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# Effect of the Criminal Justice Curriculum on the Attitudes of 12th-Grade Students Toward the Police

Willie Howard Bradley  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

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2016

Abstract

Effect of the Criminal Justice Curriculum on the Attitudes of 12th-Grade Students

Toward the Police

by

Willie H. Bradley

MA, Boston University, 2002

BS, Johnson and Wales University, 1986

AS, Fisher College, 1983

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

August 2016

## Abstract

While the use of criminal justice courses and law-related education programs have been shown to serve as a crime prevention and deterrence mechanism against school crime and violence, and help students to gain positive experiences and attitudes toward law enforcement, many high schools still do not offer criminal justice courses. The purpose of this quasiexperimental study was to compare the attitudes of 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the groups. Reisig and Park's experience with police model guided this study. Data were collected using Hurst's survey with a purposive sample of 60 12th-grade students who were 18 years of age or older and 8 students who were below the age of 18 from two school districts in Massachusetts. Data were analyzed using two sample *t* test and one-way analysis of variance. Results indicated that there was no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ) in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not, and no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ) between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police. A criminal justice course did not have an effect on student's attitudes toward the police, but other law-related education programs or students' contact with the police should be further investigated. The implications for positive social change are directed toward school district leaders to continue to look for ways to improve juveniles' attitudes toward police, but a course in the middle and high school curricula may not be the best way to spend those limited resources.

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## Dedication

First and foremost, I thank God for his grace and blessings. To my beautiful and loving wife, Erica L. Bradley, without you this would not have been possible. I thank God for blessing me with your love and support. I specifically want to thank you for the countless hours you spent proof reading my work; we work well together, and this venture was no exception. To my loving children, Abdoul, Walika, Naisha, Jenay, and Jayda, I thank you all for your understanding, patience, and overall support. To my grandchildren Ashton, Marli, and Bradley, now that this journey is over, Jampa will be available to spend quality time with you all.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Researchers have studied the relationship between the police and juveniles (e.g., Hinds, 2007; Hurst, 2007; Schuck, 2013, Watkins & Waume, 2012). When police officers make decisions that appear to be procedurally fair and equitable, people are more likely to perceive them as being legitimate authority figures (Hinds, 2007). Adults tend to perceive the police as a positive and necessary entity in the community in comparison to juveniles (Hinds, 2007). Schuck (2013) noted that in comparison to adults, juveniles, especially minority youths, are more subjected to surveillance, harassment, and derogatory treatment by the police. The researcher related that such scrutiny by the police contributes to juveniles' negative attitudes of law enforcement.

Hostility between the police and juveniles is not limited to inner-city communities. Hurst (2007) reported that geography has little influence on how juveniles view the police. The researcher related that rural youths' views of the police are very similar to those of urban youths. The definition of police officers is also important to fully understanding the lenses through which juveniles view law enforcement officers. The proliferation of the use of resource officers to address criminal behavior in high schools and private security officers to handle local crime in business establishments, tend to blur the definition of police officers in research studies (Watkins & Maume, 2012). To provide clarity, in this study, police officers refer to frontline officers who are largely responsible for social service delivery such as responding to calls for help, investigating crimes, making arrests, patrolling the streets, and managing traffic (Regoli & Hewitt, 2008; Wang, 2014).

A review of literature indicated that there is a gap that focuses on ways to change juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police. In addition, research is sparse on whether the introduction of an intervention, such as a criminal justice curriculum, would have an effect on juveniles' attitudes toward the police. As a result, this study helped to fill these gaps in knowledge by comparing the attitudes of 12th-grade high school students who took a criminal justice course to those who did not take a criminal justice course.

Dissemination of the results of this research may provide better understanding of the police's role; increase juveniles' knowledge of the police history, role, and practices; may improve juveniles' attitudes toward the police; promote goodwill between juveniles and the police; improve community relations; introduce juveniles to career opportunities in law enforcement; and may encourage education policymakers to continue to look for ways to improve attitudes toward police. In Chapter 1, I include the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses, theoretical framework, nature of the study, operational definition of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and a summary.

### **Background of the Study**

Few researchers have examined the effects that a criminal justice education at the secondary school level has on youths' attitudes toward the police. Cobkit and Chan (2011) examined the implementation of a criminal justice program at a high school in Georgia by surveying school principals and interviewing criminal justice teachers. The researchers related that the State of Georgia approved a criminal justice curriculum that was offered to all high school students in 2005. The criminal justice curriculum in

Georgia's high schools gained widespread support from students and administrators, but lacked the critical collaboration between public schools and higher educational institutions. Findings from Cobkit and Chan study indicated that criminal justice students had a high retention rate and exhibited a desire to pursue degrees and careers in the criminal justice field; thus, collaboration between high schools and higher education institutions is needed and essential to students' transferability of knowledge to a college degree. While the researchers examined the effectiveness of the State of Georgia's high school criminal justice curriculum from the administrator and teacher perspectives, they did not analyze whether the criminal justice curriculum had any effect on the attitudes of students. In this study, I addressed this gap by comparing the attitudes of high school students who took a criminal justice course with those of high school students who did not take a criminal justice course in relation to their attitudes about the police.

Researchers have examined juveniles' attitudes toward the police in different ways. Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen (2009) examined the influence of police contact on juvenile's attitudes toward the police, how involvement in delinquent subcultures affects their attitudes, and community contexts and ties that influences their attitudes toward the police. The researchers found a correlation between police contact and youths' attitudes toward police officers. However, the researchers reported that when only demographic characteristics, behavioral measures of delinquency, and victimization were analyzed, the relationship between police contact and youths' attitudes toward the police was found to be nonsignificant. The researchers noted that their findings suggested that the relationship between police contact and youths' attitudes toward the police may not be as strong as

previous studies suggested. Brick et al. further reported that in regard to youths' perceptions based on delinquent subcultures, there were a greater association with delinquent peers increased negative perceptions of the police. The researchers also found demographics differences among youths' attitudes toward the police. Specifically, findings indicated that Caucasian youths had more favorable attitudes toward the police than African American and Hispanic youths. In addition, findings indicated that increases in community ties and fear of crime are associated with more favorable attitudes toward the police.

Juveniles tend to have less favorable attitudes toward the police than adults (Hurst, 2007). Hurst (2007) related that most research on juveniles' attitudes toward the police focuses on juveniles residing in urban areas, which ignores the influence that location may have on shaping juveniles' attitudes toward the police. Hurst examined rural teenagers' attitudes toward the police from two perspectives. (a) teenagers' overall support for the police and (b) determinants of attitudes toward the police. The researcher related that while rural teenagers are less supportive of the police in comparison to adults, rural youths are more supportive of police in comparison to their urban counterparts. In contrast to other researchers' findings (e.g., Brick et al., 2009), Hurst found that demographic variables were insignificant determinants of attitudes toward the police. However, findings indicated that juveniles attending predominately African American schools had less positive attitudes toward the police. Thus, findings suggested that the location of the school and the school's environment was more of a determinant of teenagers' negative attitudes toward the police than race or demographics.



The term *police* can mean different things to different young people. Watkins and Maume (2013) argued that a global definition of the police is problematic because of the increased use of both school resource officers (SROs) and private security personnel. The authors related that gaining a better understanding of the sources of juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police is challenging if researchers do not define what is meant by the term *police*. The authors examined research on juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police and determined that juveniles view SROs, private security officers, and police officers as the police, and that this global characterization of the police obscures the source of youths' negative attitudes and opinion towards law enforcement officers. The authors noted that researchers should distinguish police officers, SROs, and private security officers so that there is a better understanding of juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police. According to Watkins and Maume, research findings indicated that when juveniles' negative attitudes toward SROs and private security officers are separated, there is a surge in youths' negativity for frontline police officers. This study focused on juveniles' attitudes toward frontline police officers.

Researchers have found that youths who are stopped and arrested tend to engage in future delinquent behaviors. Wiley and Esbensen (2013) examined the effect of being stopped or arrested on subsequent delinquent behaviors and attitudes. The researchers scrutinized the debate between deterrent theorists and labeling theorists. According to Wiley and Esbensen, deterrent theorists argued that police contact and arrest will prevent and reduce future illegal activities. In contrast, the labeling theorists argued that traditional police patrol tactics only increase future delinquent behaviors. Findings from

Wiley and Esbesen's study concurred with the proponents of the libeling theory. The researchers found a direct relationship between youths being stopped or arrested by the police and an increase in future delinquent behavior.

Researchers have also argued that neighborhood context and race shapes youths' opinions and attitudes toward the police. Brunson and Weitzer (2009) examined race and neighborhood context influence on youths' perceptions of the police. Participants included African American and Caucasian males who resided in disadvantage neighborhoods in St. Louis, Missouri. Findings indicated that Caucasian youths have more favorable attitudes toward the police than their African American counterparts. According to Brunson and Weitzer, in addition to frequent vehicle and pedestrian stops, young African American participants took exception to the manner by which officers spoke to them during the police encounter. African American youths believed that police officers used antagonistic language during the encounter to provoke them to engage in disorderly conduct so that officers could justify their decision to make arrests. Both African American and Caucasian participants disapproved of police officers' use of profanity and other inappropriate language during the encounter. In addition, both African American and Caucasian participants concurred that the worse derogatory remarks by police officers were reserved for African American youths. The researchers reported that such profanity during an encounter serves to alienate youths and weakens police authority with youths. The researchers noted that this is a major concern as youths who live in at-risk neighborhoods that are economically disadvantaged and socially

disorganized tend to have greater police involvement; thus, greater opportunities to encounter police officers.

If community policing is best described as democracy in motion, then it would behoove governments that are predicated on democratic principals to ensure that all citizens are well educated on the purpose of policing in a democracy, especially youths (Glaser & Denhardt, 2010). There is a gap in the research literature that focuses on ways to change juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police and research is limited on whether the introduction of an intervention, such as a criminal justice curriculum, would have an effect on juveniles' attitudes toward the police. As a result, this quasiexperimental quantitative study helped to fill these gaps in knowledge by examining the effects of a criminal justice course on high school students' attitudes toward the police.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Research on juveniles' attitudes toward the police suggested that they are generally less positive in their attitudes toward the police than are adults (Hurst, 2007; Watkins & Maume, 2012). Hurst (2007) reported that juveniles' high level of contact with the police affects their attitudes toward the police and their willingness to engage in behaviors that are supportive of the police. In a study of stop and frisk policies, Wiley and Esbensen (2013) found that police contact had a negative effect on future offending compared to those who were not stopped, and it also had a negative effect on individuals' attitudes toward the police.

Along with juveniles' high level of contact with the police (Hurst, 2007; Watkins & Maume, 2012), legal socialization and the media's portrayal of the criminal justice system are also noted to affect juvenile's attitudes toward the police (Surette, 2007; Taylor, 2011; Watkins & Maume, 2012). Watkins and Maume (2012) related that legal socialization asserts that the views individuals have of the police develop during childhood and adolescence, which affects their attitudes toward the police later in life. Surette (2007) reported that juveniles' perceptions of the criminal justice system are influenced by the media's inflated depictions of crime fighting, which are portrayed on television, in video games, and in movies.

Surette (2007) reported that the media's influence on public perceptions is called social construction, where the media takes actual events that occur in society and changes them for its own benefit. As a result, the portrayal of the criminal justice system is not accurately illustrated for high school students; therefore, a more accurate depiction of the criminal justice system for students is recommended (Taylor, 2011). Cobkit and Chan (2011) reported that many states such as California, Florida, Nebraska, New York, and Texas have developed criminal justice and public safety courses in their middle or high school curricula based on the Law-Related Education (LRE) Act of 1978 which advocates for students to be knowledgeable about laws, the criminal justice system, and fundamental and constitutional rights of citizens. However, Gadek (2016) reported that 99% of high schools in the United States do not offer criminal justice courses in their school curricula. Criminal justice courses and LRE programs have been shown to serve as a crime prevention and deterrence mechanism against school crime and violence, and

students gain positive experiences and attitudes to include a better understanding and appreciation of the purpose of law, a reduction in delinquencies, a decrease in disciplinary problems in school, decreased associations with delinquent peers, improved self-control, improved attitudes toward authority and personal responsibility, increased communication skills, and improved school attendance (Bartch & Cheurprakobkit, 2002).

Most research on juvenile attitudes toward the police have only focused on juveniles' current attitudes (e.g., Hurst, 2007; Taylor, Turner, Esbensen, & Winfree, 2001; Watkins & Maume, 2012). Therefore, there is a gap in research that examines whether the introduction of an intervention, such as a criminal justice curriculum, would have an effect on juveniles' attitudes toward the police. Using Reisig and Parks's (2000) three conceptual models, a study that compares the attitudes of 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course was needed.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quasiexperimental quantitative study was to compare the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. The dependent variable in the study was attitudes toward the police and the independent variables included the criminal justice course and gender. Myers (2008) defined attitude as "a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward something or someone, exhibited in

ones beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior” (p. 36). Students’ attitudes toward the police were measured through the use of Hurst’s (2007) self-administered survey.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In order to compare the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course, in this quasiexperimental quantitative research study, I addressed the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. Is there a significant difference in 12th-grade students’ attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not?

*H*<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in 12th-grade students’ attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not.

*H*<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference in 12th-grade students’ attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not.

2. Is there a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students’ attitudes toward the police?

*H*<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students’ attitudes toward the police.

*H<sub>a</sub>*: There is a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police.

### **Theoretical framework**

Reisig and Parks's (2000) three conceptual models that were used to explain variables related to attitudes toward the police served as the theoretical frameworks in this study: (a) the experience with police model, (b) the quality of life model, and (c) the neighborhood context model. A brief overview of the models is provided in this section with a more detailed explanation provided in Chapter 2.

First, researchers reported that most research on individuals' attitudes toward the police is guided by the experience with police model (e.g., Watkins and Maume, 2012). According to Reisig and Parks (2000), in this model, individuals' satisfaction with the police is mainly based on their previous contact. Estrangement between the police and individuals develop when people's expectations of police action are not met. Research tends to focus on whether the type of contact affects individuals' satisfaction and whether individuals' satisfaction is influenced by the way the police handled the encounters.

Second, according to Reisig and Parks (2000), the quality of life model is guided by the tenet that individuals' perceptions of neighborhood conditions, such as crime, social disorder, and physical decay affect levels of satisfaction with the police. Therefore, residents hold the police accountable for the quality of life in their neighborhood. As a result, if individuals have problematic neighborhood perceptions, then they will tend to have more negative sentiments toward the police. In addition, the quality of life model

posits that individuals believe their neighbors share responsibility to maintain neighborhood order and reduce crime.

Third, Reisig and Parks (2000) reported that the neighborhood context model is different from the quality of life model as the unit of analysis is not on the individual (microlevel) but rather on the neighborhood (macrolevel). Researchers using this model have relied on neighborhood-level census data, crime rate, and aggregated citizen survey data. Some studies, however, have focused on neighborhood differences in satisfaction with the police (e.g., Dunham & Alpert, 1988; Jacob's, 1971). Dunham and Alpert (1988), and Jacobs (1971) found that African Americans expressed more negative sentiments toward the police than their Caucasian counterparts.

### **Nature of the Study**

In this study, I compared the attitudes of 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. Therefore, the attitudes of 68 high schools students from two school districts in Massachusetts that are very comparable in demographics, but one school district has the criminal justice curriculum and the other does not, were surveyed and compared to see if there were statistical differences between the attitudes of the students from both school districts. Exactly 60 of the participants noted that they were 18 years of age or older and eight participants noted that they were not 18 years of age or older. This type of research design is appropriate for this study because I attempted to establish a cause and effect relationship among the variables (Baltimore County Public Schools, 2010; Frankfort-



Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The dependent variable in the study was attitudes toward the police and the independent variables included the criminal justice course and gender.

