

INCREASING CONFIDENCE IN THE CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE SYSTEM THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION

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By

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## ABSTRACT

Recent polls suggest that less than half (46%) of Canadians are confident in the criminal justice system (CJS) as a whole (e.g., Roberts, 2004). Low levels of public confidence are problematic, as the criminal justice system relies on public support in order to function effectively (Casey, 2008). Previous research has found that attitudes toward the CJS are typically based on misperceptions and misinformation, with the public being unaware of the functioning of the CJS as well as crime trends (e.g., Doob, 2000). Therefore, it seems logical that providing the public with factual information about crime and criminal justice may lead to increased confidence. A handful of studies conducted in the United Kingdom have shown that, in general, public education does lead to increased confidence (e.g., Hough & Park, 2002). However, questions pertaining to the mode of delivery have been raised (Singer & Cooper, 2009). Therefore, three studies were conducted in order to further investigate this issue as well as to delve into the differences between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ learning. Whereas active learning refers to being actively engaged in the learning process through various means (e.g., discussion, problem-solving), passive learning refers to passively obtaining information, such as by listening or by reading (Prince, 2004). Before attempting to change public opinion of the CJS, it is crucial that we first have a comprehensive understanding of what these opinions and attitudes are. As such, Study 1, a quantitative survey of CJS knowledge and attitudes, and Study 2, qualitative focus groups, were conducted. Results from these two studies were used to develop materials for Study 3: Increasing confidence in the CJS through education. As has been found in past research, participants who received CJS information had a higher level of knowledge than controls, who received information about Canada’s health care system. Interestingly, the type of learning (active vs. passive) did not have an effect on CJS knowledge. However, an effect was observed in regards to confidence and satisfaction: Participants who received CJS information through active learning were more confident in the CJS and had a higher level of satisfaction. These results have important implications for real-world interventions.

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## DEDICATION

As my mom is the one who has encouraged me since kindergarten, I feel it is only fitting that this thesis is dedicated to her. She has been there every step of the way with me - maybe not always in person, but always in my heart. She has helped me more than she will ever know and I am more grateful than words can express.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Public opinion polls conducted around the world have shown low rates of public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS; Latimer & Desjardins, 2007; Roberts, 2004; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Recent polls suggest that fewer than half (46%) of Canadians are confident in the CJS as a whole (Roberts, 2004). Saskatchewan residents have the third lowest rate of public confidence in the Canadian CJS, with only 51% of those surveyed reporting “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence (Statistics Canada, 2003). Although less than half of Canadians are confident in the CJS, this figure is substantially larger than the 29% of Americans who report being confident in the CJS<sup>1</sup> (Roberts, 2004). When asked to differentiate between various components, differing levels of confidence are found for the different facets of the CJS: Canadians report the highest confidence in the police followed by the courts and corrections (Latimer & Desjardins, 2007; Roberts, 2004).

Low levels of public confidence are problematic, as the CJS relies on public support in order to function effectively (Casey, 2008). Members of a society are more likely to comply with rules and regulations when they see legal authorities as being legitimate (Tyler & Huo, 2002). Furthermore, individuals who are not confident in the CJS are less likely to report crimes, to provide police with helpful information, or to testify as a witness in court trials (Indermaur & Hough, 2002; Roberts, 2004; Roberts & Edwards, 1989). There are also implications for social cohesion (Roberts, 2004). Statistics Canada (2003) found that people who have higher levels of confidence in the CJS were more likely to report a greater sense of belonging to Canada. In a similar vein, Tyler and Blader (2000) found that participants in the United States reported less rule-breaking behaviour (such as illegal activities) when respondents were more engaged in their communities and community activities.

A major source of dissatisfaction found in public opinion polls is that the public sees the CJS as being too lenient on offenders. This is hardly surprising, as there is a high level of

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the statistics used to compare the levels of confidence between Americans and Canadians were derived from two separate studies which utilized different methodologies. Therefore, we cannot be certain that this difference is due to differences in confidence levels and not methodological differences.

ignorance regarding the CJS, with most members of the public being unaware of average sentence lengths for particular offences and not being informed of alternatives to incarceration (e.g., community sentences; Cullen, Fisher, & Applegate, 2000; Doob, 2000; Indermaur & Hough, 2002; Hough & Park, 2002; Stalans & Diamond, 1990). Canadians also have a poor knowledge of crime trends. Canadians tend to believe that crime rates are increasing, over-estimate recidivism rates, as well as over-estimate the number of offenders who are granted parole (Roberts, 2004). Furthermore, laypersons typically overestimate the severity of typical offences that appear in court (Stalans & Diamond, 1990). This misinformation lends itself to negative attitudes and lowered confidence in the CJS (Roberts, 2004). Perceptions and attitudes based on misinformation may be problematic, as policymakers base decisions regarding crime and criminal justice on public opinion (Casey, 2008; Latimer & Desjardins, 2007).

### **Strategies for Increasing Public Confidence in the CJS**

Public education is one method of increasing public confidence in the CJS. Laypersons typically do not have an accurate perception of crime trends or of the typical cases heard in courts (Roberts, 2004; Stalans & Diamond, 1990). If the public was educated on national crime trends and sentencing practices, perhaps this would increase satisfaction and confidence in the CJS. Although increasing public confidence in the CJS has not been researched extensively, a few attempts have been made to increase confidence by educating the public. Much of this research has occurred in the United Kingdom, where raising public confidence in the CJS is a goal of the government. This research is reviewed below.

#### **The 1994 British Deliberative Poll**

In 1994, the National Centre for Social Research and Channel 4 Television collaborated in order to carry out the first deliberative poll in England. A deliberative poll gathers a large, representative group of individuals who are then educated about a topic (in this instance, criminal justice) by a group of professionals. These individuals also participate in group discussions regarding the information they have been presented with. Participants' attitudes toward the topic in question are measured both before and after the deliberative poll (Hough & Park, 2002). In this instance, the deliberative poll was televised throughout the United Kingdom

in the hope that others would also benefit from the deliberative poll, even though they were not physically present.

For the first stage of the 1994 British deliberative poll on crime, 869 respondents were interviewed regarding their views on crime and justice. Although all respondents were invited to participate in the deliberative poll which lasted an entire weekend, 297 respondents attended. Participants attended presentations by various criminal justice professionals, academics, an ex-prisoner, and representatives from the three main political parties. Respondents were given opportunities to ask the speakers questions as well as participated in several group discussions. Immediately following the weekend, participants' attitudes toward crime and justice were once again measured. A follow-up interview was administered ten months later in order to evaluate the endurance of any attitude changes (Hough & Park, 2002).

Before the deliberative poll, respondents had quite harsh views of sentencing, had little support for rehabilitation, and did not feel that the police were effective. For example, over 80% of respondents felt that tougher sentences should be given to criminals, and the majority of participants felt that the government should focus its spending and efforts on punishing rather than reforming offenders. Following the deliberative poll, participants tended to adopt more liberal views. There was less support for harsh prison sentences and more of an emphasis on preventative measures such as improved security and neighbourhood watch in high crime areas. These changes were still present at the ten month follow-up interview (Hough & Park, 2002).

### **The Impact of Mode of Delivery**

Not surprisingly, the main disadvantage of deliberative polls is that they are very expensive. However, attempts to cut costs by inviting fewer participants result in reduced generalizability of results (Hough & Park, 2002). One possible way to circumvent this disadvantage would be to create standardized materials containing the information presented by the experts at the deliberative poll, such as videos or booklets. In 2000, the British Home Office attempted to increase public confidence in the criminal justice system through three methods: (1) a booklet, (2) a seminar, and (3) a video. Attitudes and knowledge regarding the criminal justice system were assessed via pre and post interviews, with the post interviews occurring several weeks after the study (Mirrlees-Black, 2002).

The booklets were written in easy to understand language and used bright colours, charts, and photographs in order to maintain reader attention. Four seminars were held throughout the United Kingdom. Presentations were given by an academic, a prison governor, and a probation officer and included the same information that was in the booklet. Unlike deliberative polling, no group discussions were held. The video consisted of one of the seminars which was filmed. Additional video footage included police cars, courts, prisons, and interviews with prisoners. Each of the three formats included a description of the stages of the criminal justice system, as well as statistics on crime rates and sentencing patterns (Mirrlees-Black, 2002).

In order to measure knowledge, both before and after the three formats, participants were administered a questionnaire which asked eleven questions regarding criminal justice system procedures and statistics. On the pre-test, initial knowledge was found to be poor, with nine out of 10 participants answering more than half of the questions incorrectly. All three formats resulted in a significant increase in knowledge, with the video resulting in the highest increase, and the booklet and seminar resulting in equal knowledge increase. However, the higher increase in knowledge in the video condition may be due to the fact that these participants were administered the post-test sooner than the participants in the other conditions. In addition to an increase in knowledge, participants in all three conditions were also found to have more confidence in the criminal justice system as a whole (Mirrlees-Black, 2002).

A follow-up study was conducted by Salisbury (2004) in order to further explore the effectiveness of the CJS booklet, as it was the least expensive option assessed by Mirrlees-Black (2002). The booklet was delivered to 845 participants. Participants were not instructed to read it nor were they informed that they would later be tested on the information. Approximately two weeks later participants were contacted for a follow-up interview. The British Crime Survey (BCS) is an annual face-to-face survey administered to approximately 47,000 individuals. The BCS contains an item measuring general public confidence in the CJS which reads, 'how confident are you that the criminal justice system is effective in bringing people to justice.' These data were used as a baseline measure.

It was found that participants who either read or 'flicked through' the booklet (62%) had an increased knowledge of crime trends. Furthermore, these participants also reported higher

levels of confidence in the CJS. However, when the researchers examined a subsample of BCS respondents who did *not* receive the booklet, it was found that these individuals also showed an increase in confidence. This suggests that merely being involved with the BCS may change one's views and that the difference in confidence levels might not be due to an increase in knowledge.

Since the BCS provides an annual measure of public confidence in the CJS, researchers are able to make year-to-year comparisons. When BCS data from 2003 were compared with 2008 data, it was found that although there was a statistically significant improvement, over half (56%) were still either *not very* or *not at all* confident in the CJS. In order to increase confidence, a public information booklet containing information on crime and criminal justice was distributed in a Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) area with relatively low levels of confidence in the CJS. In order to obtain baseline data, a telephone survey was administered (Singer & Cooper, 2009).

This 20-page booklet was distributed to over 2000 individuals. A booklet was chosen as previous research (Mirrlees-Black, 2002; Salisbury, 2004) showed that this was the most cost-effective way of increasing knowledge. The booklet was delivered by one of three ways: (1) directly mailing the booklet to an individual, (2) handing the booklet to the individual with limited interaction, and (3) handing the booklet to the individual as well as providing a verbal summary of the information. This manipulation was included in order to explore the effect of active and passive interest. A fourth group served as a control group and did not receive the booklet. A follow-up telephone survey was administered, on average, four weeks later (Singer & Cooper, 2009).

Analyses revealed that participants in all three of the experimental groups had a significantly higher level of knowledge at the post-test as compared to the control group. Although the differences were not statistically significant, there was a general trend for participants in the two contact conditions to score higher than participants who had the booklet mailed to them. Interestingly, although all three conditions resulted in an increase in knowledge, only participants in the two contact conditions had post-test confidence levels that were significantly higher than the control group. No significant differences were found between the mail condition and the control group. The follow-up survey also found that participants in the

contact conditions (46.0%) were more likely to read the booklet than participants in the mail condition (36.1%). This study showed that the method of delivery may have important implications for attitude change (Singer & Cooper, 2009).

### **The Current Study**

National surveys have shown that the public is overall dissatisfied with the Canadian CJS (Roberts, 2004). It has also been demonstrated that this dissatisfaction is at least in part due to a lack of knowledge of current crime trends, as well as misconceptions and misrepresentations (e.g., Cullen et al., 2000; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Stalans, 1993). It would seem then a logical next step would be to try and correct this misinformation and to educate the public, as past research has shown that this may be an effective method of increasing public confidence (Mirrlees-Black, 2002; Salisbury, 2004; Singer & Cooper, 2009). However, questions still remain as to the effect of mode of delivery. It is also unclear if an increase in confidence is attributable to an increase in knowledge, as it has been suggested that public views may change simply due to being involved with being surveyed about CJS attitudes and not education *per se* (Salisbury, 2004). Furthermore, the Singer and Cooper (2009) study indicates that differing effects may be observed between active and passive participants. Finally, much of the research to date has taken place in Great Britain. One goal of the current study was to replicate past research in a Canadian setting.

Before attempting to change public opinion of the CJS, it is crucial that we first have a comprehensive understanding of what these opinions and attitudes are (Indermaur & Hough, 2002). As such, the purpose of Study 1 was to provide a more thorough understanding of criminal justice attitudes and opinions among students at the University of Saskatchewan. Aside from asking typical criminal justice attitude survey questions, the study also asked participants about past experiences with the CJS, media exposure (both news stories and fictional crime dramas), as well as knowledge of crime and criminal justice in Canada. Aside from a quantitative summary of information concerning students' opinions of the CJS, qualitative methodology was also employed in order to achieve a truly in-depth understanding of these attitudes (Patton, 2002). As such, Study 2 utilized focus groups. These focus groups were conducted in order to gather more data concerning CJS attitudes and how these opinions are formed as well as what



factors may increase or decrease confidence in the CJS. Together, Studies 1 and 2 were used to inform the methodology of Study 3 – increasing public confidence in the CJS through education.

In order to assess the effect of public education on confidence in the CJS, participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. In two of the conditions, participants were provided with factual information regarding crime and justice in Canada. Two control groups was presented with information regarding health care in Canada. Participants were further divided into active (i.e., actively engaging students in the learning process; Prince, 2004) and passive learning conditions. Active learning was encouraged by facilitating group discussion. Participants in the passive learning condition simply listened to an informational presentation. After information was presented, participants completed a survey in order to assess CJS knowledge as well as confidence in and attitudes toward the CJS. It was hypothesized that participants in both CJS information conditions would show increased knowledge and more positive attitudes; however, it was hypothesized that this increase would be greater for participants in the active learning condition.

### **Study Context**

It is important to provide context for the study setting. Prior to data collection, a popular news item concerned several escapes from prisons in the province of Saskatchewan. In August, 2008, six inmates escaped from a correctional institution in the city of Regina. While one inmate was immediately captured, the other five remained at large for between five and 30 days. It was later deemed that the escape was due to operational concerns. This was followed by several more inmate escapes as well as the mistaken release of several prisoners. As such, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety, and Policing was criticized heavily in the media (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2009a, 2009b).

Another high profile case within the province concerns David Milgaard. Milgaard was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1970 for the murder of a Saskatoon nursing aide. Milgaard spent 23 years in prison before the Supreme Court of Canada set aside his conviction. He was later cleared by DNA evidence and awarded \$10 million. Later, another individual was found guilty for the rape and death of the victim. In 2008, an inquiry report was released which found police received a tip in 1980 that may have lead to the real killer. The inquiry concluded that the

CJS was to blame for Milgaard's imprisonment (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, n.d.). The Milgaard case remains well-known within Saskatchewan.

Third, although Aboriginal offenders are over-represented across Canada, this problem is particularly evident in Saskatchewan. In 2005-2006, Aboriginals made up 79% of admissions to provincial custody yet only constituted 15% of the total population of Saskatchewan (Statistics Canada, 2007a). Furthermore, the Saskatoon Police Service has been accused of engaging in a practice known as 'starlight tours.' Accusers say that Aboriginals apprehended for intoxication and disorderly conduct are driven outside of Saskatoon and made to walk back to the city, even during freezing temperatures in winter. In February, 2004, two bodies were found, frozen, near Saskatoon. The men were Aboriginal and were not wearing proper winter clothing (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2004). This story was prominent in the local news and raised concerns of police misconduct and corruption.

Finally, in 2009 *Maclean's* magazine published a list of the 10 most dangerous cities in Canada based on 2007 data for six crimes (homicide, sexual assault, aggravated assault, vehicle theft, robbery, and breaking and entering). Saskatoon was rated the most dangerous city, with a crime rate 163% above the national rate. This distinction led the website RealClearWorld.com to rate Saskatoon as the ninth most dangerous city in the world. These two rankings were highly publicized and officials could often be seen on the news contesting these allegations. These events transpired shortly before data collection for Study 2. As the events mentioned above were relatively well-publicized, it is important to note that any of the above may have influenced participants' views of the CJS.

## CHAPTER 2

### SURVEY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Before attempting to change public opinion of the CJS, it is crucial that we first have a comprehensive understanding of what these opinions and attitudes are (Indermaur & Hough, 2002). As such, the purpose of Study 1 was to provide a more thorough understanding of criminal justice attitudes and opinions among students at the University of Saskatchewan. As previously discussed, past research has shown low rates of public confidence in the CJS (Roberts, 2004; Tyler & Huo, 2002) as well as widespread misinformation (Cullen et al., 2000; Doob, 2000; Indermaur & Hough, 2002; Hough & Park, 2002; Roberts, 2004; Stalans & Diamond 1990). Although methodology varies between studies, in general past research has asked participants quite broad questions, such as commenting on confidence in the CJS as a whole. This may be problematic as it has been found that most people have differing attitudes toward different components of the CJS (Roberts, 2004). As such, Study 1 was conducted in order to replicate previous findings with the target population as well as to provide more in-depth information than is typically found in past research.

#### **Public Perceptions of the Criminal Justice System**

There are several dimensions to confidence in public institutions. The best predictor of confidence is general approval of the performance of the institution. This indicates that confidence in the CJS may be thought of as a measure of general satisfaction with its performance (Gibson, Caldeira, & Spence, 2003). It stands to reason that members of the public are more likely to be confident in a system when they are satisfied with it. With this in mind, it is not surprising that satisfaction with the CJS has been linked to levels of public confidence. General affect is also a component of confidence, with individuals who hold more positive feelings toward an institution reporting higher levels of confidence (Gibson et al., 2003). Southgate and Grosvenor (2000) have defined confidence in the CJS as a feeling of safety as well as a belief in an impartial and fair system. However, research has shown that confidence is also influenced by efficiency, promptness, and ability to effectively deal with offenders (Page, Wake, & Ames, 2004).

Although several studies have conceptualized the CJS as one entity, generally the CJS can be thought of as being composed of three parts: (1) the police, (2) the courts, and (3) corrections. When asked to differentiate between the various components, differing levels of confidence are found for the different facets of the CJS. In general, Canadians report the highest confidence in the police and the lowest confidence in the courts and parole system (Roberts, 2004). Perceptions of each of these components will be discussed in turn.

### **Public Perception of the Police**

The 2003 *General Social Survey* asked participants to rate their confidence in 12 different public institutions. Canadians indicated the highest levels of confidence in the police, with 47.6% reporting “quite a lot” of confidence and 34.5% reporting a “great deal” of confidence (Statistics Canada, 2003). This is consistent with Tufts (2000), who found that Canadians rated the police more positively than the courts or the correctional system. Satisfaction with the police is related to confidence in the police as an institution. Weitzer and Tuch (2005) found that the more satisfied a community member was with local police, the more confidence he or she had in the police force as a whole.

Several demographic factors have been correlated with satisfaction of police. Respondents of a higher socio-economic status (SES) are typically more satisfied with police than those of a lower SES (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Gallagher, Maguire, Mastrofski & Reising, 2001). In regards to ethnicity, Caucasians are generally more confident in the police than minority groups (Dowler, 2003; Gallagher et al., 2001; Garcia & Cao, 2005; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). This has been replicated in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. A 2005 phone survey found that 85% of the general population was satisfied with local police, yet only 59% of Aboriginal respondents indicated satisfaction (Fast Consulting, 2005). However, after controlling for other variables (i.e., demographic, neighbourhood, and policing factors), Weitzer and Tuch (2005) found that there were no longer significant differences between majority and minority groups.

Past experience with police (both first-hand and vicarious) affect satisfaction and confidence ratings (Cherprakobit & Barsch, 2000; Horowitz, 2007; Tufts, 2000; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). If an individual has a negative opinion of local police, a positive experience can either neutralize or ameliorate the negative opinion (Cherprakobit & Barsch, 2000). Several

characteristics of police experiences have been found to increase satisfaction, such as: (1) if the citizen initiated the encounter rather than the officer (Cherprakobit & Barsch, 2000), (2) the courteousness and friendliness of the officer (Docking, 2003; Horowitz, 2007; Reising & Chandek, 2001), and (3) the perceived fairness of police procedures in the encounter (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Police characteristics associated with negative experiences include: (1) rudeness, (2) a lack of interest in the citizen's problem, (3) not providing adequate information to the citizen, and (4) slow response time (Boni, 1995; Glauser & Tullar, 1985).

### **Public Perceptions of the Courts**

In Canada, 62% of citizens are either very or somewhat confident in the courts (Ipsos-Reid, 2002). Although nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated some level of confidence in the courts, the percentage of Canadians with little or no confidence in the courts increased by 8% from 1989 to 1998 (28% and 36%, respectively; Roberts, 2004). In regards to specific duties of the courts, 41% of Canadians felt that the courts do a good job in ensuring a fair trial for the accused, 21% felt that the courts do a good job in determining guilt or innocence, 15% felt that the courts do a good job in helping crime victims, and only 13% felt that the courts do a good job in providing justice quickly (Tufts, 2000).

When asked to rate their confidence in the Supreme Court of Canada, 78% of respondents indicated they were very or somewhat confident (Ipsos-Reid, 2002). In the United States, the 2000 *General Social Survey* found that only 31.8% of Americans had "a great deal" of confidence in the U.S. Supreme Court, and 49.4% had "only some" confidence (Gibson et al., 2003). In regards to "customer satisfaction," fairness is an important determinant of satisfaction for both victims and defendants. When crime victims perceive a court sentence as "fair," they are more satisfied with the criminal justice system as a whole (Erez & Tontodonato, 1992). Perceived fairness is also a major predictor of satisfaction for defendants (Tyler, 1984). Whether or not the courts are perceived as being fair also affects opinions of the general public. In a telephone survey of 1,826 respondents in the United States, perceptions of fairness were found to be the main factor influencing satisfaction with the courts (Tyler & Huo, 2002).

One area that has received considerable attention is public attitudes toward sentencing. Research in the field of public attitudes toward sentencing is important for two reasons. First,

policy makers frequently cite public outcry as justification for sentencing policy reform. Recently in both Canada and the United States, politicians have put forth various “get tough” initiatives, basing these policies on public opinion polls that show a desire for harsher prison sentences (Chen, 2008; Cullen et al., 2000; Indermaur & Hough, 2002). Second, a judge does take his/her perceptions of public opinion into account when sentencing offenders (Miller, Rossi, & Simpson, 1991; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Stalans & Diamond, 1990; Tomaino, 1997). A 2009 poll found evidence that Canadians views on sentencing are becoming more punitive: 62% of respondents favoured capital punishment for homicide offenders, compared to 48% agreement in 2004 (Angus Reid, 2010).

