WALDEN UNIVERSITY
A higher degree. A higher purpose.

Walden University
ScholarWorks

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

2017

Police Officers' Perceptions of Social Media's Involvement on Delinquent Behavior by Juveniles

Rachel K. Wisnefski
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations

Part of the Criminology Commons, and the Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Rachel Wisnefski

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Christina Spoons, Committee Chairperson,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Karel Kurst-Swanger, Committee Member,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Dianne Williams, University Reviewer,
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2017

Abstract

Police Officers' Perceptions of Social Media's Involvement on Delinquent Behavior by

Juveniles

by

Rachel K. Wisnefski

MA, American Military University, 2010

BS, University of South Carolina, 2007

Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

November 2017

Abstract

The rapid growth of social media platforms coupled with the technological savviness of juveniles has led to their delinquent behavior involving social media. Researchers should investigate this phenomenon in order to establish its extent and to minimize the harmful effects this behavior may have. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate and explore potential connections between social media and delinquent acts committed by juvenile offenders through the use of police officers' perceptions of those types of acts. The primary research question focused on determining what the perceptions and experiences of police officers in a southeastern state were relative to the phenomenon and relating policies. The conceptual framework focused on policy analysis through the use of police perceptions relating to social media and juvenile delinquency, with deterrence theory serving as a guide. Ten of 50 officers responded to an anonymous online open-ended questionnaire, and the data were analyzed both inductively and through coded outlines to look for patterns regarding types of delinquency, perceptions of deterrence in present policies and perceived efficacy of educational programs. One hundred percent of the officers responding indicated first-hand experience with cases involving the phenomenon and believed all parts of deterrence theory were lacking in each of the present policies, in general, in order to effectively deter this behavior. Positive social change can be effectuated through creating or further implementing penalties at each level of public policy and ensuring sufficient educational programs exist to inform juveniles of the possible ramifications of these acts. These measures could lead to decreased rates of juvenile delinquency and victimization relative to this phenomenon.

Police Officers' Perceptions of Social Media's Involvement on Delinquent Behavior by

Juveniles

by

Rachel K. Wisnefski

MA, American Military University, 2010

BS, University of South Carolina, 2007

Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

November 2017

Dedication

I dedicate this work to all of my family, whose love and support has made this journey possible. To my parents, thank you for your constant guidance and unconditional love. To my in-laws, thank you for loving me as your own and being supportive of all my endeavors. To my brother, you will always be my first best friend and I am so proud to be your little sister. To my husband, you are the reason this was possible. I can never fully express my gratitude to you for your unwavering support and encouragement. You are truly my better half and I thank you for always loving and centering me. To my daughters, never let any obstacle stand in the way of achieving your goals and always know that you are my greatest achievement in life.

Table of Contents

List of figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Some juveniles have found a new tool to assist with the perpetration of delinquent acts--social media. Social media platforms can serve as a conduit to organize and carry out delinquent acts and sometimes allow juveniles to continue to harm victims. This phenomenon, although very new, deserved close inspection and understanding so that policymakers can assist in diminishing the effects and harm to society. In this study, I examined one southeastern state's policy through the use of an open-ended questionnaire to gather police officers' experiences and perceptions of social media's impact on juvenile delinquent acts. Police perceptions are an important lens for this policy analysis because of officers' intimate knowledge of cases with a social media component as well as their understanding of present policy. The purpose of this study was to explore whether current policy was serving as an effective deterrent for juveniles who may be behaving delinquently via social media.

In Chapter 1, I will provide an overview of the development of social media platforms and their use by juveniles as a tool for delinquent acts as well as the relevant state policy. Social media terms and usage restrictions will also be presented in this chapter. In this chapter, I will provide the background of social media and juvenile acts of delinquency, as well as the purpose, research questions, theoretical foundations, and definitions for important terms. I will also present the assumptions, scope, delimitations, and significance of the study.

Background

Juvenile delinquency, as it relates to social media, has been well studied when focused on cyber bullying; however, it has not been adequately addressed in other areas. Therefore, in this study I explored all types of juvenile deviance as they related to social media. O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011), indicated that crimes committed by juveniles through social media platforms, such as cyber bullying, can lead to criminal indictments of the offenders and psychological damage to victims. To reduce this trend of cyber bullying, as well as other delinquent acts associated with social media, criminal justice officials and public policy organizations must first understand its prevalence and what leads to or contributes to these types of delinquent behavior.

I explored the phenomenon of delinquent acts perpetrated through social media as well as investigated police officers' perceptions of juvenile punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties for acts carried out through social media. To adequately understand police perceptions relating to delinquent acts committed through social media and their related school penalties, I collected data from a school resource officer. Understanding these perceptions of sanctions may help policymakers create an appropriate deterrent for these delinquent acts. Juvenile punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties may or may not be an appropriate deterrent; however, I sought to determine whether they serve in that capacity. Although the southeastern state has laws that criminalize cyber bullying on school grounds and cyber bullying in general, they are vague about cyber bullying perpetrated by juveniles outside of a school setting and the sanctions a school could impose for such an act. Additionally, current juvenile

punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties predominately deal with the act of cyber bullying and are silent on other forms of delinquency related to social media.

The schools in this southeastern state have the authority to enact sanctions on juvenile acts that take place outside of the school setting, and therefore, should consider that authority to determine if they can minimize these actions through implementing or changing their present policies to reflect disciplinary measures for those delinquent behaviors including juvenile acts relating to social media. Within the jurisdiction for this study, the code of student conduct specifically states that the student behavior code and regulations can be enforced anytime and anywhere when a student's behavior has effects on the schools' ability to maintain order and safety. Due to the perceived connection between social media and juvenile delinquency (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011), I explored this area of school policy. Specific laws within this southeastern state require schools to enact antiharassment and bullying policies. The laws also provide that recourse be available to victims in criminal and civil realms. Further, these laws provide that the governing body of each school has authority to seek corporal punishment that it deems just and proper.

This southeastern state's law and policies are silent on the issue of transparency and monitoring though. This silence has resulted in an inability to look at previous data regarding incidents that occurred within schools, which violated these antiharassment and bullying policies. Some states have modified their laws and sanctions to fill this gap; however, this southeastern state has been slow to change. Deterrence theory helps policy scholars understand that modification to the laws could potentially deter juveniles from

acting delinquently. With this framework in mind, I explored whether police officers perceive that juvenile punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties deter delinquent acts associated with social media and what their experiences have been with regard to the level of involvement social media has played in delinquent behaviors committed by juveniles.

Most studies in this area have focused on the victims of cyber bullying and their psychological welfare stemming from the delinquent act (see Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). Researchers have not addressed the perceptions of police on the policies aimed at preventing these acts, which is surprising because police perceptions are important indicators of criminal justice and criminology trends due to their proximity to the issues. Additionally, police officers and school resource officers may be able to provide information about juvenile delinquency relating to social media that may not reach the threshold of punishment but that could provide additional support for testing deterrence theory.

The majority of research and academic literature related to this juvenile delinquency phenomenon has focused on the types of crimes committed and the effects the crimes have on the victims. Hinduja and Patchin (2006, 2010, 2011) conducted numerous case studies in which juveniles were reviewed regarding social media use, cyber bullying, and trends in juvenile social media usage. Their analyses revealed that the trend toward juvenile delinquent acts on social media continues to grow and that this trend has yet to be addressed successfully to reduce its incidence. Juvenile delinquent acts

not only affect institutions and adults but other juveniles as well. Beran, Rinaldi, Bickham, and Rich (2012) found that one-fourth of college-age students polled were victims of cyber bullying or harassment. Delinquent acts committed by juveniles through social media platforms have included cyber bullying, flash mob or rob organization, and gang activity (Hinduja & Patchin, 2006, 2010, 2011; Sela-Shayovitz, 2012).

Despite the previous research, which indicates that delinquent acts on social media by juveniles are a growing trend, no studies have been conducted to determine whether juvenile justice sanctions are an appropriate means of deterrence for juvenile delinquency through social media. The perceptions of juveniles regarding sanctions is important for public policy professionals to understand how to effectively evaluate the success (or lack thereof) of these deterrents. The perceptions of the police and school resource officers are a natural starting point for research on this topic because of their proximity to incidents of juvenile delinquency within the criminal justice and school systems. Analysis of officers' perceptions and experiences can provide a clearer lens through which public policymakers and criminal justice organizations can focus their attention and resources to deter juveniles from this form of delinquency. Additionally, the analysis can provide guidance concerning the creation of policy to fight this form of juvenile delinquency, and therefore, create positive social change.

Problem Statement

Technological advances, particularly the invention of the Internet, have led to the creation of new outlets for criminals to perpetrate offenses. Approximately 34% of the world's population uses the Internet, and these percentages have grown by over 550%

from 2000 to 2012 (InternetWorldStats.com, 2012). With the creation of these technologies, juveniles have gradually been exposed to these advances at younger ages, and this exposure has led to computer and Internet savvy juveniles who are more capable of carrying out delinquent acts through social media and the World Wide Web (Sela-Shayovitz, 2012). Given the ability of juveniles to more easily carry out delinquent acts through the World Wide Web, and particularly social media, criminal justice organizations and public policymakers should examine the factors that may lead to this form of juvenile delinquency.

Public policymakers must examine whether current policy adequately responds to this growing trend. Responses to juvenile delinquency through social media and the Internet have predominately leaned toward education for prevention, more specifically prevention of cyber bullying (see Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2013; Chistofides, Muise, and Desmarais, 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). However, cyber bullying is only one element of this phenomenon. To maintain the protected class of juveniles while investigating this growing trend, researchers should also use other sources of data. One rich source of data was police officers' perceptions, which included unique experiences with and proximity to juvenile offenders. In this study, I questioned police and resource officers from the southeast region of the United States to explore their perceptions regarding the rising trend of juvenile delinquent acts on social media.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the association between social media and delinquent acts committed by juvenile offenders through police perceptions of those acts. Using a public policy lens, I also investigated police perceptions of public policy as it related to juvenile delinquency and social media, using deterrence theory for analysis. My public policy focus in this study contextualized police perceptions to understand whether current policy for juveniles regarding offenses committed on social media is a deterrent.

Multiple types of juvenile delinquency have been traced back to social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, WorldStarHipHop, and Instagram (Hinduja & Patchin, 2006, 2010, 2011; Sela-Shayovitz, 2012). In this study, I defined juvenile offenses related to social media platforms as cyber-bullying, stalking, gang activity, drug dealing, cyber hacking, organizing crime, truancy, cheating, and sexual harassment. I sought to uncover the perceptions of police officers in a southeastern state regarding current juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties against juveniles for these types of deviant behaviors. Under this southeastern state's code of laws, a juvenile is a person less than 17 years of age, and juvenile cases stay within the family court system.

Currently, the southeastern state's juvenile justice laws do not specifically or completely address juvenile justice status punishments relating to these types of offenses. For example, the juvenile justice laws do cover instances of ungovernability, but do not address ungovernability connected or organized through social media, such as mass

walkouts or flash robberies. This criminal connection to social media could be seen by the justice system as increased intent for delinquency and deserves appropriate dissection.

Due to this southeastern states' juvenile justice laws being silent on these connections between social media activity and the deviant offense, juveniles may be charged under this states' Criminal Code differently depending on the severity of the charge. One offender may be charged as an adult in the case of flash robberies, or conversely, only reprimanded through their respective school administration for lesser offenses such as mass walkouts. The current political environment in this southeastern state is pushing towards additional juvenile justice status punishments for these types of delinquent acts by juveniles.

Currently, most repercussions stemming from juvenile offenses relating to social media are given out by school districts, where the rules and regulations are not always the same or uniformly enforced. This southeastern state requires that each school district implement its own policy about *bullying* and most delinquent acts involving social media brought to the attention of schools have been attributed to this offense. These policies do not always include other forms of juvenile offenses relating to social media and vary by school district and school. In this study, I hypothesized that police officers' perceptions would reflect that current juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties do not significantly deter juveniles from offending in this manner and that there is a connection between social media and juvenile delinquent acts because of a lack of stringent, deterring policy.

Research Questions (RQs)

I crafted the research questions (RQs) for this study based on known trends in juvenile offenses committed through social media, such as cyber-bullying, harassment, drug and sex crimes and other such delinquent acts mentioned earlier. The central questions surrounded the police officers' experiences with juvenile delinquents and their perceptions of current and potential juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties (or the lack thereof) for juvenile offenses stemming from and perpetrated on social media. A definition of deterrence theory was provided to the officers within the questionnaire. The central RQ was:

RQ1: What are the perceptions and experiences of a southeastern state's police officers related to juvenile acts of delinquency relating to social media?

In the questionnaires given to the police officer participants, the use of open-ended questions provided the most information for this qualitative research study and analysis. The research subquestions in this study were:

RQ2: Do police officers believe that existing juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties deter juveniles from behaving delinquently with social media? Why or why not?

RQ3: What parts of deterrence theory (severity, celerity, and certainty) do police officers believe are not being addressed through the juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties? How so? (Please refer to the definition of deterrence theory contained within this questionnaire).

RQ4: In what ways do police officers believe that current education for juveniles regarding juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties relating to juvenile offenses committed on or related to social media are sufficient or not?

Theoretical Foundation: Deterrence Theory

The conceptual framework of this study centered on policy analysis relating to social media and juvenile delinquency, with my focus centering on deterrence theory. Specifically, I focused on the police perceptions and experiences with juvenile culture as it relates to social media platforms. My choice of a policy analysis stemmed from the need to understand if current policy is an effective means of deterring juveniles from committing deviant acts through social media. Concurrently, my analysis sought to reveal if the lack of policy has contributed to the trend toward increasingly common juvenile offenses committed on or related to social media.

To determine if a policy is effective, I focused on deterrence theory. Deterrence theory divides into two subsets: general and specific. General deterrence theory seeks to utilize sanctions to punish a general section of a population, while specific deterrence theory seeks to deter a specific part of the population (Beccaria, 1963; Bentham, 1948). I considered both general and specific deterrent policies in this study.

Additionally, there are three parts of deterrence theory that must be present for the policy to be effective as a deterrent: severity, certainty, and celerity (Beccaria, 1963; Bentham, 1948). In order to meet these three criteria, a punishment must be severe enough to deter an actor, certain to the actor, and swift (celerity) to the actor (Beccaria,

1963; Bentham, 1948). As I gathered data towards answering the RQs, one goal of mine was to determine what, if any, elements of deterrence theory were lacking in present policy according to the perceptions of the officers questioned. I utilized Nagin's (2013) belief that a nexus must be found between perceived risk and actual sanctions for deterrents to be effective as the predominate basis for this research design. In applying deterrence theory as the theoretical foundation and police perceptions of the juveniles' evaluation of the potential risk involved in delinquent acts, I believed that a nexus would be exposed with current sanction policies. From that nexus and understanding of the efficacy of sanction policies, public policy professionals will be able to adequately respond to this phenomenon.

Based on an exhaustive literature review (presented in Chapter 2 of this study) that highlights current studies on policies about juveniles and deterrence theory, juvenile delinquency trends, social media trends, and police officer perception studies, this means of policy analysis has a strong theoretical and practical policy analysis framework and fits well into the current conversation about the trend toward juvenile delinquent acts on social media. A public policy framework guided my selection of the research method and data collection techniques. I focused the RQs of this study on obtaining perceptions of police officers regarding juvenile offenses relating to social media. Specifically, the RQs honed in on the officers' perceptions of the current policy efficacy related to these juvenile offenses relating to social media to examine whether or not these perceptions demonstrated whether deterrence theory was at work.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I gathered data from confidential questionnaires given to police officers throughout a southeastern state within the United States and used this data to test the research hypothesis. Questionnaires were designed with open-ended questions to allow for clear, complete answers, allowing for the collection of ample data regarding juvenile delinquency relating to social media and police perceptions of the acts. These questionnaires were contextualized by existing juvenile policy (and also lack thereof) to provide a base of understanding for the current juvenile justice environment.

I used inductive logic and Atlas.ti software to develop patterns and categorize information regarding police and their perceived perceptions of delinquency and juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions and school penalties relating to social media and the Internet. Questionnaire responses from police officers in the southeastern state were collected to assess their perceptions of a trend in the role of social media in juvenile delinquency as well as their perceptions of policy relating to the issue. The questionnaire served as the guide for understanding police perceptions.

With this expert-reviewed, strategically structured, and open-ended questionnaire, I primarily sought to uncover police perceptions regarding this phenomenon and determine if current juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties deter juveniles from acting delinquently. Additionally, by using the questionnaires I sought to estimate (based on police knowledge) what percentage of juveniles are knowledgeable of these current juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties and if police officers believed less or more severe

regulations are necessary to deter delinquent acts on social media among these juveniles. I believed that these questionnaires from one locality would glean that juveniles are not deterred from acting delinquently based on current regulations in the southeastern state.

This jurisdiction is representative of larger and similar school districts in the southeastern region of the United States, who face the same issues on a smaller or larger scale. The results of this study will allow public policy professionals to further investigate what can be done to deter juveniles from this delinquent behavior. The findings of this study can apply to other localities and high schools within the country because of the universality of current state regulations related to these forms of juvenile offenses.

The population of this study consisted of police officers from a southeastern district. The sample included police officers who volunteered and whose administrations allowed them to participate in the study. I had a sample size goal of approximately 10 police officers across different races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and genders. Upon approval from the police officers' administration, the police officers were asked if they wished to volunteer in the study. Questionnaires were administered using a set of self-created, expert-reviewed, open-ended questions to create dialogue but also to maintain question continuity and eliminate room for bias (see Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The questionnaires were structured using open-ended questions based on guidance and templates from the Pew Research Center (2016) and similar police perception questionnaires. I developed the questions following a review of literature sources that provided examples of current juvenile delinquency trends. Additionally, current laws and regulations of the southeastern state and the respective school district within which the

police officers operated were used as a guide for developing questions. These trends, laws, and regulations were assumed to be known to the police officers to determine if the trends in this form of delinquency are present in this jurisdiction and what the police officers' knowledge and sentiments regarding the laws and regulations were concerning deterrence. Additional information regarding the creation of the questionnaire will be provided in Chapter 3 and the questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

My expert-reviewed interview questions centered on the personal experiences and perceptions of the police officers related to juvenile justice policies as well as their knowledge regarding specific instances of juvenile offenses relating to social media. The study design included open-ended questions to allow the officers to discuss and disseminate their experiences freely. Therefore, this questionnaire first served as the primary knowledge and information source surrounding this perceived phenomenon. The questionnaire served, secondarily, as an analysis of whether present and proposed juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties deter juveniles from committing delinquent acts through social media platforms.

