



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: ✓

OR

4,000 word project and presentation:

Please remove the red writing for your final submission.

NAME: David Adam Banfield	STUDENT ID No.: 2236123
DRAFT RESEARCH TITLE QUESTION: Intoxication and Injustice: The Impact of Alcohol consumption on Crime Rates and Police Response in the United Kingdom. INTRODUCTION: The reason I have chosen this topic is due to the high volume of incidents that Police Officers have to deal with, where at least one of those involved are under the influence of alcohol, whether that be the subject or the victim. There is already an established link and association between alcohol consumption and crime within the United Kingdom. Unfortunately, many violent crimes can be associated back to alcohol use and the association between nonviolent crimes is even higher (Dingwall, 2006). I have conducted my initial reading surrounding this topic and have found a good amount of information that links alcohol to crime rates, where the opportunity for secondary research is substantial. However, there is little information available that divulges into how regularly Police Officers deal with and come into contact with people who are under the influence of alcohol, and how it differs from those who are not under the influence of alcohol.	

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

The summary of my research objectives for this study will be:

- To investigate the relationship between alcohol consumption and crime rates in the United Kingdom, focusing on trends and patterns over time.
- To analyse the parallelism between alcohol related offences and specific types of crime, such as domestic related violence, public order and non-violent offences.
- To examine the frequency and nature of police calls involving those under the influence of alcohol and to analyse how they have an effect on the resources of local police forces.
- To identify the key factors and contributions in alcohol related crime, including environmental influences and social surroundings.
- To analyse and review my own collected data to ascertain the effect that alcohol consumption has on modern day policing.

The steps that will be taken to answer my research aim will be in the form of primary research, which will be a questionnaire provided to current serving police officers. Also, secondary research will be conducted, where research into studies already concluded and analysed will be compared to the primary research.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The topic I have chosen surrounds the use of alcohol and its relationship/connection with crime rates within the United Kingdom. How police respond to this effectively will be a sub topic for my research to help understand how impactful alcohol is in regards to behaviour at scene and in regards to the crimes being committed.

The region of focus for my research will be within the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom and Ireland are amongst the highest in Europe for reporting high levels of binge drinking and drunkenness (Davoren et al, 2016) and thus crime rates within the country.

There is already a sizable collection of data available that shows the connection between alcohol and crime. A crime survey conducted in 2013-14 showed that offenders who were perceived to be under the influence of alcohol were linked to 53% of violent crimes in the United Kingdom (ONS, 2015).

Understanding the psychological theories behind alcohol consumption and crime rates will be key in my research to allow for reasoning and the ability to understand the causes for the disruptive relationship. The theories will range from Social Learning Theory (SLT), which is where people may learn violent acts or behaviours in locations or settings where alcohol consumption is common, such as pubs or clubs.

Another theory such as disinhibition theory, which is the idea that when sober your behaviour is inhibited, however when under the influence of alcohol your inhibitions are weakened and the alcohol has a greater effect on nerve functions. Thus allows the idea that when crime is committed under the influence of alcohol, it could relate to disinhibition, which is the reduction of forces holding back your impulses (Kallmen, 1998).

These theories will explain why alcohol has the effect that it does, and shows us the link between alcohol and crime rates. The British Medical Association found that alcohol use was associated with 60-70% of murders, 70% of stabbings and 50% of assaults in the home (Dingwall, 2013). Adjoining these to the theories, 70% of violent incidents that took place in a public space were alcohol related compared to the 40% of incidents that occurred in the home (ONS, 2015). As such, does the SLT have a bigger impact in these incidents, or is it the disinhibition theory, or both.

Young adult males between the ages of 18-24 years old are statistically linked to offending behaviour. In this day and age the culture has shifted in young adults and university students and alcohol consumption has a direct link to that (Davoren et al, 2016). According to a survey conducted by Youth Lifestyles Survey across England and Wales from 12-30 years olds, it was the 18-24 year olds who were most linked with criminal offences. Approximately 60% admitted criminal or disorderly behaviour, whilst 39% admitted to committing an offence (Richardson, 2006).

Different regions throughout the United Kingdom will have different data for the type of crime alcohol is affiliated to. City Centres with nightlife have a high population for students, and the crimes relating to this area are largely sexual assaults and public disorder. Where you may find that in more urban areas, offences such as burglaries or traffic offences have a more direct link to alcohol (Bromely, 2002). The one concurrent theme is that alcohol is having an effect on crime rates.

