

2021

## Exploring Probation Clients' Perception of the Officer-Client Relationship

Robert Lee Ausby  
*Walden University*

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



Part of the [Public Administration Commons](#), and the [Public Policy Commons](#)

---

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu](mailto:ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu).

# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Robert Lee Ausby, Jr.

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

## Review Committee

Dr. Olivia Yu, Committee Chairperson,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. Mark Stallo, Committee Member,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Dr. David DiBari, University Reviewer,  
Public Policy and Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost  
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2021

Abstract

Exploring Probation Clients' Perception of the Officer-Client Relationship

by

Robert Lee Ausby, Jr.

MPA, Albany State University, 2012

MS, Albany State University, 2009

BS, Albany State University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2021

## Abstract

Community supervision, commonly referred to as probation, is an alternative to jail and prison sentences which allow offenders to serve court-imposed sanctions in the community. The present study stemmed from Klockars's theory of probation supervision which contains two concepts, (a) the organizational structure of probation, which has been studied repeatedly, and (b) the exchange strategy between the officer and client. The second concept has not been adequately explored. Previous literature has explored the perception that probation officers have of their clients. However, no study has explored the perception that clients have of their probation officers. The purpose of this study was to explore the client's perception of the probation officer and their working relationship. Homans and Blau's social exchange theory was used for this study. Using a phenomenological qualitative approach, 11 participants were interviewed as to how clients perceived their probation officers during the working relationship, how the perception changed over time, and the impact officers had on their future. Findings suggested that clients entered the relationship with a sense of uneasiness, fear, and uncertainty, but as the relationship continued, clients experienced a positive change in comfort level. Additionally, clients did not perceive that the officer-client relationship deterred them from future criminal activity. There are positive social change implications resulting from this study. This study demonstrated the need for continued community support for agencies, officers, training, and the services they offer. Probation agencies, supervisors, and entry level officers may benefit from this study when assessing the risks and needs of their clients and assisting them throughout the probation process.

Exploring Probation Clients' Perception of the Officer-Client Relationship

by

Robert Lee Ausby, Jr.

MPA, Albany State University, 2012

MS, Albany State University, 2009

BS, Albany State University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2021

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the village that entered into this experience with me, encouraged me, and celebrates my successes. To my mother, Pamela Ausby, thank you for remaining the star that shines bright up on the hill. Thank you for being my number one cheerleader and the beat in my heart that keeps me going. To all of my family members who have witnessed my educational journey, please know that my success is yours and I am forever grateful for your words of encouragement, the listening ears, and the voice of reason along the way. To my friends, my closest friends, thank you for being a part of my village. At some point you have picked up the telephone to check on me, listened to my frustrations, celebrated a milestone, and told me a joke or two to keep my mind leveled. I want the whole village to know that you are the best people I could have ever asked God for.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this study to the men and women who have served time on probation and parole. Our justice system, at times, can seem like a winding journey with no end in sight. I know that there is good in everyone. That is why my life's work is dedicated to those seeking redemption. With a little faith and hope, I challenge you to meet adversity with the desire to redeem yourselves and be proud of your accomplishments no matter the size. No matter the obstacles, you better keep going.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my committee for their support during this process. The dissertation is a lonely and challenging process. Even when I thought I was lost, you were there to help keep me on track. Each of you demonstrated your wisdom in research and have inspired me to help others along their doctoral journey. I will forever be grateful. I would also like to thank the participants in this study for taking time to be active in the most important role in research. You are the real most valuable players.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	v
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study .....	2
Problem Statement .....	4
Purpose of the Study .....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Nature of the Study .....	6
Definitions.....	7
Assumptions.....	7
Scope and Delimitations .....	9
Limitations .....	10
Significance of the Study .....	11
Summary .....	12
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	13
Literature Search Strategy.....	13
Conceptual Framework: Social Exchange Theory .....	14
A Brief Overview of Probation in the United States .....	16
The Probation Officer and Their Client .....	17
The Probation Officer and How They View Their Clients.....	17
The Client and How They View Their Probation Officer .....	19



Putting Them Both Together .....	21
Recidivism .....	22
Summary .....	23
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	25
Research Design and Rationale .....	25
Role of the Researcher .....	26
Methodology .....	29
Participant Selection Logic .....	29
Procedures for Recruitment and Participation, and Data Collection .....	29
Instrumentation .....	31
Data Collection .....	33
Data Analysis Plan .....	33
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	35
Credibility .....	35
Transferability.....	35
Dependability .....	35
Confirmability.....	36
Ethical Procedures .....	36
Summary .....	37
Chapter 4: Results .....	38
Setting .....	39
Demographics .....	39

Participant Narratives of Experience with Misdemeanor Probation.....	40
Data Collection .....	43
Data Analysis .....	44
Familiarization .....	45
Coding.....	45
Generating, Reviewing, and Naming Themes .....	47
Results.....	48
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	53
Credibility .....	53
Transferability.....	54
Dependability .....	54
Confirmability.....	55
Summary .....	55
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations .....	57
Interpretation of the Findings.....	57
The Client’s Perception of Probation Officers.....	58
The Impact of the Relationship on the Client’s Future After Probation.....	59
Limitations of the Study.....	60
Recommendations.....	61
Implications for Positive Social Change.....	62
Conclusion .....	63
References.....	65

Appendix A: Prescreening Questionnaire.....	73
Appendix B: Research Instrument.....	75
Appendix C: Example of Code Book.....	77
Appendix D: Codes Grouped by Themes and Frequency of Codes Among Study Participants ( <i>N</i> =11).....	80

List of Tables

Table 1. Demographics and Type of Misdemeanor Crime of the Participants ( $N=11$ ) ... 40

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In 2016, there were 4.5 million people in the United States under community supervision with 81% of them sentenced to probation specifically (Kaeble, 2018). By the end of 2018, there was a decrease to about 4.4 million (Kaeble & Alper, 2020).

Community supervision, also known as probation, is used as an alternative to traditional jail and prison sentences which allows people to serve their court-imposed sanctions in the community. Proponents of community supervision base most of their claims on the decrease in crime when it appears that the programs work (McNeill et al., 2012).

However, everyone must consider what happens to the community and clients when the programs fail. How is the community impacted? How likely are offenders to recidivate? How will their continuance in criminal activity effect the community? These are all questions that must be addressed when there are failures in the system.

In the criminal justice sector, community supervision is a small, yet important component of corrections. The community supervision system is a collaborative effort between the client, the probation officer, the agency, the community, and the court system (Abadinsky, 2018). For the general public, awareness and a willingness to aid criminal justice agencies in correcting clients' behavior, while in the community, should be taken seriously. The probation clients are neighbors, members of religious families, and may be employed where children attend school. This study attempts to contribute to the current literature in an effort to put forth best practices within the field.

This chapter introduces the study which explains the theory of probation supervision and its relevance to probation practices today. Other areas include an

identified need for the current study, research questions, and conceptual framework used to guide the data collection and analyzation. The final section explains the significance of this study's findings and its potential impact on social change.

### **Background of the Study**

The focal question of this study was based on a theory of probation supervision. Klockars's (1972) theory described probation officers having two distinctive roles. The first role was that of a law enforcer. The second role was the officer as a therapeutic agent. Although this theory's primary focus was on officers, it laid the foundation for other studies to be explored within probation supervision.

In analyzing the context surrounding each of the actors of probation supervision (agency, officer, and probationer), Klockars (1972) provided two main components of the theory. The first component contained four elements which are the working philosophy of the officer, the organizational context in which the officer finds himself, the legal and logical definition of revocation, and the psychological approach of the probationer.

Skeem and Manchak (2008) applied Klockars's model while comparing modern models of supervision (surveillance, treatment, and hybrid) in terms of theoretical coherence and effectiveness for the program, the officer, and the probationer. The study concluded that hybrid approaches, in terms of program effectiveness, are more effective than surveillance and treatment programs (Skeem & Manchak, 2008). Their study focused on programs and effectiveness. This speaks to the organizational context in which the officer finds himself mentioned by Klockars in his theory.

The second component of the theory addresses exchange strategy and the development of supervision which grants insight on how the client and the probation officer perceive each other. This allows researchers to analyze the tone of probation. This component has not been adequately explored. In his theory, compliance with the rules of probation and rapport are the two currencies exchanged between the probation officer and the client.

A few studies have been conducted on this topic, but in a broader context. Cherkos et al. (2008) revealed an 86% satisfaction with probation among probationers in Arizona's Maricopa County Adult Probation Department. Additionally, 90% of the participants found that the probation officer was helpful. Rex (1999) concluded that clients felt that a positive relationship with the probation officer affected their commitment to stop criminal behavior. Finally, DeLude et al. (2012) examined the probationer's perception of their officer-client relationship and overall helpfulness of the probation officer, as well as, the level of general satisfaction.

This study differed from the previously mentioned studies because it narrowed the scope to clients on probation. I was specifically interested in clients that are sentenced to probation for misdemeanor offenses with no prior criminal history. There was no known literature that explained how the officer-client relationship is perceived by clients. Further, no literature existed that explained how the clients perceived their relationship with the probation officers impacted their future in the community. Since Klockars's theory focused on the officers and their actions, expanding the theory will help in

understanding how clients perceive probation officers' actions, which was relevant to the current study.

### **Problem Statement**

Although there was a 2.4% decrease in community supervision from 2017 to 2018 (Kaeble & Alper, 2020), challenges to community supervision still surface for several reasons. Over the past decade, research has been done to examine issues faced by everyone involved in community supervision. Several shortcomings still exist for all components of the supervision "network." For probation officers, their assignments are critical to the client's successful completion of the program (Anderson & Wildeman, 2015). For example, one study showed that some clients will recidivate due to the probation officer's personal stress and their inability to manage large caseloads (Lewis et al., 2013). For agencies, several other themes have emerged as obstacles to probation and parole success. These themes included in-service training, job satisfaction, and social statuses (Giovannoni et al., 2015; Healy, 2012; Klingele, 2013).

Most of the present literature highlighted the issues that involve the entire system. Few studies, however, have assessed how probation officers may attribute to their clients' success or recidivism in the future. I was especially interested in how first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive their probation officers, the working client-officer relationship, and how that relationship impacted their future in the community. There was no study that focused specifically on this topic. This study aimed to fill this gap in the research literature by expanding Klockars's theory of probation supervision in the area of the officer-client relationship from the perspective of the client.



### **Purpose of the Study**

In this phenomenological qualitative study, I examined the issues facing first-time misdemeanor probation clients. The primary focus was how clients perceived their probation officers and their perception of the working relationship, how the client's perception changed over time, and how they felt the officer had an impact on their future. The investigation was conducted with former private and state probation clients in Dougherty County, Georgia.

### **Research Questions**

Research Question 1 (RQ1): How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive the role of the officer in the officer-client relationship?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive their relationship with their probation officer changed over time?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive the impact that the experience with their probation officer has had on their future in the community?

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study was guided by two different approaches to the social exchange theory which was first developed by George Homans. One of Homans (1961) assumptions is that individuals look at social exchanges by rationally calculating the costs and benefits of the relationship. In other words, the exchange process determines the social behavior of those involved. While the purpose is to maximize benefits and minimize costs, participants may abandon the exchange process if they feel as that the costs outweigh the

benefits (Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964). Blau (1964) defined social exchange as: “limited to actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others.” Over the years, works of Homans (1958), John Thibaut (1968), and Peter Blau (1964) have taken substantial steps to develop the theory.

Of the three theorists mentioned, the psychological approach developed by Homans and the sociological approach developed by Blau were most significant to this study. As discussed later in Chapter 2, Homans (1961) noted four assumptions in social exchange. While seeking answer to the research questions to this study, I was interested to know how probation clients perceived their relationship with probation officers benefit them in the future. Blau was credited with taking a sociological approach to the social exchange theory. Applied to this study, the sociological approach aided in understanding why probation clients formed their perceptions.

