JUVENILE PERCEPTIONS

OF THE POLICE AND POLICE SERVICES

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
North Dakota State University
of Agriculture and Applied Science

By

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major Program:
Criminal Justice

April 2011

Fargo, North Dakota

North Dakota State University
Graduate School

Title

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

ABSTRACT

Sanden, Michael Brian, M.S., Department of Criminal Justice and Political Science, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, North Dakota State University, April 2011. Juvenile Perceptions of the Police and Police Services. Major Professor: Dr. Carol Archbold.

This study examined the impact of four categories of variables (demographics, neighborhood context variables, contact with the police, and vicarious influence variables) on juvenile perceptions of the police and police services. Data analyzed in this study were collected as part of a larger research evaluation that examined the impact of law enforcement efforts in relation to violent crime. Students from one middle school were surveyed. Statistical analysis consisted of a series of One-Way ANOVA tests and several ordinary least squares regression (OLS) models. The study found significant results for both dependent variables within all four categories of independent variables. Policy implications and suggestions for further research are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Citizen perceptions of the police have been a focus of research in times where police have enjoyed great public support and when public opinion has been less favorable, sometimes expressed through riots and civil protest. The Cincinnati community experienced violent protests in April 2001 in response to the police shooting several unarmed African American men (Dan Horn, The Cincinnati Enquirer 2001). Although the shootings were believed to be the primary cause of the riots, a closer look at the community relationship with the police showed several warning signs of civil unrest against the police prior to the shooting. Citizens were filing complaints against the police, instances of force being used by the police were being questioned, and racial tensions were building as African American males seemed to be specifically targeted by the police. The end result of these neglected tensions between the police and the community led to a four day citywide riot that resulted in acts of violence, property damage estimated at $3.6 million, and hundreds of arrests (Los Angeles Times, 1992). Similarly, the 1992 Los Angeles riots erupted in response to the taped beating of Rodney King by four white police officers. The rioting lasted six days and resulted in 53 deaths, an estimated 2000 injuries, and approximately $800 million in property damage (Los Angeles Times, 1992). Both of these incidents serve as good examples of how information on citizen perceptions of the police could have been used to begin repairing the relationship with the community, prior to the occurrence of any riots or protest.

The importance of citizen involvement, reporting of crimes, and participation in current crime prevention techniques has been proven to be essential to successful policing (National Research Council, 2004). By maintaining a positive relationship with the

communities in which they serve, police departments will enjoy public support through citizen cooperation, lawfulness, and public funding. Contemporary policing tactics rely on citizen involvement and resources as methods of crime prevention, as well as a source for current information on neighborhood and community problems. A positive relationship between the police and the community is therefore essential in order for the police to be successful. Thus, researchers continue to focus on citizen perceptions of the police as one way to measure the relationship between the police and the community it serves. This research can be used to help identify any possible community disconnect that could result in problems for the police; or alternatively, as a measure of effectiveness in times when public support is high.

While research focused on adult attitudes towards the police is plentiful, juvenile perceptions' of the police have received substantially less attention from researchers (Brown, Novak & Frank, 2009; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Taylor, Turner, Esbensen, & Winfree, 2001). Juvenile involvement with law enforcement is particularly important when analyzing current crime trends as juvenile delinquency accounts for a high portion of police contacts and arrests (Leiber, Nalla, & Farnworth, 1998; Snyder & Sickmund, 1996; Taylor et al. 2001). In addition, juveniles make up a disproportionate segment of the population who come into contact with law enforcement, accounting for a large amount of police services being directed at dealing with juveniles (Leiber et al. 1998; Taylor et al. 2001). Research also indicates that contact with the police is the primary exposure that juveniles have with the criminal justice system (Hurst & Frank, 2000). Researchers believe that juvenile contact with the police can have a lasting effect on their perceptions and attitudes toward the police (Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber et

al. 1998). Therefore, this contact and its apparent lasting influence on juvenile perceptions remains significant through adolescence and into adulthood, thus affecting a significant portion of the community.

In addition to differing attitudinal influence, researchers have found that several types of variables influence juvenile perceptions of the police, including demographic variables (such as race, sex and age), neighborhood characteristics (such as citizens' fear of crime and perceptions of personal safety), and vicarious experiences (such as listening to peers and family members talk about the police) (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Eschholz, Blackwell, Gertz, & Chiricos, 2002; Flexon, Lurigio, & Greenleaf, 2009; Hurst et al. 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Taylor et al. 2001). Some studies have revealed that police behavior (arrest, informal action, no action) when dealing with juveniles differs from interactions between the police and adults; however, a lack of consistency in the research has led the National Research Council (2004) to conclude that police behavior is not affected by juvenile status versus adult status (Brown et al. 2009). Brown et al. (2009) account for this lack of consensus in the research due to different operationalization of age and outcome measures in the literature, which makes it difficult for researchers to compare results. The authors did; however, find that juveniles are more likely to be arrested than adults and also that officers' behavior was affected differently by neighborhood contextual factors when dealing with juveniles rather than adults (Brown et al. 2009).

Regardless the context, the importance of citizen perceptions of the police cannot be denied, and researchers continue to work to identify the myriad factors that influence citizens' perception. The current study will not only examine the variables mentioned

above, but will also introduce a new variable of interest: media influence on youth

perceptions of the police. Using survey data collected from a middle school in a mid-

sized, Midwestern city, this study will focus on how demographic variables, neighborhood

context variables, a police-youth interaction variable, and influence variables impact youth

perceptions of the police and police service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study examines the impact of the above mentioned independent variables on two separate dependent variables, juvenile perceptions towards the police and juvenile perceptions towards police services. Although the two dependent variables were found to be highly correlated, they were both included in the study due to the fundamental difference between them. Juvenile perceptions towards the police, pertains to juvenile attitudes toward the police themselves as individuals or people, while perceptions of police services refers to the actions or behaviors of the police. Thus, the study is looking at two conceptually different things, people and behavior.

A review of the existing literature reveals that a greater emphasis has been placed on adult perceptions when compared to youth perceptions of the police and police service. The following chapter discusses several types of variables that have been included in studies that focus on both adult and youths' perceptions of the police and police service. By discussing studies focused on both adult and youth perceptions, it will be possible to compare and contrast findings from these two groups, and to also identify gaps in the literature that are addressed by the current study.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Race

Research has revealed that there are several citizen characteristics (of both adults and juveniles) that have been found to be relevant when studying perceptions of the police. For example, race has been included in nearly all of the studies focused on citizen perceptions of the police (Brown et al. 2009; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Eschholz et al. 2002; Flexon et al. 2009; Frank et al. 2002; Hurst & Frank, 2000;

Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Taylor et al. 2001; Rusinko, Johnson, & Hornung, 1978). Researchers have consistently found that race matters when it comes to perceptions of the police (for both adult and youth citizens), with the exception of Asian Americans (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cheurprakobkit, 2000). Specifically, research has revealed that minority citizens are more likely to have negative views of the police when compared to white citizens (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Brown et al. 2009; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Eschholz et al. 2002; Flexon et al. 2009; Frank, Brandl, Cullen, & Stichman, 1996; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Rusinko et al. 1978; Taylor et al. 2001). The National Research Council (2004) stated that "Research on public opinion documents the profound gulf between the races in American's views of legitimacy of the police" (p 326).

To date, only one study has found that African American citizens had more positive views of the police when compared to white citizens (Frank et al. 1996). In this study, researchers conducted phone surveys in four main areas of Detroit. The study asked whether or not a community with a predominately African American population, police force, and government will have the same findings on citizen perceptions of the police as found in other research (Frank et al. 1996). The researchers found that race, when controlling for other demographic variables, did in fact have a significant effect on citizen attitudes towards the police; however, the results were opposite of other studies showing significant results (Frank et al. 1996). Frank et al. suggest that Detroit's governmental leadership went through an "ethnoracial political transition" from White to African American, and resulted in Whites being in a position of minority status living with governmental control of individuals in another race category (Frank et al. 1996). The

study suggests that whatever racial group is in the minority, within a specific community, they will hold less favorable attitudes towards the police (Frank et al. 1996).

One problem with previous studies that have examined race and adult and youth perceptions of the police is that most studies only include White and African American citizens, due to a lack of representation of other race categories in the study's sample population (Brown et al. 2009; Eschholz et al. 2002; Hurst et al. 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber et al. 1998). In the few instances when other racial and ethnic groups have been included in studies, they have revealed findings different from perceptions held by both African American and white citizens. For example, Cheurprakobkit (2000) included Spanish-speaking Hispanics in an attitudinal study of police contacts. The author found that African Americans still held the least favorable attitudes towards police, even when including this third ethnic group. Taylor et al. (2001) also found consistent findings with adult studies stating that Whites hold a more favorable rating than African Americans, and that Hispanics were somewhere in the middle of these two groups. These researchers also included Asians and American Indians in their study, and found that Asians were very similar to Whites and that American Indians were comparable to Hispanic citizens (Taylor et al. 2001).

In a study comparing attitudes of black and white teenagers, Hurst et al. (2000) also found that African American juvenile perceptions of police were less favorable than whites. The researchers utilized self-administered surveys of 9th through 12th graders in Cincinnati, OH. The data consisted of a sample size of 852, and received a high response rate of 99.3 percent due to the surveys being administered during class (Hurst et al. 2000). This study showed that African American juveniles held less favorable perceptions

towards the police in the categories of police performance, stopping the sale of drugs, and order maintenance. Following with the research trend that minorities hold less favorable views towards the police, Hurst et al. found that in the category of overall job performance, 47.1 percent of White juveniles held positive perceptions, compared to only 25.6 percent of African American juveniles. The authors also found that in terms of police effectiveness, African American juveniles overall hold less favorable attitudes towards the police (Hurst et al. 2000).

