Direct and Indirect Effects of Crime-Related Media Consumption on Public Confidence in the Police

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Abstract

This study explores the potential links between crime-related media consumption and confidence in the police based on the instrumental and expressive models. Drawing on data from a large sample of South Koreans, direct and indirect effects of crime-related media consumption on perceptions of police are examined using a regression-based multiple mediation analysis. Results showed that while there is no direct effect of media consumption on confidence in the police, crime-related media consumption is significantly and negatively associated with public confidence in the police via perceived incivilities and fear of crime. This study suggests that the police should make a constant effort to develop strategies to enhance communication with the public.

Keywords: media effects, confidence in the police, cultivation theory, expressive model, multiple mediation model

Direct and Indirect Effects of Crime-Related Media Consumption on Public

Confidence in the Police

Criminologists have paid much attention on the extent to which objective information about neighborhoods and police performance influences perceptions of police (e.g., Cao, Frank, & Cullen, 1996; Jackson, Bradford, Hohl, & Farrall, 2009; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Wu, 2014). Much of the previous literature assumed that the public's understandings about the world are based on real-world experiences. However, the sources of the information which they rely upon to assess police work may not originate from their observations of the real world (Choi, 2019; Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Hohl, Bradford, & Stanko, 2010; Surette, 2015). According to national studies from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, among U.S. residents who were 16-year-old and older, only about 20% of them had personal contact with police officers in the previous year (Eith & Durose, 2011). Simultaneously, most of these interactions were focused on traffic-related contacts. Despite their lack of first-hand interaction with police officers, citizens tend to have a strong view of them (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Decker, 1981; Reisig & Parks, 2000). This suggests that citizens may base their perceptions of police independent of real-world experiences.

One particular source that may offer a unique understanding of how individuals to access information is the media. Some researchers have called for more attention to the potential role of the media as a learning agent that can influence our perceptions (e.g., Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Graziano, 2018; Intravia, Wolff, & Piquero, 2018; Surette, 2015). If individuals foster their views about the police based on the information presented in the media, overlooking the importance of the media can lead to incomplete theoretical models regarding our understanding of public perceptions about the police. Some recent empirical studies investigated media

influences on citizen perceptions of police (e.g., Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Dowler, 2002). However, most of these studies yielded inconsistent results regarding media effects, and their focus of research was limited to direct media effects. Previous research has not considered the potential mechanisms that may help to explain the role of media in fostering perceptions of police.

The current study examines the mediating role of different perceptions linking media influence and perceptions of police confidence. More specifically, this study aims to bridge a theoretical gap, integrate media effects into two theoretical perspectives (i.e., the instrumental model and expressive model). Our article employs a multiple mediation analysis, which permits us to examine if there are indirect effects of media consumption on confidence in the police. Our paper contributes to elaborating the mechanisms connecting media consumption to perceptions of police (Hayes, 2018). This may help to assess not only the validity of two dominant theoretical frames but also whether we should expand our focus of determinants from objective conditions to consider socially-constructed images in the media (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010; Surette, 2015). Findings regarding media effects can be helpful for police officials who strive to increase positive perceptions of police.

Confidence in the police: The instrumental model vs. the expressive model

Two theoretical frameworks have mainly been used to understand the perceptions of the police. The instrumental model emphasizes police performance in shaping confidence in the police (Jackson & Bradford, 2009; Jackson et al., 2009). The model argues that citizen's attitudes toward police are driven by police performance. Trust in public institutions is determined by the level of social phenomena that the authorities should be held responsible for (Tyler & Boeckmann, 1997; Van Craen, 2013). The primary duty of the police is seen as the authority for crime control and reduction in fear of crime (Wilson, 1975, p. 81). It is assumed that confidence

in the police is low when citizens are fearful of being crime victims. When the level of citizen's

fear of crime is high, citizens are more likely to rate police as ineffective in crime control and

hold police responsible for failure to do their basic duty (Jackson et al., 2009).

On the other hand, the expressive model assumes that citizens' perceptions of police are

shaped less by police performance but instead more by their judgments about norms and values

in their communities (Dirikx, Van den Bulck, & Parmentier, 2012; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007).