Opinion polls conducted in common law countries around the world (e.g., Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Australia) have found that the majority of the public feel that criminal courts are not harsh enough when sentencing offenders (Allen, Edmonds, Patterson, & Smith, 2006; Canadian Sentencing Commission, 1988; Gelb, 2009; Hough & Roberts, 1999; Jones, Weatherburn, & McFarlane, 2008; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Roberts & Hough, 2005). However, even though the public may view the courts and judges as being too lenient, individuals often are not aware of current sentencing practices. For instance, Stalans and Diamond (1997) asked participants to recommend a sentence for residential burglary. Although the majority of participants felt that judges are too lenient, the average recommended sentence was less than the legally required minimum sentence for the offence (a minimum of four years in the state of Illinois). When appropriate methodology is utilized, members of the public tend to favour legal sanctions similar to those imposed by the courts (Roberts & Doob, 1990; Stalans & Diamond, 1990; Tufts & Roberts, 2002).

Characteristics of a particular offence influence public sentencing attitudes. Harsher sentences are typically recommended for crimes that are perceived as being more serious (Darley, Carlsmith, & Robinson, 2000; Payne, Gainey, Triplett, & Danner, 2004). In a recent study, it was found that recommended prison sentences increased with amount of harm caused by a crime. High harm crimes (e.g., murder) were given longer prison sentences than medium harm crimes (e.g., robbery), which were given longer sentences than low harm crimes (e.g., vandalism; Tanasichuk, 2007).

Various individual factors have been shown to be associated with differential attitudes toward sentencing, such as demographic factors (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, education, religion), authoritarianism, and conservatism. Older individuals tend to endorse harsher punishments than younger individuals (Hough & Park, 2002; Payne et al., 2004). It has been debated in the literature whether or not gender plays a role in punitive attitudes. Some studies demonstrate males are more punitive than females (e.g., Stinchcombe et al., 1980), some studies have found females to be more punitive (e.g., Hurwitz & Smithey, 1998; Miller et al., 1991), and other studies find an effect for only certain offences such as rape and domestic violence (e.g., Mills & Bohannon, 1992). Sprott (1999) found gender differences only for cases involving young offenders: Women were more likely than men to endorse community sanctions (i.e., fines and community service orders) only when the offender was under age 18. No significant differences between men and women were found for cases involving adult offenders.

In regards to minority groups, traditionally studies have found Caucasians to endorse harsher sentences than African Americans (e.g., Costelloe, Chiricos, Buriánek, Gertz, & Maier-Katkin, 2002). However, it should be noted that some studies find that ethnic minority groups are more punitive than the majority group. For example, Miller et al. (1991) found that African Americans were more punitive than Caucasian participants. In regards to educational attainment, more educated individuals are less likely to endorse harsh sentences than individuals with lower educational attainment (Hough & Park, 2002; Kuhn, 1993; Millet et al., 1991; Tyler & Boeckmann, 1997). This relationship between punitiveness and education has been found in North America as well as in Europe (Costelloe et al., 2002).

### **Public Perceptions of Corrections**

Far less research has examined public perceptions of the correctional system, including prisons, parole, and probation. Research has shown that although Canadians feel alternatives to imprisonment such as halfway houses and parole have a place within the correctional system, they are doubtful of the effectiveness of such measures in reducing recidivism (Angus Reid, 2010). Tufts (2000) found that Canadians are supportive of community-based sentences for first-time offenders as well as for young offenders. This has been replicated in other common law countries (e.g., Roberts & Hough, 2005). In the United Kingdom, several recent initiatives have attempted to increase public confidence in community sentences. These initiatives include a

public relations campaign targeted to promote a positive image of the justice system and sentencing, the 'Rethinking Crime and Punishment' campaign designed to increase debate about alternatives to imprisonment, and presentations by probation staff to community groups concerning case studies in order to increase awareness of alternative sentences. Overall, these initiatives have been found to be successful in increasing public confidence in community sentences (Allen, 2008).

There are several major criminal justice philosophies that guide punishment for crime. *Deterrence* refers to preventing future crimes by punishing individuals for their transgressions so that they will not commit another offence due to fear of more punishment. This is specific deterrence. General deterrence occurs when members of the broader society do not commit a crime due to a fear of punishment as a result of knowing someone else was punished for the crime (Goff, 2004). Another justification for sentencing those who commit wrong-doings is *retribution*, or "just deserts." This is when an offender is punished because of the harm he or she has caused (Darley et al., 2000). Presumably, the punishment should reflect the moral "wrongness" of the crime (Carlsmith et al., 2002). *Rehabilitation* attempts to treat offenders through a variety of means in order to decrease recidivism once offenders are released back into the community. The *Criminal Code of Canada* dictates that the purpose of sentencing should be at least one of the following:

- (a) To denounce unlawful conduct;
  - (b) To deter the offender and other persons from committing offences;
  - (c) To separate offenders from society, where necessary;
  - (d) To assist in rehabilitating offenders;
  - (e) To provide reparations for harm done to victims or the community; and
  - (f) To promote a sense of responsibility in offenders, and acknowledgement of harm done to the victims and the community
- (Criminal Code of Canada, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-27, s. 156)

A recent poll asked a sample of Canadians to indicate what the main goal of the justice system should be. The most common answer was prevention (36%), followed by punishment/retribution (30%), rehabilitation (18%), and deterrence (16%; Ekos Politics, 2010). Latimer and Desjardins (2007) found that Canadians placed importance on both retribution and



rehabilitation; however, when respondents were asked to select only one goal rehabilitation was identified as the most important. A recent U.S. study found that the public generally favours rehabilitation over retribution for young offenders, and is willing to pay more in taxes for rehabilitation (Piquero & Steinberg, 2010).

### **Media Consumption and Perceptions of the Criminal Justice System**

Most members of the general population rate mass media as their primary source of information regarding crime (Dowler, 2003; Gallagher et al., 2001; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Roberts & Edwards, 1989). A survey of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan residents found that newspapers (70%) and television newscasts (63%) were the primary sources of information regarding crime in Saskatoon (Fast Consulting, 2005). As the majority of people are dependent on the news media to obtain information regarding crime and criminal justice issues, it is disconcerting that numerous studies have found the cases represented in the media to not be representative of all crimes that occur. For example, the Canadian Sentencing Commission (1988) found that violent crimes were grossly overrepresented in the news media. Also problematic is the fact that many of these news reports were quite short and provided little or no detail as to the rationale for the imposed sentence. This finding has been replicated in several other studies around the world (e.g., Chermak, 1995; Dowler, Fleming, & Muzzatti, 2006; Estrada, 2001; Romer, Jamieson, & Aday, 2003). As the public relies on mass media for information concerning crime and criminal justice, this misrepresentation may contribute to negative attitudes toward the CJS (Gleb, 2009).

Relying on the news media for information may contribute to specific attitudes such as views that sentencing is too lenient. A study conducted by Roberts and Doob (1990) found that when participants were asked to read an account of an offence from a newspaper, the majority (63%) of participants rated the sentence given to the offender as being too lenient. However, far less (19%) rated the sentence as too lenient when reading a summary of actual court documents. This suggests that public views of sentencing are not radically different than those of the courts as has been found in past research. Rather, it appears as though public opinions based on *media representations* of offences differ from actual imposed sentences. When presented with similar information as one would receive if attending the actual trial, there is a higher level of congruence between public opinions and court imposed sentences (Roberts & Doob, 1990).

In addition to media exposure concerning actual crimes, viewing fictional crime dramas (e.g., *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, Law & Order*) may also have an effect on public perceptions of law enforcement. Recently, the media has dubbed this phenomenon “the CSI effect” (Patry, Smith, Stinson, & McCulloch, 2008; Podlas, 2006; Schweitzer & Saks, 2007; Smith, Patry, & Stinson, 2007). Originally it was thought that this phenomenon primarily affected jurors, as anecdotal evidence suggested that jurors who regularly viewed crime dramas had unrealistic expectations about the quantity and quality of evidence that should be available at a criminal trial. Later research confirmed this anecdotal evidence by showing that viewing fictional crime dramas can lead individuals to assess certain forensic evidence (e.g., DNA, fingerprints) as more reliable and are more critical of non-scientific evidence (e.g., eyewitness testimony). However, it is inconclusive whether these dramas significantly impact juror verdicts (Podlas, 2006; Schweitzer & Saks, 2007; Smith et al., 2007). Some researchers have found evidence that the CSI effect has extended beyond jurors: For example, in a recent survey of 15 RCMP forensic experts, it was found that these television dramas distort the reliability, accuracy, and availability of several different investigative techniques. This is theorized to have changed the public’s expectations of forensic investigators, as viewers may now have unrealistic expectations of forensic investigators due to watching fictional crime dramas (Patry et al., 2008).

### **Overview of Study 1**

National surveys have shown that the public is overall dissatisfied with the criminal justice system in Canada (Roberts, 2004). It has also been demonstrated that this dissatisfaction is at least in part due to a lack of knowledge of current crime trends, as well as misconceptions and misrepresentations, particularly due to media exposure (e.g., Cullen et al., 2000; Latimer & Desjardins, 2007; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Stalans, 1993). It would seem then a logical next step would be to try and correct this misinformation and to educate the public, as past research has shown that when the public is made aware of accurate information, they are more satisfied with the current sentencing practices (Hough & Roberts, 2002; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Stalans, 1993).

Before attempting to change public opinion of the criminal justice system, it is crucial that we first have a comprehensive understanding of what these opinions and attitudes are (Indermaur & Hough, 2002). As such, the purpose of Study 1 is to provide a more thorough understanding of criminal justice attitudes and opinions among students at the University of

Saskatchewan. Aside from asking typical criminal justice attitude survey questions, the study will also take into account past experiences with the criminal justice system, media exposure (both news stories and fictional crime dramas), as well as knowledge of the Canadian legal system. As discussed previously, much of the pre-existing research on attitudes toward the CJS is superficial. Many of these studies simply focus on the surface layer of such attitudes and ask participants to respond to broad questions such as rating their confidence with the CJS as a whole. Therefore, the purpose of Study 1 was to obtain more in-depth knowledge of criminal justice attitudes. Study 1 was also designed to provide information regarding how knowledgeable participants were of the Canadian CJS, as a lack of knowledge has been hypothesized to be related to negative appraisals (Roberts, 2004). Participants were also asked questions regarding where they obtain knowledge concerning the CJS, with a particular focus on the media (both fictional and non-fictional). This information was collected in order to inform the methodology and to develop materials for Studies 2 and 3. Although previous studies have shown low levels of confidence in the CJS, the specific relationships between confidence and CJS knowledge, previous CJS experience, and media exposure have not been assessed.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A total of 250 students were recruited from the Introductory Psychology participant pool at the University of Saskatchewan. There were no restrictions on who was allowed to participate. All participants received credit towards their final course grade.

### **Measures**

**Knowledge of CJS.** The first portion of the questionnaire asked participants a series of questions about their knowledge of crime in Canada and Saskatchewan as well as the Canadian CJS (see Appendix A). Participants were also asked to rate their confidence in their answer, ranging from 1 = *not at all confident* to 5 = *extremely confident*. For each question that the participant answered correctly, he or she received one point. The points for each participant were summed. This allowed for level of knowledge to be used in subsequent data analysis.

**Attitudes towards Law, Courts and Police (ALCP).** Participants next completed the ALCP subscale of the *Criminal Sentiments Scale* (CSS). The CSS, developed by Andrews and

Wormith (1984), consists of three subscales: Attitudes toward the Law, Courts, and Police (ALCP), Tolerance for Law Violation (TLV), and Identification with Criminal Others (ICO). Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with 41 statements, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Lower ALCP scores indicate a more negative attitude towards the justice system (see Appendix B). The CSS has demonstrated reliability (Kennedy, 1989; Roy & Wormith, 1985), as well as discriminant, construct, convergent, and divergent validity (Rettinger, n.d.).

**CJS Confidence and Satisfaction.** The next section of the questionnaire asked participants to rate their confidence in the various facets of the criminal justice system. Participants responded on a 5-point scale where 1 = *not at all confident* and 5 = *extremely confident* (see Appendix C). In order to provide more information concerning attitudes toward the CJS, participants were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the various criminal justice institutions. These items are from Tufts (2000) and ask participants to rate the police, courts, and corrections on various dimensions.

Participants were also asked to indicate their opinions on sentencing practices in Canada (see Appendix C). In order to obtain more in-depth knowledge than provided by past research, participants were asked to differentiate between sentencing practices for different types of offenders (e.g., young offenders, sex offenders, etc.). Participants responded on a 5-point scale where 1 = *too harsh* to 5 = *too lenient*.

**Past Experience with CJS.** As discussed previously, past experience with the CJS has been found to influence respondents' opinions. As such, participants in the study were asked "In the past 10 years, have you had contact with the criminal justice system (e.g., police, courts?). This includes filing a complaint with police, reporting a crime, serving as a witness, etc." Participants were next asked to indicate whether they would consider any of this experience as constituting a serious incident. If the participant indicated yes, he or she was next asked if he or she felt that this experience influenced his or her perceptions of the justice system (see Appendix D).

**Exposure to Criminal Justice Information.** Participants were next asked a series of questions regarding their media exposure to crime and criminal justice issues (see Appendix E).

Participants were asked what their primary source of information was, how often they read/watched news stories pertaining to crime and criminal justice, and how often they read/watched crime fiction (e.g., television programs, novels).

**Social Desirability.** To control for social desirability bias (the tendency to respond to questionnaires in a way that portrays a positive self-description; Paulhus, 2002), participants completed the Impression Management Scale (IMS), a section of the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1988). Participants responded on a seven-point rating scale where 1 = *not true* and 7 = *very true* to 20 items such as “I don’t gossip about other people’s business” (see Appendix F). Possible scores on the IMS range from 20 to 140. Past research has demonstrated both convergent and discriminant validity with the IMS (Paulhus, 1991).

**Political Conservatism and Demographics.** Political conservatism is an important variable influencing sentencing decisions (Huang, Finn, Ruback, & Friedmann, 1996). To assess this, participants responded to one item measuring their degree of conservatism. The single item asks participants to rate themselves as being liberal, somewhat liberal, conservative, or somewhat conservative. Scores on this scale range from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicating a greater degree of conservatism. Single items have been found to be a reliable and valid method for assessing conservatism (Gerbner, Goss, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). Participants were also asked to indicate their age, gender, year of university, and ethnicity (see Appendix G).

## **Procedure**

Participants for Study 1 were recruited from the Introductory Psychology participant pool. All first year psychology students had the opportunity to take part in this study. Students logged on to a web-based participant pool site where they were able to choose to take part in studies available through the Department of Psychology. Before they chose to participate, students were able to read a description of the study, the amount of time required, and any restrictions on who was allowed to participate. For each half hour that the student spent completing the study, he or she received one credit that was worth 1% of his or her final course grade. In order to increase participation, the survey was offered online through this web-based

participant pool site (Deutskens, De Ruyter, Wetzels, & Oosterveld, 2004). This protocol was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board.

## **Testing**

**Consent to Participate.** Before completing the survey, all participants were required to read an informed consent form (see Appendix H). This form detailed the study's purpose, procedure, and potential benefits/risks, and included statements regarding confidentiality, the student's right to withdraw, and contact information of the researcher. If the student agreed to participate in the survey, he or she clicked "accept" on the screen and was then forwarded to the online survey. Participants were urged to print a copy of this screen for their own records, or to contact the researcher if they wished to obtain a copy.

**Survey Completion.** The survey was posted on the participant pool site. When each student logged in to the site, the list of available online surveys was displayed in a random order. There was a restriction placed on the study so that students could only complete the survey once. After the students read the consent form they were asked to complete the survey. The students were told that the survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete, however they were able to take as long as needed to finish.

**Debriefing.** After the student completed the survey, he or she was forwarded electronically to a debriefing form on the website (see Appendix I). The debriefing form described the study in detail as well as provided references if the student wished to learn more about the topic. The student was urged to print a copy for his or her records, or to contact the researcher if he or she would have liked a copy. The students were also told to contact the researcher if they wished to be notified of the results of the study once it had been completed.

## **Results**

### **Participants**

In total, 250 participants were recruited from the Introductory Psychology participant pool at the University of Saskatchewan. There were no restrictions on who was allowed to participate. Seven participants were missing more than 5% of their data and were excluded from analyses. This resulted in a final sample size of 243 participants. All participants received credit

towards their final course grade. Of the 243 participants included in analyses, there were 184 (75.7%) females and 59 (24.3%) males. The vast majority of participants were Caucasian ( $N = 193$ , 79.4%) and in their first year of university ( $N = 175$  72.0%). In regards to political conservatism, the modal response was “somewhat conservative” ( $N = 83$ , 34.2%), and the mean age was 19.15 ( $SD = 2.23$ ) years.

### **Gender Differences**

A series of matched-sample t-tests were run in order to assess any gender differences. As can be seen in Table 2-1, the only significant difference between males and females was in regards to confidence in CJS knowledge. This indicates that males were more confident in their answers than females even though males did not score significantly higher on the knowledge questions than females. However, when the Bonferroni correction for Type I error is applied to this series of t-tests, this difference is no longer significant ( $\alpha = 0.006$ ).

Table 2-1. Comparison of Females and Males on Demographics and Scales

	Females ( <i>SD</i> )	Males ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Age	19.13 (2.40)	19.21 (1.56)	0.26	0.80	-0.04
Year of University	1.38 (0.70)	1.45 (0.90)	0.63	0.53	-0.09
Conservatism	2.51 (0.97)	2.60 (1.80)	0.60	0.55	-0.06
CJS Knowledge	3.17 (1.73)	3.55 (1.91)	1.47	0.14	-0.21
Confidence in CJS Knowledge	30.87 (6.46)	33.43 (5.98)	2.61	0.01	-0.41
ALCP	89.54 (8.40)	87.90 (9.20)	-1.25	0.21	0.19
Confidence in CJS	21.16 (2.81)	20.51 (3.00)	-1.54	0.13	0.22
Satisfaction with CJS	30.97 (4.06)	31.49 (4.61)	0.83	0.41	-2.42
Sentencing Opinion	18.88 (2.47)	18.80 (2.93)	-0.21	0.83	0.03



## Knowledge of CJS

Possible scores on the questionnaire assessing knowledge of the CJS range from zero to ten. The mean score was 3.28 ( $SD = 1.78$ ). Obtained scores ranged from zero ( $N = 6, 2.5\%$ ) to eight ( $N = 3, 1.2\%$ ). The number of participants with a “passing grade” (scores of five or higher) was 50 (20.6%). Table 2-2 shows a further breakdown of participant scores. Participants’ level of confidence in their answers had a modest correlation with overall knowledge score,  $r = 0.17, p = 0.01$ . Responses to the ten CJS knowledge questions are included in Appendix J.

Table 2-2. CJS Knowledge Scores

Score	<i>N</i>	%
0	6	2.7
1	34	15.3
2	38	17.1
3	54	24.3
4	36	14.5
5	29	13.1
6	13	5.9
7	9	4.1

## Attitudes towards Law, Courts, and Police (ALCP)

Higher scores on the ALCP indicate more positive attitudes toward the law, courts, and police. The mean score on the ALCP was 89.22 ( $SD = 8.82$ ), with scores ranging from 47 to 116. The median score as well as the mode were 90. Scores were computed for the three subscales (law, courts, and police). For the law subscale, the mean score was 35.76 ( $SD = 3.46$ ). For the court subscale, the mean score was 25.72 ( $SD = 3.49$ ). For the police subscale, the mean score was 25.55 ( $SD = 3.58$ ). The internal reliability of the scale (Cronbach’s Alpha) was  $\alpha = 0.84$ . Scores on the ALCP were not significantly correlated with total knowledge score,  $r = 0.04, p = 0.60$ .

## CJS Confidence and Satisfaction

Participants were asked to rate their confidence in various CJS institutions, ranging from 1 = *not at all confident* to 5 = *extremely confident*. The average rating was 3.50 ( $SD = 0.48$ ). The

results for each institution are presented below in Table 2-3. As can be seen from the table, participants were most confident in the RCMP, followed by the Supreme Court of Canada and Saskatoon Police Services. When confidence values in each of the two police institutions, two court institutions and two correctional institutions assessed were collapsed, it was found that participants were equally confident in the police ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.64$ ) and the courts ( $M = 3.70$ ,  $SD = 0.59$ ),  $t(246) = 1.32$ ,  $p = 0.19$ ,  $d = 0.10$ . However, participants were significantly more confident in these two institutions than the correctional system ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ),  $t(246) = 14.28$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 1.02$ , which was listed generically and not by specific agency (e.g., federal or provincial).

Table 2-3. Confidence Ratings for Six CJS Institutions

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
RCMP	3.91	0.72
Saskatoon Police Services	3.64	0.82
Courts in Saskatchewan	3.52	0.67
Supreme Court of Canada	3.89	0.73
Correctional System	3.06	0.95
National Parole Board	3.02	0.74

Upon visual inspection of the means, it appeared as though participants were more confident in federal institutions versus more local institutions. Dependent sample *t*-tests revealed that these differences were significant. Participants were more confident in the RCMP than Saskatoon Police Services,  $t(241) = 4.92$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.35$ . Furthermore, participants were more confident in the Supreme Court of Canada than in the courts in Saskatchewan,  $t(242) = 7.72$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.53$ .

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with 10 items regarding satisfaction with the CJS, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. The mean score was 31.10 ( $SD = 4.22$ ), with scores ranging from 17 to 43. The median score was 31 and the mode was 29. This indicates that overall, participants were moderately satisfied with the CJS. The internal reliability of the scale (Cronbach's Alpha) was  $\alpha = 0.74$ . The mean ratings for each of the items are presented in Table 2-4.

Table 2-4. CJS Satisfaction: Mean Ratings

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The local police are approachable	3.69	0.80
The local police do their best to ensure public safety	3.85	0.71
The local police supply the public with adequate information about crime in Saskatoon	3.08	0.89
The courts do a good job of ensuring a fair trial for the accused	3.44	0.70
The courts do a good job of determining the guilt or innocence of the accused	3.40	0.70
The courts provide justice quickly	2.25	0.69
Correctional authorities do a good job of controlling/supervising offenders	3.07	0.82
Correctional authorities do a good job of helping offenders to become law-abiding citizens	2.65	0.83
Correctional authorities do a good job of only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend	2.61	0.84
Correctional authorities do a good job of supervising offenders on parole	3.04	0.69

As can be seen from the table, participants were in agreement with statements such as ‘the local police are approachable,’ ‘the local police do their best to ensure public safety,’ ‘the courts do a good job of ensuring a fair trial for the accused,’ and ‘the courts do a good job of determining the guilt or innocence of the accused.’ Participants were close to neutral regarding the statements ‘the local police supply the public with adequate information about crime in Saskatoon,’ ‘correctional authorities do a good job of controlling/supervising offenders,’ and ‘correctional authorities do a good job of supervising offenders on parole.’ Participants disagreed with the statements ‘the courts provide justice quickly,’ ‘correctional authorities do a good job of helping offenders to become law-abiding citizens,’ and ‘correctional authorities do a good job of only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend.’ Agreement ratings were the most positive for police and the least positive for the correctional system.