Within the context of subcultural theory, Leiber et al. (1998) studied attitudes of juveniles toward the police and operationalized attitudes into three separate measures: "respect for the police, perceptions of police fairness, and perceptions of police discrimination" (p.158). The authors drew on traditional subcultural theories of deviance to support their claim that sociocultural forces are partly responsible for juvenile attitudes towards the police (Leiber et al. 1998). Specifically, the authors theorize that subcultural preferences, along with other social background variables (including minority status), influence juvenile perceptions of the police. The data used in this analysis were collected as a part of a bigger study focusing on minority overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system, and consisted of a voluntary survey of known delinquents in secure facilities throughout Iowa. The minority population in this research location is approximately 4 percent of the total population. Since the authors wanted to understand racial differences, the study utilized oversampling of minorities within research sites where large proportions of minority juveniles were present in an attempt to conduct comparative analysis without artificial data weighting (Leiber et al. 1998). Through their analysis, the authors found that race was the most consistent predictor of all three attitudinal measures of the police (Leiber

et al. 1998). Specifically, when compared to white juveniles, juvenile minorities reported less respect for the police resulting from police contact. Also, when compared to white juveniles, juvenile minorities from poorer neighborhoods reported more negative views of the police, in addition to being more likely (than white juveniles) to report perceptions of police discrimination (Leiber et al. 1998).

Regardless of whether it was adult or youth samples used in the studies, race was consistently found to be a significant factor in regard to youth and adult perceptions of the police.

Age

Research has consistently found that juvenile attitudes toward the police differ from adult attitudes (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Taylor et al. 2001). Hurst and Frank (2000) found overall attitudes of juveniles toward the police are not as favorable as those reported by adults. The data in this study were collected using self-administered surveys of high school students in Cincinnati, OH. The sample size for this study totaled 852 completed surveys with a response rate of 99.3 percent. The study utilized an eleven-item scale that divided measures into general police attitudes as well as specific attitudes towards police functions. Survey questions on specific police functions ranged from police effectiveness of stopping crime to police stopping to help someone in need (Hurst & Frank, 2000). The study found neutral responses were very common within these measures, and confirm a lack of positive support, which is found in other adult studies (Hurst & Frank, 2000). One reason suggested for this finding is that juveniles view the police as social control agents, and therefore are more critical as they see them as a form of authority

(Brown et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; LaMotte, Ouellette, Sanderson, Anderson, Kosutic, Griggs, & Garcia, 2010; Leiber et al. 1998; Taylor et al. 2001).

Taylor et al. (2001) also found juvenile attitudes of the police to be less positive than adult attitudes; however they classify juvenile perceptions as "indifferent." The study utilized a self-report survey of 8th grade students across eleven cities, and had a sample size of 5,477. The survey consisted of Likert-type scale responses that rated police actions when dealing with juveniles. The authors state that these indifferent attitudes differ from the general approval towards the police that is seen with adults (Taylor et al. 2001). One argument suggested for this finding is that the nature of police contact with juveniles follows a more "adversarial" approach (Taylor et al. 2001). This study confirms the consistent findings in the research that states juvenile perceptions of the police are generally less positive than perceptions of adults.

While the literature on adult perceptions of the police commonly uses age (measured in years) as a demographic variable; the juvenile literature seems to lack in this area (Flexon et al. 2009; Leiber et al. 1998; Moretz Jr., 1980; Rusinko et al. 1978; Taylor et al. 2001). For example, Taylor et al. (2009) utilized survey data from 5,477 eighth grade students from eleven U.S. cities, and Flexon et al. (2009) collected data from Chicago public school students from freshman and junior classes, noting a mean and median age of 16 years old. Neither of the above mentioned studies operationalized age as a demographic variable. An exception to this trend is found in Hurst and Frank's (2000) survey of Cincinnati high school students. The survey was administered to students, grades 9 through 12, and age was operationalized by years of age rather than by grade in school (Hurst & Frank, 2000). Despite the different operationalization of the age variable,

the study's findings were consistent with prior research. Juveniles were less likely to hold favorable opinions of the police when compared with adults, no significant differences were found within the juvenile category in terms of age (Hurst & Frank, 2000).

Sex/gender

When reviewing the research on sex/gender, the research is mixed at best. Brown and Benedict's (2002) review of past literature on adult attitudes towards the police note a lack of consensus in research findings regarding sex/gender. The authors cite support for adult females holding more favorable views of police, and also being more satisfied with police service (Cao, Frank, & Cullen, 1996; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Reisig and Giacomazzi, 1998). However, they also cite research that has found empirical support for adult men having more favorable attitudes toward the police when compared to women (Brown & Coulter, 1983; Correia, Reisig, & Lovrich, 1996). In addition, Brown & Benedict (2002) also discuss studies where no effects for sex/gender were found, and conclude that overall, there are mixed results in terms of sex/gender (Benedict, Brown, & Bower, 2000; Chermak, McGarrell, & Weiss, 2001; Worrall, 1999).

In a study examining the relationship between youths' attitudes and trust in the police, Flexon et al. (2009) found no gender effect on the predictors of trust of the police and police perceptions in their analysis. The study consisted of survey data collected from Chicago area youths. The study had a sample size of 891 with a response rate of 94 percent. The authors included a measure of vicarious contact defined as witnessing police interaction with another student and whether or not that interaction was viewed as disrespectful towards the student (Flexon et al. 2009). The study found that vicarious and

direct contact had more significant results when compared to gender, which was found to have no effect at all (Flexon et al. 2009).

Hurst and Frank (2000), however, did in fact find a significant difference in attitudinal perceptions of the police in their survey of Cincinnati high school students. The authors found that juvenile females were less likely to hold positive attitudes toward the police when compared to male juveniles. Like Flexon et al. (2009), this study also included a measure of vicarious contact (witnessing police contact with another) and found more significant results with this measure than with direct contact. The authors theorized that this vicarious contact had a more significant effect with the female demographic, since females were more likely to experience vicarious contact rather than direct contact (Hurst & Frank, 2000).

In Taylor et al.'s (2001) study analyzing juvenile attitudes towards the police, the authors confirm the inconsistency in the literature and suggest that these findings can be attributed to the low number of females in the juvenile justice system, citing a gender-gap phenomenon. Other possibilities suggested by Taylor et al. (2001) include different socialization processes among the genders, different parenting and role expectations, as well as a possible difference in the actions taken by police when dealing with female juveniles as opposed to male juveniles (Taylor et al. 2001). All of these possibilities suggested by Taylor et al. (2001) are theoretical reasons for the more negative views of police by male juveniles when compared to female juveniles. Specifically, males are more likely to have direct formal contact with the police, which will lead to more negative perceptions.

While considering the continued consistent findings in relation to age and race, and the mixed results for sex/gender variables in the research, several other factors have been identified when analyzing juvenile perceptions of the police. Researchers have found that police-citizen contact variables have a significant effect on juvenile perceptions of the' police.

POLICE-CITIZEN CONTACT VARIABLES

Contact versus no-contact with the police

When studying factors that influence citizen perceptions of the police, researchers have identified the contact that occurs between citizens and the police as a significant factor (Brandl et al. 1994; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Maxson, Hennigan, & Sloane, 2003; Miller, Davis, Henderson, Markovic, & Ortiz, 2004; Reisig & Chandek, 2001; Taylor et al. 2001). Researchers have also found that contact with the police can influence attitudes that are already present in citizens, prior to any police contact. When specifically talking about contact, the research has focused on the nature of the contact as well as the frequency of police contact. While the variable of contact with the police has been assessed more with adult citizens, the research is now beginning to focus on the contact that occurs between juveniles and the police.

Leiber et al. (1998) surveyed juveniles already exposed to the juvenile justice system and operationalized police interactions into three variables. The researchers looked at the frequency of police encounters that resulted in police warning and releasing juveniles, encounters where juveniles were taken to the police station, and finally, the juvenile perceptions of police contact where they felt they were wrongly accused (Leiber et

al. 1998). The study found police contact as a significant predictor of juvenile attitudes towards the police and specifically stated that respect for the police was reduced when juveniles were taken to the police station and when they felt that they were wrongly accused by the police (Leiber et al. 1998).

Hurst and Frank (2000) operationalized police contact into four categories in their survey of Cincinnati high school students. These four categories identified whether the juvenile or the police officer initiated contact (viewed positively or negatively by the citizen), and the juvenile's perception of their treatment during the contact (viewed positively or negatively) (Hurst & Frank, 2000). This study found significant positive effects on juvenile perceptions when the juvenile initiated the contact and felt like they were treated well; and also significant negative effects when the police initiated the contact and the juvenile felt like they were not treated well (Hurst & Frank, 2000).

Rusinko et al. (1978) conducted a study that focused on the types of contact between juveniles and the police. The study consisted of a survey of 9th graders in Lancaster Michigan and revealed similar results to the study conducted by Hurst and Frank (2000). The study found police contact with juveniles that was viewed as positive significantly affected juvenile perceptions of the police (Rusinko et al. 1978). The study also showed that this positive contact can override negative attitudes resulting from frequent police contact as well as previous police contact that was viewed as negative (Rusinko et al. 1978). Thus, the positive contact was significant enough to affect perceptions resulting from previous contact with the police, including multiple contacts and negatively viewed contacts (Rusinko et al. 1978).

The results found for adult contact with the police are consistent with juvenile studies focusing on the effects of police contact (Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Maxson et al. 2003; Miller et al. 2004; Rusinko et al. 1978). Cheurprakobkit's (2000) telephone survey of police satisfaction found that adult citizen attitudes developed during police contact have a significant impact on lasting attitudes toward the police. The study focused on the impact of police contact and language spoken on citizen attitudes of the police (Cheurprakobkit, 2000). The data consisted of 251 telephone surveys in two Texas communities. The study found contact experience being more significant than both the nature of the police contact (arrest, warning, traffic citations) and demographic characteristics (Cheurprakobkit, 2000).