My use of questionnaires in this study was appropriate based on this research method's ability to provide both ample information on the phenomenon as well as providing anonymity to the police officers that participated. The combination of these factors elicited open and frank responses from participants. I compiled the resulting questionnaire data, and then categorized and coded the data based on the participants' responses. The open-ended questions presented to participants created narrative data to analyze. Data from the questionnaires were codified through computer software (Atlas.ti)

using common keywords and phrases from the participants. For example, data about the types of delinquent acts being perpetrated and what social media platforms were being used in these offenses were compiled, categorized, and coded. The codified data were then analyzed for themes and potential outliers. These themes were found through the use of hand coding of information derived from the data sets, if coding provided by computer software was deemed insufficient or too vague. These themes revealed additional areas requiring research and I appropriately reported for future scholars. Additionally, the codified information and any sentiments provided that can be used in quotation format were used as evidentiary support for examples of juvenile offenses relating to social media platforms. More detailed and specific information, such as the type of analysis conducted and software utilized, will be provided in Chapter 3.

Deterrence theory holds that when rational actors are knowledgeable regarding potential ramifications from poor decisions, they are less likely to engage in those acts that will lead to unfavorable penalties (Beccaria, 1963; Bentham 1948). It was also important to study whether, in the absence of a juvenile justice status offense, criminal sanction, or school penalty, the juveniles are or are not deterred. It was important because if juveniles are not significantly deterred in the absence of any sanctions or penalties then policy makers could be able to determine appropriate implementation of policies to attempt deterrence. In this study, I sought to determine if police officers believed that juveniles, when acting as independent individuals knowledgeable of existing juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions and school penalties regarding delinquency and social media, will or will not continue to engage in these delinquent behaviors.

Furthermore, I sought to determine if these police officers believed that current juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties are enough to deter delinquency. In so doing, I explored a previously under researched and developing area of juvenile delinquency. By obtaining police officer perceptions, public policy professionals may be able to develop punitive and nonpunitive measures to address this growing phenomenon.

Definitions

Criminal sanctions: For purposes of this study, criminal sanctions include all those punishments under the southeastern state's code of laws which are referred out of family court and into adult court jurisdiction. Specific sanctions of pertinent importance can be found in under the state's computer crimes laws.

Delinquency: Any act or combination of actions, involving or relating to social media, that would be defined as a punishable act with criminal sanction under the southeastern state's code of laws.

Juvenile: Under the southeastern state's laws and for purposes of this study, a juvenile is a person less than 17 years of age.

Juvenile justice status punishments: An offense punishable under the southeastern state's Juvenile Justice Code.

School penalties: Penalties covered under the same school jurisdiction as the police officers that participate in the study.

Social media: All social media platforms and applications as of 2016, which includes, but is not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, Whisper,

YikYak, Kik, Vine, Tinder, Omegle, ChatRoulette, Pokemon GO! and Poof. User agreements and terms and conditions for these sites are attached as Appendix D of this study.

Assumptions

I only made a few assumptions concerning this study. The first assumption was that the police officer participants were knowledgeable of the current laws concerning juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties in their jurisdiction as well as the general concept of deterrence theory. Additionally, the concept of deterrence theory is commonly known within the field of law enforcement and is taught in police academies (Wadman, 2009). Therefore, I believed that this assumption would not damage the study. This assumption was based on the necessity of these officers to know this information in order to carry out their job functions efficiently.

Another assumption was that officers had encountered or had knowledge of incidents involving juvenile delinquency related to social media. While incidents regarding this type of delinquency have made national headlines in recent years, it was unknown at the time whether these types of incidents were occurring and, if so, at what rate in the locality that was studied. Lastly, I assumed that juveniles can appreciate the ramifications from present policy relating to this phenomenon and their actions. This is a pillar of deterrence theory in that actors are assumed to be rational and able to weigh the cost versus benefit of punishment and crime.

Scope and Delimitations

I chose the specific scope of this research study due to the continuous evolution of social media application, accessible to anyone with an Internet-ready device. Those pertinent social media platforms or applications were listed in the definitions section of this chapter. Along with the creation and increase of these types of applications comes the potential for abuse of the same. In this study, I viewed these delinquent acts through the lens of deterrence theory in an attempt to measure if the current policies serve as a deterrent for such abuse.

I studied the juvenile population through the use of questionnaires with police officers. This data collection method created a boundary that protected the juvenile population, since police officer perceptions and experiences were the unit of analysis and not the perceptions and the experiences of the juveniles themselves. However, the boundary is largely remedied because of the intimate information that police officers had regarding specific instances of juvenile delinquency and the related juveniles' experiences. Social learning theory was considered, but not used due to the potential for its inclusion to broaden the scope of the study unnecessarily. The results of this study may be applied to other jurisdictions with similar demographics.

Limitations

Because both the victims and perpetrators of many of these acts of delinquency are members of a protected class of individuals, the need to conceal these individuals' identities was necessary. Using the questionnaires of police officers provided protection to these individuals because no identifying information was solicited. Any supporting or

supplemental information came from publicly disseminated information, such as news reports or criminal records, if necessary, and was redacted of identifying information. This information already underwent redaction due to departmental requirements, and therefore, would assist in protecting and eliminating any potential breach to the subjects.

The ethical implications of this study largely stemmed from the questionnaires the police officers completed. To minimize those ethical concerns, I obtained a Letter of Cooperation from the police department and each officer who completed a questionnaire was a voluntary participant. Their consent was implied by their participation and completion of the questionnaire, and a consent statement was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire reflecting the same. Also, at the beginning of the questionnaire, I presented a description of the study; information regarding the participant's rights to decline participation at any time before, during, or after the questionnaire; and information about keeping confidentiality.

Further, since these questionnaires included subject matter about a protected class of individuals, it was important that the data be protected. Police officers were informed of the confidentiality of this study. The police officers needed to feel open and free to reveal perceptive information for me to glean usable data for analysis. Therefore, the ability for police officers to remain anonymous allowed the officers the freedom to disseminate this information. The police officers should be provided with a copy of their department's respective policy (if one exists) on participating in studies for future use and reference. It is important for officers to be aware of their departments policies so that they can make informed decisions relative to their participation in studies.

This study may have been limited in that the questionnaires only provided the experiences of police officers and not those of the victims or perpetrators themselves. Therefore, the information gathered stemmed from a secondary source of the delinquency. However, these officers were able to provide intimate and pertinent information about their perceptions of the delinquent acts as well as their perceptions about current policy regarding the same. Their perceptions regarding the efficacy of policy are what predominately drove the study, and therefore, I still saw the utilization of the officers as a useful tool in policy analysis.

Another potential limitation stemmed from the fact that the information gleaned from the police officers was only information from known or reported delinquency and did not allow for unreported incidents. Unreported incidents may only be revealed through investigation with primary subjects, but due to the subjects being a protected class of individuals, this was not a prudent avenue for this research. The need to first reveal a potential gap or inefficiency in policy should be found, if it existed, before subjecting this protected class of individuals to a research study regarding the same.

Additionally, a potential limitation existed relating to the questioning of police officers about only acts reported under the juvenile justice and criminal codes. However, in this study I used a questionnaire from a school resource officer as well. This school resource officer was also privy to incidents that did not reach the justice system but where school penalties were explored and instituted instead.

Lastly, another potential limitation could be seen in the transferability or applicability of the study to other regions. This stems from the demographic and

population in the locality in which this study was performed being different from that of

other regions. However, I believed that the study was transferable within similar

demographic and populations. Biases could potentially stem from the study participants,

and therefore, measures were taken to ensure that biases were removed or minimized. To

do so, I tried to use document review as secondary data. These documents were to

include any supplemental materials available including, but not limited, to news articles,

police reports, and school incident reports. These documents were to be redacted

according to department policy and were only to be presented if there was a clear

mention of a case that could be documented based on an officer's narrative response to

the questionnaire.

Significance

In this study, I sought to reveal if current juvenile justice status punishments,

criminal sanctions, and school penalties, as they now exist on a state and local level, are

an effective deterrent for juveniles from committing delinquent acts through social media

platforms. Deterrence theory, formulated by Beccaria (1963) and Bentham (1948), states

that punishment is a deterrence for individuals to act in an undesirable manner and is split

into two types: specific and general. Specific deterrence seeks to prevent future crimes by

teaching the criminal the consequences or punishment for their specific crime in order to

deter them from committing the crime again (Beccaria, 1963; Bentham 1948). General

deterrence focuses on turning the criminals into examples, through their punishment in

order to deter others from committing the same deviant actions (Hagan, Gillis, &

Brownfield, 1996).

Commonly, criminal justice professionals believe that deterrence theory can be applied to juveniles the same way it is applied to adults (Paternoster, 1987). However, in this study I sought to determine if deterrence theory is affected with respect to juveniles and social media delinquency because of the level of anonymity that social media platforms provide to juveniles. This anonymity encourages delinquency through social media platforms among juveniles, while also preventing juvenile sanction policies from effectively deterring these types of delinquent acts. The unique relationship between social media, anonymity, and deterrence is one reason why exploration of this phenomenon was vital. The results of this study should provide important information from police officers regarding this trend toward delinquency on social media. Additionally, by revealing the perceptions of police officers regarding current policies on this form of delinquency, I sought to provide a guide for the evolution of policies aimed to prevent juvenile delinquency relating to social media and to further protect this class of citizens.

Summary

Public policy about juveniles continues to be a sensitive and important area of concern for policy analysts and the criminal justice system. Additionally, continuous social media evolution coupled with its frequent use by juveniles, as well as the potential for anonymity during the commission of delinquent acts, emphasizes the need for a closer examination of policy. Utilizing the perceptions and experiences of police officers that work most closely with juveniles who may be participating in this trend revealed potential policy weaknesses. The results of this study have the potential to create more

dialogue about this trend and address the need for policy choices that will provide positive social change among this protected class of individuals.

In the following chapter, I will discuss previous studies regarding juvenile delinquency, and specifically, its connection to deterrence theory. Additional discussion will center around police perceptions used as a lens for analyzing public policy. I will also analyze and discuss previous studies on the topic of juvenile delinquency and social media, of which there are very few, about their comparability to this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In recent years, a trend in juvenile delinquency through social media platforms has emerged. The purpose of this qualitative and phenomenological study was to uncover any connection between social media and juvenile delinquency through the use of police perception questionnaires on the phenomenon. In this literature review, I will highlight known policy approaches and research on deterrence theory as it is applied to juveniles, including social media and delinquency trends. In so doing, I will present gaps in the literature regarding deterrence theory as it is applied to juveniles who offend on social media and cybercrime in general. Further, in the literature review I will provide information relative to the use of police officers' perceptions as a tool to examine public policy and to gain insight on difficult to understand criminal justice and juvenile justice topics such as this one. All literature examined was published within the past 5 years to provide the most relevant and recent information available. This is specifically important for this topic due to the ever-changing nature of social media. The literature search strategy employed for the literature review will follow.

Literature Search Strategy

The search engines I used included Google Scholar and were accessed through Walden University. The library databases used included criminal justice and legal databases such as ProQuest Criminal Justice, Oxford Criminology Bibliographies, SAGE Premier, Political Science Complete, LegalTrac, and LexisNexis Academic. The search terms used included but were not limited to: *juvenile justice and deterrence, juvenile*

justice and deterrence theory," cybercrime and deterrence, cybercrime and deterrence theory, juvenile delinquency and cybercrime, juvenile delinquency and internet, juvenile delinquency and social media, police perceptions and social media, police perceptions and public policy, police perceptions and cybercrime, police perceptions and juvenile delinquency, and *police perceptions and social media.*

These search terms generated literature relevant to this, but I found no study that illustrated an identical match to this one. More specifically, no literature found related to the efficacy of current public policy (in the southeast or otherwise) serving as a deterrent for juvenile delinquency related to social media. Relevant studies surrounding the areas of juvenile delinquency and deterrence theory, juvenile Internet and social media behaviors, and police perceptions on public policy provided the most information and served as a guide for this study. A litany of information was present on the topic of cyber-bullying; however, this information is only a small component of the overall perceived trend in online juvenile delinquency relative to social media. Therefore, I included literature from the leading scholars in cyber-bullying.

Framework

Deterrence theory is a classic criminal justice theory made prevalent by Beccaria (1963) and Bentham (1948). Though long studied, deterrence theory remains elusive in many aspects with regard to its true applicability. The theory holds that actors (potential deviants) will weigh the punishments against the crime to decide if the punishment outweighs the crime (Beccaria, 1963; Bentham, 1948). Several subparts arise within the theory that actors consider. These subparts are the severity of the punishment, the

certainty of the punishment, and the celerity (swiftness) of the punishment (Beccaria, 1963; Bentham, 1948; Schneider, 1990). In weighing all these elements, deterrence theory presupposes that an actor will not commit the deviant act if these parts working in concert outweigh the benefit of the crime (Beccaria, 1963; Bentham, 1948).

Akers (2013) believes that perceptual studies are one of the most effective ways with which to measure if a public policy is serving as an effective deterrent. A perceptual deterrence study is one in which the experiences and perceptions of individuals are collected and analyzed in order to determine what that population believes regarding a deterrent (Paternoster & Bachman, 2012). I will discuss other perceptual deterrence studies later on in this chapter. Deterrence theory has long been applied to criminal justice topics and other related disciplines. A summation of research will follow where I will highlight the large expanse and application of deterrence theory to criminal justice and other disciplines. Following this general overview, a review of deterrence theory as applied to juveniles will be provided.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Deterrence Theory and Broad Application

In looking at the literature on the most current and the broader applications of deterrence theory, I found that deterrence theory has seen a recent resurgence in its application in many disciplines. One such area is terrorism (Wilner, 2015), and the theory has also moved into corporate realms with the employee misuse of technology (D'Arcy & Devaraj, 2012). Wilner (2015) found that deterrence theory has seen an increase in study and application to terrorism and security matters in the post-9/11 era. With this

application came an expansion of deterrence theory that is uniquely attributable to terrorism due to the complexities of state and nonstate actors. Additionally, Wilner found that while deterrence theory serves a practical purpose in its application to public policies created in response to terrorism, those applications bring a new set of issues that require in-depth analysis in order for effective application. These new issues, caused by the actors in terrorism, create an opportunity for deterrence theory to be investigated anew by public policy professionals (Wilner, 2015).

Another area where deterrence theory is finding resurgence is in the corporate realm (D'Arcy & Devaraj, 2012). D'Arcy and Devaraj looked at deterrence theory application in a corporate setting whereby companies sought to deter their employees from engaging in technology and Internet misuse. Policies based on formal and informal sanctions were developed in an attempt to deter employees from misusing company technology during work hours (D'Arcy & Devaraj, 2012). Companies could reduce this perceived trend by utilizing deterrence theory to create a corporate environment where employees were educated on the formal and informal sanctions for technological misuse (D'Arcy & Devaraj, 2012).

I found an additional area examined, which is particularly applicable to this study, in the utilization of deterrence theory in the creation of school sanctions. Rees and Zimmerman (2014) looked towards peer relationships and deterrence theory in seeking to determine if formal school sanctions were effective at deterring juveniles. Additionally, they looked at the indirect influence of strict sanctions on peer relationships and deviant behavior. They determined that harsh formal sanctions, while possibly not a specific

deterrent, did serve as a general deterrent in that it affected peer relationships and deviant associations (Rees & Zimmerman, 2014).

Rees and Zimmerman's (2014) work points to an important marker that suggests that while a sanction may not serve as the specific deterrent that was intended, it may still serve as a general deterrent. This point is specifically important when looking towards the specific actors that are targeted. In the Rees and Zimmerman work, the focus on juveniles and school sanctions highlights that sanctions are effective in ways that are not always formally intended. Therefore, this study was vital in that I sought to determine if current policies were serving an effective role in deterring delinquency and inappropriate behavior by juveniles with regard to a social media influence. Present policies may or may not be serving their specific intended goals, but they may be meeting unintended general deterrent needs to address phenomenon.

Deterrence Theory and Juveniles

Jordan and Myers (2011) sought to determine if juveniles who receive waivers to adult court from juvenile justice systems are also deterred in future criminal acts. In seeking to do so, the authors hypothesized that deterrence would be affected based on these waivers being obtained. They determined that only one large difference presented itself between juvenile and adult court with regard to deterrence theory. In testing this concept, the authors looked at three specific counties in the state of Pennsylvania, where 345 juvenile offenders received waivers to adult court. These juveniles were then split into two groups for analysis. The authors decided that distinctions between the groups might be difficult to determine due to the ability of youth offenders to appeal their waiver

to adult court. Therefore, the authors used a specific tool to control the groups and remove this problem. This choice gave credence to the study and provided solid support for the findings. The authors found that, while punishment does tend to be more severe in adult court systems, both systems appear to be equal in the application of the law. Additionally, juvenile courts do tend to be more judicially swift in processing and swiftness in processing is an important component of a public policy serving as an effective deterrent (Jordan & Myers, 2011).