Building on neo-Durkheimian insights into the function of crime as a marker of moral structure,

Jackson and Sunshine (2007) explains that citizens are more concerned about neighborhood

stability and breakdown than crime (see also, Jackson et al., 2009). The public look to the police

to be not only responsible for their safety but also for moral structure in the community

(Durkheim, 1897/1951; Jackson & Bradford, 2009). As such, when individuals perceive disorder

that represents the risk in their environment, they are inclined to believe that their neighborhood

norms and values have eroded and attributed this problem to the police whom the public

perceives as a symbol of moral authority. The result is a lack of confidence in the police.

Both models emphasize the role of objective information about police work and the

neighborhood in establishing a view of police. Interestingly, people commonly obtain

information through media sources rather than a direct encounter with law enforcement (Surette,

2015). The percentage of Americans who had face-to-face contact with police, ranging being

pulled over for traffic to reporting a crime is only 16.9% (Eith & Durose, 2011). Most Americans

obtain news and other information regarding crime and justice through various mediums,

including television, newspaper, and social media platforms (Shearer & Matsa, 2018). Media

effects on citizen's perceptions of police have received fair amount of attention as mass media is

recognized as one of the resources for information about crime and criminal justice issues (e.g., Dowler, 2003; Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Graziano, 2018; Miller & Davis, 2008).

While the primary media format which Americans turn to for the news is a television, the importance of social media is growing (Twenge, 2017). Noticeable majorities of Americans are using *YouTube* (73%), and *Facebook* (68%), and a variety of other platforms are also being used by younger U.S. adults (Smith & Anderson, 2018). As most national television stations give major coverage to crime stories (Klite, Bardwell, & Salzman, 1997), crime is one of the most popular news topics on *Facebook*. According to the recent Facebook News Survey, 51% of *Facebooks* news consumers reported that they regularly see news on *Facebook* about crime (Matsa & Mitchell, 2014). As a substantial proportion of people are exposed to media, and stories about crime and criminal justice comprise one-quarter to one-third of various modes of contemporary media (McCall, 2007), the media may play a significant role in structuring view about police as a socializing agent.

Theoretical background for media effects

Cultivation theory has been widely used as a theoretical framework offering possible explanations for media effects on perceptions of crime and justice (e.g., Callanan, 2012; Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Dowler, 2002; Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Intravia et al., 2018; Roche, Pickett, & Gertz, 2016). Cultivation theory suggests exposure to media distorts perceptions of high media consumers because individuals who frequently consume media have a worldview that matches certain media images and messages rather than social reality (Custers & Van den Bulck, 2013; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980).

The direction of the relationship between crime-related media consumption and perceptions remains unclear. Some people argue that media consumption may have negative

influence on attitudes toward police. Mass media often leads off with a story on violent crime of some sort (Klite et al., 1997), and the media frequently portray how violent and sensational the crimes are to draw attention from viewing audiences (Graber, 1980). Disproportionate news coverage focuses on instances wherein police failed to solve violent crime and keep citizens safe (Beckett & Sasson, 2004). Given the sensational media coverage and misrepresentation of crime rates in the media, people who frequently consume media are more likely to be exposed to fearful crime images and thus become more inclined to have a fearful attitude toward crime (Eschholz, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2003; Roche et al., 2016). Increased fear of crime may lead consumers to believe that police are ineffective in crime control and the police fail to do their duties for citizen's safety. In short, fear of crime developed via media consumption can erode confidence in the police.

On the other hand, other scholars hypothesize that media consumption can improve confidence in the police. The heightened level of fear of crime may lead the public to rely more on the police instead of lowering confidence in the police since individuals are assured of the importance of law enforcement in their society (Choi, 2018; Skogan, 2009). In addition, crime shows often portray police work as efficient and swift relying on sophisticated technologies (Boda & Szabó, 2011; Tyler, 2006).