Maxson et al.'s (2003) survey of adult police opinion distinguished between formal and informal police contact, and measured police contact in the categories of officer demeanor and job approval. The study defined formal contact as contact according to official police reports, crimes, or arrests and informal contact as conversations with police at various community events (Maxson et al. 2003). The data utilized in this study consisted of a random sample of 375 surveys in four geographic areas of Los Angeles. The findings of this study showed adults who only had informal contact with the police had more positive opinions in both officer demeanor and job approval, as opposed to adults who had only formal contact or both informal and formal contact (Maxson et al. 2003). The study also showed positive results for informal contact despite negative views of neighborhood context variables such as levels of perceived violence, fear, disorder, and cohesion (Maxson et al. 2003).

Researchers have also identified the importance of other influence variables which effect perceptions of the police. Forms of vicarious contact with the police have begun to draw attention in contemporary attitudinal research. Specifically, this vicarious contact can take the form of observing police contact with another individual, influence of friends and family, and also the influence of media.

VICARIOUS INFLUENCE VARIABLES

Vicarious contact has generated significant interest in the current research on juvenile perceptions of the police (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Eschholz et al. 2002; Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst et al. 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Maxson et al. 2003; Miller et al. 2004). Although direct contact with the police has occupied a large majority of attitudinal research on police perceptions, vicarious contact is beginning to receive more attention from researchers. When focusing on the impact of vicarious contact, most research operationalizes this measure by determining if the individual witnessed police contact with another individual (Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000).

Studies are now beginning to expand on this measure of vicarious contact by including various forms of media (Eschholz et al. 2002; Miller et al. 2003) along with the opinions or experiences shared by family and friends (Miller et al. 2003). Overall, research has shown vicarious contact with the police having a statistically significant effect on attitudes toward the police and thus, should be included as a variable of interest when studying this particular topic (Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Miller et al. 2004). When focusing on media, the research has traditionally relied upon formats such as TV news, police related TV shows, and printed news formats. Police contact with family and friends can simply be described as formal or informal experience with the police that has

occurred with a family member or friend who shares a personal relationship with the individual. Both of these measures of vicarious experience continue to be expanded as the research on perceptions of the police grows.

The continued interest and support for vicarious influence variables in the research is supported by Akers' social learning theory. The theory utilizes a concept called modeling, which focused on an observational method of learning (Bandura, 1975). Modeling consists of four basic steps which determined whether or not the behavior was learned successfully. The subject first needed to pay attention to the observed behavior, then the behavior needed to be remembered through retention, the third step consists of reproduction of the observed behavior, and finally the subject needs to be motivated to perform the observed behavior (Bandura, 1975). Through these four steps, modeling provided an important approach to explaining the importance of vicarious influence.

Social learning theory also suggests that deviant behavior is a result of the system of rewards or punishments for the behavior, and also the corresponding rewards and punishments for any alternative behavioral choices (Akers, 1977). This theory suggests that deviant behavior occurs from learned definitions of the deviant behavior being imitated by the individual, as well as attempts by the individual to balance the anticipated rewards or punishments of the act of deviance (Akers, 1977; Akers & Jensen, 2006). Whether or not the deviant behavior will continue and how frequently it will occur is dependent on the reward or punishment reinforcement that has taken place (Akers & Jensen, 2006). When specifically dealing with vicarious contact, social learning theory has provided evidence that observing rewards or punishments of the behavior of another can have a determining effect on whether or not the individual chooses to also participate in

this observed behavior. The theory also suggests that this vicarious experience is just as significant as direct contact (Akers & Jensen, 2006; Bandura, 1969).

When applied to juvenile delinquency, social learning theory has seen significant results (Akers & Jensen, 2006; Winfree et al. 1994). Winfree et al. (1994) applied social learning theory to juvenile gang activity and found juveniles who identified more with pro-gang attitudes had a higher rate of self-reported delinquency. The researchers go further to state that juvenile delinquency was allowed to grow in a pro-gang environment, which resulted in reinforcement and modeling of further delinquent activity (Winfree et al. 1994). Researchers have also been able to identify forms of media (video and computer usage) as vicarious contact (Kozma, 1994). This research goes on to link these forms of media and vicarious contact to significant learning through social learning theory (Kozma, 1994). Thus, the research does show that media influence will provide a significant environment for social learning where deviant behavior could be punished or reinforced (Kozma, 1994).

Observed police interactions with other people

Hurst and Frank (2000) utilized vicarious variables in their survey of juvenile perceptions. Vicarious contact was measured using a series of questions related to what the juveniles saw in regard to the police contact with another individual, what they had heard happened to a third party, and their knowledge of several types of police misconduct. The authors found that vicarious contact consistently produced significant effects on juvenile perceptions. Specifically, the study reported that juveniles who personally saw or heard of more instances of police misconduct had more negative views of police (Hurst & Frank, 2000). Not only were these results consistent throughout the study, but they also found that vicarious conduct produced the most significant and greatest impact on juvenile

attitudes of the police out of all of the variables included in the study (Hurst & Frank, 2000).

Flexon et al. (2009) acknowledged support within the research for the effect of direct contact with the police; however, they also note support for vicarious experiences related to the police and the lasting effect this contact can have on juveniles. The authors were able to assess the positive or negative nature of the vicarious experience through a three-part measure and relate the findings into a dependent variable measure of police trust (Flexon et al. 2009). The three measures identified were youths who had not seen others stopped by the police, youths who had seen others stopped by the police and treated with respect, and finally youths who observed others stopped by the police and were perceived to be disrespected (Flexon et al. 2009). This study showed vicarious experiences as one of the most important influences on juvenile attitudes, and that indirect encounters were a critical variable in juvenile attitudes (Flexon et al. 2009). The study also found negative experiences were more likely to have a lasting effect rather than positive vicarious contact, and that this negative contact can override any past positive experiences (Flexon et al. 2009).

Influence of family and friends

In a study that assessed neighborhood satisfaction level of the police, Miller et al. (2003) analyzed the effect of vicarious police contact through experiences of family and friends, as well as any media influence. This study used public opinion surveys, consumer satisfaction surveys, and a media tracking database in five different New York City police precincts (Miller et al. 2003). Miller et al. specifically addresses a gap in vicarious police contact research when operationalizing the variable into influence of family and friends,

rather than witnessed police contact with another citizen. The study found negative vicarious contact through family and friends produced a negative effect on individual opinions of the police, and that positive vicarious contact did not result in positive opinions (Miller et al. 2003).

Media influence

Another way that police contact can have an influence on perceptions of the police is through the media. There is limited research on media as a factor that might influence public perceptions of the police. This is important as media now comes in several formats including print, television (including news, fictional, and non-fictional programing), radio, internet, and social networking. This variable needs to be examined in more detail, as media now reaches people (specifically youth) on a much broader scale than in the past.

Eschholz et al. conducted a study on the effects of reality-based police programming on citizen attitudes towards the police. Data utilized in this study consisted of a survey of 1,492 adults in a southeastern metropolitan area (Eschholz et al. 2002). The authors described reality-based programming as shows that portrayed actual footage of law enforcement activities, usually from the perspective of the police. Results from this study showed more perceived confidence with the police as viewing of this type of programming increased; however, the authors did find a statistically significant difference in the category of race (Eschholz et al. 2002). White viewers tended to show significant increases in police confidence with increased viewing of the reality programing, but there appeared to be no change with African American viewers. The authors theorized that this could be caused by several possible reasons, including a disproportionate amount of African Americans being portrayed as criminals, while white people were portrayed as the police

on this type of programing. Additionally, they believe there could also have been a possible "floor effect" where African American views toward the police are low enough to begin with, thus "reality" programing would not have any effect on their perceptions (Eschholz et al. 2002).

Maxson et al. (2003) conducted a survey across four neighborhoods in the Los Angeles area and operationalized attitudes toward the police through two measures, overall job approval and whether or not the officer had a positive or negative demeanor. The media category in this study was considered to be mainstream sources, specifically TV, radio, and newspapers. The study found media-influenced opinions of the police were just as favorable as opinions resulting from direct contact with police officers.

Miller et al.'s analysis of adult public opinion on the police in New York City utilized both survey data as well as a media tracking database. This database compiled police news items over a nine month period, and was coded according to their content (Miller et al. 2003). The media consisted of both local and national TV, as well as several newspaper stories, both local and national. The study found public opinions of the police remained stable and positive over the nine month period, despite a significant shift in media coverage of the police from positive to negative (Miller et al. 2003).

Overall, research focusing on media influence of police perceptions is limited. Although the research in this area continues to grow, focus on media influence of juvenile perceptions continues to be neglected. Previous research also appears limited in its operationalization of the media variable, focusing only on mainstream formats such as TV and newspapers. We have yet to see an expansion of the media variable into more current formats like online sources, social networking, and music. Continuing with factors that

have been shown to influence juvenile perceptions, neighborhood context variables will now be discussed.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT VARIABLES

Research on citizen perceptions of the police has commonly utilized neighborhood context variables as a measure of influence. This research includes elements similar to the work of Shaw and McKay's (1942) original social disorganization theory which first identified social disorganization as a way to explain urban crime and delinquency in Chicago. Social disorganization theory is based on the premise that criminal activity is present in a society where there is a lack of stability, social cohesion, and order (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Criminal activity is prevented through community ties and organization, by an all who reside within the community. The theory proposes that any breakdown of this organization will result in further disorder, crime, and delinquency (Shaw & McKay, 1942).

This criminological theory can be utilized in research that analyzes relationships between neighborhood disorder and perceptions of the police. Studies thus far have attempted to utilize this theoretical approach by showing correlation between these attitudes of neighborhood disorder and attitudes towards the police. Research focused on adult perceptions has found that citizens tend to view the police more negatively in neighborhoods having a lower socioeconomic status and social disorder (Cao et al. 1996; Skogan, 1990). Research in this area is much more prevalent for adult perceptions; however researchers have begun to look at neighborhood context variables' influence on juvenile perceptions.