### **Nature of the Study**

This study collected data with a qualitative approach by interviewing participants who were former probation clients and who had completed their first term of probation supervision. Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore and understand a population and how they are related to social and human problems (Creswell, 2014). In qualitative research methods, researchers can establish better rapport with participants (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). This was essential to the data collection of this study and it enabled me to explore how probation clients process and display emotions in a live setting. It also allowed me to relate to the conditions of clients by understanding their “place” in society. Qualitative methods are appropriate for exploratory research.

After data collection a six-step method was used for data analysis. The audio recordings were transcribed to writing. The transcripts were entered into the NVivo computer software for coding and thematic analysis. The analysis method is explained with more depth in Chapter 3.

### **Definitions**

*First-time misdemeanor offender:* Individuals who have are adjudicated guilty of a criminal act that is classified as a misdemeanor without any prior criminal history (O'Neill, 2005). Note: For the purposes of this study, this term applied to individuals that are also convicted of traffic offenses that otherwise would not be reflected on the offender's criminal history.

*Misdemeanor:* and criminal act where punishment is less than twelve months in jail or a fine not greater than \$1000.00, or both. (GA Code, 2014).

*Probation:* punishment in which a convicted person must comply with certain court-ordered mandates based on public safety and rehabilitative needs, but allows the sentence to be served in the community (Abadinsky, 2018).

*Recidivism:* After community re-entry, the offender continues criminal activity and is subjected to future criminal charges (Abadinsky, 2018).

### **Assumptions**

Creswell (2013) mentioned ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological as four philosophical assumptions driving qualitative inquiry. The ontological assumption links reality to research. The ontological assumption of the nature of reality is closely related to Homans' (1958) final assumption in social exchange where

relationship participants realize that results differ from other individuals in similar relationships and may differ with the same person over time.

The essence of the ontological philosophical assumption is that while there are multiple realities presented, reality is subjective. In qualitative inquiry, this belief is shown by discovering themes to illustrate how the different perspectives relate. Each participant in the study, while involved in the same type of exchange process, will revealed different experiences. The participant's perceptions of the probation officer differed from the initial probation meeting through the termination of probation.

The epistemological assumption requires the researcher to answer questions about truth, real knowledge, and the link between the researcher and the topic being studied. In qualitative inquiry it is be impossible to develop a single response when answering research questions because of the existence of multiple realities revealed by the participants. This makes responses subjective with notable differences from person to person and responses cannot be expected to be consistent with the researcher's interpretations (Rolfe, 2006). Creswell (2013) suggests that the researcher conduct the study where participants live and work to better understand the participant's view of their reality.

The axiological philosophical assumption brings to light the role of values in research. Creswell (2013) argues that researchers should make their values known because this acknowledges that certain biases may be present that effects the interpretation of responses given by participates in the study. The argument can be made that facts cannot be presented as they are, and only how the researcher perceives them

because facts and values cannot be divided. This removes the possibility of total objectivity in qualitative research.

The methodological assumption refers to the process when conducting a research inquiry. In this study, I examined how the clients perceived the relationship with their probation officer based on their lived experience. Creswell (2013) argued that the goal is to relay on the views of the participants. Data collected during the study allowed me to gain better knowledge of the probation process from the clients' perspectives.

These four philosophical assumptions are applied to the social constructivism interpretive paradigm. In social constructivism, researchers make sense of the topic based on how they position themselves in the research (Creswell, 2013). In phenomenological studies, individuals describe their experience, but ultimately the interpretations of the experience are developed by the researcher. The researcher recognizes a pattern of meaning by discovering themes from the data while considering that each individual may present different realities of the same phenomena (Cypress, 2017).

### **Scope and Delimitations**

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the supervision network is made up of several components. This research study did not examine how participants perceive other components of the supervision network because there is already existing data. In this study, the aim was to conduct a phenomenological qualitative study among former probationers who have completed only one term of probation as a postconviction sentence. In order to participate in this study, participants could not have pending charges, be under any postconviction sentence, nor be involved in any aftercare programs

(drug treatment, family counseling, anger management, etc.). Gender, age, and race did not factor in determining eligibility, but was documented for research participant demographic purposes and was completed during the prescreening process. The participants must have completed their term of probation in Dougherty County, Georgia, United States.

Data collection was limited to those who have only completed one term of probation for two reasons. First, to examine how people with no previous experience on probation perceived the officer-client relationship. Second, to explore how the participants perceive that relationship effected their future. This allowed a better understanding of how the officer-client relationship impacts recidivism among first time probation clients.

### **Limitations**

While the study's aim was to gather data on how probation clients perceived their probation officer, the probation process can present certain limitations which can affect the study's outcome. Chapter 2 discusses social exchange in-depth. However, in this section, it is important to link Blau's (1964) assertion that relationship perceptions may change over time with the probation process. Due to situations beyond the researcher and participant's control, probation clients may experience a change in probation officers throughout their time on probation. This may affect how the client's view of the probation officer changes, because the relationship may not have time to fully develop.

There was a degree of uncertainty about the participants willingness to be open about their lived experience on probation. This study relied on my ability to gain rapport

with participants. The aim, as the researcher, was to make participants feel as if the interview was a nonjudgmental conversation about their experience. If a participant provided a positive or negative answer to the question, follow-up questions were asked to gather a better understanding of their answer.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, previous scholars recommend that the researcher conduct the study where the participant live and work to better understand their perception of reality. However, the scope of the study required that participants be removed from probation supervision. This limited the study to the participant's recollection of events and experiences while they were on probation.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research will fill a gap in literature because it explored how probation officers affect first-time misdemeanor probation clients and their future. Bolin and Applegate (2016) found that juvenile officers and supervision agencies are offender focused; placing emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation. This study addressed the potential problems associated with agencies on the adult level that caused them to fall short of adequate treatment and rehabilitation of first-time misdemeanor probation clients. The findings of this study could potentially aid probation agencies when evaluating best service practices for clients who are first-time offenders. This study was unique because it sought to answer questions about how first-time probation clients understand their role, the role of the officer, and how that relationship impacts the client's future.

This study, while narrowed to benefit practitioners in probation for best practices when dealing with clients, may benefit everyone involved in the network. As stated earlier in this chapter, many people encounter probation clients every day in the community. Providing research in efforts to better understand the tone of probation could help in several ways. For officers, they may gain a better understanding of how critical the treatment, case management, and working-relationship is to the future of the clients.

### **Summary**

Although probation saw a slight decrease from 2016 to 2018 (Kaeble, 2018; Kaeble & Alper, 2020), there are still areas in the research that need to be explored to better understand how practitioners can improve this important service. This chapter laid the foundation for the need to study clients in order to take steps to extend Klockars's theory. Chapter 2 expands on the background of the study by reviewing literature on probation, the probation officer-client relationship, and recidivism.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In a broad context, research on community supervision has been conducted for many years. Most of the present literature, however, gather perspectives from the organization or institution of probation and from the probation officers that staff the agencies (Anderson & Wildeman, 2015; Lewis et al., 2013; McNeill et al., 2012). Few studies have been conducted to gain more empirical knowledge on, perhaps the most important component of probation, the client (DeLude et al., 2012; Clarke, 2017, Chui & Chan, 2013). While the success of the client may be contingent on several factors, such success reflects on how well the agency, the officer, and the community invest in clients in efforts to reduce crime and recidivism. After a brief historical overview of probation in the United States, this literature review will focus primarily on the relationship between the officer and client. The final section discusses defining recidivism and its various measurements.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

Efforts were made to explore this topic by selecting articles specifically related to two areas of interest: probation officer-client relationship and recidivism. Using the Walden University Library, I accessed several databases to locate useful literature for this review. The databases were the Criminal Justice Database, SAGE Journals, and Political Science Complete. ProQuest was used to search for dissertations similar to the current study. I also used Google and Google Scholar to locate peer reviewed articles. The following terms were used in many of the search engines: *adult probation, causes of recidivism, probation officer's perceptions, probation officer and client relationship,*

*probationers' perceptions*, and *probationers' perceptions of probation officers*. Finally, in reviewing dissertations and other articles, I located more sources from the references listed in the articles I found. Because there is little literature related to this study, I searched for articles dated from 2005 – 2020.

### **Conceptual Framework: Social Exchange Theory**

This study will be guided through the lens of the George Homan's (1958) social exchange theory. In his theory, Homan (1961) described social behavior as a rewarding or costly exchange between two people. The foundation of the social exchange theory rests on four key assumptions. First, individuals look at social exchanges by rationally calculating the costs and benefits of the relationship. Second, individuals seek ways to maximize benefits and profits that can be gained from situations in the relationship. Third, the use of exchange processes results in payoffs and rewards which patterns social interactions. Finally, relationship participants realize that results differ from other individuals in similar relationships and may differ with the same person over time.

There are several contributors to the research of the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1962; Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Aside from Homan's psychological view, the social exchange theory has evolved to include other disciplines such as anthropology, organizational theory, and social psychology (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2007). While this study aligns with Homans' view, one other view is important. Homan developed this theory from the psychological point of view. Blau's (1964) expansion of the social exchange theory presented the notion that social exchanges in the relationship are not clearly defined, and are left for the individuals to determine. Blau

(1964) was careful to highlight that human interactions in exchange are usually interdependent, but depends on another's actions. Thus, social exchange is a growing process and the result will not be the same for everyone involved in the exchange. In contrast to Homans psychological view of social exchange, Blau's view was from sociology.

Blau (1964) also argued that social exchange involves degree of uncertainty. This is caused by a lack of trust from those involved in the exchange process. Therefore, it is important for both participants to take steps to reduce uncertainty. Corcoran (2013) listed repeated exchanges as one of five ways to reduce uncertainty. Over time, the officer-client relationship will experience repeated exchanges, leaving room for both tangible and intangible interactions. Those repeated exchanges develop trust and may affect the reputations of both participants (Blau, 1964; Corcoran, 2013).

Nunkoo's (2016) works on the social exchange theory complemented the works of both Homans and Blau. He wrote, "Individuals engage in an exchange process once they have judged the rewards and the costs and will enter relationships in which they can maximize benefits and minimize the costs" (Nunkoo, 2016, p. 590). For probation officers, the benefits are ensuring safety and protection for the community through case management of the offenders. However, it is unclear how the offender perceives their benefits from the working relationship with the probation officer. Relating to this study, the psychological view will allow me to understand how the probation client perceives the role of the probation officer on their success or failure. Blau's sociological view will

help me understand why the probationer thinks the actions of another impacted their future.

Cropanzano and Mitchell (2007) noted, “Exchange rules and norms define the expectations or attributes of transactions” (p. 773). They presented the notion that people act through a concept of reciprocal exchanges which lead to closer interpersonal relationship between the parties (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2007). In this study both parties are expecting exchanges. However, it is uncertain how the clients perceive how those exchanges will occur, or how they will benefit in the future from such exchanges.

### **A Brief Overview of Probation in the United States**

John Augustus, who was a businessman in Boston, Massachusetts is known as the founder of probation (Dressler, 1970). The birth of probation originated when Augustus posted bail for a local alcoholic which he then supervised in the community for a short period of time. After his success at supervising the male, Augustus spent nearly two decades as a volunteer probation officer. During this time, he posted bail for almost 2000 men and women, and only 10 resulted in a bond forfeiture. Massachusetts passed a probation statute in 1878, making it the first legislation for probation in the United States (Petersilia, 1997).