Still other researchers contend that the impact of media consumption may be insignificant. Since messages from the media are conflicting and complicated, the media may end up exercising little or no influence on the audience (Tyler, 2006). Empirical research testing the mechanisms of media impact can help to explain the media/perceptions of police association by clarifying how media consumption is linked to fear of crime, perceived incivilities, and confidence in the police. Notwithstanding the studies that have examined the direct impact of the

media on perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Dowler, 2002; Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Intravia et al., 2018), assessing the possibility of indirect effects of media consumption is almost non-existent and deserving of empirical examination (But see also, Kort-Butler & Hartshorn, 2011).

Here, we advance and empirically assess the argument that two traditional policing models (i.e., the instrumental and expressive models) can help unpack the relationship between media consumption and perceptions of police. For example, perceived incivilities (e.g., social and physical disorder) that represent the expressive model can be linked to media effects. Media consumption can increase a resident's sensitivity to neighborhood disorder and problems (Dowler, 2002; Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Exposure to negative messages of crime stories may stimulate resident's awareness of disorder in the neighborhood. Using the National Crime Survey conducted during 1974 and 1975, Liska and Baccaglini (1990) found that people who are exposed to media that exaggerated local crime perceived their neighborhood as dangerous. People who become sensitive to community incivilities through differential media consumption may believe that community norms or social control have declined (Jackson & Bradford, 2009; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007), and they are more likely to hold a negative view of the police who people suspect are doing their job as defenders of moral structure in the community (Dirikx et al., 2012). Similarly, fear of crime is a key variable that represent the instrumental model. Research has consistently shown that the media can cultivate fear of crime among heavy viewers of the media (Chiricos, Eschholz, & Gertz, 1997; Gerbner et al., 1980; Intravia, Wolff, Paez, & Gibbs, 2017; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). People who fear crime by watching crime-related media may develop different attitudes toward police compared with their counterparts.

In short, we can better understand differences in perceptions of police by linking the role of media consumption and the theoretical frameworks that have been used to account for perceptions of the police. The instrumental and expressive models suggest that media consumption may have some impact on attitudes toward police and its effects are more likely to be indirect through fear of crime and incivility rather than exhibiting a more direct impact.

Current Study

The current study examines the direct and indirect impact of crime-related media consumption on attitudes toward police using a large, representative sample of South Koreans. Given that Gerbner's cultivation theory did not limit its theoretical validity within the context of the United States (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Morgan, 2011), it is worth testing the external validity of cultivation theory. In addition, assessing the influence of media consumption among this general population is important not only because the effectiveness of the police work depends on the citizen's voluntary cooperation and compliance with legal authority (Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, & Tyler, 2013; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Tyler & Huo, 2002), but also because little is known about how the media can influence the audience located in a different cultural context. Specifically, to the extent to which individuals are exposed to crime-related media, we anticipate that heavy media consumers are more likely to exhibit different perceptions of police compared with their counterparts. While the findings on the direction of the impact of media consumption are mixed (e.g., Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Dirikx & Van den Bulck, 2014; Donovan & Klahm, 2015; Dowler & Zawilski, 2007; Intravia et al., 2018), as a matter of the first hypothesis, we propose that crime-related media consumption is more likely to lower individuals' confidence in the police because people who often consume crime-related media may consider police work ineffective based on exaggerated presentations

(e.g., more frequent occurrence of homicide) of crime on crime-related news and media content (Deutsch & Cavender, 2008; Eschholz, Mallard, & Flynn, 2004). This argument is consistent with the accountability model proposed by Skogan (2009), which suggests that perceptions of police flow from police performance.

In Hypotheses 2 and 3, we predict the indirect influence of the media through key variables associated with perceptions of police. Figure 1 represents our hypothesized model. Crime-related media consumption is assumed to cultivate fearful attitudes toward crime and sensibility to neighborhood environment and, subsequently, to affect the public confidence in the police (Gerbner et al., 1977).

> Hypothesis 1 (H1): Crime-related media consumption will be negatively and significantly associated with individuals' confidence in the police

> Hypothesis 2 (H2): Crime-related media consumption will significantly and negatively influence fear of crime, which in turn decreases individuals' confidence in the police.

> Hypothesis 3 (H3): Crime-related media consumption will negatively influence perceived level of incivility, which in turn reduces individuals' confidence in the police.

