

Initial Dissertation Proposal (1000 words) This is worth 10% of your dissertation grade.

Name	Enrolment Number
Jemma Collins	1704061

Topic area- Criminology

Aim of your study

The aim of this study was to look at the public perception on criminal ex- offenders and sentencing.

A significant amount of research has been showing a link between the public concerns about crime with their request for tougher sentences (Kornhauser, 2013).

Previous research has proposed that “informal exclusions” of ex-offenders increase recidivism rates (Chiricos et al., 2007). The wish to punish people who break the rules is debatably a universal characteristic of human societies (Boehm, 1986; Tyler & Boeckmann, 1997). Ex-offenders can face a lot of barriers when it comes to trying to be trying to move back and live in a community when it comes to the negative views of the community (Rade, C. B., Desmarais, S. L., & Mitchell, R. E. 2016). The publics view that offenders also do not have harsh enough sentencing when it comes to the length of sentence for people who break the law (Maruna & King, 2009). A constant understanding what predicts punitive attitudes has been to examine global trends regarding factors associated with punitive attitudes (Unnever & Cullen, 2010). Previous findings support the idea of a punitive public that demands long prison terms. According to national opinion polls around the globe, the public believes that, in general, courts are not harsh enough when it comes to sentencing (Roberts and Stalans, 1997). Previous research by O’Sullivan, K., Holderness, D., Hong, X.Y. et al. Eur J Crim Policy Res (2017) the Results showed during this study that demographic factor like age household etc were significantly related to scores in one of the components. “According to the survey, most respondents preferred not to have any contact with ex-offenders. 42.9% were not prepared to work in the same team as a former prisoner; 54.2% were not prepared to live next to a former prisoner; and 72.4% were not prepared to have children with them” (Warr, 1995, p. 81). Previous research on public attitudes towards offenders and ex- offenders (Demski and McGlynn 1999; Helfgott 1997; Homant and Kennedy 1982; Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Kjelsberg et al. 2007; Steffensmeier and Kramer 1980) and on support for rehabilitation (Applegate et al. 1997, 2000; Cullen et al. 1983, 1990; McCorkle 1993) proposes that members of the public likely have very divergent views on this. This is important to look at as previous research findings have suggested that educating the public about positive views on ex-offenders should reduce punitive opinions,

(Chiricos et al. 2004; King and Wheelock 2007; Unnever et al. 2007). It is important as to be able to “Get their life back on track” ex-offenders being seen as not being able to change or live back in a community by the public having a negative perception could give them a higher chance of re offending if they are not given a chance.

Hypotheses

- 1) Females will have a more positive perception on offenders than males.
- 2) A younger participant will have a more positive view on offenders than older participants.
- 3) Participants from urban areas will be more positive about offenders.
- 4) Lower class will be less harsh on criminal sentencing than higher class.
- 5) Violent and organized crime offenders will be seen more negative than white collar crime.

Methodology

This study is a related design. Participants will take part in each survey. The dependent variable (DV) during this study is the public perception on criminal offenders and sentencing. The independent variables (IVs) during this study are

- 1) Age
- 2) Gender
- 3) ECS
- 4) Type of crime

There will be an estimate of 400 participants from the south west wales area. Participants will be female and male from the ages of 18 years and older. Participants will be randomly chosen as a link will be shared on social media where they will be redirected to kwik survey where they can choose to take part in the survey, they can withdraw at any time during the survey.

Participants will be asked to do a survey They will answer 69 questions during this survey. The first page will ask their age etc (see appendix 1) they will also be asked to complete a survey based on The Perceptions of Sex Offenders Scale (PSO) by Harper, C. A., & Hogue, T. E. (2014). Which I will change the wording to fit the current study (see Appendices 1) and take out all reference to sex offenders. To score the Perceptions of Offenders Scale, you subtract a constant of 1 from each item score. This functionally leaves a scoring range for each item of 0–5, and for the full scale of 0–100. Higher scores mean participants have a harsher view of offenders, with perceptions that these people should be sentenced harshly and posed a significant threat. Several items are reverse-scored: 1, 4, 5, 9, 13, 20. The ages will be separated into 4 groups using Erikson psychosocial stages later adolescence 18-22 years old early adulthood 23-30 years old middle adulthood 31-50 years old and later adulthood 51+ years.

Results will be analysed using quantitative method.

A Multiple regression statistical test will be used during this study. all data will be collected and analysed using SPSS.

