



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David
SWANSEA - ABERTAWE

UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORM

Please complete the following research proposal and submit it to Turnitin.

Which project option are you taking? Please tick:

8,000 word project:

Please remove the red writing for your final submission.

NAME: Damien Thomas	STUDENT ID No.: 2031275
DRAFT RESEARCH TITLE QUESTION: The impact of the media on the public perception of the modern day police officers and the effect that has on every day policing.	
INTRODUCTION:	
Policing by consent is the foundation of British policing in part due to the 9 principles first issued to all new officers in 1829 known as Robert Peel's 9 Principles of Policing. The Peelian Principles ask officers to always be aware that the ability of the police to carry out their tasks is based on the public's acceptance of their existence, activities, and behaviour as well as their capacity to gain and keep the public's respect. It also states that always remembering that public respect and approval entails securing the public's ready cooperation in the effort to ensure the following of laws.	
According to a recent YouGov poll conducted on behalf of the BBC, 42% of respondents had either a slight or very high mistrust of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The poll's sample size was 1051 adults in London, and it was conducted between March 27 and March 31, 2023. 43% of people surveyed claimed to have a worse opinion of the MPS now than they did one year prior. Additionally, the survey revealed that 73% of respondents thought the police handled some persons differently than others (Parliament. House of Lords, 2023)	
According to the Institute for Government, Highly publicised documented instances of misconduct and criminal behaviour by officers are likely to be connected to a "deterioration in attitudes towards policing " (Institute for Government, 2023). With high profile cases the likes of Sarah Everard who was abducted, raped, and killed by Wayne Couzens in March 2021 while he was a working MPS officer and the MPS officer David Carrick who was given 36 life sentences in February 2023 after pleading guilty to 49 offences, including 24 counts of rape.	

There is a need for news groups to attract viewers and readers because modern news is available around-the-clock and makes money from subscription fees and adverts (Conscious Vibe, 2022). This is where news providers make use of the negativity bias, where human beings are more likely to put a high weight on negative events, objects or personal traits (Rozin, P., & Royzman, E. B, 2001). The fact that the public is more likely to pay attention to negative stories mixed with the modern day news media being a view driven business it shows why there is a trend towards negative news surrounding policing.

The purpose of the research is to better understand the disconnect between the police and media, the effect this is having on individual officers in their daily duties and pave a way forward for policing by consent.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

I will be looking to explore the two points below as part of my research in the hopes of better understanding them.

The impact of media on public perception of police officers

I will be looking to gain information on the public perception of police officers in the current day and what impact the media has played. I will be looking to find out the public opinion both positive and negative and how or if the media has influenced that opinion.

Information regarding this objective will be gained completing a survey with members of the public. This survey will be completed digitally via open platforms such as Reddit or Facebook to reach the largest amount of people as possible. The survey will cover questions surround how the person consumes their media, what media they tend to consume, how up to date they are on current affairs surrounding policing and finally their opinions on modern day policing.

The impact that perception has on every day policing.

I will be looking to research if the media reports and portrayal of police is impacting the every day officer in the line of duty. I will also research what issues if any do officers believe are as a result of news media reporting habits.

This will be researched by completing a survey with active servicing police officers, both regulars and special constables. Again to reach the largest volume of people this will be conducted by both an internal force survey but also completed by the use of Reddit. This will consist of questions regarding their service time, job role, current affairs media knowledge and then asking questions regarding their belief of media impact on policing.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

On May 3rd 2023 Lord Lexden of the House of Lords proposed a motion for debate which concerned the resorting the public confidence in policing. In this motion it was discussed that public confidence in policing has decreased in recent years in part to what was believed to be negative opinions of the police in the news media (Parliament. House of Lords, 2023). Also in an opinion piece conducted by Graham Wallace of Policing Insight he stated that although there has always been a complicated relationship between the police and the media, recent coverage of high-profile crimes involving officers, as well as a number of inquiries and reviews, have raised concerns that the current reporting of law enforcement is negatively biased and contributing to the decline in public confidence (Wallace, G, 2023).

