolved, but, on the contrary, it was compounded. Bully targets who contacted HR had similar unhelpful responses and at times did not obtain a response at all (Namie, 2003).
Furthermore, some bully victims suffered in silence and did nothing at all (Rayner, 1999). It appears that leaving the organization, or being separated from the bully in the work environment, is the ultimate solution. (Zapf & Gross, 2001).

Organizations do not want their employees to leave as turnover is expensive. The time spent alone for Human Resources to hire replacements could potentially cost $20,000 (Mattice, n.d., p.12). Rather than taking financial losses, employers should implement policies and procedures that expansively address workplace bullying (Quine, 1999). Different aspects to consider when making such policies includes clear-cut actions that will be taken when a bully occurrence happens, third party investigation procedures and interventions to coach the perpetrator to change behavior. Bully-victims should also be provided counseling and education for all parties of the agency with more specialized training for human resources should be provided also. “Due to the financial costs to organizations and the potentially lasting emotional impact of incivility, workshops should be constructed dealing with workplace incivility” (J. Barlett, M. Barlett, & Reio, 2008, p. 6). The training should highlight achieving a civil work environment, with a general focus of intolerance for bullying, while also teaching helpful skills that helps in the communication among all in the working environment (Mattice, n.d.). The work environment should also be supportive, as setting up support systems to protect bully-victims from the damaging effects of victimization and help non-bullied employees and the employers also (Quine, 1999).

In addition to employers playing a critical role in creating civil working environments, and alleviating bullying, legislation should be passed to address this phenomenon. In most of the United States, equal opportunity harassment, better known as bullying, is permitted. In the state of Nevada, a law was passed in 2010 that addressed bullying safeguarding the students in
schools, the teachers, and administrators. In Tennessee, a law was approved in 2014 that strongly suggested that government agencies implement policies addressing bullying. In California in 2014, a law was approved to provide sexual harassment training and anti-abuse training to supervisors in companies with 50 or more employees (Mattice, n.d.). This is a start but should not be the ending point. Anti-bullying laws should be enacted at the federal level for the workplace as it is a growing problem that effects a number of individuals adversely.

Conclusion

This literature review portrays various definitions of workplace bullying, the effects that bullying has on victims and non-bullied individuals, as well as, the effects on employers. It is concluded that bullying in the workplace has many names, however the definitions are similar in many ways among experts. It is also concluded that this phenomenon causes serious psychological and physiological effects for victims and by-standers. Although anti-bullying measures are considered, policy does not move far enough in prevention and intervention. There is a need to consider bullying as a criminal offense. Currently there are no bullying federal laws to address issues relating to workplace bullying however, harassment is considered illegal based on the Equality Act of 2010. Even though the law does not protect victims from workplace bullying, victims should not suffer in silence, and should take actions against the person who is bullying even if the individual is an administrator. If not a victim, support of victims should be offered, and in this manner, the victim will not feel the need to suffer the continued victimizing behaviors. Employers should support each other with discussions about bullying, and training sessions similar to the mandatory harassment training, should be provided in organizations. Employees who act simply as bystanders in situations of bullying may eventually become victims of bullying.
themselves. Thus, organized support and open discussions about organizational bullying are effective strategies that can be used to prevent or at least reduce the amount of workplace bullying in organizations. There is some agreement regarding basic preventative and interventive measures, but more research is needed. Further research is also needed to assist organizations in understanding the effects of bullying on job performance and productivity which may ultimately impact revenue.

References


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