### **Sentencing Opinions**

Participants were also asked to indicate their opinions on sentencing practices in Canada. Participants were asked to respond on a 5-point scale where 1 = *too harsh* to 5 = *too lenient*. Mean ratings for five types of offenders are presented in Table 2-5. As can be seen in the table, participants felt that current sanctions are not punitive enough for all types of offenders, as the means for all six offender categories are over the scale mid-point (3). These ratings were highest for sex offenders, followed by violent offenders, young offenders, property offenders, and female offenders.

Table 2-5. Sentencing Opinions: Mean Ratings

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sex offenders	4.38	0.77
Violent offenders	4.06	0.79
Young offenders	3.59	0.94
Property offenders	3.42	0.74
Female offenders	3.41	0.67

The difference between sex offenders and violent offenders was significant,  $t(239) = -6.48, p < 0.001, d = 0.41$ . The difference between violent offenders and young offenders was also significant,  $t(240) = 7.05, p < 0.001, d = 0.54$ . The difference between young offenders and property offenders was also significant,  $t(235) = 2.90, p = 0.004, d = 0.20$ . The difference between property offenders and female offenders was not significant,  $t(233) = 0.08, p = 0.94, d = 0.01$ .

### **Past Experience with the CJS**

Participants were asked, *“In the past 10 years have you had contact with the criminal justice system (e.g., police, courts)? This includes filing a complaint with police, reporting a crime, serving as a witness, etc.”* Just under half (44.4%,  $N = 108$ ) of the participants responded that they had contact with the CJS, whereas 55.1% ( $N = 134$ ) responded that they had not had contact with the CJS. If participants had contact with the CJS, they were next asked *“Would you consider this experience to include a serious incident?”* ‘Serious’ was not defined for the participants and they were left to use their own definition. Of all participants who had contact with the CJS, only 18.5% ( $N = 20$ ) considered the experience to be ‘serious.’ If participants had contact with the CJS they were also asked *“Do you believe this experience influenced your perceptions of the criminal justice system?”* Of all 44.4% of participants who had contact with the CJS, almost half of them (46.3%,  $N = 50$ ) felt that it had influenced their perceptions. This finding suggests that even if an encounter with the CJS is not seen as a ‘serious’ incident, it can still have lasting effects on one’s perceptions and attitudes.

A series of matched-sample t-tests were run in order to assess any differences between participants with CJS experience and those without. As can be seen in Table 2-6, the only significant difference between participants with experience and those without was in regards to sentencing opinions: Participants with previous CJS experience rated sentences given to offenders as being more lenient than participants without previous CJS experience. However, when the Bonferroni adjustment for Type I error is applied, this difference is no longer significant ( $\alpha = 0.006$ ).

Table 2-6. CJS Knowledge and Attitudes: Past Experience with CJS

	Past Experience ( <i>SD</i> )	No Experience ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Age	3.15 (1.74)	3.38 (1.81)	-0.95	0.34	-0.13
Year of University	1.52 (0.90)	1.45 (0.90)	0.63	0.53	0.08
Conservatism	2.51 (0.97)	2.60 (1.80)	0.60	0.55	0.31
CJS Knowledge	3.15 (1.74)	3.38 (1.81)	-0.95	0.34	-0.13
ALCP	88.95 (9.32)	89.28 (8.39)	-0.29	0.77	-0.03
Confidence in CJS	20.89 (2.69)	21.29 (2.98)	-0.67	0.51	-0.14
Satisfaction with CJS	30.93 (4.35)	31.24 (4.09)	-0.56	0.58	-0.08
Sentencing Opinion	19.34 (2.74)	18.48 (2.76)	2.58	0.01	0.31

## Exposure to CJS Information

Participants also completed a series of questions designed to measure their level of exposure to both fictional and non-fictional CJS information. Television newscasts were the most commonly cited source of non-fictional CJS information (24.2%), followed closely by friends and family (23.1%) and newspapers (21.2%). The frequency for each modality is displayed in Table 2-7. Participants were permitted to select more than one source of information. The mean number of information sources selected by each participant was 3.00 ( $SD = 1.08$ ). Participants were also asked to indicate how often they watched or read news stories pertaining to crime and criminal justice issues. The most frequent response was one to two times a week (30.0%; see Table 2-8).

Table 2-7. Primary Sources of CJS Information

	Frequency	Percent
Television newscasts	177	24.2%
Friends/family	169	23.1%
Newspapers	155	21.2%
Radio newscasts	119	16.3%
Online news websites	83	11.3%
Other	29	4.0%
Total	732	

Table 2-8. Frequency of Exposure to CJS News Stories

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	32	13.2%
5-6x week	19	7.8%
3-4x week	45	18.5%
1-2x week	73	30.0%
Few times a month	57	23.5%
Hardly ever	17	7.0%

Participants were next asked about the frequency of exposure to fictional CJS media. Over half (53.5%, N = 130) of participants indicated that they ‘hardly ever’ read fiction pertaining to crime and criminal justice (see Table 2-9). When asked how frequently participants watched fictional television crime dramas, the most frequent responses were ‘a few times a month’ (28.8%, N = 70) and ‘one to two times a week’ (27.2%, N = 66; see Table 2-10). The most frequently watched television crime drama was *CSI* followed by *CSI: Miami* (see Table 2-11). Participants were able to select more than one crime drama watched regularly. The mean number of crime dramas watched was 2.5 ( $SD = 1.92$ ).



Table 2-9. Frequency of Reading Crime Fiction

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	3	1.2%
5-6x week	4	1.6%
3-4x week	12	4.9%
1-2x week	20	8.2%
Few times a month	74	30.5%
Hardly ever	130	53.5%

Table 2-10. Frequency of Watching Television Crime Dramas

	Frequency	Percent
Daily	19	7.8%
5-6x week	8	3.3%
3-4x week	37	15.2%
1-2x week	66	27.2%
Few times a month	70	28.8%
Hardly ever	43	17.5%

Table 2-11. Crime Dramas Frequently Watched

	Frequency	Percent
CSI	122	20.4%
CSI Miami	100	16.8%
CSI: NY	58	9.7%
Law & Order	39	6.5%
Law & Order SVU	72	12.1%
Law & Order Criminal Intent	26	4.4%
Homicide	33	5.5%
Bones	55	9.2%
Criminal Minds	12	2.0%
Veronica Mars	30	5.0%
Dexter	50	8.4%
Total	597	

### Impression Management Scale

The mean score on the IMS was 79.51 ( $SD = 17.14$ ). The internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was  $\alpha = 0.82$ . IMS scores were not significantly correlated with CJS knowledge,  $r = 0.05$ ,  $p = 0.53$ , and sentencing opinions,  $r = -0.01$ ,  $p = 0.91$ . However, higher IMS scores were associated with higher ALCP scores,  $r = 0.30$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , higher levels of confidence in the CJS,  $r = 0.17$ ,  $p = 0.01$ , and more positive attitudes toward the CJS,  $r = 0.22$ ,  $p = 0.001$ . Because of these results, correlational analyses with these three variables (discussed below) were also run with partial correlations in order to covary out impression management.

### Correlations

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed in order to determine whether or not satisfaction and confidence were related to criminal justice knowledge as well as frequency of exposure to media information. Knowledge of the CJS was not found to be correlated with any of the variables with the exception of confidence in the CJS. However, this correlation was in the negative direction,  $r = -0.16$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . The more knowledgeable participants were about the CJS,

as measured by the 10 knowledge items included in the survey, the less confident they were in the CJS as a whole.

Confidence in the CJS was strongly correlated with ALCP scores,  $r = 0.54, p < 0.001$ . This indicates that participants with more confidence in the CJS had more positive attitudes toward law, courts, and police. As would be expected, higher levels of confidence in the CJS were also associated with more positive general attitudes toward the CJS,  $r = 0.60, p < 0.001$ . Past experience was not significantly associated with CJS knowledge,  $r = 0.06, p > 0.05$ , CJS confidence,  $r = 0.05, p > 0.05$ , nor ALCP scores,  $r = 0.01, p > 0.05$ . Similarly, watching fictional crime programs was not associated with CJS knowledge,  $r = -0.10, p > 0.05$ , CJS confidence,  $r = 0.01, p > 0.05$ , nor ALCP scores,  $r = 0.04, p > 0.05$ . A complete listing of all correlations can be found in Appendix K.

As discussed above, scores on the IMS were associated with higher ALCP scores, higher levels of confidence in the CJS, and more positive attitudes toward the CJS. Because of these results, correlational analyses with these three variables were also run with partial correlations in order to covary out impression management. Although several correlation coefficients were reduced, overall these changes were not great and did not change the significance of the unadjusted correlation coefficients reported above. A complete listing of the partial correlations can be found in Appendix L.

### **Stepwise Regression**

In order to assess which variables accounted for variance in CJS knowledge, a stepwise regression was run in which CJS knowledge was entered as the dependent variable and confidence in knowledge, ALCP scores, confidence in CJS, satisfaction with CJS, sentencing attitudes, past experiences and media exposure were entered as predictor variables. The overall statistic for the model was  $R^2(1, 199) = 0.09, p = 0.04$ , indicating that 9% of the variance in CJS knowledge was accounted for by the model. The multiple  $R$  of 0.30 was obtained with confidence in CJS, confidence in knowledge, frequency of reading crime fiction, and ALCP total score entered into the equation (see Table 2-12). These variables were found to be significant predictors of CJS knowledge.

Table 2-12. Stepwise Regression of CJS Knowledge on CJS Attitudes, Experience, and Media Exposure

Step <sup>a</sup>	Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>Change</i>
1	Confidence in CJS	-0.10	0.04	-0.16	0.03	0.16	0.02
2	Confidence in Knowledge	0.41	0.19	0.15	0.03	0.21	0.02
3	Crime Fiction	0.25	0.11	0.15	0.03	0.26	0.02
4	ALCP	0.03	0.02	0.17	0.04	0.30	0.02
	(Constant)	0.78	1.52				

Note. Stepwise multiple regression; *F* to enter ( $p < 0.05$ ).

a. *B*, *SE B*,  $\beta$ , and *p* are reported for the last step in the regression; Adjusted *R*<sup>2</sup> and *R* are reported for each step.

A stepwise regression was run in which confidence in the CJS was entered as the dependent variable and CJS knowledge, confidence in knowledge, ALCP scores, CJS satisfaction, sentencing attitudes, past experiences and media exposure were entered as predictor variables. The overall statistic for the model was  $R^2(1, 199) = 0.46$ ,  $p = 0.03$ , indicating that 46% of the variance in CJS confidence was accounted for by the model. The multiple *R* of 0.68 was obtained with CJS attitudes, ALCP, and CJS knowledge entered into the equation (see Table 2-13). These variables were found to be significant predictors of confidence in the CJS; however most (38.4%) of the variance was accounted for by CJS attitudes.

Table 2-13. Stepwise Regression of Confidence in CJS on CJS Satisfaction, Experience, and Media Exposure

Step <sup>a</sup>	Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>Change</i>
1	Satisfaction	0.42	0.04	0.62	0.00	0.62	0.38
2	ALCP	0.10	0.02	0.30	0.00	0.67	0.07
3	CJS Knowledge	-0.20	0.09	-0.12	0.03	0.68	0.04
	(Constant)	2.98	1.61				

Note. Stepwise multiple regression; *F* to enter ( $p < 0.05$ ).

a. *B*, *SE B*,  $\beta$ , and *p* are reported for the last step in the regression; Adjusted *R*<sup>2</sup> and *R* are reported for each step.

### Discussion

The survey showed that participants had an overall low level of knowledge in crime and criminal justice, which is consistent with past research (Cullen et al., 2000; Doob, 2000; Indermaur & Hough, 2002; Hough & Park, 2002; Roberts, 2004; Stalans & Diamond 1990). Participants' confidence in their answers was not related to their overall knowledge score, although this may be due to the restricted range on the knowledge scores (i.e., a floor effect).

In regards to confidence in the CJS, the average rating was 3.5, which is above the neutral midpoint on a five-point scale indicating that overall participants were somewhat confident in the various institutions. Participants were most confident in the RCMP (81%), followed by the Supreme Court of Canada (77%), Saskatoon Police Services (67%), courts in Saskatchewan (56%), the correctional system (39%), and the National Parole Board (25%). These ratings are similar to those obtained in previous studies (e.g., Ipsos-Reid, 2002, Statistics Canada, 2003). Typically past research has found that participants are most confident in police, followed by courts and corrections (e.g., Roberts, 2004; Tufts, 2000). However, in the current study there were no statistically significant differences between the police and the courts: the difference between confidence in the two police institutions (the RCMP and the Saskatoon Police Service) and the two court institutions (the Supreme Court of Canada and courts in

Saskatchewan) was not significant. Furthermore, a significant difference was found in the current study for federal institutions: participants were more confident in the RCMP versus Saskatoon Police Services as well as the Supreme Court of Canada versus courts in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan there is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) as well as municipal police (in the case of Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Police Service). The RCMP report to the federal government, enforce federal statutes, and provide services such as forensic laboratories, identification services, and the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). The RCMP also provide police service in rural areas through a contact with the provincial government. Municipal police report to the municipal government and enforce the general law as well as city by-laws. In regards to courts, there are three levels of courts in Saskatchewan: Provincial Court, the Court of Queen's Bench, and the Court of Appeal. There is also the Supreme Court of Canada which is a federal body. There is also a federal-provincial distinction in terms of corrections. In Canada, if an offender is sentenced to a prison term of two years or more, he/she attends a federal prison. If the prison term is less than two years, he/she attends a provincial prison.

These differences in confidence in federal and local institutions were unexpected. There is a dearth of research examining this distinction. In related research, Page et al. (2004) found that participants in the United Kingdom were more confident in the way crime was dealt with at the local level (63%) versus at the national level (47%). It should also be noted that it is unknown if participants in the current study were fully aware of the differences between the federal and local institutions. It is possible that the sample was unaware of the distinction between the RCMP and Saskatoon Police Services as well as courts in Saskatchewan and the Supreme Court of Canada. Confidence in the CJS was associated with more positive attitudes toward the law, courts, and police (as measured by the ALCP) as well as a higher level of satisfaction with the CJS. This is not surprising given that past research has found confidence to lead to satisfaction (Gibson et al., 2003).

Participants were also asked a series of ten questions pertaining to their satisfaction with the CJS in regards to specific functions. In regards to police, participants were most satisfied with the performance of local police in maintaining public safety (80%), followed by being approachable (68%). Participants were the least satisfied with the performance of the local police in supplying the public with information about crime in Saskatoon (33%). Tufts (2000) also

found the least agreement for this item: Only 54% were satisfied with the performance of local police in supplying the public with information. However, Tufts (2000) found less discrepancy between items: It was found that 66% felt local police were approachable and 62% felt local police were effective in maintaining safety.

In regards to the courts, participants in the current study felt that the courts were effective in determining the guilt or innocence of the accused (46%) as well as ensuring a fair trial for the accused (45%). However, only 3.2% of participants felt that the courts were effective in providing justice quickly. Tufts (2000) also found low agreement for this item: only 13% of respondents agreed. However, whereas the current study found similar ratings for ensuring a fair trial and determining the guilt or innocence of the accused, Tufts (2000) found that more participants viewed the courts as being effective in ensuring a fair trial (41%) versus determining guilt or innocence (21%). Similar results were obtained by Jones et al. (2008): although participants felt that the CJS brought people to justice, far fewer felt that the CJS dealt with cases promptly.

There was far less satisfaction with corrections. Participants were most satisfied with performance in controlling/supervising offenders (29%) followed by supervising offenders on parole (21%). Participants were less satisfied with performance in helping offenders to become law-abiding citizens (13%) and only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend (13%). Given the high-profile local news stories that were circulating at the time of data collection concerning the escape of several inmates from custody, these results are hardly surprising. However, Tufts (2000) also found low levels of satisfaction with corrections. Similarly, she found the highest level of satisfaction with controlling/supervising offenders (26%). There was little variation between only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend (15%), help offenders become law-abiding (14%) and supervision on parole (13%).

Not unexpectedly, many participants felt that sentences given to offenders are too lenient. This has been a common finding in past research (e.g., Casey, 2008, Gelb, 2009; Hough & Roberts, 1999; Jones et al., 2008; Roberts & Hough, 2005). Participants were the most critical of perceived sentencing practices of sex offenders and the least critical of perceived sentencing practices of property and female offenders. Past experience with the CJS appeared to have an

influence on sentencing opinions: Participants with previous CJS experience rated sentences given to offenders as being more lenient than participants without previous CJS experience. However, this was the only significant difference when examining participants with experience and those without.

Television newscasts were the most frequent source of information pertaining to crime and criminal justice. This was expected as most members of the general population rate mass media as their primary source of information regarding crime (Dowler, 2003; Gallagher et al., 2001; Roberts & Doob, 1990; Roberts & Edwards, 1989). However, participants in this sample were not particularly 'heavy' users of the news media: when asked to indicate how often they watched or read news stories pertaining to crime and criminal justice issues, the most frequent response was one to two times a week (30%). The second most frequent response was one to two times a month (24%). Information from friends and family was also a source of information for this sample.

Participants were moderate viewers of fictional crime dramas. When asked how frequently participants watched fictional television crime dramas, the most frequent responses were 'a few times a month' (29%) and 'one to two times a week' (27%). The most frequently watched television crime drama was *CSI* followed by *CSI: Miami*. No evidence of a "CSI effect" was found in this study: Viewing fictional crime dramas was not associated with attitudes toward the CJS.

Multiple regression showed that CJS attitudes were the strongest predictor of confidence in the CJS. This corresponds with Gibson et al. (2003) who found that approval of performance and general satisfaction were the best predictors of confidence. The present study found that ALCP scores as well as CJS knowledge also accounted for variance in CJS confidence above and beyond the variance accounted for by satisfaction, although they added relatively little. In regards to CJS knowledge, confidence in CJS, confidence in CJS knowledge, use of crime fiction, and ALCP scores were found to be significant predictors. However, these variables were weaker predictors than those found for confidence in CJS and only 9% of the variance in CJS knowledge was accounted for by the model.



Overall, the general trends found in Study 1 are in concordance with the results of past research. However, the present study went beyond past research by providing a more comprehensive view of attitudes toward the CJS. It was anticipated that this in-depth look would provide guidance when designing an intervention for the purpose of providing the public with education regarding crime and criminal justice. However, quantitative surveys are merely one way to assess CJS attitudes. More in-depth information was sought to provide meaning to the present results. Therefore, focus groups were conducted in Study 2.

## CHAPTER 3

### A FURTHER LOOK AT CJS ATTITUDES: FOCUS GROUPS

Much of the previous research assessing public confidence in the CJS is quantitative in nature. Researchers typically use surveys and polls to obtain their data. This is understandable, as surveys and polls, particularly if administered by telephone, allow the researcher to obtain a large amount of data in order to generalize the results to the population in question. Although these methods are useful in detecting patterns and trends in public attitudes and opinions, they are limited in their ability to provide us in-depth information as to *why* these patterns and trends occur. Although the survey results obtained in Study 1 provided a comprehensive view of participants' knowledge of and attitudes toward the CJS, a more meaningful elaboration was sought. It was thought that further explanation and exploration would aid in creating an education intervention (Study 3). As such, it was decided to conduct several focus groups in order to provide more detailed information.

#### **Overview of Study 2**

Focus groups were conducted in order to acquire more in-depth, qualitative information regarding attitudes toward the CJS and how these attitudes are formed. Focus groups were chosen in lieu of individual interviews as participants are able to build on one another's responses and come up with ideas they might not have thought of independently. This allows for greater insight into why certain opinions are held (Krueger, 2000). As the overall purpose of Studies 1 and 2 was to obtain information that would be useful when designing an intervention, questions were asked concerning participants' CJS knowledge, the origin of this knowledge, possible reasons for CJS confidence ratings, as well as opinions on what may increase and/or decrease confidence ratings. The unexpected finding in Study 1 concerning national versus local institutions was also explored further.

## Method

### Participants

A total of 22 participants were recruited for the focus groups. Originally it was proposed that participants from Study 1 would be recruited to take part in Study 2. Unfortunately only two participants from Study 1 were willing to attend a focus group session. The remainder of Study 2 participants were recruited from the Introductory Psychology pool at the University of Saskatchewan.

### Procedure

Participants for Study 2 were recruited from the Introductory Psychology participant pool. All first year psychology students had the opportunity to take part in this study. Students logged on to a web-based participant pool site where they were able to choose to take part in studies available through the Department of Psychology. Before they chose to participate, students were able to read a description of the study, the amount of time required, and any restrictions on who was allowed to participate. For each half hour that the student spent completing the study, he or she received one credit that was worth 1% of his or her final course grade. Focus groups varied in length from 35 minutes to 50 minutes.

### Data Collection

**Consent to Participate.** Before participating in focus groups, all participants were required to read an informed consent form (see Appendix M). This form detailed the study's purpose, procedure, and potential benefits/risks, and included statements regarding confidentiality, the student's right to withdraw, and contact information of the researcher. Participants were given a copy for their own records.

**Focus Groups.** After all participants have read and signed the consent form, the focus group commenced. The focus groups were ran according to protocols set by Krueger (2000). A questioning route following a logical sequence was developed to be used in the focus groups (Appendix N). All focus groups were audio taped and later transcribed. The researcher acted as the moderator, with a research assistant engaged as an assistant moderator. The moderator was responsible for posing questions to the group and guiding the group conversation. The assistant

moderator was responsible for taking comprehensive notes and operating the audio recorder. Upon completion of each focus group, the moderator and assistant moderator met in a private room for a debriefing session in order to compare notes, share observations, and discuss participant responses to key questions. The intent of the debriefing sessions was to create a short summary of the focus group in order to describe findings and to address key issues under investigation.

**Debriefing.** Upon completion of the focus group, participants were provided with a debriefing form. The debriefing form described the study in detail as well as provided references if the student wished to learn more about the topic (see Appendix O).

### **Data Analysis**

Krueger's (2000) suggested procedure was used in order to analyze the focus group data. One of Krueger's central tenets is that data analysis should always be driven by the research question. In the present study, the issue to be examined was participants' attitudes toward the CJS and what contributes to these attitudes. The analysis must be systematic and follow the prescribed sequential process, which includes:

- (1) Reading all of the summaries in one sitting, making note of trends and patterns,
- (2) Reading all transcripts from beginning to end, and
- (3) Re-reading the transcripts, concentrating on one question at a time, identifying themes and patterns. The researcher gives consideration to the words used by participants, the specific context of responses, as well as the internal consistency and specificity of responses.