Police respond to a variety of different crimes at all hours of the day. Alcohol has an impact in a large amount of those crimes. Alcohol in itself, is no defence for the commission of a crime, and is largely not spoken about in relation to the initial response to an incident. Dealing with a person who is under the influence of alcohol compared to a sober person can alter the nature of the call in a large way (Parrott, 2018). A police officer responding to an incident with a person under the influence of alcohol is much more likely to be shown aggression and resistance, and unless this aggression towards a police officer results in another offence, the aggression and abuse is largely swept under the rug.

Although as stated, alcohol is no defence for a crime, it may be a mitigating factor that courts take into account (SC, 2025). This could be in relation to drunk driving, where there is an emergency or the driver was driving a short distance. However in most cases, alcohol consumption linked with many other crimes, such as violent assaults, disorder, burglaries and sexual assaults is seen as an aggravating factor that will have an effect on sentencing in court (Lightowlers, 2022).

There are discrepancies and gaps in the research as different figures are found. The world health Organisation (WHO) released a fact sheet in 2019 regarding alcohol consumption within the United Kingdom. It states that 25.4% of intentional injuries caused had an alcohol-attributable factor (WHO, 2019). This is a completely different figure than that of 53% stated by the Office for National Statistics and much lower than the perceived link between alcohol and crime (ONS, 2015).

Another gap in the research is how often Police officers deal with intoxicated people and how their behavior/ approach differs to any other incidents. I aim to explore this topic in further detail and hope to find out more from a Police officers perspective surrounding this specific topic. I also aim to find out if different regions have a different approach, for example, do Police Officers who work in City Centres approach intoxicated people differently than those who work in urban areas.

There is a lot of information surrounding the topic of alcohol consumption and its relation/link to crime from all different areas around the world. However there is a difficulty in understanding the reason behind it. There are different theories, such as SLT and disinhibition theory which you can have more of an understanding of, but the exact psychological effects are still largely unknown.

We know the link is there, but a better understanding is needed to help approach this topic. A better understanding will allow for better training for Police Officers who have to deal with those who have consumed alcohol and committed a crime. Police officers are three times more likely to be assaulted by offenders who have consumed alcohol, due to the increased aggression that alcohol provides (Bierie, 2015). The aim is to gather information on how Police Officers approach the subject and to establish the difficulty in dealing with those under the influence of alcohol.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH –SURVEY METHOD:

The method of research that I will be conducting, will be in the format of an online questionnaire. There will be a range of questions designed to gather a sizable amount of information surrounding the impact of alcohol on crime rates in the United Kingdom. The questionnaire will also provide an inside perspective of how Police Officers deal with those under the influence of alcohol and how it personally affects them in their active duty.

The method of the questionnaire itself will range from multichoice questions, to closed questions, to open questions which will allow for more structured information, as well as allowing officers to express their feelings surrounding the subject.

I will send the questionnaire in a range of different formats, such as through a link via email, whats-app and via word of mouth. The questionnaire will only be accessible through a closed link, where I have directly sent the link to the set of subjects.

There are a multitude of benefits to completing my research in this format, such as it being time efficient for both myself as the author and the subjects who are completing the questionnaire. Another benefit will be that there will be no cost attached to the research. The ability to conduct an online questionnaire will also allow for a large range of data to be collected and keep the participants anonymous.

The specific method of completing the questionnaire will be:-

Design of the questionnaire

- Firstly, I will design the questionnaire in a format that is clear and to the point. I will think carefully of the questions I will input, with the aim to provide as much research into the topics I have chosen and provide me with the information required. I will ensure that the design is clean and professional, and there are no clerical mistakes.

Publishing the questionnaire

- Secondly, once the questionnaire has been completed, I will choose the participants carefully. This means I will send the questionnaire to a range of different officers, such as those who have a large amount of experience in the job in multiple departments, as well as those who have started the job recently. Doing this will allow me to acquire data from different participants, surrounding the same subject.
The questionnaire will be sent via email, Whats-app or given the link directly.

Acquiring and analysing the data

- Once the questionnaire has been completed and the data acquired, it will allow me to analyse the results in depth. During this, I will be looking for any patterns or abnormalities that would be beneficial to investigate.