Hurst and Frank (2000) note citizen perceptions of neighborhood conditions as critical, and that these perceptions of the neighborhood conditions will influence perceptions of the police. The study acknowledges a gap in the juvenile research in regard to neighborhood context variables and attempts to measure this variable through questions regarding neighborhood crime in their survey of Cincinnati high school students (Hurst & Frank, 2000). The authors found that juveniles hold the police responsible when crime worsens in their neighborhoods in comparison to other surrounding neighborhoods (Hurst & Frank, 2000). These negative perceptions of the police, however, were not significant when the analysis focused on their neighborhood alone and only surfaced when a comparison of neighborhoods was being considered (Hurst & Frank, 2000).

In their comparison of African American and White juvenile perceptions of the police, Hurst et al. included perceptions of neighborhood crime and police visibility in their analysis. The study operationalized neighborhood perceptions into survey questions that assessed their neighborhood crime levels, as well as a comparison to other neighborhoods. The authors found that juveniles who felt that crime was higher in their neighborhood compared to other neighborhoods also held less positive perceptions of police performance regardless of race (Hurst et al. 2000).

Taylor et al.'s (2001) survey of 8th graders across eleven cities found differences in juvenile perceptions varied by city; however, these contextual differences did not override the significance of race as a variable. The authors theorized that contextual factors do affect attitudes towards the police and they note a gap in the current research which excludes analysis of several research sites, with most research focusing on only one research site. Therefore, their study utilized a larger sample size (n=5,477) across eleven

U.S. cities. The study found significant differences across locations, and noted more favorable attitudes in areas that were predominately white and more rural (Taylor et al. 2001). The authors also found the city of residence did not appear to change the findings of previous research on attitudes of racial groups, specifically minority groups holding less favorable attitudes towards the police (Taylor et al. 2001).

Maxson et al. (2003) included perceptions of the neighborhood in their survey identifying factors influencing public opinion of the police. The study found residents who reported positive perceptions of their neighborhood being more likely to have informal contact with the police. These same residents also felt that the citizens living within the community had a responsibility towards maintaining safety, and thus were less likely to blame the police for crime and disorder (Maxson et al. 2003). This survey of Los Angeles citizens showed support for positive neighborhood contextual factors having a positive influence on perceptions towards the police (Maxson et al. 2003).

The research has also shown support for other general neighborhood characteristics influencing juvenile perceptions in a social context. Leiber et al. (1998) conducted a study of juvenile perceptions toward the police in relation to their deviant subcultural preferences. The researchers found that although police-juvenile contact had a strong effect on perceptions of police, delinquent subcultures and social environment factors were also significant (Leiber et al. 1998). Leiber et al. (1998) state "These findings suggest that juveniles' characteristics and community circumstances, as emphasized in subcultural theories of delinquency, are useful in explaining juveniles' unfavorable views of law enforcement officers" (p. 169). The work done by Leiber et al. (1998) was able to clearly show a link between juvenile attitudes towards the police and general subcultural factors.

CURRENT STUDY

After considering past research, the current study will contribute to the existing body of literature by adding a new variable of interest: media influence on juvenile perceptions of the police. Further, this study utilizes four main categories of variables (demographic characteristics, neighborhood context variables, contact variables, and vicarious influence variables) to determine the effects on juvenile perceptions of the police and police services. More specifically, the current study will answer the following research questions:

1. Are juvenile demographic characteristics, neighborhood context variables, contact variables, and vicarious influence variables related to juvenile perceptions toward the police?

2. Are juvenile demographic characteristics, neighborhood context variables, contact variables, and vicarious influence variables related to juvenile perceptions toward police services?

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH SITE

Data analyzed in this study were collected as part of a larger research evaluation that examined the impact of law enforcement efforts in relation to violent crime. More specifically, the study focused on policing efforts including additional out-of-vehicle patrol to increase police interaction with community residents. Neighborhood restoration efforts were also part of this project. One part of this evaluation included the examination of youth perceptions of the police and police service in their neighborhood. Students from one middle school were surveyed. This particular middle school was chosen to be part of the larger evaluation as it was located in a neighborhood that was experiencing a decline in quality of life, and also high levels of criminal activity.

In order to use this data in any kind of publication or presentation, an agreement was made with the program director that the location of the research site and the title of the program being evaluated would not be revealed; therefore, we will refer to the research site with a pseudonym, "River City". In an effort to provide some descriptive information about River City while protecting the identity of the city, we will include ranges for the population and median income. River City has a city-wide population of 100,000-150,000 people. The median income range for this city is $40,000-$45,000. Most (86%) of the citizens in River City are white, 5 percent are African American, 3.3 percent are Hispanic, 2.9 percent are Asian, and 2.9 percent included all other races.

SURVEY DATA

The survey used in this study was created by combining questions from other evaluations of this program across the country, and additional questions were asked based

on unique characteristics of the research site (see appendix). The principal of the middle

school sent information forms home during parent-teacher conferences in October 2009 so

that parents would have time to decide if they wanted their child to be involved in the

evaluation. The parents of students who chose not to fill out the survey turned in the

withdrawal forms from the bottom of the information sheet sent home with them and their

children were not given surveys. When the survey was administered, students were

instructed not to include their name, student identification number, or any other personal

information that might identify them on the survey. The surveys were administered by the

teachers at the middle school on October 29, 2009. Once completed, the teachers placed

the surveys in a large box and sealed it. The surveys were then mailed directly to the

principal investigator conducting the evaluation. Upon arrival, the principal investigator

entered all of the surveys into SPSS for quantitative analyses. The research protocol was

submitted for IRB approval to ensure compliance with all applicable institutional and

federal research requirements. There were 423 students who completed the survey out of

the 535 students enrolled in the school at that time, resulting in a response rate of 79%.

Exactly one quarter (25%) of the surveys were filled out by students in the 8th

grade. Less than half (40%) of the surveys were filled out by students in the 7th grade.

And finally, 35 percent of the surveys were filled out by students in the 6th grade. Half

(50%) of the surveys were filled out by male students, 49 percent filled out by female

students, and 1 percent of the surveys did not identify the sex of the student. Racial/ethnic

representation was hearty in this sample as 42 percent of the students who filled out

surveys identified themselves as members of a racial/ethnic group other than "white,"

while the remaining 55 percent of the surveys were completed by students who identified

themselves as "white." (21.7% African American, 12.5% Multi-racial, 2.6% Hispanic, .9% Native American, 4% other) In comparison, a racial breakdown of the middle school population provided by 2009 census data shows 64.23 percent as "white," 30.24 percent as "black," and 5.53 percent as all other racial/ethnic groups including Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and multiracial. Census data from 2009 lists the percent free and reduced price lunch rate at the middle school as 41.50 percent.

DEPENDENT VARIABLES

Two dependent variables were included in this study: (1) juvenile perceptions of the police, and (2) juvenile perceptions of the effectiveness of police services. The first dependent variable, "perceptions of the police" was operationalized by creating a scale that included three items: (1) In general, I trust the police. (2) In general, I like the police. (3) In general, I am satisfied with the police in my neighborhood. Survey responses ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). A scale reliability analysis of these three items resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .875.

The second dependent variable, "perceptions of the effectiveness of police services" was created through a scale consisting of six items: (1) In general, police do a good job. (2) The police do a good job of stopping crime. (3) The police do a good job of stopping people from using drugs. (4) The police do a good job of stopping people from selling drugs. (5) The police do a good job of stopping people from hanging out and causing trouble. (6) The police do a good job of keeping my neighborhood quiet at night. Survey responses ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). A scale reliability analysis of these six items resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .887.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Independent variables used in this study consisted of four main categories including student characteristics, neighborhood context variables, a police contact variable, and vicarious influence variables. These four categories of variables are explained in the section below.

Student characteristics

The student characteristics variables included in this study consisted of grade in school, sex, and race. Past research has identified age as a significant factor when studying perceptions of the police; however, a majority of this research operationalizes age only for adults and is usually limited in the category of juveniles (Brown et al. 2009; Flexon et al. 2009; Leiber et al. 1998; Rusinko et al. 1978; Taylor et al. 2001). The current study will use grade (6th =1, 7th =2, or 8th =3).

Race was also included in this study. The variable was dichotomized into two groups: white =1 and all other race/ethnic groups combined =0. Research has consistently shown that citizens from racial/ethnic minority groups other than white tend to hold a less favorable opinion of the police (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Taylor et al. 2001).

In terms of sex, previous research has revealed mixed research findings for perceptions among male and female citizens (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Eschholz et al. 2002; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Moretz Jr., 1980; Taylor et al. 2001). Due to the mixed findings in previous research, this study included sex as an independent variable to determine if any differences existed in our analysis (male =0, female =1).

Neighborhood context

This study used three measures to assess neighborhood context variables: First, a "lack of personal safety" scale was constructed using two items: "How safe do you feel at night in your neighborhood" and "How safe do you feel during the day in your neighborhood?" Response categories for these questions ranged from 1 (always safe) to 5 (never safe). A scale reliability analysis of these two items resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .754. Second, "perceptions of crime in the neighborhood" was measured using one item, "To what degree do you think crime is a problem in your neighborhood," with responses ranging from 1 (never a problem) to 5 (always a problem). The third neighborhood context variable focused on interactions with neighbors. This was measured using one item "How often do you talk with your neighbors," with responses ranging between 1 (often), 2 (rarely), and 3 (never). In support of these measures, social disorganization theory posits that neighborhood characteristics can influence how people feel about crime and disorder in their neighborhood, which can also influence their perceptions of the police (Shaw & McKay, 1969).

Contact with the police

This study measured direct contact with the police with a single item asking "In the past year, have you had contact with a police officer?" Responses were dichotomized into two groups (1=yes or 0=no). Past research has found that direct contact with the police has an effect on perceptions of the police for both adults and youth (Brandl et al. 1994; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Reisig & Chandek, 2001; Rusinko et al. 1978).