Krueger (2000) stipulates that numbers and percentages are inappropriate for focus group research and should not be included when reporting the results as they give the impression that the results can be projected to a population.

## **Results**

### **CJS Knowledge and Sources of Information**

Participants were asked if they felt they were knowledgeable about crime and the CJS. Overall, most participants did not feel they possessed a great deal of knowledge in this area. This was mostly due to a lack of exposure (either first-hand or through the news media). However, several participants had family members who were either members of the Saskatoon Police Service or the RCMP. Even though these participants felt that they were not overly knowledgeable about crime and the CJS, these participants felt that the little knowledge they did have stemmed from their experiences with the specific family member. Although participants had little knowledge of CJS proceedings or crime statistics, several participants felt they had sufficient knowledge as they ‘knew the rules’ of society and knew what crimes not to commit. It was thought that this constituted ‘knowing enough’ about the CJS.

When asked to comment on their primary source of information concerning crime and the CJS, most participants cited the news media. However, the majority of participants consumed news media once a week or less. It was also common for the participants to discuss a crime-related news story with a friend or family member who had encountered the story in the news media. The vast majority of participants felt that the news media was biased and did not accurately portray crime and criminal justice in Canada. It was recognized that the news media selects which cases to report and that media is often concerned with providing entertainment to the viewer. Approximately half of the participants were regular viewers of fictional crime dramas. The most popular series watched was CSI and its variants. Although these participants regularly viewed fictional crime dramas, they did not feel it influenced their view of the CJS. It was recognized that the crime dramas were fictional and not an accurate portrayal of reality.

### **Confidence in the CJS**

Participants were asked if they would describe themselves as having confidence in the CJS as a whole. Most participants said yes with several caveats. Caveats included too lenient of sentences (particularly for young offenders), too high of a crime rate, abuse of power (particularly by police), loopholes in laws, wrongful convictions, and the courts not operating in a timely manner.

Participants were next asked to comment on their confidence in the police. Overall there was a fairly high level of confidence. A minority of participants were not confident in the police. Reasons given for this included poor response times, perceptions of corruptness, and a focus on specific subgroups such as Aboriginals or teenagers and young adults. The majority of participants were unaware of the difference between the Saskatoon Police Service and the RCMP. Once they were given a brief explanation, most participants felt they had more confidence in the RCMP. These participants felt that because it was a federal body, the RCMP would be more organized and handle more serious crimes. Other reasons given for greater confidence in the RCMP were more compassion to Aboriginal issues and personal acquaintances with several RCMP officers.

Participants were next asked to comment on their confidence in the courts. Similar to the CJS as a whole, most participants said they were confident in the courts with caveats. Caveats included leniency for young offenders and the length of time required to complete a trial. Although most participants felt the court system was fair, several participants felt the system was unfair, as is exemplified in the following quote:

It's just not fair. There are people who commit crimes and get convicted...there are people who are innocent but because of lack of money aren't represented well. *It's just not fair.* (emphasis added)

Several participants did not have confidence in the courts due to personal experience. Frustrations with personal experience stemmed from feelings that the judicial process was lengthy. This is evidenced in the following quote:

My parents are divorced and I grew up with that [the courts] for, like, 10 years. It was stupid...because there's so much for them to deal with it takes forever and then that causes more problems and then more problems. And then this one little thing has become this huge family ordeal that could have been dealt with, if there had been time, right away. That stresses people out and causes problems.

The majority of participants were aware of the distinction between the Supreme Court of Canada and courts within the province of Saskatchewan. Most participants placed greater

confidence in the Supreme Court. Reasons given for this included employing the best judges and handling more serious cases.

Participants were next asked to comment on their confidence in the correctional system. Overall, participants had a low level of confidence in the correctional system. Reasons given for low confidence included recent escapes made from prisons in Saskatchewan, overrepresentation of Aboriginal offenders, early release, and too many ‘comforts’ provided to offenders, as exemplified in the following quote:

They [offenders] eventually get so used to being there that they commit more crimes just to go back because they’re so comfortable and they have a place to stay and they don’t need to work and they can play video games all day if they want...I think that if you’re going to make it a prison then at least give them some limitations and take away their rights.

There was also a perception of a high amount of violence and gang activity within prisons:

The prisoners are basically running [the prisons]. The guards are just so limited in what they can and can’t do. The gang activity in the prisons – the guards are pretty much helpless to do anything.

While some participants felt rehabilitation programs were a *negative* aspect as they were not seen as being punitive enough, a few participants felt that there should be *more* of a rehabilitative focus:

...it costs more to incarcerate somebody than a rehabilitative process. For smaller crimes that [rehabilitation] would be more effective. I guess for murder and rape, the bigger crimes, then they should be punished. For smaller crimes, like poverty-related crimes, then maybe we should give some consideration to other ways of dealing with crime instead of just incarcerating everybody.

Overall, participants were unaware of the distinction between provincial and federal prisons. After a brief explanation, most participants felt that their level of confidence was equal

between the two types of prisons. Several participants indicated that they felt more confident in federal prisons as there was a perception that federal prisons would have more highly trained guards as well as higher security.

Participants were asked to comment on things that made them confident in the CJS as a whole. Participants placed a strong emphasis on police. Many participants thought that they would feel more confident in the CJS as a whole if they felt that police would be able to help them if need be or if there was a reduction in the crime rate. Other factors included criminals being punished, a feeling of safety or security, and learning about the CJS (such as through presentations by the Saskatoon Police Service or the Elizabeth Fry Society). When asked to comment on things that made them less confident in the CJS, participants mentioned lenient sentences, wrongful convictions, lengthy trials, corruption, discrimination, recidivism, a lack of treatment in prisons, and the recent prisoner escapes. Participants were asked if their level of confidence in the CJS had recently changed. The majority of participants said no. Reasons for a change in the level of confidence including recent experiences with the CJS, personal acquaintances with police officers, and recent news stories.

Finally, participants were asked if they felt it was necessary for citizens to have confidence in the CJS. The majority of participants thought that it was. It was thought that this was necessary for society to function and for laws to be followed. There was a concern that the CJS would be ineffective if citizens did not have confidence. Several participants felt that Canadians had the 'right' to feel safe and secure. However, there was a concern that *too* much confidence could also result in negative outcomes, as exemplified in the following quote:

You have to have some level of confidence. The justice system would start to fall apart if nobody had confidence in it. But you can't have *too* much. A lot more could go wrong.  
(emphasis added)

## **Discussion**

The results of the focus groups give us a deeper understanding of the survey results obtained in Study 1. Most participants freely admitted to having a low level of knowledge regarding crime and criminal justice, which corresponds with the low knowledge scores obtained in Study 1. As was found in the survey, participants were most likely to obtain CJS information



from the news media; however, participants did not access the news media on a regular basis. The majority of participants indicated that they accessed news media once per week or less. It was also common for participants to obtain CJS information from friends and family members. Participants did not perceive fictional media was affecting their views of the CJS, which corroborates the lack of correlation between media exposure and CJS attitudes found in Study 1.

As was found in Study 1 and in past research (e.g., Roberts, 2004; Tufts, 2000), participants had the most confidence in the police, followed by the courts and corrections. Overall participants did have a fairly high level of confidence in police; however, concerns were raised over police misconduct as well as targeting specific groups such as Aboriginals. This is unsurprising, as police misconduct has been found to have a pronounced negative effect on public opinion (e.g., Weitzer, 2002). As was found in Study 1, most participants were more confident in the RCMP than the Saskatoon Police Service. There was a perception that because the RCMP is a federal body, there would be a higher level of organization. Several participants were also under the impression that the RCMP handled more serious crimes than the local police. Finally, the RCMP were not seen as targeting Aboriginal offenders to the extent of the Saskatoon Police Service. However, this could be due to the high profile news stories surrounding the Saskatoon Police Service and the practice of ‘starlight tours’ previously discussed.

When asked to comment on their confidence in the courts, participants cited long processing times as a reason for lowered confidence. As in Study 1, there was a perception that the courts did not provide justice quickly. Furthermore, several participants had personal experience with the courts. These participants had less confidence in the courts as they felt the lengthy process had negatively impacted their lives. There was also a perception that courts were too lenient on young offenders. Most participants were aware of the difference between the Supreme Court of Canada and courts located in Saskatchewan. As was found in Study 1, participants were more confident in the Supreme Court. It was felt that only the best judges were appointed to the Supreme Court and that the most serious cases were handled.

Participants were less confident in the correctional system. Various reasons were given for this, including recent prison escapes, overrepresentation of Aboriginal offenders, early release, and too many ‘comforts’ provided to offenders. Interestingly, some participants saw

rehabilitation as a positive aspect of prison, others saw it as a negative aspect and felt that prison should be more punitive. Study 1 addressed differences in level of confidence between the RCMP and the Saskatoon Police Service as well as the Supreme Court of Canada and courts in Saskatchewan. However, differences between federal and provincial prisons were not assessed. In general, participants were unaware of the difference between federal and provincial prisons. After a brief explanation, most participants did not feel that they were more confident in one over the other.

Participants felt that a variety of things might increase their level of confidence in the CJS, including a feeling of safety and a lowered crime rate. This is interesting as the crime rate in Canada has experienced a large decline in the past 19 years. The crime rate peaked in 1991 and has decreased approximately 30% since that time (Statistics Canada, 2007b). Study 1 did not assess participant knowledge of this general trend. In hindsight, it would have been helpful to include such an item on the knowledge portion of the survey in order to assess whether participants who are aware of this statistic are more confident in the CJS. Furthermore, several participants indicated that learning more about the CJS may increase their confidence. This is consistent with other studies, such as Jones et al. (2008), which have found members of the public are generally misinformed about the CJS and would like to know more about how their justice system operates. Smith (2007) conducted focus groups in order to elaborate on what factors would increase confidence in the CJS. Participants indicated that increasing police visibility, harsher sentencing, decreasing the number of offenders who receive early release, and consistency in sentencing would increase confidence.

Overall the results of Study 2 are consistent with the results of Study 1 and provide further elaboration. Although CJS attitudes were gathered in Study 1, it was unclear what perceptions participants were basing these attitudes on, since participants did not have a high level of knowledge regarding the CJS. Results from Study 2 show that attitudes may be based on misperceptions and inaccuracies, the majority of which stem from second-hand knowledge. However, the question remains whether attitudes will change if participants are given accurate information, which is the goal of Study 3. Together, the results of Study 1 and Study 2 were used to create educational material intended to raise public confidence in the CJS, as the results of

these two studies highlighted specific common misperceptions, such as the notion that crime in Canada is increasing and the differences between local and federal CJS institutions.

## CHAPTER 4

### INCREASING CONFIDENCE THROUGH PUBLIC EDUCATION

Studies 1 and 2 found that university students have a limited knowledge of crime and criminal justice. This is consistent with past research. The little knowledge that people do possess is usually attained through the media. In Studies 1 and 2, participants reported the news media was the most frequent source of their criminal justice information. This reliance on the media creates misconceptions, as it has been shown that the media does not portray an accurate view of crime and overrepresents violent offences (Gelb, 2009). Several focus group participants felt that having more access to CJS information would increase their confidence. This finding is consistent with Jones et al. (2008) who found that participants had a low level of knowledge and desired more CJS information. Past research has shown that this misinformation can be corrected and that doing so may lead to increased confidence in the CJS (Mirrlees-Black, 2002; Salisbury, 2004; Singer & Cooper, 2009).

Results obtained by Singer and Cooper (2009) suggested that the mode of delivery is important when providing information to participants. As discussed previously, although all participants in their study showed an increase in CJS knowledge, only participants who were actively engaged with the research team showed an increase in CJS confidence. This included having an informational booklet either handed to them or explained to them. Both methods appeared to be equally effective. Furthermore, more participants who were actively engaged with the research team read the booklet as compared to the participants who received the booklet through the mail. These results led the authors to conclude that, although the evidence is insufficient for a definitive conclusion, it appears as though personal contact is more effective than postal contact. A goal of Study 3 was to further explore this active vs. passive distinction in relation to increasing CJS confidence.

#### **Active vs. Passive Learning**

In the field of education, ‘active learning’ was popularized by Bonwell and Eison (1991) and has received increased attention over recent years as an alternative to traditional, passive

teaching methods. Although there is no universally accepted, specific operationalization of active learning, Prince (2004) offered the following general definition:

Active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process. In short, active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing. While this definition could include traditional activities such as homework, in practice active learning refers to activities that are introduced into the classroom. The core elements of active learning are student activity and engagement in the learning process. Active learning is often contrasted to the traditional lecture where students passively receive information from the instructor. (p. 1)

Before reviewing the effectiveness of active learning, it is important to note that two issues make it difficult to compare results across studies. First, the lack of a universally accepted definition makes it difficult to decipher what exactly is being evaluated. Terms such as ‘problem-based learning,’ ‘cooperative learning,’ and ‘collaborative learning’ (all considered forms of active learning) can be used to describe different strategies. For example, one study might assess students working in teams to solve problems via self-direction. Another study might assess students working alone using self-direction to solve problems. These two studies may find discrepant results<sup>2</sup> yet both may claim to evaluate a form of ‘problem-based learning.’ This calls into question several meta-analyses examining the effectiveness of active learning approaches, which often aggregate studies with very different methodology. Second, when asked ‘does active learning work?’ it is unclear what *work* refers to – how is the effectiveness being defined and measured? Outcomes may include knowledge retention, student attitudes, skill acquisition, or student retention (Prince, 2004).

Some proponents define active learning simply as introducing a student activity into a traditional lecture. Even a method as simple as pausing periodically during a lecture in order to allow students to review their notes with a classmate has shown to increase both short- and long-term retention (Di Vesta & Smith, 1979; Ruhl, Hughes & Schloss, 1987). However, this may be due to student attention span, which has been shown to be approximately 15 minutes (Wankat,

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<sup>2</sup> A meta-analysis by Norman and Schmidt (2000) found that working in teams had a positive impact on students’ achievement, whereas self-directed learning had a slight negative impact.

2002). Simply focusing on introducing an activity fails to capture the importance of the *type* of activity that is being introduced. These activities should produce a deep understanding of the material by promoting thoughtful engagement (Wiggins, & McTighe, 1998). Student engagement has been found to be one of the most important predictors of college success (Astin, 1993). Typically studies find that students who have participated in active learning designed to encourage active engagement have higher test scores than students in traditional, passive learning classrooms (Hake, 1998, Laws, Sokoloff, & Thornton, 1999; Redish, Saul, & Steinberg, 1997).

Although Singer and Cooper (2009) do not specifically address the constructs of active and passive learning, the authors evaluated whether actively engaging participants in the material was effective in increasing CJS knowledge and confidence. Explaining the material to the participant may be considered encouraging active engagement, as the participant is engaged in a dialogue about the material. It can also be argued that directly delivering the booklet to the participant results in some form of active engagement, however minimal. Answering the door and receiving a booklet from a member of the research team is considerably more active than simply receiving the booklet through the mail. This active versus passive distinction was addressed in Study 3.

### **Overview of Study 3**

In order to increase public confidence, participants were provided with factual information regarding crime and justice in Canada. A control group was presented with information regarding health care in Canada. Participants were further divided into active and passive learning conditions. The active learning condition included group discussion. Participants in the passive learning condition simply listened to an informational presentation. Therefore, there were four conditions in total: a CJS active learning group, a CJS passive learning group, a health care active learning group, and a health care passive learning group. After information was presented, participants completed a survey in order to assess CJS knowledge as well as confidence in and attitudes toward the CJS. It was hypothesized that participants in both CJS information conditions would show increased knowledge and more positive attitudes; however, it was hypothesized that this increase would be greater for participants in the active learning condition. The specific hypotheses were as follows:

- (1) Participants who receive CJS information will score significantly higher on the CJS knowledge questions than participants who receive health information. Participants in the active learning CJS information condition will score significantly higher than participants in the passive learning CJS information condition<sup>3</sup>.
- (2) Participants who receive CJS information will score significantly higher on the *Attitudes toward Law, Courts, and Police* (ALCP) scale (i.e., have more positive appraisals) than participants who receive health information. Participants in the active learning CJS information condition will score significantly higher than participants in the passive learning CJS information condition.
- (3) Participants who receive CJS information will score significantly higher on CJS confidence ratings than participants who receive health information. Participants in the active learning CJS information condition will score significantly higher than participants in the passive learning CJS information condition.
- (4) Participants who receive CJS information will score significantly higher on CJS satisfaction ratings than participants who receive health information. Participants in the active learning CJS information condition will score significantly higher than participants in the passive learning CJS information condition.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A total of 140 students were recruited from the Introductory Psychology participant pool at the University of Saskatchewan. There were no restrictions on who was allowed to participate. All participants received credit towards their final course grade.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that this hypothesis was made before the publication of Singer and Cooper in December, 2009. As such, the researcher was unaware of their finding that the increase in CJS knowledge did not differ between the active and passive conditions.

## Measures

**Knowledge of Criminal Justice System.** Participants were asked to answer seven questions about their knowledge of the crime and the Canadian criminal justice system (see Appendix P). Participants were also asked to rate their confidence in their answer, ranging from 1 = *not at all confident* to 5 = *extremely confident*. For each question that the participant answered correctly, he or she received one point. The points for each participant were summed. This allowed for level of knowledge to be used in subsequent data analysis. Whereas the knowledge questions used in Study 1 concentrated on knowledge of crime trends, in Study 3 the questions included knowledge of crime trends as well as knowledge of the CJS. This was included as participants in Study 2 indicated that their knowledge of the CJS was poor and past research has shown that increased knowledge of CJS functioning may improve confidence in the CJS (e.g., Hough & Park, 2002; Mirrlees-Black, 2002; Salisbury, 2004; Singer & Cooper, 2009).

**Attitudes towards Law, Courts and Police (ALCP).** As in Study 1, participants also completed the ALCP subscale of the *Criminal Sentiments Scale* (CSS). The CSS, developed by Andrews and Wormith (1984), consists of three subscales: Attitudes toward the Law, Courts, and Police (ALCP), Tolerance for Law Violation (TLV), and Identification with Criminal Others (ICO). Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with 41 statements, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Lower ALCP scores indicate a more negative attitude towards the justice system (see Appendix B). The CSS has demonstrated reliability (Kennedy, 1989; Roy & Wormith, 1985), as well as discriminant, construct, convergent, and divergent validity (Rettinger, n.d.).

**Criminal Justice System Attitudes.** As in Study 1, participants were also asked to rate their confidence in the various facets of the CJS. Participants responded on a 5-point scale where 1 = *not at all confident* and 5 = *extremely confident* (see Appendix Q). Participants were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the various criminal justice institutions. These items are from Tufts (2000) and ask participants to rate the police, courts, and corrections on various dimensions.

**Social Desirability.** To control for social desirability bias (the tendency to respond to questionnaires in a way that portrays a positive self-description; Paulhus, 2002), participants



completed the Impression Management Scale (IMS), one of the two subscales in the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1988). This measure was also used in Study 1. Participants responded on a seven-point rating scale where 1 = *not true* and 7 = *very true* to 20 items such as “I don’t gossip about other people’s business” (see Appendix F). Possible scores on the IMS range from 20 to 140. Past research has demonstrated both convergent and discriminant validity with the IMS (Paulhus, 1991).

**Political Conservatism and Demographics.** Political conservatism is an important variable influencing sentencing decisions (Huang, Finn, Ruback, & Friedmann, 1996). To assess this, participants responded to one item measuring their degree of conservatism. The single item asks participants to rate themselves as being liberal, somewhat liberal, conservative, or somewhat conservative. Scores on this scale range from 1 to 4, with higher scores indicating a greater degree of conservatism. Single items have been found to be a reliable and valid method for assessing conservatism (Gerbner, Goss, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994). Participants were also asked to indicate their age, gender, year of university, and ethnicity (see Appendix G). These measures were identical to those included in Study 1.

## **Procedure**

Participants for Study 3 were recruited from the Introductory Psychology participant pool. All first year psychology students had the opportunity to take part in this study. Students logged on to a web-based participant pool site where they were able to choose to take part in studies available through the Department of Psychology. Before they chose to participate, students were able to read a description of the study, the amount of time required, and any restrictions on who was allowed to participate. For each half hour that the student spent completing the study, he or she received one credit that was worth 1% of his or her final course grade.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. In two of the conditions, participants received information about the CJS. The presentation included information concerning crime trends in Canada as well as information about the police, the courts, and corrections. In one of the CJS conditions active learning was induced by encouraging group discussion (Lorenzen, 2001). Participants were asked to comment on their perceptions of crime

and the CJS and to discuss how the information presented differed from or corroborated their previous views. The other CJS condition utilized passive learning: Participants listened to a presentation of the information but did not engage in discussion. There were also two control conditions. Each of these conditions received information regarding the health care system in Canada. The health care system was chosen as a similar format could be followed. Participants were presented with information concerning health in Canada, as well as information about the three facets of the system (i.e., Health Canada, provincial/territorial health, and regional health authorities). Once again, there was an active learning control condition and a passive learning control condition. Participants in the active learning control condition engaged in group discussion regarding their perceptions of health and health care in Canada and how the information presented differed from or corroborated their previous views. Educational material for the CJS conditions was reviewed by four individuals with varying levels of expertise regarding crime and criminal justice. Educational material for the health information condition was reviewed by one individual with expertise in Canadian health care.

## **Testing**

**Consent to Participate.** Before completing the survey, all participants were required to read an informed consent form (see Appendix R). This form detailed the study's purpose, procedure, and potential benefits/risks, and included statements regarding confidentiality, the student's right to withdraw, and contact information of the researcher. Participants were given a copy for their own records.

**Presentation of Information.** Participants were presented with information via Microsoft PowerPoint software. The researcher stood at the front of the room in order to present the information. Both the CJS and the health system presentations were designed to be of equal length and contained equal amounts of information. In the passive learning conditions, participants were instructed to not ask any questions until the study was completed. This ensured that no discussion occurred. In the active learning condition, participants were asked questions about their perceptions of crime trends and functioning of the CJS. Discussion of these perceptions was encouraged. Due to the addition of group discussion, the active learning presentations were longer (approximately 30 minutes) in duration than the passive learning presentations (approximately 17 minutes).

**Survey Completion.** After the presentation of educational material, a survey was distributed to participants containing the measures discussed above. The survey was counterbalanced so that for half of the participants the knowledge questions preceded the attitude measures. In the remaining half, the attitude measures preceded the knowledge questions. The demographic questions were at the end of all of the surveys.

**Debriefing.** After the student completed the survey, he or she received a debriefing form (see Appendix S). The debriefing form described the study in detail as well as provided references if the student wished to learn more about the topic.