Loughran et al. (2015) looked to the Pathways to Desistance study, which evaluated juvenile justice trends of over 1,300 juvenile offenders for 7 years' postconviction. From their study, the researchers concluded that the juvenile justice policies that were specific in types of offenses were most effective in deterring juvenile offenders. Additionally, they found that post arrest juveniles increased their risk-perception of juvenile justice policies, and therefore, increased the chance of policies serving as effective deterrents for those individuals. Loughran et al. effectively pointed out the gap in current literature regarding the efficacy of juvenile justice policies as deterrents for juveniles even though deterrence theory is a foundational theory of juvenile and criminal justice systems.

One of the problems of the Loughran et al. (2015), Pathways to Desistance study are that these offenders were predominately male and of ethnic backgrounds. It is unclear if their study would be applicable to the specific juvenile justice policies that I examined in this study due to the potentially unrepresentative sample in the Pathways study. Also, the researchers studied serious juvenile offenders who had committed felony crimes, and

the majority of the delinquent acts (with a few exceptions) covered within this study are not felonies.

One important idea stemming from the Loughran et al. (2015) evaluation of Pathways was that deterrence can be subjective based on the person and their knowledge of the policies. Therefore, Loughran et al. held that the ability of a policy to serve as an effective deterrent depends on the individual, their knowledge of the policy, and their perception about how the punishment would be applied to them if they offended. Loughran et al. continually touched on previous studies that have found that juveniles are more likely deterred when they are aware of the severity of punishment and when the punishment is not ambiguous. They further noted that the biggest hurdle in ensuring that a policy provides effective deterrent is in the education of juveniles regarding both the policy and the severity of punishment. It is also important to note that the efficacy of policies serving as deterrents varies in different areas, making them difficult to apply widely. This conclusion may assist policy makers in creating or modifying existing policy to include an education component, to ensure that the policy serves as an effective deterrent for juveniles from committing these delinquent acts.

Royster (2012) examined the differences in scholarly research and opinion regarding the popular Scared Straight deterrence program for juveniles. Royster sought to highlight the discrepancies from the project's initial successes and the subsequent mixed reviews on the program. The author found that some subsequent studies on the program had successes and many were seen as failures; Royster found that those failures were caused by an increase in peer influence. Unfortunately, much of the literature, including

that of Royster, focuses on recidivism, and therefore, only on the deterring effects of policy post incarceration or arrest of juveniles. This study sought to determine if policy serves as an effective deterrent prior to a first offense.

Types of Delinquency

In the following subsections, I will provide a review of current literature relative to the most commonly and damaging types of delinquency relating to social media. These subsections are pertinent to understanding the broad reach and types of delinquency that are occurring. Following the types of delinquency will be a discussion on the impacts of victimization.

Cyber-bullying

Hinduja and Patchin (2011), leading researchers in cyber-bullying and juvenile online behavior, conducted a study wherein they surveyed middle school-aged children regarding their traditional and nontraditional bullying experiences. The authors sought to compare these responses against the general strain theory to determine if this theory could explain bullying behaviors. Their results revealed that approximately one-third of the respondents had engaged in traditional bullying and that 21% of the respondents engaged in cyber-bullying. The researchers concluded that general strain theory did apply to both traditional and nontraditional forms of bullying, since the respondents who indicated strain also indicated higher levels of anger and instances of bullying behavior.

One important note from this study is the representation in the sample used. The study sampled students from a very large school district in the United States; however, it appears as if the ethnicity and gender of respondents ranged greatly so that the sample

may not have been representative. Additionally, the age gap for the respondents was from approximately 10–16 years of age with the majority of respondents being around 12 years of age. This is significant, since the researchers concluded that the older the respondents were the more likely they were to engage in bullying behaviors. This conclusion could be disputed since the respondents' age were not representative enough of a sample to come to this result. Hinduja et al.'s (2011) study findings could indicate that older (high school age) students are more likely to be victimized by this form of bullying.

Prior research focuses on a wide range of juvenile delinquent acts and the use of social media platforms by juveniles; however, the only studies that have been conducted that relate the two are those that involve cyber-bullying. The majority of these cyber-bullying studies focus on the effects that this new form of bullying has on its victims, as well as the potential causes for aggressors to act. However, this focus leaves a gap in the literature regarding other forms of juvenile delinquency relating to social media, as well as analysis regarding alleged connections, causes, and psychological effects on the victims of these acts. This gap also leaves room for this study, which explored the ability of public policy to serve as an effective deterrent for this form of juvenile delinquency (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011).

Cassidy, Faucher, and Jackson (2013) reviewed current literature since 2006 on cyber-bullying in various contexts. These contexts include traditional versus cyber-bullying analysis, victim and offender impact, as well as policy reviews. The authors sought to provide a thorough investigation into current cyber-bullying literature, concluding that many authors differ in their belief about whether cyber-bullying is

increasing among youth or whether an increase appears apparent due to hypersensitive media coverage of the topic. Regardless, these authors suggest that understanding and educating others regarding the harms from this phenomenon is most important. The article sought to inform educators, policy makers, and parents alike about the issue of cyber-bullying, as well as those areas that lack understanding and require further research. Researchers concluded that traditional and cyber-bullying had multiple similarities: both caused psychological harm to victims, were usually carried out by individuals that the victim knew, and most offenses stemmed from lack of supervision.

Cyber-bullying differed from traditional bullying because of a lack of physical contact, which created a unique situation where perpetrators are unable to gauge their victim's reaction to the bullying. Additionally, victims may not always know who the perpetrator is and, therefore, this new form of bullying creates a sense of anonymity. The authors argue that there was not enough evidence to offer the most effective coping strategies for victims of cyber-bullying. These victims typically do not bring bullying offenses to the attention of adults, but they do tell their peers. This indicates the use of non-active coping strategies. Active coping strategies involve the victim dealing with the bullying either by confronting the bully or by attempting to stop the bullying through methods such as blocking the bullying through technical means on social media. This was an important piece of information for this study because it highlights a potential limitation as the victims are not reporting their victimization and, therefore, underreporting of this delinquency may be present.

Their article predominately looked at this phenomenon from a community perspective with a goal of educating parents and educators. This goal serves to inform those at home and in schools of the current trend in cyber-bullying so that they may effectively handle instances of the offense. Unfortunately, the article does not make in-depth reference to any criminal justice efforts or policies. This article would prove most useful in providing information with regard to rehabilitation services for juvenile offenders and victim coping strategies due to its victim and offender impact coverage.

However, though the study lacks a public policy focus, it can assist public policy makers by providing an outline of the type of collaborative effort with community organizations that might be necessary to combat this problem effectively. It could also provide law enforcement and legal officials with information on how to handle instances of cyber-bullying, including how to properly handle victims and offenders. Additionally, the study may help focus on community and police department education regarding cyber-bullying and its impact on victims and communities. Their review sought to understand the phenomenon on a much broader scale and had the goal of providing information that would predominately assist parents and schools in dealing with this phenomenon.

Unfortunately, it did not focus on literature or ways in which to deter juveniles from committing these delinquent acts but rather focused on a post-offending viewpoint. Researchers suggests several directions for future researchers and educators interested in combating the growing phenomenon of cyber-bullying. One such direction was studying the way the many different social media platforms create different types of cyber-

bullying and the demographics for most likely offenders. When recognized and addressed, these differences will lead to the successful implementation of programs to combat cyber-bullying (Cassidy et al. 2013).

Chistofides, Muise, and Desmarais (2012) studied the reaction of juveniles when they experience bullying as well as other negative interactions through their Facebook accounts. The most important element of the article to this study focuses on the response of victims of bullying online. Additionally, the article reviews the privacy controls available to young Facebook users with regard to its ease of navigability, controls, and effectiveness. Researchers concluded that while there are some privacy controls available for juveniles on Facebook, these privacy controls are largely flawed because they still provide outlets for initial or continued bad experiences and do not thoroughly protect juveniles. This study also looked at the different types of negative experiences juveniles face through Facebook and what methods they used for coping with them. This information proves insightful as educators or policy makers create victim coping programs for victims of offenses on social media. Additionally, the study could provide assistance in helping victims to add privacy protections to their online profiles for the future. It is important that public policy and criminal justice professionals are aware of the ways in which juveniles can protect themselves online, so that they can serve as educators to potential or current juvenile victims.

These researchers also sought to evaluate online education materials available to juveniles as well as looking at the closely interconnected relationship of police agencies. The researchers focused on the information given to youth regarding the dangers of

online activity (and the portion of that information that related to social media platforms) as well as the dual relationship of law enforcement to both educate and oversee this issue. They also looked at the partnerships between Internet companies and other agencies in protecting youth and educating them on the harm that can come from risky online activity. The main connection that the authors effectively made was that law enforcement agencies are represented as the trustworthy source who will assist victims in obtaining help and justice. However, the researchers failed to delve into ways in which law enforcement agencies can assist further or what pitfalls these connections have faced. Essentially, the researchers do not review or provide information regarding the efficacy of these current education programs. Additionally, the location of this study (the United Kingdom) presents a few minor correlation issues as it is applied to the American criminal and juvenile justice systems.

Chistofides et al's. (2012) qualitative study contained the responses of surveyed juveniles regarding delinquency among their peers and upon them as the victims. This study focuses on the psychological damage and coping strategies used by juveniles when faced with this issue. Additionally, it explored the privacy options on the juveniles' online accounts and their ease of use. They concluded that these tools are not always easy to use and still provide avenues for juveniles to fall victim to delinquent acts. This study provides first-hand accounts of juveniles relating their stories of victimization; however, much like other cyber-bullying literature, it does not provide a review of public policy or evaluate its effectiveness as a deterrent for this behavior among juveniles.

In this particular study, 256 youths were sampled regarding their Facebook experiences. The majority of those sampled that had experienced a negative situation were more likely to protect their information and privacy following that experience. The authors then reflected upon this coping strategy as a means of proactively providing education to youths regarding the need to protect their online accounts and privacy. The authors also review the safety measures currently in place for adolescents to assess how they assist these youths in protecting their online information and access. Researchers found that some additional privacy settings are in place for adolescents, such as the ability to restrict their profiles to only friends and potential acquaintances. Additionally, new privacy controls have been created specifically for adolescents due to public policy and privacy concerns.

The researchers surveyed the youths for this qualitative study and used open-ended questions in order to gauge the online proficiency and experiences of the adolescents. The researchers sought to know if the participants were aware of the privacy controls provided by Facebook, whether the settings were used, and if the participants had ever been victims of a bad experience through Facebook. Approximately one-fourth of those surveyed reported having a bad experience on Facebook and half of those bad experiences stemmed from bullying. Those who had more knowledge regarding privacy settings on Facebook were also directly associated with those who had reported negative experiences. The study concluded that education directed towards youths regarding the ways they can protect their online information is imperative. Proactively educating youths regarding the risks associated with social media profiles may reduce victimization

and negative experiences online amongst this demographic (Christofides et al. 2012). As mentioned, this study provides foundational information about educating youth on how to not become victims and, though important, it does not provide information regarding the offenders and what might prevent them from attempting to victimize their peers.

Beran, Rinaldi, Bickham, and Rich (2012) found that, of the college age students they surveyed, approximately one fourth of students had been bullied or harassed through traditional or Internet means. Further, these researchers highlighted the psychological effects of the harassment on its victims. However, the researchers failed to explore the perpetrating individuals and their potential rationale for committing these deviant acts. The researchers provide sufficient evidence that cyber-bullying may translate to college age individuals, even though members of this age group likely possess more restraint with regard to these deviant behaviors. Therefore, it can be deduced that the issue of delinquent behavior through social media mediums may be more prevalent among younger individuals than previously understood (Beran et al. 2012).

Beran et al. (2012) used a survey to determine the prevalence of cyberharassment among adolescents in two localities: the United States and Canada. They found that, of the 1,368 students surveyed, approximately 33% of students had been harassed online. The authors further sought to identify the attitudes of those that were harassed online to determine what effect the harassment had on these adolescents. The authors found that this harassment could lead to anger and also create a cycle of abuse wherein the victim becomes an aggressor later on (Beran et al. 2012).

Beran et al. (2012) notes an important reason why understanding these online dangers for adolescents is vital and why determining if public policy is providing an effective deterrent is paramount. The sentiments and reactions of the victims to these delinquent acts indicate that there is a propensity for victims to become the delinquents themselves. This creation of a cycle of harm should be of grave concern to public policy makers, parents, and other professionals who interact with adolescents. What the study fails to do is document how many instances of peer aggression grew from those victims that turned into aggressors themselves. Therefore, further investigation should be made to determine if this is a phenomenon that affects a certain demographic in particular. This study sought to determine if police officers are aware of any instances of this trend, if possible.

Flashrobberies

Hartman (2011) reflected on a new trend in the use of social media by adolescents to perpetrate delinquent acts known as flash robberies. These flash robberies involve the coordination and organization of multiple juveniles who then descend upon a certain location in order to wreak havoc and cause damage. The robberies oftentimes involve dozens of adolescents who organize at a retail store and in swift fashion rob the store. Store clerks are then usually so stunned or unable to handle the large crowd that financial damages can be great. Store video cameras can sometimes help to identify the perpetrators of the crimes; however, juveniles have also used social media platforms to discuss the use of mutual disguise wear to prevent identification.

The importance of this article stems from its inclusion of a new form of juvenile delinquency being linked to social media. The relevance of this article stems from this report showing that social media is being used as a tool in these delinquent acts perpetration and coordination by juveniles. Additionally, it highlights the types and extent of damages that have been caused to stores and retailers from this delinquent act. This further highlights the need for exploration into this phenomenon due to the financial damages that the perceived trend can have on businesses. Unfortunately, the article falls short in identifying what policies or loopholes exist wherein the juveniles are able to use these social media platforms in such a delinquent way without being punished in advance of the crimes. It appears that further investigation should be given to the policies that social media platforms have, wherein juveniles are able to openly coordinate criminal activity without the threat of law enforcement response.

Smith, Rush, Robinson, and Karmiller (2011) investigated the most recent flash robberies that have made headlines and seek to provide law enforcement personnel with information regarding how to prepare for these flash robbery attacks. The article is relevant due to the author's development of relating terminology and providing expanding knowledge for law enforcement personnel. The authors provide a new definition and term for *flash robbery*, which they deem *flashgangs*. These flashgangs are defined as a gathering a people who connected through social media means to perpetrate a criminal act. The authors sought to assist law enforcement with their response to this type of crime; however, they indicated that constitutional barriers might prevent law enforcement from responding in the most efficient or proactive way.

These authors also brought up a valid point in their suggestions to law enforcement to be wary of constitutional issues, as they may create a roadblock to proactive efforts. Therefore, the article creates a unique situation for future researchers to determine if these constitutional barriers are actually helping to facilitate these delinquent acts as they relate to social media. Additionally, the authors indicated that there might be a lack of police training to deal with these large groups of delinquent adolescents. Given this knowledge, future research may need to determine if this is a failure in training of law enforcement and if special training should be adapted in the future to monitor and address this form of juvenile delinquency. In highlighting this form of delinquency and a proper law enforcement response to the same, Hartman (2011) and Smith et al. (2011) have brought to light another type of juvenile delinquency relating to social media that requires attention.

Smith et al. (2012) provided a very important study regarding the increasing prevalence of flash mobs and further indicates statistical analysis regarding the rate at which juveniles are involved in the same. This study found that approximately 83% of the individuals that are engaged in these criminal flash mobs are juveniles. This finding is concerning in that it portrays that this type of developing delinquent act is a predominately perpetrated by juveniles. Further, recommendations were given to assist law enforcement individuals in combating this growing trend. However, it appears that Smith et al. failed to cover any potential pitfalls to the recommendations such as legal hurdles or privacy concerns.

As Steinblatt (2012) reported, flash robs or mobs have evolved quickly over time. Originally, these flash mobs were an innocent organization of individuals through social media to perform public dances or sing songs. However, in recent years the flash mobs turned into robberies and quickly deteriorated the once innocent status of the term. Steinblatt touched on the fact that while the people involved in these delinquent acts can be prosecuted, there becomes an issue with criminalizing and regulating the social media platforms that facilitate the acts (Steinblatt, 2012). Lastly, Steinblatt indicated that it would be difficult to restrict this form of communication because it would largely be covered under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. This insight demonstrates an issue that may affect the efficacy of public policy related to the social media and delinquency, the certainty of punishment component of deterrence theory.

Other Deviant Acts

Patton, Eschmann, and Butler (2013) focus on a specific criminal demographic in their study of gangs and the alleged influx of gang activity relative to social media. Their study is important due to it providing addition pertinent terminology. The researchers coined the term *Internet banging* (also known as *cyber banging* or *gang banging on the internet*) and define it as the use of the Internet and social media sites to provoke violence and organize criminal gang activity. They cite multiple media stories on this gang development as support for the phenomenon and the need for research.

The researchers point out conflicting research regarding social media usage and juvenile psychological development, which suggests that it can have either a positive or negative effect on behavior. This behavioral effect can include lessened inhibitions,

which can lead to a false sense of anonymity online. The researchers also suggest that these lessened inhibitions lead to hostile and inappropriate behavior against societal norms when online. They demonstrated this by pointing to prior research of online newspaper postings and town hall meetings in a community affected by recent crimes. That study indicated behavior online was different from that in person within the community, indicating the anonymity of the Internet provided a false shield from judgments or repercussions from their hostile behavior. This false anonymity online could be an indicator associated to the efficacy of the subpart of certainty of punishment within deterrence theory to this study.

An important note that Patton et al.'s (2013) study asserts is that currently research is split on whether aggressive behavior online serves as an indication that these same individuals will act aggressively offline. However, their research does explore and indicates that the male dominated area of gangs does show that those that are aggressive online also perpetuate violence offline and use social media as a way to broadcast this offline aggression. The gap present in their research is whether or not this phenomenon can be applied to females or if it is a male dominated development.