President Calvin Coolidge signed The Probation Act of 1925. The act’s original design was for the federal court system; granting power to judicial officers to use probation as an alternative to traditional jail when sentencing offenders. It also called for probation officers to be appointed at the direction of the courts. Although the courts could

appoint several members to serve as probation officers, only one would be compensated for their service. By 1956, all 50 states had adopted a probation statute (Petersilia, 1997).

One of the purposes of punishment is the rehabilitation. Although people seek rehabilitation in several ways, no statute in the United States penal codes specifically addresses how it can be achieved. In fact, when judges are considering an appropriate punishment, the United States Code calls for them to make decisions in some cases “recognizing that imprisonment is not an appropriate means of promoting correction and rehabilitation” (Imposition of a sentence of imprisonment, 1987). The alternative to imprisonment can be probation. Canton (2018) stated, “Probation has long been associated with rehabilitation and has often argued its worth on the grounds of effectiveness in reducing reoffending” (p. 258). Probation has evolved over the decades since its origin to a systematic approach. The approach makes probation collaborative effort between the offender, the probation officer, the agency, and the community.

### **The Probation Officer and Their Client**

#### **The Probation Officer and How They View Their Clients**

The concept of probation has been researched over the past few decades, but not in all areas. One area lacking extensive empirical research is the relationship between probation officer and their probation client. In narrow terms, how they perceive each other. This is the second component that Klockars (1972) outlined in his theory.

Although the topic has been researched, most studies are about how the probation officer perceives the client.

In order to understand the dynamic of the probation officer-client relationship, first, attention must be given to other aspects that may strain the relationship. Annison et al. (2008) found that probation officers entered the profession because they wanted to help probation clients and they enjoyed working with people. Yet, many of them find themselves dissatisfied. The dissatisfaction is not with the working relationship with the client, but with other variables such as agency politics, caseloads, and the lack of one-on-one contact with the clients (Johnson & Jones, 1998; Annison et al., 2008).

Often the probation officers are asked to manage a high number of clients on their caseload. The pressures to manage these large caseloads explains why some officers report higher levels of depressive symptoms and emotional exhaustion (Gayman et al., 2018). The discontent results in a high turnover rate among probation officers. Further findings suggest that probation officers desire strong leadership, reduction of heavy and difficult caseloads, job variation, time management skills, and physical training (Alexander, 2013).

Although there is a negative connotation about people on probation, probation officers do not believe everything that is said about their clients (Brace, 2014). Brace (2014) assessed probation officers and the public's attitude towards sex offenders. In contrast to the public's opinion, the study revealed that the officer's view was more favorable of the clients they supervised. This is not to indicate that all probation officers believe their clients are good people (Lewis et al., 2013).

Sex offenders refer to a specific category of people who are assigned to probation. Another special category of offenders is those who suffer from one or many mental

illnesses. Van Deirse et al. (2018) found that probationers with mental illness and substance abuse problems makes supervision efforts challenging. This, the study found, is not linked to the probationer's lack of understanding of the client or their problem, but the lack of mental health and drug treatment resources (Van Deirse et al., 2018).

Probation officers are asked to manage the caseloads of various types of offenders. Offender types can be broken down into two broad categories of felony and misdemeanor. In more complex terms, offenders can also be categorized based on the type of offense such as drug offenses, sex offenses, or other violent offenses. One managerial mistake by a probation officer could result in adverse consequences for all parties involved in the supervision network.

### **The Client and How They View Their Probation Officer**

Anderson and Wildeman (2015) suggested that probation officers' assignments are critical to the clients they serve. Yet, a very limited amount of research has emerged addressing how the clients on probation perceive their probation officer. These studies are relevant to the present study. Clarke (2017) used a logistic regression analysis in a two-part study. First, he measured predictive relationships between the officer and client, perceptions of the officers' job, and its impact on their recidivism. Second, he asked participants to rate the officer's effectiveness in deterring their recidivism. The study found that the black male probation clients' perception of the officer and their job did not predict recidivism (Clarke, 2017). In short, the Clarke study suggested that clients did not think that probation officers predicted their future criminal behavior.

In an earlier study, Chui and Chan (2014) also examined probationers' perceptions of effectiveness in terms of a reduction in recidivism. Like the Clarke study, they found that the relationship between the officer and client was not a predictor of future criminal behavior, but acknowledged that they are likely to be deterred from future criminal behavior because of the relationship with the probation officer. Moreover, participants in their study revealed that the view of probation officers were authoritative and punitive in nature.

Both studies presented a few limitations to the findings. One of the limitations that the present study aims to explore is the participants. In the Clarke study, the population included only black male juveniles while Chui and Chan's study was limited to perceptions that the clients had on juvenile probation officers. Juvenile perceptions are expected to differ from those involved in the adult system. Bolin and Applegate's (2016) study compared juvenile and adult probation and parole officers' job focus. This study found that juvenile officers are offender focused and place more emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation. The focus of rehabilitation lessens the potential for revocation; not sending a juvenile back to jail for breaking rules. Whereas the adult system is more punishment focused; sending probationers to jail for breaking even simple rules.

Similar research studies in the adult system have been conducted, but there are only a few. Springer et al. (2009) conducted a quantitative study to measure the probationers' perceptions of the probation process and the characteristics that make up those perceptions. The findings suggest that the clients thought the probation officers



were fair, competent, helpful and clear; especially when they were supervised by a person of their own race.

Rex (1999) influenced the study conducted by DeLude et al. (2012) where they examined the association between the officer-client relationship and the probationer's perception of the helpfulness of probation. Findings suggested that overall probationers were pleased with probation, but participants felt that the probation officers lacked in the area of helping them find services. Lack of services are found to contribute to the causes of technical violations which eventually lead to revocations and recidivism (Haley, 2012; Klingele, 2013). Neither of the two studies reported how many times the participants had been assigned to probation as a punishment, nor did they explore how the relationship with their assigned probation officer impacted their future other than committing criminal behavior.

### **Putting Them Both Together**

These studies suggest that the relationship between the probation officer and client is complicated because of several factors. The probation officers' organizational structure, stress, caseload management, and the lack time with the clients contribute to job dissatisfaction (Johnson, 1998; Annison et al., 2008; Alexander, 2013). For probationers, the quantitative data suggests that there is an overall satisfaction of the work probation officers do, but the research stops short of explaining how they perceive the officer's impact on their future (Springer et al., 2009; Rex, 1999; DeLude et al., 2012). Also, while the research provided general findings about the relationship the officer and client share, none of the data specifically addresses the relationship's effect on

recidivism of clients with no prior criminal history. That is the primary focus of this study.

### **Recidivism**

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 5 out of 6 (83%) state prisoners released in 2005 were arrested at least once during a nine-year study (Alper & Markman, 2018). The report went on to add that 44% included in the study were arrested during their first year of release. While these statistics are significant to the total corrections process, the report showed no data on recidivism rates of people whose punishment did not include custodial supervision.

Recidivism involves an offender who re-enters the criminal justice system after being released from custodial, community supervision, or both. A part from the relationship that the probation officer and client share, there are several extrinsic factors that contribute to recidivism rates among probationers. Klingele (2013) examined reasons why probation fail. She found that the communities lack the resources to adequately address the needs of the client, a lack of accountability and oversight, and the ever-present threat of being sent to jail for violations. The study, however, failed to address outcomes that resulted from how the client perceive the treatment of those that supervised them.

In a Denmark study, Anderson and Wildeman (2015) analyzed three outcomes (earnings, dependency on public benefit transfers, and criminal recidivism) which were identified as critical to reintegration of ex-offenders. The quantitative study concluded that the assignment of the probation officer impacts the client's future. While reaching

that conclusion, however, there is no indication in the research that suggest that the clients think the probation officer contributes to future outcomes. There is also no indication that the practices by probation officers in Denmark aligned with the practices in the United States.

The use of probation through specialized courts also associated with probation client failure. For example, a study found that some people fail in drug court because the associated courses are not suited for the offender and lacks the resources needed to achieve success (Stahl, 2018). Given the proper resources for courts such as drug and mental illness courts and the probation officers that supervise the offenders, recidivism rates are likely to decline (Utter-Godfrey, 2016).

Perhaps the most critical stage in a criminal's life of crime is the first offense. Research suggest that when criminals re-offend they often commit serious and even violent offenses. The findings in one study revealed that of the probation officers that participated (N=309), 12 percent said they supervised clients who reoffend by killing another person, 23 percent had clients who reoffended with sexual assaults, 32 percent reported having a re-offender whose victims were children (Lewis et al., 2013, pp. 74 – 75).

### **Summary**

McCombes (2019) argues that a literature review “analyses, synthesizes and critically evaluates a topic to provide a clear picture of the state of knowledge on a subject.” As previously mentioned, people on probation in the United States has nearly doubled the amount of people incarcerated. Probation has been a part of the criminal

justice system in the United States since the late 1800s (Petersilia, 1997). Significant studies have been conducted over time to expose successes and failures of organizational structure, probation as a process, recidivism, and officer supervision. However, none of them specifically address the link between offender's perception of the officer-client relationship and the relationship's impact of on their future. Exploring this topic will contribute to the limited body of research derived from Klockars' theory. The next chapter outlines the research methods that will be used to carry out the study.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to examine and understand the issues facing first-time misdemeanor probation clients. The primary focus was how clients perceive their probation officers, their perception of the working relationship, and how they feel the officer has had an impact on their future in the community. The investigation was conducted with former private and state probation clients in Dougherty County, Georgia.

This chapter has several parts. After explaining the research design and rationale, I outlined the role of the researcher. Next, I explained the methodology that was used to gather data; including the research instruments used. After discussing the data analysis plan, this chapter ends by highlighting issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

To explore the primary focus of this study, three research questions were answered using a qualitative design:

RQ1: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive the role of the officer in the officer-client relationship?

RQ2: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive their relationship with their probation officer changed over time?

RQ3: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive the impact that the experience with their probation officer has had on their future in the community?

For this qualitative study, I chose a phenomenological approach. Creswell (2013) described phenomenological research as the development of a concept or phenomenon by obtaining lived experiences from several individuals. This research sought to understand how offenders with no prior criminal history perceive their probation officers and the effect, if any, they had on their future. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, there is little research on this topic; therefore, there is a lack of empirical data that adequately explore how their relationship with the probation officer is perceived.

The common denominator for all participants in a phenomenological study is that they have all *lived* the same experience. In this study, the same experience was being sentenced to probation supervision and having a working relationship with a probation officer. Some researchers turn to phenomenological studies out of an abiding concern which seriously interests them (Creswell, 2013). I was interested in this study because the potential effect the result may have on policy formulation with the agency, and the overall intimate effect it may have on the officer-client working relationship.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Sutton and Austin (2015) said, “The role of a researcher in qualitative research is to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants” (p. 226). Karagiozis (2018) argues that one of the complexities in qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument. While my role as a police officer is to be that of a law enforcer, I have not lost the sight of the struggles that citizens experience when under probation supervision. I understand that participants in this study, at some point in their life, broke the law. However, I also believe probation is aimed to rehabilitate the defendant, protect

society from further criminal conduct by the defendant, and to protect the rights of the victim. On-going research is needed to ensure that practitioners are provided with empirical data to support best practices and training.

My background in law enforcement required that my approach to the study was that of a researcher and not a criminal justice professional. To safeguard the study from my personal and professional associations with probation supervision, during the interview my focus was on allowing the participant to provide as much information that they were comfortable sharing. I relayed to them that I understood that some questions might trigger sensitive responses which they were not obligated to share. I also made certain that my interpretation of their answers was aligned with their intended responses. This is a process called member checking which is discussed later in this chapter.