Reference

- 1) Cohen, M. A., Rust, R. T., & Steen, S. (2002). Measuring Public Perceptions of Appropriate prison sentences: executive summary. PsycEXTRA Dataset. doi:10.1037/e530062006-001
- 2) HIRSCHFIELD, P. J., & PIQUERO, A. R. (2010). NORMALIZATION AND LEGITIMATION: MODELING STIGMATIZING ATTITUDES TOWARD EX-OFFENDERS. *Criminology*, 48(1), 27-55. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2010.00179.x
- 3) Kjelsberg, E., Skoglund, T. H., & Rustad, A. (2007). Attitudes towards prisoners, as reported by prison inmates, prison employees and college students. *BMC Public Health*, 7(1). doi:10.1186/1471-2458-7-71
- 4) Maruna, S., & King, A. (2009). Once a Criminal, Always a Criminal?: 'Redeemability' and the Psychology of Punitive Public Attitudes. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 15(1-2), 7-24. doi:10.1007/s10610-008-9088-1
- 5) Roberts, J. (2013). Changing attitudes to punishment. doi:10.4324/9781843924272
- 6) Schoepfer, A., Carmichael, S., & Piquero, N. L. (2007). Do perceptions of punishment vary between white-collar and street crimes? *Journal of criminal justice*, 35(2), 151-163. doi: 10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2007.01.003
- 7) Stalans, L. J. (n.d.). Public Opinion About Crime. *Encyclopedia of psychology and law*. doi:10.4135/9781412959537.n253
- 8) Van Kesteren, J. (2009). Public Attitudes and Sentencing Policies Across the World. *European journal on criminal policy and research*, 15(1-2), 25-46. doi:10.1007/s10610-009-9098-7
- 9) Warr, M. (1995). Poll trends: public opinion on crime and punishment. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 59(2), 296. doi:10.1086/269474

Appendix

I am an ambassador for the university and have read and will follow the code of conduct and follow BPS and University guidelines and be professional and act with integrity. The risks to the investigator will be minimal as this study will be done over the internet if I feel like I am at risk I will contact my supervisor for advice. If they want to complain I will give them the university website link for complaints which is <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/governance-management/external-complaints/>

Participants will have the right to withdraw at any time and will be debriefed at the end of the questionnaire. At the beginning of the questionnaire there will be a page saying

By continuing you are giving consent to participate in this study

I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure I cannot be identified (except as might be required by law)

I agree that data gathered in this study may be stored anonymously and securely, and may be used for future research

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

I agree to take part in this study.

Participants will be debriefed at the end and will know beforehand the study is looking at public's perception on criminal offenders. all information is anonymous and will not be showed to anyone else. I will also put helplines e.g.

<http://www.samaritans.org/> in the debrief form in case any of the participant feel emotional distress. They will have my details and my supervisor in case they need to contact me they have a debrief at the ended of survey. Data collected will be kept on a memory stick in a locked cupboard. If they get upset, I will contact my supervisor for advice all information will be numbered no names will be used.

Questionnaires

1. Gender (circle one):

Female

Male

Other: _____

2. Age _____

3. Religion (circle ONE):

A. Christian/Catholic

B. Christian/Non-Catholic

C. Jewish

D. Muslim

E. Other _____

4. What kind of area were you raised in?

A. rural

B. small town

C. suburban

D. urban

E. Other _____

5. Political orientation:

A. very conservative

B. conservative

- C. moderate
- D. liberal
- E. very liberal

6. Sexual orientation:

- A. primarily heterosexual
- B. primarily bisexual
- C. primarily homosexual
- D. Other _____

7. Marital status of parents:

- A. Married
- B. Separated
- C. Divorced
- D. Never married
- E. Other _____

8. Please report an estimate of your household's combined annual income in thousands of pounds:

9. Please circle one of the following to indicate your primary ethnic identity:

- A. African American
- B. Asian American
- C. White, non-Hispanic
- D. White, Hispanic
- E. Middle Eastern
- F. Other: _____

The Perceptions of Organized Crime offenders.

Please respond to each of the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree with it. To answer, please place the appropriate number next to the question, in the space provided.

1 -Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Somewhat Disagree 4- Somewhat Agree 5- Agree 6-Strongly Agree

____1. With support and therapy, someone who committed an Organized Crime can learn to change their behaviour.

____2. People who commit Organized Crime should lose their civil rights (e.g. voting, privacy).

____3. The death penalty should be reintroduced for Organized Crime offenders.

____4. People are far too on edge about the risks posed by Organized Crime offenders.

____5. More Organized Crime offenders should be given sentences in the community.

____6. Organized Crime prefer to stay home alone rather than be around lots of people.

____7. Most Organized Crime offenders do not have close friends.

____8. Organized Crime offenders have difficulty making friends, even if they try really hard.

____9. The prison sentences Organized Crime offenders receive are much too long when compared to the sentence lengths of other crimes.