Social media platforms have also been used during the commission of sex crimes committed by juveniles. For example, a case presented in Steubenville, Ohio revealed that two teenaged boys who were guilty of raping a teenage girl then subsequently utilized social media platforms, including YouTube, to broadcast video and photographs of the assault (Oppel, 2013 & Macur & Schweber, 2012). The damage and juvenile delinquent acts continued even after the trial, when two teenage girls sent death threats to

the victim through the social media site Twitter and were later arrested for these threats (CBS Pittsburgh, 2013). Another sexual assault case in California resulted in the suicide of the young female victim after photos from the assault were posted on social media sites (Castillo, 2013). Additionally, in Canada multiple offenders raped a young girl and then posted the images from her assault on social media sites. Subsequently, she was bullied both in person and online, which eventually led to her suicide (Campbell, 2013). These examples provide evidence that delinquent acts committed by juveniles related to social media can take multiple forms and that a policy analysis of all laws pertaining to these delinquent acts needs to be undertaken to determine their efficacy in deterring these juveniles from committing these acts.

Based on a review of the literature, the predominant studies regarding any form of online and social media cybercrime has been conducted in the area of cyber-bullying. However, we are aware of many instances of juvenile delinquent acts, as described above, that occur online and through social media that are outside of cyber-bullying, such as piracy, hacking, child pornography, and sexual victimization (Schinder, 2012), as well as organized flash robberies (Carter et al., 2011 & Bates & Swan, 2013). These developing and concerning areas of cybercrime have been committed by juveniles and deserve a public policy focus and review.

The following subsection reviews literature on the impact of victimization caused from these types of delinquent acts relative to social media.

Impact of Victimization

O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) provided a clinical perspective regarding the use of social media by adolescents and the effects that its use can have on them psychologically. The authors indicate that due to lax regulations it has become easy for adolescents to engage in risky behaviors online through social media platforms. These risky behaviors include cyber-bullying, sexual oriented activities, and organizing delinquent groups. The authors suggest that, while juveniles can obtain benefits from social media platforms, there are risks from becoming victims to these delinquent activities such as depression, isolation, and even suicide. These resulting risks to victims are very important to this study because this study seeks to determine if there is a way in which to minimize that causal behavior.

The importance of this article lies in its ability to highlight the positives and the negatives of adolescent use of social media platforms. Additionally, its clinical perspective highlights the psychological effects on adolescents who are targeted by other adolescents through social media, an important point for policy makers, parents, and the public in order to know the damages that can be caused from the negative side of social media platforms. Likewise, the article provides directives for these adults in order to assist the adolescents affected from the negative side of social media as well as tips for encouraging safe adolescent online usage (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011).

O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) report for the American Academy of Pediatrics that social media platforms and their use in juvenile delinquent activities, such as cyber bullying, can lead to extreme emotional damage in juvenile victims. This further

solidifies the emotional damage caused from this delinquent behavior that can lead to multiple negative responses such as reclusion and even suicide. Further, the punishments that face juvenile offenders can jeopardize and impact the future of these youth (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). This study sought to explore this phenomenon in order to highlight areas for public policy professionals and law enforcement organizations to focus on in order to prevent negative impacts to victims and juvenile perpetrators.

Education on Online Safety

Barnard-Willis (2012) conducted a review of the resources available to juveniles in the United Kingdom regarding education on online safety. It also delved into the role that law enforcement agencies play in educating juveniles on online protection. The study showed that law enforcement serves as a surveillance measure of online delinquency and that law enforcement agencies want to be seen as an aid to juveniles who fall victim to delinquency through social media platforms. Education was largely responsible for providing juveniles with information necessary to protect themselves from falling victim to these types of acts. This is another study where the focus was on the aftermath of the victimization or on prevention of victimization by educating the potential victims about ways to protect themselves. Policy makers can use this review to gauge the knowledge juveniles have about how to protect themselves, but may also use it as a means to communicate information about the consequences of such acts.

Closely-Linked Theories and Relatable Studies

Bossler and Holt (2011) conducted a quantitative online survey study focused on low self-control and deviant peer associations regarding juvenile cyberdeviance. They sought to examine low self-control and deviant peer associations among juveniles who admitted to committing cyberdeviant acts using social learning theory and general theory of crime. The sample consisted of 435 surveys from middle and high school students in a suburban area in the state of Kentucky. The study was limited in that it did not provide demographic information on the participants and only sampled juveniles from one middle and one high school in that locality.

The theories explored in Bossler and Holt's (2011) study is closely linked to deterrence theory but differ because social learning theory is a much broader concept than deterrence, including deterrence theory as a subset. An element of concern about this study was the mention of a relationship between the researchers and the schools where the study was conducted. This could raise potential ethical and bias issues and lead to invalidation of the research. There also was no mention of the process by which consent was gained for conducting the survey with the students. Students used their online student portal to take the survey, but there was no mention of the ability to provide answers anonymously or if students were required to provide consent and assent forms. Again, this omission would raise potential ethical issues and lead to invalidation.

The issues in the study discussed above solidify the research decision to not use questionnaires or surveys with juveniles in this study, as their protected classification presents many scenarios wherein research findings could be challenged. The present

decision to use perceptions from police officers circumvented the delicate issue of research on a protected class while also providing a lens that could clearly and substantially investigate the research questions.

Alternatively, Dowdell, Burgess and Flores' (2011) study was much more complex than the Bossler and Holt (2011) study and provided a more diverse lens because their study included not only middle and high school students but also college age students and adult internet offenders. Dowdell et al. (2011) also explored demographic information much more in depth in an attempt to find themes among the different classes studied but unfortunately the data set they gained was predominately Caucasian and, therefore, may not be transferrable. Most importantly, the study was clear in providing details in its usage of consent and assent forms for underage participants as well as potential limitations that were presented with the use of adult Internet offenders. What is important to note is that Dowdell et al. recognized that, while this type of study provides for self-reporting of deviant behavior, it also lends itself to instances of over exaggeration or underreporting. This was an important factor for this study when visiting this phenomenon because police perceptions were only available for those instances which were reported.

Patton, Hong, Ranney, Patel, Kelley, Eschmann, and Washington (2014) looked at the trend of violence and social media as it related to youth by conducting a review of present literature. Their study's purpose was to uncover any trends in youth violence relative to social media in order to begin a discussion on policy implementations that could be used to prevent and deter this phenomenon. Their review of the literature

reflected findings that the literature lacks thorough and comprehensive discussion on this topic and that much of the literature has varying definitions. Their findings did conclude that public policy professionals should be concerned about youth violence relative to social media, but current literature and studies were not wholly reliable for providing the tools or information necessary to implement any formative policy.

Alternative Viewpoints

Jones, Mitchell and Finkelhor (2013) look at youth victimization rates and their decline in the past decade. Jones argues that victimization is declining in many different subtypes, such as Internet victimization, and that policy makers are inaccurately making policy decisions on potentially incomplete information. The researchers looked at the Youth Internet Safety Surveys from 2000, 2005, and 2010 for trends in youth victimization and found that online harassment continued to increase over the last decade particularly among young female victims. Researchers believe that, since other types of youth victimization have seen a decline, this positive change should lead to a policy analysis to determine what was done correctly to create this positive movement. Jones et al. believes that the positives should be emphasized and disseminated so that policy makers can apply what has been successful for future policy decisions.

Unfortunately, Jones et al. (2013) only supports their claim by pointing to media accounts of youth victimization as an indicator that the problem may be larger than it seems. It supports this finding by looking at the Youth Internet Safety Surveys. While these surveys can potentially be used to mark a reduction in certain victimization

subtypes, they cannot be wholly relied upon to show a complete shift in victimization or be used as a marker for any one policy's success.

Police Officers, Sentiments, and Police Use of Internet as an Investigative Tool

Spizman and Miller (2013) conducted a mixed method study wherein they asked college students what their sentiments were regarding police officers utilizing social media outlets as a criminal investigative tool. The researchers also explored the responses for differences based on race and gender and sought to determine what the privacy expectations of these students were with regard to social media and its use as a tool in law enforcement. Spizman and Miller provided a great definition for the term *social media*, stating "social media refers to electronic communication in which users can generate and convey information, ideas, personal messages, and other content to various online communities," and adds to this the definition from International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Center for Social Media and IACP National Law Enforcement Policy Center which asserts that "social media also can refer to websites, including social networking, blogs, wikis, and certain news sites" (Spizman & Miller, 2013, pg. 101). These definitions, along with some additions from myself, provided the social media definition for purposes of this study.

Spizman and Miller's (2013) study was also important because, in looking at college students' perceptions of law enforcement use of social media, they provided yet another lens to measure public trust of police officers. As Spizman and Miller pointed out, public trust of police and the community-policing model provide an increase in crime control and community program efficacy. Public trust of police, crime control methods,

and community programs are crucial to youth feeling comfortable reporting crimes such as those committed on and relating to social media. Further, Spizman and Miller presented previous research that indicates that public trust of police varies based on race and gender, with African-Americans and males having less trust of police. This conclusion is important to this study, because students that fit this demographic and who have potentially been victims of juvenile delinquency related to social media may be less likely to report their victimization due to distrust of law enforcement.

They further indicate that there has been little research conducted relative to expectations of privacy online and within social media outlets. This was important with regard to this study's hypothesis that juvenile delinquency relative to social media is compounded by the potential false belief and expectation of privacy and anonymity, which may then lead to an increase in juvenile delinquency, and that current policies lack the ability to overshadow this belief. The study found that there was a direct correlation between student's privacy expectations and their support of police usage of social media as a tool to combat crime. This correlation showed that students were generally supportive of this tool for policing but when police social media investigation came too close to their personal privacy, student support wavered.

Lew (2012) took an interesting approach in his review and critique regarding the need for increased law enforcement presence online and education for juveniles on dangers online in order to protect them from potential victimization by peers and adults. Lew's concern stems from the increased use of the Internet for online distance education for younger students. To connect those two concepts, Lew looked at statistics in

California that show that approximately 25% of a given police jurisdiction is made up of juveniles and additionally quoted the contractual agreements that police departments have with schools to provide school resource officers. Additionally, Lew notes the emphasis placed on cybercrime and proper online behavior education to juveniles by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice to show the need for individual police departments to provide this service to schools and juveniles. This connection was important for this study's hypothesis that if current public policy regarding cybercrime penalties is properly disseminated to juveniles, then that same policy will serve as a more effective deterrent for cybercrime among juveniles. However, it appears as if current literature is lacking in empirical studies relative to whether current policy serves as a deterrent and, if not, what can be done to increase its efficacy through education (Lew, 2012).

Many studies have used police officer perceptions as a tool to measure policy efficacy. The majority of these studies, however, focus on departmental policies or policing strategies and not as much on the efficacy of regulatory laws. One such study that focused on community oriented online policing strategies is closely related to the present topic and was conducted by Bossler and Holt, (2013). Bossler and Holt surveyed two southeastern police forces regarding their sentiments on community oriented online policing as a method to combat cybercrime. This study focused on officer sentiments regarding the process of utilizing the Internet as a means to combating a certain type of crime.

Further, its data collection method and geographical proximity to this study provides a potential guide with regard to the success rate that this study may have in questioning police officers in general. The study found that officers who held favorable sentiments regarding traditional community oriented policing also held favorable sentiments regarding online community oriented policing. This serves as an important guide for police departments when selecting which officers would serve best in roles that are geared towards or are highly involved in online community oriented policing. The study found that technical and online expertise was not an indicator of a successful police officer and online community oriented policing match but rather that positive sentiments towards this form of policing was what would provide a successful marriage of the two. However, Bossler and Holt suggests that the generalizability of their study is unknown due to the low response rate but that the objective of the study was to obtain a broad understanding of officer's sentiments regarding this form of policing.

An additional study by Bossler and Holt (2012) looked an officers' perceptions about cybercrime and specifically their roles in responding to it. The study, which also used surveys of two southeastern police departments, asserts that police officers believe that the public should be better educated on cybercrime laws and on how to protect themselves from cybercrime. Additionally, some officers are unaware about how upper management within their departments are handling cybercrime and are not supportive of specific cybercrime details within their departments. This conclusion highlights the gap in literature regarding police officer sentiment regarding the efficacy of current cybercrime laws. More specifically, it shows that officer perceptions are important

indicators of public knowledge on the subject of cybercrime laws, which can in turn be applied to juveniles and the application of these laws to juveniles as a deterrent.

As the leading researchers in the area of cybercrime, Bossler and Holt (2016) also discuss deterrence theory and cybercrime in general, pointing out that literature is scant on the topic. Even more specifically, they suggest that studies of deterrence theory and cybercrime relative to juveniles is even more lacking. They point to several studies that have been conducted in order to determine if current policies regarding several cybercrimes (i.e. piracy and computer hacking) are serving as effective deterrents. Those studies found conflicting information, as offenders of piracy were deterred by certainty of punishment while offenders of computer hacking were deterred by the severity of the punishment. It should be noted however that these studies were conducted on adults and not juveniles but their contribution to knowledge of cybercrime and deterrence theory serve as building blocks in understanding this developing area. Bossler and Holt continue to call for more research regarding the application of deterrence theory to cybercrimes and understanding which aspects of deterrence theory are most effective in combating the crimes.

The most closely related study that used police perceptions to analyze public policy and its efficacy as a deterrent came from Najdowski, Cleary, and Stevenson (2016) and Tewksbury and Mustaine (2013). Najdowski et al. (2016) looked at juveniles and studied whether sex offender registration policies served as a general deterrent for juveniles. In looking to the law's intention and creation, researchers discovered that policy makers believed that, by attaching the requirement of a registration component to

potential sex offenders, this would serve as a deterrent from committing this type of crime and was, therefore, embedded in deterrence theory. Najdowski et al. also indicated that very little research exists to determine if juveniles are generally aware of laws that would affect them and rightly calls for additional research on this topic in order to determine if such policies are effective deterrents. This study sought to do just that. Najdowski et al. also correctly indicated that much research states that increased education on specific public policies, created in order to serve as deterrents for juveniles, are lacking because they do not discuss the certainty of punishment. This was important to this study because, while this study sought to determine if present public policy regarding juvenile delinquency relating to social media deters juveniles from committing these acts, we are aware that we must also attempt to identify whether or not police officers believe sanctions are effective because of a certainty of punishment. Najdowski et al.'s work provides an invaluable tool because of their description about how public policy could serve as an effective deterrent for juveniles; they suggest that, first, juveniles should know that the policy exists and, second, juveniles should believe in the certainty that if they break this policy they will be punished for doing so.

Najdowski et al. (2016) also pointed to Tewksbury and Mustaine's (2013) study that used police officer sentiments regarding sex offender registration, finding that officers did not believe sex offender registration requirements served as a deterrent for prospective offenders. The Tewksbury and Mustaine study was important because it used officer perceptions regarding public policy to determine the policy's effectiveness as a deterrent. This was the same method this study sought to employ.

Summary

A phenomenon is developing with regard to juvenile delinquency and social media and that literature is scant at best with regard to this issue. The literature surveyed indicates that studying the connections between social media and juvenile acts of delinquency would provide public policy professionals with tools and information necessary to further address this growing phenomenon. Additionally, current research is conflicting regarding the application of deterrence theory to juvenile delinquents, but research does point to areas within which juveniles are deterred given the right circumstances. While some studies indicated that juveniles are not deterred in the same way as adults, other literature suggested that if all areas of deterrence theory were applied that juveniles could be properly deterred from acting inappropriately. Therefore, this study sought to determine, through the effective means of police perception questionnaires, if juvenile delinquency relating to social media is being deterred by existing public policy. In Chapter 3, the research method, research design and analysis procedures along with detailed information on the methodology follow.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

When combining the ever-evolving area of social media with the study of juveniles, a perceived phenomenon has emerged with juvenile delinquency relating to social media. These delinquent acts have included harassment, cyber hacking, pirating, as well as gang and organizing crime activity to name a few. The public policies that I focused on regarding this phenomenon stem from a southeastern state's criminal sanctions, juvenile justice status punishments, and local school regulations. Deterrence theory has historically been a founding principle within the criminal and juvenile justice realms (Beccaria, 1963; Bentham, 1948). Criminal and juvenile justice professionals look to deterrence theory when creating and evaluating public policy effectiveness (Ismaili, 2015). These policies provide that the penalties and punishments accompanying them serve as a deterrent to potential delinquents because they outweigh any benefit gained from the delinquent act.

The purpose of this study was to determine if the current public policy in a southeastern state relating to delinquency and its existence on social media currently serves as an effective deterrent by looking at police perceptions on the issue. News reports have slowly revealed instances where juveniles are using social media as a tool to commit delinquent acts, and these acts have led to the victimization of other individuals (i.e., cyber harassment and hacking) and caused damage to businesses (i.e., organizing crime, gang activity, pirating, and flash robberies) (Campbell, 2013; Castillo, 2013; CBS, 2013; Giammonna, 2013; Macur, 2012; Oppel, 2013). The unknown extent of this

phenomenon coupled with the damage that is caused by it should make public policy researchers attentive in addressing this growing phenomenon.

Within this chapter, in the research design and rationale section, I provided the four main RQs that I used to seek to understand police officer perceptions of this phenomenon and their sentiments on current policy. In this chapter, I also delved into my role as the researcher as a distanced or absent observer, since I was not present when participants completed their questionnaires. In the methodology section, including the participant selection logic and instrumentation subsections, I revealed why I chose this particular police department and how I formulated the questionnaire. The data analysis procedures that were employed were discussed and, lastly, issues of trustworthiness and ethics were presented.

Research Design and Rationale

In this study, I focused on one primary RQ (RQ1): What are the perceptions and experiences of a southeastern state's police officers with juvenile acts and delinquency relating to social media? To find the answers to this question, I created a questionnaire using open-ended questions to help gather data from police officers and school resource officers in one southeastern state. Open-ended questions provided the most information for this qualitative research study and analysis. The following research subquestions guided the development of that questionnaire. Pertinent definitions, such as that of deterrence theory, were included for the participants within the questionnaire.

RQ2: Do police officers believe that existing juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties deter juveniles from behaving delinquently with social media? Why or why not?

RQ3: What parts of deterrence theory (severity, celerity, and certainty) do police officers believe are not being addressed through the juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties? How so? (Please refer to the definition of deterrence theory contained within this questionnaire).