## Results

### Participants

In total, 140 (35 per condition) participants were recruited from the Introductory Psychology participant pool at the University of Saskatchewan. There were no restrictions on who was allowed to participate. All participants received credit towards their final course grade. Of the 140 participants, there were 82 (58.6%) females and 54 (38.6%) males. The majority of participants were Caucasian ( $N = 102$ , 72.9%) and in their first year of university ( $N = 95$ , 67.9%). In regards to political conservatism, the modal response was “somewhat conservative” ( $N = 44$ , 31.4%), and the mean age was 20.48 ( $SD = 3.42$ ) years. For a summary of demographic variables, see Table 4-1.

### Gender Differences

A series of matched-sample *t*-tests was run in order to assess any gender differences (see Table 4-2). As can be seen in Table 4-2, females scored significantly higher in confidence in CJS knowledge as well as on the ALCP. The effect sizes for these differences (as measured by Cohen’s *d*) are 0.43 and 0.40, respectively. According to Cohen’s (1992) conventions, these would be considered smaller effect sizes, although they are approaching medium (0.50 is the conventional criteria for classification as a medium effect size). Furthermore, when the Bonferroni adjustment for Type I error is applied, these differences are no longer significant ( $\alpha = 0.006$ ).

## **Social Desirability**

The mean score on the IMS was 79.20 ( $SD = 16.58$ ), with scores ranging from 40 to 121. The median score was 78 and the mode was 86. The internal reliability of the scale (Cronbach's Alpha) was  $\alpha = 0.78$ . The IMS was not significantly correlated to CJS knowledge,  $r = -0.11$ ,  $p = 0.24$ , confidence in CJS knowledge,  $r = -0.02$ ,  $p = 0.83$ , ALCP scores,  $r = 0.09$ ,  $p = 0.31$ , confidence in the CJS,  $r = 0.11$ ,  $p = 0.24$ , nor satisfaction with the CJS,  $r = 0.14$ ,  $p = 0.13$ . As such, these measures were not contaminated by participants' desire to appear socially desirable and the IMS was excluded from all analyses.

Table 4-1. Summary of Demographic Variables

	<i>N</i>	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	82	58.6%
Male	54	38.6%
Missing Data	4	2.9%
<b>Year of university</b>		
First	95	67.9%
Second	26	18.6%
Third	5	3.6%
Fourth	5	3.6%
Fifth or more	5	3.6%
Missing data	4	2.9%
<b>Political Conservatism</b>		
Liberal	28	20.0%
Somewhat liberal	39	27.9%
Somewhat conservative	44	31.4%
Conservative		
Missing data	17	12.1%
	12	8.6%

Table 4-2. Comparison of Females and Males on Demographics and Scales

	Females ( <i>SD</i> )	Males ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Age	20.81 (4.09)	19.98 (1.94)	-1.57	0.12	0.26
Year of University	1.49 (1.02)	1.57 (0.96)	0.50	0.62	-0.08
Conservatism	2.43 (1.00)	2.33 (0.94)	-0.59	0.56	0.10
CJS Knowledge	4.57 (2.05)	3.98 (2.45)	-1.47	0.15	0.70
Confidence in CJS Knowledge	28.16 (5.27)	25.83 (5.57)	-2.46	0.02	0.43
ALCP	91.21 (9.40)	87.22 (10.51)	-2.26	0.03	0.40
Confidence in CJS	22.00 (3.70)	21.17 (3.08)	-1.42	0.16	0.24
Satisfaction with CJS	32.65 (5.54)	32.17 (5.13)	-0.52	0.60	0.09
IMS	81.38 (16.95)	75.98 (15.63)	-1.86	0.07	0.33

## Knowledge of the CJS

Possible scores on the questionnaire assessing knowledge of the CJS range from zero to seven. Overall, the mean score was 4.24 ( $SD = 2.28$ ). Scores ranged from zero ( $N = 7, 5.0%$ ) to seven ( $N = 20, 14.3%$ ; see Table 4-3).

Table 4-3. CJS Knowledge Scores

Score	<i>N</i>	%
0	7	5.0%
1	14	10.0%
2	11	7.9%
3	23	16.4%
4	12	8.6%
5	27	19.3%
6	25	17.9%
7	20	14.3%

Participants' level of confidence in their answers was positively correlated with overall knowledge score,  $r = 0.71, p < 0.001$ . Responses to the seven CJS knowledge questions are included in Appendix T.

It was hypothesized that participants in both of the CJS learning conditions would have higher knowledge scores than participants in the control conditions. In order to assess this prediction, a 2 (Learning: Active vs. Passive) x 2 (Information: CJS vs. Health between-groups ANOVA was run on knowledge scores. The main effect of Information was significant,  $F(1,136) = 122.81, p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.48$  (see Table 4-4). Analysis of the simple effect of type of information showed that participants who received CJS information scored significantly higher than participants who received health information,  $t(138) = 11.12, p < 0.001, d = 1.88$ . The effect size for this comparison is large (see Table 4-5).

Table 4-4. ANOVA for Learning and Information on CJS Knowledge Scores

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	Partial $\eta^2$	<i>p</i>
Information	1	122.81	0.48	< 0.001
Learning	1	0.74	0.01	0.39
Information * Learning	1	0.43	0.51	0.003
Error	136	(2.79)		

*Note.* Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

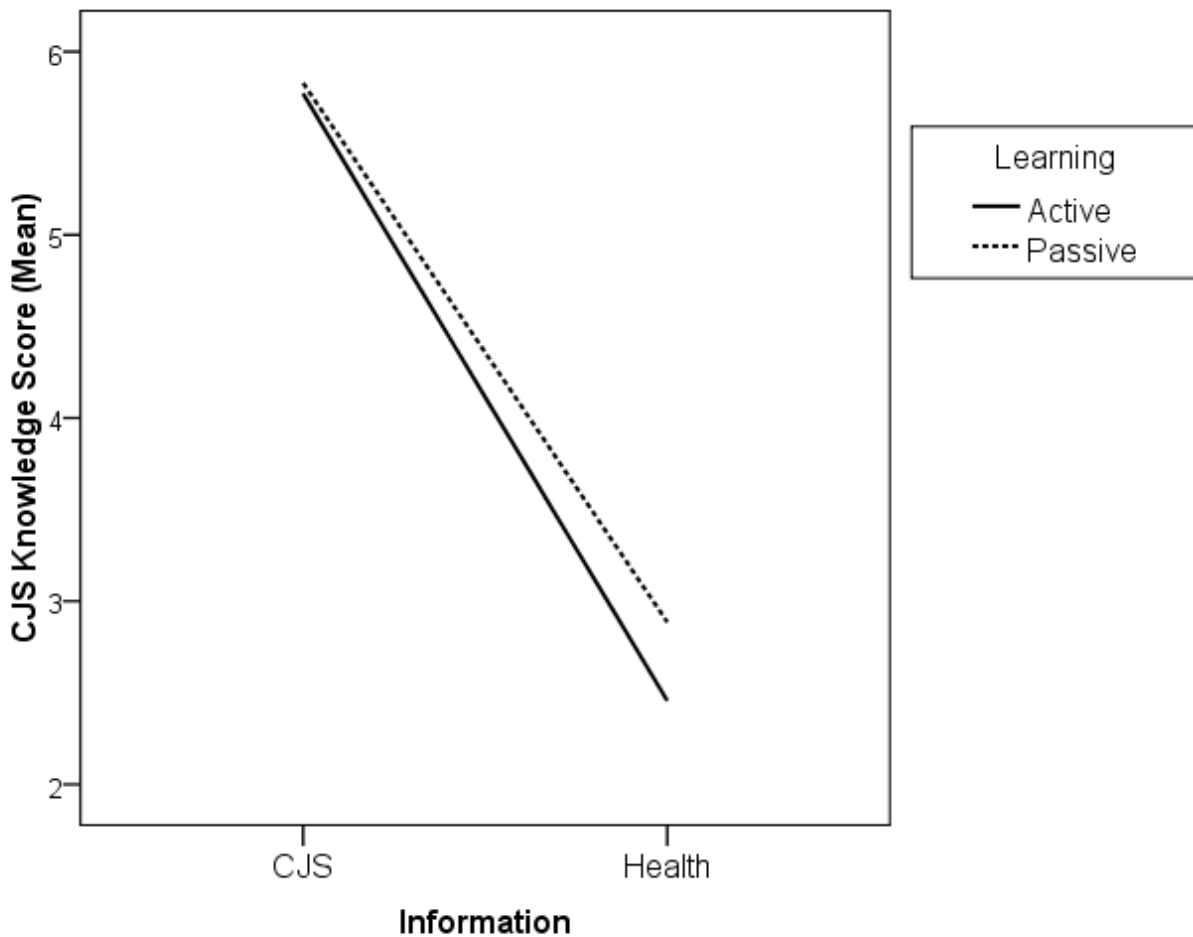
Table 4-5. Simple Effect of Information on CJS Knowledge

	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
CJS Information	5.80 (0.96)	11.12	< 0.001	1.88
Health Information	2.67 (2.15)			

The main effect of learning (active vs. passive) was not significant,  $F(1,136) = 0.74$ ,  $p = 0.39$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ . Knowledge scores did not differ depending on whether or not participants were assigned to active or passive learning conditions. The interaction effect was also nonsignificant,  $F(1,136) = 0.43$ ,  $p = 0.51$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.003$ . These results are displayed graphically in Figure 4-1.



Figure 4-1. CJS Knowledge by Condition



In order to assess any differences in confidence in CJS knowledge, a 2 (Learning: Active vs. Passive) x 2 (Information: CJS vs. Health) between-groups ANOVA was run on confidence in CJS knowledge ratings. The main effect of information was significant,  $F(1,136) = 280.11, p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.67$  (see Table 4-6). Analysis of the simple effect of type of information showed that participants who received CJS information were significantly more confident in their answers to the CJS knowledge questions,  $t(138) = 16.76, p < 0.00, d = 2.84$ . Once again, the effect size for this comparison is large (see Table 4-7).

Table 4-6. ANOVA for Learning and Information on Confidence in CJS Knowledge

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	Partial $\eta^2$	<i>p</i>
Information	1	280.11	0.67	< 0.001
Learning	1	1.55	0.01	0.22
Information * Learning	1	0.001	< 0.001	0.98
Error	136	(10.15)		

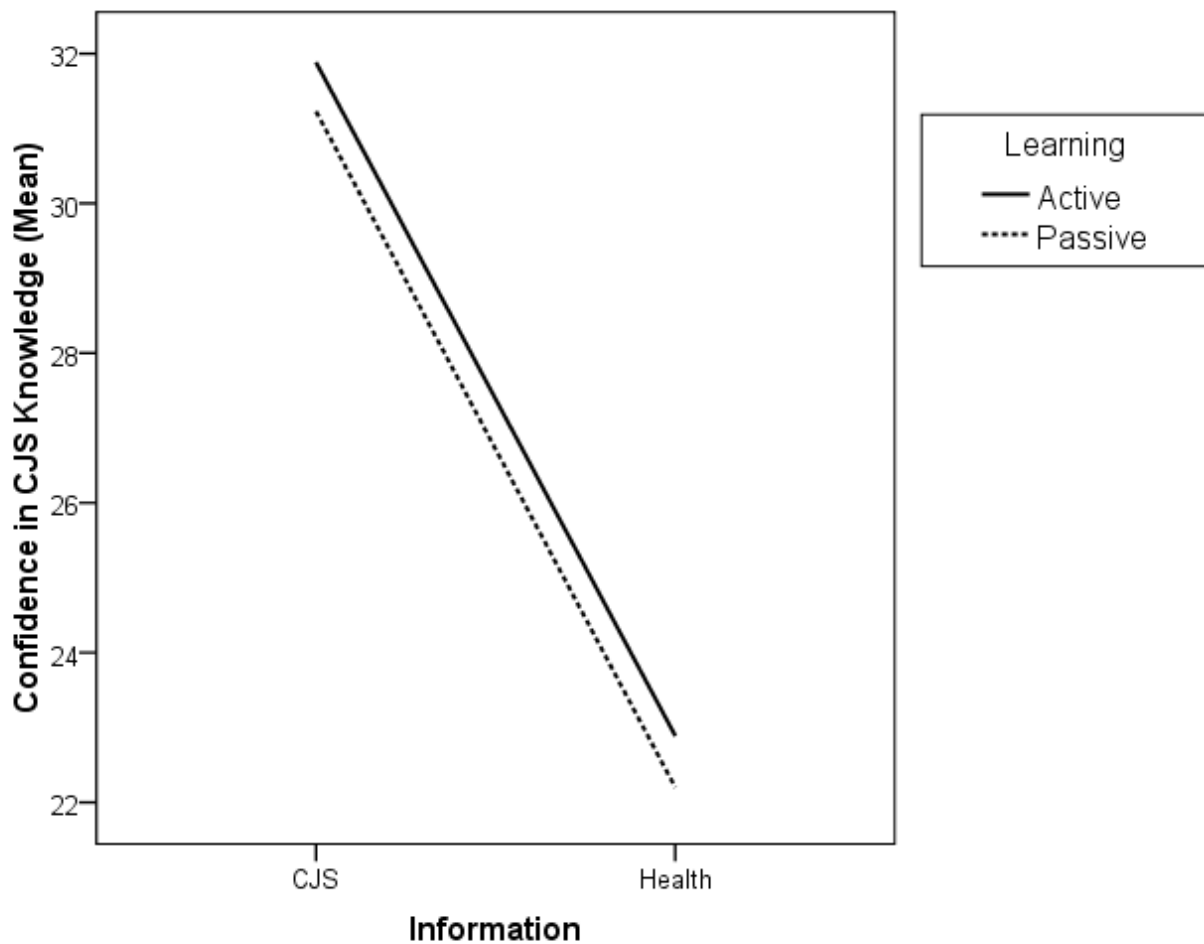
*Note.* Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

Table 4-7. Simple Effect of Information on Confidence in CJS Knowledge

	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
CJS Information	31.56 (2.62)	16.76	< 0.001	2.84
Health Information	22.54 (3.65)			

The main effect of learning (active vs. passive) was not significant,  $F(1,136) = 1.55$ ,  $p = 0.22$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.01$ . Knowledge scores did not differ depending on whether or not participants were assigned to active or passive learning conditions. The interaction effect was also nonsignificant,  $F(1,136) = 0.001$ ,  $p = 0.98$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.00$ . These results are displayed graphically in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2. Confidence in CJS Knowledge by Condition



### Attitudes towards Law, Courts, and Police (ALCP)

The mean score on the ALCP was 89.46 ( $SD = 9.94$ ), with scores ranging from 61 to 114. The median score was 89 and the mode was 88. The internal reliability of the scale (Cronbach's Alpha) was  $\alpha = 0.86$ . Scores were computed for the three subscales (law, courts, and police). For the law subscale, the mean score was 38.22 ( $SD = 4.72$ ). For the court subscale, the mean score was 23.10 ( $SD = 3.69$ ). For the police subscale, the mean score was 25.20 ( $SD = 3.96$ ). Subscale intercorrelations are shown in Table 4-8. Scores on the ALCP were positively correlated with total knowledge score,  $r = 0.27$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , confidence in CJS knowledge,  $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , confidence in the CJS,  $r = 0.69$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , and satisfaction with the CJS,  $r = 0.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

Table 4-8. ALCP Subscale Intercorrelations

	Law Subscale	Courts Subscale	Police Subscale
Law Subscale	-	0.45**	0.43**
Courts Subscale	0.45**	-	0.34**
Police Subscale	0.43**	0.34**	-

Note. \*\*  $p < 0.01$

It was hypothesized that participants receiving CJS information would score higher on the ALCP than participants receiving health system information. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that participants in the CJS active learning condition would score higher than participants in the CJS passive learning condition. As such, a 2 (Learning: Active vs. Passive) x 2 (Information: CJS vs. Health between-groups ANOVA was run on ALCP scores. The main effect of information was significant,  $F(1,136) = 18.39$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.12$  (see Table 4-9). Analysis of the simple effect of type of information showed that participants who received CJS information had significantly higher ALCP scores than participants who received health system information,  $t(138) = 4.25$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.72$  (see Table 4-10).

Table 4-9. ANOVA for Learning and Information on ALCP Scores

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	Partial $\eta^2$	<i>p</i>
Learning	1	2.11	0.02	0.15
Information	1	18.39	0.12	< 0.001
Learning * Information	1	2.22	0.02	0.14
Error	136	(86.55)		

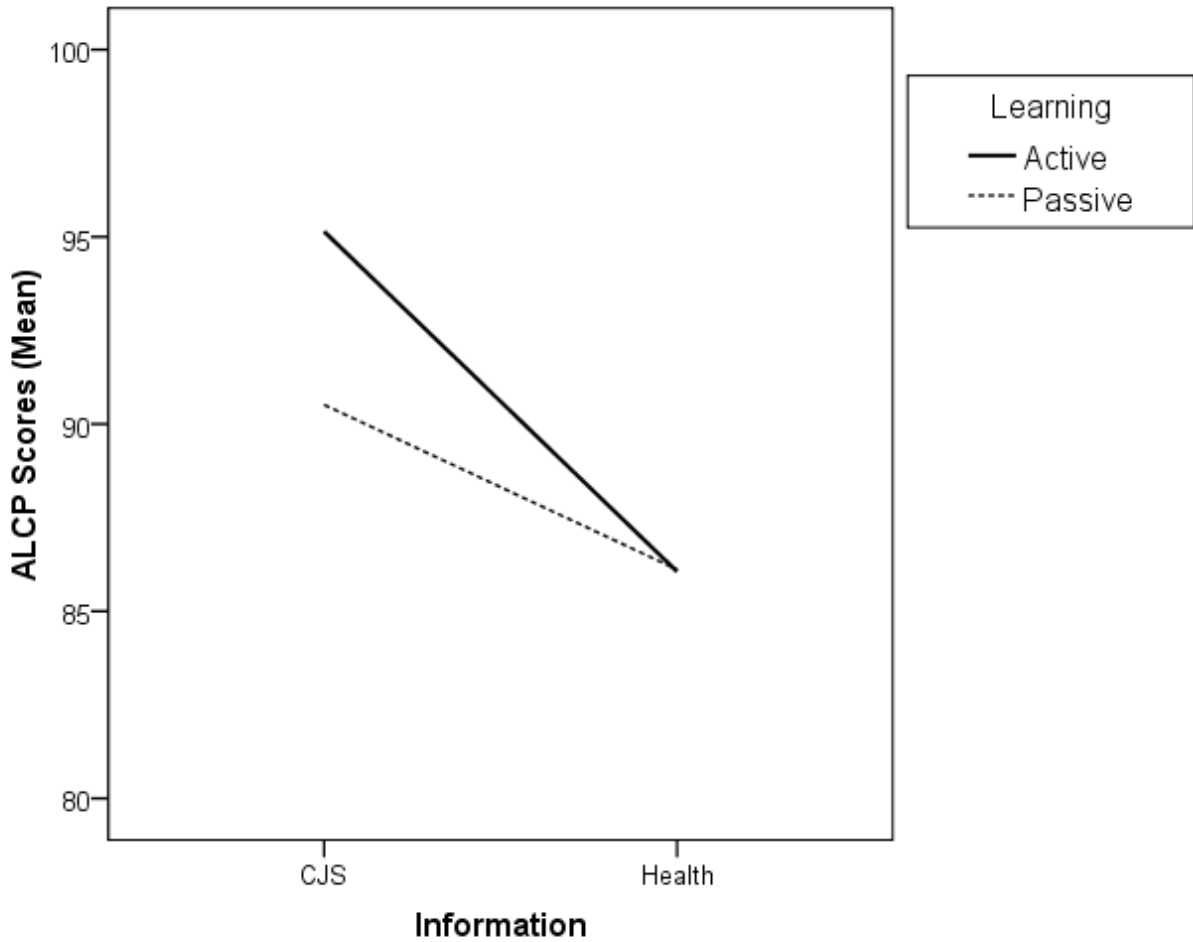
*Note.* Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

Table 4-10. Simple Effect of Information on ALCP

	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
CJS Information	92.83 (9.69)	4.25	< 0.001	0.72
Health Information	86.09 (9.06)			

The main effect of learning was not significant,  $F(1,136) = 2.11, p = 0.15$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ . The interaction effect between information and learning was also nonsignificant,  $F(1, 136) = 2.22, p = 0.14$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ . However, several planned *a priori* comparisons were run. These comparisons revealed that the difference in ALCP scores between participants in the active learning CJS condition ( $M = 95.14, SD = 10.38$ ) and participants in the passive learning CJS condition ( $M = 90.51, SD = 8.49$ ) was marginally significant,  $t(138) = 2.04, p = 0.05, d = 0.49$ . These results are depicted in Figure 4-3.

Figure 4-3. ALCP Scores by Condition



When the subscales were analyzed separately, it was found that the effect of information was significant for all three subscales (see Table 4-11). However, the main effect of learning as well as the interaction effect was nonsignificant.

Table. 4-11. ANOVA for Information and Learning on ALCP Subscales

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	partial $\eta^2$
<b>Law Subscale</b>				
Information	1	17.01	< 0.001	0.11
Learning	1	0.94	0.33	0.01
Information * Learning	1	2.61	0.11	0.02
Error	136	(19.78)		
<b>Courts Subscale</b>				
Information	1	5.21	0.02	0.04
Learning	1	0.70	0.40	0.01
Information * Learning	1	1.70	0.20	0.01
Error	136	(13.18)		
<b>Police Subscale</b>				
Information	1	10.09	0.002	0.07
Learning	1	2.39	0.13	0.02
Information * Learning	1	0.24	0.63	0.002
Error	136	(14.68)		

*Note.* Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.



## CJS Confidence

Participants were asked to rate their confidence in various CJS institutions, ranging from 1 = *not at all confident* to 5 = *extremely confident*. The overall average rating was 3.61,  $SD = 0.57$ . As was the case in Study 1, participants were most confident in the RCMP, followed by the Supreme Court of Canada. However, the difference between these two institutions is negligible (see Table 4-8). When confidence values for specific groups were collapsed into police, courts, and corrections, it was found that participants were equally confident in the police ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ) and the courts ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ), followed by the correctional system ( $M = 3.24$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ). The difference between confidence in the police and courts as compared to the correctional system was significant,  $t(139) = 9.13$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.77$ . This finding was also found in Study 1.

Table 4-12. Confidence Ratings for Six CJS Institutions

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
RCMP	4.02	0.67
Saskatoon Police Services	3.59	0.83
Courts in Saskatchewan	3.59	0.76
Supreme Court of Canada	4.01	0.86
Correctional System	3.26	0.94
National Parole Board	3.22	0.72

It was hypothesized that participants receiving CJS information would have higher confidence ratings than participants receiving health system information. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that participants in the CJS active learning condition would score higher than participants in the CJS passive learning condition. As such, a 2 (Learning: Active vs. Passive) x 2 (Information: CJS vs. Health) between-groups ANOVA was run on confidence ratings. The main effect of information was significant,  $F(1,136) = 14.12$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.09$  (see Table 4-13). Analysis of the simple effect of type of information showed that participants who received CJS information were significantly more confident in their answers to the CJS knowledge questions,  $t(138) = 3.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 0.60$  (see Table 4-14).