I received cooperation from the superintendent and the principal who are the respective research point of contacts for the two school districts. Data were collected through the use of Hurst's (2007) survey, which assesses participants' demographic characteristics and attitudes toward the police. Hurst's survey has been field tested and is a valid and reliable measure of juveniles' attitudes toward the police. The study was conducted in accordance with the parameters established by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure the ethical protection of research participants. Prior to data collection, I contacted homeroom teachers of all 12th-grade students at both schools in order to coordinate data collection (see Appendix E). I gave the homeroom teachers the invitation to participate letter, which was stapled to a hard copy of the consent form, to distribute to all 12th-grade students in their class. The reason students were given a hard copy of the consent form was because they may not be able to print or save the consent form on SurveyMonkey, so the hard copy consent was for them to keep. Providing students with a hard copy consent form ensured that students had the contact number for the Walden University representative with whom they can privately talk to about participants' rights.

The consent form was also available on SurveyMonkey and participants had to first read the consent form before completing the survey. Therefore, implied consent was used rather than signed consent as participants were informed on the consent form that completing the web link survey indicated their voluntary consent to take part in the study.

The SurveyMonkey account was set to ensure complete anonymity so that I was not able to identify individuals based on their responses; hence, participants' identities were anonymous.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which include descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation; Cronbach's alpha; two sample *t* test for independent samples; Levene's test was used to test for homogeneity of variances; and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Data will be kept secure in a locked file cabinet and password protected computer in my private home office where I will be the only one with access to the records for 5 years per Walden University's guidelines. The nature of the study is discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

*African American*: "A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa" (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015, para. 5).

*Attitude*: "A favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward something or someone, exhibited in ones beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior" (Myers, 2008, p. 36).

*Broken window theory*: Community conditions breed crime (Wilson & Kelling, 1982).

*Caucasian*: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015, para. 7).

*Digital game-based learning*: Educators using the computer games concept to encourage secondary school level students to learn more traditional high school curriculums (Papastergiou, 2008).

*Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.):* Police officers included in high school and middle school curriculums to educate students on the deleterious effects of drug use (Schuck, 2013).

*Experience with police model:* Individuals' satisfaction with the police is mainly based on their previous contact (Reisig & Parks, 2000).

*Fixing broken windows theory:* Repairing conditions in the community that breeds crime because the sheer fear of crime is pernicious to the quality of life in the community (Kelling & Coles, 1996).

*Hot spots policing:* Hot spots policing is a place-based strategy that typically entails a concentrated police presence in a small geographic area, such as a specific address, block, or subset of a neighborhood that” (Kochel, 2011, p. 351) “has a greater than average number of criminal or disorder events, or an area where people have a higher than average risk of victimization” (Eck, Chainey, Cameron, Leitner, & Wilson, 2005, p. 2).

*Juvenile:* “A person who has not attained his [or her] 18th birthday” (United States Department of Justice, 2015, para. 1).

*Law-Related Education (LRE) Act of 1978:* Advocates for students to be knowledgeable about laws, the criminal justice system, and fundamental and constitutional rights of citizens (Bracy, 2010).

*Legal socialization:* Asserts that the views individuals have of the police develop during childhood and adolescence, tends to shape their attitudes toward the police later in

life (Watkins & Maume, 2012). The views are often derived from people who have closed relationships with the child (Watkins & Maume, 2012).

*Neighborhood context model:* Cultural composition of the neighborhood tends to shape residents' attitudes toward the police (Reisig & Parks, 2000).

*Order maintenance policing:* Is also called broken window policing or quality of life policing, and "is a police practice that involves managing minor offenses and neighborhood disorders in order to address community problems" (Sousa & Kelling, 2014, p. 3349).

*Police officers:* In this study, police officers refer to frontline officers who are largely responsible for social service delivery" (Wang, 2014, p. 20). "They are the first to respond to call for help, and they play an important role in keeping society safe by investigating crimes, making arrests, patrolling the streets, and managing traffic" (Regoli & Hewitt, 2008, p. 86).

*Quality of life model:* Individuals' perceptions of neighborhood conditions, such as crime, social disorder, and physical decay affect levels of satisfaction with the police (Reisig & Parks, 2000).

*Social constructions:* Media takes actual events that occur in society and changes them for its own benefit (Surette, 2007). As a result, the portrayal of the criminal justice system is not accurately illustrated for high school students (Surette, 2007).

*Youths:* "Persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years" (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015, para. 5).

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions made for this study were the following:

1. Hurst's (2007) survey was appropriate for comparing the attitudes of the two groups of 12th-grade students from two school districts in the State of Massachusetts.
2. The survey accurately measured what it was intended to measure.
3. The wording of the survey were clear for participants to understand what was asked of them.
4. Participants honestly and openly answered the survey questions.
5. The 60 students who indicated that they were 18 years of age and older were the ones who completed the survey.
6. Juveniles' attitudes toward the police and criminal justice courses matters to students, parents, school officials, teachers, and law enforcement officers, in order to improve police and youth relations.
7. The findings from the study may be generalized to similar populations of 12th-grade students in the State of Massachusetts.
8. The results of the study will lead to positive social change.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The study's participants included 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course and 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. The study focused on participants' attitudes toward the police. Excluded for this study were students

who were under 18 years of age, in other grade levels, other public and private schools, cities, and states. Therefore, generalizations based on the findings of this research were limited to a similar population of students in the 12th grade in Massachusetts. I did not include anyone with whom I had a personal or professional relationship with in my study in order to prevent perceived coercion to participate due to any existing or expected relationship between the participants and me. As the Director of Security for Randolph Public School System, I did not have any enforcement authority over students in Randolph High School.

### **Limitations**

Limitations are possible weak points in the study and are often beyond the control of the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2011). This quasiexperimental quantitative research study had several limitations. Generalizing the results of the study was one possible limitation since a purposive sample of 60 male and female students who were 18 years and older and who were enrolled in the 12th grade at two high schools in the State of Massachusetts were used. Eight of the students noted that they were below 18 years of age. The findings were limited to 12th-grades students who are 18 years of age and older, which can only be generalized to a similar population of students in the State of Massachusetts and not to students attending private schools or students in other grade levels. To address this limitation, future study could be replicated with charter or private high school sample populations and younger students from public, charter, or private high schools, and the results could be compared to the findings that were found in this study.

A second limitation was the use of SurveyMonkey to collect data anonymously, which was recommended by Walden University's IRB. While the use of SurveyMonkey ensured complete anonymity for participants so that I could not identify individuals based on their responses, eight students who were not invited to participate in the study completed the survey on SurveyMonkey. To address this limitation, future study could be conducted using a different data collection procedure, where data could be collected in the classroom to ensure that only students who met the study's criteria completed the survey and surveys from the two schools could be numbered or coded to protect participants' identities.

Third, in order to obtain information on students' attitudes toward the police, students were asked to self-report their attitudes using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from agree to strongly disagree. In future studies, researchers could incorporate other measures of juveniles' attitudes toward the police. In addition, a quasiexperimental research design was used in this study. Therefore, the same variables were only measured on one occasion for each participant. The question of causality could not be tested definitively but the relationships obtained could be used to support potential causal interpretations. This design helped me to determine the direction and the strength of the association between the variables.

A fourth limitation of the study was self-report or social desirability bias, which had to be considered as students may have wanted to be perceived positively so they may not have responded honestly. However, it is assumed that students openly and honestly answered the survey questions. In addition, when completing self-report data, participants

may not accurately or fully self-evaluate themselves. However, in order to address this bias, the Likert scale format was used; therefore, students were not able to include additional information that they believed were important.

Fifth, the study was limited in scope because students' attitudes toward other areas of the criminal justice system was not examined as the focus was on participants' attitudes toward the police. Policing is only one of the three primary elements of the American criminal justice system; while the prison and court systems are the other two elements. Therefore, in future studies, researchers could further examine high school students' attitudes about all three elements of the criminal justice system.

### **Significance of the Study**

This quasiexperimental quantitative study has far reaching social change implications. Finding from the study added to the literature and advanced knowledge by filling a gap in the public policy and administration literature with respect to 12th-grade high school students' attitudes toward the police. Even though no significant differences were found between the two groups, education policymakers may be encouraged to continue to look for ways to improve juveniles' attitudes toward police, but a course in the middle and high school curricula may not be the best way to spend those limited resources. As previous researchers have found (Hinds, 2007; Hurst, 2007; Schuck, 2013; Watkins & Maume, 2012), adults tend to perceive the police more positively than juveniles. In addition, Schuck (2013) related that juveniles, especially minority youths, are more subjected to surveillance, harassment, and derogatory treatment by the police. The researcher related that such scrutiny by the police contributes to juveniles' negative



attitudes of law enforcement. As Gadek (2016) reported, 99% of high schools in the United States do not offer criminal justice courses in their school curricula. Thus, it is recommended that school district leaders continue to look for ways to improve students' attitudes toward police that positively affect their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors, which could improve community relations between juveniles and law enforcement officials, along with saving the lives of many youths.

In addition, along with the field of public policy and administration, a wide array of other fields might be interested in the research findings, to include the fields of criminal justice, criminal law, and criminal psychology. The findings from the study are also applicable to many agencies and organizations, to include the department of education and law enforcement agencies, police unions, and neighborhood crime watch groups. University and college leaders, such as the deans of the criminal justice department, may also be interested in the research findings.

Findings indicated that there was no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not, and there was no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police. However, findings from study will lead to positive social change by assisting students, parents, educators, governmental officials, and law enforcement professionals in better understanding the relationship between students' attitudes toward the police and criminal justice courses. This in turn can be used to develop policies and programs geared towards improving juvenile and police relations.

## Summary

In this study, I compared the attitudes of 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. This study helped to fill the gap in the public policy and administration literature by examining whether an intervention such as a criminal justice course had any effect on juveniles' attitudes toward the police. Reisig and Parks's (2000) three conceptual models served as the theoretical frameworks in this study: (a) the experience with police model, (b) the quality of life model, and (c) the neighborhood context model. Hurst's (2007) survey was used in this study. Participants of this study were a purposive sample of 68 male and female students who attend two public high schools in the State of Massachusetts. Data analysis includes various sets of statistical analysis, such as descriptive statistics, two sample *t* test for independent samples, test of homogeneity of variances, and one-way ANOVA. Findings from study will lead to positive social change by assisting students, parents, educators, governmental officials, and law enforcement professionals in better understanding the relationship between students' attitudes toward the police and criminal justice courses, which in turn can be used to develop policies and programs geared towards improving juvenile and police relations.

In Chapter 1, I included the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses, theoretical framework, nature of the study, operational definition of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and a summary. In Chapter 2, I include the

literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, introduction to the literature review, police encounters and negative juveniles' attitudes, family and media influences on juveniles' negative attitudes, gender and juveniles' negative attitudes, race and juveniles' negative attitudes, and public schools and changing juveniles' negative attitudes, and a summary and conclusions. In Chapter 3, I include the introduction, research design and rationale, methodology, data analysis plan, threats to validity and reliability, informed consent and ethical considerations, and a summary. In Chapter 4, I include the introduction, data collection, results, and a summary. In Chapter 5, I include the introduction, interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and a conclusion to the study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

The purpose of this quasiexperimental quantitative study was to compare the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. Researchers have found that juveniles' attitudes and behaviors toward the police are less positive than adults' attitudes and behaviors towards the police (Hurst, 2007; Watkins & Maume, 2012). Stewart, Morris, and Weir (2014) reported that juveniles consume a considerable amount of police attention and resources and the frequency of negative contacts with the police shapes their negative attitudes toward law enforcement. Legal socializations and the media portrayal of the criminal justice system are also possible sources of juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police (Surette, 2007; Watkins & Maume, 2012). Wiley and Esbensen (2013) suggested that patrol tactics such as *stop and frisk* contributes to juveniles' negative attitudes toward law enforcement officers.

Despite the Law Related Education (LRE) Act of 1978, which advocates for students to be educated on law, the criminal justice system, and fundamental constitutional rights of citizens, 99% of secondary schools in the United States do not offer criminal justice curriculum to their students (Gadek, 2016, para. 1). However, some states have recognized the positive effects that a comprehensive criminal justice curriculum offers youth. Cobkit and Chan (2011) reported that several states have mandated criminal justice curriculums into their secondary schools' academic agendas.

However, Taylor (2013) related that state-mandated criminal justice curriculums were designed to introduce students to potential career opportunities, instead of counteracting negative information from secondary sources about the criminal justice system, which may have an effect on juveniles' attitudes. Therefore, the effect a criminal justice curriculum has on changing juveniles' attitudes toward the police is relatively unknown. The current study added new knowledge to the existing body of research by examining the effect a criminal justice curriculum at the secondary school level has on shaping juveniles' attitudes toward the police. In Chapter 2, I include the literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, introduction to the literature review, police encounters and negative juveniles' attitudes, family and media influences on juveniles' negative attitudes, gender and juveniles' negative attitudes, race and juveniles' negative attitudes, and public schools and changing juveniles' negative attitudes, and a summary and conclusions.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The literature search strategies included an in-depth search in Walden University Library research databases to include ProQuest and all EBSCOhost databases such as SAGE premier and ProQuest Criminal Justice. In addition, the Old Colony Public Library Network and Google Scholar were utilized. Search terms included *juveniles' attitudes and police*, *gender and juveniles' attitudes and police*, *race and juveniles' attitudes and police*, *family and media and attitude and police*, *experience with police model*, *quality of life model*, and *neighborhood context model*. Additional articles were examined after reviewing the reference section from each article and dissertation.

## Theoretical Foundation

Reisig and Parks's (2000) experience with the police model, the quality of life model, and the neighborhood context model served as the theoretical foundations for this study. I discussed the theoretical propositions of the models and how they have been applied previously in ways similar to this study. This section is organized in the following subsections: overview, experience with police model, quality of life model, and neighborhood context model.

### Overview

Reisig and Parks used the police model, the quality of life model, and the neighborhood context model to conduct a hierarchical analysis of citizens' satisfaction of police services. According to Reisig and Parks (2000), while the models are frequently used in the academic community to assess police and community relations, the majority of the studies on this topic use experience with the police model to quantify communities' approval or disapproval of services provided by law enforcement practitioners. The quality of life model was explored in relation to juveniles' satisfaction with the police. Reisig and Parks noted that some scholar practitioners have used the quality of life model to examine the relationship between community members and the police. Kelling and Wilson (1982) used the *broken window theory* in their study when exploring the source of crime in communities. While this theory postulates that community conditions breed crime, it rests on the same principles that comprise the quality of life model. In their study titled, *Fixing Broken Windows*, Kelling and Coles (1996) argued that the fear of crime is related to the quality of life in the neighborhood because people distrust

strangers, including the police who are often strangers in the community due to their mobile patrol strategies.

Very few studies have used the neighborhood context model to evaluate the relationship between the police and community members (Reisig & Parks, 2000).

According to Reisig and Parks (2000), the neighborhood context model hypothesizes that the cultural composition of the neighborhood shapes residents' attitudes and behaviors toward the police. The researchers noted that the neighborhood context model examines community and police relations from a macrolevel; thus, using the attitudes and behaviors of community members as the primary unit of analysis. The attitudes and behaviors toward the police tend to differ among cultures and gaining a better understanding of those cultural differences will help to address citizens' negative opinions toward law enforcement.

### **Experience With Police Model**

The experience with police model pertains to individuals' satisfaction with the police, which is mainly based on their previous contacts (Reisig & Parks, 2002).