As a police officer, conducting interviews and interrogations is a daily routine in my professional work. I have also completed several hours of training for interviews and interrogations through the Georgia Public Safety Training Counsel. These trainings specifically addressed different ways to ask open-ended and follow-up questions without leading the person being interviewed. The trainings also taught those who conduct interviews how to observe the body language of the interviewee. Both of these traits are essential to qualitative studies.

There are differences in police interviews and interrogations when compared to a qualitative researcher. From my professional experience, when conducting police interviews, officers approach the interview with a wealth of knowledge about the case and evidence against the accused. Therefore, the investigator may only conduct the

interview in search of a confession. Qualitative inquiry, in contrast, is an exploration of a phenomenon where little is known (Cypress, 2015). This requires the researcher to depend on the responses of the participants to then form a conclusion about the phenomenon.

My role was also to present clear and unbiased information throughout the research process. As a member of the law enforcement community, I have worked with probation officers on local, state, and federal levels. I have also had several interactions with citizens on probation. However, I have not been in either position examined in this study. I did not have an opinion, positive or negative, of the relationship a probation officer and client share. Therefore, I aimed to ensure this study was fact-driven with no editorial comments from myself.

I provided each potential participant with a research invitation and consent form. The letter explained that I am a doctoral student at Walden University, the purpose of the research and how the data will be used, and contact information for questions and concerns. The invitation letter also addressed confidentiality, the voluntary nature of the study, criteria for participation, and potential risks and benefits of participation. Once consent was obtained, and prior to the interview, I provided each participant with the interview instrument (Appendix B).

I chose Dougherty County as the area to gather data. I did not anticipate any bias or conflicts of interest would arise while conducting this study. Although I have served as a police officer with the City of Albany (a municipality within Dougherty County), I have



not worked in that capacity since 2015. Further, to my knowledge, all misdemeanor cases that named myself as the case officer were disposed of in court.

Finally, all demographical data, audio transcripts, and written notes were collected by me. I maintained custody of them in a filing area which is in a locked storage room at my residence for 5 years.

## **Methodology**

### **Participant Selection Logic**

Dougherty County is a small metro county in the southwest area of the state of Georgia. As of July 1, 2019, the reported population is about 87,956 (Unknown, 2020). According to the Georgia Department of Community Supervision, there are 3,010 (3.4%) people in Dougherty County on probation. There were no known statistical data reports how many clients were on probation for their first offense. Therefore, before being interviewed, each potential participant was asked prescreening questions about their current involvement in the criminal justice system to ensure they met the criteria for participation. The scope of questions eight and nine listed in Appendix B were limited to ensure that each participant had completed their term of probation and did not have a pending legal matter before a court. The target population for this study was former probation clients in Dougherty County who was sentenced to probation for the first time after committing a misdemeanor offense.

### **Procedures for Recruitment and Participation, and Data Collection**

An advertisement flyer was created. The flyer was advertised on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These are social media sites. I chose to use social media because

it is commonly used by citizens who view and share advertisements within the community. I gave a brief description of the study, and the criteria for eligibility. The advertisement asked for participants to contact me if they were interested in participating in the study. To get as much interest as possible, the advertisement was posted and continually shared for three consecutive weeks.

The second method was snowball sampling. Used in qualitative inquiry, snowball sampling is a type of convenience sampling that is applied when the researchers have a difficult time recruiting participants for a study (Naderifar et al., 2017). In this method of data collection, the researcher uses current participants to recruit other participants. This method continues until saturation is achieved. Given (2008) suggested that the researcher start with a set of diverse participants so the snowball process will represent the target population. This ensures that the research is transferable and is not biased.

To ensure eligibility to participate in the study, each participant was screened by answering a prescreening questionnaire (Appendix A). Participants male and female. There was no ethnic or racial requirement to participate. The following criteria had to be met by each participant and which was outlined in the information and consent letter:

Each participant had to be least 18 years old at the time of the interview, the participant's sentence of sentence of community supervision had to be in Dougherty County, Georgia, and the participant could not have had any pending charges (pending charges include, but limited to any citations, summons, misdemeanor, or felony that have not been disposed of by a court).

## **Instrumentation**

This study was unique because there was no qualitative research that examined the probation officer-client relationship from the perspective of the client. Therefore, an interview protocol (Appendix B) that aimed to understand and answer the research questions was created. The interview questions also were established to confirm or reject one key assumption from Homan's psychological view of the social exchange theory. In his final assumption, Homan (1961) noted how relationship participants realize that results differ from other individuals in similar relationships and may differ with the same person over time. The questions seeking to examine how the clients perceive the role of the probation officer and how that perception changed over time.

Questions one and two in the interview protocol asked about the participant's criminal activity which resulted in them being assigned to probation, and their initial thoughts of how the probation process worked. These questions did not directly answer any research questions for this study, but were included to allow the researcher observe the participant's willingness to be open when answering the questions that followed. Additionally, the questions were included to allow the researcher to understand how the participants perceive probation as process.

Questions 3 – 9 were formed to address research questions one and two. The questions were listed in chronological order. The purpose was to guide the interviewee through their experience on probation. This allowed the researcher to gather data on how the participant perceived the role of the probation officer and how that perception changed over time. Questions 10 and 11 were formed to address research question three.

The purpose is to examine how the participant perceive the role of the probation officer in the relationship has impacted their future. Finally, question 12 allowed the participant to reflect on their overall experience with the probation officer.

A panel was assembled which included subject matter experts to review the research instrument. Panel members had a total of 26 years of education in the disciplines of psychology, criminal justice, and social work. They also had over 35 years of experience in the fields of counseling, corrections, probation supervision, and social work. Panel members were told that there were five members, but had no knowledge of who the other members were. This step was taken to encourage individual and honest opinions about the contents of the questionnaire.

Panel members were provided with the research purpose, problem statement, research questions, and the interview questions. The Delphi method was then used to help panelists reach a consensus about each question. I served as the facilitator for the panel. Members were asked to review the questions in multiple rounds until the panel reached a general consensus. In the rounds, members were asked to anonymously identify potential issues of concern for the questions in the questionnaire. The concerns were then shared with other members to allow them to reflect on their own concerns about the same questions. Each panel member was asked to provide a revision any question(s) they had a concern with. After gathering feedback from each panel member, I revised the questions based on the similarities and differences shared from the members. This method was repeated until there was no need to edit or change the contents of the interview protocol.

## **Data Collection**

Participants that met the criteria for participation was scheduled for an audio recorded interview and assigned a participant number. The interview was conducted using telephone audio. Because of the impact of COVID-19, face-to-face interviews were excluded as an option. Participants were provided the information and consent letter which was discussed prior to the interview. Once consent was gained, the interview was conducted. The interviews lasted no more than one hour.

After the interview was complete, participants were debriefed. During this process, participants had an opportunity to ask any questions, relay concerns, and had an opportunity to withdraw from the study. Participants were reminded that all contact information was included in the information and consent letter, should questions or concerns arise after the meeting is over.

## **Data Analysis Plan**

The transcripts were entered into a coding table and a thematic analysis was deployed. The themes were coded based on the responses. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as, “A method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data (p. 79).” This method of analysis has six commonly used steps: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. Below is a brief description of each step described by Caulfield (2019):

- *Familiarization*: This step requires the researcher to become familiar with the data which includes transcribing audio and note taking.

- *Coding*: This involves locating phrases or sentences to develop codes with in the content.
- *Generating themes*: After developing a list of codes, they are grouped into more broader categories.
- *Reviewing Themes*: In this step, the researcher makes sure that the themes are useful and represent the data. Also, the researcher may have to make changes to some themes by adding, deleting or creating new ones.
- *Defining and naming themes*: Here, the themes are given meaning and an understandable name. This is stage is critical because it helps researchers understand the data.
- *Writing up*: The last step, writing up the analysis includes an introduction, the methodology, and the findings.

Creswell (2013) suggests that phenomenological studies contain at least five participants. I desired at least 10-15 participants to reach saturation. In qualitative analysis, saturation is achieved when further collection and analysis are unnecessary (Saunders et al., 2018). I relied on thematic saturation to determine when saturation was accomplished. Thematic saturation was reached when no new themes were presented in the data analysis (Lowe et al., 2018).

In an effort to cross check the thematic analysis, the transcripts were entered into the NVivo computer software. The software was used to analyze the data for codes and themes. My coding was compared to the results of the NVivo software for confirmation.

## **Issues of Trustworthiness**

### **Credibility**

To ensure credibility for this study, the participants were to be asked to provide honest responses to each question based on their personal experience with their probation officer. They were reminded that this was not an attempt to embarrass or expose their involvement in the criminal justice system, instead an attempt to gather meaningful data that would contribute to the body knowledge that was not represented in this phenomenon. Participants were reminded of the important role they had in this study and their right to withdraw at any time without cause. These assurances were an attempt to build a strong level of rapport with each participant.

### **Transferability**

As stated in chapter one, there was known qualitative research about officer-client relationships from the client's perspective. Therefore, it may be difficult for those not involved in the relationship to understand. Employing thick description was important for people who have little to no knowledge about the topic to understand its need and how it can be used to effect policy and social change. Thick description is used in qualitative research to illustrate the complex layers of understanding by examining the critical details of a study (Mills et al., 2010). The use of thick description should provide future researchers with substantial information to determine transferability and usefulness.

### **Dependability**

A reflective journal was kept to note significant, unexpected, and general occurrences throughout the data collection process. The journal also documented feelings

and reflections from my view. Second, an audit trail was kept which serves as a guide for future researchers to replicate this study. The audit trail provides explanations of the steps used to identify themes and coding during data analyzation. The audit trail also serves illustrate that the findings are a result of the participant responses and not the researcher's biases or preconceptions.

### **Confirmability**

Throughout the interview process, member checking was conducted with each participant. Member checking is used in qualitative studies to return results to the participant to make certain that the data recorded by the researcher is accurate, thereby enhancing the credibility of results (Birt et al., 2016). The sole purpose is confirming the responses of each participant. Participants were told that this is a normal step in the interview process and that it is not an indication that the answer was not desired or incorrect.

After data collection and analyzation, the reflective journal and audit trail was evaluated against the findings. This was done to ensure that any researcher biases were not represented in the analyzation. Additionally, this step allowed the researcher to explain decisions made throughout the research process and allows readers to gain a better understanding of the data.

### **Ethical Procedures**

To satisfy ethical concerns related to recruitment, data collection, and confidentiality, a research application for the study was submitted to the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research approval. Using social



medial to recruit participants was strategically done to exclude the need to contact any probation supervision agency in Dougherty County.

Once participants consented to participate in the research, they were assigned a participant number and was only referred to by their assigned number throughout the duration of the interview. All transcripts, recordings, notes, and other forms of data are be filed in a locked storage area of my residence. The aforementioned is maintained for a maximum period of 5 years from the date of the final publication. This is done to mask the identity of all participants.

Each participant in the study was presented with a copy of the information and consent letter. I also made certain the participant understood what their role was in the study. If, at any time, a participant wanted to withdraw participation, they were told to notify me. Once notified all transcripts, recordings, and statistical data would have been destroyed.

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 outlined the procedural steps necessary to complete data collection for this study. After research approval, the study was conducted in Dougherty County which is located in the state of Georgia. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions related to their perception of the officer-client relationship and its impact on their future. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The analyzation was cross-checked using the NVivo software. Chapter 4 will include a report of data outcomes and thematized findings.

## Chapter 4: Results

The aim of this study was to explore the relationship that probation officers and clients share from the perspective of the client. This was accomplished through the use of a qualitative research design which contained open-ended questions to gather data through lived experiences of those in the phenomenon. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, there is a wealth of research that presented findings in other areas of probation, but a noticeable absence of extensive research that explored how clients perceive the role of the probation officer, the impact that probation officer had on the client, and the client's perception of the relationship they share. This study sought to contribute to the body of knowledge that exists by adding a client's perspective which is part of the second component of Klockars's theory of probation supervision.