Table 4-13. ANOVA for Learning and Information on CJS Confidence Ratings

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	Partial $\eta^2$	<i>p</i>
Information	1	14.12	0.09	< 0.001
Learning	1	1.28	0.26	0.01
Information * Learning	1	6.77	0.05	0.01
Error	136	(10.35)		

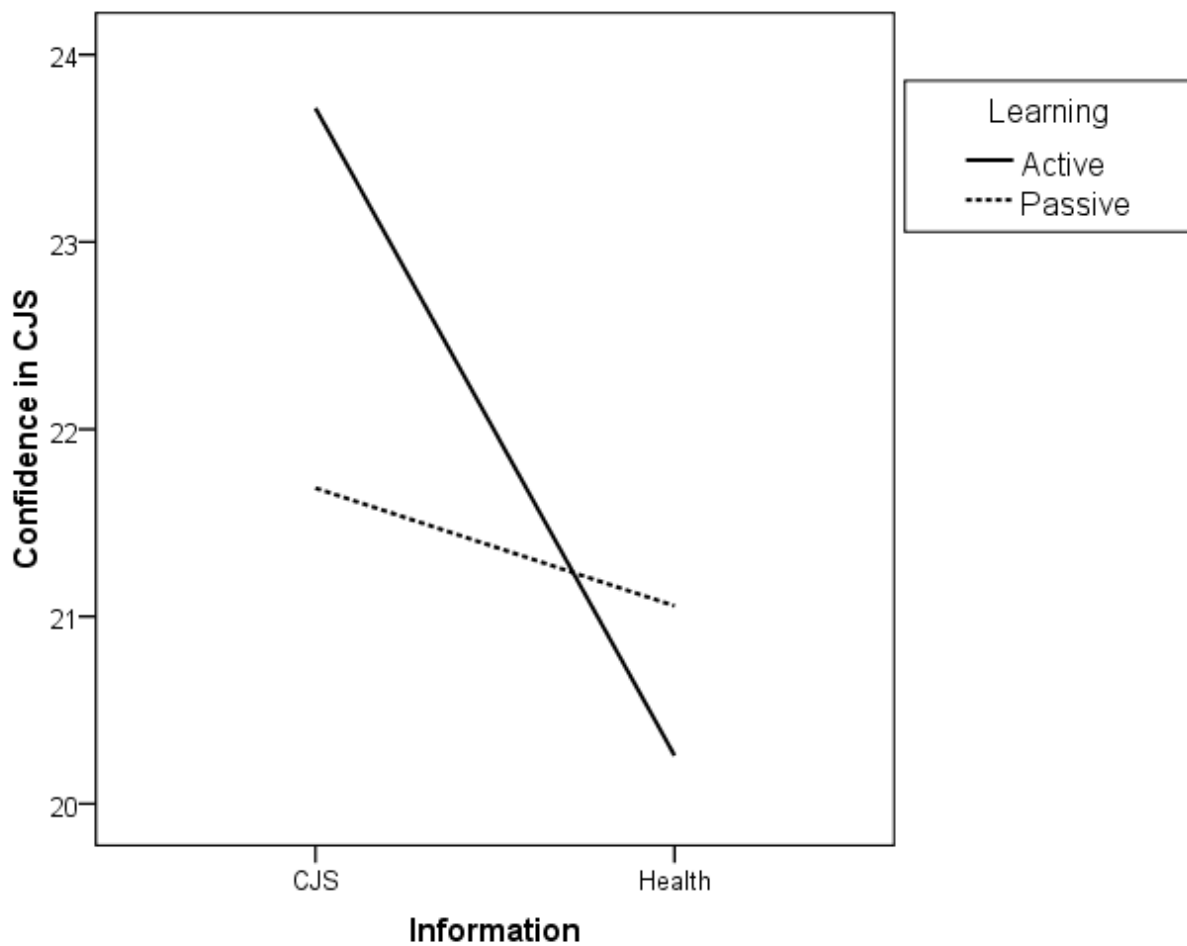
*Note.* Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

Table 4-14. Simple Effect of Information on CJS Confidence

	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
CJS Information	22.70 (3.21)	3.68	< 0.001	0.60
Health Information	20.66 (3.57)			

The main effect of learning was not significant,  $F(1,136) = 1.28, p = 0.26, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.01$ . The interaction effect between information and learning was significant,  $F(1,136) = 6.77, p = 0.01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = 0.05$ . In order to further investigate this interaction, follow-up  $t$ -tests were run. It was found that the type of learning (active vs. passive) had an effect on participants' confidence in the CJS for participants receiving CJS information,  $t(68) = 2.77, p = 0.01, d = 0.66$ , but not for participants receiving health information,  $t(68) = -1.00, p = 0.32, d = -0.24$ . These results are displayed in Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4. Confidence in CJS by Condition



Further analysis revealed that nonsignificant differences between the CJS-passive condition and the Health-active condition ( $t(68) = 1.90, p = 0.06, d = 0.46$ ) as well as the Health-passive condition ( $t(68) = 0.77, p = 0.45, d = 0.18$ ). An increase in CJS confidence was only evident for participants in the CJS-active condition.

The CJS confidence ratings for each institution are presented below in Table 4-15. As can be seen in the table, participants in the CJS – Active condition had significantly higher confidence ratings than participants in the CJS – Passive condition for four out of the six institutions assessed: the RCMP, Saskatoon Police Services, the correctional system, and the National Parole Board. There were no significant differences in confidence for the courts in Saskatchewan nor the Supreme Court of Canada. Although these differences are no longer significant when the Bonferroni adjustment for Type I error is applied ( $\alpha = 0.008$ ), the effect sizes are considered to be of medium magnitude.

Table 4-15. Confidence ratings for six CJS institutions: CJS – Active vs. CJS - Passive

	CJS - Active		CJS - Passive		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
RCMP	4.29	0.52	3.94	0.59	2.58	0.01	0.63
Saskatoon Police Services	3.94	0.77	3.54	0.78	2.17	0.03	0.52
Courts in Saskatchewan	3.91	0.70	3.66	0.64	1.60	0.11	0.37
Supreme Court of Canada	4.23	0.65	4.03	0.92	1.05	0.30	0.24
Correctional System	3.77	0.65	3.31	0.99	2.28	0.03	0.55
National Parole Board	3.57	0.78	3.20	0.68	2.13	0.04	0.51

In Study 1, it was found that participants had higher confidence in federal institutions (i.e., the RCMP and the Supreme Court of Canada) than more local institutions (i.e., Saskatoon Police Services and courts within the province of Saskatchewan). Once again, participants were more confident in the RCMP ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ) than the Saskatoon Police Services ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ),  $t(139) = 6.54$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , as well as the Supreme Court of Canada ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ) as compared to courts in Saskatchewan ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ),  $t(139) = 6.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$ .

In order to assess satisfaction with the CJS, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with 10 items, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*. The mean score on the questionnaire was 32.40 ( $SD = 5.31$ ), with scores ranging from 14 to 47. The median score was 33 and the mode was 25. The internal reliability of the scale (Cronbach's Alpha) was  $\alpha = 0.83$ . It was hypothesized that participants receiving CJS information would have higher satisfaction ratings than participants receiving health system information. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that participants in the CJS active learning condition would score higher than participants in the CJS passive learning condition. As such, a 2 (Learning: Active vs. Passive) x 2 (Information: CJS vs. Health) between-groups ANOVA was run on satisfaction ratings. The main effect of information was significant,  $F(1,136) = 18.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.12$  (see Table 4-16). Analysis of the simple effect of type of information showed that participants who received CJS information were significantly more satisfied with the CJS,  $t(138) = 4.24$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $d = 1.33$  (see Table 4-17).

Table 4-16. ANOVA for Learning and Information on CJS Satisfaction Ratings

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	Partial $\eta^2$	<i>p</i>
Learning	1	3.56	0.03	0.06
Information	1	18.62	0.12	< 0.001
Learning * Information	1	5.46	0.04	0.02
Error	136	(23.89)		

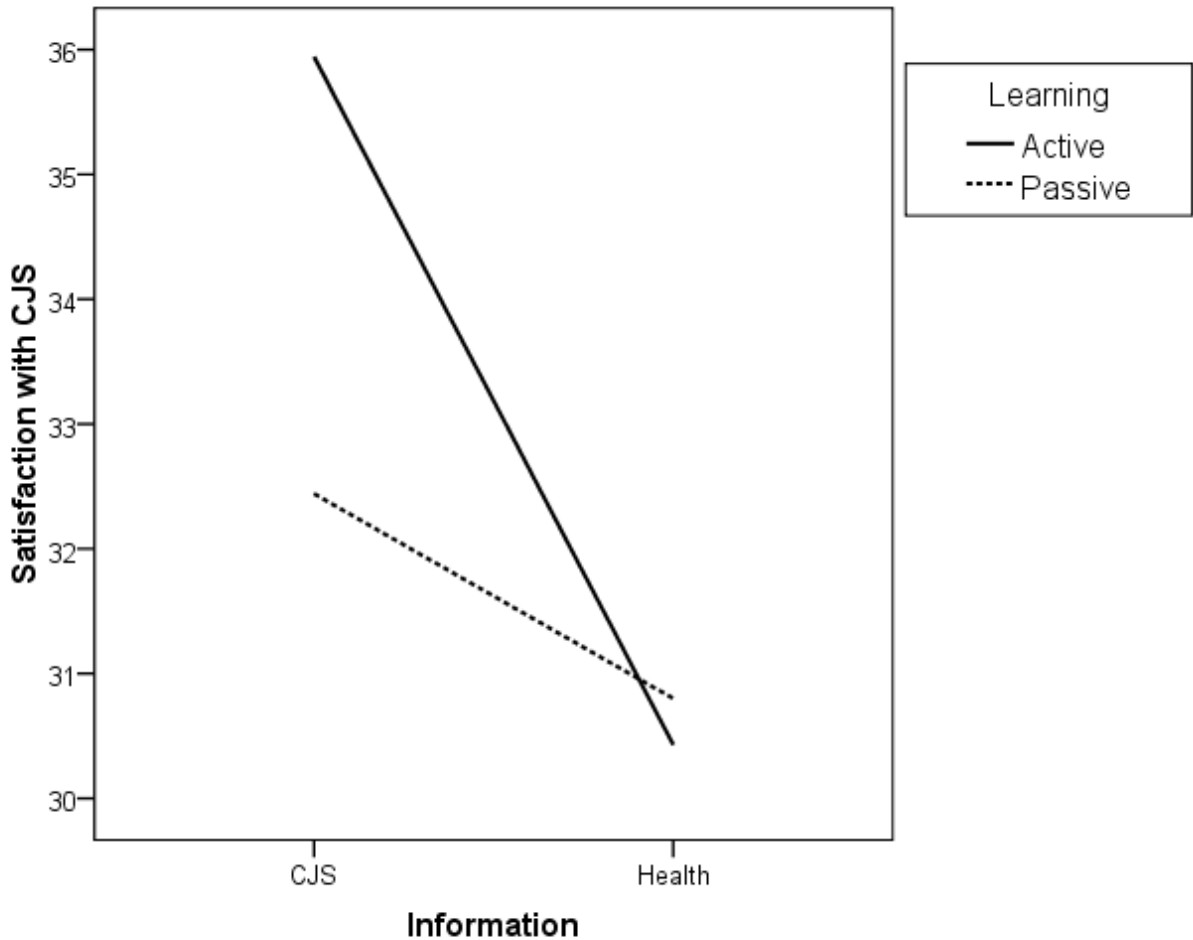
*Note.* Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

Table 4-17. Simple Effect of Information on CJS Satisfaction

	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
CJS Information	34.22 (4.94)	4.24	< 0.001	1.33
Health Information	30.61 (5.08)			

The main effect of learning was not significant,  $F(1,136) = 3.56, p = 0.06$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.03$ . The interaction effect between information and learning was significant,  $F(1,136) = 5.46, p = 0.02$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.04$ . In order to further investigate this interaction, follow-up *t*-tests were run. It was found that the type of learning (active vs. passive) had an effect for participants receiving CJS information,  $t(68) = 3.13, p = 0.003, d = 0.75$ , but not for participants receiving health information,  $t(68) = -0.30, p = 0.76, d = -0.07$ . These results are displayed in Figure 4-5.

Figure 4-5. Satisfaction with CJS by Condition



Further analysis revealed nonsignificant differences between the CJS-passive condition and the Health-active condition ( $t(68) = 1.70, p = 0.06, d = 0.41$ ) as well as the Health-passive condition ( $t(68) = 1.41, p = 0.16, d = 0.34$ ). An increase in CJS satisfaction was only evident for participants in the CJS-active condition.

The mean ratings for each of the satisfaction items are presented in Table 4-18. As can be seen in the table, significant differences between the CJS-active and the CJS-passive conditions were found for only five out of the ten items. Significant differences were found for two (out of three) items assessing satisfaction with police and three (out of four) items assessing satisfaction with corrections. No significant differences were found for items assessing satisfaction with the courts.



Table 4-18. CJS Attitudes: Mean Ratings

	CJS - Active		CJS - Passive		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
The local police are approachable	3.94	0.94	2.60	0.87	1.61	0.11	1.48
The local police do their best to ensure public safety	4.37	0.60	3.94	0.64	2.90	0.01	0.69
The local police supply the public with adequate information about crime in Saskatoon	3.60	0.74	2.89	0.83	3.81	<.001	0.90
The courts do a good job of ensuring a fair trial for the accused	3.77	0.73	3.69	0.58	0.54	0.59	0.12
The courts do a good job of determining the guilt or innocence of the accused	3.74	0.71	3.51	0.61	1.41	0.16	0.35
The courts provide justice quickly	2.57	0.56	2.46	0.92	0.63	0.53	0.14
Correctional authorities do a good job of controlling/supervising offenders	3.51	0.74	3.31	0.80	1.09	0.28	0.26
Correctional authorities do a good job of helping offenders to become law-abiding citizens	3.57	0.70	3.15	0.89	2.20	0.03	0.52
Correctional authorities do a good job of only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend	3.34	0.97	2.66	0.80	3.23	0.002	0.76
Correctional authorities do a good job of supervising offenders on parole	3.51	0.78	3.17	0.82	1.79	0.08	0.42

## Discussion

The first hypothesis of the current study was that participants who received CJS information would score significantly higher on the CJS knowledge questions than participants who received health system information. This was confirmed: Whereas participants receiving CJS information had an average score of 5.80 (where a 7.00 represents a perfect score), participants receiving health system information had an average score of 2.67. It was further hypothesized that participants in the active learning CJS information condition would score significantly higher than participants in the passive learning CJS information condition. This was not the case. There were no significant differences between participants in the two CJS information conditions. Active learning did not increase the amount of CJS knowledge acquired. However, there is evidence elsewhere that active learning may increase long-term retention of information (e.g., Moreno & Mayer, 2000). Although a follow-up was not included in the current study, future research should address this. It is possible that although differences between the active and passive learning conditions were not evident immediately following the presentation of CJS information, significant differences may emerge at a follow-up test.

The second hypothesis was that participants who received CJS information would score significantly higher on the *Attitudes toward Law, Courts, and Police* (ALCP) scale. This hypothesis was supported: Participants receiving CJS information had significantly higher ALCP scores, indicating more positive attitudes. This difference was also found when attitudes toward the three institutions (i.e., law, courts, and police) were analyzed separately. It was further hypothesized that participants in the active learning CJS information condition would score significantly higher than participants in the passive learning CJS information condition. This was somewhat supported: The difference in ALCP scores between the CJS-active and the CJS-passive conditions was marginally significant ( $p = 0.05$ ). However, the effect size (as measured by Cohen's  $d$ ) was 0.49, which is near the suggested 0.50 cut-off for a medium-sized effect (Cohen, 1992). When attitudes toward the three separate institutions were analyzed separately, no significant differences were found between the two conditions.

The third hypothesis was that participants who received CJS information would have significantly higher levels of confidence in the CJS than participants who received health system

information. It was further hypothesized that participants in the CJS-active condition would be more confident than participants in the CJS-passive condition. This hypothesis was partially supported. Participants in the CJS-active condition scored significantly higher in CJS confidence than participants in the CJS-passive condition. However, participants in the CJS-passive condition did not score significantly different than participants in either of the two control conditions. When levels of confidence for the six CJS institutions assessed were analyzed separately, it was found that participants in the CJS-active condition scored significantly higher than participants in the CJS-passive condition for four of the institutions (i.e., the RCMP, the Saskatoon Police Service, the correctional system, and the National Parole Board). No significant differences were found for the Supreme Court of Canada nor courts in Saskatchewan. This finding is interesting as it suggests that active learning only had an effect on confidence in the police and corrections, not in the court system. Although the educational material presented contained equal information pertaining to the police, courts, and corrections and discussion was promoted throughout the presentation (in the CJS-active condition), it is the perception of the researcher<sup>4</sup> that participants were more engaged in the material concerning police and corrections and that this material promoted more discussion than the material concerning the courts. This could account for the lack of a significant difference in confidence in the courts. Perhaps if more discussion concerning the courts had transpired the participants would have been more actively engaged and an increase in confidence would have been found.

The fourth hypothesis was that participants who received CJS information would have significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the CJS than participants who received health system information. It was further hypothesized that participants in the CJS-active condition would be more satisfied than participants in the CJS-passive condition. This hypothesis was partially supported. It was found that participants in the CJS-active condition were significantly more satisfied with the CJS than participants in the CJS-passive condition. However, participants in the CJS-passive condition did not score significantly different than participants in either of the two control conditions. When the individual items were analyzed separately, it was found that there were significant differences between the two CJS conditions for only four of the ten items.

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<sup>4</sup> It is acknowledged that this is subjective. Unfortunately a limitation of the current study is that this was not measured objectively. See next chapter for a full discussion of study limitations.

These items were ‘the local police do their best to ensure public safety,’ ‘the local police supply the public with adequate information about crime in Saskatoon,’ ‘correctional authorities do a good job of helping offenders to become law-abiding citizens,’ and ‘correctional authorities do a good job of only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend.’ As was found when the confidence items were analyzed separately, differences were found for items pertaining to the police and to corrections, but not to the courts.

Although there were three items pertaining to the police, significant differences were found for only two items. Participants in the CJS-active condition felt that local police were more successful in regards to ensuring public safety and supplying the public with crime information. However, participants in the CJS-active condition were not more likely to agree with the statement ‘the local police are approachable.’ In regards to police information provided to participants, no specific information pertaining to supplying the public with crime information was given. Police public outreach was not covered by the educational presentation. Therefore, it is interesting that a difference was found for this item. It is possible that obtaining police information as well as information about crime in addition to discussing this material resulted in the CJS-active participants having better recall of various crime information supplied by the local police, such as television newscasts and interviews, newspaper articles, Crime Stoppers campaigns, etc. Furthermore, CJS-active participants may have been more satisfied with the local police in regards to ensuring public safety as the educational presentation provided participants with information pertaining to the decrease in the crime rate in Canada that has been experienced over the last two decades. Discussion of the material was encouraged and many participants indicated that they were surprised by the falling crime rate. This may have led participants to feel a heightened sense of public safety. No information was provided about the approachability of local police.

Although there were four items pertaining to corrections, significant differences were found for only two items. Participants in the CJS-active condition felt that correctional authorities were more successful in regards to helping offenders becoming law-abiding citizens and only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend. However, participants in the CJS-active condition were not more likely to agree with the statements ‘correctional authorities do a good job of controlling/supervising offenders’ nor ‘correctional authorities do a good job of

supervising offenders on parole.’ Information specific to controlling and supervising offenders was not provided to participants. Additionally, results obtained from focus groups in Study 2 indicate that this may be a particular concern for some members of the public: It was found that some focus group participants had a perception that correctional institutions were ‘being run by the inmates’ and that correctional officers were ‘powerless to do anything.’ Furthermore, specific information pertaining to supervision parole was also not included due to time constraints. The presentation did contain information regarding reductions in recidivism following effective correctional treatment and there was discussion on this point. This could account for why participants in the CJS-active condition were more likely to feel that correctional authorities are effective in helping offenders to become law-abiding citizens. This may also account for why participants in the CJS-active condition were more likely to feel that correctional authorities only released offenders who are not likely to reoffend. Although no specific information concerning parole decisions was provided, perhaps the information and group discussion regarding recidivism influenced these ratings.

The current study found that while participants in both the passive and active learning conditions increased knowledge when presented with CJS information, only participants in the active learning condition showed increased levels of confidence and satisfaction. This is similar to results obtained by Singer and Cooper (2009): Although all participants provided with an informational booklet on the CJS showed an increase in knowledge, it was found that only participants who were actively engaged with the researcher showed an increase in confidence. These findings suggest that there is something about active learning that goes beyond rote learning to induce attitude change. Benware and Deci (1984) found that students in both active and passive learning conditions scored equally as well in terms of rote learning. However, students in the active learning condition had more positive attitudes toward the learning activity and scored higher in terms of conceptual learning. The lack of differences in regards to rote learning (i.e., recalling CJS information that was just presented in order to complete a CJS knowledge quiz) is not surprising as the sample was comprised of undergraduate university students. Generally speaking, this is a population in which rote learning skills are required for academic success. Students are accustomed to being presented with information in a lecture format as well as being asked to recall this information on quiz or test. The passive learning condition in the present study was very similar to a typical university lecture. However, this rote

learning does not appear to result in attitude change. It appears as though the increased processing and engagement required for active learning is necessary for attitude change.

These results seem to fit in with the *elaboration-likelihood model* (ELM) of persuasion put forth by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). According to the ELM, there are two routes to persuasion: the central route and the peripheral route. The central route involves a high degree of elaboration and occurs when an individual is presented with thought-provoking information and spends mental resources evaluating the arguments being presented. Conversely, the peripheral route does not involve extensive cognitive processing. Instead, surface characteristics are often used to evaluate the argument, such as the attractiveness of the source of a 'catchy' slogan. Attitude change is still possible under the peripheral route; however attitudes formed under the central route are more robust and long-lasting (Aronson, Wilson, Akert & Fehr, 2004; Petty, Haugtvedt & Smith, 1995). Although the central or peripheral route could be used in both active and passive learning environments, it seems that the central route would be more commonly used in active learning situations as the student needs to cognitively process the material in order to be actively engaged. This link between active learning and achieving attitude change through the central route to persuasion is an area for future research.

As is the case in many studies comparing active and passive learning, participants in the active learning conditions spent more time with the material than participants in the passive learning conditions. This imbalance is a by-product of presenting the two groups with identical information in an identical format. The time spent in group discussion in the active learning condition was extra time processing the CJS information that was denied in the passive learning condition. This could account for why participants in the active learning condition demonstrated more positive attitudes. However, results by Redish et al. (1997) suggest that improved outcomes are due to active engagement and not simply extra time spent on a given topic as their study controlled for this factor.