According to Reisig and Parks (2000), estrangement between the police and individuals develop when people's expectations of police action are not met. Research tends to focus on whether the type of contact affects individuals' satisfaction and whether individuals' satisfaction is influenced by the way the police handled the encounters. Previous studies using the experience with the police model identified statistical correlations between the type of police encounter and citizens' attitudes toward the police.

In their study on how citizens' opinions and attitudes are shaped by police encounters, Bordua and Tifft (1971) suggested that unmet expectations, officers' actions once on the scene of the incident, and the officers' attitudes while addressing the complaints, contributes to the shaping of citizens' attitudes toward law enforcement. Approximately 92% of the citizens surveyed reported that they were very angry when the officer on scene did not meet their expectation (Bordua & Tifft, 1971; Reisig & Parks, 2000). Furstenberg and Wellford (1973) found a correlation between citizens' satisfaction with the police and officers' behavior once on the scene of the incident. Studies using citizens and police encounter as a unit of analysis to measure citizens' attitudes are sparse because they depend largely on a dataset gathered by interviewing people who were consumers of police services and who could be biased of the police due to their encounter (Bordua & Tifft, 1971; Furstenberg & Wellford, 1973; Reisig & Parks, 2000). Reisig and Parks (2000) noted that many studies address this limitation in the dataset by employing a survey method to gain an understanding of peoples' opinion on policing instead of interviewing consumers of police services. Using a survey design, researchers found that individuals who had unfavorable contact with the police are more likely to have a negative opinion about the police than those who had favorable contact or no contact with the police (Dean, 1980; Jacobs, 1971; Parks 1976; Smith & Hawkins, 1973). Therefore, contact with the police influence people's opinions about the quality of police services (Dean, 1980).

The manner in which police contact was initiated also influences citizens' opinions about police services. Researchers found that people who were stopped by the



police had a different opinion about police services than individuals who initiated contact with the police (Dean 1980; Webb & Marshal, 1995). The types and purposes of citizens' contact with the police are strong predictors of citizens' attitudes and behaviors toward the police (Reisig & Parks, 2000). Scaglione and Condon (1980) argued that personal history; specifically, the way in which police officers treated citizens during their encounter, has a greater impact on individuals' overall attitudes toward the police than socioeconomic status such as income, education, or race. Furthermore, the researchers argued that a positive policing style would make significant strides to improve community-police relations.

In their discussion of juveniles' attitudes toward the police, Watkins and Maume (2012) reported that researchers have found that juveniles' attitudes toward the police is less favorable than adults. However, the researchers noted that the identity of the police should be made explicit in research studies, such as SROs, private security personnel, and patrol or beat officers on the streets. Therefore, by precisely identifying the source of juveniles' attitudes toward the police, researchers will then be able to draw strong inferences from research findings. Based on Reisig and Park's experience with police model, Watkins and Maume argued that juveniles are unlikely to have uniform opinions of SROs, private security officers, and patrol officers.

### **Quality of Life Model**

According to Reisig and Parks (2000), the quality of life model is guided by the tenet that individuals' perceptions of neighborhood conditions, such as crime, social disorder, and physical decay affect levels of satisfaction with the police. Therefore,

residents hold the police accountable for the quality of life in their neighborhood. As a result, if individuals have problematic neighborhood perceptions, then they will tend to have more negative sentiments toward the police. In addition, the quality of life model posits that individuals believe their neighbors share responsibility to maintain neighborhood order and reduce crime.

While a main premise of the quality of life model is that citizens are responsible for civilities within their neighborhood, another premise is that citizens hold the police responsible for their neighborhood's quality of life (Reisig & Parks, 2000). Reisig and Giacomazzi (1996) explored citizens' perception of community policing and found an inverse relationship between the fear and perception of crime and officers' demeanor toward citizens while working in the neighborhood. Kelling and Coles (1996) related that police organizations are suited to lead the effort in restoring order in the community, but the motivation for change in policing practices and tactics should begin with citizens residing in the neighborhoods. Even with citizens urging the police to address the crime problem in the community, police officers should not work alone. Instead, law enforcement should work in conjunction with political leaders. The courts should also validate the police's purpose through rulings by sending a message to criminals that operating their criminal enterprise in communities will not be tolerated (Kelling & Coles, 1996). Kelling and Coles (1996) reported that the citizens' neighborhood association played a critical role in convincing the New York Police Department to change its patrol practices that resulted in the community taking back the Bryant Parks section of the city.

Citizens who embraced the concept of community and were willing to provide mutual protections against criminals are significantly more content with law enforcement than citizens who have outsourced their safety to law enforcement agencies (Cao, Frank, & Cullen, 1996). Reisig and Parks (2000) asserted that the academic community is still undecided about whether the quality of life model explains the racial differences in citizens' attitudes and demeanors toward the police. The researchers related that since this model is predicated on individuals' perceptions of community conditions and not the ecological circumstances that tend to invite criminal behavior to the neighborhood, the model is ill-suited to account for racial differences in citizens' attitudes and opinion toward the police. Kelling and Coles (1996) noted that researchers have used the quality of life model to explain the impact that economically depressed neighborhoods have on the quality of life in major urban settings and to identify the type of collaborative efforts between neighbors that is needed to restore order in their communities.

In their study on the evaluation of public satisfaction with law enforcement services in Turkey, Muş, Köksal, and Yeşilyurt (2014) used the quality of life model, along with the demographic model and the confrontation/experiential model to explain public satisfaction with security services. The researchers found that women's satisfaction level for security services was higher than men's. Women had less contact with law enforcement. In addition, the higher the participant's education level, the lower the satisfaction level with law enforcement because expectation from security services increased by the level of education. Many factors affected participants' security services level of satisfaction, such as age, education, victimization and fear of crime, income,

marriage, gender, and rural-urban location. Therefore, the underlying causes are diverse; hence, public services for different communities should be tailored to the needs and expectations of its residents.

Of the three models, the quality of life model was the best fit for this study. Since numerous researchers have found that citizens' opinions and behaviors are shaped by their encounters with police officers working in official or semiofficial capacities (e.g., Bordua & Tift, 1971; Dean, 1980; Fursentberg & Willford, 1973; Jacobs, 1971; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Scaglione & Condon, 1980; Smith & Hawkins, 1973), this model was used to explain the effect that a comprehensive criminal justice education has on shaping juveniles' attitudes and behaviors toward the police, as well as other elements of the criminal justice system. Some researchers who have focused on police-community relations used the quality of life model to understand how citizens' opinions and attitudes toward the police are shaped (Reisig & Parks, 2000). In this study, I hypothesized that there was a significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not; however, no significant differences were found.

### **Neighborhood Context Model**

According to Reisig and Parks (2000), the neighborhood context model is different from the quality of life model as the unit of analysis is not on the individual (microlevel) but rather on the neighborhood (macrolevel). Researchers using this model have relied on neighborhood-level census data, crime rate, and aggregated citizen survey data. Some studies, however, have focused on neighborhood differences in satisfaction

with the police (e.g., Dunham & Alpert, 1988; Jacob's, 1971). Dunham and Alpert (1988), and Jacobs (1971) found that African Americans expressed more negative sentiments towards the police than their Caucasian counterparts. Jacob (1971) found that culture influences people's opinion about the quality of police services in their neighborhood. Schafer, Huebner, and Bynum (2003) found that citizens' perceptions of the police are formed within the milieu of their neighborhood culture and context.

Researchers have studied whether a community's socioeconomic status affects the public's perception of quality police services (Dunham & Alpert, 1998; Reisig & Giacomazzi, 1998). In their study on subcultural tolerance to deviant behavior, Sampson and Jeglum-Bartusch (1988) found that neighborhood structural characteristics have more of an influence on citizens' normative orientation towards criminal justice, law, and deviant behavior than subcultural norms. They argued that the neighborhood ecological situation, which includes disadvantages in society, large immigrant concentration associated with inequalities, and social disenfranchisement, tend to shape citizens' sense of satisfaction with the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the researchers noted that citizens residing in inner-city communities tend to show an increased level of legal cynicism, dissatisfaction with law enforcement, and an elevated tolerance for deviant behavior.

Innovative policing patrol strategies such as community policing is pivotal on citizens' involvement in restoring order to the community (Kelling & Coles, 1996; Trojanowicz, Kappeler, Gaines, & Bucquerox, 1990). Citizens' misgivings toward the purpose and function of law enforcement, particularly patrol police officers, are

pernicious to the overall objective of law enforcement (Schafer et al., 2003). Schafer et al. (2003) argued that the police can only achieve their objective when having the full support of the community. The notion that the community and the police must work in concert to address criminal behavior forms the foundation for what the British call *policing by consent* (Carter, 2002). Scaglione and Condon (1980) reported that traditional police education programs that emphasizes the positive side of policing, such as crime reports, clearing rates, and guns taken off the streets, have limited success with improving community-police relations. The researchers found that broad-based programs that focus on police officers and citizens acting in an official capacity would be considerably more effective than traditional programs aimed at improving police relations with the community.

In his research on the effects of assimilation on Hispanics and their opinion of the local police, Garcia (2012) noted the importance of gauging the public's attitudes toward the police. In his study, the researcher included assimilation variables, as well as other independent variables such as a neighborhood context model, demographic model, and a police/citizen interaction model. Garcia found significant findings related to the neighborhood and Hispanic participants' attitudes toward the police. First, crime victimization had an effect on general attitudes and a stronger effect on specific trust. Thus, the higher the level of victimization, the lower the opinion of the police. Once Hispanics became crime victims, their faith in the police system decreased. Second, fear of crime had a strong effect on general attitudes and also affected specific trust. Third, collective efficacy was significant on both general attitudes and specific trust, but the

statistical level was higher for specific trust. Neighborhood context had a significant influence on Hispanic's attitudes toward the police.

While there are many researcher who explored citizens' negative attitudes toward the police (e.g., Dean, 1980; Kappeler & Gaines, 1998; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Scaglione & Condon, 1980), research is limited on how to foster positive citizens' attitudes toward the police. Furthermore, researchers also explored the benefits of community policing (e.g., Plummer, 1999; Skogan, 2004; Trojanowicz et al., 1990), but failed to offer solutions to solving the contentious relationship between the police and youths in the community. This study addressed a gap in the literature by determining whether educating youths during their high school years on the role the criminal justice system plays in society will create a generation of adults that are more willing to engage in collaborative initiatives with police officers in future years. Therefore, in this study, I addressed whether the use of the traditional education system is the best suited method to teach youths about the criminal justice instead of untraditional methods of learning such as street knowledge, social constructions, and learning through other peoples' historical encounters with unprofessional criminal justice practitioners, which shapes their opinions and behaviors about the criminal justice system.

### **Introduction**

Numerous researchers have explored juveniles' negative attitudes and behaviors towards the police (e.g., Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Chow, 2011; Dirikx, Gelders, & Parmentier, 2012; Gau, 2012; Hurst 2007; Reisig, Wolfe, & Holtfreter, 2011; Romain & Hassell, 2014; Rosenbaum, Graziano, Stephens, & Schuck, 2011; Morris, & Weir, 2014;

Watkins & Maume, 2012). The researchers explained factors that contributed to juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police, such as various social conditions. Dirikx et al. (2014) noted that perceptions of police performance and fairness are important factors that contribute to citizens' attitudes toward the police.

In the literature review, I explored the various sources of juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police, which is in line with my research questions. The literature review is organized in the follow sections: police encounters and negative juveniles' attitudes, family and media influences on juveniles' negative attitudes, gender and juveniles' negative attitudes, race and juveniles' negative attitudes, and public schools and changing juveniles' negative attitudes.

### **Police Encounters and Negative Juveniles' Attitudes**

Several researchers used the frequency of encounter theory to explain the relationship between police officers and the youths in communities (Hurst, 2007; Stewart et al., 2014; Watkins & Maume, 2012). According to Hurst (2007), a main premise of the frequency of encounter theory is that the quality of juveniles' encounter with the police normally influences their attitudes and opinions about police officers. The geographical location or the neighborhood context does not mitigate the applicability of the frequency of contact theory. Hurst reported that similar to their urban counterparts, rural youths' negative personal or third party experiences with the police resulted in negative attitudes and less than favorable opinions. The researcher noted that juveniles tend to have a higher level of contact with the police and such frequency in contact shapes their attitudes and opinion toward the police.



Definition of a police officer is also important in order to understand juveniles' attitudes toward the police. Watkins and Maume (2012) argued that researchers' failure to explicitly define what they mean by the police is problematic because juveniles frequently encounter different police officers, such as SROs and private security officers, who have different police duties. Youths' frequent contact with law enforcement is not the only source of their negative attitudes toward the police (Hurst, 2007; Romain & Hassell, 2014; Stewart et al., 2014). According to Watkins and Maume (2011), there are three additional sources that contribute to youths' negative perception of the police. First, youth perceptions of the police during their formative years have an effect on how they view police later in life. Second, police officers have considerable authority over the lives of youths because of their responsibility to enforce status offense laws such as curfew, truancy, and underage drinking. Third, youths can be rebellious and police officers are one of the authority figures who exercise control over them.

Youths' views of authority figure have been used to explain their negative attitudes toward law enforcement (Watkins & Maume, 2012). Stewart et al. (2014) noted that juveniles increasingly consume a substantial amount of police time and resources. The nature of the police encounter also has implications on juveniles' attitudes toward the police. Romain and Hassell (2014) noted that police initiated encounters have been rated less favorably than encounters initiated by citizens. Stewart et al. (2014) noted the importance of juveniles having a positive image of the police.

Juveniles' perceptions of legitimacy affect their opinions and attitudes toward the criminal justice system (Hinds, 2007). Hinds (2007) defined legitimacy as a property of

an authority or institution that compels people to believe that the authority or institution should be deferred to and obeyed. Rosenbaum et al. (2011) explored the usefulness of municipal police websites to further enhance community policing. The researchers took the definition of legitimacy a step further and defined police legitimacy as a currency with a value that is solely defined by the public as to the rightfulness of how police conduct themselves when exercising their authority. Schuck (2013) argued that due to the strong relationship between juveniles' perception of police legitimacy and their attitudes toward the police, policymakers should consider the *Drug Abuse Resistance Education* (D.A.R.E.) curriculum as a long-term support for the police.

Other researchers explored the issue of police legitimacy from a different perspective. Kockel (2011) argued that aggressive policing tactics such as *hot spots policing* can significantly damage the sense of police legitimacy in the target community. "Hot spots policing is a place-based strategy that typically entails a concentrated police presence in a small geographic area" (Kochel, 2011, p. 351) "or an area where people have a higher than average risk of victimization" (Eck et al., 2005, p. 2). Gau and Brunson (2011) examined police tactics and legitimacy and noted that *order maintenance policing* strategies have a damaging influence on citizens' perception of police legitimacy as well. According to Sousa and Kelling (2014), from a contemporary perspective, order maintenance policing, which is also called broken window policing or quality of life policing, "is a police practice that involves managing minor offenses and neighborhood disorders in order to address community problems" (p. 3349). Gau and Brunson (2011) found that citizens' perceptions of procedural justice, which refers to

fair treatment by police officers when they exercise their authority, also affects their opinions on police legitimacy.

The legitimacy of policing as a social control institution is predicated on the trust in the benevolence and good will of individual police officers (Gau, 2012). Gau (2012) related that while policing tactics such as consent searches during motor vehicle stops may be defined as a normative model of law enforcement, such policing techniques might erode citizens' sense of law enforcement legitimacy, especially for juveniles who reside in urban environments. A citizen who possesses low levels of legitimacy towards law enforcement is less likely to come forward with information about crime and offenders in the community. Gau examined the effects of consent searches on motorist perceptions of procedural justice. The researcher provided two recommendations for law enforcement agencies that employ consent searches as a routine function of policing and agencies that are considering whether to embrace the practice of consent searches of motor vehicles during traffic stops. The first recommendation is that police executives should evaluate the deleterious effect that consent searches have on the motorists' sense of procedural justice. The second recommendation is that for law enforcement agencies that encourage consent searches during motor vehicle stops, operational policy should demand that the officer be respectful and provide high-quality treatment to the motorist during the traffic stop. Warren (2011) found that vicarious experience and long-standing trust of social institutions influenced the likelihood that people will perceive the police as disrespectful during traffic stops. Juveniles' attitudes toward police legitimacy are directly linked to the police's use of procedural justice (Hinds, 2007).