Influence by peers, parents, neighbors and media

The current study included two measures to assess the category of influence variables: (1) vicarious contact with the police and (2) media influence on perceptions of the police. Vicarious contact was measured by constructing a scale containing three items: "how often do you hear your (1) parents, (2) neighbors, and (3) friends talk badly about the police?" Response categories for these three questions included "1=never", "2=rarely", or "3=often". A scale reliability analysis for these three items resulted with a Cronbach's alpha of .729. Previous research supports this measure by showing that vicarious contact does have a statistically significant effect on juvenile perceptions of the police (Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Miller et al. 2004). With few exceptions, however, the research has neglected the influence of family and friends when attempting to measure vicarious influence (Miller et al. 2004). The research that has included vicarious contact through experiences of family and friends does show significant results; however, most of the research characterizes vicarious contact as seeing police interact with other people (Miller et al. 2004). Akers' Social Learning Theory (1977) supports this study's operationalization of vicarious contact by asserting that beliefs and attitudes can be directly learned from an individual's peers and close personal groups, specifically family and friends, and that this behavior is reinforced through the rewards and punishments resulting from these beliefs and attitudes (Akers, 1977).

This study introduced a new variable of interest: media influence. Specifically, the media variable focused on the mainstream format of TV, but also included music. Media influence was measured by constructing a scale consisting of two questions; (1) "How often do you listen to music that negatively portrays the police?" and (2) "How often do

you watch television that negatively portrays the police?" Response categories for these two questions included "1=never, 2=rarely, or 3=often." The scale reliability analysis for these two items resulted with a Cronbach's alpha of .758. Current research on media influence has shown mixed results on the effects of media on adult citizen perceptions of the police (Eschholz et al. 2002; Maxson et al. 2003; Miller et al. 2004). To date, there have been no published studies that examine media influence on juvenile perceptions of the police.

Diagnostic tests were performed and revealed no collinearity problems for any of the variables. Variance inflation factor (VIF) scores for all of the variables were below four, and all Eigen values were below one (Walker & Madden, 2005).

DATA ANALYSIS

Univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses were utilized in this study. This includes frequencies, a series of ANOVAs and several ordinary least squares regression (OLS) models. ANOVAs determine if there is any significance at the bivariate level within each category of independent variables (Walker & Madden, 2005). The One-Way ANOVA test was chosen to measure the dispersion between group means of the independent and dependent variables. A series of OLS regressions will determine the strength and direction of correlation between the variables (Walker & Madden, 2005). Some argue that this analysis is problematic because the assumptions of OLS are violated when it is used with a non-interval outcome variable; however, OLS has traditionally been used to study both adult and youth perceptions of the police in the United States (see Nofziger & Williams, 2005; O'Shea, 2000; Reisig & Lloyd, 2009; Rosenbaum, Schuck, Costello, Hawkins, & Ring, 2005; Schafer, Huebner & Bynum, 2003; Weitzer & Tuch,

2005). Also, Likert scales, which are utilized in this study, are commonly used with interval procedures in current statistical tests, and the research has consistently shown that the interval nature of the Likert data is appropriate for OLS regression analysis and that it does not violate any of the statistical assumptions (Nofziger & Williams, 2005; O'Shea, 2000; Reisig & Lloyd, 2009; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005).

LIMITATIONS

This study is not without limitations. Data utilized in this study were originally collected as a part of a larger evaluation; therefore, the current study was limited to the questions contained in that survey. There are also constraints with generalizability of the research findings as this study included only one middle school in one Midwestern city. A study that included several research sites might produce different results, and could also allow the research findings to be generalized nationwide.

FINDINGS

The analysis began with a correlations matrix to determine any statistically significant relationships between the independent variables (see Table 1). The correlations matrix shows race as having a significant relationship with all other independent variables. Non-white respondents were more likely to report feeling less safe in their neighborhood, more likely to report crime being a problem in their neighborhood, and less likely to talk with their neighbors. In addition, minority students were more likely to have contact with the police, more likely to hear parents, peers and neighbors talk negatively about the police, and more likely to watch and listen to TV and music which portrayed the police in a negative manner.

The correlations also show that students in a higher grade were less likely to talk with neighbors, more likely to hear parents, neighbors and peers talk negatively about the police, and more likely to watch and listen to TV and music which portrayed the police negatively. No significant relationships were found with sex. Respondents who reported not feeling safe in their neighborhood were also more likely to think that crime was a problem in their neighborhood, more likely to have had contact with the police within the last year, more likely to hear their parents, peers, and neighbors talk negatively about the police, and also more likely to watch and listen to TV and music which portrayed the police negatively.

Next, a series of one-way analysis of variance tests were conducted. This analysis showed significance in all four categories of independent variables for both research questions (see Table 2). For the first research question, the ANOVA tests found grade, race, respondent views on crime being a problem in the neighborhood, communication

Table 1.

Correlation Matrix of Variables in Analysis

		Grade	Student sex	Race	Lack of Safety Scale	Neigh. Crime	Talk to your Neigh.	Contact w/ a Cop	Influence Variable	Media Var.
Grade	Pearson Correlation	1								
	Sig. (2-tailed)									
	N	423								
Student sex	Pearson Correlation	.005	1							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.913								
	N	417	417							
Race	Pearson Correlation	.051	-.020	1						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.307	.691							
	N	411	409	411						
Lack of Safety Scale	Pearson Correlation	-.018	-.017	-.129**	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.713	.738	.009						
	N	417	411	405	417					
Neighborhood Crime	Pearson Correlation	.044	-.014	-.173**	.641**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.369	.773	.001	.000					
	N	413	407	401	407	413				
Talk to your Neighbors	Pearson Correlation	.174**	-.073	-.205**	.050	.044	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.143	.000	.319	.381				
	N	411	405	399	405	407	411			
Contact with a Cop	Pearson Correlation	.004	-.054	-.100*	.164**	.241**	.013	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.943	.282	.048	.001	.000	.800			
	N	401	395	389	395	397	395	401		
Influence Variable	Pearson Correlation	.149**	.010	-.279**	.249**	.309**	.126*	.290**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.852	.000	.000	.000	.022	.000		
	N	339	335	330	335	335	332	328	339	
Media Var.	Pearson Correlation	.199**	-.108	-.232**	.139*	.246**	.089	.169**	.383**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.051	.000	.012	.000	.110	.002	.000	
	N	333	329	324	329	329	327	322	331	333

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

with neighbors, neighborhood safety, police contact, vicarious influence, and media

influence statistically significant. For the second research question, the ANOVA tests

found race, neighborhood safety, respondent views on crime being a problem in the

neighborhood, communication with neighbors, police contact, vicarious influence, and media influence statistically significant.

Table 2.
One-Way ANOVA

	F (Police)	F (Police Services)
Demographics		
Grade	4.421*	3.317
Sex	.007	.732
Race	27.739*	13.374*
Neighborhood context		
Unsafe in Neighborhood	31.061*	47.756*
Crime in Neighborhood	42.658*	51.663*
Don't Talk with Neighbors	42.587*	26.575*
Contact Variable		
Contact with Police	26.303*	12.567*
Vicarious Influence		
Influence variable	92.258*	82.856*
Media variable	58.745*	52.338*

*$p < .05$.

After finding several statistically significant relationships in the bivariate analyses, ordinary least squares regression models were used to further assess the effects of the independent variables. Seven models were created and applied to both dependent variables with each of the four groups of independent variables first being analyzed individually (see Tables 3 and 4). Model 1 examines the impact of student demographic characteristics (grade, race, sex) on each dependent variable. Model 2 tests the effect of neighborhood context variables (views on a lack of neighborhood safety, views on crime being a problem in the neighborhood, and neighborhood communication) on each dependent variable.

Model 3 examines the influence of contact with the police with both dependent variables. Model 4 tests the effect of vicarious influence variables (how often do you hear

Table 3.

Juvenile Perceptions toward the Police

	Demographics			Neigh. Context			Contact Variable	Influence		R^2
	Grade	Sex	Race	Unsafe in Neigh.	Crime in Neigh.	Lack of talk w/ Neigh.	Contact w/ Police	Influence Variable	Media Variable	
Model 1										
b	.117*	-.007	-.387*							
B	.111*	-.004	-.261*							.078
SE	.046	.071	.072							
Model 2										
b				.137*	.199*	.297*				
B				.102*	.125*	.314*				.193
SE				.044	.037	.048				
Model 3										
b							.252*			
B							.397*			.063
SE							.077			
Model 4										
b								.370*	.255*	
B								.476*	.303*	.273
SE								.066	.061	
Model 5										
b	.070	-.003	-.150*	.152*	.166*	.244*				
B	.065	-.005	-.222*	.111*	.102*	.257*				.213
SE	.044	.067	.071	.044	.038	.051				
Model 6										
b	.067	.011	-.149*	.176*	.115*	.221*	.183*			
B	.062	.016	-.218*	.131*	.070*	.232*	.288*			.250
SE	.044	.067	.071	.045	.038	.051	.075			
Model 7										
b	-.027	.033	-.069	.152*	.037	.206*	.104*	.267*	.236*	
B	-.025	.050	-.104	.114*	.023	.216*	.160*	.344*	.281*	.392
SE	.046	.070	.078	.047	.039	.052	.077	.071	.063	

*p<.05.

your parents, peers, and neighbors talk negatively about the police) and media influence variables (police portrayed negatively on TV and in music) on both dependent variables. After the individual analysis, the cumulative effect of all four categories of independent variables is examined. Model 5 combines demographic characteristics and neighborhood context variables. Model 6 adds contact with the police to neighborhood context variables and demographic characteristics. And finally, Model 7 combines demographic characteristics, neighborhood context variables, contact with the police, and vicarious and media influence.

Table 4.