In conclusion, the results of Study 3 are consistent with the study by Singer and Cooper (2009). Although passive learning did result in an increase in CJS knowledge, this knowledge increase did not directly result in an increase in CJS confidence nor satisfaction. It was only when the participants were actively engaged with the material that these differences were

observed. This finding has important implications for real-world interventions, which are discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

Consistent with past research (e.g., Roberts, 2004), the current study found low levels of confidence and satisfaction with the CJS. However, it has been suggested that much of the public's dissatisfaction is based on misperceptions. For example, Allen et al. (2006) found that although 75 percent of respondents felt sentences were too lenient, respondents grossly underestimated typical sentencing practices. Furthermore, despite a dramatic decrease in crime over the past two decades, only 26 percent of Canadians surveyed thought that the crime rate had decreased in the past five years (Angus Reid, 2010). This is troubling, as Latimer and Desjardins (2007) found that participants who had misperceptions regarding crime trends (i.e., thought that the crime rate in Canada was increasing rather than decreasing) were less confident in the CJS.

There is evidence that the public would like to know more about crime and the CJS (e.g., Casey, 2008). In Study 2, several focus group participants indicated that providing the public with information would be a good way of increasing confidence. As previously discussed, a variety of interventions have been implemented which have attempted to increase public confidence by providing factual information. Study 3 has extended this previous literature by further examining the role of mode of delivery as well as the distinction between active and passive learning. Furthermore the current study extends this body of research to Canada, as much of the past research has taken place in the United Kingdom.

The findings of Study 3 as well as past research suggests that simply supplying the public with CJS information may not be enough to achieve attitude change. Aside from the results obtained by Singer and Cooper (2009) previously discussed, Feilzer (2007) reported on a two-year research project in which a criminologist presented CJS information through a weekly column in a local newspaper in Oxford. The column was not found to have a significant impact on the CJS attitudes of its readers. It would appear that some type of active engagement with the material is necessary in order to achieve attitude change. Study 3 utilized group discussion among participants; however, past research has incorporated discussion with the researcher (Singer & Cooper, 2009), discussion with CJS experts (Hough & Park, 2002), and educational seminars (Mirrlees-Black, 2002). However, it should be noted that Mirrlees-Black (2002) found



an increase in confidence when a booklet was distributed. However, participants were contacted about the study by a researcher before receiving the booklet and had an opportunity to discuss the study with the researcher. This could be considered a form of actively engaging the participant.

In regards to real-world implications, the present research suggests that although the public is misinformed about crime and criminal justice, supplying information in a passive manner may not result in attitude change. If an intervention was to be designed, care should be taken to ensure participants have some degree of active engagement. This need not be a presentation as was used in the current study: Results by Singer and Cooper (2009) suggest that merely handing an individual an informational booklet with a brief explanation may be sufficient to increase confidence. It is not apparent whether this contact should be in person or if another type of contact, such as a phone call, would suffice. In terms of cost effectiveness, an informational booklet accompanied by a phone call would be a feasible option. However, future research should address whether this would be a sufficient level of active engagement.

Finally, a note should be made about the impact of testing participants on their knowledge of the CJS. Research has suggested that testing individuals on subject matter leads to better retention of that material. This is known as the ‘testing effect’ (Roedinger & Karpicke, 2006). In the current study as well as in previous research, participants are typically tested on their knowledge of the CJS following an experimental manipulation. The very act of testing participants may increase their retention of CJS information. If a real world intervention were to be designed that did not include a test, retention of CJS information may be lessened. Therefore, aside from actively engaging the public in the material, it would also be recommended that individuals are later tested on the material.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of the current study was the use of Introductory Psychology students. This population differs from the general public in several ways, including age, socioeconomic status, and educational attainment. Past research has shown demographic differences in CJS attitudes. Typically, younger people (teenagers to young adults) are found to have more confidence in the CJS (Allen et al., 2006; Jones et al., 2008). Furthermore, confidence in the CJS is also associated

with higher educational attainment and higher socioeconomic status (Jones et al., 2008). Therefore, it is not clear whether the findings of the current study can be generalized to the general public, particularly the CJS attitudes assessed in Studies 1 and 2. It is possible that different results would be obtained with an older sample, as age-related differences have been found in previous research. Aside from attitudinal differences, first-year university students do not typically access the news media on a regular basis. Therefore, their base rate of knowledge regarding crime and criminal justice may be lower than that of the general public. However, the finding that active learning was necessary for attitude change was obtained by Singer and Cooper (2009) in a sample of the general public.

Secondly, participants were not asked to rate their overall level of confidence with the CJS as a whole. This would have allowed for direct comparison with other studies. In the current study, participants were asked to rate their confidence for six separate CJS institutions (i.e., the RCMP, Saskatoon Police Service, the Supreme Court of Canada, courts in Saskatchewan, the correctional system, and the National Parole Board). Several studies simply ask participants to rate their confidence in the CJS as a whole. While it is more methodologically-sound to separate confidence ratings in the various CJS institutions, an overall, global assessment would have allowed the researcher to compare the level of confidence in the current sample with the levels of confidence obtained in other studies.

A third limitation is that the actual content of the group discussions that occurred in the active learning conditions was not documented. In hindsight, it would have been useful to audio record the discussions in order to produce transcripts. These transcripts could have undergone content analysis in order to objectively document the discussions. This process may have been useful in analyzing the data from Study 3 and may have highlighted between-group differences in discussion sessions. All active learning group discussions were supervised by the researcher. As a result, the researcher's subjective perceptions of discussion content are provided where applicable; however, it is acknowledged that this is not an objective measure. It is recommended that future research that actively engages participants in learning about the CJS should implement a procedure to document the precise content of the 'active engagement.'

A fourth limitation is the lack of a follow-up test in Study 3. Although immediate increases in knowledge were observed for both of the CJS conditions and attitudinal changes were found for the CJS-active condition, it is not apparent whether these observed differences are long-term. It would have been ideal to invite participants to participate in a two- to three-week follow-up; however, this was not feasible given the limits of the current study. Although no differences in CJS knowledge were found between the CJS-active and the CJS-passive conditions, it is possible that participants in the CJS-active condition might perform better in regards to long-term retention. Furthermore, it is unknown whether the increase in confidence and satisfaction observed in the CJS-active condition would be present at a follow-up testing. However, Singer and Cooper (2009) tested participants on average four-weeks after they had been given an informational booklet. Even though four-weeks had elapsed, their results were similar to those obtained in Study 3.

A fifth limitation is that the educational material provided in Study 3 did not address victims of crime. Smith (2007) found that providing information about victim-related rights and services may help to increase confidence in the CJS. Victim rights are a complex issue and as such could not have been included in Study 3 without the exclusion of other material. However, future research may wish to more directly address this issue. As the matter of victim rights is so complex, it may be best to study this issue and the impact of education on participants independent of other CJS information.

Despite these limitations, the current studies have made a valuable contribution to this line of research by replicating past research in a Canadian setting as well by further exploring the distinction between active and passive learning in relation to increasing CJS confidence. Although the study by Singer and Cooper (2009) did have a high degree of external validity as it was conducted in a real-world setting, the current study had a high degree of internal validity due to the experimental format. Participants were randomly assigned to either experimental or control conditions. Furthermore, care was taken so that the only difference between conditions was information (CJS vs. Health) and mode of delivery (passive vs. active learning). Although results by Singer and Cooper (2009) suggested that active engagement was necessary for an increase in CJS knowledge, their study could not say this definitively due to the research design.

The current research has added to this body of knowledge by corroborating their results with a true experiment.

### **Future Directions**

Given the low levels of confidence in the CJS found in Canada and around the world, it is surprising that such little research has examined how to improve confidence. The CJS relies on public support in order to function effectively (Casey, 2008). Individuals who are confident in the CJS are more likely to report crimes, provide police with helpful information, or to testify as a witness in court trials (Indermaur & Hough, 2002; Roberts, 2004; Roberts & Edwards, 1989). Therefore, it is in the best interest of the CJS to increase the number of people who are confident in the system. The current study demonstrated that confidence can be increased when participants are actively engaged in information pertaining to the CJS. However, while the current study had a high degree of internal validity, this was at the expense of external validity. Participants were brought into a room and viewed an educational presentation. It is not feasible to implement this procedure on a wide-scale basis with members of the general public. Therefore, it is recommended that future research examine cost-effective interventions in the 'real-world' such as has been suggested previously.

One feasible method that appears to be promising is disseminating information via booklets, as was done by Singer and Cooper (2009). However, it should be noted that simply delivering the booklets without actively engaging individuals may not lead to attitude change. Individuals may be engaged by being personally delivered the booklet and being able to discuss the contents. However, it may not be feasible to have door-to-door discussions with every Canadian household. It is also plausible that discussing the material over the telephone may also lead to active learning, as this would be a more cost-effective method. Future research should examine this possibility.

Although the above mentioned methods are cost-effective means of increasing confidence among adults, it is worth mentioning that perhaps the best way to improve confidence in the CJS among future generations is to employ active learning in the classroom. In Canada, students may elect to take a law class. Research has shown that active learning can increase mastery in many different subjects (Hake, 1998, Laws, Sokoloff, & Thornton, 1999; Redish,

Saul, & Steinberg, 1997). Relevant to this discussion, despite increasing mastery, active learning in such classes may lead to a deeper understanding of the Canadian CJS and increased confidence.

A final note should be made pertaining to the assumption of the current study that increased confidence in the CJS is a positive outcome. As discussed previously, increased confidence is associated with an increased propensity to assist the CJS by reporting crimes, provide police with information, and to testify as a witness in court (Indermaur & Hough, 2002; Roberts, 2004; Roberts & Edwards, 1989). In order to operate effectively, the CJS relies on this type of support from the public. However, it should be acknowledged that others may argue that increased confidence may be a negative outcome and that the public should be critical of public institutions such as the CJS. Although this line of research is promoting public confidence, a 'blind trust' is not being advocated. Rather, it is anticipated that by providing the public with factual information pertaining to the operation of the CJS confidence will be increased. However, this increase in confidence should be due to an increase in *knowledge*. Conversely, the opposite effect could also be true: providing the public with CJS information could lead to a *decrease* in confidence. However, previous research, as well as Study 3, shows that this is not the case. By providing individuals with information pertaining to the CJS (e.g., crime rate data, how the CJS operates), confidence is increased when appropriate teaching methods are used and the learner is engaged.

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APPENDIX A: CJS KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS (STUDY 1)

**Instructions:** We are now going to ask you a series of questions to test your knowledge of Canada's criminal justice system. Please answer to the best of your ability. After each question, please rate your confidence in your answer.

1. Of all the defendants found guilty in court in 2006/2007 in Canada, what percentage do you think were sentenced to prison (check one)?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

- |                         |                       |         |                       |                        |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Not at all<br>Confident | Not very<br>Confident | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Confident | Extremely<br>Confident |
| 1                       | 2                     | 3       | 4                     | 5                      |

2. What percentage of offenders do you think commit new crimes once they are released from prison (check one)?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

- |                         |                       |         |                       |                        |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Not at all<br>Confident | Not very<br>Confident | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Confident | Extremely<br>Confident |
| 1                       | 2                     | 3       | 4                     | 5                      |

3. What percentage of crimes committed in Canada do you think are violent crimes?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5

4. What percentage of crimes committed in Canada do you think are sex crimes?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5

5. What percentage of crimes committed in Canada do you think are property crimes?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5

6. What percentage of crime in Canada do you think is committed by young offenders?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5



7. Of all the offenders sentenced to custody in 2006/07, what do you think the average length of the prison sentence was?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months – 2 years
- 2 years – 5 years
- 5 years – 10 years
- 10 years – 15 years
- More than 15 years

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B: ATTITUDES TOWARD LAW, COURTS, AND POLICE

**Instructions:** Following are some statements, with which you may agree or disagree. Circle the answer that best represents *your* feeling about the statement or your general feeling or the way you usually feel about it.

1. Pretty well all laws deserve our respect.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

2. It's our duty to obey all laws.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

3. Laws are usually bad.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

4. The law is rotten to the core.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

5. You cannot respect the law because it's there only to help a small and selfish group of people.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

6. All laws should be obeyed just because they are laws.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

7. The law does not help the average person.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

8. The Law is good.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

9. Law and justice are the same thing.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

10. The law makes slaves out of most people for few people on the top.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

11. Almost any jury can be fixed.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

12. You cannot get justice in court.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

13. Lawyers are honest.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

14. The prosecution often produces fake witnesses.

Strongly Disagree 1      2      3      4      Strongly Agree 5

15. Judges are honest and kind.

Strongly Disagree 1      2      3      4      Strongly Agree 5

16. Court decisions are pretty well always fair.

Strongly Disagree 1      2      3      4      Strongly Agree 5

17. Just about anything can be fixed in court if you have enough money.

Strongly Disagree 1      2      3      4      Strongly Agree 5

18. A judge is a good person.

Strongly Disagree 1      2      3      4      Strongly Agree 5

19. The police are honest.

Strongly Disagree 1      2      3      4      Strongly Agree 5

20. A cop is a friend to people in need.

Strongly Disagree 1      2      3      4      Strongly Agree 5

21. Life would be better with fewer cops.

Strongly Disagree 1                      2                      3                      4                      Strongly Agree 5

22. The police should be paid more for their work.

Strongly Disagree 1                      2                      3                      4                      Strongly Agree 5

23. The police are as crooked as the people they arrest.

Strongly Disagree 1                      2                      3                      4                      Strongly Agree 5

24. Society would be better off if there were more police.

Strongly Disagree 1                      2                      3                      4                      Strongly Agree 5

25. The police almost never help people.

Strongly Disagree 1                      2                      3                      4                      Strongly Agree 5

## APPENDIX C: CJS ATTITUDES (STUDY 1)

**Instructions:** We are now going to ask you a series of questions about your confidence in the criminal justice system. Please keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answer, we are interested in your views and opinions.

1. Please rate your confidence in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
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2. Please rate your confidence in Saskatoon Police Services.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
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3. Please rate your confidence in Saskatchewan provincial courts.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
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4. Please rate your confidence in the Supreme Court of Canada.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

5. Please rate your confidence in the correctional system.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

6. Please rate your confidence in the National Parole Board of Canada.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

**Instructions:** We are now going to ask you a series of questions about your satisfaction with the criminal justice system. Please keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answer, we are interested in your views and opinions.

1. The local police are approachable.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

2. The local police do their best to ensure public safety.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

3. The local police supply the public with adequate information about crime in Saskatoon.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

4. The courts do a good job of ensuring a fair trial for the accused.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

5. The courts do a good job of determining the guilt or innocence of the accused.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

6. The courts provide justice quickly.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

7. Correctional authorities do a good job of controlling/supervising offenders.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

8. Correctional authorities do a good job of helping offenders to become law-abiding citizens.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

9. Correctional authorities do a good job of only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

10. Correctional authorities do a good job of supervising offenders on parole.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

**Instructions:** We are now going to ask you a series of questions about your opinion of sentencing practices in Canada. Please keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answer, we are interested in your views and opinions.

1. Do you feel that sentences given to defendants found guilty of property offences (e.g., break and enter, theft) are too lenient, too harsh, or just about right?

Too harsh			Just about right		Too lenient
1	2	3	4	5	

2. Do you feel that sentences given to defendants found guilty of violent offences (e.g., assault) are too lenient, too harsh, or just about right?

Too harsh			Just about right		Too lenient
1	2	3	4	5	

3. Do you feel that sentences given to defendants found guilty of sex offences (e.g., sexual assault) are too lenient, too harsh, or just about right?

Too harsh			Just about right		Too lenient
1	2	3	4	5	



4. Do you feel that sentences given to young offenders (i.e., children under the age of 18) are too lenient, too harsh, or just about right?

Too harsh		Just about right		Too lenient
1	2	3	4	5

5. Do you feel that sentences given to female offenders are too lenient, too harsh, or just about right?

Too harsh		Just about right		Too lenient
1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX D: PAST EXPERIENCE WITH CJS

1. In the previous six months, have you had contact with the criminal justice system (e.g., police, courts)? This includes filing a complaint with police, reporting a crime, serving as a witness, etc.).

- Yes
- No

2. In the previous six months, has an immediate family member or close friend had contact with the criminal justice system (e.g., police, courts)? This includes filing a complaint with police, reporting a crime, serving as a witness, etc.).

- Yes
- No

## APPENDIX E: EXPOSURE TO CJS INFORMATION

**Instructions:** We are now going to ask you a series of questions about where you obtain information about the criminal justice system.

1. What is your primary source of information regarding crime and criminal justice issues (check all that apply)?

- Newspapers
- Television newscasts
- Radio newscasts
- Online news websites
- Friends/family
- Other (please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)

2. How often do you watch/read news stories pertaining to crime and criminal justice issues (check one)?

- Daily
- 5-6 times a week
- 3-4 times a week
- 1-2 times a week
- A few times a month
- Hardly ever

3. How often do you read fiction pertaining to crime and criminal justice movies (e.g., detective novels, homicide mysteries, etc.)?

- Daily
- 5-6 times a week
- 3-4 times a week
- 1-2 times a week
- A few times a month
- Hardly ever

4. How often do you watch television crime dramas (e.g., CSI, Law & Order, etc.)?

- Daily
- 5-6 times a week
- 3-4 times a week
- 1-2 times a week
- A few times a month
- Hardly ever

5. Which television crime dramas, if any, do you regularly watch (check all that apply)?

- CSI: Crime Scene Investigation
- CSI: Miami
- CSI: NY
- Law & Order
- Law & Order: Special Victims Unit

- Law & Order: Criminal Intent
- Homicide: Life on the Street
- Bones
- Criminal Minds
- Veronica Mars
- Dexter
- Other (please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)

## APPENDIX F: IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT SCALE

**Instructions:** Using the scale below as a guide, type a number beside each statement to indicate how true it is.

Not True			Somewhat True			Very True
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- \_\_\_ 1. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.\*
- \_\_\_ 2. I never cover up my mistakes.
- \_\_\_ 3. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.\*
- \_\_\_ 4. I never swear.
- \_\_\_ 5. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.\*
- \_\_\_ 6. I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.
- \_\_\_ 7. I have said something bad about a friend behind his or her back.\*
- \_\_\_ 8. When I hear people talking privately, I avoid listening.
- \_\_\_ 9. I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.\*
- \_\_\_ 10. I always declare everything at customs.
- \_\_\_ 11. When I was young I sometimes stole things.\*
- \_\_\_ 12. I have never dropped litter on the street.
- \_\_\_ 13. I sometimes drive faster than the speed limit.\*
- \_\_\_ 14. I never read sexy books or magazines.
- \_\_\_ 15. I have done things that I don't tell other people about.\*
- \_\_\_ 16. I never take things that don't belong to me.
- \_\_\_ 17. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.\*
- \_\_\_ 18. I have never damaged a library book or store merchandise without reporting it.
- \_\_\_ 19. I have some pretty awful habits.\*
- \_\_\_ 20. I don't gossip about other people's business.

Note: \* represents items to be reverse scored

## APPENDIX G: POLITICAL CONSERVATISM AND DEMOGRAPHICS

**Instructions:** The last section of this survey asks for some general background demographic information about yourself.

1. By my own definition, I would consider myself to be (select one):

- Liberal
- Somewhat liberal
- Somewhat conservative
- Conservative

2. What is your gender (select one)?

- Male
- Female

3. What is your age in years? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What year of university are you in (select one)?

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year
- Fifth year or more

5. With which of the following ethnic groups do you most feel a shared ancestral self-identity (check one)?

- European/Caucasian descent
- Aboriginal/Métis
- East Indian
- Asian
- Middle Eastern
- African
- Central American
- South American
- Other

7. How interested are you in issues surrounding crime and criminal justice?

Not at all  
interested

1

2

3

Neutral

4

5

6

Extremely  
interested

7

## APPENDIX H: CONSENT FORM (STUDY 1)

*Please read this form carefully, and feel free to contact the researcher with any questions you might have.*

**Researchers:** Carrie L. Tanasichuk, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca (Graduate Student)

Dr. J. S. Wormith, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, (306) 966-6818, s.wormith@usask.ca (Faculty Supervisor)

**Purpose and Procedure:** The purpose of this study is to examine what opinions university students have about various aspects of the criminal justice system in Canada. The study involves completing a survey that will ask you your opinion on several aspects of the criminal justice system as well as various measurements of attitudes. This survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**Potential Risks:** There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. Please feel free to skip over any questions that you do not wish to answer. You may stop participating at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the study you will still receive your course credit.

**Potential Benefits:** Following the completion of the survey, you will receive a debriefing form which will provide you with a summary of current research regarding how we perceive the criminal justice system and what can affect these perceptions. This form will also provide you with several references in case you would like to do some further reading on the subject. Furthermore, your answers will aid in a further scientific understanding of the topic.

**Confidentiality:** Your data will be stored on a computer disc in a locked filing cabinet by Dr. J. S. Wormith for a minimum of five years before it is destroyed. The data from this study will be published and presented at conferences, but only in aggregate form so that individuals cannot be identified.

**Right to Withdraw:** Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data that you have contributed will not be used in the study. Furthermore, you may skip any question on the survey which you do not wish to answer.

**Questions:** If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel to contact the researcher at the number or e-mail address provided above if you have questions. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on December 18, 2008. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Ethics Office (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect. If you wish to be informed of the results of this study, please feel free to contact the researcher.

**Consent to Participate:** I have read and understood the description provided above; I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. You are urged to print a copy of this screen for your own records. Alternatively, you may contact the researcher, Carrie Tanasichuk, and a copy will be sent to you.

Yes, I agree to participate      No, I do not wish to participate

## APPENDIX I: DEBRIEFING FORM (STUDY 1)

First of all, we would like to thank you for participating in our study. The primary objective of this study is to provide an understanding of the knowledge and opinions people have about the Canadian criminal justice system (i.e., police, courts, corrections).

The first section of the survey asked you a series of questions measuring your knowledge about the criminal justice system. Past studies have found that Canadians are typically misinformed about crime trends and average sentences. It is thought that this may be due to how the news media portrays crime and criminal justice stories. Typically, the news media only talks about the most extreme cases, which are not representative of all crimes committed in this country.

We also asked you a series of questions about your confidence in the different parts of the criminal justice system. We are curious as to the opinions University of Saskatchewan students hold, and if they have differing levels of confidence in the different parts of the criminal justice system.

We also asked about how often you read fictional crime novels, as well as watch fictional television programs and movies about crimes. This genre is popular among North Americans. Some research has found that people who watch/read this genre more often have different ideas about how the criminal justice system operates. This is known as “the CSI Effect.”

Thank-you once again for your participation in this study. If you have any questions or concerns or would like to be informed of the findings of this study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Carrie Tanasichuk, at [carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca](mailto:carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca).

This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on December 18, 2008. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Ethics Office (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect.

