

As previously discussed, the purpose of the research is to survey both police and public in an attempt to identify any links between the news media, the consumption of that media and the impact that consumption has on an individual's confidence in UK policing. This will be conducted by way of two web surveys for both the public and UK police officers. Web surveys provide a self-administered method that standardizes the delivery of multimedia survey content to respondents by leveraging the capability of conducting large-scale data collection (Couper, M, 2000). However web surveys are not without their problems. As discussed by Tourangeau *et al* in 2013, Web surveys do not possess a "native" method for selecting samples, unlike other survey methods such as telephone surveys which utilize random-digit dialling (Tourangeau, R *et al*, 2013). It also discusses the issue of internet access however as of 2023 this issue is less problematic as in a United Kingdom census conducted in 2021 it found that 92% of adults were internet users with 99% of adults aged 16 to 44 being recent internet users (Office for national statistics, 2021). There is also concern surrounding error or bias when conducting web surveys as raised by Lee, S in 2006. These concerns surround the fact that there may be a selection error or disparities between the survey population, which consists of Internet users, and the individuals who are recruited into the panel and chosen to participate in the particular survey (Lee, S, 2006). There both present and potential issues that arise as a result of conducting a web based survey however, these are outweighed by the potential for vast data collection and cost value ultimately offered by a web based survey.

The web survey for both parties will consist of short series of closed questions. Closed questions are widely regarded as efficient due to their ease of data collection, coding, and analysis. Efficiency plays a crucial role in survey methodology as researchers strive to capture the attitudes or experiences of a representative sample, allowing for generalization to a broader population. In order to ensure the accuracy of estimates, it may be necessary to gather information from a substantial number of individuals (O'Cathain, A *et al*, 2004). However open-ended questions offer several benefits, including the opportunity to uncover spontaneous responses from individuals and avoid the potential bias that can arise from suggesting specific responses, as is the case with closed-ended questions. Nonetheless, open-ended questions also come with drawbacks when compared to closed-ended questions, such as the requirement for extensive coding and a higher likelihood of non-response for certain items (Reja, U *et al*). As discussed by Reja, U in 2004 due to the self-administered nature of online surveys, the interviewer is unable to probe for further information. This can pose challenges, particularly with open-ended questions that demand more effort from the respondents leading to the potential for a higher non respondent rate. Although open ended questions offer the ability to gain insight through obtaining qualitative data respondents spontaneous personable responses offer little value to the research question itself which relies more on quantitative data. Open questions efficiency at data collection and analysis mixed with their ability to be more easily generalised across a population was ultimately why this method of survey was questionnaire was selected.

When composing a web based survey it is also important to look at all aspects including the length of the survey. In a 2009 study conducted by Galesic *et al* it was been postulated that questions asked later in a web-based questionnaire will exhibit certain characteristics when compared to those asked earlier. These characteristics include shorter response times, higher rates of non-response, shorter answers to open-ended questions, and less variability in responses to items arranged in grids. In order to test these assumptions, the researchers manipulated the stated length of the questionnaire (10, 20, and 30 minutes) as well as the position of the questions within the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of randomly ordered blocks of thematically related questions. As anticipated, the results showed that the longer the stated length of the questionnaire, the fewer respondents started and completed it. Furthermore, answers to questions positioned later in the questionnaire were found to be faster, shorter, and more uniform compared to answers to questions

positioned near the beginning (Galesic, Bosnjak 2009). This was also identified in a 2018 study conducted by Kost and Correa where a 2228 eligible member survey was conducted with 3 survey types. The study consisted of an ultra short, short and long survey and the completion rates of each were examined. The study found that the ultra short survey had the highest completion rate with a 63% compared with 54% with short and 37% with long surveys (Kost, Correa, 2018). Short surveys proved to be dependable and yielded greater response and completion rates compared to lengthier surveys (*ibid*). In a study conducted by Revilla and Ochoa in 2017 where people were surveyed on the ideal survey length it found that ideal survey length was 10 minutes with the maximum being 20 minutes (Revilla, Ochoa 2017). When exploring and analysing the existing research there is a common trend in web based surveys yielding better response rates when shorter in length. This is also compounded further when looking at the research of Revilla and Ochoa showing that this is potentially what the surveys respondents themselves want from a survey. It is clear from existing research that the web based survey would be better constructed to be short in format and aim to be completed by respondents within 10 minutes of starting.