The following RQs were used to guide this study:

RQ1: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive the role of the officer in the officer-client relationship?

RQ2: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive their relationship with their probation officer changed over time?

RQ3: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive the impact that the experience with their probation officer has had on their future in the community?

This chapter presents the results of the present study. In addition to reporting the results of this study, this chapter explains the setting, demographics, data collection and analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness accomplished during the study.

### **Setting**

The study's advertisement flyers were posted on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Appendix D represents the flyer that was placed on the various platforms. Once the potential participant responded to the flyer by phone or email, they were sent, via email, the invitation and letter of consent. Participants were asked to respond "I consent" via email and no names or other contact information were gathered. Interviews were conducted by telephone and only audio was used. Participants were asked to find a comfortable quiet location for the duration of the interview. This study was not linked to any agency or other community stakeholders.

### **Demographics**

Participants for the study was limited to people that were sentenced to probation for their first misdemeanor offense in Dougherty County. The participants' demographics were gathered during the prescreening questionnaire (Appendix B) and Question 1 of the research instrument (Appendix C). The questions were used to gather the sex, race, gender, and crime type. Table 1 is a summary of demographics followed by brief narratives of why the participants were sentenced to probation.

**Table 1***Demographics and Type of Misdemeanor Crime of the Participants (N=11)*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Crime Type</b>
1	M	Black	18 – 23	Traffic Violation
2	M	Black	24 – 29	Traffic Violation
3	M	Black	35 – 39	Other
4	F	Black	30 – 34	Persons
5	F	Black	30 – 34	Persons
6	M	Black	30 – 34	Persons
7	F	Black	35 – 39	Persons
8	M	Black	30 – 34	Other
9	F	White	> 50	Persons
10	M	Black	35 – 39	Traffic Violation
11	M	Black	24 – 29	Persons

**Participant Narratives of Experience with Misdemeanor Probation**

The following are brief narrative descriptions of each participant which provides background information about what the participant did that ultimately led a criminal conviction and a probation sentence. This information may contain direct quotes and paraphrases and was obtained from Question 1 in the research instrument (Appendix C).

P1, the youngest of all participants, indicated that he was issued a citation in the city of Albany, Georgia. Albany is inside the county limits of Dougherty county. P1 stated that he was speeding an excess of 20 miles per hour. Although he could have paid

the fines, he did not have the money, so he was assigned 80 hours of community service. He was placed on probation until he completed his community service. In Georgia, speeding is a misdemeanor.

P2 stated that his sentence for probation originated from being cited for driving under the influence of alcohol to the extent that he was less safe to drive. P2 was sentenced to 24 months of probation. Driving under the influence in Georgia is a misdemeanor.

P3 stated that he could not remember how long he was on probation. He stated that the only time he was ever in trouble with the law was for public intoxication. P3 stated that he was at a club where a few fights took place. Upon police arrival, P3 stated that he could not remove himself from the premises and was arrested. In Georgia, public intoxication is a misdemeanor.

P4, stated that she was charged with simple battery. P4 claimed that she was defending herself during an altercation with a coworker. She indicated that the person spat on her in the face and she attacked him. In Georgia, simple battery is a misdemeanor.

P5 did not provide details about the original offense that lead to her being sentenced to probation. She did indicate that she was charged with simple battery. Instead of contesting the charge, she took a plea deal which resulted in twelve months of probation among other sanctions. In Georgia, simple battery is a misdemeanor.

P6, recently released from probation, indicated that he pled guilty to the charge of domestic violence – simple battery. He stated that the guilty plea steamed from a physical

altercation with his live-in girlfriend. He was sentenced to twelve months of probation. In Georgia, domestic violence – simple battery is a misdemeanor.

P7, took a plea for battery after being charged with aggravated assault. According to P7, she took the plea to avoid going to prison. Since battery is a misdemeanor in Georgia, she stated that she took for 24 months of probation.

P8, stated that he was arrested for criminal trespass for not leaving a public location after being directed to do so by law enforcement. As a result of the arrest he pled guilty to criminal trespass and received probation. The participant could not remember how long his term of probation was.

P9 was identified as the oldest participant in the study. P9 stated that she was charged with aggravated assault and reckless conduct, a felony in Georgia. She stated that she was at a bus stop for children going to school. At some point an argument with another adult took place and she pointed her gun at the adult but did not shoot them. She stated that she took a plea for misdemeanor pointing a gun at another and reckless conduct. She was sentenced to fines and 36 months of probation. Both charges are misdemeanors in the state of Georgia.

P10 stated that he was charged with several traffic violations after leaving the scene of an accident. P10 stated that he left the scene because he had been drinking. He stated that he was contacted by police a few days later and given citations for leaving the scene of an accident, following too closely, and striking a fixed object. All charges are misdemeanors in Georgia.

P11 stated that he was 17 and threw rocks at an occupied vehicle. The charges were reduced to reckless conduct and he served time on probation. Reckless conduct is a misdemeanor.

### **Data Collection**

The Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study on March, 25, 2021 (approval #: 03-25-21-0342143). No data was collected prior to the IRB approval. The data collection period was from March 26, 2021 through April 30, 2021.

I desired 10 – 15 participants for this study. There were 15 respondents to the advertisement for this study. However, four of the respondents were excluded during the pre-screening questionnaire because they did not meet the criteria for participation as outlined in Chapter 3. It was discovered that two respondents had pending charges for traffic violations. One respondent was excluded because his probation derived from a charge in another county. The final respondent was excluded for indicating that her probation sentence was not complete. As a result, this study was completed with 11 participants. Data collection ended once I felt that there was significant evidence that saturation had occurred in response to my research questions. Saturation is explained later in the chapter.

Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants. I conducted all interviews. All participants agreed to complete an interview containing open-ended questions which lasted less than 90 minutes. Telephone recordings of the interview were the only method of data recording used for this study.

After the interview concluded, the recording was transcribed to verbatim written format. The transcript was sent back to the participant for member checking. Participants were asked to read the transcript to clarify or correct any errors found in the transcription, but were asked not to alter the transcript. Instead, the participant was asked to put corrections or clarifications in the body of the email response. No participants indicated a need for corrections to the transcript.

The member checking step was a deviation from the original plan for member checking presented in Chapter 3. I modified the member checking step because I did not want to interrupt the participant during the interview. I also felt that it was more effective to have them confirm one transcript as opposed to verifying each answer during the interview process. The member checking process was not expected to exceed 30 minutes for each participant.

Audio files and digitally saved documents were loaded on a password protected media storage device. Written and printed materials along with the media storage device were stored in a secure storage room at my residence. There were no unusual circumstances encountered in data collection.

### **Data Analysis**

For data analysis, I deployed the thematic analysis process. Recall from Chapter 3, the thematic analysis includes familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and the write up. This section explains how the data was analyzed during the study.



## **Familiarization**

First, I started by taking steps to become familiar with the data by reviewing each participant's transcript. This process began as I transcribed the recorded interviews by hand. During the first reading, I read each transcript while reviewing what I wrote about the participant during the interview in the reflective journal. In the journal, I noted the participant's tone, my impression of the willingness to be open and frank about their experience, and any notes about specific questions that triggered a different emotion. I also underlined and highlighted certain words and phrases that participants used during their responses. During this process, notes were made in the margins for future steps.

## **Coding**

During the second reading I reviewed the transcripts and began to code responses using the inductive coding strategy. Inductive coding involves developing concepts using raw data to create themes based on the interpretation of the data (Chandra & Shang, 2019). In essence, during inductive coding I started the process from scratch without the use of a code book.

I used Microsoft Word to create a three-column chart to organize the sentence-by-sentence coding. Column one contained the questions and responses from the interviews. Column two was used to note the sentence or phrase taken from the response that was used for coding. Column three represented the code derived from the sentence. Appendix C is a shortened example of the code table used for this study.

Each participant's response was entered under the coinciding questions in the first column. After member checking was complete, I entered the responses from the

transcript into the coding table for sentence-by-sentence coding. This process continued until I was able to confirm that no new codes emerged from the data collected, and data saturation had occurred.

When considering data saturation, I considered a few factors. First, I reflected on my role as the researcher for this study. Fields and Kafai (2009) suggests that intentionally or unintentionally, the researcher's bias and worldview is present in all social research. My experience as a police officer presented me with opportunities to investigate several incidents of criminal activity similar to those committed by participants involved in this study. I was careful to journal instances during data collection where others may perceive researcher bias. As I viewed the research for saturation, I considered extending data collection until I was comfortable that lay people with little or no knowledge of probation would not view the study and still have questions of "how" and "why."

Second, I considered the benefit of continuing collecting data verses the quality of the data already collected. As stated in Chapter 3, data collection continued until there was sufficient evidence that it was not feasible to continue. Using the coding table to organize data allowed me view patterns where new codes and themes developed. After interviewing eight of the 11 participants, I noticed that responses, while discussing different experiences, became repetitive. However, I was not comfortable with saturation until after I coded the data from participant 10. Still, I interviewed participant 11 to confirm data saturation. While realizing that data saturation is inconsistently assessed and reported, the depth of the data must be considered (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012; Morse et

al., 2014). Ultimately, after interviewing the 11<sup>th</sup> participant, I discovered no need to continue interviews.

Codes were created regardless of their relationship to the study and developed based on words or phrases found within the sentence. As a result, some codes developed during this process were duplicates or similar in meaning. Those codes were combined. For example, when asked about the initial thoughts of the probation process, participant seven responded, “I honestly did not think anything of it.” I coded the response “indifferent.” However, when asked the same question, participant 2 responded, “I just didn’t really think nothing...” The response was coded “neutral thought.” The final coding for both responses was coded “neutral thought.”

### **Generating, Reviewing, and Naming Themes**

The inductive coding strategy yielded 41 codes for this study. The codes were then grouped in broader categories based on their relationship to one another. Next, I gave each category a name which developed into a theme. The themes were given names based on the codes attributed to the questions asked during the interview with relation to the research questions for the study. As themes emerged from the categories, I gave them an understandable name. There were five emerging themes from the data: probation officer’s role – manager, relationship status over time, officer-client relationship, view of the probation officer, and impact and thoughts.

Some codes were grouped into more than one theme based on the data elements found in the code. For example, the code “discipline” appeared in both “view of the probation officer” and “probation officer’s role” themes. The list of codes grouped by

themes can be found in Appendix D. Appendix D serves two purposes. First, it illustrates how the codes were grouped by theme. Second, it documents the frequency at which words or phrases contributed to the code.

Finally, I used the NVivo computer software to cross-check my coding against the auto code feature imbedded in the software. For this step, I entered codes found while hand coding and asked the software to process data against my codes. The results of the auto coding were compared to the hand coding. There were some additional codes, but they were attributed to different names with similar meaning which were documented during hand coding.

## **Results**

The final step in the thematic analysis process was a critical analysis write-up. Using the emerging themes and codes, I answered the research questions for this study. This section is an inclusive response to each research question using the responses from participants in the study.

RQ1: This question asked: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive the role of the officer in the officer-client relationship? Specifically, participants were asked about their perception of the role of the probation officers as a case manager. They were also asked how they perceived the probation officer as the person responsible for enforcing the rules of probation.

As a case manager, six out of eleven participants viewed the officer's role as that of a helper. Participant seven stated, "I thought their role would be to help me get done with probation faster and help make it less complicated." Because it was the participant's

first time on probation, she felt a level of uncertainty with the probation process. When asked about the probation process, the participant stated, "I was nervous." Participant three stated that he believed that the officer would help him develop a plan to stay on track while on probation. The remaining five participants viewed them a person that would be a counselor, leader, and a caring person.