Also in research conducted by Jaeyong Choi in 2019 it was found that people are inclined to accept that police wrongdoing is widespread because they have a lack of respect for the police, which causes them to read news about the police in a way that supports their preconceived beliefs (Jaeyong Choi, 2021). Also in research conducted by Kenneth Dowler in 2002 it was identified that respondents were more inclined to rate the police as ineffective if they watch more television (Kenneth Dowler, 2002).

Although there is a growing body of research as stated above in relation to the effects of media on policing and its legitimacy, there is a lack of research in to the effects this is having on individual officers in the carrying out of their duties. By surveying officers it will allow for first hand experience and may provide answers to the question surround the media's impact on officers during their daily role.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH –SURVEY METHOD:

I am going to be conducted multiple surveys on both members of public and police officers. Due to the nature of the required research, first hand knowledge directly from the source is required to prove or disprove any points. Surveys to the public are required to understand the current opinions of police officers and any impact the media could have potentially had on these opinions. Surveys to officers is also required as it can provide an idea of how the media is impact the role and duties of individual officers and if any impact both positive and negative is being felt on the front lines.

SUMMARY OF SAMPLING FRAMEWORK:

I will be looking to use closed question surveys to avoid any huge variances in data gathered. Closed questions allow for more easy analytical breakdown of the data that should hopefully provide answers to the research I am conducting.

For the public survey I will be looking to do this via an online forum platform known as Reddit. I

will conduct this in two forums known as sub reddit. The first one I will use is known as GreenandPleasant which self describe themselves as upper middle-class socialists and politically left leaning. This boasts a member count of 182,000 and huge potential of data to the research. During the survey I will also looking to identify any protected characteristics and diversity while protecting anonymity throughout.

For the police survey I will be looking to utilise the PoliceUK subreddit which has a membership of 68,000 current and retired officers. Not all members are active in their role and as such I will be looking to identify this at the start of the survey. The same survey will also be passed to all Gwent Police officers. The reach of the subreddit plus internal police force survey will provide a large sample pool to gauge opinions on the research topic.

ETHICAL ISSUES:

When looking to complete a survey of any kind there is always ethical issues that must be addressed. Firstly I will be looking to provide full and total anonymity to all participants and no opinions or answers shared will be linked to any person in the surveys.

Any data that identifies the participant will fall subject to Data protection and GDPR rules and will not be submitted in the final research as to protect the identity of the participant.

All results of the surveys will be included in order to show the analysis of the data was conducted without bias.

Any conflicts of interest identified during the conducting of the research will be addressed and discussed with the ethics board if required prior to any conclusions being drawn.

TIME SCALE:

The full dissertation will be completed by March of 2024. I will aim to complete all relevant surveys by January of 2024 allowing the required time to analyse the data and draw any points from it. Completing the surveys by this point will allow the time for conclusions if any to be drawn from the research.

REFERENCE LIST:

Parliament. House of Lords (2023) Police standards and culture: Restoring public trust. Available at: <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/police-standards-and-culture-restoring-public-trust/> (Accessed: August 2023)

Institute for Government. (2023.). *Performance Tracker 2022/23: Spring update – Police*. Available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/performance-tracker-2022-23/police>.

Conscious Vibe (2023) How Do TV, News & Media Channels Make Money. Available at: <https://theconsciousvibe.com/how-do-news-media-stations-make-money> (Accessed: February 2023).

Rozin, P., & Royzman, E. B. (2001). Negativity Bias, Negativity Dominance, and

Contagion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(4), 296–320.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0504_2

Wallace, G. (2023) *Police and the media: Negative bias needs to be replaced with balanced reporting*. Available at: <https://policinginsight.com/feature/opinion/police-and-the-media-negative-bias-needs-to-be-replaced-with-balanced-reporting/> (Accessed: August 2023).

Jaeyong Choi (2021) Asymmetry in media effects on perceptions of police: an analysis using a within-subjects design experiment, *Police Practice and Research*, 22:1, 557-573, DOI: [10.1080/15614263.2020.1749624](https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2020.1749624)

Kenneth Dowler (2002) Media Influence on Citizen Attitudes Toward Police Effectiveness, *Policing and Society*, 12:3, 227-238, DOI: [10.1080/10439460290032369](https://doi.org/10.1080/10439460290032369)