Methods

Sample

Data for the present study were derived from the 2010 Korean Crime Victim Survey (KCVS) collected by the Korea Institute of Criminology (KIC). The 2010 KCVS was designed to understand the causes and effects of crime victimization on individuals' perceptions of criminal justice and their behaviors (Kim & Hong, 2011). The sampling strategy for the 2010 KCVS involved a two-stage process in which sample clusters were sampled, followed by a random selection of households. Specifically, 755 sample clusters were selected from the

302,832 sample clusters using probability proportionate sampling method. A total of 7,550 households were sampled from 755 sample clusters. Each household was visited by trained interviewers. They conducted in-person interviews with all household members who were 14-year-old or older. Overall, 16,895 individuals were asked to participate in the research, and 16,557 individuals voluntarily participated in the 2010 KCVS, producing a total response rate of 98%. Multivariate outliers can influence the result of statistical analysis, and this issue can be particularly important within the context of mediational models (Leys, Klein, Dominicy, & Ley, 2018). To negate the potential risk of false positives, multivariate outliers in combinations of values of independent variables and confidence in the police were detected. Using Mahalanobis distance with $p < 0.001$, 933 multivariate outliers were found. These outliers were deleted, leaving 15,624 cases.

Measures

Dependent variable.

The main outcome variable in the current study is confidence in the police. This construct has been used in previous research (Cao, 2015; J. Lee, Lim, & Lee, 2015; Skogan, 2006b). The following three items were used: "I think the police in our neighborhood are doing well in patrolling our area," "I think the police in our neighborhood will come to the crime scene immediately, if a crime happens," and "I think the police in our neighborhood will arrest the offenders of the crime, if we report the crime incidents." Response options ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale conformed well to a one-factor solution and had good internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.79$). The confidence in the police scale was created by summing three items such that higher scores indicate a higher level of confidence in the police.

Independent variable.

Scholars have used different measures to tap the influence of media, resulting in non-unified measurement formats. Some researchers asked respondents how often they watch listed specific programs (Callanan, 2012; Eschholz et al., 2003). Other researchers asked respondents to indicate the number of hours spent on various media outlets such as television (Gerbner et al., 1980; Kohm, Waid-Lindberg, Weinrath, Shelley, & Dobbs, 2012). Considering the increasing availability of online media consumption and different patterns of media consumption in an era of social media (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010; Surette, 2015), simply asking what TV programs respondents watch and measuring how often they watch each TV program may not be effective in capturing various media consumption. Recognizing the weaknesses of previous media measures, we used an item that can capture the exposure to the crime-related media uniquely. Specifically, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: "I often consume crime-related media." Response categories ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Though we recognize that this single item may not fully satisfy content validty requirements, we believe it is worthy exploring the the utility of this media measure in that the current measure can complement some weaknesses of the previous measures (Potter & Chang, 1990).

Mediating variables

In the current study, fear of crime was hypothesized to mediate the effect of crime-related media on confidence in the police according to the instrumental model (Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Van Craen, 2013; Wilson, 1975). The fear of crime scale consisted of eight items: "I am afraid of having my money or my property stolen," "I am afraid of getting robbed," "I am afraid of being beaten or hurt," "I am afraid of being scammed," "I am afraid of being sexually harassed and assaulted," "I am afraid of having my property damaged." "I am afraid someone

will break into my house," and "I am afraid someone will follow me and pick on me persistently." All items loaded one overall factor, and had very good internal reliability ($\alpha = .96$). Items were summed and combined with higher scores indicating higher fear of crime. If crime-related media influences confidence in the police indirectly through fear of crime, the role of the media in shaping confidence should not be overlooked.

Incivility was used to represent the expressive model (Jackson & Bradford, 2009; Jang & Hwang, 2014; Sun et al., 2014). It was hypothesized that perceived incivilities play a mediating role linking media effects to confidence in the police. The incivility scale was created by combining values reflecting agreement with six statements: "My neighborhood is dirty," "There are many dark alleys around my neighborhood," "There are abandoned cars and buildings in my neighborhood," "There are many people who violate the basic social rules and orders around my neighborhood," "There are many delinquents going around my neighborhood," and "There are many people fighting and yelling around my neighborhood." The incivility measure conformed well to a one-factor solution, and the scale's reliability was very good ($\alpha = .85$). The scale ranged from 6 to 30, with higher values representing a greater level of social and physical disorder.