RQ4: In what ways do police officers believe that current education for juveniles regarding juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties relating to juvenile offenses committed on or related to social media are sufficient or not?

In this qualitative study, I focused on public policy about juvenile delinquency as it relates to social media. Using a phenomenological approach, the questionnaires administered to southeastern police officers allowed me to gather narratives regarding the officers' perceptions and experiences with juvenile delinquency relating to social media. These narratives, in turn, highlighted themes and helped me to determine if current policy is effective in deterring this potentially deviant behavior.

I chose this research design due to the current lack of studies, literature, and basic knowledge on the phenomenon as it currently stands. This design provided for a large amount of narrative information to expand on the present minimal knowledge regarding the phenomenon. Additionally, this qualitative study approach provided perceptions intimately tied to the phenomenon to help gain a clearer understanding of the trend. I

sought to expand the breadth of knowledge on this growing trend and provide information for potential themes and generalizations. Even more importantly, I chose this research design due to the complex social construct of the phenomenon that may not be appropriately measured with quantitative approaches.

Due to juveniles being both a protected class of individuals and a core component of the study, the research design was a sensitive choice. A case study or other design requiring interviews would prove difficult due to the need to provide protection to the juveniles that would be questioned. Additionally, since the extent of the phenomenon was unknown, choosing a group of juveniles to interview would have proved difficult at this time. The data gathered from another research design may or may not have been representative. In choosing the phenomenological design and utilizing police officer perceptions and experiences to provide the narrative, there was a higher likelihood that I would be provided with usable data because officers receive reports and conduct investigations about this form of delinquency. While not all incidents of this delinquency reach law enforcement attention, it was likely that the more serious incidents would be reported.

Role of the Researcher

Due to the administration of the questionnaire in an online format, my role as the researcher in this study was limited concerning the overt or covert observation of participants. I chose the police department that I used to obtain participants for the research study based on a familial relationship with one of the police officers within that department. To remove potential bias or conflicts of interest, the officer with whom I

shared the familial relationship with did not participate in the final study. Rather, he served as an expert for review of the questionnaire and a point of contact between me and the management within the police department. This expert provided feedback on the questions so that I formatted them in an understandable and easily answered manner. His feedback included minor modifications to terminology to make it the most applicable to the field of criminal justice. My point of contact within the southeastern police department provided me with appropriate telephone and e-mail contact information for management and supervisors. Preliminary approval for the research study with the point of contact's direct supervisor was obtained along with a Letter of Cooperation. I also provided the supervisor and management with a copy of the preliminary questionnaire and flyer located within the Appendix A and C, respectively.

Once I made direct communication with management, I distributed the online open-ended questionnaire web link directly to management in the form of a flyer to be disseminated to the department officers. Officers were informed of their department's participation in the study and that they were allowed to complete the questionnaire either during noncritical work hours and/or while off duty.

<p align="center">**Methodology**</p>

Participant Selection Logic

I selected the southeastern police department chosen because of publicly known instances of juvenile delinquency relating to social media occurring in that locality. This police department serves a population of approximately 16,000 citizens over 54.3 square miles and employs over 45 officers. All officers within the southeastern police

department selected for this study were given the opportunity to opt-in to complete the open-ended online questionnaire. From those participants that opted in, only those officers who stated that they have had first-hand experience with the phenomenon had their samples included. I did this in an attempt to remove any potential hearsay or bias on the part of those officers who had no first-hand experience with the phenomenon. A preliminary question was asked of officers within the questionnaire to determine if they have the first-hand experience with the phenomenon. Those that indicated that they had first-hand experience had their answers included in the analysis portion of the study, while the others were allowed to provide their answers, but their responses were not used for the purposes of analysis. I employed this strategy after the officer's opt-in as opposed to before in an attempt to obtain the most responses as possible from within the department. Additionally, two to three school resource officers within the southeastern police department work with local schools. These specific officers were asked to participate in the study due to their proximity to juveniles on a regular basis and the likelihood that they had experienced the phenomenon over other officers.

Participants were provided with a flyer containing the study's purpose statement, sample question, and link to the online questionnaire. Management and supervisory officers (chief, deputy chief, majors, lieutenants, and sergeants) were tasked with distributing flyer at roll call meetings. Instructions for completing the questionnaire were provided along with information regarding the confidential nature of the study, my role as researcher, and my affiliation (by a familial relationship with an officer) with the police department. A letter from the department head can be found in Appendix B.

O'Reilly and Parker (2012) held that saturation occurs when the study can be accurately replicated, and Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) stated that it is achieved when there is no longer any more information that can be gleaned or coded. Therefore, based on the previously unexplored nature of this study it was difficult to determine when saturation would occur. However, I desired for the study to obtain 10 to 20 or more sample responses to meet this threshold. This size provided for enough thick and rich data from the research participants to sufficiently code the types of delinquency and social media platforms most prominent in this phenomenon. I will provide additional discussion on the coding procedures later in this chapter.

Instrumentation

I employed one data collection instrument, consisting of an online questionnaire I produced and provided to officers for the study. This instrument provided narrative information about the RQs because of the open-ended structure of the questions. The self-administered four-item open-ended questionnaire, found in Appendix A, was developed and designed specifically for this research study. Incomplete questionnaires were still included in the results as long as the officer indicated personal experience with the phenomenon. The questionnaire was modeled after another police officer perception and experiences study, entitled, "Police Officers and Paramedics' Experiences with Overdose and Their Knowledge and Opinions of Washington State's Drug Overdose Naloxone Good Samaritan Law" by Banta-Green, Beletsky, Coffin, Kuszler and Schoeppe (2013). This questionnaire only served as a guide for the questions that were developed and was not replicated in any capacity.

The basis for my development of this instrument came from current juvenile and criminal justice codes as well as the school district rules and regulations from the corresponding southeastern jurisdiction studied. The questionnaire consisted of minimal demographic questions, such as rank and length of career, and was designed to assess the police officers' perceptions regarding these juvenile justice, criminal justice, and school policies as well as their efficacy at deterring juvenile delinquent behavior related to social media. The officers were asked open-ended questions and given plenty of time to provide their answers at their leisure, and each question provided an area for officers to provide narrative responses describing their experiences and perceptions about the study.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I collected the data from a southeastern police department of approximately 50 officers. A sample size of at least 10-20 is desired to reach saturation based on Creswell's (2012) suggestion that a phenomenological study contain at least five participants. Flyers (Appendix C) were distributed on occasion by management or supervisors at the department's headquarters. The flyer included an explanation of the study's purpose, a sample question, and a link to the full online questionnaire. This provided the most opportunity for participation. Officers were afforded on-duty and off-duty opportunities to complete the questionnaire, and each officer was only allowed to complete the questionnaire once.

Instead of a paper questionnaire, officers were allowed to complete the questionnaire at their leisure electronically through an online questionnaire platform called Survey Monkey. By completing the questionnaire online, police officers were

permitted to keep their answers confidential from management and their identities confidential from myself. The officers were asked to volunteer whatever information they could organically recall in the narrative of the questionnaire to provide me with enough information to follow up with a case report request from the department, if necessary. This eliminated any need for officer involvement in obtaining the report for me and minimize any pressure that officers may feel to provide additional documentation. Any reports or case notes that were obtained by me would only serve as supplemental data and must adhere to the department's policies regarding redaction for the protection of juveniles involved.

The department distributed the flyer inviting participants to the study on one occasion. The participants were given a deadline of three weeks from the date of receiving the flyer to complete the questionnaire. This allowed for approximately four weeks of data collection time. Data collected was stored within the online survey platform, Survey Monkey, as well as exported to an external hard drive for archival purposes.

If the study yielded fewer than 10 participants after the initial flyer distribution, I was to attempt to follow up with the department to ask for an additional opportunity to provide the questionnaire to officers in paper format and would follow the same data collection timetable. If a follow up in paper format was required, I would provide self-addressed stamped envelopes for the research participants to mail their responses back to me. Completed paper format responses would be transcribed into a word processor and coded in the same format as the online questionnaires.

All participants were provided with debriefing information in the form of a letter upon their completion of the questionnaire. For online participants, this was in the form of a letter they can print after the questionnaire was completed. For paper participants, if any, this letter would be distributed along with their questionnaire materials. This debriefing information would provide them again with information on why this research study was being conducted, a few references about trends in this phenomenon, and contact information for myself should the participants have questions, concerns, or wish to withdraw from the study.

Data Analysis Plan

Two data analysis plans were employed, including hand coding and the use of Atlas.ti computer software. The data collected through the questionnaires of police officers provided their perceptions on this phenomenon, its prevalence, and the effectiveness of public policy relating to the phenomenon for analysis. The analysis method employed first began with the responses being read multiple times by myself and then analyzed for themes. Themes were identified by looking for word repetition or outliers to identify the types of delinquency, social media platforms, specific laws, and other identifiers not yet known. These themes were categorically coded based on the responses. Additionally, responses from the questionnaires were entered in Atlas.ti software and analyzed for themes. Themes and subgroups were developed using data reduction by sequential analysis. This served as a cross check against my hand coding method.

In instances of discrepant cases, those responses were utilized only if there was a positive indication by the participant that they have experienced the phenomenon. Follow up was not be possible due to the confidential nature of the study. As mentioned previously, incomplete questionnaires were still included if they indicated a positive response to experience with the phenomenon.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To provide credibility, officers were asked to volunteer into the questionnaire any information they organically recalled from reports and case notes for cases where they had knowledge of the phenomenon occurring. Additionally, participants were also asked to provide frank and honest answers to the questions posed to ensure credible information was provided. The participants were reminded of my role and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time so as to build a strong rapport and gain the trust of participants.

Transferability

Thick description was terribly important for this study due to the lack of current research, literature, and analysis of the phenomenon. Descriptions of the specific instances of juvenile delinquency related to social media provided information on how these juveniles are behaving and what social media platforms are providing the tools through which these juveniles act. Additionally, thick description provided information about police officer perceptions and insight into the present policies efficacy or lack

thereof. These thick descriptions provide later researchers with detailed information regarding the phenomenon to determine if this study is transferable.

Dependability

Triangulation was obtained through any case notes or reports that were obtained which would lend to dependability. This triangulation allowed the information given by participants to be confirmed through supplemental documents obtained by myself through available public data at the department. Triangulation helped provide support that the participant responses were not dishonest. An audit trail was kept along with a researcher journal to provide for additional dependability in this study. The audit trail provided adequate detail so that a roadmap for the study is available, allowing the study to be replicated with the same participants and yield the same results. However, it must be noted that if a subsequent study was performed with the same participants, the data gathered would not have changed but rather new data may be present as new cases of the phenomenon may arise.

Confirmability

I kept a reflective journal to track experiences, sentiments, and developments during the research process. This assisted in providing an understanding of my thoughts when making determinations in matters such as methodology, data collection, and data analysis. The consistency of the reflective journal helped in understanding my thought process throughout this research study.

As mentioned above, triangulation between participant responses and supplemental documents assisted in aiding in credibility and confirmability. This

triangulation diminished any perceived instances of researcher bias. Additionally, the reflective journal assisted in highlighting any potential biases and create an audit trail for later researchers to examine.

Ethical Procedures

The following institutional permissions were required for this study: Letter of Cooperation (Appendix B) and Walden University Institutional Review Board approval #03-08-17-0339290. To diminish ethical concerns related to recruitment, the questionnaire was made completely voluntary, and management and supervisors at the police department were advised only to provide reminders of participation with potential participants but not to pressure participants in any way. Had participants decided to withdraw from the study early, their responses were to be destroyed.

There was no data collected regarding officer names. Rather, data collected on demographics was kept confidential. Maintaining confidentiality was important for officers who may have been privy to instances of the phenomenon but where a report or charges were never filed. An officer would be more likely to provide this information if he or she could ensure that his or her name would remain confidential and to keep the trust of citizens.

All electronically completed questionnaires were provided to the participating police department. The department also was provided a copy of the study findings upon completion of the study. Data will be retained on an external hard drive for approximately five years to be available for follow-up studies either by the police department, myself, or other subsequent researchers.

The department does not condone the use of incentives and therefore, officers were not offered any incentive for completing the questionnaires. Police officers frequently complete many written reports and may have had little free time to complete the questionnaire during their workdays. The Letter of Cooperation, located in the Appendix B, provides that the department would allow officers to complete the questionnaire during the workday and while off duty. Additionally, the flyer also indicated to officers that their supervisors had cleared them to complete the questionnaire while on duty.

Summary

I contacted and provided a researcher developed open-ended online questionnaire to a southeastern police department. This questionnaire was reviewed by an expert within this police department, and feedback was received and implemented to ensure the questionnaire's quality to meet the study's objectives. Contact was made through my point of contact at the department, and I did not use that point of contact for the final study questionnaire to avoid ethical concerns. The questionnaire was provided in digital format to increase participation and reach saturation. The questionnaire was voluntary and confidential. The officers' participation indicated their consent, and this was clearly stated at the beginning of the questionnaire.

Participants were afforded the opportunity to withdraw at any time. Responses would be triangulated against supplemental documents (i.e., police case notes and reports), if available, which would be obtained by myself through public records searches at the department. I kept a reflective journal to provide insight into the developments,

decisions, and thoughts of myself throughout the study. I gathered and analyzed data for themes and code words/phrases, while Atlas.ti provided further analysis and cross-checking. Chapter 4 includes the study's results and findings including the settings, demographics, data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In this study, I sought to examine a southeastern state's policies, relative to juvenile delinquency relating to social media and relative juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties, through the use of an open-ended questionnaire of police officers. This questionnaire obtained the experiences and perceptions of the police officer participants' belief that social media may or may not be related to juvenile delinquent acts. The purpose was to explore whether police officers believe that current policies are serving as an effective deterrent for juveniles who may be behaving delinquently with social media.

The RQs that guided this study were as follows:

RQ1: What are the perceptions and experiences of a southeastern state's police officers related to juvenile acts of delinquency relating to social media?

RQ2: Do police officers believe that existing juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties deter juveniles from behaving delinquently with social media? Why or why not?

RQ3: What parts of deterrence theory (severity, celerity, and certainty) do police officers believe are not being addressed through the juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school penalties? How so? (Please refer to the definition of deterrence theory contained within this questionnaire).

RQ4: In what ways do police officers believe that current education for juveniles regarding juvenile justice status punishments, criminal sanctions, and school

penalties relating to juvenile offenses committed on or related to social media are sufficient or not?

I included two demographical and optional questions that asked the participants their rank and their time employed as a police officer. These demographical questions were asked to gauge the extent of officers' potential exposure to the phenomenon. In the remainder of this chapter, I focused on revisiting the use of an expert in organizing the questionnaire, the study's setting, demographics, data collection and analysis, evidence of trustworthiness and the results of the study.

Expert

I consulted an expert in crafting the questionnaire questions in such a way that would be easily understood by officers and would elicit the richest data for the study. This expert was a senior officer of the department and had been an officer for more than a decade. The expert provided feedback on the questionnaire questions, which included the use of certain terminology and an arrangement of the questions in a format that led to pertinent narratives from participants. Additionally, this expert provided me with a managerial point of contact within the police department in order to gain access to the participants.

Setting

Flyers were distributed to officers by supervisory staff within the department as I previously described in Chapter 3. Appendix C contains the flyer that was distributed to potential participants. The participants were informed that the study's results would be provided to the department for their use in the future. They were also reminded that their

participation was sanctioned by their department but that this also was an opt-in questionnaire. They were reminded that their answers would be anonymous and given a sample question on the flyer. There were no significant changes in the budget or other operations at the department between the time I began and ended data collection. The supervisory officer who cleared the study at his department was promoted to the chief of the department during the study period.

Demographics

Participants were any certified officers employed by the southeastern police department to be questioned. Only certified officers were solicited with the survey and given a flyer. The officers ranged in age, sex, and race, but I did not collect demographics relative to exact age, sex, or race. I asked participants minimal demographic questions, and these questions were optional. These questions were Question 5: What is your rank? and Question 6: How long have you been a police officer?

In looking towards the demographics collected, one of the most important pieces of data I collected was the rank or role of the officers. Specifically, data were gleaned from one school resource officer. This officer undoubtedly had rich knowledge relative to this topic and was in close proximity to juveniles on a regular basis. Therefore, their responses assisted in giving the study even more validity.

Appendix D provides a detailed look at the rank and roles and lengths of time in service of officers who responded to this questionnaire. Additional demographic data that I collected were regarding the length of time in service as a police officer. This

demographic information was important in order to provide insight into the depth of the

experiences and their development over time.

Data Collection

The study yielded responses from 10 police officers from the department, which

represented approximately 20% of their total police force. Responses were rich in detail

and examples providing a thorough lens from which to gauge southeastern police

perspectives on juvenile delinquency relating to social media. I collected all 10 officer

responses within approximately three months' time. Data were recorded via

SurveyMonkey.com and were protected by password encryption. The data were also

stored on a password protected external hard drive. There were no variations in data

collection from the plan presented previously in this study. There were also no unusual

circumstances encountered in data collection.

Data Analysis

In attempting to inductively analyze the perceptions of the police officers, I

created coded units to create a more generalizable representation of their experiences

based in part on the belief that perceptual studies such as this one will provide the

population's perceptions regarding the deterrents. I used Patton's (2014) concept of

thematic analysis and coding to find common recurring themes and experiences. This

type of coding looks for common recurrences in experiences. Additionally, narrative

analysis was used in order to complete the story of the officers' perceptions of the

phenomenon. These narratives used exact quotes from the officers to provide additional

emphasis on their experiences and ensure that proper reliability was given to their statements.

The first code I determined was whether or not the officers indicated that they had experience with the phenomenon. This was coded as a positive experience for if they had experienced it and negative experience for if they had not. I first looked at the answers for each question individually for completeness to make sure it addressed the question completely and could be included for coding as a positive or negative experience. This created a common consensus for each question and I was then able to categorize the main code from all officers. It was important to separate the individual questionnaire questions first and then combine the overall sentiments to obtain the common representation based on the narratives provided. Questions were hand coded based on the positive or negative responses and themes were identified through repetition of responses throughout all questions.