Each participant perceived the role of the probation officers as either a disciplinarian, enforcer, or authority figure when viewing officers as the person responsible for enforcing the rules of probation. Participant eight felt the probation officer was there to "make sure I followed the rules."

Along with these feelings, participants felt as if the probation officer would send them to jail for any probation violation. Participant eight stated, "They are going to find a way to make me get in trouble and go to jail." Participant six stated, "I felt he or she was like any other officer of the law. I felt as if he was going to be firm and not give any chances because I was looked at as another criminal that he or she has to baby-sit."

In summation, although participants viewed probation officers as enforcers, disciplinarians, and authority figures, they also viewed to them as a person that would contribute to their successful completion of probation. As a case manager, participants believed that the officers were in the relationships to help them develop plans to be successful as they maneuver through the probation process, pay their fines and complete other sanctions ordered by the court.

RQ2: This question asked: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive their relationship with their probation officer changed over time? Participants

were asked several questions aimed to explore how the officer-client relationship changed over time. First, participants were asked about positive and negative impressions they developed after their first meeting. One participant did not have a positive or negative impression of the probation officer. Participant nine felt that the probation officer was focused following the rules of probation and fine payments. "My probation officer just wanted to take my money. As long as I showed my face and abided by all of the stipulations it went smoothly," participant nine stated.

Six of eleven participants described the probation officers as nice, well spoken, and kind whose job was to make sure they were compliant while on probation. Participant two described his probation officer as one that did not present any signs of intimidation, while participant five had a "firm but fair" first impression.

As probation continued, participants indicated that their thoughts of the probation officers did not change. Participants indicated that the lack of change was largely because the probation officers remained consistent. Participant six said, "She stayed consistent and as I stated previously she was really caring and wasn't the type to threaten you with jail or disrespect you because you made a mistake in your life." Participant one stated, "She didn't hound me, she just worked with me. It was pretty much straight forward for the most part." Participants also indicated that doing as they were instructed, paying fines, attending classes, and not committing new crimes made the probation process easier.

Participants were also asked to describe their comfort level with their probation officer. Participant five response indicated a clearer understanding of the probation

process, but he still had reservations about the officer. He said, “She gave me clear rules and explained about the curfew restrictions and pop-up visits... I’m an introvert, so I never got too comfortable. However, I did trust her to keep her word.” Another participant did not feel that he had a relationship with the probation officer. Instead, the participant said he paid his monthly fee, often without seeing the probation officer. The remaining nine participants reported positive change in comfort when dealing with the probation officer over time. These participants cited a clear understanding of the rules, the officer being firm but fair, conversations shared with the probation officer, empathy, and the officer’s willingness to help them get through a tough time in life as reason for a positive change in comfort with the officer.

Participants were next asked about their overall impression of the probation officer-client relationship. The participants viewed their officer-client relationship as a professional relationship. Participant seven added, “My relationship with my probation officer shaped my thoughts by showing me that probation officers are ordinary people just trying to do their job as effective and efficient as possible.”

One participant had several questions throughout the process and said that the probation officer really did everything possible to make sure that probation was a smooth process. Participant six indicated that the probation officer made him look at probation differently. He said, “I don’t feel that everyone is against people who makes mistakes in life.”

In sum, participants began the officer-client relationship with a sense of fear, uneasiness, and nervousness. Overtime participants described a positive change with a

greater comfort level as the officer-client relationship evolved. They found officers to present a clear understanding of expectations, firm but fair, and consistent. However, others did not get too comfortable because of their inherent personalities and beliefs about probation. Participants described the officer-client relationship as a professional relationship and perceived the officer as being willing to help them be successful while on probation.

RQ3: This question asked: How do first-time misdemeanor probation clients perceive the impact that the experience with their probation officer has had on their future in the community? The participants were asked two questions in attempts to address this research question. First, participants were asked to explain how the relationship shared with the probation officer influenced their actions after being released from probation. Five participants indicated that conversations with the probation officer has influenced them to make positive changes when dealing with situations. These participants reported finding themselves walking away from situations, finding peaceful alternatives when dealing with conflicts, and making different decisions when they feel like they are about to commit an unlawful act. “My probation officer provided me with some conflict resolution training and now I know when to and how to walk away from highly escalated situations,” participant seven stated.

The remaining participants did not describe an influence from probation officers, but reported a value of freedom, not wasting money on fines and programs, and wanting to be a positive example for their family as influencers for their actions. Participant eight said, “I knew I didn’t want to pay them folks all my money... It made me think twice



about my actions.” Participant one stated, “It feels good knowing that I did not have to report to anyone... Living free and at peace.”

Next, participants were asked what impact, if any, did the probation officer have on the person they are today. Nine of eleven participants cited no impact when responding to this question. One participant stated that she felt that the officer provided her with skills that will help her get through everyday life. The participant also did not report an impact, but stated, “She has shown me that the criminal justice system isn’t all bad.”

In essence, although the participants largely did not feel that the probation officer impact how they live in the community, they did experience learning positive ways to resolve conflicts and making better choices. Alternatively, other participants were motivated by being free from probation, being better examples for their family, and saving money on fines and programs.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

The research instrument (Appendix B) contained questions specific to the current study. An expert panel was assembled and the Delphi method was used to ensure the validity of the instrument. Participants of this study were asked to provide answers to the questions based on their lived experiences relative to their time on probation. Credibility was established by confirmation that all 11 participants met the criteria to participate in the study. There were no deviations from the strategy outlined in chapter three.

**Transferability**

Thick description was very evident in the participants' answers. The answers coded, placed in to categories, and several themes emerged. The use of thick description was important to this study. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research requires substantial description of the phenomenon studied. While those who review this study may be researchers and practitioners in the field, others may have little or no knowledge of the topic. The use of thick description enhanced the value of the research and allow future researchers to evaluate usefulness and transferability of the research in future studies. The thematic process explained in chapter three was demonstrated in this chapter and labeled by section for others to understand how the data was collected. There were no deviations from the strategy outlined in chapter three.

**Dependability**

As mentioned in chapter three, a reflective journal and audit trail was kept throughout the research process. The entries documented steps taken before and after interviews, and coding procedures used during analyzation, and general thoughts of the research process. Participants provided information in their responses that could only be known to them and the probation officers that supervised their cases. There was no way to verify their answers because the of the promise of confidentiality. Participants were reminded of their role in the research and the importance of frank and honest answers when responding. Specific questions asked during the prescreening questionnaire and question one of the interviews also supported dependability by allowing participants to

display their willingness to be honest when answering questions. There were no deviations from the strategy outlined in chapter three.

### **Confirmability**

To confirm the contents of each interview, member checking was conducted. This step was a deviation from chapter three. Originally, member checking was going to be done throughout the duration of the interview. Instead, I transcribed the interviews to verbatim form. Next, I sent the transcription to each participant so they could clarify or correct anything that was inaccurate in the transcript. Each participant confirmed that the contents of the transcript was accurate. This process was completed to ensure accuracy of the data collected.

### **Summary**

This chapter reported the results for the study. After approval from the IRB, social media platforms were used to seek participants. Fifteen people responded and eleven participants satisfied the criteria for participation. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions to explore their experience in the officer-client relationship during their first time on probation for misdemeanor offenses. Data collection continued until there was sufficient evidence that data saturation had occurred.

The data was analyzed using a six-step thematic analysis process. Data results were used to answer three research questions. The findings suggest that participants experience a sense of fear, uneasiness, and uncertainty when starting the relationship. As time continued, participants mostly had a positive change in comfort in the relationship because officers remained consistent with expectations and treatment of the clients. The

results indicated that the relationship had no impact on the person they are in the community presently, but the experience with the officer and the probation process motivated them to make a change in social behaviors. Chapter 5 covers the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications for positive social change, and a final conclusion.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This phenomenological qualitative study sought to expand the second component of Klockars's theory of probation supervision by exploring the officer-client relationship. Specifically, the purpose was to explore the lived experiences of the relationship from the client's perspective. Participants in this study were first-time misdemeanor probation clients who had completed all terms of probation.

Key findings suggest that probation clients entered the relationship with senses of fear, uneasiness, and uncertainty when describing how they felt probation officers would treat them in the relationship. As the relationship continued, however, clients largely reported a positive change in comfort level because the probation officer remained consistent with expectations and helped them make the probation process easy to maneuver through. However, the clients did not perceive that the probation officer had an impact on the person they are today. The remainder of this chapter will include a critical interpretation of the findings, limitation of the study, recommendations for future studies, implications of positive social change, and a final conclusion.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

Recall, from Chapter 1, Klockars's theory has two components. In his first component, Klockars's main focus was on the essence of probation which included the working philosophy of the probation officer, the organizational context in which the officer finds themselves, the legal and logical definition of revocation, and the psychological approach of the probationer. Although those themes have been explored extensively, the second component had a noticeable gap in literature. This component

deals largely with the officer-client relationship, but current literature only explored the topic from the perspective of the probation officer (Brace, 2014; Lewis et al., 2013; Van Deinse et al., 2018). This study's purpose was to explore the officer-client relationship from the perspective of the client.

Using the results of data presented in Chapter 4, this section is an interpretation of the findings. Five themes emerged from the findings of this study. The themes include: the probation officer's role as the manager, the relationship status over time, the view of the probation officer, the officer-client relationship, and the impact of the probation officer. These themes were consolidated into two key findings which are the client's perception of probation officers and the impact of the relationship on their future after probation.

### **The Client's Perception of Probation Officers**

In a study by DeLude et al. (2012), researchers found that probationers were pleased with probation, but similar to a study by Clarke (2017) how the client's perception of the probation officer changed over time had not been examined. Springer et al. (2009) suggested that clients thought probation officers were fair, helpful, and clear. This study confirms the overall findings of their study, but more context is needed. This study examined the both preconceptions of the probation officer before meeting with them and how those perceptions changed over time throughout the officer-client relationship.

While, ultimately, the probation officers were perceived by the participants as people of authority whose responsibility was to oversee sanctions imposed during

sentencing, participants did not have the same view at the beginning of the relationship. The participants initially described a sense of uneasiness, fear, and uncertainty when measuring their comfort level. This supports Blau's (1964) assertion that social exchange involves a degree of uncertainty. The uncertainty of the relationship can be caused by several factors. The findings of this study indicated that some factors are the client's inexperience with probation, what they heard about the experience of family and friends, and the fear of committing a technical violation.

According to Blau's (1964) sociological view of the social exchange theory, relationships change over time, but it is important for both participants in the relationship to take steps to reduce uncertainty. A significant number of participants in this study described a change in certainty after the first meeting with the probation officer. As time continued, most participants reported having experienced a more positive comfort change in the relationship. They also described the instances in meetings and conversations where the probation officers were willing to compromise, provided clear understanding of expectations, and were helpful in other ways beyond completing probation. Blau (1964) and Corcoran (2013) believed that those repeated exchanges develop trust and may affect the reputations of both participants. The results of this study support their assertion.

### **The Impact of the Relationship on the Client's Future After Probation**

Chui and Chan (2014) findings suggested that the relationship between the officer and client was not a predictor of future behavior, but the relationship likely deterred them from future criminal activity. In a similar study, Clarke (2017) presented findings that

were aligned with the findings from Chui and Chan's study. As mentioned in Chapter 2, both of these studies were conducted with offenders that were juveniles. I was interested to see if the results of adult offenders differed from juvenile offenders.