To further explain citizens' attitudes toward the police, Dirikx et al. (2012) presented three main perspectives. According to the researchers, citizens based their attitudes toward the police on the performance-based perspective, the distributive justice perspective, or the procedural justice perspective. People who look to the performance-based perspective to determine their attitudes toward the police are examining police agencies ability to control crime in their neighborhoods. If people believe that police officers are effective in controlling crime, they are likely to have a positive attitude toward the police. Distributive justice perspective pertains to the fairness by which police services are distributed across society. Citizens who look to the distributed justice perspective to determine their attitudes toward the police are usually concerned about the fairness of distributions associated with police services. Finally, the procedural justice perspective is based on the individual police officer's sense of fairness. Citizens who look to this perspective to determine their attitudes toward the police are usually basing their decision on personal or vicarious experiences with the police, or both.

Juveniles views on police legitimacy are not only formed by their normative judgment of the police, but also by how well the police perform their duties in maintaining order in society (Hinds, 2007). While adults tend to use procedural justice as a factor when determining police legitimacy, juveniles rely heavily on past police encounters to shape their opinions about police legitimacy (Hinds, 2007). Taylor's (2011) process-based model, which is also referred to as procedural justice, suggests that police can improve their perceived legitimacy and trustworthiness when they exercise their authority in a fair and equitable manner. Posick, Rocque, and McDevitt (2013) found that

people in minority groups tend to have less confidence in the police and perceive less procedural justice during police encounters than Caucasians.

While police administrators may view order maintenance policing as an excellent crime control tool, citizens' perceptions of such policing practice can be quite different and their attitudes toward the police can be negatively affected by what is perceived as harsh and unnecessary police behavior (Gau & Brunson, 2010). Police can improve citizens' perception of law enforcement legitimacy when officers exercise procedural fairness during citizen or police initiated encounters (Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2014). Researchers' findings indicated that African Americans are subjected to pedestrian and motor vehicle stops at a disproportionate rate; therefore, African American youths' negative opinions toward the police are more likely to be shaped by the police officers exercising poor procedural justice during police initiated encounters (Fallik & Novak, 2012; Gau, 2012; Gau & Brunson, 2010). Posick et al. (2013) findings suggested that citizens' satisfaction with the police is linked to their confidence in the police and the ability of the police to conduct themselves fairly and professionally when exercising their law enforcement duties. Citizens' view of law enforcement agencies as a legitimate authority comprising of trustworthy practitioners are critical to the policing function because such normative opinions about the police leads to compliance to the law, obedience to the police, and collaboration between the community and the police to address crime (Nix et al., 2014). Peoples' willingness to obey the law is not shaped by fear or consequences in breaking the law, but rather by their strong belief that law enforcement agencies are legitimate institutions that have a viable purpose in society

(Schulhofer, Tyler, & Huq, 2011). Nevertheless, residents in neighborhoods under anomomic conditions, such as the breakdown in social standards and public unrest, are less likely to view police actions as procedurally fair (Nix et al., 2014).

Lerman and Weaver (2013) argued that aggressive police patrol practices such as *stop-and-frisk* alienates juveniles in the community and results in reluctance among community residences to engage in civic government. The authors further reported that negative police encounters erode public confidence in the police more than positive encounters with the police. This asymmetrical relationship between negative and positive police encounters is important in order to understand the pernicious nature of negative police and citizen encounters (Lerman & Weaver, 2013). Similarly, Wiley and Esbensen (2013) noted the effects of negative patrol practices in their assessment of stop-and-frisk practices and related that police aggressive patrol procedures can have an adverse effect on juveniles' attitudes toward the police. Lerman and Weaver (2013) reported that while good police work is necessary for a democratic society, unnecessarily aggressive policing tactics that routinely detain citizens and criminalize their behaviors results in tension between law enforcement and youths in communities. In addition, aggressive policing tactics deter citizens engagement with other local government institutions. Citizens' perception of police legitimacy is critical to the stability of local government. Zernova (2013) related that if citizens view the police as illegitimate and a threat to their security, then the legitimacy of the entire state structure is at risk. Promoting police practices that are predicated on procedural fairness and a strong sense of legitimacy may provide the

perfect avenue towards mending differences between the police and youths in communities (Romain & Hassell, 2014).

### **Family and Media Influences on Juveniles' Negative Attitudes**

Researchers discussed additional factors that influence juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police, such as familial and media influences. Watkins and Maume (2012) noted that the premise of legal socialization is that peoples' views and opinions about the police are shaped during their childhood and adolescent years of development. Reisig et al. (2011) asserted that legal socialization is an internalizing process that forms values, perceptions, and attitudes toward legal authority figures. Romain and Hassell (2014) suggested that mothers play a role in young African American males' attitude formation towards the police. The authors noted that African American males who have a close relationship with their mothers tend to hold more negative attitudes toward the police. According to Reisig et al. (2011), legitimacy and legal cynicism towards law enforcement is a product of legal socialization and both can encourage apathy toward all aspects of the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the researchers reported that criminal behavior is significantly shaped by both legal cynicism and the offender's sense of legal legitimacy.

Researchers studied the effect that communication media has on shaping juveniles' attitude and perception of the police. Surette (2007) reported that juveniles' perception of the American criminal justice system is overwhelmingly influenced by mass media's glorification of crime fighting, which is viewed on the evening news broadcasts, interactive video games, reality television, and movie theaters through the

country. The researcher coined the term *social construction* to explain the media's ability to influence the public's perception and opinion on any social issue or entity. Social construction postulates that the mass media is self-serving and takes actual events in society and reshapes them to fit a particular agenda. A body of research examined the influence of socialization on shaping juveniles' attitude and perception towards the police. Romain and Hassell (2014) reported that peers have a greater influence on shaping juveniles' perceptions of the police, which includes general perception and the likelihood of having prior negatively rated contact. However, the researchers found little empirical evidence to support the notion that parents, neighbors, or media are influential in shaping juveniles' attitudes toward the police.

Scholars have created theories to explain the social forces that motivate citizens to obey rules and authority figures. The *social control theory* identifies the social forces that motivate juveniles and adults to conform to society's rules, which includes family, schools, moral values, and belief about government (Adler, Mueller, & Laufer, 2012). Adler et al. (2012) reported that in urban communities, juvenile delinquent behavior, antisocial values, and attitudes are learned and transmitted from one generation to the next. During adolescent development, juveniles' attitudes are usually parroted from the perspective of their caregiver (Schuck, 2013). Since juveniles experience frequent encounters with the police (Stewart et al., 2014), a criminal justice curriculum at the secondary school level is the perfect point in a young person life to begin the process of changing their minds about the police's purpose and role in a democratic society. For this reason, the criminal justice system must be accurately illustrated for high school students;



therefore, it is imperative to offer an introductory criminal justice curriculum that describes the general principles of the profession and the role it plays in stabilizing society (Taylor, 2011).

School administrators continued use of SROs is a potential source of juveniles' negative perception of police officers. Contemporary public middle and high schools have been described as hot beds for violence in many newspaper articles, which has prompted public school districts throughout the country to bring in SROs to promote safety and reduce crime in schools (Bracy, 2010). Bracy (2010) related that SROs are in a prime position to assist in the process of educating youths in areas such as drug prevention, safety, drunk driving, and share information about the police profession. Instead of using SROs as a resource to promote goodwill between law enforcement and students, many school administrators are finding ways to work with SROs to circumvent legal standards that protect students' rights while in school. Such collaborations between school administrators and SROs can potentially present a considerable impediment to establishing goodwill between youths and the police. Goodwill and collaborative relationships between youths and the police are a fallacy as long as administrators and SROs continue to feed the school-to-prisoner pipeline through the use of zero-tolerance discipline policies, school-based arrest, and exclusion from school. School administrators should keep in mind that students are more likely to obey school rules when they perceive them as fair (Farina, 2011; Kupchik, 2010, 2011).

### **Gender and Juveniles' Negative Attitudes**

Researchers have found that juveniles' perception of the police differs by gender. Romain and Hassell (2014) reported that while males are more likely to interact with the overall criminal justice system, females are more likely to express safety concerns in their neighborhoods and their concerns for safety influences their evaluation of the police effectiveness in their communities. Warren (2011) related that the vicarious experience of police misconduct is a greater predictor of girls' attitudes toward the police than race. Gabbidon, Higgins, and Potter (2011) noted that African American females residing in the southern region of the United States were less likely to report unfair treatment by the police. Schuck (2013) reported that the root of racial differences in attitudes toward the police lies in early childhood. Minority children tend to form negative opinions about the police earlier than their Caucasian counterparts. According to Schuck, by fifth grade, minority youths begin expressing negative behaviors and opinions toward the police more than Caucasian youths. The researcher also noted that regardless of their race, juveniles' negative experience with the police is normally associated with negative attitudes toward the police while positive contact with the police is directly linked to positive attitude about the police.

### **Race and Juveniles' Negative Attitudes**

Researchers have examined the relationship between race and juveniles' opinions and behaviors toward the police (e.g., Brunson & Weitzer, 2009; Cochran & Warren, 2012; Gabbidon et al., 2011; Gau & Brunson, 2010; Hinds, 2007; Hurst, 2007; Lake, 2013; Lurigio, Greenleaf, & Flexon, 2009; Posick et al., 2013; Rengifo & Fratello, 2014;

Romain & Hassell, 2014; Warren, 2011). Law enforcement agencies have engaged in unfair treatment of African Americans, first in the form of slave patrols and later as organized law enforcement agencies (Alexander, 2010; Bonner, 2014; Gabbidon et al., 2011). Posick et al. (2013) reported that African Americans and other minorities groups have less confidence in the police to exercise appropriate procedural justice during encounters due to a history of unfair treatment by the police. Bonner (2011) noted that while police legitimacy is predicated on the law of the land, early police practices sustained societal institutions that were injurious to African Americans and other minority groups. Law enforcement duties such as supporting the slavery institution, enforcing segregation laws, overt discrimination, and excluding certain demographics from main stream American all formed a cultural foundation that persists in law enforcement agencies to this day (Bonner, 2011; Posick et al., 2013).

When officers have shown they can exercise their authority fairly and equitably, citizens were more likely to be supportive of the police and respect the broad range of discretion that comes along with police work (Gau & Brunson, 2010). Gau and Brunson (2010) explored order maintenance policing and procedural justice and found that African American adolescents and adults are more likely to report dissatisfaction and distrust with the police than members of other groups. Rengifo and Fratello (2014) noted that citizens residing in poor, high-crime communities tend to have less positive views of law enforcement than other city residents. Warren (2011) argued that African American tend to express more dissatisfaction with police than Caucasian because they are often exposed to aggressive police patrol, racial bias policing, and police brutality. Similarly,

Romain and Hassell (2014) reported that African American juveniles were more likely to view the police from a negative perspective in comparison to Caucasian juveniles. Cochran and Warren (2012) indicated that Hispanics, as well as African Americans, hold lower levels of confidence and trust in the police than Caucasians and citizens of other racial groups. While Hispanic and African American juveniles were more likely to form negative opinions toward the police, African American youths reported a higher frequency of prior contact with the police than their Hispanic and Caucasian counterparts (Romain & Hassell, 2014). Therefore, it is incumbent on police executives and supervisors to emphasize to patrol officers and others in law enforcement agencies that work routinely with the public that professionalism and respectful treatment toward citizens is of paramount importance (Gau & Brunson, 2010).

Researchers have examined the relevance of police officers' race on citizens' evaluation of law enforcement effectiveness in their communities. Cochran and Warren (2010) noted that the debate about police officers' race has its roots in the 1970s and early 1980s and a small amount of empirical research focuses on officer's race and citizens' perception. The researchers related that officers' race might be a contributing factor in shaping citizens' perceptions of police encounters, particularly among African American citizens. Cochran and Warren related that African American citizens are most skeptical of police behavior and are most likely to perceive their treatment by police officers as unfair.

Race is a powerful factor in understanding public attitudes and behaviors towards police officers (Hinds, 2007; Hurst, 2007; Lake, 2013). Lake (2013) noted that Caucasian

juveniles hold more favorable attitudes toward the police than African American or Hispanic youths. Hurst (2007) argued that police officers in rural communities are most likely to view African American juveniles as disrespectful. African American youths tend to have a negative view about the purpose and intention of law enforcement. Hurst found that African American teenagers were more negative of the police in their overall assessment, but their evaluation of police treatment after an encounter was closely aligned to their Caucasian counterparts. Race tend to dictate how police functions will be viewed by juveniles. The researcher further noted that Caucasian juveniles were more in favor of police and had greater satisfaction with police service role; however, their African American counterparts were likely to rate the police as high in conducting crime fighting duties but they were less satisfaction with the police. Brunson and Weitzer (2009) found that African American youths viewed police as bullies in uniforms, which is in contrast to their Caucasian counterparts. Thus, African American youths had no faith in the police as guardians or protectors of citizens' rights.

While unwelcome police encounters occurred less frequency for Caucasian citizens, African American citizens tend to express a sense of hopelessness because they believe that the police will always view them as nothing other than a symbolic assailant (Brunson & Weitzer, 2009). Warren (2011) related that citizens' perceptions of the police are influenced by more than their direct encounter with law enforcement; thus, vicarious experience and their views of dominant social institutions, such as schools, housing, and the overall criminal justice system are also viewed as unfair or discriminatory. Warren noted that law enforcement is no longer viewed as an autonomous institution but instead

an extension of other governmental entities that are perceived as disrespectful and unfair. Thus, any effort to change citizens' view of any governmental agency must begin with assessing citizens' views and beliefs about the governmental structure.

African Americans are more likely to have negative contact with the police and reported greater incidents of mistreatment by the police (Lurigio et al., 2009; Romain & Hassell, 2014). Researchers have explored the differences between African Americans' and Latinos' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors toward law enforcement. Lurigio et al. (2009) found that African Americans and Latinos have different opinions and perceptions of law enforcement. The researchers further found that Latinos are more likely to remain respectful of the police even if police officers are disrespectful to them during the encounter. Lurigio et al. noted that Latinos commitment to respect adults in positions of authority is related to cultural conditioning, which is a deeply rooted value in a large majority of Latino households.

Along with race, location and social environment in which juveniles operate tend to shape attitudes and opinions about the police (Hurst, 2007). Rengifo and Fratello (2014) reported that foreign-born, first generation youths in the United States, tend to have a positive perception of law enforcement, while second generation youths with one foreign-born parent tend to have more negative perceptions of police legitimacy. Similar to Watkins and Maume's (2012) legal socialization theory, Brunson and Weitzer (2011) reported that adults in inner-city neighborhoods educate youths on how to handle their interactions with the police. Brunson and Weitzer further noted that there is an intergenerational transmission of proper etiquette by African American adults to the

younger generation regarding interacting with the police. Similarly, Warren (2011) related that many minority parents instruct their children on how to behave when they encounter the police and those conversations can pass on negative attitudes and behaviors towards the police.