From Question 1, the first code that emerged was whether or not the officers had experience with this type of connection between juvenile delinquent acts and social media. This code was simply coded as a positive experience or negative experience. The code was positive for all officers who responded to the questionnaire. Due to there being all positive responses from the officers, there were no discrepant cases to report.

Figure 1. Question 1 Responses.
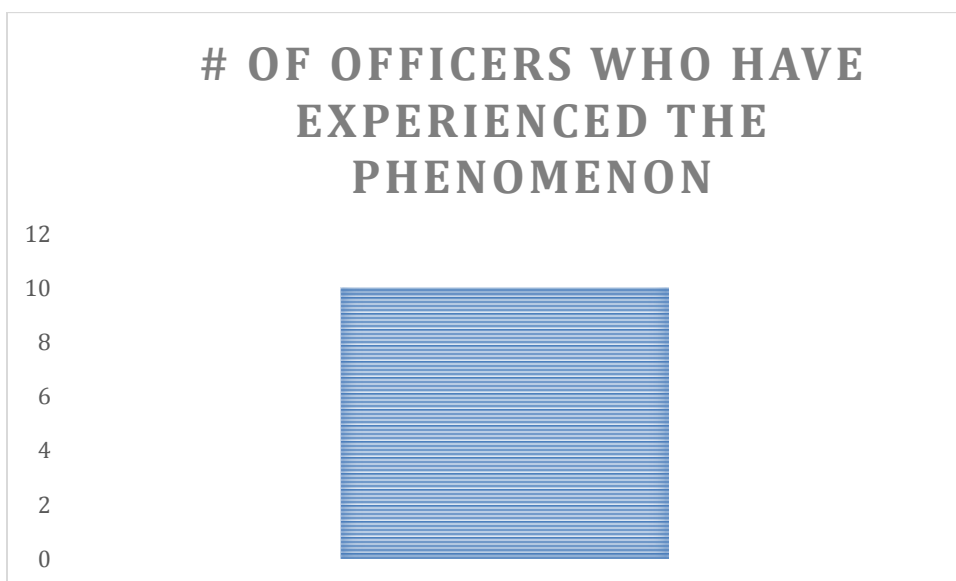
Next, the first category I identified was what social media platforms were utilized by juveniles committing these acts. Those predominate social media platforms revealed were:

1. Facebook

2. Snapchat

3. Instagram

Figure 2. Social media platforms referenced by officers.
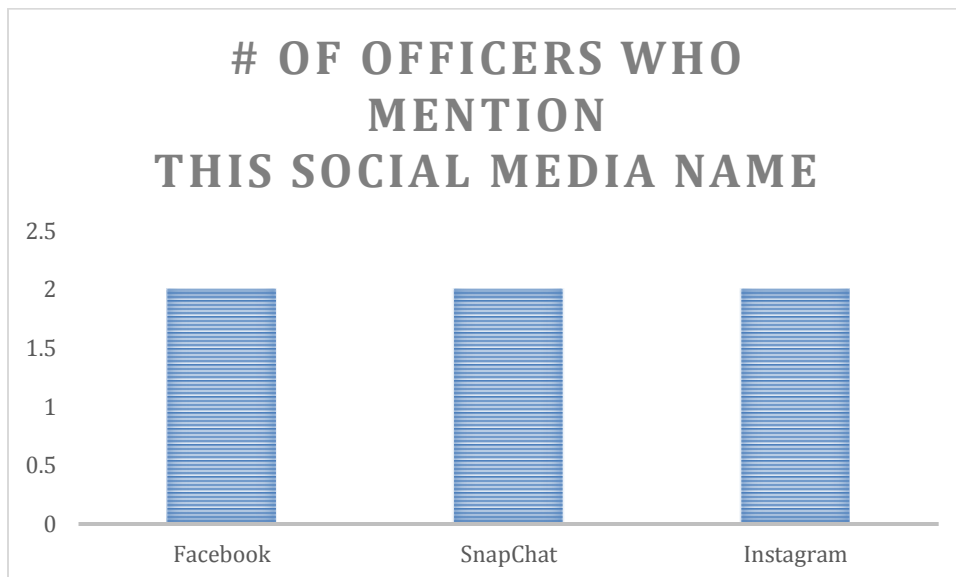
I was also able categorize for the types of incidents based on those delinquent actions

mentioned by the officers. Those categories that emerged were:

- Threats of harm/bullying/harassment;

- Child pornography (self or others);

- Organizing crime;

- Drug crime; and

- Illegal firearms.

Figure 3. Types of delinquency experienced.

OF OFFICERS WHO MENTIONED THIS TYPE OF DELINQUENCY EXPERIENCED

Categories (left to right):
- Threats of harm/Bullying/Harassment: 3
- Child pornography (self or others): 4
- Organized crime: 2
- Drug crime: 1
- Illegal firearms: 1

Respondent 4 had this to say about his perception of incidents:

My perception is that social media in regards to juveniles is causing not only more

avenues to engage in criminal activity but also an outlet for them to display their

acts. I have responded to multiple complaints of juveniles posting inappropriate

pictures of not only themselves but as well of others. Social media also has given

a rise to bullying through social media which in turn leads to criminal behavior.

Social media has also given a rise to child pornography and made it acceptable to

send child pornography from one juvenile to another.

The code that emerged from Question 2 was again whether or not officers

believed existing punishments were sufficient to deter juveniles. This coding was found

that either punishments were sufficient or insufficient and were based on the response

within the narrative of each respondent. If the officers stated they believed existing

punishments were sufficient then that was an indication that the officers perceived that

existing sanctions were serving as effective deterrents. If the officers stated they believed

existing punishments were not sufficient (i.e., insufficient) then that was an indication

that the officers perceived that existing sanctions were not serving as effective deterrents.

It was gleaned that there were zero officers who believed existing sanctions were

sufficient to deter and nine officers believed existing punishments were insufficient to

deter. One officer was neutral in their answer. The neutral officers answer was a

discrepant case in that in that the officer responded, "I don't really have an answer to this

as I have not seen a case make it to court. Usually it can be handled between the school, law enforcement and the parents at least in my experience."

Figure 4. Number of officers who believe punishment is sufficient.
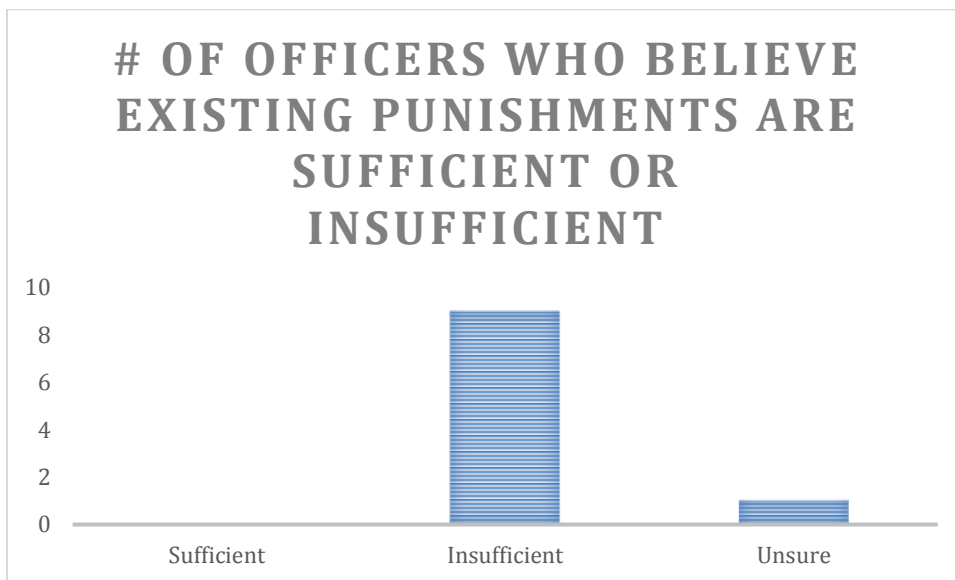
Respondent 1 stated: No. Our Juvenile System needs some drastic changes. Similar to adults, these kids are going to Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and becoming smarter criminals. They, as well as the adults, understand family court and how to manipulate the system. The penalties are weak when it comes to those with no hope. The juveniles are left unsupervised and have access to cellular phones in DJJ. There, they can continue to criminal behavior through the use of social media.

Respondent 8 stated: No I do not, because a lot of juveniles have learned that they will just have to go Family Court-be directed to do community service or some sort of counseling but receive no real punishment. I believe a lot of juveniles think the court system is a joke and does not deter them from being delinquent.

Some of these officer responses led to additional information that could added to the overall discussion regarding specific parts of deterrence theory that are insufficiently addressed through these laws and regulations. To build off the above officer responses, Respondent 5 stated that, "Family Court is a joke and when the juvenile is charged and gets a slap on the hand they realize they can pretty much get away with anything because there isn't much of a punishment."

For Question 3, the first step taken was to identify the parts of deterrence theory that the officers believed were not being addressed. It was gleaned that 5 of the 10 officers believed that all three parts of deterrence theory were not being addressed.

Figure 5. Question 3 results.
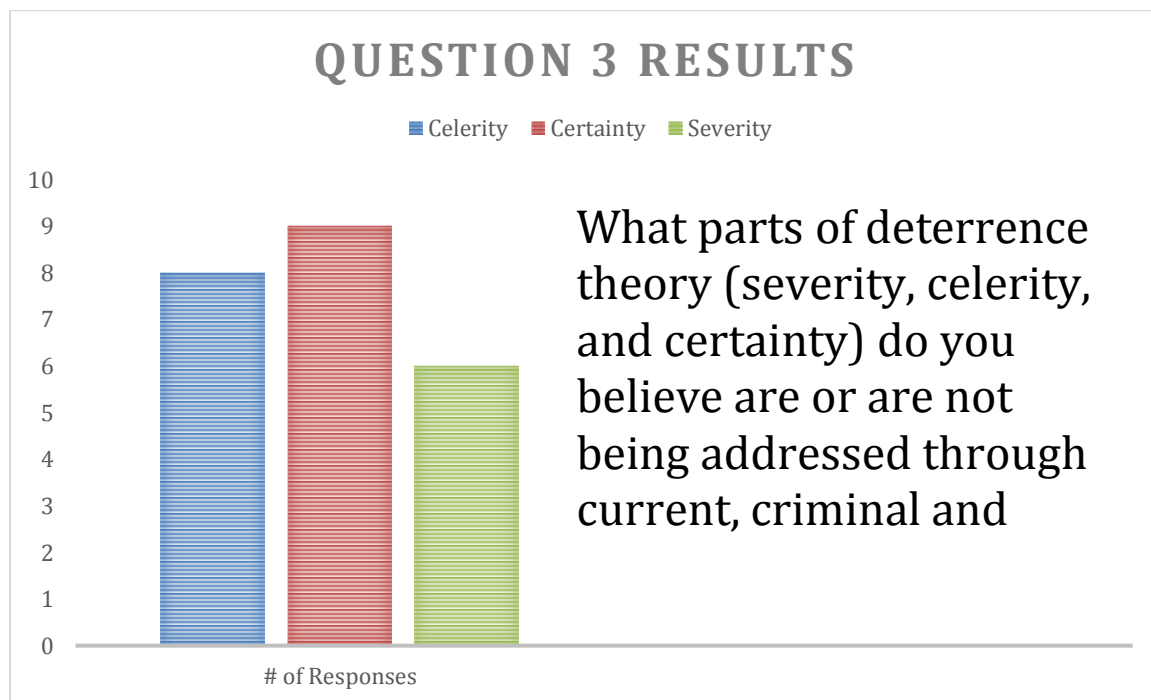
Respondent 6 stated: My belief is that none of the three subparts to the deterrence theory are being utilized in the juvenile justice system nor the local school

penalties. For first time juvenile offenders are often given community service or a program through the solicitors office. In my opinion this is not a punishment but more of a warning not to do what they did. This leads to the thought process of "I am a juvenile and I did not get any punishment I'll do what I want." There is no certainty of what the punishment will be for the crime committed and therefore there is no fear that they will even be punished. The justice system as a whole moves slowly and a majority of the time it is even worse within the juvenile justice system. Court hearings are often months away.

Additionally, Respondent 2 revealed: I do not believe any parts of the deterrence theory are being addressed in the current criminal juvenile punishments because Family Court often takes a couple of months after the offense to occur, the punishment/sentence never seems to be severe enough and it is not even guaranteed a punishment will be handed out. I am not sure where the failure stems from, it is either the solicitor's office or the judiciary process.

It was then found that 3 out of 10 officers stated that certainty was the only area of deterrence theory that they believed was being insufficiently addressed.

Respondent 4 stated: I do not believe juveniles fear getting caught, due to the first punishment being a slap on the wrist. I believe there needs to be more of an emphasis on the types of programs and information we are providing to the juveniles. Some juveniles do not have rules at home, they don't have to deal with consequences and can do what they want without getting into trouble. I believe

with certain juveniles they should be put through a "scared straight program" or some type of mentor program to deter them from making the same mistakes.

The second part was to identify any themes regarding enforcement mechanisms that were mentioned in more detail by the officers and what their sentiments were regarding those sources. For example, two officers mentioned that parental influence plays a role in rules and regulations serving as effective deterrents. For example, and to reiterate as stated above, Respondent 4 stated, "Some juveniles do not have rules at home, they don't have to deal with consequences and can do what they want without getting into trouble."

Additionally, another enforcement mechanism was mentioned from multiple officers that felt that school enforcement was much swifter than the juvenile judicial justice system. Due to the school system being perceived as swifter this addressed issues of celerity that may have otherwise minimized effective deterrence. 7 out of 10 officers mentioned that the juvenile justice system moves far too slowly and therefore, they believed that the current laws and regulations do not serve as effective deterrents. Respondent 6 stated, "The justice system as a whole moves slowly and a majority of the time it is even worse within the juvenile justice system. Court hearings are often months away."

> Respondent 8 stated: Under celerity if the act was committed in a school setting and is reported the school can act faster with immediate consequences whereas in the juvenile justice setting punishment will take weeks if not months depending on case the case load of the courts.

Question 4 answers were coded based on whether the officer believed that educational programs were sufficient or insufficient. As with Question 2, these were coded based on whether the officers believed that the current educational programs that inform students about the types of punishments were sufficient or insufficient to help deter this behavior. 0 out of 10 officers believed that the current educational programs are sufficient. 6 out of 10 officers believed that the current educational programs were insufficient. 4 out of 10 officers stated they were either unsure or that educational programs are somewhat sufficient.

Figure 6. Officers who believe educational programs are sufficient.
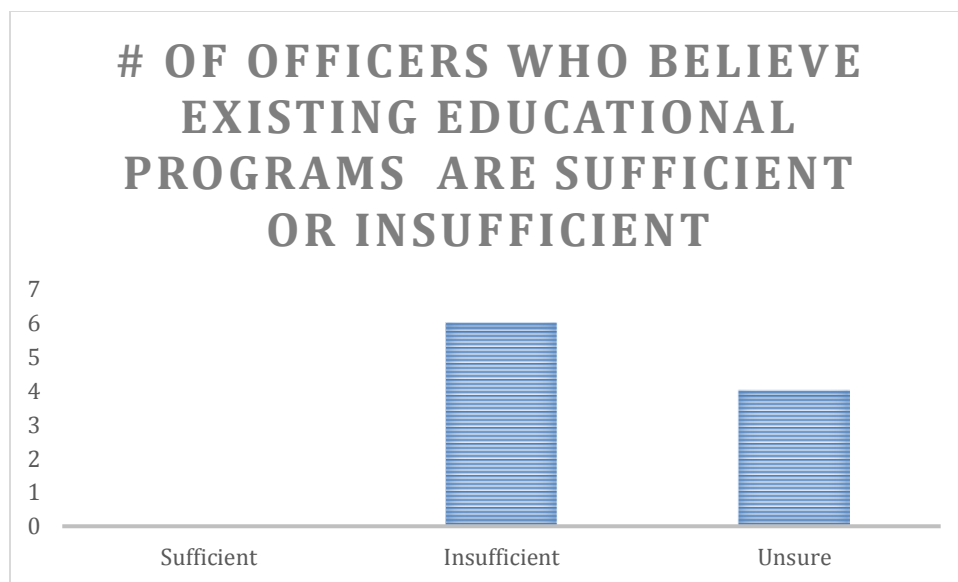
In looking at the responses from officers that believed the current educational programs are insufficient, the answers were then analyzed for themes based on how (if stated) they perceived the education is lacking. The themes that emerged were focused on lack of education, lack of current policy and lack of parental involvement.

Respondent 6 stated: I do not believe that the current laws nor the justice system have caught up with the rise of social media and are continuously attempting to try to combat it. In regards to the child pornography for example in my experience juveniles do not have the education of the law to understand both the child taking the picture and the child receiving the picture can be charged with child pornography. The education is not there to deter juveniles from misusing social media.

Similarly, Respondent 8 stated: I believe education is what's missing. Most kids have no idea they are committing a crime so they act without thinking they are doing anything wrong until after the fact. I think if we educate our youth on what is considered a crime using social media then I think they would think twice about doing it therefor I believe that the current programs, laws and sanctions are sufficient.

The theme of parental involvement also appeared within the responses to questionnaire Question 4. Respondent 2 stated, "I believe the punishment and control of social media and their children should come from the parents." Respondent 9 left an incomplete answer to Questionnaire Question 4. However, this respondent indicated a positive response to him experiencing this perceived phenomenon and therefore, his other responses were still included for data analysis.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The questionnaire questions were formatted in such a way that they were asked for their frank and open responses to the questions. This allowed for the officers to share examples of their experiences. Credibility was provided by the confirmation that all of the officers questioned are employed officers of the department sampled and who have all stated they have experiences relative to this phenomenon.