Juvenile Perceptions toward Police Services

	Demographics			Neigh. Context			Contact Variable	Influence		R²
	Grade	Sex	Race	Unsafe in Neigh.	Crime in Neigh.	Lack of talk w/ Neigh.	Contact w/ Police	Influence Variable	Media Variable	
Model 1										
b	.091	.044	-.189*							
B	.085	.063	-.274*							.045
SE	.047	.072	.073							
Model 2										
b				.200*	.193*	.232*				
B				.146*	.118*	.241*		·		.192
SE				.044	.037	.048				
Model 3										
b							.179*			
B							.273*			.032
SE							.077			
Model 4										
b								.364*	.230*	
B								.451*	.268*	.251
SE								.066	.062	
Model 5										
b	.055	.048	-.095	.214*	.165*	.202*				
B	.051	.069	-.139	.155*	.100*	.210*				.206
SE	.045	.068	.071	.045	.038	.051				
Model 6										
b	.505	.056	-.101*	.240*	.115	.181*	.098*			
B	.046	.080	-.146*	.175*	.069	.186*	.149*			.213
SE	.045	.068	.072	.046	.039	.052	.076			
Model 7										
b	-.063	.059	-.007	.222*	.027	.160*	.020	.305*	.224*	
B	-.057	.084	-.011	.158*	.015	.159*	.030	.374*	.258*	.364
SE	.046	.070	.076	.047	.039	.051	.076	.070	.064	

*p<.05.

JUVENILE PERCEPTIONS TOWARD THE POLICE

The first research question asked whether juvenile demographic characteristics, neighborhood context variables, contact variables, and vicarious influence variables affect juvenile perceptions toward the police. The results for all seven models related to research question one can be found in Table 3. The juvenile demographic characteristics model (Model 1) was tested first. Both race and grade were significant in this model. Consistent with past research, the results showed that non-white students held less positive perceptions of the police (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Brown et al. 2009; Eschholz et al.

2002; Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998, Taylor et al. 2001). The results also showed that students in a higher grade held more negative perceptions toward the police.

Model 2 found a more negative perception towards the police for juveniles who did not feel safe in their neighborhood, perceived crime to be a problem in their neighborhood, and also did not talk often with their neighbors. The findings of this model show that neighborhood context variables are related to juvenile perceptions of the police. Specifically, views on a lack of neighborhood safety, high crime levels in their neighborhood, and low communication with neighbors were shown to be related to more negative perceptions of the police. Model 3 found a significant relationship between having contact with a police officer within the last year and also having more negative attitudes towards the police. This is similar to findings in previous studies (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Brandl et al. 1994; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Taylor et al. 2001).

Model 4 found negative perceptions towards the police in juveniles who experienced negative vicarious influence such as watching TV and listening to music which portrayed the police negatively. The model mirrors findings in the existing literature that shows significant results for vicarious influence on perceptions of the police (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Eschholz et al. 2002, Flexon et al. 2009, Hurst et al. 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Maxson et al. 2003, Miller et al. 2004). The model found that hearing parents, neighbors, and peers talk negatively about the police resulted in more negative perceptions towards the police. The model also found that watching TV and

listening to music which portrayed the police in a negative manner also resulted in more negative perceptions towards the police.

The analysis of Models 1-4 showed all variables to be significantly related to juvenile perceptions of the police when tested independently, with the exception of sex. The analysis continued by adding the variables one group at a time to determine any significant cumulative effect. Individually, models 1-4 all had relatively small R^2 values which show that each individual variable category does little to explain juvenile perceptions towards the police independently (see Table 3). Model 4 enjoyed the highest R^2 value of all the independent models at 27 percent explained variance. It was even higher that the first two cumulative models (5 and 6); however, it did not override the final model which combined all variables and had a R^2 value of 39 percent (see Table 3).

Model 5 included both demographic characteristics and neighborhood context variables in regard to juvenile perceptions toward the police. The effects for grade disappeared in this model and were not significant, along with sex. The effects of all neighborhood context variables were significant along with the effects of race. Model 6 added the police contact variable to juvenile demographic characteristics and neighborhood context variables. The model found no significant effect for grade, sex, and perceptions of neighborhood crime. Race, feelings of neighborhood safety, talking with neighbors, and contact with the police all were once again statistically significant.

Model 7 included all 4 categories of variables. In this model all three demographic variables were no longer found to be statistically significant; however, race approached significance (see Table 3). Also, perceptions of neighborhood crime did not have a significant effect on juvenile perceptions toward the police. Continuing to be significant

was perceptions of neighborhood safety, talking with neighbors, and contact with the police. This model also found significant results for the influence of parents, family and friends, as well as influence by TV and radio.

These results suggest that vicarious influence variables are in fact related to juvenile perceptions towards the police. While the measurement of vicarious influence is expanded through the use of media in the current study, this study supports other research by showing a significant relationship between vicarious influence and negative perceptions toward the police (Eschholz et al. 2002, Hurst & Frank, 2000; Maxson et al. 2003, Miller et al. 2003). Specifically, the current study found significant results for juveniles who hear their parents, neighbors, and peers talk negatively about the police and juveniles who watch TV and listen to music which negatively portrays the police. The study also found support for neighborhood context variables and recent contact with the police. This is similar to prior studies which found that citizen perceptions of neighborhood conditions will influence perceptions of the police (Hurst & Frank, 2000, Hurst et al. 2000, Leiber et al. 1998). Also supported in this study was contact with the police, which has been identified as a significant influence on juvenile perceptions towards the police (Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Taylor et al. 2001).

JUVENILE PERCEPTIONS TOWARD POLICE SERVICES

The second research question asked whether juvenile demographic characteristics, neighborhood context variables, contact variables, and vicarious influence variables were related to juvenile perceptions toward police services. Model 1 showed race as a significant predictor of juvenile perceptions toward police services. Non-white juveniles

were more likely to have negative perceptions towards police services. Both grade and sex were not significant in this model.

Model 2 found significant results for all three neighborhood context variables on juvenile perceptions toward police services. Respondents perceptions of low neighborhood safety, views on the degree crime is a problem in their neighborhood, and talking with their neighbors were all related to perceptions toward police services. These findings are consistent with those from research question one regarding neighborhood context variables and perceptions of the police. Similarly, Model 3 also found significant results for juvenile contact with a police officer within the last year, which was also found in the previous research question. Juveniles who had contact were more likely to have negative perceptions towards police services. Significant results were also found with Model 4, where both vicarious influence variables had an effect on juvenile perceptions of police services. Like research question one, influence from family, friends and parents as well as TV and music had a significant effect on juvenile perceptions toward police services.

As seen in the first research question, R^2 values for the models related to research question two were relatively small and indicate that each individual group of independent variables does little to explain juvenile perceptions towards police services by themselves (see Table 4). Again, Model 4 had the highest R^2 value (25%) which was found to be higher than the first two combined variable models (5 and 6), but not higher than the full Model 7 at 36 percent (see Table 4).

Model 5 continued the analysis by adding the neighborhood context variables with the juvenile demographic variables. None of the demographic variables (grade, sex, race)

were found to be significant; however, race approached significance ($p = .052$). All of the

neighborhood context variables were found to be significant in this model. Model 6

included juvenile demographic variables, neighborhood context variables, and the police

contact variable. Race again became significant in this model ($p = .044$) despite being

found not significant in Model 5. Police contact was also found to be significant in this

model. Perceptions of neighborhood crime were not significant in this model, however,

neighborhood safety and talking with neighbors were both statistically significant.

Finally, Model 7 included all variables in the analysis of juvenile perceptions

toward police services. With all the variables included, both vicarious contact variables

were found to be significant. Influence of parents, family, and friends talking negatively

about the police was related to juvenile perceptions toward police services. Watching and

listening to TV and music which portrayed the police negatively was also related to

juvenile perceptions toward police services. Also, perceptions of neighborhood safety and

talking with neighbors were significantly related to juvenile perceptions of police services.

When looking at all the variables in the second research question, vicarious

influence and neighborhood context variables continue to be robust in the results as seen in

the first research question. All of the vicarious influence variables (hearing parents, peers,

and neighbors talk negatively about the police, and watching TV and listening to music

that portray the police negatively) showed significant results in the models in which they

were included. All three neighborhood context variables were significant when they were

analyzed in Model 2, and two of them remained significant in the full model (perceptions

of neighborhood safety and talking with neighbors). Neither grade nor sex was found to be

significant in any of the models. Race was found to be significant when the demographic

variables were analyzed independently and also when the demographic variables were combined with neighborhood context variables and contact variables.

Overall, race was found to be more significant in the first research question, and only significant in the second research when analyzed with the other demographic variables and in Model 6 when combined with neighborhood context variables and the contact with police variable. Neighborhood context variables also showed robust findings in both research questions. Specifically, neighborhood safety and talking with neighbors both remained significant in all research models. These findings mirror previous research that found a relationship between juvenile perceptions of the police and perceptions of neighborhood conditions (Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Taylor et al. 2001). Recent contact with the police was found to be significant in all models in which it was included, with the exception of the full model in the second research question. This is also consistent with previous research; however, the results for police contact were not as strong as for other variables used in this study. The vicarious influence variables appeared to be the most robust in this analysis and were significant in all models in which they were included. These findings are consistent with previous research on vicarious contact; however, the operationalization of vicarious contact in the current study is unique to this body of research. These results suggest hearing parents, peers, and neighbors talk negatively about the police, and watching and listening to TV and music that portrays the police negatively is related to juvenile perceptions towards the police.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze juvenile perceptions of the police and police service. The first research question asked about juvenile perceptions of the police. The statistical models run for this research question included four groups of independent variables: demographic, neighborhood context, contact with the police, and influence of peers, neighbors, and media (specifically TV and music).

In the first model, grade and race were statistically significant while sex was not. This mirrors prior research which shows non-white juveniles having a more negative perception of the police (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Brown et al. 2009; Eschholz et al. 2002; Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998, Taylor et al. 2001). In terms of sex, it is not surprising that there were no significant results as prior research can only be described as mixed at best (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Benedict et al. 2000; Chermak et al. 2001). Flexon et al. (2009) found no significant results when sex was included as a measure in their survey of juvenile attitudes towards the police.