The two systems are different. The juvenile justice system is focused on rehabilitation, while the adult system's focus is on punishment and restorative justice (Bolin & Applegate, 2016). Although the aim of the two justice systems are different, this study's findings are consistent with the findings by Clarke, Chui, and Chan. First time misdemeanor probation clients in this study did not feel that the officer-client relationship had an impact on the person they are in the community. Instead, they described other factors that influence their continued deviation from criminal activity. They sighted motivators such as being a positive example for family, saving money, and the value of freedom.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In Chapter 1, I described limitations that could have potentially affected this study. First, there was the concern that I would encounter participants that had experienced a change in probation officers while completing their sentence. However, no participants experienced such change. Second, there was uncertainty surrounding the participants willingness to be open and frank about their experience. Significant efforts were made to ensure that there was not a breach of confidentiality. Moreover, I aimed to gain enough rapport with participants by making our interactions seem like more of a conversation rather than an interview. Finally, probing questions were asked of some



participants to increase detail in responses since this study required the participants to recall events and experiences that may have occurred in the past.

### **Recommendations**

This study began as a result of a noticeable gap in research related to Klockars's theory of probation supervision. Prior to this study, research was limited to known results of juvenile offenders' relationship with their probation officers. No literature existed that specifically presented findings of adult offenders' relationships with their probation officers and how it impacted their future. Although this study is a step in that direction, there is more work needed to fully explore this area. This section provides a few recommendations for future study.

First, this study was limited to people who was sentenced to probation for the first time as a result of a misdemeanor offense. Misdemeanors, defined in Chapter 1, are offenses committed where punishment is less than one year in jail and fines not exceeding one thousand dollars. Future studies should compare the findings to this study to a study that explore the experiences of convicted felons who are sentenced to probation.

Second, while studies show that probation officers have a more favorable view of their clients who are in special populations (Brace, 2014), more studies are also needed to present findings of how these probationers view the relationship they share with their probation officers. Future researchers studying this topic should examine perceptions and experiences of special populations such as sex offenders, mental health offenders, and drug offenders.

Finally, this study was limited to participants located in southwest Georgia. Probation services differ on local, state, and federal levels. This study should be replicated in different geographical regions throughout the state. It should also be expanded to determine if and how perceptions differ from state to state.

### **Implications for Positive Social Change**

In linking the importance of social change to criminal justice, Ohlin (1968) wrote, “It is becoming increasingly difficult to arrive at a balanced assessment of the crime problem – an assessment that takes adequate account of the many other costs and benefits of the profound social changes that have also made crime a prominent national problem” (p. 834). In order to fully understand the root causes of crime and the need for punishment, it is incumbent upon researchers to present critically analyzed studies that can be used by practitioners and policy makers when making decisions about best practices. The findings of this study advanced the knowledge of, perhaps, the most important component of Klockars’s theory – the client.

There are implications for positive social change as a result of this study. From the onset of this study, I located literature that suggested the assignments of probation officers are critical to the success of their client (Anderson & Wildman, 2015). There is also research that found that probation officers have a lack of understanding of the client or their problem (Van Deirse et al., 2018). This study can be used by entry level practitioners and their supervisors when assessing the risks and needs of their clients and assisting them throughout the probation process.

For community stakeholders, a continued exploration of the relationship shared between the probation officer and client is also important. Studies like these demonstrate the need for continued community support of corrections in general, and specifically, support of probation officers, training, and the services they offer.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to explore officer-client relationships from the perspective of the clients. The success of the client has been found to be contingent on the relationship with the probation officer (Anderson & Wildeman, 2015). Yet, there was no contribution to the body of literature that fully explored the officer-client relationship from the perspective of the client.

This phenomenological qualitative study included 11 participants who were interviewed about their lived experience while they were on probation. Specifically, they were asked open-ended questions in efforts to explore and understand their perceptions of the probation officer they shared the relationship with. A thematic analysis strategy was deployed using inductive coding to analyze the results.

The codes were grouped into categories which were given names which developed into themes. Themes emerged were defined based on their relationship to the research questions. Five themes emerged: probation officer's role – manager, relationship status over time, officer-client relationship, view of the probation officer, impact and thoughts. Those themes were consolidated into two key findings.

The findings suggest that clients entered the relationship with a sense of uneasiness, fear, and uncertainty, but as the relationship continues, clients experience a

positive change in comfort level. Additionally, the clients reported that the probation officers had an influence on their change in comfort level. Participants felt that although they perceived probation officer's role as that of an enforcer, disciplinarian, and authoritative in nature, they were also consistent, helping, and presented a clear expectation of the rules. The findings of this study also suggest that clients did not perceive that the officer-client relationship deter them from future criminal activity. Instead, clients identified other factors such as setting a positive example for family, saving money, and the value of freedom as being motivators to deviate from criminal activity.

As indicated earlier, this study should be replicated to expand the body of literature on the topic of the officer-client relationship. Providing such research could benefit training, policy implementation, and an overall understanding of the importance of the officer-client relationship as a critical component of probation.

## References

- Abadinsky, H. (2018). *Probation and parole: Corrections in the community* (13th ed.). Pearson.
- Alexander, L. (2013). *Stress among probation and parole officer: Have we lost our way?* (Order No. 3605106) [Doctoral dissertation, Capella University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Alper, M., & Markman, J. (2018). *2018 Update on prisoner recidivism: A 9-year follow-up period (2005-2014)*. Bureau of Justice Statistics.  
<https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/18upr9yfup0514.pdf>
- Anderson, L., & Wildeman, C. (2015). Measuring the effect of probation and parole officers on labor market outcomes and recidivism. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 31(4), 629-652. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-014-9243-4>
- Annison, J., Eadie, T., & Knight, C. (2008). People first: Probation officer perspectives on probation work. *Probation Journal*, 55(3), 259-271.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550508095122>
- Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1802–1811. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>
- Blau, P. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. John Wiley.
- Bolin, R., & Applegate, B. (2016). Adultification in juvenile corrections: Examining the orientations of juvenile and adult probation and parole officers. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 41(2), 321-339. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-015-9298-2>

- Brace, K. (2014). *Assessing probation officers, and the publics' attitude towards sex offenders* (Order No. 3644534) [Doctoral dissertation, Alliant International University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Braun V. & Clarke V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.  
<https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development*. Harvard University Press.
- Burmeister, E., & Aitken, L. M. (2012). Sample size: How many is enough? *Australian Critical Care*, 25(1), 271-274. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aucc.2012.07.002>
- Canton, R. (2018). Probation and the philosophy of punishment. *Probation Journal*, 65(3), 525-568. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550518776768>
- Caulfield, J. (2019). How to do thematic analysis: A step-by-step guide & examples. *Scribbr*. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/>
- Chandra, Y. & Shang, L. (2019) *Qualitative Research Using R: A Systematic Approach*. Springer.
- Cherkos, R., Ferguson, J., & Cook, A. (2008). Do we care what offenders think? Perspectives. *Summer*, 37(2), 53-57.
- Chui, W., & Chan, H. (2013). Juvenile offenders' perceptions of probation officers as social workers in Hong Kong. *Journal of Social Work*, 14(4), 398-418.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017313478291>

- Clarke, F. (2017). *Black Male Probationers' Perceptions of Juvenile Probation Officers' Role in Reducing Recidivism* (Order No. 10636527) [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University]. ProQuest dissertations and Theses Global.
- Corcoran, K. (2013). Divine exchanges: Applying social exchange theory to religious behavior. *Rationality and Society*, 25(3), 335-369.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1043463113492306>
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3rd ed.). Sage.
- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 874-900.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279602>
- Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. (2007). Social Exchange Theory. *Encyclopedia of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. SAGE.
- Cypress, B. (2017). Qualitative Research. *Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing*, 34(6), 356–361. <https://doi.org/10.1097/dcc.0000000000000150>
- DeLude, B., Mitchell, D., & Barber, C. (2012). The probationer's perspective on the probation officer-probationer relationship and satisfaction with probation. *Federal Probation*, 76(1), 35-39.
- Dressler, D. (1970). *Practice and Theory of Probation and Parole*. Columbia University Press.

- Emerson, R. (1962). Power-dependence relations. *American Journal of Sociological Review*, 27(1), 31-41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2089716>
- Fields, D., & Kafai, B. (2009). A connective ethnography of peer knowledge sharing and diffusion in a tween virtual world. *Computer Supported Collaborative Learning*, 4(1), 47-69.
- Frankford-Nachmias, C., & Nachmias, D. (2008). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (7th ed.). Worth.
- GA Code § 16-1-3 (2014).
- Gayman, M., Powell, N., & Bradley, M. (2018). Probation/Parole officer psychological well-being: The impact of supervising persons with mental health needs. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(3), 509-529. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-017-9422-6>
- Giovannoni, J., McCoy, K., Mays, M., & Watson, J. (2015). Probation officers reduce their stress by cultivating the practice of loving-kindness with self and others. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 8(2), 325-343.
- Given, L. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Healy, D. (2012). Advise, assist, and befriend: Can probation supervision support desistance? *Social Policy & Administration*, 46(4), 377-394. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2012.00839.x>
- Homans, G. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597-606. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2772990>



- Homans, G. (1961). *Social behavior*. Harcourt Brace.
- Imposition of a sentence of imprisonment, 18 U.S.C. §3582 (1987).
- Johnson, W., & Jones, M. (1998). Probation, race, and the war on drugs: An empirical analysis of drug and non-drug felony probation outcomes. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 28(4), 985-1004. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002204269802800409>
- Kaebler, D. (2018). *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2016*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/ppus16.pdf>
- Kaebler, D., & Alper, M. (2020). *Probation and parole in the United States, 2017-2018*. Bureau of Justice Statistics. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ppus1718.pdf>
- Karagiozis, N. (2018). The complexities of the researcher's role in qualitative research: The Power of Reflexivity. *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Studies*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-011X/CGP/v13i01>
- Klingele, C. (2013). Rethinking the use of community supervision. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, 103(4), 1015-1069. <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2232078>
- Klockars, C. (1972). A theory of probation supervision. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 63(4), 550-556. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1141809>
- Lewis, K., Lewis, L., & Garby, T. (2013). Surviving the trenches: The personal impact of the job on probation officers. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 38(1), 67-84. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-012-9165-3>
- Lowe, A., Norris, A., Farris, A., & Babbage, D. (2018). Quantifying thematic saturation in qualitative data analysis. *Field Methods*, 30(3), 191–207.

- McCombes, S. (2019). The literature review: A complete step-by-step guide. *Scribbr*.  
<https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/literature-review/>
- McNeill, F., Raynor, P., & Trotter, C. (2012). *Offender Supervision: New Directions in Theory, Research and Practice*. Routledge.
- Mills, A., Durepos, G., & Wiebe, E. (2010). *Encyclopedia of case study research* (Vols. 1-0). SAGE <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Molm, L., Peterson, G., & Takahashi, N. (2001). The value of exchange. *Social Forces*, 80(1), 159-184. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2001.0081>
- Morse, W., Lowery, D., & Steury, T. (2014). Exploring saturation of themes and spatial locations in qualitative public participation geographic information systems research. *Society & Natural Resources*, 27(5), 557-571.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2014.888791>
- Naderifar, M., Goli, H., & Ghaljaei, F. (2017). Snowball sampling: A purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*. In Press.
- Nunkoo, R. (2016). Toward a more comprehensive use of social exchange theory to study residents' attitude to tourism. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 39, 588-596.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671\(16\)30303-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(16)30303-3)
- Ohlin, L. (1968). Effect of social change on crime and law enforcement. *Notre Dame Law Review*, 43(6), 834-846.
- O'Neill, M. (2005). Re-conceptualizing criminal history for first time offenders. *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, 17(3), 191-206.