Inputting the data

- I will then incorporate my findings into my report and compare them to any secondary research I have already obtained.
I will look for any links and attempt to understand the reasons surrounding the data that I have acquired.

SUMMARY OF SAMPLING FRAMEWORK:

The target sample for this questionnaire will be a group of current serving Police Officers who are working in the South Wales region. Information from these officers will allow for in depth experience and answers regarding their active role.

The pool of Police Officers included will have a vast level of different experience, ranging from new recruits to experienced officers. They will all have different backgrounds and upbringings and will allow for a range of data available for analysis.

Each Officer will have their own personal and professional experience with alcohol and how they must deal with it on duty. This should allow for comprehensive and in depth answers for the target sample.

ETHICAL ISSUES:

This research will utilise both primary and secondary research. The primary research will include a questionnaire that will be completed by active duty Police Officers who work in the South Wales region; however, it will be made clear that the questionnaire will be anonymous and voluntary. As such, from the primary data collected, it is anticipated that no ethical issues will arise.

Regarding the secondary research analysed, it will include publicly available crime statistics and police records related to alcohol related incidents. All information gathered or included in this study will be handled in compliance with data protection regulations and will aim to safeguard all those involved and handle the privacy of all persons will be the utmost priority.

Therefore, it is expected that no significant ethical concerns will arise during the course of this study.

TIME SCALE:

I have been given a guided timeframe for each stage of my research work, which follows the following guide:

Date	Event
February 24 th 2025	Research Proposal & Ethics Form
May 5 th 2025	Literature Review
June 16 th 2025	Research Methodology & Planning
August 4 th 2025	Analysis of Results
September 8 th 2025	Findings & Conclusion
October 6 th 2025	Final project

REFERENCE LIST:

Please follow the Harvard referencing system

Dingwall, G. (2006). Alcohol and Crime (1st ed.). Willan. Available at: [Alcohol and Crime | Gavin Dingwall | Taylor & Francis eBooks, Referenc](#) (Accessed 15th January 2025).

Office for National Statistics. (2015). Violent Crime and Sexual Offences - Alcohol Related Violence. Available at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/focus/onviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/2015-02-12/chapter5violentcrimeandsexualoffencesalcoholrelatedviolence> (Accessed 13th February 2025)

Davoren, M.P., Demant, J., Shiely, F. *et al.* (2016). Alcohol consumption among university students in Ireland and the United Kingdom from 2002 to 2014: A systematic review. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12889-016-2843-1#citeas> (Accessed 13th February 2025).

World Health Organisation. (2019). Alcohol country fact sheet - United Kingdom 2016. Available at:

[https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/librariesprovider2/country-sites/alcohol-country-fact-sheet---united-kingdom-\(2019\).pdf?sfvrsn=4ef68271_1&download=true](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/librariesprovider2/country-sites/alcohol-country-fact-sheet---united-kingdom-(2019).pdf?sfvrsn=4ef68271_1&download=true) (Accessed 13th February 2025).

Kallmen, H. (1998). Alcohol and Disinhibition. Available at: <https://karger.com/ear/article-abstract/4/4/150/120407/Alcohol-and-Disinhibition> (Accessed 13th February 2025).

Richardson, A., Budd, T. (2006). Young adults, alcohol, crime and disorder. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/cbm.527> (Accessed 13th February 2025).

Bromley, R., Nelson, A. (2002). Alcohol-related crime and disorder across urban space and time: evidence from a British City. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0016718501000380> (Accessed 13th February 2025).

Parrott, D. (2018). Effects of alcohol on human aggression. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352250X17300581> (Accessed 13th February 2025).

Sentencing Council. (2025). Drink Driving. Available at: <https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/outlines/drink-driving/> (Accessed 13th February 2025).

Lightowlers, C. (2022). Intoxication and sentencing: January 2022. Available at: <https://www.sentencingacademy.org.uk/intoxication-and-sentencing-january-2022/#:~:text=Since%202004%2C%20English%20and%20Welsh,expanded%20definitions%20accompanying%20the%20guidelines.> (Accessed 13th January 2025).

Bierie, D. (2015). Assault of Police. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0011128715574977> (Accessed 13th February 2025).