When attempting to gain a data set it not just important that the web survey itself is comprised correctly but also that it is aimed and targetted to the correct area's to gain the largest amount of responses. In a study conducted by Ortiz-Ospina Esteban in 2019 it was identified that 79% of US adults used social media with Facebook being used by 30% of the worlds population at 2.4 billion users (Ortiz-Ospina, Roser 2023). In a study survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre in 2021 it found that 61% of male respondents and 77% of female respondents used Facebook as a social media platform (Auxier, Anderson 2021). The reach afforded by Facebook in order to gain respondents cannot be ignored but it is also important insure that the data gained is truthful and an honest reflection of the beliefs of the respondent. In 2018 a study was conducted by Guess *et al* which aimed to find if social media survey responses were accurate when relating to politics, The study found that largely respondents self reported answers were accurate when compared to social media trends at the time (Guess, Munger et al. 2019). Although not directly related these findings can be used as a guide in order to identify whether social media namely Facebook can be used as a platform to gain respondents. However in a 2021 study conducted by Suarez-Lledo and Alvarez-Galvez it was found that there is significant misinformation on social media platforms. When relating to medical misinformation it found that there was high amounts of malformation surrounding dominant health topics (Suarez-Lledo, Alvarez-Galvez 2021). This prevalence towards misinformation has the ability to influence responses of the web survey as users may be influenced by misinformation surrounding the researched topic online. This can be seen in a study conducted in 2021 by Snikders et al where 110 participants were presented with 1610 new stories, half of which were false stories (Snijders, Conijn et al. 2023). The study identified that on only 64% of occasions respondents were able to detect a false story leaving the potential for fake news stories to be impacting a respondents opinion on a subject matter.

Facebook provides a platform that has significant reach for survey respondent gathering due to the sheer amount of available users and research shows that social media sites in general provide largely accurate responses to surveys. The potential benefits of Facebook as a platform are likely to outweigh any negatives when attempting to gain quantitative data for research purposes even with the potential for fake news stories impacting the opinion of the respondent.

Another platform available for the potential of the web survey is Reddit, with around 1.7 billions visits in April of 2023 (Statista, 2023). Previous studies have been conducted using Reddit as a tool for recruitment such as one conducted by Itamar Shatz in 2015. A short survey was conducted by posting on a subreddit called "Language Learning" to recruit participants. There was no monetary reward offered for participation. A total of 962 individuals began the survey, with the majority (848, 88.1%) starting on the first day of the posting. The number of participants decreased to 91 (9.5%) on the second day and further dropped to 23 (2.4%) on the third day. After that, no new participants

joined the survey (Shatz 2015). This response pattern aligns with a prior investigation on Reddit's usage, indicating that most users engage with new posts within around 24 hours of their initial publication (Moyer, Carson, & Carson, 2015). Out of the 962 participants who initially took part in the survey, a total of 926 individuals (96.3%) successfully passed the qualifying question. Among those who qualified, 844 participants (91.1%) proceeded to answer the initial background questions. From this group, 676 individuals (80.1%) began the task. Among those who started the task, an impressive 654 participants (96.7%) successfully completed it. Furthermore, out of the participants who completed the task, 634 individuals (96.9%) also finished the final questionnaire. These findings suggest that the primary reason for attrition is a lack of interest among participants at the beginning of the survey, rather than difficulties encountered during the task. The aforementioned statement aligns with the typical browsing behaviour observed among Reddit users, as a significant portion of them tend to quickly leave external links from Reddit (Russel, 2015). There are however issues when it comes to recruitment of participants through Reddit. The selection of candidates in the recruitment process is dependent on individuals voluntarily choosing to participate based on the stated criteria. This presents a potential concern, as it allows for the possibility of unqualified individuals attempting to deceive their way into participation. This type of behaviour cannot be completely eradicated and is a common challenge in online surveys. Nevertheless, this problem is somewhat alleviated on Reddit due to the absence of monetary rewards, which significantly reduces the motivation to cheat (Gadiraju et al., 2015).