Transferability

Thick description was provided via respondents' answers. Thick description refers to the use of rich and detailed accounts of experiences (Holloway, 1997). This thick description provided the study with themes relative to social media platforms currently being used by juveniles for carrying out or relating to delinquent acts. This thick description also provided the study with perceptions of the officers relative to deterrence theory and the specific factors they believed are or are not providing deterrent towards these actions. No adjustments were made from the transferability strategy stated in Chapter 3.

Dependability

The officers questioned did not provide any information that could specifically be triangulated for dependability purposes. They did provide examples of delinquency that they had experienced but due to the confidential nature of juvenile cases they could not be confirmed or debunked. An audit trail was kept in the form of researcher reflective journal from inception of the study to now. This audit trail provides notes from

conversations with the committee, chair, expert, and previously employed strategies and why they were abandoned. No adjustments were made to the dependability strategies listed in Chapter 3.

Confirmability

As mentioned above, a researcher reflective journal has been kept in order to track my thought process regarding the study. This reflective journal has been used to show my understanding and implementation of measures during the study. Further, the journal highlights the changes that took place between the first set of questionnaire questions and the final questionnaire. No adjustments were made to the confirmability strategies listed in Chapter 3.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

The results discussed include a look at the findings for each RQ relative to the questions posed to the officers. The findings summarize the overarching and majority sentiments of the officers from the study. These summations provide the most simplified version of the studies results.

RQ 1 revealed a finding that all 10 of the officers questioned did have experience with this phenomenon. This was evidenced by the officers giving examples of types of juvenile delinquent actions relating to social media that they had direct experience with. These experiences included the officers being called on for cases involving juveniles using social media to commit delinquent acts such as harassment, gang activity, and child pornography of self or others. The finding that all 10 officers who responded had experienced this phenomenon can illustrate the need to inspect this phenomenon closer to

identify ways in which to prevent further harm to this class of individuals that is spread by these types of actions.

RQ 2 revealed a finding that the overwhelming majority of officers did not believe that present laws and regulations were deterring juveniles from acting delinquently with social media. This is evidenced by nine officers directly stating so and one officer stating they were unsure. Multiple officers stated that they believe this is because they believe the system is flawed.

RQ 3 revealed a finding that half of the officers believed that all parts of deterrence theory: celerity, certainty and severity were insufficient to deter then types of delinquent juvenile acts. Additionally, 3 of the 10 officers believed that only certainty was insufficiently addressed in present laws and regulations. Therefore, it can be deduced that main theme present is that the certainty of punishment is the overarching area of deterrence theory that is insufficiently addressed in present laws and regulations regarding this phenomenon.

RQ 4 revealed a finding that over half of the officers questioned believed that current educational programs regarding the laws and regulations for these delinquent acts were insufficient and the remainder were unsure. No officers who responded believed that the current educational programs were sufficient. There remaining officers were unsure if current educational programs were sufficient.

Summary

The answers provided by the officers provided that not only is this phenomenon been experienced by all of the officers but also that present laws and regulations lack in

their ability to sufficiently deter juveniles from acting. Further, education regarding those laws and regulations is largely believed to be insufficient to inform juveniles of the potential ramifications of their actions. In summary, the RQ's lead to a finding that present laws and regulations as well as educational programs require a close examination to determine what can be done to inform juveniles of the present laws and regulations relating to this phenomenon. The study finds that many types of juvenile delinquency relating to social media have been experienced by officers. These delinquent acts include cyberbullying or harassment but also include serious offenses such as gang activity, child pornography of self or others, and firearms usage. Within Chapter 5, the study's results will be discussed in further detail relative to previous literature and its potential to bring about positive social change.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Introduction

As I indicated previously in the literature review, juvenile activity within social media platforms continues to expand and grow as technology advances. Examples of juvenile delinquent activity involving these social media platforms was also provided in the Types of Delinquency section of the literature review. There also was discussion on why this activity can be detrimental to not only potential victims of this delinquent action but also the perpetrators, families, and sometimes businesses (for property crimes) under the Impact of Victimization section of the literature review. Some of these delinquent

activities come with penalties at the school district, juvenile justice, and criminal justice levels. Some do not hold any penalties or are difficult to assign to currently regulations as written.

Police officer perceptions provide an appropriate lens for analyzing these delinquent actions committed by juveniles relating to social media due to police officers' proximity to the phenomenon. Deterrence theory served as an appropriate framework for guiding the RQs and providing a structure by which I could measure police officer perceptions of existing relative policy. The primary purpose of this study was to determine if police officers believed that present policy at the school district, juvenile justice, and criminal justice levels in a southeastern state serve as effective deterrents for juvenile delinquent actions relative to social media.

The key findings of the study indicated that police officers are in fact privy to this phenomenon and that it does exist. All of the officers questioned responded that they had experienced this trend and had relatively firm opinions regarding the causes and impact made from juvenile delinquent acts relating to social media. These perceptions included the common consensus from 9 out of the 10 officers that current juvenile justice and criminal justice laws and school district regulations within this southeastern state are insufficient to deter this type of delinquent actions by juveniles.

However, officers were partially split with regard to which parts of deterrence theory were not being properly addressed by these laws and regulations. 5 out of 10 officer participants believed that all three parts of deterrence theory were lacking while addressing this phenomenon. In looking towards those three officers that stated one of the

three parts of deterrence theory coupled with those five officers that believed all three, it is found that the most discussed and concerning area of deterrence theory that officers feel is being neglected is certainty. A conclusion can be made that officers believe that the certainty of being caught or punished is the primary area of deterrence theory that is neglected in these laws and regulations.

Again, officers were split with regard to whether or not they believed that there are proper educational programs to educate juveniles on the severity of their actions and the laws and regulations relating to these actions. Even those officers whom believed that educational programs are available, also believed they were insufficient to provide deterrent for these types of delinquent juvenile acts. Officers either stated they were unsure (four officers) or that they believed the educational programs were not sufficient to provide deterrent (six officers). Therefore, a conclusion could be made that educational programs are lacking in educating juveniles on the laws and regulations that could affect them if they commit delinquent acts relating to social media.

Interpretation of Findings

Prior research largely focused on the impact of victimization and not on deterrents or program efficacy. Additionally, prior research focused predominately on cyberbullying as the acts committed. The results of this study extend the knowledge beyond the impact of victimization researched by O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson, (2011) and cyberbullying as a delinquent act that was highlighted by Hinduja and Patchin (2011). When looking to the type of delinquent action, the literature has been predominately focused on the issue of cyberbullying but little touches on other juvenile delinquent acts relating to social

media or their type. The findings of this study reveal that these police officers who are privy to the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency relating to social media believe that not only is this phenomenon real but that the acts are varied and not just restricted to cyberbullying. The types of delinquent acts indicated as experienced by police officers included, but were not limited to: gang activity, child pornography of self or others, and firearms usage.

Additionally, the officers stated that they perceived that present laws and regulations as written and as used do not deter juveniles from behaving in this manner. Further, these officers believed that the education programs regarding the regulations and laws that are meant to deter these juveniles are inefficient at encouraging deterrence. The officers revealed multiple types of juvenile delinquent acts that they have encountered and provided insight into why they believe the present laws and regulations are ineffective beyond just education of the same. One of these additional areas mentioned as affecting deterrence included parental involvement. These officers stated that the part of deterrence theory that supports a certainty of punishment from school, juvenile, or criminal justice arenas are lacking to properly deter juveniles.

By the nature of their training and education, police officers are knowledgeable on the concept of deterrence theory. Additionally, I provided the officer participants with the definition of deterrence theory within their questionnaire. This assisted in providing reference for the officers when answering their questions regarding deterrence theory. Tewksbury and Mustaine (2013) utilized police officer perceptions to determine if sex offender registration policy was effective in deterring sex offenders. In comparing this

study to the Tewksbury and Mustaine study, it can be confirmed that this study utilized an area of specific knowledge to police officers and their perceptions to create a unique lens with which to focus on deterrence theory. The officers in the Tewksbury and Mustaine study believed that registration policy did not serve as a deterrent for offenders. The researchers also explained that officers do not believe that the registry deters previous offenders from further crime. The officers' sentiments in the Tewksbury and Mustaine study provided strong perceptions that the officers believed present sex offender registry policies were not serving their intended purposes of deterring offenses.

Likewise, police officers in my study stated they did not believe present policies are deterring juveniles from their delinquent behaviors relating to social media. This serves as a correlation to the use of police officer perceptions on deterrence such as that presented in Tewskbury and Mustaine (2013). It also serves as confirmation that the present policy regarding juveniles and delinquency relating to social media is not perceived by officers as serving as an effective deterrent.

Additionally, in looking toward the Rees and Zimmerman (2014) study that found that school sanctions can serve as a general deterrent, it can be deduced that in this study I found that school sanctions are not necessarily serving as general deterrents for juvenile delinquency relating to social media. This is evidenced when looking to the general consensus among officers that these issues when handled by the school are not harshly penalized. Therefore, officers believe that the level of severity is not sufficiently deterring the delinquent acts.

In contrast to the Jordan and Myers (2011) study, in this study I found that police officers believed that the juvenile system is not swift. Officers stated that celerity was an important part of deterrence theory that is lacking with regard to deterring juveniles from acting in this delinquent manner. Additionally, Loughran et al.'s (2015) study findings indicated that juvenile policies that are specific in their penalty and nature are more effective at deterring this population. This would coincide with my findings in this study that found that police officers believed that policy has not caught up and there the certainty aspect of deterrence theory is lacking with regard to this phenomenon. Also, Loughran et al. held that education on policy is also a key part in a policy serving as an effective deterrent. This finding was similarly confirmed by the results of this study in that the officer participants questioned also believed that educational programs to inform juveniles about the potential harm from their actions would be beneficial to help further deter this phenomenon.

Limitations of the Study

All efforts were made as I detailed previously in Chapter 1 to protect any inadvertent responses that disclosed information regarding a specific juvenile or individual. There were no indications within the participants' responses that could have created a breach of that trustworthiness. There was also no confidential information relative to any specific juveniles that was revealed through the participants' responses.

Recommendations

In coupling the findings of Cassidy et al. (2013) along with the findings from this study, I would recommend that future researchers investigate the extent of damage

caused by this phenomenon. Cassidy et al. noted that the damages caused by this phenomenon were different because of the anonymity that social media platforms provide. When combining this information with this study's findings that the area of deterrence theory that is most believed by police officers to be insufficiently addressed is certainty, I then deduced that this anonymity does in fact provide a roadblock to present laws and regulations from serving as effective deterrents. Additionally, as evidenced by the police officer participants' responses in this study, juveniles are perceived to be uneducated in the criminal nature of some of their delinquent actions using social media that involve nudity. As mentioned by Schinder (2012), this type of juvenile act is another delinquency trend relating to social media. Further research into the present education on this specific type of delinquent behavior relating to social media could aid in preventing harmful victimization.

In looking towards the limitations of this study, the most beneficial recommendation would be to uncover the extensiveness of the damage caused as well as additional perspectives from key stakeholders such as parents, educators and juveniles. Although the extent and damage is difficult to measure from this study, further investigation into the extensiveness of this phenomenon could provide more urgency for change. Additionally, in this study I focused on the perspectives of police officers due to their proximity to the issue within the criminal and juvenile justice systems. There were also perspectives from a school resource officer for perspectives relative to school regulations. It could be beneficial to conduct further research from a school teacher or administrator perspective. Obtaining juvenile perspectives could also be beneficial but

difficult to obtain due to their protected classification. Juvenile perspectives would give more insight into the potential reasons why the present laws and regulations may or may not be serving as a deterrent. Alternatively, as pointed out by Dowdell et al. (2011), utilizing juvenile perceptions could also lead to exaggeration and underreporting, and therefore, should be utilized cautiously.

As I stated in Chapter 1, the conceptual framework of this study centered on policy analysis relating to social media and juvenile delinquency and also centered on deterrence theory. The broad analysis of present school regulatory, criminal justice, and juvenile justice policies was presented under a deterrence theory umbrella. I considered both general and specific deterrence theories as described by Beccaria (1963) and Bentham (1948) in that criminal justice policies are generally enacted for a broader population while school regulations and juvenile justice policies are created for the specific population of juveniles. Revisiting Nagin's (2013) belief that a link must exist to create a real perceived risk between the actions and the sanctions, I used questionnaire questions for the officer participants that asked what areas of deterrence theory the officers believed was lacking. This gleaned a finding that all areas of deterrence theory were lacking. It can be deduced that the officers' perception was that there is no real perceived risk between the delinquent actions made by juveniles relating to social media and the present sanctions available. I also believed from this finding that all areas of deterrence theory need additional attention and enhancement in present policy at the school regulatory, criminal, and juvenile justice levels. This attention should be paid to

the severity, celerity, and certainty within present policies and is necessary to strengthen the perceived risk and association with these actions by juveniles to deter this behavior.

Positive Social Change Implications

The potential impact for a positive social change from this study stems from the revelations that present laws and regulations in this southeastern state are believed to not be efficient at deterring this type of behavior by police officers. I believed the officers' closeness to this phenomenon to provide reliability to indicate the seriousness of the results implications. Firstly, the police officer participants stated that they believe the current educational programs are insufficient to educate juveniles on the criminality and delinquent nature of their actions through social media.

An additional or modified emphasis on educating juveniles on the potential ramifications of their actions could lead to a decrease in occurrence. Also, in looking towards the results of the Spizman et al. (2013) study, students support law enforcements' use of social media as an investigative tool as long as they do not feel their privacy is being invaded. It is worth consideration to look into a community-oriented education program that will provide not only education regarding the potential punishments from these types of delinquent acts but also simultaneously fostering trust between officers and juveniles by maintaining juveniles' privacy on social media platforms.

As mentioned by Lew (2012), the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Justice presently place a large emphasis on education to protect juveniles online. In finding that the police officers questioned in this study believe that education is

lacking, it could be deduced that the same emphasis could be beneficial on a local level to prevent victimization and reduce juvenile delinquency relating to social media. Lew noted the importance of police presence in schools through school resource officers and it is important to note that a school resource officer was also a participant in this study. This school resource officer also stated that they did not believe that the present educational programs do enough to educate juveniles on the ramifications of these types of behaviors.

Secondly, positive social change could come from the modification or addition of laws and regulations that provide more deterrence. This study is limited in perceiving if either of these changes supersedes the other but it does highlight the realization that change is necessary in order to assist in deterring juveniles from committing these delinquent acts. It is unclear if modification or addition of laws and regulations would solely lead to deterrence but based on officers' responses, there is a gap in the education of juveniles relative to current laws and regulations.

As previously discussed, the unique combination of anonymity provided by social media platforms coupled with a lack of education on present laws and regulations relative to juvenile delinquency and social media, presents a formula for deterrence theory to operate ineffectively. Laws and regulations are, by their nature, created to present a deterrent from delinquent behavior. As Paternoster (1987) believed, deterrence theory principals can be applied to juveniles. Therefore, there is a disservice being made to the juvenile population, as well as the general public, when the present laws and regulations are prevented from serving their purposes and deterrence theory is hindered.

Policy makers and key stakeholders have an interest in ensuring that today's policy protects youth as well as themselves. Key recommendations include revisiting existing policy in all areas that guide deterrence including school regulations, juvenile justice policy and criminal justice policy. The recommendations are limited to these areas due to this study reaching only those potential areas of policy that serve as a deterrence. However, researchers are highly encouraged to seek other areas of potential deterrence such as parental involvement and demographic factors, due to the reference of these matters in the police officers' responses to this study. Likewise, companies that operate these social media platforms hold an interest in ensuring their company is not liable for actions taken by juveniles that lead to individual harm or social disruption through delinquency on these platforms.

Conclusion

The youth of today are exposed to technology and social experiences unlike that of generations before. These new potential areas of delinquency relative to social medial platforms for juveniles to fall victim to or become offenders of, requires much focus and consideration. In utilizing police experiences of the types of offenses occurring and their cycle through the different systems, I was able to determine some of the extent and areas of further exploration within this phenomenon. Additionally, using police officer perceptions as a guide to further determine ways in which to effectively deter this behavior provides a lens to guide potential policy modifications.

References

Akers, R. (2013). *Criminological theories: Introduction and evaluation.* Abingdon,

   United Kingdom: Routledge Press.

Bandura, A. (1963). *Social learning and personality development.* New York, NY:

   Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Banta-Green C. J., Beletsky, L., Coffin, P. O., Kuszler, P. C., & Schoeppe, J. A. (2013).

   Police officers and paramedics experiences with overdose and their knowledge

   and opinions of Washington states' drug overdose naloxone good Samaritan law.

   Journal Urban Health, 90(6),1102-1111. doi:10.1007/s11524-013-9814-y.

Barnard-Wills, D. (2012). E-safety education: Young people, surveillance and

   responsibility. *Criminology and Criminal Justice, 12*(3), 239-255.

   doi:10.1177/1748895811432957.

Bates, K. A., & Swan, S. (2013). *Juvenile delinquency in a diverse society. Social*

   science. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Beccaria, C. (1963). *On crimes and punishments* (H. Paolucci, Trans.).

   New York, NY: Macmillan. (Original work published 1764)

Bentham, J. (1948). *An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*. New

   York: Macmillan.

Beran, T. N., Rinaldi, C., Bickham, D. S., & Rich, M. (2012). Evidence for the need to

   support adolescents dealing with harassment and cyber-harassment: Prevalence,

   progression, and impact. *School Psychology International, 33*(5), 562-576.

   doi:10.1177/0143034312446976.

Bossler A. M., Holt, T. J., & May, D. (2011). Low self-control, deviant peer associations, and juvenile cyberdeviance. *Southern Criminal Justice Association*. doi:10.1007/s12103-011-9117-3.

Bossler, A. M., & Holt, T. J. (2012). Patrol officers' perceived role in responding to cybercrime. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, 35*(1). 165-181. doi:10.1108/13639511211215504.

Bossler, A. M., & Holt, T. J. (2013). Assessing officer perceptions and support for online community policing. *Security Journal, 26*(4), 349-366. doi:10.1057/sj.2013.23.