Control variables

Statistical controls were added to reduce the potential spuriousness. Researchers have reported that perceived collective efficacy is an important correlate with the perceptions of the police (Gau, Corsaro, Stewart, & Brunson, 2012; Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2015). Collective efficacy is a scale consisting of seven items representing the extent to which respondents agree the following four statements: "I know most of the people in my neighborhood," "My neighbors often talk about what is going on in our neighborhood," "Community people in my neighborhood often participate in gatherings and events in my

neighborhood," "My neighbors would help neighborhood kids if they were bullied by other

strange kids," "My neighbors would report any crime incidents that take place to the police," and

"My neighbors would like to participate in community policing if it was needed." This scale taps

two essential components of collective efficacy which are social cohesion and informal social

control (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). While this measure has been often aggregated in

statistical models to capture community-level phenomena, many studies have demonstrated the

utility of using individual perceptions of collective efficacy in their analyses (e.g., Gibson, Zhao,

Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2002) A factor analysis yielded the presence of a single common factor.

The scale was coded so that higher scores indicated a higher level of perceived neighborhood

collective efficacy ($\alpha = .86$).

Additionally, demographic factors were controlled such as age, gender, education, direct

victimization, and indirect victimization experiences. These variables are known to have

potential effects on confidence in the police (e.g., Huebner, Schafer, & Bynum, 2004;

Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins, & Ring, 2005). A respondent's age was measured on a

continuous scale. Gender was dichotomized (male = 0, female = 1). Education level was

measured by a respondent's highest level of education ranging from an elementary school

education up to and including attendance in graduate school (1 = elementary school, 2 = middle

school, 3 = high school, 4 = college, 5 = university, and 6 = graduate school). Victimization

experience was measured with seven different questions about respondent's victimization

experiences during the past twelve months: "have my money or my property stolen or robbed,"

"have been threatened or beaten," "have been scammed," "have been sexually harassed and

assaulted," "have had my property damaged," "someone broke into my house," and "someone

followed and picked on me persistently within the last year." The response categories were

dichotomous (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). Direct experience index was generated by summing and dichotomizing the responses.

Indirect victimization was created using eight items. Respondents were asked if they know someone who experienced the following victimization during the past year: "someone who has had his/her money stolen," "someone who has had his/her money robbed within the last year," "someone who has been beaten," "someone who has been scammed," "someone who has been sexually harassed and assaulted," "someone who has had his/her property damaged within the last year," 'someone whose house has been broken into," and "someone who has been picked on persistently." All responses options were dichotomous (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). Each of the individual items was summed and then recoded (0 = never, 1 = at least once) to differentiate respondents who did not experience indirect victimization in the previous year and those who experienced it at least once. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for all variables included in the present study.

[Table 1 about here]

Analysis Plan

We examine the direct and indirect effects of crime-related media consumption on confidence in the police using the ordinary least squares regression-based path analysis with the assistance of the PROCESS Macro. In terms of the indirect effects, it was tested whether fear of crime and perceived incivilities mediated the relationship between crime-related media consumption and confidence in the police. While some researchers argue that structural equation modeling (SEM) is the proper analytical strategy to consider the effects of measurement error (Pek & Hoyle, 2016), Hayes, Montoya, and Rockwood (2017) urge reviewers and editors to consider the following three points. First, critics who question the legitimacy of the results from

regression-based path analysis have not been consistent regarding their position. The issue of measurement error can be applicable to any analysis that takes the form of a linear regression model (e.g., multiple regression, ANOVA, and ANCOVA). Second, structural equation modeling is not a cure-all to issues involving measurement errors unless there is an adequate model of that error. Third, the results of observed variable models from structural equation modeling and PROCESS are largely identical, which makes the choice between them inconsequential. Given that our study employs observed variable proxies, we believe that the choice of PROCESS will significantly influence the results from analysis.