Researchers have also found that youths' attitudes toward school is a predictor of their attitudes toward the police. Chow (2011) reported that juveniles' who enjoyed being in the classroom and respected teachers' authority were more likely to respect authority figures. In addition, the researcher related that adolescents who respect principals, teachers, and staff authority were more likely to adhere to societal positive norms and values. Brunson and Weitzer (2011) noted parallels between the code of the street, which governs inner-city youths behavior when operating in the neighborhood and the admonitory conversations between adults and juveniles concerning police encounters. The researcher noted that similar to the street code where respect is demanded, respect is important for juveniles' when interacting with the police. Similarly, Warren (2011) reported that Caucasian youths are more likely to hear negative stories about the police from news media outlets, while African American youths are more likely to hear negative stories about law enforcement from their family members.

In this study, I compared the attitudes of students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. Findings from this study helped in understanding whether juveniles' criminal justice education have a significant effect on youths' attitudes toward the police. Gadek (2016) reported that majority of high

school curriculums in the United States do not include criminal justice. As a result, Brunson and Weizter (2011) related that juveniles in those jurisdictions rely on the code of the street as well as other social entities in order to understand the criminal justice system. Even after Congress passed the LRE Act of 1978, which provided the legal rationale for offering a law-based curriculum to middle and secondary schools students throughout the nation, many school districts neglected to include minimum criminal justice curricula to their course profile (Corbit & Chan, 2011). Some states, however, understood the significance of offering a criminal justice curricula in public schools and incorporated LRE courses in their middle or secondary school programs. According to Corkit and Chan (2011), states such as California, Florida, Nebraska, New York, and Texas offer criminal justice or law courses predicated on the LRE Act to their middle or high school students. While each state LRE curriculum has a particular focus, no state has structured their LRE courses with changing juveniles' attitudes and behaviors toward the criminal justice system and its practitioners as a primary objective. However, Corkit and Chan reported that at-risk students showed positive outcomes after participating in the criminal justice program. Participants not only gained positive attitudes and experiences while attending the program, but they also showed a reduced tendency towards juvenile delinquent behavior, fewer discipline problems in schools, improved attitudes toward authority, and increased personal responsibility.

Youths' negative attitudes and behaviors towards the criminal justice system will be difficult to change as long as mass incarceration is the preferred public policy to address crime (Alexander, 2010). Researchers have found that racial classification is



based on the frequency of contact with the criminal justice system (Saperstein & Penner, 2012; Sapertein, Penner, & Kizer, 2014). Alexander (2010) found that the criminal justice system is used as a vehicle to exclude African Americans from mainstream society. In their work, titled, *The Criminal Justice System and the Racialization of Perceptions*, Saperstein et al. (2014) reported that there is a stereotypical association between blackness and crime. The authors further reported that the frequency of citizens' contact with the criminal justice system tends to shape racial perceptions. Chow (2011) related that since the criminal justice system depends heavily on citizens providing information to the police and serving as witnesses in the adjudicating process, there is intrinsic bias in the United States justice system.

The role of police, courts, and prisons in perpetuating racial inequality has prompted many to refer to the contemporary criminal justice system as the *New Jim Crow* (Alexander, 2010; Saperstein et al., 2014). Saperstein et al. (2014) found that African Americans are viewed as being synonymous with criminal behavior. On the other hand, the researcher noted that Native Americans are often characterized as alcoholics, violent, and prone to crime. Franklin (2013) reported that Native Americans receive longer crime sentences than other groups. Saperstein et al. (2014) related that in an experimental study on judges' sentencing practices, Native Americans were judged more severely when the charges were alcohol-related than their Caucasian counterparts under similar circumstances.

Different groups experience policing in different ways (Bonner, 2014). Bonner (2014) reported that despite the public's expectation of fair and equitable treatment of all

citizens in the United States justice system, the cultural affiliation of the accused tend to determine the level of fair treatment afforded by the justice system. Rocque (2011) argued that there is a statistical correlation between racial disparity in the criminal justice system and minorities' perception of legitimacy of the law. According to Rocque, African Americans tend to view the law as well as criminal justice practitioners with less legitimacy compared to their Caucasian counterparts. To the extent that legitimacy is associated with criminal behavior, racial disparities in the criminal justice system may be linked to the level of legitimacy African Americans and other minority groups have toward to the law (Bonner 2014; Rocque, 2011).

### **Public Schools and Changing Juveniles' Negative Attitudes**

This section discusses numerous ways in which public schools can be influential in changing juveniles' negative attitudes. The public school system has been used to educate students on numerous subjects such as finance, substance abuse, teen pregnancy prevention, digital literacy, and sex and violence prevention. Therefore, public schools can be used to educate juveniles about the criminal justice system, which includes police officers.

A summer job program offers an excellent opportunity for law enforcement officers to educate inner-city youths on the purpose of the criminal justice system. This program could also address issues with police legitimacy by fostering a relationship between police officers and inner-city youths (Bonner, 2014; Nix et al., 2014; Rocque, 2011). Saperstein et al. (2014) related that summer job programs educate at-risk youths who are usually unclear about law enforcement and addresses assumptions associated

with racialization by demystifying law enforcement officers and foster friendships. Chapman-Nyaho, James, and Kwan-Lafond (2011) reported that a police summer program in Toronto, Canada designed for marginalized youth provide learning opportunities for youths and improve the relationship between marginalized youths and police officers. The authors further reported that after 6 weeks of working with the police, the attitudes of these youths changed from avoidance to enthusiasm and endorsement of law enforcement practices. Chapman-Nyaho et al. related that the primary benefit of the summer job program for the police was the enthusiasm and increase knowledge about law enforcement youths gained while working with them, which effectively positioned youths to serve as ambassador for law enforcement when interacting with their peers.

Ultimately, the relationship between police officers and marginalized youths in Toronto benefited the city government (Chapman-Nyaho et al., 2011). Chapman-Nyaho et al. (2011) related that by connecting law enforcement with the segment of the city's population that would most likely consume police resources, police service was promoted as a potential career opportunity for at-risk youths in the city, which would further diversify the police force. In addition to opening youths' minds to prospective employment in law enforcement, the Toronto police summer job program also gave marginalized youths exposure to police officers so that they could learn first-hand about the people behind the badges. The researchers noted that by allowing the police and youths to engage in a collaborative working initiative, it provided an opportunity for each side to dispel any negative stereotype that may have existed between them. Initiatives that bring police officers and youths together, such as Toronto's summer job program, serves

as a perfect example of how education can play a critical role in changing youths' negative behaviors and attitudes toward the police.

The concept of using education as a vehicle to promote change in peoples' attitudes and behavior is not a recent epiphany. Numerous researchers have examined the level of influence education has on changing peoples' attitudes, opinions, and behaviors on a wide range of subjects (Cowburn, 2014; Fox & Cook, 2011; Graves, Sentner, Workman, & Mackey, 2011; Lambert, Camp, Clark, & Jiang, 2011; Mandracchia, Shaw, & Morgan, 2013; Papastergiou, 2008; Strunk, King, Viodourek, & Sorter, 2014; Zhao, French, Manchiaiah, Liang, & Price, 2011). Mandracchia et al. (2013) studied the effects of education on attitudes toward several criminal justice issues in college students enrolled in senior-level psychology programs in comparison to students not enrolled in a psychology program. The researchers' findings indicated that as students were educated about forensic and criminal justice issues their attitudes became more favorable towards the death penalty, insanity defense, and prison reform. Papastergiou (2008) examined the effect students' knowledge about computer games have on youths' learning habits and motivation to learn at the secondary education level. Since computer games have become an integral part of modern society, it is understandable that academic professionals want to gain a better understanding about how computer technology can contribute to education. The researcher further argued that the motivational components of computer games could be combined with school curriculum to create a digital game-based learning approach to education. The author also examined gender in relation to computer game knowledge. Papastergiou hypothesized that since boys tend to gravitate toward computer

games at a greater rate than girls, males would be more susceptible to digital-based learning than their female counterparts.

Research on students' blaming attitudes suggests that education can change people's perceptions to blame victims for criminal behavior committed against them. Fox and Cook (2011) examined the effects of an undergraduate victimology course on students' knowledge and perception of victims' blaming attitudes and found that knowledge of victimology had a significant effect on students' propensity to blame victims for the crime. Findings also indicated that men tend to blame victims for the crime more frequently than their female counterpart. The researchers noted that the effectiveness of education in changing people attitudes and behaviors extends far beyond the academic classroom.

In 1972, Supreme Court Justice Marshall asserted that the public was uneducated about the death penalty and if given the information, people's views and support of public policy would most likely change (Lambert et al., 2011). Lambert et al. (2011) explored how information changes people's opinions and support for controversial public policy such as the death penalty. The researchers reported that information on deterrence and innocence led to a reduction in public support for the death penalty. The researchers had participants read essays on the possibility of executing an innocent person and the lack of deterrence from committing a crime that is associated with the death penalty. After being educated about the deterrence and innocence effect, participants registered a significant decrease in support of the death penalty. However, Lambert et al. reported some deviation in support of attitudinal change based on race and age of participants. The

researchers found that Caucasian participants were less likely to report a change in support for the death penalty in comparison to their minority counterparts. Similar to previous research findings, Lambert et al. found that older individuals were also less likely to report changes in their views on capital punishment as well. Religious attendance had a marginal effect on participants' attitudes toward the death penalty.

Education has also been used as a tool to convince adolescent and young adults to change their music listening habits to avoid music-induced hearing loss (MIHL), which has become increasingly prevalent in those age cohorts (Zhao et al., 2011). Zhao et al. (2011) found that education is not the solution to changing young adults' and adolescents' music listening habits. The authors noted that in regard to youths' decision to listening to loud music for long periods of time, conventional education can only raise awareness at best; thus, much more is needed to effect real change in young people's attitudes and behaviors associated with long exposure to loud music. Since the consequences of prolong exposure to loud music has an insidious effect on hearing loss, it is difficult for youths to fully appreciate the seriousness of a problem that may take years to present.

While research findings have indicated that education is influential and encourages attitudinal and behavior change toward topics that tend to affect both genders, a well-structured curriculum can also promote behavioral change on topics that are gender-specific as well. Graves et al. (2011) evaluated the school-base pregnancy prevention program for middle school girls called the *Girls Life Skill Training or Smart Girls*. According to Graves et al. (2011), the Smart Girls curriculum was an 8 week

course specifically tailored to promote healthy behaviors by teaching middle school girls the importance of life skills such as making healthy decisions, high self-esteem, and if choosing to be sexually active, do so intelligently with proper protection. The researchers focused on the degree of change in attitude and behavior between girls who underwent the curriculum in comparison to those who did not take the course. Findings revealed that girls who participated in the Smart Girls program did improve their personal and social sexuality expectations, such as personal attitudes about having sexual intercourse. In addition, findings indicated moderate improvement in participants parent-adolescent communication, such as the desire to communicate with their parents before engaging in sexual behavior, in comparison to the control group participants. Graves et al. noted that the lack of real change in social sexuality expectation may be due to immense peer pressure and influence youths are faced with during adolescence.

Adolescent girls are engaging in sexual behavior at an alarming rate in the United States (Graves et al., 2011). Graves et al. (2011) related that 5.08% of young girls who took part in the Smart Girls program reported they had already had intercourse by the seventh grade, with an average age for first time sexual experience at 11.71 years (p. 466). The researchers findings are consistent with other reported first time sexual activity among youths in the United States. According to Graves et al., between 5% to 10% of youths in the United States are sexually active by age 13 (p. 469). Thus, the introduction of sexually prevented education at the middle school level is an ideal time to intervene and promote positive decision making. The researchers noted that the aim of the Smart

Girls program was to provide young girls with information and skills to make smart decision, which helps them to become smart women who are happy and productive.

Research findings indicated that when young kids are educated in suicide prevention techniques they tend not to follow through with their temptation to commit suicide. According to Strunk, King, Vidourek, and Sorter (2014), suicide is the third leading cause of death for youths between the ages of 10 to 19 years. The researchers evaluated the effectiveness of a school-based suicidal prevention and awareness program. The outcome of this school-base suicidal prevention program indicated that the students who participated had more knowledge regarding suicidal ideations and what steps to take when seeking assistance to help friends with suicidal intentions. Strunk et al. noted that educating youths on the suicidal warning signs that students tend to display, such as verbal, behavioral, and environmental signs, is critical to the prevention of suicidal behavior. The researchers noted that verbal suicidal warning signs include a statement such as “I want to kill myself”, while other warning signs include a sudden change in school performance, loss of interest in socializing with friends, and previous attempts to carry out suicide. Therefore, the school-based suicidal prevention program armed students with coping strategies to deal with family stressors, self-esteem, sexual orientation, as well as trauma and violence. Participants in the suicidal prevention program were also given a set of steps to help remember the protocols to take when dealing with suicidal ideations or assisting a friend to cope with suicidal desires.

Participants in the program were given a mnemonic, *L.A.S.T.*, which stands for *To Listen, Ask, Share, and Tell*, as a step-by-step procedure to remind students on



management strategies (Strunk et al., 2014). Strunk et al. (2014) noted that L.A.S.T. is a critical suicidal prevention step, which can be easily compared to the Heimlich Maneuver because it can be employed on oneself as well as on people who are in crisis. Knowing that help is necessary to deal with suicidal intentions and asking for that help are two different issues. The researchers reported that the TEENS suicidal prevention program addressed this issue by teaching participants how to ask for help. The decrease of stigma in regard to juveniles dealing with suicidal issues is a significant outcome of this evaluation as well. According to Strunk et al., educating participants about suicide and depression not only changed their attitudes and opinions about such tragic behavior, but it also lowered the stigma associated with behaviors such as suicide, depression, and counseling for mental health, and encouraged students to seek help for their friends or for themselves.

Education has also been used to change juveniles' attitudes and behaviors towards sex and violence in relationships. Cowburn (2010) examined the public's response to male sexual coercion through three prisms: moral panic, risk, and denial. The researcher argued that education changes young peoples' attitudes and behaviors toward sexual violence and is used as a strategy to prevent sexual violence among youths who are in intimate relationships. Barnard-Willis (2012) related that the lack of knowledge is often the source of negative behavior; therefore, by increasing knowledge, negative behavior can be prevented.

The United States is not the only country in the world that uses education as a vehicle to effect change in young people's behavior and attitude. Haddad, Shotar,

Umlauf, and Al-Zyoud (2010) explored the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about substance abuse among high school adolescents in Jordan. The researchers noted that despite Jordan citizens' conservative Islamic values, there has seen an increase in nicotine use and other type of drugs among youths. Haddad et al. questioned Jordanian adolescents' knowledge and understanding of substance abuse as well as the socioeconomic and sociocultural implications associated with drug abuse. Haddad et al. related that Jordanian adolescents' knowledge about substance abuse might be reflective of their greater access to the Internet and cable television services and less likely associated with their exposure to drug use in their respective peer groups. Due to their findings, Haddad et al. recommended the development of drug abuse prevention programs and advocated that the programs take place in schools and health organizations so that they can address the developmental level and perceptions of the vulnerable youth populations in Jordan.

School-based substance abuse prevention programs are also used in the United States to educate high school students about the harmful effects of drugs use and cigarettes. According to Eaton et al. (2012), the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) monitors six categories of priority health-risk behaviors among youths and young adults. Finding from the 2011 YRBSS survey found that 44.7% of students never smoked cigarettes in their life time, 18.1% of students had smoked cigarettes at least 1 day prior to the survey, 70.8% took a minimum of one drink of alcohol at least once during their life, 21.9% of the students indulged in binge drinking or had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey,

39.9% of students participating in the survey used marijuana one or more times during their life, 3% of students had used cocaine one or more times during the 30 days before survey, 11.4% of students had used inhalants to get high on one or more occasions in their life, and 8.2% of the students had used ecstasy one or more occasions in their life (p. 12). Merikangas et al. found that 11.4% of youths 13 to 18 years, suffer from a lifetime disorder due to substance use (p. 980).