The research on age suggests that juveniles will hold less positive attitudes towards the police when compared with adults (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Taylor et al. 2001). Prior research has typically operationalized this variable into years of age; however, this study operationalized the variable by grade (Hurst & Frank, 2000). The current study did identify a significant difference within the juvenile category. Specifically, the study found juveniles in higher grades as having more negative perceptions of the police. This warrants further research to determine at what point juveniles begin to perceive the police more negatively, as well as at what point their views start to return to the positive as they age out of adolescence.

Of all demographic variables included in this study, non-white juveniles were the only ones to consistently view the police more negatively when neighborhood context and contact variables were added to the model. However, this trend lost significance in the full model containing all four groups of variables. As seen in prior research, demographic characteristics initially shown to be statistically significant tend to be overshadowed by other variables included in multivariate statistical analysis. Hurst and Frank (2000) found that females were less likely to hold positive attitudes towards the police and theorized that the measures of vicarious contact significantly affected the female demographic. This could also be the case in this study, which found demographic variables failing to be significant when views on neighborhood conditions and vicarious influence were added to the multivariate analysis.

Negative feelings about poor safety in the neighborhood, high crime levels in the neighborhood, and not talking with neighbors were all linked to more negative perceptions of the police in all models, except for the full model where perceptions of high crime levels were no longer significant. Previous research has found that juveniles tend to hold the police responsible when crime worsens in their neighborhood when compared to surrounding neighborhoods (Hurst & Frank, 2000). Specifically, Hurst and Frank (2000) found negative perceptions of the police ceased to be significant when their analysis focused on a single neighborhood without comparing outside neighborhoods. This may help to explain results from the current study which utilized survey data from a single neighborhood.

Prior research has also found consistent results for neighborhood perceptions influencing perceptions towards the police; however the strength of the significance varies

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when neighborhood conditions are combined with other independent characteristics (Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Taylor et al. 2001). For example, Hurst and Frank (2000) found neighborhood context variables becoming more significant than race, while Taylor et al. (2001) found significant results that did not overcome the less positive attitudes of non-white respondents. It is believed that while these neighborhood context variables are significant, the inclusion of contact and vicarious influence variables may have an overpowering effect on juvenile perceptions of the police in the full multivariate analysis, which was also seen in the current study.

Juveniles who felt unsafe in their neighborhood, felt that crime was a problem in their neighborhood, and also reported less communication with neighbors were more likely to report a more negative view of the police. These findings help justify current police administrations that utilize partnerships with other community resources to improve overall quality of life conditions within their respective jurisdictions. Current policing efforts have expanded past the singular purpose of addressing crime and delinquency and now include efforts to improve overall neighborhood conditions and quality of life. Police departments now utilize more proactive, problem based policing tactics that engage the community in an attempt to improve citizen participation in crime prevention and policing efforts (National Research Council, 2004). Police agencies believe the more positive opinion of neighborhood conditions will then lead to more positive perceptions of the police and police services as the overall conditions in the neighborhood continue to improve (Katz, Webb and Schaefer, 2001).

Consistent with prior research, this study found that juveniles who had more contact with the police in the last year held more negative perceptions of the police (Brandl

et al. 1994; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cheurprakobkit, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Maxson et al. 2003; Miller et al. 2004; Reisig & Chandek, 2001; Taylor et al. 2001). Previous studies have operationalized contact with the police into more detailed variables; however the current study simply asked whether or not the juvenile had contact with the police in the past year. Thus, it is not surprising that this study found more contact with the police resulting in more negative attitudes towards the police and police services. As a result of these findings, police agencies should try to maximize positive contact with youth populations through community outreach programs and school resource officer positions (SRO), to compensate for this finding. Having police officers assigned to public schools is not a new phenomenon; however, since the 1990's the school resource officer position has evolved from simply providing school security to a universal law enforcement liaison officer who provides a variety of services for the school community (Brown 2006). In its basic form, the SRO programs initially started in an attempt to curb juvenile delinquency and violence, and to provide a safe environment in which the student body could learn. In today's application, school resource officers also serve as counselors and educators, as well as public relations advocates for their employing agencies (Brown 2006).

Based on the results found in this study, SRO contact with juveniles should be supported in an attempt to foster positive attitudes towards the police. SRO programs should also be expanded to include media formats that would be seen by juveniles within the community. These SRO positions are an ideal venue for today's police agencies to begin positive media campaigns to improve long term juvenile perceptions of the police and police services. Also, police officers have even been found to be more effective in

certain areas of instruction (substance abuse prevention), than non-police instructors (Hammond, Sloboda, Tonkin, Stephens, Teasdale, Grey, & Williams, 2007).

This study included influence variables focused on the influence of peers, family members and neighbors, as well as a new vicarious influence variable based on consumption of TV and music which portrays the police in a negative manner. These two vicarious influence variables were the most statistically significant, and had the greatest impact in all of the models run in this study. Specifically, juveniles who listed to music and watched TV that portrayed the police negatively, held more negative perceptions of the police. This mirrors prior research which has found vicarious contact to be one of the main influences on juvenile perceptions toward the police (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Eschholz et al. 2002; Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst et al. 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Maxson et al. 2003; Miller et al. 2004). Hurst and Frank (2000) found vicarious exposure of police misconduct had the most significant and greatest impact of all variables included in their study on juvenile perceptions. Flexon et al. (2009) also found that vicarious experiences held a more lasting effect on juvenile attitudes than direct contact with the police. Despite a gap in the research dealing with the influence of family and friends, Miller et al. (2003) found that the opinions of family and friends can negatively affect perceptions of the police. Thus, the current study adds to the research by showing a strong effect for vicarious influence on juvenile perceptions.

Research on vicarious influence is supported by Akers' (1977) social learning theory and Bandura's (1975) concept of modeling. While this study did not directly test social learning theory or modeling, the findings on vicarious influence can be explained by both. The vicarious observation of behavior that portrays the police in a negative way was

found to result in more negative perceptions of the police. This directly coincides with social learning theory's suggestion that the observed rewards and punishments of a certain behavior will determine whether or not an individual will participate in a similar deviant behavior (Akers & Jensen, 2006). Also, the four necessary conditions for modeling (attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation) can all be seen through the vicarious influence variables included in the study. TV and music which portrays the police negatively can apply to all four conditions by being viewed as popular within the juveniles peer groups, and thus satisfying the conditions necessary for modeling (Bandura, 1975).

The current study found that juveniles who watched and listened to TV and music which portrayed the police negatively held more negative views of the police. These results are important as media influence on perceptions of the police continues to evolve. Researchers have found significant results for reality based TV shows depicting the police and how they provide police service, as well as more general media categories that resulted in more positive opinions of the police (Eschholz et al., 2002; Maxson et al., 2003). Despite this research, media influence continues to be neglected as few studies have looked at the media's effect on juvenile perceptions (Miller et al. 2003). Prior research has also failed to address the expanding media formats that go beyond traditional sources such as TV and newspapers. The current study not only found significant results for TV and music which portrayed the police negatively, it found this to be the most powerful variable within the study. The current findings of this study; in addition to the vast expansion of the media formats now reaching juveniles, warrants further research in this area.

The second research question asked about juvenile perceptions of police services. The statistical models run for this research question utilized four groups of independent

variables: demographic, neighborhood context, contact with the police, and influence of peers, neighbors, and media (specifically TV and music). Non-white juveniles were the only demographic category found to have more negative to perceptions of police services, which is supported in prior research (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Brown et al. 2009; Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000; Leiber et al. 1998; Taylor et al. 2001)

Some researchers have concluded that race is the most important predictor in evaluations of police performance (Brown & Benedict, 2002). Brown & Benedict (2002) go further to specifically link lower perceptions of police service to both contact and neighborhood context variables. The authors theorize that non-white respondents are more likely to have been arrested and live in neighborhoods experiencing declining conditions, and that these two social characteristics are related to the consistent perceptions which are found to be less positive than white respondents (Brown & Benedict, 2002). This is supported by the current study which found non-white juveniles to have more negative perceptions of police services in the models containing demographic variables (Model 1 in Table 4) and Model 6 which included demographic variables, perceptions of neighborhood conditions, and contact with the police.

We can conclude from these findings that race is significant when talking about juvenile perceptions of police services, along with having contact with the police and perceptions of declining neighborhood conditions. However, the inclusion of vicarious influence variables tends to have an overshadowing effect on the demographic variables, as seen in the first research question. Watching and listening to music and TV which portrayed the police negatively was more influential on negative perceptions of police services than demographic characteristics. This is also supported in the prior research as

vicarious influence tends to be the variable with the greatest statistical significance (Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000).

Perceptions of neighborhood safety, crime in the neighborhood, and how much juveniles talked with their neighbors were also found to affect juvenile perceptions of police services. For example, not feeling safe in the neighborhood, perceiving a high level of crime, and not talking with neighbors were all linked with more negative perceptions of the police in Model 2 when analyzed independently, and also in Model 5 when combined with demographic characteristics. However, perceptions of crime in the neighborhood, was found to be not significant when combined with juvenile contact with the police in Model 6, or in the full Model (7) which contained all four groups of variables, while talking with neighbors and feeling not safe in the neighborhood both remained significant.

Prior research has found consistent support for neighborhood context factors being significant in perceptions of police services (Hurst et al. 2000; Taylor et al. 2001; Maxson et al. 2003; Leiber et al. 1998). Hurst et al. (2000) specifically addressed neighborhood crime levels in comparison to other neighborhoods and found significant results regarding perceptions toward police performance. Based on the results from this study, contact with the police not only influences perceptions of police services, but it can also influence perceptions of neighborhood crime levels. Also, vicarious influence continues to show its significance, as seen by perceptions of neighborhood crime not being significant in the full model. These findings are supported by Maxson et al. (2003) who found support for police contact having influence on officer job approval perceptions, despite the respondents having negative views on perceived levels of neighborhood violence, fear, and disorder. As with several other independent variables in this study, having recent contact with the

police resulted in having more negative perceptions of police services throughout the study, except when it was combined with the vicarious influence variables. As mentioned previously, vicarious influence continued to be robust, both in this study as well as prior research (Flexon et al. 2009; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst et al. 2000).