Travis Levell in 2015 also proposed that any study to be conducted with the use of Reddit, two guidelines should be adhered to. These guidelines are *fit* and *reach*. When it comes to fit, it is advisable to share a survey on a subreddit where users are inclined to engage, as the overall subject of the survey aligns with the interests of that subreddit's members. Selecting the most relevant subreddit is a crucial factor to take into account as it can greatly impact the outcome of a survey (Levell, 2015). Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the significance of compatibility may pose a concern. This implies that the majority of participants are likely to be individuals who possess a strong interest in the subject matter, thereby making them less representative of the entire population. When it comes to reach, having a higher number of subscribers in a subreddit is advantageous. This is because a larger subscriber base means that more users will see your posts, resulting in higher recruitment rates (Baxter, 2016). It is worth noting that both the subscriber count and the number of active users browsing the subreddit can be easily found in the sidebar of each subreddit.

With the relevant studies in mind the police officer web survey element of the study will be submitted to the subreddit <https://www.reddit.com/r/policeuk>, a subreddit dedicated to police officers in the United Kingdom. This subreddit consists of 69,600 subscribers as of 13th of December 2023 and has an active user count between 250-300 daily. The subreddit was measured over a 7 day period and over this 7 day period the top rated post had 150 upvotes by users and had 42 comments, showing that half of the active users are engaging in the most popular post of the week. There is no authentication process for confirming active subscribers are UK police officers so the opening question of this survey will consist of a question surrounding their current status within a UK police force. As mentioned previously there is a concern that as this survey is self administered that a respondent may lie regarding this status, But as there no financial incentive to completing the survey this should have little impact.

To obtain the relevant data there is also need to capture diversity information during the survey as in a 2021 YouGov poll it was found that only 44% of ethnic Britons have trust in the police which fell from 52% the previous year (Institute for Government, 2022). This shows the need to capture this data during the web survey provided to the public as it might provide further insight in to the public confidence in policing from people of an ethnic background. Although there is not much

information available surround the same confidence issues from people suffering from disabilities, there is still a reason to capture. The information captured could provide insight in to whether people suffering from disabilities or other neurodiverse conditions have higher or lower confidence in UK policing. The same is true for both gender and sexual identity however with gender this metric has been measured before. From 2018 to 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) revealed that women exhibited higher levels of trust in the police compared to men, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. However, a recent survey conducted by the End Violence Against Women Coalition in October 2021, involving around 1,700 British adults, indicated that 47% of women reported a decrease in their trust towards the police (POST, 2023). Asking for diversity information surrounding gender, sexual orientation, disabilities and ethnic background could provide valuable data to gain a better understanding but in order to not cause concern within causing a non response, the option to skip or not response to these questions will be provided to all participants.

As this study is looking to gain two data sets for analysis, two web surveys will be supplied to two different placed. The first survey aimed at members of the general public will be supplied to members on Facebook, this as the research suggest is the best way to gain the largest amount of potential responses and highest response rate. The second, a police officer focused survey will be posted on the PoliceUK subreddit which will yield the biggest potential for users to participate and engage in the survey. From the extensive research available the decision to use a close questioned, short five to ten minute long survey has been chosen. This will allow for the most quantitative data to be collected for review and analysis as it provides the highest potential for response in rates in web best surveys if previous research is accurate. Closed questions also allow for a stricter data set to be gained that can also be more easily quantified and analysed, meaning that there is potential for more reliable outcomes and patterns to emerge.

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