Marijuana, alcohol, and tobacco are the substance of choice among high school students (Sharma & Branscum, 2013; Yule & Prince, 2012). Sharma and Branscum (2013) evaluated 18 school drug abuse prevention programs. The researchers noted that they measured substance abuse behavior in 12 programs and statistically significant changes in behavior were found in seven of the 15 programs. Sharma and Branscum related that substance abuse prevention programs are critical in high schools because many students are experimenting with drugs at that point in their lives. While there is no specific link between the intervention length and program effectiveness, the researchers reported that shorter interventions seem to show considerable promise.

Studies on the efficacy of financial curriculums in high school have been met with mix results (Hamilton, Shobe, Murphy-Erby, & Christy, 2012). Researchers have indicated that financial education in high schools have increased students' financial literacy levels and have positive effects on long- and short-term measures (e.g., Hamilton et al., 2012; Masa et al., 2010). Hamilton et al. (2012) reported that when poor youths take a financial literacy curriculum in high school they tend to make better decisions in the marketplace when compared to their parents. The researchers also noted that high

school financial education is associated with improved financial decision making. However, Shim, Barber, Card, Xiao, and Serido (2009) related that while financial curriculums in high school help students to gain knowledge about the market place, youths' behaviors and attitudes toward finances are best shaped by their parents. Shim et al. reported that the most significant predictor of students' financial behavior was their parents' behavior. Similarly, Hamilton et al. related that youths' exposure to family asset development and wealth retention aids are associated with future financial knowledge and asset development. The researchers used the term *parental learning effect* to describe the basic financial exposure children acquire from their parents regarding wealth accumulation and retainment. Hamilton et al. related that the current body of knowledge is limited on ways in which youths learn and imitate their parents behavior in relation to financial decision making. Shim et al. (2012) reported that parents are the primary socialization agents who teach their children how to operate in the financial marketplace as consumers and money managers; however, the academic community still has to clearly define the specific roles that parents play when teaching financial practices to their children. Hamilton et al. noted that the high school financial curriculum benefits students when the lesson is designed with family's financial situations in mind.

The effect an economic curriculum at the secondary school level has on youths' understanding and appreciation of the nation's economic condition is well documented. Clark, Scafidi, and Swinton (2011) noted that the State of Georgia requires all students to successfully complete an economic course as a condition of completing high school. After completing an economic course, each student is required to take the Economics End

of Course Test (EOCT). Clark et al. related that the EOCT is a very high stake test for Georgia high school students because it represents approximately 15% of the school's overall courses in economics. The quality of students' education relies heavily on teachers' confidence in their ability to convey the subject content to the student. Maistry (2010) reported that teacher confidence is strongly correlated with content knowledge, which increases the teacher's ability to effectively teach. The researcher further noted that college ratings, test scores, course taking and degree, and certification status are four distinctive teaching characteristics that have been found to influence students' achievement levels in the classroom.

State legislatures have also recognized the benefits of improving the economic literacy of secondary students. Walstad and Rebeck (2012) noted that there has been a trend in the number of states mandating that economic curriculums be taken as a condition of graduation for secondary schools students. According to the authors, due to this requirement, traditional secondary schools have a 45% increase in student enrollment for economic courses between 1999 and 2005 school years (p. 339). The authors related that as of 2012, over half of secondary school students take a formal course in economics before graduation. Thus, state mandates requiring high school students to take economic courses before graduation provided the necessary impetus needed to encourage local school district leaders to offer economics at the secondary schools level. The focus of this study is to provide empirical data that will encourage various state department of education (DOE) to support mandating criminal justice education in secondary schools as a requirement of graduation. With the support of the DOE, high school students'

enrollment in criminal justice curriculums would increase youths' knowledge about the United States criminal justice system and potentially improve their attitudes toward the police.

Secondary schools have also been used as academic venues for improving youths' digital literacy. Kafai and Peppler (2011) noted that educational practitioners have focused on the development of the youth's understanding of new media literacy as a primary aspect of digital literacy. Researchers related that there is a connection between new media creation and computer literacy (Kafai & Peppler, 2011; Peppler, 2010). Peppler (2010) noted that because new media art appeals to youths' existing interest, it can serve as an excellent connector between in-school and out-of-school learning, as well as assist in preparing youths with 21st century skill sets that extend far beyond traditional learning. The researcher discussed an 8-year-old special needs student who could not read or write beyond the emergent level but possessed the innate intelligence to express himself through images, sounds, and animation.

Leadership in business organizations have long called for an increased integration of digital literacy in middle and high school curricula, especially in the area of data retrieval and information evaluation from the Internet (Colwell, Hunt-Barron, & Reinking, 2013; Hutchison & Reinking, 2011). Colwell et al. (2013) noted that individuals who can access and evaluate data from the Internet will be in high demand in a global economy. The researchers further noted that youths tend to be heavily influenced by data retrieval and evaluation practices, which often develops while using the Internet outside of the school setting. Colwell et al. (2013) examined the effectiveness of Internet

Reciprocal Teaching (IRT) techniques in middle school and findings indicated that youths tend to understand new Internet data retrieval and evaluation strategies, but are not easily persuaded to utilize those newly acquired strategies when operating independently on the Internet. IRT allows young students to explain and demonstrate appropriate strategies to retrieve and evaluate data off the Internet, but students often revert to the less effective methodologies learned beyond the doors of the classroom. Mahari (2011) noted that the lives and experiences of today's juveniles are inextricably attached to their daily activities on the Internet. The researcher related that many students go to school with experiences, interests, and skills that are shaped by and express through their virtual engagement on the Internet. The hip-hop culture has profoundly influenced youth's attitudes and behaviors on the Internet. In order to successfully inculcate new data retrieval and evaluation strategies that will be useful to young students, teachers must meet their students where they are intellectually and use innovative teaching strategies to show young students how new data retrieval methods can enhance their hip-hop experience on the Internet (Colwell et al., 2013; Hutchison & Reinking, 2011; Mahari, 2011). To be effective, teachers should change their perspectives and practices (Mahari, 2011).

Digital communications, which is also referred to as information and communication technologies (ICTs) has permeated the mainstream of everyday literacy to the extent that ICT programs should be integrated into literacy instructions (Hutchison & Reinking, 2011). Hutchison and Reinking related that the majority of literacy teachers who responded to a survey on the need for digital instructions in the classroom agreed

that digital forms of reading and writing need to be addressed in traditional schools. The researchers noted that in order to improve students' digital literacy skills, middle and secondary schools facilities must provide access to the Internet. Hutchison and Reinking (2011) indicated that 98% of the literacy teachers reported having Internet access in their school facilities, while only 86% reported having access to the Internet in their respective classrooms (p. 327). However, the researchers reported that digital literacy teachers tend to have less Internet access in their classrooms than their counterparts who teach other subject areas. Thus, equality in Internet access for all teachers, regardless of their subject expertise, is critical to changing youths' behaviors and attitudes toward retrieving and processing data from the Web.

Along with a lack of equity in Internet access for all teachers, juveniles who are negatively involved in the criminal justice system may also have problems successfully completing high school. Sweeten (2009) examined the effects of juvenile justice involvement on educational outcome. The researcher used the 1997 National Longitudinal Youth Survey and found that first time arrest and court involvement significantly decreases the likelihood of the arrested youth attaining a high school diploma. The researcher related that first time court appearances while in high school increases high school dropout rates. Hjalmarsson (2007) studied the criminal justice system's effect on students' success rate in high school curriculum. Findings indicated that 11% to 26% of students who were arrested or incarcerated failed to complete high school. Allgood, Mustard, and Warren (2007) found a correlation between criminal behavior as a child and lack of earning potential as an adult. Using the data contained in



the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, the researchers provided empirical information about how criminal activities as youths affect future earning potential. Allgood et al. related that there is causality between criminal behavior during the years of adolescence and the lack of future earning ability, which could lead to incarceration as an adult.

In this study, I examined the effects that a comprehensive criminal justice education has on 12th-grade secondary school students' attitudes and behaviors toward the police. Researchers noted that youths who view the criminal justice system as a legitimate societal institution, such as respecting the arduous task of the criminal justice practitioner is immense because it obviates confrontation between the juveniles and law enforcement officers; thus, paving the way for collaborative between police officers and the communities they serves (Gau & Brunson, 2010; Hinds, 2007; Kochel, 2011; Schuck, 2013).

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Researchers have explored various factors that contribute to youths negative attitudes, opinions, and behaviors toward the police (e.g., Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Chow, 2011; Dirikx et al., 2012; Gau, 2012; Hurst 2007; Reisig et al., 2011; Romain & Hassell, 2014; Schuck, 2013; Stewart et al., 2014; Watkins & Maume, 2012). However, there is a gap in the research literature on how best to move forward in changing youths' attitudes toward the criminal justice system, particularly the police. Stewart et al. (2004) related that a favorable relationship between the community and the police has been the prominent goal of the American Police Institution since the public relations debacle in the

1960s. The researcher noted that a working relationship between the police and the community it serves will continue to be elusive as long as youths continue to harbor contempt and misgivings toward law enforcement.

Juveniles have frequent contact with the police, which places them in a prime position to form a hostile relationship with police practitioners (Rengifo & Fratello, 2014; Stewart et al., 2014; Telep, 2012). In addition to frequency of encounters, researchers have discussed other theories and identified police practices that create or perpetuate hostile relationships between the police and youths. The legal socialization theory posits that youths develop negative attitudes and behaviors from key familial relationships during childhood (Reisig et al., 2011; Watkins & Maume, 2012). Reisig et al. (2011) postulated that legal cynicism and legitimacy stems from the legal socialization theory and that individuals' attitudes toward committing criminal activities are significantly shaped by both legal cynicism and legitimacy toward the criminal justice system, which developed during childhood. Findings from a number of research indicated that youths question the legitimacy of law enforcement, which is the primary reason for their negative attitudes and behaviors toward the police (Gau, 2012; Gau & Brunson, 2011; Hinds, 2007; Nix et al., 2014; Reisig et al., 2011; Rosenbaum et al., 2011; Zernova, 2013). Rosenbaum et al. (2011) defined legitimacy as a public determined currency that places a value on the rightfulness of how police conduct themselves when performing their legal duties. On the other hand, Hinds (2007) defined legitimacy as individuals' opinion about law enforcement authority or the police institution that compels citizens to comply and obey. Research findings revealed that people tend to comply with police

directives and tactics when they view law enforcement as a legitimate institutional entity that is there to protect and serve them (Gau & Brunson, 2011). Gau and Brunson (2011) related that citizens' perception of police officers' sense of fairness, which pertains to procedural justice, influences juveniles' opinions about law enforcement legitimacy. Aggressive police tactics such as hot spot policing and zero-tolerance practices also contribute to youths' view of police officers as illegitimate practitioners with unlawful intentions (Kockel, 2011).

Youths' negative attitudes and behavior towards law enforcement also differ between ethnic groups. Schuck (2013) found that African American youths develop a negative attitude toward the police much earlier in their childhood than their Caucasian counterparts. The researcher noted that the frequency in which African Americans encounter law enforcement practitioners might be a contributing factor to the development of early childhood mistrust and negative behaviors toward law enforcement. Gibbons et al. (2011) found that gender also plays a role in juveniles' negative attitudes and behaviors toward the police. According to the researchers, African American females are unlikely to report disrespectful police treatment in comparison to their male counterparts. In addition, youths also form their negative opinions and attitudes toward the police when they hear about other people's negative experiences with the law enforcement. The researchers reported that living vicariously through other people's negative encounter with the police is indicative of impressionable young minds being shaped by erroneous information. Thus, exposing youths to criminal justice education may provide information that may help them to make more informed decisions about law

enforcement. Researchers have discussed numerous factors that contribute to juveniles' negative attitudes and behaviors toward law enforcement (e.g., Bracy, 2014; Hinds, 2007; Surette, 2007). However, research is sparse on whether a criminal justice education has a positive effect on high school students' attitudes toward the police. Thus, this study helped to bridge the gap in the existing body of literature.

In Chapter 2, I included the literature search strategy, theoretical foundation, introduction to the literature review, police encounters and negative juveniles' attitudes, family and media influences on juveniles' negative attitudes, gender and juveniles' negative attitudes, race and juveniles' negative attitudes, and public schools and changing juveniles' negative attitudes, and a summary and conclusions. In Chapter 3, I include the introduction, research design and rationale, methodology, data analysis plan, threats to validity and reliability, informed consent and ethical considerations, and a summary. In Chapter 4, I include the introduction, data collection, results, and a summary. In Chapter 5, I include the introduction, interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and a conclusion to the study.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quasiexperimental quantitative study was to compare the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. With her permission, Hurst's (2007) survey, which she distributed to high school students from four rural towns in Southern Illinois, was used in this study. Through the use of SurveyMonkey, 12th-grade students who were 18 years of age and older, and who have taken a criminal justice course and those who have not, completed the survey. This allowed participants' identities to remain anonymous. Using SPSS, I analyzed whether there was a significance difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not. I also analyzed participants' gender in relation to their attitudes toward the police. The study was conducted in accordance with the guidelines established by Walden University's IRB to ensure ethical protection of research participants. In Chapter 3, I include the research design and rationale, methodology, data analysis plan, threats to validity and reliability, informed consent and ethical considerations, and a summary.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

A quasiexperimental quantitative research design was used in this study. This type of research design was feasible and appropriate for this study because the goal was to determine whether a cause and effect relationship existed among the variables. The

quasiexperimental research design is very similar to true experimental research designs; however, there are some key differences (Baltimore County Public Schools, 2010). The Baltimore County Public Schools (2010) reported that with a quasiexperimental research design, an independent variable is identified but not manipulated by the researcher, and effects of the independent variable on the dependent variable are measured. The researcher does not randomly assign groups and must use naturally formed or preexisting groups. In addition, identified control groups exposed to the treatment variable are studied and compared to groups who are not. In this study, the attitudes of 12th-grade students who took a criminal justice course were compared to the attitudes of 12th-grade students who did not take a criminal justice course.

A variable refers to an individual or organization characteristic or attribute that can be measured or observed (Creswell, 2009). The two independent variables in this study were criminal justice curriculum and gender. The dependent variable was juveniles' attitude toward the police. Hurst's (2007) survey was used in this study. An ANOVA comparing means scores for each of the two groups was run. SPSS was used to analyze the data.

### **Methodology**

In this section, the methodology was discussed. Sufficient depth was provided so that other researchers can replicate the study. This section is organized in the following subsections: population; sampling and sampling procedures; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection (primary data); and instrumentation.

## **Population**

A purposive sample of twenty-nine 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course and thirty-nine 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course was used in the study. Therefore, the attitudes of 68 high schools students from two school districts in Massachusetts that are very comparable in demographics, but one school district has the criminal justice curriculum and the other does not, was surveyed and compared to see if there was a statistical difference between the attitudes of the students from both school districts. Even though I only invited 12th-grade students who were 18 years of age or older who have taken a criminal justice course and those who have not to participate in the study by going to the SurveyMonkey link noted in the invitation to participate letter, there were four 11th-graders and eight students who noted they were not 18 years of age or older who participated anonymously on SurveyMonkey in the study. However, this number was small compared to 63 students who met the study's sample criteria of being in the 12th grade and 60 students who noted that they were 18 years of age or older, which was higher than the necessary sample size of 52 participants. Since I collected data anonymously on SurveyMonkey, data from the small number of students who did not meet the study's sample criteria could not be eliminated from the overall data collection summary.

## **Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

Purposive sampling, which is a nonrepresentative subset of a larger population sampling (University of California, Davis, 2014), was used in this study. Frankfurt-

Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) related that when using purposive sampling, the researcher relies on subjective judgment and makes every attempt to select sampling units that are representative of the population. Only 12th-grade students from both schools in Massachusetts were invited to participate in this study.