Results

Table 2 presents the results of the parallel multiple mediation analysis. Most notably, crime-related media consumption was not significantly related to confidence in the police. On the other hand, fear of crime and perceived incivilities were significantly and negatively related to confidence in the police. In particular, those who were more afraid of crimes and those who perceived more incivilities in their neighborhood were more likely to have fewer positive perceptions of police compared to their counterparts ($b = -0.033$ and $b = -0.103$, respectively). These results lend some support for the instrumental model and expressive models (Jackson & Bradford, 2009; Jackson et al., 2009; Jang & Hwang, 2014; Song, Choi, & Lee, 2015; Sun, Jou, Hou, & Chang, 2014). The fear of crime scale accounted for 5.9% of the total explained variance in confidence in the police while the incivility scale explained 23.3% of the total explained variance. Collective efficacy was also a significant predictor of confidence in the police. The magnitude of the effect of collective efficacy ($\beta = .235$) was greater than that for fear of crime ($\beta = -.101$) and incivility ($\beta = -.200$). Turning our attention to individual characteristics, the effects

of age ($b = 0.008$) and education ($b = -0.048$) were significant, but the magnitudes are weak relative to the variables of interest in the current study (i.e., fear of crime and incivility).

Older respondents were significantly more likely than younger respondents to have confidence in the police. People with a higher level of education tended to hold fewer positive views of police compared to their lower educated counterparts. People who experienced victimization, directly and indirectly, were shown to have less favorable perceptions of police ($b = -0.038$ and $b = -0.024$, respectively). These findings are consistent with the instrumental model that underlines the objective performance of the police (Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Van Craen, 2013). When we look at the results from the simple regression analysis, the impact of the media can be argued to be trivial since the direct effect of the media was not statistically significant. However, the absence of the direct effect does not necessarily imply that there is no effect, especially considering that the media may have affected different perceptions of the audience, which in turn, influence confidence in the police indirectly.

While there was no evidence that crime-related media consumption influenced confidence in the police independent of its effects on perceived incivilities and fear of crime ($b = 0.011$, $p = 0.480$), both fear of crime and incivility were positively and significantly influenced by crime-related media ($b = 0.708$ and $b = 0.143$, respectively). More importantly results using bootstrap approach showed that the total effect of crime-related media was significant [$b = -0.038$, standard error (SE) $= 0.005$, $p < .001$; 95% confidence interval (CI) $= (-0.047, -0.029)$, excluding zero)]. In other words, increased crime-related media consumption reduced the level of confidence in the police. In particular, both of the indirect effects of crime-related media on confidence in the police via fear of crime and perceived incivilities were significant.

As can be seen in Figure 2, the first indirect effect was the specific indirect effect of crime-related media consumption on confidence in the police through fear of crime, (X $\rightarrow M_1 \rightarrow$ Y), estimated as $a_1 b_1 = -0.023$. Respondents who consumed more crime-related media tended to indicate higher level of fear of crime than those who did not ($a_1 = 0.708$), and respondents who perceived more fear indicated a significantly lower level of confidence in the police ($b_1 = -0.033$).

A biased-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect based on 10,000 bootstrap samples was entirely below zero (-0.029 to -0.018). The second indirect effect was the specific indirect effect of crime-related media consumption on confidence in the police through perceived incivilities (i.e., X $\rightarrow M_2 \rightarrow$ Y). Estimated as the product of the effect of crime-related media consumption on perceived incivilities (a_2) and the effect of perceived incivilities on confidence in the police (b_2), this indirect effect is -0.015. This path of influence was negative and significant because the bootstrap confidence interval did not straddle zero (-0.021 to -0.008). Overall, the multiple mediator model was significant, $R^2 = .16.6$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

Discussions about the relationship between the media and perceptions of police have focused primarily on direct media effects: whether the media influence our perceptions of police. Nevertheless, the mechanisms by which the media affect our perceptions remains almost entirely understudied (cf. Kort-Butler & Hartshorn, 2011). The results of this study offer some insights into the relationship between media consumption and confidence in the police. Our results demonstrated that media crime-related media consumption has an impact on confidence in the police. While media effects were not directly associated with perceptions of police, media

consumption influences our views of the police through the variables that represent instrumental and expressive perspectives.