If you would like to learn more about this topic, the following articles and books are recommended:

Cullen, F. T., Fisher, B. S., & Applegate, B. K. (2000). Public opinion about crime and corrections. *Crime & Justice*, 27, 1-79.

Dowler, K. (2003). Media consumption and public attitudes toward crime and justice: The relationship between fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police effectiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 10, 109-126.

Roberts, J. V., & Doob, A. N. (1990). News media influences on public views of sentencing. *Law and Human Behavior*, 14, 451-467.

Tyler, T. R., & Huo, Y. J. (2002). *Trust in the Law: Encouraging Public Cooperation with the Police and Courts*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

**\*\*You are urged to print a copy of this screen for your own records. Alternatively, you may contact the researcher, Carrie Tanasichuk, and a copy will be sent to you.**



APPENDIX J: RESPONSES TO CJS KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS (STUDY 1)

1. Of all defendants found guilty in court in 2006-2007 in Canada, what percentage do you think were sentenced to prison?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%	17	7.0%
21% - 40%*	85	35.0%
41% - 60%	99	40.7%
61% - 80%	38	15.6%
81% - 100%	4	1.6%
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 34%.

2. Of all defendants found guilty in court in 2006-2007 in Saskatchewan, what percentage do you think were sentenced to prison?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%	46	18.9%
21% - 40%*	86	35.4%
41% - 60%	69	28.4%
61% - 80%	36	14.8%
81% - 100%	5	2.1%
Missing	1	0.4%
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 26%.

3. Of all offenders sentenced to custody in 2006-2007 in Canada, what do you think the average length of the prison sentence was?

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 6 months*	28	11.5%
6 months – 2 years	73	30.0%
2 years – 5 years	80	32.9%
5 years – 10 years	36	14.8%
Over 10 years	5	2.1%
Missing	21	8.6%
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 124 days.

4. What percentage of crimes committed in 2006-2007 in Canada do you think were violent crimes?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%*	44	18.1%
21% - 40%	82	33.7%
41% - 60%	70	28.8%
61% - 80%	43	17.7%
81% - 100%	4	1.6%
Missing	0	0
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 13%.

5. Of all the violent crimes committed in 2007 in Canada, what percentage do you think involved homicide (i.e., murder)?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%*	121	49.8%
21% - 40%	76	31.3%
41% - 60%	32	13.2%
61% - 80%	13	5.3%
81% - 100%	1	0.4%
Missing	0	0
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is < 1%.

6. What percentage of crimes committed in Canada in 2006-2007 in Canada do you think were property crimes?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%	30	12.3%
21% - 40%	69	28.4%
41% - 60%*	75	30.9%
61% - 80%	67	27.6%
81% - 100%	2	0.8%
Missing	0	0
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 48%.

7. Of all persons sentenced to prison in 2005/2006 in Canada, how many do you think were Aboriginal?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%	20	8.2%
21% - 40% *	67	27.6%
41% - 60%	93	38.3%
61% - 80%	55	22.6%
81% - 100%	8	3.3%
Missing	0	0
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 23%.

8. Of all offenders sentenced to prison in Saskatchewan from 1999 to 2004, how many do you think were Aboriginal?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%	9	3.7%
21% - 40%	33	13.6%
41% - 60%	81	33.3%
61% - 80% *	98	40.3%
81% - 100%	22	9.1%
Missing	0	0
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 76%.

9. Of all offenders sentenced to prison in 2006 in Canada, how many do you think were female?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20% *	85	35.0%
21% - 40%	139	57.2%
41% - 60%	18	7.4%
61% - 80%	1	0.4%
81% - 100%	0	0
Missing	0	0
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 10%.

10. Of all offenders sentenced to prison in 2005/2006 in Saskatchewan, how many do you think were female?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%*	105	43.2%
21% - 40%	119	49.0%
41% - 60%	17	7.0%
61% - 80%	0	0
81% - 100%	2	0.8%
Missing	0	0
Total	243	

*Note.* Correct answer is 13%.

APPENDIX K: CORRELATIONS (STUDY 1)

	Knowledge	Know. Confidence	ALCP	CJS Confidence	CJS Attitudes	Sent. Opinion	CJS Exp.	Freq. of news stories	Freq. of read fiction	Freq. of watch dramas	CJS Interest
Knowledge	1.00	0.17*	0.04	-0.16*	-0.12	0.02	0.06	0.06	-0.18	-0.10	0.02
Know. Confidence	0.17*	1.00	0.05	-0.01	-0.03	0.11	0.01	0.16*	0.00	0.00	-.25***
ALCP	0.04	0.05	1.00	0.54***	0.51***	0.20**	0.01	0.10	0.08	0.04	0.14*
Law Subscale	0.01	0.03	0.73***	0.36***	0.22***	0.28***	-0.10	0.01	0.19*	0.00	0.09
Courts Subscale	0.04	-0.01	0.76***	0.48***	0.46***	-0.06	0.07	0.14*	-0.02	-0.02	0.06
Police Subscale	0.02	0.06	0.80***	0.38***	0.47***	0.23***	0.05	0.08	0.09	0.07	0.12
CJS Confidence	-0.16*	-0.01	0.54***	1.00	0.60***	-0.01	0.05	-0.05	-0.04	0.01	-0.06
CJS Attitudes	-0.12	-0.03	0.51***	0.60***	1.00	-0.01	0.04	-0.02	-0.09	-0.03	-0.02
Sent Opinion	0.02	0.11	0.20**	-0.01	-0.01	1.00	-0.17*	0.10	0.13	0.01	0.07
CJS Exp.	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.05	0.04	-0.17*	1.00	0.00	-0.21*	-0.25***	-0.10
# of CJS info sources	0.05	0.07	0.01	0.00	-0.03	0.24***	0.08	0.23***	-0.06	-0.05	0.14*
Freq. of news stories	0.06	0.16*	0.10	-0.05	-0.02	0.10	0.00	1.00	-0.04	0.03	0.28***
Freq. of read fiction	-0.18	0.00	0.08	-0.04	-0.09	0.13	-0.21*	-0.04	1.00	0.43***	0.24***
Freq. of watch dramas	-0.10	0.00	0.04	0.01	-0.03	0.01	-0.25***	0.03	0.43***	1.00	0.15*
CJS Interest	0.02	0.25***	0.14*	-0.06	-0.02	0.07	-0.10	0.28***	0.24***	0.15*	1.00

APPENDIX L: PARTIAL CORRELATIONS (STUDY 1)

	Knowledge	Know. Confidence	ALCP	CJS Confidence	CJS Attitudes	Sent. Opinion	CJS Exp.	Freq. of news stories	Freq. of read fiction	Freq. of watch dramas	CJS Interest
Knowledge	1.00	0.17*	0.03	-0.16*	-0.13	0.02	0.06	0.06	-0.18	-0.10	0.02
Know. Confidence	0.17*	1.00	0.11	0.01	0.01	0.11	0.01	0.16*	0.00	0.00	-.25***
ALCP	0.03	0.11	1.00	0.51***	0.50***	0.24**	-0.02	-0.05	0.13	0.01	<b>0.12</b>
Law Subscale	0.00	0.10	0.71***	0.32***	0.17*	0.33***	-0.12	0.01	<b>0.15</b>	0.01	0.07
Courts Subscale	0.02	0.03	0.73***	0.46***	0.45***	-0.06	0.01	<b>-0.06</b>	-0.01	-0.03	0.06
Police Subscale	0.05	0.10	0.80***	0.36***	0.49***	0.27***	0.06	-0.07	0.14	0.12	0.12
CJS Confidence	-0.16*	0.01	0.51***	1.00	0.59***	0.02	0.04	-0.21	0.00	0.00	-0.08
CJS Attitudes	-0.13	0.01	0.50***	0.59***	1.00	0.03	0.002	-0.11	-0.04	0.00	-0.02
Sent Opinion	0.02	0.11	0.24**	0.02	0.03	1.00	-0.17*	0.10	0.13	0.01	0.07
CJS Exp.	0.06	0.01	-0.02	0.04	-0.002	-0.17*	1.00	0.00	-0.21*	-0.25***	-0.10
# of CJS info sources	0.05	0.07	0.00	0.003	-0.02	0.24***	0.08	0.23***	-0.06	-0.05	0.14*
Freq. of news stories	0.06	0.16*	-0.04	-0.21	-0.11	0.10	0.00	1.00	-0.04	0.03	0.28***
Freq. of read fiction	-0.18	0.00	0.13	0.00	-0.04	0.13	-0.21*	-0.04	1.00	0.43***	0.24***
Freq. of watch dramas	-0.10	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.01	-0.25***	0.03	0.43***	1.00	0.15*
CJS Interest	0.02	0.25***	<b>0.12</b>	-0.08	-0.02	0.07	-0.10	0.28***	0.24***	0.15*	1.00

## APPENDIX M: CONSENT FORM (STUDY 2)

**Researchers:** Carrie L. Tanasichuk, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan,  
carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca (Graduate Student)

Dr. J. S. Wormith, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, (306) 966-6818,  
s.wormith@usask.ca (Faculty Supervisor)

**Purpose and Procedure:** The purpose of this study is to examine what opinions university students have about various aspects of the criminal justice system in Canada. The study involves participating in a focus group that will ask you your opinion on several aspects of the criminal justice system. This focus group should take approximately 60 minutes to complete.

**Potential Risks:** There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. However, although every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality, it cannot be guaranteed. Additional information is provided in the confidentiality section. Please feel free to not answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. You may stop participating at any time. If you decide to withdraw from the study you will still receive your credits.

**Potential Benefits:** Following the completion of the focus group, you will receive a debriefing form which will provide you with a summary of current research regarding how we perceive the criminal justice system and what can affect these perceptions. This form will also provide you with several references in case you would like to do some further reading on the subject. Furthermore, your answers will aid in a further scientific understanding of the topic.

**Confidentiality:** Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality. You may use a pseudonym in lieu of your name for the purposes of the focus group. Although we may report direct quotations from the focus group, your real name will not be used. Audio tapes will be made of the focus groups. These audio tapes will later be transcribed into a typed document. The audio tapes and transcription will be stored in a locked office by Dr. J. S. Wormith for a minimum of five years before they are destroyed. The data from this study will be published and presented at conferences, but only in aggregate form so that individuals cannot be identified.

**Right to Withdraw:** Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data that you have contributed will not be used in the study.

**Questions:** If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel to contact the researcher at the number or e-mail address provided above if you have questions. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on December 18, 2008. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Ethics Office (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect. If you wish to be informed of the results of this study, please feel free to contact the researcher.

**Consent to Participate:** I have read and understood the description provided above; I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

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Name of Participant

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Date

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Signature of Participant

---

Signature of Researcher

## APPENDIX N: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Would you describe yourself as being knowledgeable about crime and criminal justice issues? Why?
2. What is your primary source of information about the criminal justice system? (*television newscasts, radio newscasts, newspapers, online news sites, friends/family*)
  - What other sources do you rely on?
  - Do you feel that the news media accurately reflects crime and criminal justice issues in Canada?
3. How often do you watch crime dramas on television/movies? Which programs do you watch regularly? How often do you read fictional crime novels?
  - Does watching/reading fictional crime stories influence how you view our criminal justice system in any way? How?
4. Would you describe yourself as having 'confidence' in the CJS as a whole? Why or why not?
  - How confident are you in the police? Why? Are you aware of the difference between the RCMP and the local Saskatoon police? Is there a difference in your level of confidence between the RCMP and the local Saskatoon police? Why?
  - How confident are you in the courts? Why? Are you aware of the difference between the Supreme Court of Canada and the courts here in Saskatchewan? Is there a difference in your level of confidence between the Supreme Court of Canada and the courts here in Saskatchewan? Why?
  - How confident are you in the correctional system? Are you aware of the difference between federal prisons and provincial prisons? Is there a difference in your level of confidence between federal prisons and provincial prisons? Why?
5. What are some things that make you confident in the CJS? What are some things that make you unconfident in the CJS? Has your level of confidence changed recently? What prompted this change?
6. Do you think it is necessary that citizens have confidence in the CJS? Why? What difference would this make?



## APPENDIX O: DEBRIEFING FORM (STUDY 2)

First of all, we would like to thank you for participating in our study. The primary objective of this study is to provide an understanding of the knowledge and opinions people have about the Canadian criminal justice system (i.e., police, courts, corrections).

We are curious as to the opinions University of Saskatchewan students hold, and if they have differing levels of confidence in the different parts of the criminal justice system. We are conducting a series of focus groups in order to provide a more in-depth look at criminal justice opinions than can be measured on a survey. Focus groups allow students to expand on their opinions and let us know the rationale behind them.

We also asked you a number of questions about your knowledge of sentencing practices in Canada. Past studies have found that Canadians are typically misinformed about crime trends and average sentences. It is thought that this may be due to how the news media portrays crime and criminal justice stories. Typically, the news media only talks about the most extreme cases, which are not representative of all crimes committed in this country.

We also asked about how often you read fictional crime novels, as well as watch fictional television programs and movies about crimes. This genre is popular among North Americans. Some research has found that people who watch/read this genre more often have different ideas about how the criminal justice system operates. This is known as “the CSI Effect.”

Thank-you once again for your participation in this study. If you have any questions or concerns or would like to be informed of the findings of this study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Carrie Tanasichuk, at [carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca](mailto:carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca); 270-0628.

If you would like to learn more about this topic, the following articles and books are recommended:

Cullen, F. T., Fisher, B. S., & Applegate, B. K. (2000). Public opinion about crime and corrections. *Crime & Justice, 27*, 1-79.

Dowler, K. (2003). Media consumption and public attitudes toward crime and justice: The relationship between fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police effectiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture, 10*, 109-126.

Roberts, J. V., & Doob, A. N. (1990). News media influences on public views of sentencing. *Law and Human Behavior, 14*, 451-467.

Tyler, T. R., & Huo, Y. J. (2002). *Trust in the Law: Encouraging Public Cooperation with the Police and Courts*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

APPENDIX P: CJS KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS (STUDY 3)

**Instructions:** We are now going to ask you a series of questions to test your knowledge of the criminal justice system. Please answer to the best of your ability, even if you are unsure of the correct answer. After each question, please rate your confidence in your answer.

1. What is the most common type of sentence given to defendants who are found guilty in a court of law?

- Fine
- Probation
- Conditional Sentence
- Imprisonment

How confident are you in your answer?

- |                         |                       |         |                       |                        |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Not at all<br>Confident | Not very<br>Confident | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Confident | Extremely<br>Confident |
| 1                       | 2                     | 3       | 4                     | 5                      |

2. What percentage of crimes committed in Canada do you think are violent crimes?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

- |                         |                       |         |                       |                        |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Not at all<br>Confident | Not very<br>Confident | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Confident | Extremely<br>Confident |
| 1                       | 2                     | 3       | 4                     | 5                      |

3. Of all the violent crimes committed in Canada, what percentage do you think involve homicide (i.e., murder)?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

- |                         |                       |         |                       |                        |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Not at all<br>Confident | Not very<br>Confident | Neutral | Somewhat<br>Confident | Extremely<br>Confident |
| 1                       | 2                     | 3       | 4                     | 5                      |

4. True or false: The crime rate in Canada has been steadily increasing

- True
- False

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5

5. Which level of the criminal justice system is responsible for charging individuals with crimes?

- The courts
- The police
- The correctional system
- A judge

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5

6. By what percentage can treatment in prison reduce future crime?

- 0% - 20%
- 21% - 40%
- 41% - 60%
- 61% - 80%
- 81% - 100%

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5

7. Which of the following is NOT a court in Saskatchewan?

- The Court of Saskatchewan
- Provincial Court
- The Court of Queen's Bench
- The Court of Appeal

How confident are you in your answer?

Not at all Confident	Not very Confident	Neutral	Somewhat Confident	Extremely Confident
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX Q: CJS ATTITUDES (STUDY 3)

**Instructions:** We are now going to ask you a series of questions about your *confidence* in the criminal justice system. Please keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answer, we are interested in your views and opinions.

1. Please rate your confidence in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
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2. Please rate your confidence in Saskatoon Police Services.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

3. Please rate your confidence in the courts in the province of Saskatchewan.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

4. Please rate your confidence in the Supreme Court of Canada.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

5. Please rate your confidence in the correctional system (e.g., prisons).

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

6. Please rate your confidence in the National Parole Board of Canada.

Not at all Confident 1	Not very Confident 2	Neutral 3	Somewhat Confident 4	Extremely Confident 5
------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------

**Instructions:** We are now going to ask you a series of questions about your satisfaction with the criminal justice system. Please keep in mind that there is no right or wrong answer, we are interested in your views and opinions.

1. The local police are approachable.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

2. The local police do their best to ensure public safety.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

3. The local police supply the public with adequate information about crime in Saskatoon.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

4. The courts do a good job of ensuring a fair trial for the accused.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

5. The courts do a good job of determining the guilt or innocence of the accused.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

6. The courts provide justice quickly.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

7. Correctional authorities do a good job of controlling/supervising offenders.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

8. Correctional authorities do a good job of helping offenders to become law-abiding citizens.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

9. Correctional authorities do a good job of only releasing offenders who are not likely to reoffend.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

10. Correctional authorities do a good job of supervising offenders on parole.

Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	

## APPENDIX R: CONSENT FORM (STUDY 3)

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Assessing Knowledge of Canadian Public Institutions*. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask questions you might have.

Researchers: Carrie L. Tanasichuk, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, (306) 270-0628, carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca (Graduate Student)

Dr. J. S. Wormith, Department of Psychology, University of Saskatchewan, (306) 966-6818, s.wormith@usask.ca (Faculty Supervisor)

Purpose/Procedure: The purpose of this study is to look at the effects of education on opinions of Canadian public institutions (e.g., criminal justice, health care). The study involves participating in an educational presentation about a Canadian public institution. You will then complete a questionnaire. This study will take approximately 60 minutes to complete.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. Furthermore, you may receive no personal benefit from participation in the study. At the end of the study you will be given a sheet that better explains the nature of the study and you will be given a chance to ask any further questions that you might have.

Confidentiality: Your data will be kept completely confidential and no personally identifying information will be linked to your data. All data will be reported in aggregated form. The data and consent forms will be stored securely at the University of Saskatchewan by the researcher. This consent form will be stored separately from the data materials so that it will not be possible to associate names with any given data. In instances where the data is published in an academic journal and/or presented at a professional conference, the data will be stored for a minimum of five years after completion of the study.

Right to Withdraw: You may withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, without penalty of any sort, and without loss of research credit. If you decide to withdraw, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed beyond recovery.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask at any point. You are also free to contact the researchers at the numbers provided above if you have questions at a later time. The proposed research was reviewed and approved on ethical grounds by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board March 4, 2010. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the Behavioural Research Ethics Board through the Ethics Office (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect. You may obtain a copy of the results of the study by contacting the researcher.

Consent to Participate: I have read and understood the description of the research study provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study described above, understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Researcher)

## APPENDIX S: DEBRIEFING FORM (STUDY 3)

First of all, we would like to thank you for participating in our study. The primary objective of this study is to provide an understanding of the knowledge and opinions people have about the Canadian criminal justice system (i.e., police, courts, corrections). We also wanted to assess differences between what is known as ‘active learning’ and ‘passive learning.’

There are actually four different conditions to this study. In two of these conditions, participants received education regarding the criminal justice system. However, in one of these conditions, ‘active learning’ was facilitated by encouraging group discussion. In the other condition, participants simply listened to the presentation (this is known as ‘passive learning’).

Participants in the other two conditions received education regarding the health care system. Once again, there was an ‘active learning’ group and a ‘passive learning’ group. The two health care system conditions are what are referred to as ‘control groups.’ By including these two conditions, we can see if there are differences between participants who received education regarding the criminal justice system and those who received education regarding the health care system.

After the educational presentation we asked you to complete a questionnaire. The first section of the questionnaire asked you a series of questions measuring your knowledge about the criminal justice system. We wanted to see if those participants who received the criminal justice system information would score higher than those who did not. We also asked you a series of questions about your confidence in the different parts of the criminal justice system. We are curious as to whether or not these opinions will differ between the different conditions.

Thank-you once again for your participation in this study. If you have any questions or concerns or would like to be informed of the findings of this study, please feel free to contact the researcher, Carrie Tanasichuk, at [carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca](mailto:carrie.tanasichuk@usask.ca).

This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on March 4, 2010. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Ethics Office (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect.

If you would like to learn more about this topic, the following articles and books are recommended:

Cullen, F. T., Fisher, B. S., & Applegate, B. K. (2000). Public opinion about crime and corrections. *Crime & Justice*, 27, 1-79.

Dowler, K. (2003). Media consumption and public attitudes toward crime and justice: The relationship between fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police effectiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 10, 109-126.

Roberts, J. V., & Doob, A. N. (1990). News media influences on public views of sentencing. *Law and Human Behavior*, 14, 451-467.

Tyler, T. R., & Huo, Y. J. (2002). *Trust in the Law: Encouraging Public Cooperation with the Police and Courts*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.



APPENDIX T: RESPONSES TO CJS KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS (STUDY 3)

1. Excluding traffic offences, what is the most common type of sentence given to defendants who are found guilty in a court of law?

	Frequency	Percent
Fine	39	27.9%
Probation*	70	50%
Conditional Sentence	16	11.4%
Imprisonment	15	10.7%

*Note.* Correct answer is probation.

2. What percentage of crimes committed in Canada do you think are violent crimes?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%*	83	59.3%
21% - 40%	41	29.3%
41% - 60%	12	8.6%
61% - 80%	4	2.9%
81% - 100%	0	0%

*Note.* Correct answer is 13% (2006-2007).

3. Of all the violent crimes committed in Canada, what percentage do you think involve homicide (i.e., murder)?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%*	112	80.0%
21% - 40%	19	13.6%
41% - 60%	6	4.3%
61% - 80%	3	2.1%
81% - 100%	0	0%

*Note.* Correct answer is < 1% (2006-2007).

4. True or false: The crime rate in Canada has been steadily increasing

	Frequency	Percent
True	47	33.6%
False*	66.4	66.4%

*Note.* Correct answer is false.

5. Which level of the criminal justice system is responsible for first charging individuals with crimes?

	Frequency	Percent
Courts	61	43.6%
Police*	50	35.7%
Correctional System	14	10.0%
Judge	14	10.0%

*Note.* Correct answer is the police.

6. By what percentage can treatment in prison reduce future crime?

	Frequency	Percent
0% - 20%	12	8.6%
21% - 40%	31	22.1%
41% - 60%*	87	62.1%
61% - 80%	8	5.7%
81% - 100%	1	0.7%

*Note.* Correct answer is 50% (Correctional Service of Canada).

7. Which of the following is NOT a court in Saskatchewan?

	Frequency	Percent
The Court of Saskatchewan*	83	59.3%
Provincial Court	10	7.1%
The Court of Queen's Bench	34	24.3%
The Court of Appeal	12	8.6%

*Note.* Correct answer is Court of Saskatchewan.