The sample size was calculated using the *Necessary Sample Size* table provided by Walden University (2011). Statistical power was set at .80 and alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was set at .05. The values of  $R^2$  of .366, .382, and .29 from a multiple regression performed by Hurst (2007), which indicated a large effect size was used to determine the study's effect size. However, since the present study was only comparing the results from 2 groups (students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not), a similar large effect size of .80 from Cohen's  $d$  was used. Subsequently, the power analysis revealed that for a  $t$  test for two independent samples at  $\alpha = .05$ , to detect an effect size of .80 with a power of .80, the study would require a sample of at least 26 participants in each group, for a total of 52 participants. Exactly 68 students participated in the study.

#### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection (Primary Data)**

I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research human research protections training prior to data collection (see Appendix K). In addition, I complied with all federal and state regulations, such as the protection of human research participants' requirements noted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' (2015) Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). I contacted the superintendent at one school and the principal at the other school as they were the research contacts at the two schools in Massachusetts where I requested



cooperation to conduct the study (see Appendices A and C, respectively). I received approval from the superintendent and the principal to conduct the study (see Appendices B and D).

Upon approval from Walden University IRB, I contacted the homeroom teachers of all 12th-grade students at both schools in order to coordinate data collection (see Appendix E). I gave the homeroom teachers the invitation to participate letter, which was stapled to a hard copy of the consent form, to distribute to all 12th-grade students in their class (see Appendices F and G, respectively). The invitation to participate letter invited all 12th-grade students who were 18 years of age or older who have taken a criminal justice course and those who have not to participate in the study by going to the SurveyMonkey link noted in the letter. The reason students were given a hard copy of the consent form was because they may not be able to print or save the consent form on SurveyMonkey, so the hard copy consent was for them to keep. Providing students with a hard copy consent form ensured that students had the contact number for the Walden University representative with whom they could privately talk to about participants' rights.

The consent form was also available on SurveyMonkey and participants had to read the consent form before completing the survey (see Appendix J for the questionnaire). Therefore, implied consent was used rather than signed consent as participants were informed on the consent form that completing the web link survey indicated their voluntary consent to take part in the study. The SurveyMonkey account was set to ensure complete anonymity so that I was not able to identify individuals based

on their responses (see Appendix H for SurveyMonkey permission letter). In order to ensure anonymity, no demographic information that could identify participants was collected. Hence, participant's identities remained anonymous. An advantage to using SurveyMonkey is that it will automatically save the data into a form compatible with the SPSS. From the initial collection of the data, I was able to determine if the participants took a criminal justice course or not as participants were asked on the survey if they have taken a criminal justice course in their high school.

It was unlikely that participation in the study would arouse any acute discomfort; however, to provide participants with reasonable protection from distress from psychological harm, participants were informed on the consent form that they can seek free counseling from the school psychologist or social worker should they experience any negative effects from taking part in this research endeavor. The data obtained from SurveyMonkey were scored and analyzed through the use of the SPSS. After the study is completed and approved, a summary report of the findings will be given to the 12th-grade homeroom teachers at both schools to distribute to all 12th-grade students in their class as I do not know the identity of the students who participated. I will e-mail a summary report of the findings to the schools' superintendents, principals, vice principals, and teachers. I will share the results of the study by speaking at meetings. Data are kept secure in a locked file cabinet and password protected computer in my home office where I am the only one with access to the records. Data are kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

## **Instrumentation**

An extensive search of the literature was completed to determine available instruments to measure high school students' attitudes toward the police. Hurst's (2007) survey that she used in her study, titled, *Juvenile Attitudes toward the Police: An examination of Rural Youth*, was used in this study. Hurst's survey was designed to examine rural youths' attitudes toward the police. Hurst administered the survey to high school students from four rural towns in Southern Illinois. Specifically, the participants consisted of ninth through 12th-grade students enrolled in four public high schools. The population of the high schools ranged from 125 to 800 students. One of the public high schools was located in a predominantly African American town with 93% of the student population classified as African Americans. The other three high schools were located in towns where the racial composition was predominantly Caucasian, ranging from 85% to 98% of the student population.

Students who have taken a criminal justice course and those who have not, completed Hurst's (2007) survey (see Appendix J). Hurst's survey has been field tested and is a valid and reliable measure of juveniles' attitude toward the police. Cronbach's alphas were .87 and .92, respectively. The survey uses a 5-point Likert scale format ranging from agree to strongly disagree. Students completed the survey on SurveyMonkey to ensure anonymity, which took approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Permission to reprint and use the survey was obtained from Hurst (see Appendix I).

### **Data Analysis Plan**

In this section, I discussed the data analysis. I also provided in-depth discussions of how each research question and hypotheses were analyzed. This section is organized in the following subsections: data analysis, and research questions and hypotheses.

#### **Data Analysis**

To compare the attitudes of 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course, 11 questions were asked from Hurst's 2007 survey. Four questions were designed to tap general attitudes about the police and seven questions were designed to measure attitudes toward specific police functions. Responses to the four general questions were summed to create a scale measuring general attitudes toward the police, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes. The same process was taken to measure attitudes toward specific police functions, where the seven questions were summed to create a scale measuring attitudes toward specific job functioning. Then a final scale of the 11 items (both general and specific questions) was created to measure the overall attitude of 12th-grade students who have taken a criminal justice course and 12th-grade students who have not taken a criminal justice course.

Prior to summation of the scales, the Cronbach's alpha was computed on the 11 items from the Hurst survey. This ensured that the survey results were reliable and provided statistical support for summation. The resulting 11 items were summed together

to create the general metric of attitude for the 12th-grade students' attitudes toward police, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes.

Data from surveys were analyzed using the SPSS in order to determine the degree of statistical significances between the variables. To answer the two research questions, various sets of statistical analysis were used, such as descriptive statistics to determine the mean, standard deviation, and frequency of the scale responses on the survey. In addition, Levene's test was used to test for homogeneity of variances. The statistical test that used to test each hypothesis in this study was the  $t$  test for independent samples. I used a two sample  $t$  test for independent samples to compare the difference in a sample mean for attitudes toward the police for two groups: 12th-grade students who have taken a criminal justice course and 12th-grade students who have not taken a criminal justice course. I also used a two sample  $t$  test for independent samples to compare the difference between male and female participants. A one-way ANOVA was also utilized to validate the findings of the  $t$  test in order to minimize the risk of obtaining a *type I error*. No post-hoc test were conducted since there were fewer than three groups of the independent variable.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In order to compare the attitudes of 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course, in this quasiexperimental quantitative research study, I addressed the following research questions and hypotheses:

1. Is there a significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not?

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not.

$H_a$ : There is a significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not.

2. Is there a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police?

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police.

$H_a$ : There is a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police.

### **Threats to Validity and Reliability**

Validity pertains to the survey instrument measuring what it is intended to measure (Field, 2009; Nachimas & Nachimas, 2008). Validity in this study relates to the accuracy of Hurst's 5-point Likert scale survey that was used to measure juveniles' attitudes toward the police. Hurst's survey has been field tested and is a valid and reliable measure of juveniles' attitudes toward the police. Even though there are much strengths to the use of a survey, there are also several weaknesses. In relation to this study, one of

the possible validity threats to the use of surveys was that surveys are inflexible in many ways (Babbie, 2007). A 5-point Likert scale format was used and participants may have been resistant to this format. When filling out the surveys, participants may find some questions ambiguous and I was not present to answer any questions. Trochim and Donnelly (2007) noted that bias issues should also be taken into account when using standardized instruments, such as social desirability bias where participants may want to look good so they may respond dishonestly. However, it was assumed that participants were honest when answering the questions. Threats to external validity, internal validity, and content validity are discussed below.

### **External Validity**

External validity pertains to the extent by which a study's results can be generalized to other people who have the same characteristics of the participants in the study (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) reported that in order to ensure the external validity in a study, the characteristics of the participants in the study must be reflective of the characteristics represented in the overall population. Therefore, the researcher must be meticulous in creating a sample size that truly represents the overall population. According to the authors, representativeness of the sample and reactive arrangements in the research procedure are the two main issues that threaten external validity in a study. However, the majority of the known threats to external validity in social science research, such as testing effects, reactivity of awareness of being studied, and multiple treatment interference were not applicable to this study's outcome. Selection bias was the main external threat to consider for this study. The study

was designed to measure attitudes of 12th-grade students after exposure to a comprehensive criminal justice curriculum in the secondary school environment in comparison to their counterparts who did not take a criminal justice curriculum during high school. Selection bias was addressed through the use of a purposive sample of 68 students.

### **Internal Validity**

In regard to internal validity, the survey findings must be addressed whether a change in the independent variable indeed caused a change in the dependent variable (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) reported that changes to the individual or the unit investigated that occurred during the testing period pose a considerable threat to the internal validity of the study. There were no threats to internal validity such as selection, history, and selection-maturation in this study.

### **Construct Validity**

Construct validity is obtained when the instrument is related to the study's theoretical concept (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Thus, construct validity in this study pertained to measuring the relationship between juveniles' negative attitudes toward the police and whether they have taken a criminal justice course, as well as the difference between participants' race and gender. There are numerous threats to content validity, such as mono-operation bias, which can lead to an underrepresentation of the construct and measurement of irrelevant constructs (Johnson, 2013). Another threat to construct validity includes mono-method bias, which can confound method with the measurement of the construct leading to an inaccurate inference about the construct.



(Johnson, 2013). The measure was logical and it tapped into juveniles' attitudes about the police.

### **Informed Consent and Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted within the parameters established by the Walden University IRB to ensure the ethical protection of research participants. I took all steps necessary to protect the rights of the students who participated in the study. Participants of this study was a purposive sample of male and female students who were 18 years of age or older and enrolled in the 12th grade at two public high schools in Massachusetts. I reviewed the laws in the State of Massachusetts that are relevant to this study, such as the protection of human research participants' requirements noted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' (2015) EOHHS. I have also completed the National NIH training (see Appendix K). Cooperation was obtained from the superintendent at one school and the principal at the other school, and the approved letters were sent to Walden University IRB (see Appendices A and C, respectively). Data collection began after approval from Walden University's IRB. The homeroom teachers were given the invitation to participate letters, which were stapled to a hard copy of the consent form, to distribute to all 12th-grade students in their class as students may not have been able to print or save the consent form on SurveyMonkey. Providing students with a hard copy consent form ensured that students had the contact number for the Walden University representative with whom they could privately talk to about participants' rights (see Appendix G).

The consent form outlined the minimal to nonexistent risks (physical or psychological) that students might experience and noted that participants are not

obligated to complete any parts of the survey with which they were not comfortable. Participants' identities were anonymous as they completed the survey on SurveyMonkey. Therefore, implied consent was used. The SurveyMonkey account was set to ensure complete anonymity so that I was not able to identify individuals based on their responses. In order to ensure anonymity, no demographic information that could identify participants were collected. It is unlikely that participation in the study aroused any acute discomfort; however, to provide participants with reasonable protection from distress from psychological harm, participants were informed on the consent form that they could seek free counseling from the school psychologist or social worker should they experience any negative effects from taking part in this research study. After the study is completed and approved, a summary report of the findings will be shared with all 12th-grade students in both schools as I will not know the identity of the students who participated. I will also provide a summary report of the findings to the schools' superintendents, principals, vice principals, and teachers. I also hope to be able to share the results of the study by speaking at a meeting. Data are kept secure in a locked file cabinet and password protected computer in my home office where I am the only one with access to the records. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years per Walden University's guidelines.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this quasiexperimental quantitative study was to compare the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school

district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. Through the use of SPSS, data analysis included various sets of statistical analysis such as descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, two sample *t* test for independent samples, Levene's test was used to test for homogeneity of variances, and one-way ANOVA. The study was conducted in accordance with the parameters established by Walden University's IRB to ensure the ethical protection of research participants. A purposive sample of 52 participants were used from two public high schools in Massachusetts. On the consent form, participants were provided with the contact information of the Walden University representative with whom they could talk privately about their rights as participants.

In Chapter 3, I included the introduction, research design and rationale, methodology, data analysis plan, threats to validity and reliability, informed consent and ethical considerations, and summary. In Chapter 4, I include the introduction, data collection, results, and a summary. In Chapter 5, I include the introduction, interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and a conclusion.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this quasiexperimental quantitative study was to compare the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. The dependent variable in the study was attitudes toward the police and the independent variables were criminal justice course and gender. Two research questions were examined. The first research question determined if there was a significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not. The second research question determined if there was a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police. I used SPSS to analyze the data. In Chapter 4, I present the data collection, results, and summary.

### **Data Collection**

Even though I only invited 12th-grade students who were 18 years of age or older who have taken a criminal justice course and those who have not to participate in the study by going to the SurveyMonkey link noted in the invitation to participate letter, there were four 11th-graders and eight students who noted they were not 18 years of age or older who participated anonymously on SurveyMonkey in the study. However, this number was small compared to 63 students who met the study's sample criteria of being in the 12th grade and 60 students who noted that they were 18 years of age or older,

which was higher than the necessary sample size of 52 participants. Since I collected data anonymously on SurveyMonkey, data from the small number of students who did not meet the study's sample criteria could not be eliminated from the overall data collection summary.

Thus, the study's sample consisted of 68 high school students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course and students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. The summaries of the demographic information are summarized in Table 1. There were slightly more male students ( $n = 39$ ; 57.4%) compared to female students ( $n = 29$ ; 42.6%). For students' age, almost all ( $n = 60$ ; 88.2%) of the 68 students were 18 years old or older. For the current grade level, almost all ( $n = 63$ ; 92.6%) of the 68 students were in 12th grade. More than half ( $n = 43$ ; 63.2%) of the 68 students resided with both parents, while 25 (36.8%) students did not live with both parents. Among the 25 students who did not reside with both their parents in the household, 21 (30.9%) resided with their mother, three (4.4%) resided with their father, two (2.9%) resided with their brother, and one (1.5%) lived alone. Lastly, in terms of the measure of the independent variable of criminal justice course, less than half ( $n = 29$ ; 42.6%) out of the 68 students had taken a criminal justice course in their high school, while 39 (57.4%) had not.

Table 1

*Frequency and Percentage Summaries of Demographic Information (N = 68)*

	Frequency	%
Gender		
Female	29	42.6
Male	39	57.4
Are you 18 years of age or older?		
No	8	11.8
Yes	60	88.2
Current grade level		
Missing	1	1.5
11th	4	5.9
12th	63	92.6
Do you reside with both parents in the household?		
No	25	36.8
Yes	43	63.2
If No, please indicate which parent you reside with or title of whom you reside with:		
Brother	2	2.9
Father	3	4.4
Mother	21	30.9
Self	1	1.5
Have you taken a criminal justice course in your high school?		
No	39	57.4
Yes	29	42.6

## Results

In this section, I discussed the descriptive statistics that appropriately characterized the sample. I also discussed the statistical analysis findings, which are organized by research questions. I organized this section in the following subsections: descriptive statistics of study variables, Cronbach's alpha results, and research questions and hypotheses.

### Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics summaries of scores for the dependent variable of attitudes toward the police. There were three scores for attitudes toward the police: (a) general attitudes toward the police, (b) attitudes toward specific job functioning, and (c) the general metric of attitude for the 12th-grade students' attitudes toward police, which measures the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police. The mean score for general attitudes toward the police was 13.72 ( $SD = 3.63$ ). The mean score for attitudes toward specific job functioning was 23.21 ( $SD = 4.71$ ). The mean score for the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police was 36.96 ( $SD = 7.73$ ). The mean score (36.96) for the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police was slightly in the higher end of the 11 to 55 range of possible scores, which indicated that the sample consisting of 12th-grade students from two school districts in Massachusetts have higher scores, indicating more positive attitudes toward the police.