Crime-related media consumption has an indirect impact on confidence in the police through fear of crime. A high level of media consumption was linked to increased fear of crime. Through its effects on fear of crime, the negative association between media consumption and confidence in the police was significant. The result indicates that people who frequently consume crime-related media are inclined to perceive police in a negative light. Individuals who experienced the increased level of fear of crime through media consumption may have developed disappointment in police thinking that the police are not effectively controlling crime (Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Van Craen, 2013).

The indirect media effect on confidence in the police through incivility was also significant. Viewers who consume more crime-related media are more likely to be sensitive to their neighborhood problems like social and physical disorders (LaGrange, Ferraro, & Supancic, 1992). Our results show that crime-related media consumers' heightened level of perceived incivilities eroded confidence in the police. This lends some evidence for the role of the media in relation to the expressive model (Jackson et al., 2009; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007). Crime-related media consumption fostered audience's perceived incivilities, and the police may have been held responsible for perceived social and physical disorders (Jackson et al., 2009).

The current article provides one of the first tests examining the mechanisms between media consumption and attitudes toward police among a South Korean sample. The results suggest that media effects may be generalizable regardless of social and cultural contexts (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Dowler & Zawilski, 2007), supporting Gerbner's perspective with respect to the universal power of the media (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, &

Shanahan, 2002). Moreover, the present study can contribute to the existing literature examining media effects on views of police by investigating specific mechanisms between media viewing and perceptions of police. Also, this study implies that instrumental and expressive models can be extended by taking into account that citizens mainly rely on media information as a resource for judgment about the police.

The findings, however, should be interpreted cautiously due to several limitations of this study. First, this study used data from a cross-sectional survey, and thus the results cannot ensure the causality of the relationship between the proposed variables. It is possible that people who have a certain view of police may be more or less likely to consume crime-related media than ones who have different views. Nonetheless, previous research reports that preference for particular media contents does not necessarily lead to actual media consumption (Van den Bulck, 1995). Another potential threat to the findings is that there are some variables that are not controlled for in this study due to the data limitation. Omitted variables other than those examined in this study may have overestimated or underestimated media effects on confidence in the police. Prior studies have consistently identified encounters with the police as the main determinant in attitudes toward police (Intravia et al., 2018; Mazerolle, Bennett, Antrobus, & Eggins, 2012; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Although some researchers considered police contact in their statistical models (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Dowler & Zawilski, 2007), empirical research on media effects within the context of perceptions of police has failed to fully consider the nature and quality of interaction between the police and respondents (cf. Dirikx & Van den Bulck, 2014).

Additionally, previous studies have shown that the effects of media consumption on perceptions of crime and justice can vary depending on key audience characteristics (e.g., males

vs. females, victims vs. non-victims, younger vs. older respondents among others) (Choi, 2018; Intravia et al., 2018). Unfortunately, one study cannot address all research questions involving media effects. Future research can further investigate the role of the media by conducting split-samples to examine interactions between the media and individual characteristics. Mediated moderation analysis can also contribute to a more complete understanding of media effects.

Finally, some critics may question the validity of the measurement of media consumption used in the present study since our measure is different from previous media measures (cf., Eschholz et al., 2003; Roche et al., 2016; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004; Weitzer & Tuch, 2006). Despite much interest in media effects, there is no universally accepted measurement to capture the concept of the media (Chiricos et al., 1997; Chiricos, Padgett, & Gertz, 2000; Kort-Butler & Hartshorn, 2011; Nabi & Sullivan, 2001). While each previous measure has different weaknesses and strengths, our media measure can uniquely consider the media that are most relevant to our discussion about media effects on perceptions of police because our media measure narrows the content of the media down to crime-related subjects.