In this research question, listening to parents, peers, and neighbors talk negatively about the police as well as watching and listening to TV and music which portrayed the police negatively both resulted in more negative perceptions towards police services regardless of any other variables being included. As seen in the first research question, vicarious influence continued to be an overpowering influence on juvenile perceptions. Vicarious influence research continues to grow as researchers expand on this measure and apply it to both adult and juvenile populations. In order to keep up with the expanding media formats now reaching juveniles, future research needs to continue to expand on the measure of vicarious influence. Research should also move past perceptions of the police in general as the dependent variable and continue to include measures of police performance and perceptions of police services as measures of interest as there is less research focused on how the police provide service to the public. Also, police agencies should continue work on community police youth development programs. These programs allow officers to work personally with juveniles involved in the program, and to teach the juveniles basic principles of police activity and community action.

A good example of police youth development programs is the Police Explorer Program. This program was created through the Learning for Life organization, which is a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America (www.learningforlife.org). Police explorer programs consist of co-educational, young-adult programs developed to give juveniles a

chance to experience and learn about law enforcement. Explorer participants apply and enroll into the explorer program through their local police department. The participants then volunteer their services and skills to gain a working knowledge about police work. Explorer programs allow juveniles interested in law enforcement to prepare for future career training, participate in community social activities, and provide valuable community services through their local police departments (www.exploring.learningforlife.org).

Research on the effectiveness of juvenile outreach programs is limited; however some studies have shown these programs improve the attitudes towards officers involved in the program, but not the police in general (Anderson, Sabatelli & Trachtenberg, 2007). These programs have also shown some success by instilling a greater sense of youth responsibility and improving parents' attitudes towards the police, which was found to be significant in the current study (Anderson et al. 2007). Due to the findings of this article, and the consistent findings in past research, further research is warranted.

The statistically significant findings presented in this study highlight several factors which are related to juvenile perceptions of the police and police services. Continued understanding of the factors that influence juvenile perceptions of the police and police services will allow current policing agencies to utilized their resources (like the SRO program and community youth development programs such as the Explorers program) in a more efficient and effective way. This study also found that juveniles who heard peers, parents, and neighbors talk negatively about the police held similar negative attitudes towards the police and police services. If police departments are able to make significant progress in improving attitudes toward the police of a select group of adults, hopefully these attitudes will permeate throughout the juvenile community through vicarious contact.

The rate at which technology is expanding through social networking is alarming. Individuals are now communicating simultaneously through the internet at a rate not seen before in history. Researchers need to stay vigilant to address this new form of communication as it applies to our respective research goals. The consistent support for vicarious influence found in this study only adds to the already growing body of research which states its importance. Future research needs to identify the new and growing forms of media and social networking in an attempt to identify any influence this might have in terms of vicarious influence. An example of this can be seen by the growing number of police departments which have invested in social networking, in an attempt to reach the community through this new form of communication.

By improving our knowledge on what influences juvenile perceptions towards the police and police services, we will be better equipped to ensure satisfaction among our citizenry. The juvenile population continues to be a priority for law enforcement agencies throughout the nation, and by better understanding determinates of juvenile perceptions, police agencies will be better able to provide sustainable services throughout their respective communities. Also, the new variables of TV and music content which portrays the police negatively were proven to be significant. The significance of these new variables calls for further research on juvenile perceptions of the police and police services.

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APPENDIX. SCHOOL SURVEY

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

GRADE:_____   **SEX**:_____ Female _____ Male

RACE:_____ White _____ Black/African American _____ Multi-racial _____
Hispanic/Latino _____ Native American _____ Other

ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

The following questions refer to the availability of drugs and alcohol in school. How easy or hard is it for someone to get the following things at your school?

	Easy	Hard	Impossible	Don't Know	Don't Know the Drug
Alcoholic beverages					
Marijuana					
Crack					
Cocaine					
Uppers/downers					
LSD					
PCP					
Heroin					
Prescription drugs					
Methamphetamines					

The following questions refer to the availability of drugs and alcohol in your neighborhood. How easy or hard is it for someone to get the following things in your neighborhood?

	Easy	Hard	Impossible	Don't Know	Don't Know the Drug
Alcoholic beverages					
Marijuana					
Crack					
Cocaine					
Uppers/downers					
LSD					
PCP					
Heroin					
Prescription drugs					
Methamphetamines					

PRESENCE OF GANGS IN SCHOOL

Are there gangs at your school?   _____No _____Yes _____Don't Know

    -If yes, what are the names of the gangs at your
school?_____

Are there gangs in your neighborhood?   _____No _____Yes _____Don't know

    -If yes, what are the names of the gangs in your
neighborhood?_____

Do students at your school belong to a gang? _____No _____Yes _____Don't Know

How often have gangs been involved in fights, attacks or violence at your school?
_____ Never
_____ Once or twice in the last year
_____ Once or twice in the six months
_____ Once or twice a month
_____ Once or twice a week
_____ Almost everyday

Have gang members been involved in the sale of drugs at your school in the past year?
_____No _____Yes _____Don't Know

Have gang members been involved in the sale of drugs in your neighborhood in the past
year?
_____No _____Yes _____Don't Know

Have any gang members brought weapons (knives, guns, etc.) to your school in the past
year?
_____No _____Yes _____Don't Know

TRUANCY/DISENGAGEMENT FROM SCHOOL

Have you ever skipped school? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, how often have you skipped school in the past year?
_____ Once or twice _____ A Few Times _____ Many times/Often

Why did you skip school (check all that apply)?
_____ Don't like school
_____ Don't like my teachers
_____ School-work is too hard

_____ Family issues
_____ I was picked on or bullied/afraid to go to school
_____ School-work is too easy
_____ School is boring
_____ Other:

_____

Have you ever considered dropping out of school? _____ Yes   _____ No

Why have you considered dropping out of school?

_____

_____

_____

_____

VICTIMIZATION AT SCHOOL

During the last year, did anyone steal something from your desk, locker or some other place at school?
_____ Yes   _____ No

How many times did this happen? _____

During the last year, did anyone threaten or bully you? _____ Yes _____ No

How many times did this happen? _____

During the last year, did anybody injure you by hitting or striking you with their body?
_____ Yes   _____ No

How many times did this happen? _____

During the last year, did anybody injure you with a weapon? _____ Yes _____ No

How many times did this happen? _____

What kinds of weapons were used: _____

During the last year, were you ever afraid of being beaten up? ____ Yes ____ No

How many times did this happen? _____

During the last year, did anyone destroy property that belonged to you? _____ Yes _____ No

How many times did this happen? _____

During the last year, did anybody harass you because of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and/or disability? _____ Yes _____ No

How many times did this happen? _____

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

How safe do you feel in your neighborhood during the day?　　How safe do you feel at night?

_____ Always safe　　　　　　　　　　　　　_____ Always safe

_____ Almost always safe　　　　　　　　　_____ Almost always

_____ Sometimes safe　　　　　　　　　　　_____ Sometimes safe

_____ Almost never safe　　　　　　　　　　_____ Almost never

_____ Never safe　　　　　　　　　　　　　_____ Never safe

To what degree do you think crime is a problem in your neighborhood?

_____ Never a problem

_____ Almost never a problem

_____ Sometimes a problem

_____ Almost always a problem

_____ Always a problem

If you were in trouble, who would you turn to for help (check all that apply)?

_____ Parent(s)　　_____ Relative　　_____ Friend your own age　　_____ Neighbor

_____ Teacher　　_____ Adult friend　　_____ Spiritual leader/pastor

_____ Neighborhood community/resource center staff

_____ Other:

_____

_____

How often do you talk with your neighbors? ____ Often ____ Rarely ____ Never

Do you participate in any activities either before or after school? _____ Yes   _____ No

    Which activities: _____

Is there a local neighborhood community/resource center in your neighborhood?
_____Yes _____No

Do you ever hang out at the local neighborhood community/resource centers? _____ Yes _____ No

    If yes, how often have you hung out there in the past year?
    _____ Once or twice _____ A Few Times _____ Many times/Often

Which activities/programs do you participate in at the neighborhood community/resource

centers? _____

_____

Why do you hang out at the neighborhood community/resource centers? _____

_____

_____

How safe do you feel at the neighborhood community/resource centers?
    _____ Very safe   _____ Safe   _____ Unsafe _____ Very unsafe

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE

In the past year, have you had contact with a police officer? ___ No ___ Yes
    If yes (answer all questions that apply):

    Did you initiate the contact? ____ No ____ Yes

    Did the police initiate the contact? ____ No ___ Yes

    Were you the victim of a crime? ____ No ____ Yes

    Did you call the police after being victimized? ____ No _____ Yes

    Were you satisfied with the police service you received? ____ No ____ Yes

How often do you listen to music that negatively portrays the police? ____ Often ____ Rarely ____ Never

How often do you watch television that negatively portrays the police? ____ Often ____ Rarely ____ Never

How often do you hear your parents talk badly about the police? ____ Often ____ Rarely ____ Never

How often do you hear your neighbors talk badly about the police? ____ Often ____ Rarely ____ Never

How often do you hear your friends talk badly about the police? ____ Often ____ Rarely ____ Never

**Please check one box for each of the following questions that best reflects your perception of the police:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In general, I trust the police.				
In general, I like the police.				
In general, I am satisfied with the police in my neighborhood.				
In general, police do a good job.				
The police do a good job of stopping crime.				
The police do a good job of stopping people from using drugs.				
The police do a good job of stopping people from selling drugs.				
The police do a good job of stopping people from hanging out and causing trouble.				

The police do a good job of keeping my neighborhood quiet at night.				
If the police see someone who is sick or who needs help, they will do their best to help.				
If I had a problem, I would call the police for help.				

Thank you for participating in this study.