Bossler, A. M., & Holt, T. J. (2016). *Cybercrime in progress: Theory and prevention of technology-enabled offenses. Crime science series.* Abingdon-on-Thames, United Kingdom: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Campbell, R. (2013, April 16). The dark side of social media: A new way to rape. *CNN*. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/16/opinion/campbell-rape-social-media.

Cassidy W., Faucher, C., & Jackson, M. (2013). Cyberbullying among youth: A comprehensive review of current international research and its implications and application to policy and practice. *School Psychology International, 34*(6), 575-612. doi:10.1177/0143034313479697.

Castillo, M. (2013, April 12). Teens accused of posting pictures of sexual assault. *CNN*. Retrieved from http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/12/justice/california-rape-arrests.

CBS Pittsburgh. (2013). Teens arrested for death threats against Steubenville rape victim. Retrieved from http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/2013/03/18/police-probe-death-threats-against-steubenville-rape-victim/.

Christofides, E., Muise, A., & Desmarais, S. (2012). Risky disclosures on Facebook: The effect of having a bad experience on online behavior. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 27*(6), 714-731. doi:10.1177/0743558411432635.

Cohen, D., & Crabtree, B. (2006). Qualitative research guidelines project. http://www.qualres.org/HomeStru-3628.htm.

Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (*3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

D'Arcy, J., & Devaraj, S. (2012). Employee misuse of information technology resources: Testing a contemporary deterrence model. *Decision Sciences*, *43*(6), 1091-1124. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5915.2012.00383.x.

Dowdell, E. B., Burgess, A. W., & Flores, J. R. (2011). Original research: Online social networking patterns among adolescents, young adults, and sexual offenders. *The American Journal of Nursing, 111*(7), 28-36. doi:10.1097/01.NAJ.0000399310.83160.73.

Fagan, J., Kupchik, A., & Liberman, A. (2003). *Be careful what you wish for: The comparative impacts of juvenile versus criminal court sanctions on recidivism among adolescent felony offenders.* Public Law Research Paper No. 03-61. New York, NY: Columbia University Law School.

Fuller, E. J. & Redding, R. E. (2004). What do juvenile offenders know about being tried

as adults?: Implications for deterrence. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal, 55*(3), 35-45. http://ssrn.com/abstract=648621.

Giammonna, C. (2013, April 14). California case another three part tragedy of rape, cyber bullying and suicide. *NBC News.* Retrieved from http://usnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/04/14/17747411-california-case-another-three-part-tragedy-of-rape-cyber-bullying-and-suicide?lite.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59-82. doi:10.1177/1525822X05279903

Hagan, J., Gillis, A. R., & Brownfield, D., (1996). Criminological controversies: A methodical primer. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc.

Hartman, K. I. (2011). Thieves use Facebook, Twitter to co-ordinate 'flashrob' thefts. *Digital Journal.* Retrieved from http://digitaljournal.com/article/309640#tab=comments&sc=0.

Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. (2006). Bullies move beyond the schoolyard: A preliminary look at cyber-bullying. *Youth Violent and Juvenile Justice, 4*(2), 148-169. doi: 10.1177/1541204006286288.

Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. (2010). Trends in online social networking: Adolescent use of MySpace over time. *New Media and Society, 12*(2), 197-216. doi:10.1177/1461444809341857.

Hinduja, S., & Patchin, J. (2011). Traditional and nontraditional bullying among youth: A

test of general strain theory. *Youth and Society, 43*(2), 727-751. doi:
10.1177/0044118X10366951.

Holloway, I. (1997). Basic concepts for qualitative research. London, England: Blackwell
Science.

InternetWorldStats.com. (2012). Internet users in the world. Retrieved from
internetworldstats.com/stats.htm.

Ismaili, K. (2015). U.S. Criminal Justice Policy (2nd ed.) Burlington, MA. Jones and
Bartlett Publishers.

Jones, L. M., Finkelhor, D., Nair, R., & Collett, M. (2013). Trends in youth victimization
and well-being, and implications for youth policy. *New England Journal of Public
Policy, 25*(1), 4. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2011.09.015.

Jones, L. M., Mitchell, K. J., & Finkelhor, D. (2013). Online harassment in context:
Trends from three Youth Internet Safety Surveys (2000, 2005, 2010). *Psychology
of Violence, 3*(1), 53-69. doi:10.1037/a0030309.

Jordan, K. L., & Myers, D. L. (2011). Juvenile transfer and deterrence: Reexamining the
effectiveness of a "get-tough" policy. *Crime and Delinquency, 57*(2). 247-270.
doi:10.1177/0011128708319111.

Lew, C. (2012). Where have all the children gone? *Journal of California Law
Enforcement, 46*(1), 7-13. California Peace Officers' Association.

Loughran, T. A., Brame, R., Fagan, J., Piquero, A. R., Mulvey, E. P., & Schubert, C. A.

(2015). Studying deterrence among high-risk adolescents. Retrieved from

http://www.corrections.com/system/assets/0000/1214/OJJDP_Studying_Deterenc

e_Amount_High_Risk_Adolescents.pdf

Macur, J., & Schweber, N. (2012, December 17). Rape case unfolds on web and splits

city. *The New York Times.* Retrieved from

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/17/sports/high-school-football-rape-case-

unfolds-online-and-divides-steubenville-ohio.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

Mears, D. P. (2003). A critique of waiver research: Critical next steps in assessing the

impact of laws for transferring juveniles to the criminal justice system. *Youth*

Violence and Juvenile Justice, 1(2), 156-172. doi:10.1177/1541204002250876.

Mocan, H. N., & Rees, D. I. (2005). Economic conditions, deterrence, and juvenile

crime: Evidence from micro data. *American Law and Economics Review, 7*(2),

319-349. https://doi.org/10.1093/aler/ahi011

Myers, D. L. (2001). *Excluding violent youths from juvenile court: The effectiveness of*

legislative waiver. New York, NY: LFB Scholarly.

Myers, D. L. (2003). The recidivism of violent youths in juvenile and adult court: A

consideration of selection bias. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 1*(1), 79-101.

doi:10.1177/1541204002238365.

Myers, D. L. (2005). Boys among men: Trying and sentencing juveniles as adults.

Westport, CT: Praeger.

Nagin, D. (2013). Deterrence in the twenty-first century. *Crime and Justice, 42*(1), 199-

263. doi:10.1086/670398.

Najdowski, C. J., Cleary, H. D., & Stevenson, M. C. (2016). Adolescent sex offender

    registration policy: Perspectives on general deterrence potential from criminology

    and developmental psychology. *Psychology, Public Policy, And Law, 22*(1), 114-

    125. doi:10.1037/law0000059.

O'Keeffe, G. S., & Clarke-Pearson, K. (2011). The impact of social media on children,

    adolescents, and families. *Pediatrics: Official Journal of the American Academy*

    of Pediatrics. 127(4). 800-804. doi:10.1542/peds.2011-0054.

Oppel, R. A. (2013). Ohio teenagers guilty in rape that social media brought to light. *The*

    New York Times. Retrieved from

    http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/18/us/teenagers-found-guilty-in-rape-in-

    steubenville-ohio.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

O'Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2012). Unsatisfactory saturation: A critical exploration

    of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. *Qualitative*

    Research Journal, *13*(2), 190-197. doi:10.1177/1468794112446106.

Paternoster, R. (1987). The deterrent effect of the perceived certainty and severity of

    punishment. *Justice Quarterly, 4*(2), 173-218.

Paternoster, R. & Bachman, R. (2012). Perceptual Deterrence Theory. The Oxford

    Handbook of Criminological Theory. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford

    University Press. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199747238.013.0033.

Patton, D. U. Eschmann, R. D., & Butler, D. A. (2013). Internet banging: New trends

    in social media, gang violence, masculinity and hip-hop. *Computers in Human*

    Behavior, 29, A54-A59. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.035.

Patton, D. U., Hong, J. S., Ranney, M., Patel, S., Kelley, C., Eschmann, R., & Washington, T. (2014). Social media as a vector for youth violence: A review of the literature. *Computers In Human Behavior*, *35*, 548-553. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2014.02.043.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Pew Research Center. (2016). Questionnaire design. Retrieved from http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/questionnaire-design/.

Redding, R. E. (2003) The effects of adjudicating and sentencing juveniles as adults: research and policy implications. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 1*, 128-55.

Redding, R. E. (2005). *Adult punishment for juvenile offenders: Does it reduce crime? Handbook on children, culture and violence.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rees, C., & Zimmerman, G.M. (2014). Do school disciplinary policies have positive social impacts? Examining the attenuating effects of school policies on the relationship between personal and peer delinquency. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 42*(1), 54-65. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2013.12.003.

Royster, M. (2012). The success and failure of Scared Straight: A reassessment of juvenile delinquency deterrent methods and their measurements. *International Journal Of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, *6*(8), 145-151.

Schinder, D. (2012). Juvenile cyber delinquency laws are turning kids into criminals. *IT*

Security. Retrieved from http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/it-security/juvenile-cyber-delinquency-laws-that-are-turning-kids-into-criminals/

Schneider, A. L., & Ervin, L. (1990). Specific deterrence, rational choice, and decision heuristics: Applications in juvenile justice. *Social Science Quarterly, 71*(3), 585-601.

Sela-Shayovitz, R. (2012). Gangs and the web: Gang members' online behavior. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 28*(4). 389-405. doi: 10.1177/1043986212458191.

Smith, C., Rush, J. P., Robinson, D., & Karmiller, M. (2011). Flashgangs and flash gangbanging: How can local police prepare? *Journal of Gang Research. 20*, 33-50. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/1131264/Flashgangs_and_Flashgangbanging_How_can_local_police_prepare.

Smith, S. (2012). Flash mobs and flash robs: The law enforcement response. *Law & Order, 60*(4), 34-37.

Spizman, R. J., & Miller, M. K. (2013). Plugged-in policing: Student perceptions of law enforcement's use of social media. *Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice, 9*(2), 100-123.

Steinblatt, H. (2013) E-Incitement: A framework for regulating the incitement of criminal flash mobs. Fordham Intellectual Property. *Media and Entertainment Legal Journal, 22*(3), 753-793.

Tewksbury, R., & Mustaine, E. E. (2013). Law-enforcement officials' views of sex

offender registration and community notification. *Police Science & Management*,

 15(2), 95–113. doi:10.1350/ijps.2013.15.2.305

Wadman, R. C. (2009). Police theory in America: Old traditions and New Opportunities.

 Springfield, IL. Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Ltd.

Wilner, A. (2015). Contemporary deterrence theory and counterterrorism: A bridge too

 far? *International Law and Politics, 47*, 439-462.

Appendix A: Research Questionnaire (Online Version)

Research Study on:

Police Officers' Perceptions of Social Media's Involvement on Delinquent Behavior by

Juveniles

Welcome to the 'Police Officers' Perceptions of Social Media's Involvement on

Delinquent Behavior by Juveniles' questionnaire. Your consent to participate in this

study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. No identifying

information is being collected and therefore, the study is confidential. Your department

management has cleared your participation in this study and you are authorized to

complete this questionnaire during non-critical work hours and/or while off duty.

Study Abstract:

The rapid growth of the Internet and social media platforms coupled with

technological savviness of juveniles has led to in delinquent behavior involving or via

social media by juveniles. Public policy must also adapt to this trend and seek to not only

understand it but also to modify, remove or add policies that will protect this vulnerable

population of both the juvenile perpetrators and their victims. In seeking to determine if

current policies are effective in a southeastern state, questionnaires to evaluate police

perception will be utilized to uncover potential weaknesses or strengths in existing

policy. Police officers were chosen due to their pertinent knowledge and proximity to this

issue. The perceptions and experiences of these police officers should provide

informative guidance for policy makers in determining the extent and breadth of this

phenomenon as well as the efficacy of current policy in the chosen region.

The questionnaire consists of 4 questions. Please answer all questions with local and state juvenile justice status punishments, local and state criminal sanctions and local school penalties in mind. This study is specifically geared towards juvenile acts and delinquency trends relating to social media in this locality.

Please use the below definition to assist you in answering any of the questions below.

__Deterrence theory__ says that people obey the law because they are scared of getting caught and being punished. In order for deterrence to be effective it should contain three subparts, which are:
__Severity__- the punishment is severe enough to deter;
__Certainty__- punishment is certain or feared to be certain; and
__Celerity__- the punishment will come quickly after the crime.

2. What are your perceptions and experiences with juvenile acts of delinquency relating to social media (Please describe any incidents that you have been a responding officer in which a juvenile or a group of juveniles have used social media and have engaged in troubling or criminal behavior to relating to juveniles and delinquent acts relating to social media). If none, please state "N/A".

3. Do you believe that existing juvenile justice punishments, criminal and juvenile justice sanctions, and local school penalties deter juveniles from behaving delinquently when juveniles may use social media to behave in a deviant manner? (Please describe why or why not)

4. What parts of deterrence theory (severity, celerity, and certainty) do you believe are or are not being addressed through current, criminal and juvenile justice punishments, sanctions, and local school penalties? (See definition of deterrence theory and subparts above if needed. Please provide as much detail regarding why you believe these parts are or are not being addressed properly).

5. Do you believe that current local and state education programs regarding, criminal and juvenile justice punishments, sanctions, and local school penalties relating to social media are sufficient to educate juveniles on the same? (Please describe why or why not)

6. What is your rank? (optional)
7. How long have you been a police officer? (optional)

Thank you for your participation in the 'Police Officers' Perceptions of Social Media's Involvement on Delinquent Behavior by Juveniles' questionnaire.

Should you have any questions or desire to withdraw your answers from the study, please contact the researcher (XXXXXXX).

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
<DATE>

Dear Rachel Wisnefski,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "Police Officers' Perceptions of Social Media's Involvement on Delinquent Behavior by Juveniles" within the XXXXXXXX. As part of this study, I authorize you to distribute an invitation via a flyer (sample attached) for officers to participate in an online questionnaire (draft attached) and for officers to complete the online questionnaire during non-critical work hours and/or while off duty. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include:

- distributing the invitational flyers to all officers at roll call meetings on two separate occasions,
- allowing officers to complete the online questionnaire during non-critical work hours and/or while off duty.

All flyer materials will be provided to the department at the student's expense. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

The student will be responsible for complying with our site's research policies and requirements.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not

be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without

permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

XXXXXXXX

Walden University policy on electronic signatures: An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Electronic signatures are only valid when the signer is either (a) the sender of the email, or (b) copied on the email containing the signed document. Legally an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. Walden University staff verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Walden).

Appendix C: Participation Flyer

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR
RESEARCH IN
CRIMINAL JUSTICE & JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

We are looking for volunteers to take part in a study of:
Police Officers' Perceptions of Social Media's Involvement on Delinquent Behavior by

Juveniles

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to:
Complete a 4-item online questionnaire regarding your experiences
with juvenile delinquency relating to social media.

This questionnaire is entirely ***confidential***.

Your department has cleared your participation in this study and you are
authorized to complete this questionnaire during non-critical work hours and/or while off
duty.

Your participation would involve completion of one questionnaire, which is
estimated to take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete.

To participate in this study, please visit:
<WEBSITE LINK HERE>
If you have any questions,
please contact:
Rachel Wisnefski, M.A.
at
Telephone: XXXXXXXX
Email: XXXXXXXX

The study has been reviewed and approved by the
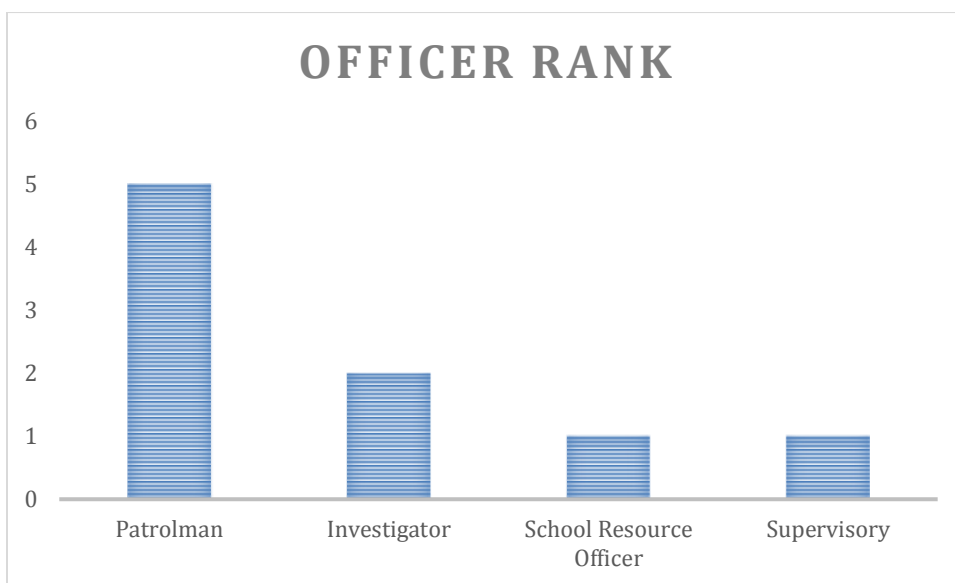**Institutional Review Board, Walden University**
Sample question below:
What are your perceptions and experiences with juvenile justice status
punishments, criminal sanctions and school penalties regarding juvenile
delinquency relating to social media? (Please describe any incidents that you have
been a responding officer in which a juvenile or a group of juveniles have used
social media and have engaged in troubling or criminal behavior to relating to
juvenile delinquency and social media)

Appendix D: Demographic Question Responses

The responses for Question 5 were as follows:

Figure 7. Officer Ranks.

OFFICER RANK

Rank	Count
Patrolman	5
Investigator	2
School Resource Officer	1
Supervisory	1

The responses for Question 6 were as follows:

Figure 8. Years in service.

YEARS AS A POLICE OFFICER

Years	Count
0 - 5 years	5
6 - 10 years	2
11 - 15 years	1
16+ years	1