This study suggests that police should not only make a constant effort to perform their expected role such as crime control and prevention but also develop strategies to enhance communication with the public. Such efforts may be more important yet for especially people who only rely on other sources for judgment of police because of lack of personal experience with the police, to inform objective information about crime. The U.S. government organizations including law enforcement agencies began to use Social Network Service (SNS), a group of technologies including *Twitter*, *YouTube*, and *Facebook* on a daily basis to facilitate the communication with the public (Meijer & Thaens, 2013). However, their social media strategy focuses on disseminating information about crime and incident. Around half of tweets of 30 U.S.

city police departments are comprised of crime reporting and its updates (Heverin & Zach, 2010). Police departments can benefit by using SNS to reduce citizens' fear of crime and improve of their perceived social disorder.

<div align="center">References</div>

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics for variables.

Variables	Description.	Range	Mean or %	S.D.
Confidence in Police (M)	Level of confidence in police	3-15	9.84	2.19
Media (M)	Extent of crime-related media consumption	1-5	3.12	1.07
Fear of Crime (M)	Specific fear of crime regarding five types of crime	8-40	17.63	6.66
Incivility (M)	R's evaluation about visible disorder	6-30	14.29	4.27
Collective Efficacy (M)	R's collective efficacy	7-35	21.30	5.60
Female (%)	R is female	0-1	51.96 %	.50
Age (M)	R's age	14-109	44.87	17.86
Education (M)	R's educational level	1-6	3.33	1.36
Victimization (%)	R ever crime victim	0-1	5.2 %	.22
Indirect Victimization (%)	R knows someone who was victimized	0-1	13.57 %	.34

Table 2. Regression coefficients, standard errors, and model summary information for the multiple mediator model of the crime-related media influence.

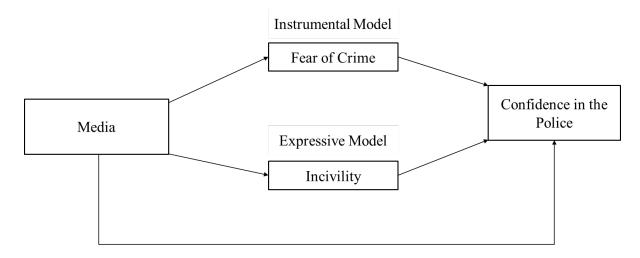| Antecedent	M_1 (Fear of Crime)		M_2 (Incivility)		Y (Confidence in the Police)	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
X (Media)	0.708***	0.049	0.143***	0.033	0.011	0.016
M_1 (Fear of Crime)	–	–	–	–	-0.033***	0.003
M_2 (Incivility)	–	–	–	–	-0.102***	0.004
C_1 (Collective Efficacy)	-0.080***	0.010	-0.098***	0.007	0.092***	0.003
C_2 (Gender)	3.456***	0.103	0.036	0.069	0.048	0.003
C_3 (Age)	-0.042***	0.004	-0.033***	0.002	0.006***	0.001
C_4 (Education)	0.190***	0.043	-0.183***	0.029	-0.058***	0.014
C_5 (Victim)	2.168***	0.236	1.137***	0.157	-0.392***	0.075
C_6 (Indirect Victimization)	1.940***	0.153	0.975***	0.102	-0.160***	0.049
Constant	16.628***	0.337	17.786***	0.224	9.800***	0.130
	$R^2 = 0.123$		$R^2 = 0.052$		$R^2 = 0.166$	
	$F (7, 14933) = 297.706, p < .001$		$F (7, 14933) = 116.241, p < .001$		$F (9, 14931) = 329.913, p < .001$	

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Figure 1. A conceptual mediator model for crime-related media consumption and confidence in the police.
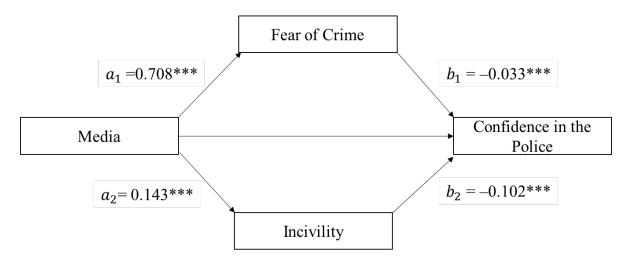

Figure 2. A statistical diagram of the multiple mediator model for crime-related media consumption and confidence in the police.