- Petersilia, J. (1997). Probation in the United States. *Crime and Justice: A Review of the Research*, 22(1), 149-200.
- Rex, S. (1999). Desistance from offending: Experiences of probation. *The Howard Journal*, 38(4), 366-383. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2311.00141>
- Rolfe, G. (2006). Validity, trustworthiness and rigor: Quality and the idea of qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 53(1), 304-310. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03727.x>
- Santos, S. (2011). *Misdemeanant probationers' perspectives on the severity of the conditions of probation* (Order No. 3496929) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., & Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & quantity*, 52(4), 1893–1907. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8>
- Skeem, J., & Manchak, S. (2008). Back to the future: From Klockars' model of effective supervision to evidence-based practice in probation. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 47(3), 220-247. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509670802134069>
- Springer, N., Applegate, B., Smith, H., & Sitren, A. (2009). Exploring the determinants of probationers' perceptions of their supervising officers. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 48(3), 210-227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509670902766596>
- Stahl, J. (2018). *Probation officers' perceptions of factors that increase and decrease drug court participants' success: A qualitative exploratory case study* (Order No.

- 10974072) [Doctoral dissertation, The University of the Rockies]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, 68(3), 226-231. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>
- Thibaut, J. (1968). The development of contractual norms in bargaining: Replication and variation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 12(1), 102-112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200276801200108>
- Thibaut, J., & Kelley, H. (1959). *The Social Psychology of Groups*. John Wiley and Sons.
- Unknown. (2020). *QuickFacts Dougherty County, Georgia*. United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/doughertycountygeorgia>
- Utter-Godfrey, G. (2016). *Probation officers' understanding of psychological disorders as it pertains to probationers on their caseloads* (Order No. 10151940) [Doctoral dissertation, Chestnut Hill College]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Van Deirse, T., Cuddeback, G., Amy, B., & Burgin, S. (2018). Probation officers' perceptions of supervising probationers with mental illness in rural and urban settings. *American Journal of Criminal Justice: AJCJ*, 43(2), 267-277.
- Wing, C., & Chan, H. (2014). Juvenile offenders' perceptions of probation officers as social workers in Hong Kong. *Journal of Social Work*, 14(4), 398-418. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017313478291>

## Appendix A: Prescreening Questionnaire

Participant #: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

1. Which of the following best describes your gender?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  - c. Prefer not to disclose
  
2. Which of the following best describes your race?
  - a. White
  - b. Hispanic or Latino
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Native American or American Indian
  - e. Asian
  - f. Other
  - g. Prefer not to disclose
  
3. Which of the following best describes your age?
  - a. 18 – 23
  - b. 24 – 29
  - c. 30 – 34
  - d. 35 – 39
  - e. 40 - 44
  - f. 45 – 49
  - g. 50 and above
  - h. Prefer not to disclose
  
4. Which of the following best describes your education level?
  - a. Some high school
  - b. High school diploma
  - c. General Education Diploma (GED)
  - d. Some College
  - e. Bachelor's Degree
  - f. Graduate Degree
  - g. Professional Degree
  - h. Prefer not to disclose
  
5. What is your Marital status?
  - a. Single, never married
  - b. Married or domestic partnership
  - c. Widowed
  - d. Divorced
  - e. Separated
  - f. Prefer not to disclose
  
6. As of today, what is your employment status
  - a. Employed
  - b. Self-employed
  - c. Homemaker

- d. Student
  - e. Military
  - f. Unemployed
  - g. Prefer not to disclose
7. What is your annual income?
- a. Less than \$25,000
  - b. \$25,000 - \$35,000
  - c. \$35,000 - \$45,000
  - d. More than \$45,000
8. Did you complete your term of probation in Dougherty County, Georgia?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
9. Do you have any pending charges (pending charges include, but limited to any citations, summons, misdemeanor, or felony that have not been disposed of by a court)?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

## Appendix B: Research Instrument

### Interview Protocol

#### Prompt:

Hello participant #\_\_\_\_\_. The recording has started. Can you confirm that we have gone over the information sheet? Can you also confirm that you have given consent to participate in this study? At this time, I want to reiterate that you can stop this interview at any time. If you need a break, please let me know.

I will ask you a series of questions about your experience and relationship with your probation officer while you were on probation. I will also be taking notes during the questioning. At times it may seem as if I am not paying attention, however, I am listening at everything you are saying, but I have to notate as much as possible. I may ask you to repeat a response. This does not mean that your answer is wrong or unacceptable. I just want to make certain that I have recorded your response correctly. There may also be a time when I read a response back to you. I am doing this for clarity. If what I read is not what you said, please correct me. I will also be recording. It is important that you speak as clear as possible. Do you have any questions?

#### General Probation

1. Briefly tell me about the circumstances that led to your probation sentence.
2. What were your initial thoughts of the probation process?

#### Interactions with the probation officer

3. Before meeting with your probation officer, what did you think his or her role would be as your case manager?
4. Before meeting with your probation officer, what did you think his or her role would be as the person responsible for enforcing the rules of probation?
5. After the first meeting, what impressions, positive or negative, did you have about your probation officer?
6. In reference to the previous two questions, how did your thoughts change as your time on probation continued?
7. As the officer-client relationship continued, describe your level of comfort you had with him or her.
8. Overall, describe your relationship with your probation officer while you were on probation.
9. Explain how the relationship with your probation officer shaped your thoughts of the probation process.
10. Some say that probation changed them. Explain how your relationship with your probation officer has influenced your actions after being released from probation.
11. What impact, if any, have your probation officer had on the person you are today?

12. Reflecting on your relationship with your probation officer and if you could suggest changes that could have improved the relationship, what would you suggest to them?

**Closing Prompt:**

We have finished the question answer portion of the interview. At this time, do you have anything else you would like to add about your experience with your former probation officer? Do you have any questions for me?

Once again, thank you for your participation in this study.

The recording is stopped.



## Appendix C: Example of Code Book

*Example of Code Book*

<b>Transcript</b>	<b>Sentence – by – sentence Coding</b>	<b>Code</b>
Q: What were your initial thoughts of the probation process:		
A: I just didn't really think nothing, I just went through with what they told me.	I just didn't really think nothing	Neutral feeling
A: I was scared because I was young and didn't know what to expect.	I was scared because I was young	Scared
A: My initial thoughts about the probation process is that I would be rehabilitated from my criminal behavior and that I would be assigned a case manager that will make sure that I will abide by all the things that the court has mandated for me to do.	I would be rehabilitated	Change
Q: Before meeting with your probation officer, what did you think his or her role would be as your case manager?	Case manager that will make sure that I will abide	Enforcer Discipline
A: I thought that my probation officer would make sure that I abide by all of the stipulations that the court has mandated for me.	Officer would make sure I abide by all stipulations the court mandated	Carry out court order
A: Basically, she was gonna be the person that I have to check in with while I was on probation. She should help me out with the process and help me come up with a plan to make sure I'm doing what I need to.	The person I have to check in with while on probation	Case supervisor
Q: Before meeting with your probation officer, what did you think his or her role would be as the person responsible for enforcing the rule?	Help me come up with a plan	Helper
A: I figured he would be a brick wall for lack of a better word. I didn't think he would be supportive, and that his entire existence would be to catch me doing something that would violate my probation.	his entire existence would be to catch me doing something that would violate my probation.	Looking for negative actions.
Q: After meeting with your probation officer, what impressions, positive or negative, did you have about your probation officer?		
A: Negative would be...probably would be the fact of not wanting to be on probation. Positive would be she seemed like a decent individual but was just doing her job and she was doing her job.	Negative.... The fact of not wanting to be on probation Positive, she seemed like a decent individual, just doing her job.	Dislike probation Just doing job Good person
A: After first meeting her, I thought that she was a nice woman. She appeared to be firm but fair, I was ok with that.	She appeared to be firm but fair, I was okay with that.	Fair Clear understanding
It was a good thought. She was kind, well spoken, and she just had my best	Had my best interest.	Vested interest in success

---

interest nothing negative, no intimidation.		
Q: As the officer-client relationship continued, describe your level of comfort you had with him or her.		
A: I'm an introvert, so I never got too comfortable. However, I did trust her to keep her word.	I never got too comfortable, but trusted her to keep her word	Developed trust over time
A: Initially, I wasn't comfortable with sharing information with her because I felt as if she was looking for a reason to violate me or look down on me. However, my perception of her was wrong and I became very comfortable with her.	My perception of her was wrong and I became very comfortable with her	Positive comfort level change
Q: Overall, describe your relationship with your probation officer while you were on probation.		
A: It was a good relationship. She was understanding, times I didn't have the money she would understand work it out and compromise. I never had any issues with my probation officer.	Times I didn't have the money she would understand work it out and compromise	Empathetic Willing to compromise
A: It was just what it was. Me on probation, and her being the probation officer. There wasn't any small talk when I met with her or anything. It was straight business. I reported to her and did what I was supposed to and I left.	It was straight business	Professional
A: Honestly it really was not bad, I didn't go to jail. We had small talk throughout the meetings where I would pay my fine. He acted like he cared, but I don't know that he really did. I mean he didn't do nothing to make it seem harder.	He acted like he cared, but I don't know that he really did.	Caring Relationship uncertainty
Q: Explain how the relationship with your probation officer shaped your thoughts on the probation process.		
A: My relationship with my probation officer shaped my thoughts by showing me that probation officers are ordinary people that want to help rehabilitate their clients and help them to become productive law-abiding citizens.	Probation officers are ordinary people that want to help rehabilitate their clients and help them become productive law-abiding citizens	Helping Counselors Provide guidance
Q: Some say probation changed them. Explain how your relationship with your probation officer has influenced your actions after being released from probation.		
A: I don't think anything has changed about me. It's an experience that I would never want to go through again. So, in essence I think that it made me want to walk away from an issue versus handling it in the manner that I once did.	I don't think it changed me.	No change
Q: What impact, if any, have your probation officer had on the person you are today?	It made me want to walk away from an issue verses handling it in the manner that I once did	Changed future reactions

---

---

A: As I previously stated, my probation officer provided me with a skill that will help me get through everyday life.	Provided me with skills that will help me get through everyday life	Provided life skills
A: I can't say that he was the driving force in me wanting to change and do right. I think with all I have going on now, I have to be good to make sure I can remain free.	I can't say that he was the driving force in me wanting to change and do right.	No impact

---

## Appendix D: Codes Grouped by Themes and Frequency of Codes Among Study

Participants (N=11)

Codes Grouped by Themes	Participants/Total
<b><i>Probation Officer's Role – Manager</i></b>	
Authority	5
Carry out court order	1
Case supervisor	3
Comfort Level	8
Discipline	10
Enforcer	3
Impression	6
Looking for negative actions	1
Neutral Thought	4
<b><i>Relationship Status Over Time</i></b>	
Change	8
Comfort Level	11
Developed trust overtime	6
Follow directions	2
Just doing job	1
No Change	3
Positive comfort level change	2
Relationship	9

Scared	2
--------	---

***Officer-client Relationship***

Clear understanding	1
---------------------	---

Positive	6
----------	---

Professional	7
--------------	---

Relationship uncertainty	4
--------------------------	---

Willing to compromise	1
-----------------------	---

***View of the Probation Officer***

Authority	2
-----------	---

Caring	3
--------	---

Case supervisor	1
-----------------	---

Consistent	4
------------	---

Counselor	3
-----------	---

Discipline	10
------------	----

Empathetic	1
------------	---

Enforcer	9
----------	---

Good person	6
-------------	---

Helper/helping	6
----------------	---

Provide guidance	2
------------------	---

Vested Interest in success	1
----------------------------	---

***Impact and Thoughts***

Changed future reactions	1
--------------------------	---

---

Influence	11
Motivation	6
No change	5
Provided life skills	1

---