____10. People who commit Organized Crime should be subject to harsh restrictions on their liberty for the rest of their lives.

____11. Trying to rehabilitate an Organized Crime offender is a waste of time.

____12. Organized Crime offenders should wear tracking devices so their location can be pinpointed at any time.

____13. Only a few offenders with convictions in Organized Crime are dangerous.

____14. Most Organized Crime offenders are unmarried men.

____15. Most Organized Crime offenders commits another crime,

____16. Most Organized Crime offenders keep to themselves.

____17. Organized Crime offender should have all their details announced to local communities.

____18. Convicted Organized Crime offenders should never be released from prison.

_____19. Organized Crime offender will almost always commit further offences.

_____20. Some Organized Crime offender should be allowed to work in schools.

What type of Organized Crime offender were you thinking of?

The Perceptions of White-Collar Crime offenders.

Please respond to each of the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree with it. To answer, please place the appropriate number next to the question, in the space provided.

1 -Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Somewhat Disagree 4- Somewhat Agree 5- Agree 6-Strongly Agree

_____1. With support and therapy, someone who committed an White-Collar Crime can learn to change their behaviour.

_____2. People who commit White-Collar Crime should lose their civil rights (e.g. voting, privacy).

_____3. The death penalty should be reintroduced for White-Collar Crime.

_____4. People are far too on edge about the risks posed by White-Collar Crime offenders.

_____5. More White-Collar Crime offenders should be given sentences in the community.

_____6. White-Collar Crime offenders prefer to stay home alone rather than be around lots of people.

_____7. Most White-Collar Crime offenders do not have close friends.

_____8. White-Collar Crime offenders have difficulty making friends, even if they try really hard.

_____9. The prison sentences White-Collar Crime offenders receive are much too long when compared to the sentence lengths of other crimes.

_____10. People who commit White-Collar Crime should be subject to harsh restrictions on their liberty for the rest of their lives.

_____11. Trying to rehabilitate a White-Collar Crime offender is a waste of time.

_____12. White-Collar Crime offenders should wear tracking devices so their location can be pinpointed at any time.

_____13. Only a few offenders with convictions in White-Collar Crime are dangerous.

_____14. Most White-Collar Crime offenders are unmarried men.

_____15. Most White-Collar Crime offenders commits another crime,

_____16. Most White-Collar Crime offenders keep to themselves.

_____17. White-Collar Crime offender should have all their details announced to local communities.

_____18. Convicted White-Collar Crime offenders should never be released from prison.

_____19. White-Collar Crime offender will almost always commit further offences.

_____20. Some White-Collar Crime offender should be allowed to work in schools.

What type of White-Collar Crime offender were you thinking of?

The Perceptions of Violent Crime offenders.

Please respond to each of the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree with it. To answer, please place the appropriate number next to the question, in the space provided.

**1 -Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Somewhat Disagree 4- Somewhat Agree
5- Agree 6-Strongly Agree**

____1. **With support and therapy, someone who committed a Violent Crime offender can learn to change their behaviour.**

____2. **People who commit Violent Crime offenders should lose their civil rights (e.g. voting, privacy).**

____3. **The death penalty should be reintroduced for Violent Crime offenders.**

____4. **People are far too on edge about the risks posed by Violent Crime offenders.**

____5. **More Violent Crime offenders should be given sentences in the community.**

____6. **Violent Crime offenders prefer to stay home alone rather than be around lots of people.**

- ____7. Most Violent Crime offenders do not have close friends.
- ____8. Violent Crime offenders have difficulty making friends, even if they try really hard.
- ____9. The prison sentences Violent Crime offenders receive are much too long when compared to the sentence lengths of other crimes.
- ____10. People who commit Violent Crime offenders should be subject to harsh restrictions on their liberty for the rest of their lives.
- ____11. Trying to rehabilitate a Violent Crime offender is a waste of time.
- ____12. Violent Crime offenders should wear tracking devices so their location can be pinpointed at any time.
- ____13. Only a few offenders with Violent Crime are dangerous.
- ____14. Most Violent Crime offenders are unmarried men.
- ____15. It's not if a Crimes Against Persons commits another crime, it's when.
- ____16. Most Violent Crime offenders keep to themselves.
- ____17. Violent Crime offenders should have all their details announced to local communities.
- ____18. Convicted Violent Crime offenders should never be released from prison.
- ____19. Violent Crime offender will almost always commit further offences.
- ____20. Some Violent Crime offenders should be allowed to work in schools.

What type of Violent Crime offender were you thinking of?

Submission dates

Draft date: **21.06.19**

Final draft date: **22.07.19**

These dates are not subject to compensatory measures. These dates stand for all level five students.