Table 2

#### *General Attitudes Toward the Police, Job Function, and Overall Attitudes*

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
General attitudes toward the police	68	4	20	13.75	3.63
Attitudes toward specific job functioning	68	7	35	23.21	4.71
Overall juveniles' attitude toward the police	68	13	55	36.96	7.73

### Cronbach's Alpha Result

I used Hurst's (2007) survey instrument in this study. Cronbach's alpha was the statistical method used to measure the validity and reliability of the survey instrument.

Test results displayed in Table 3 verified the internal consistency of construct to measure the dependent variable of juveniles' attitude toward the police. An alpha above .7 for items denoted acceptable level of consistency, an alpha between .8 and .9 for the items denoted a good level of consistency, and an alpha greater than .9 for all other construct items indicated an excellent level of reliability. The level of interval consistency for the 11-items Hurst survey to measure juveniles' attitude toward the police (.73) and behavioral intention (.70) was acceptable. The level of consistency for effort expectancy (.89) was good. The level of consistency for performance expectancy (.89) was more than acceptable and was in the good level of consistency. This indicated that the reliability of the 11-items on Hurst's survey instrument was established in this study.

Table 3

*Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for Hurst's Survey*

$\alpha$	Number of Items
.89	11

*Note.*  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In this subsection, I discussed the results of the two research questions. The findings are organized by research questions, where the *t* test results of differences by criminal justice course and gender, test of homogeneity of the dependent variables, and one-way ANOVA results of differences of attitudes toward the police by criminal justice course and gender are discussed. This subsection is organized in the following areas: Research Question 1 and Research Question 2.



**Research Question 1.** Is there a significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not?

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not.

$H_a$ : There is a significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not.

***T test results of differences by criminal justice course.*** An independent sample  $t$  test was conducted to determine whether there was difference in a sample mean for attitudes toward the police for two groups of 12th-grade students: (a) 12th-grade students who have taken a criminal justice course and (b) 12th-grade students who have not taken a criminal justice course. The results of the  $t$  test are presented in Table 4. The result of the independent  $t$  test results showed that the general attitudes toward the police ( $t(66) = -1.17, p = .25$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $t(66) = -0.83, p = .41$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $t(66) = -1.06, p = .29$ ) were not significantly different between the two groups of 12th-grade students, those who have taken a criminal justice course and those who have not taken a criminal justice course. This was because the  $p$  values were all greater than the level of significance value of .05. With this result, the null hypothesis for Research Question 1 that there is no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal

justice course and students who have not, was not rejected. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4

*Independent Sample t Test Result of Score Differences for General Attitudes, Specific Job Functioning, and Overall Juveniles' Attitude by Differences of Criminal Justice Course*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t test for Equality of Means						
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
General attitudes toward the police	Equal variances assumed	0.04	.84	-1.17	66	.25	-1.04	0.89	-2.81	0.74
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.18	63.09	.24	-1.04	0.88	-2.79	0.71
Attitudes toward specific job functioning	Equal variances assumed	0.63	.43	-0.83	66	.41	-0.96	1.16	-3.28	1.35
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.86	65.47	.39	-0.96	1.12	-3.21	1.28
Overall juveniles' attitude toward the police	Equal variances assumed	0.51	.48	-1.06	66	.29	-2.00	1.89	-5.78	1.78
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.09	65.18	.28	-2.00	1.84	-5.68	1.68

*Note.* *F* = Levene's *F* test for equality of variances; *Sig.* = significance; *df* = degrees of freedom; CI = confidence interval.

***One-way ANOVA results of differences by criminal justice course.*** Aside from the *t* test, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to validate the findings of the *t* test in order to minimize the risk of obtaining a *type I error* to determine the whether there is difference in a sample mean for attitudes toward the police for two groups of 12th-grade students: (a) 12th-grade students who have taken a criminal justice course and (b) 12th-grade students who have not taken a criminal justice course. The results of the one-way

ANOVA are presented in Table 6. Prior to the ANOVA, test of homogeneity of variances of the dependent variables of general attitudes toward the police ( $Levene(1, 66) = 0.04, p = .84$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $Levene(1, 66) = 0.63, p = .43$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $Levene(1, 66) = 0.51, p = .48$ ) was conducted and showed that the variances of each of these dependent variables were homogeneous or equal across the two groups: (a) 12th-grade students who have taken a criminal justice course and (b) 12th-grade students who have not taken a criminal justice course (see Table 5).

The ANOVA results in Table 6 showed that the general attitudes toward the police ( $F(1, 66) = 1.37, p = .25$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $F(1, 66) = 0.69, p = .41$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $F(1, 66) = 1.12, p = .29$ ) were not significantly different between the two groups of 12th-grade students who have taken a criminal justice course and 12th-grade students who have not taken a criminal justice course. The ANOVA results validated the  $t$  test results. With this result, the null hypothesis for Research Question 1 that there is no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not, was not rejected. Post-hoc test cannot be conducted since there are fewer than three groups of the independent variable.

Table 5

*Results of Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Score for General Attitudes, Specific Job Functioning, and Overall Juveniles' Attitude Toward the Police by Criminal Justice Course*

	Levene Statistic	<i>df</i> 1	<i>df</i> 2	Sig.
General attitudes toward the police	0.04	1	66	.84
Attitudes toward specific job functioning	0.63	1	66	.43
Overall Juveniles' attitude toward the police	0.51	1	66	.48

*Note.* *df* = degrees of freedom; Sig. = significance.

Table 6

*One-Way ANOVA Result of Score Differences for General Attitudes Toward the Police, Attitudes Toward Specific Job Functioning, and Overall Juveniles' Attitude Toward the Police by Differences of Criminal Justice Course*

		Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
General attitudes toward the police	Between Groups	17.89	1	17.89	1.37	.25
	Within Groups	864.86	66	13.10		
	Total	882.75	67			
Attitudes toward specific job functioning	Between Groups	15.45	1	15.45	0.69	.41
	Within Groups	1471.67	66	22.30		
	Total	1487.12	67			
Overall Juveniles' attitude toward the police	Between Groups	66.59	1	66.59	1.12	.29
	Within Groups	3934.28	66	59.61		
	Total	4000.87	67			

*Note.* *df* = degrees of freedom; *F* = Levene's *F* test for equality of variances;

Sig. = significance.

**Research Question 2.** Is there a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police?

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police.

$H_a$ : There is a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police.

***T test results of differences by gender.*** An independent sample  $t$  test was conducted to determine whether there was difference in a sample mean for attitudes toward the police for two gender groups of female and male 12th-grade students. The results of the  $t$  test are presented in Table 7. The result of the independent  $t$  test results showed that the general attitudes toward the police ( $t(66) = -1.27, p = .21$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $t(66) = -0.88, p = .38$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $t(66) = -1.14, p = .26$ ) were not significantly different between the two gender groups of 12th-grade students. This was because the  $p$  values were all greater than the level of significance value of .05. With this result, the null hypothesis for Research Question 2 that there is no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police, was not rejected. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Table 7

*Independent Sample t Test Result of Score Differences for General Attitude, Specific Job Functioning, and Overall Juveniles' Attitude Toward the Police by Differences of Gender*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
General attitudes toward the police	Equal variances assumed	0.23	.64	-1.27	66	.21	-1.13	0.89	-2.90	0.64
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.28	62.19	.20	-1.13	0.88	-2.88	0.63
Attitudes toward specific job functioning	Equal variances assumed	0.00	.99	-0.88	66	.38	-1.02	1.16	-3.33	1.29
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.90	64.64	.37	-1.02	1.13	-3.28	1.24
Overall Juveniles' attitude toward the police	Equal variances assumed	0.00	.99	-1.14	66	.26	-2.15	1.89	-5.92	1.63
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.16	64.30	.25	-2.15	1.85	-5.85	1.55

*Note.*  $F$  = Levene's  $F$  test for equality of variances; Sig. = significance;  $df$  = degrees of freedom; CI = confidence interval.

***One-way ANOVA results of differences by gender.*** Aside from the  $t$  test, one-way ANOVA was conducted to validate the findings of the  $t$  test in order to minimize the risk of obtaining a *type I error* to determine the whether there is difference in a sample mean for attitudes toward the police for two gender groups of female and male 12th-grade students. The results of the  $t$  test are presented in Table 9. Prior to the ANOVA, test of homogeneity of variances of the dependent variables of general attitudes toward the police ( $Levene(1, 66) = 0.23, p = .64$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $Levene(1, 66) = 0.00, p = .99$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police

( $Levene(1, 66) = 0.00, p = .99$ ) was conducted and showed that the variances of each of these dependent variables were homogeneous or equal across the two gender groups of 12th-grade students (see Table 8).

The ANOVA results in Table 9 showed that the general attitudes toward the police ( $F(1, 66) = 1.62, p = .21$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $F(1, 66) = 0.78, p = 0.38$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $F(1, 66) = 1.29, p = 0.26$ ) were not significantly different between the two gender groups of 12th-grade students. The ANOVA results validated the  $t$  test results. With this result, the null hypothesis for research question two that there is no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police was not rejected. Post-hoc test cannot be conducted since there are fewer than three groups of the independent variable.

Table 8

*Results of Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Score for General Attitudes, Specific Job Functioning, and Overall Juveniles' Attitude Toward the Police by Gender*

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
General attitudes toward the police	0.23	1	66	.64
Attitudes toward specific job functioning	0.00	1	66	.99
Overall Juveniles' attitude toward the police	0.00	1	66	.99

*Note.*  $df$  = degrees of freedom; Sig. = significance.

Table 9

*One-Way ANOVA Result of Score Differences for General Attitudes, Attitudes Specific Job Functioning, and Overall Juveniles 'Attitudes Toward the Police by Differences of Gender*

		Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
General attitudes toward the police	Between Groups	21.14	1	21.14	1.62	0.21
	Within Groups	861.61	66	13.06		
	Total	882.75	67			
Attitudes toward specific job functioning	Between Groups	17.32	1	17.32	0.78	0.38
	Within Groups	1469.80	66	22.27		
	Total	1487.12	67			
Overall Juveniles' attitude toward the police	Between Groups	76.72	1	76.72	1.29	0.26
	Within Groups	3924.15	66	59.46		
	Total	4000.87	67			

*Note.* *df* = degrees of freedom; *F* = Levene's *F* test for equality of variances;

Sig. = significance.

### Summary

In this quasiexperimental quantitative study, I compared the attitudes 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. The results of both the *t* test and one-way ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not. In addition, the results of both the *t* test and one-way ANOVA showed there was no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police. Thus, the null hypotheses for the two research questions were accepted and the



alternative hypotheses were rejected. In Chapter 4, I included the introduction, data collection, results, and a summary of the chapter. In Chapter 5, I include the introduction, interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and a conclusion to the study.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

In this quasiexperimental quantitative study, I compared the attitudes of 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. The instrumentation for this study was Hurst's (2007) survey. This study was designed to answer two research questions: (a) Is there a significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not and (b) is there a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police? The results of the study indicated that there was no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not. In addition, the results indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police. In Chapter 5, I discuss the interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications, and a conclusion to the study.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

In an effort to compare the attitudes of 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course, this quasiexperimental quantitative research study examined two research questions. The findings are interpreted in the context of the theoretical foundation and the literature

review. This section is organized in the following subsections: Research Question 1 and Research Question 2.

### **Research Questions 1**

Is there a significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not? The result of the independent  $t$  test results showed that the general attitudes toward the police ( $t(66) = -1.17, p = .25$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $t(66) = -0.83, p = .41$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $t(66) = -1.06, p = .29$ ) were not significantly different between the two groups of 12th-grade students, those who have taken a criminal justice course and those who have not taken a criminal justice course. Similarly, the ANOVA results showed that the general attitudes toward the police ( $F(1, 66) = 1.37, p = .25$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $F(1, 66) = 0.69, p = .41$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $F(1, 66) = 1.12, p = .29$ ) were not significantly different between the two groups of 12th-grade students who have taken a criminal justice course and 12th-grade students who have not taken a criminal justice course. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

The mean score (36.96) for the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police was slightly in the higher end of the 11 to 55 range of possible scores, which indicated that the sample consisting of 12th-grade students from two school districts in Massachusetts have higher scores, indicating more positive attitudes toward the police. The research results revealed that 12th-grade students who took a criminal justice course were not more likely

than 12th-grade students who did not take the criminal justice course to have a positive attitude toward the police. This finding may be attributed to Reisig and Parks's (2000) experience with the police model, which pertains to individuals' satisfaction with the police. Therefore, students' contact with the police may influence their opinions about the quality of police services (Dean, 1980). Researchers found that individuals who had unfavorable contact with the police are more likely to have a negative opinion about the police than those who had favorable contact or no contact with the police (Dean, 1980; Jacobs, 1971; Parks 1976; Smith & Hawkins, 1973). Hence, students who had favorable contact or no contact with the police, whether they have taken a criminal justice course or not, are more likely to have a more favorable opinion of the police than students who had unfavorable contacts. Therefore, contact with the police influence students' opinions about the quality of police services (Dean, 1980).

Personal history, specifically, the way in which police officers treated citizens during their encounter, has a greater impact on individuals' overall attitudes toward the police than socioeconomic status such as income, education, or race (Scaglione & Condon, 1980). Therefore, students' encounter with police officers may have had a greater effect on their overall attitudes toward the police than their education, race, and income. In addition, positive policing style may have contributed to student-police relations (Scaglione & Condon, 1980). When officers have shown they can exercise their authority fairly and equitably, citizens were more likely to be supportive of the police and respect the broad range of discretion that comes along with police work (Gau & Brunson, 2010).

Findings may also be attributed to students' attitudes toward authority figures in

their schools. Researchers have also found that youths' attitudes toward school is a predictor of their attitudes toward the police (Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Chow, 2011). Chow (2011) reported that juveniles' who enjoyed being in the classroom and respected teachers' authority were more likely to respect authority figures. In addition, the researcher related that adolescents who respect principals, teachers, and staff authority were more likely to adhere to societal positive norms and values. Brunson and Weitzer (2011) noted parallels between the code of the street, which governs inner-city youths behavior when operating in the neighborhood and the admonitory conversations between adults and juveniles concerning police encounters. The researcher noted that similar to the street code where respect is demanded, respect is important for juveniles' when interacting with the police.

### **Research Question 2**

Is there a significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police? The result of the independent  $t$  test results showed that the general attitudes toward the police ( $t(66) = -1.27, p = .21$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $t(66) = -0.88, p = .38$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $t(66) = -1.14, p = .26$ ) were not significantly different between the two gender groups of 12th-grade students. Similarly, the ANOVA results showed that the general attitudes toward the police ( $F(1, 66) = 1.62, p = .21$ ), attitudes toward specific job functioning ( $F(1, 66) = 0.78, p = 0.38$ ), and the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police ( $F(1, 66) = 1.29, p = 0.26$ ) were not significantly different between the two gender groups of 12th-

grade students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

The mean score (36.96) for the overall juveniles' attitude toward the police indicated that the sample consisting of 12th-grade students from two school districts in Massachusetts have higher scores, indicating more positive attitudes toward the police. The research results revealed that female 12th-grade students were not more likely than male 12th-grade students to have a positive attitude toward the police. This finding may be attributed to Reisig and Parks's (2000) quality of life model, which is guided by the tenet that individuals' perceptions of neighborhood conditions, such as crime, social disorder, and physical decay affect levels of satisfaction with the police. Therefore, students, both males and females, may hold the police accountable for the quality of life in their neighborhood. In addition, Cao et al. (1996) related that citizens who embraced the concept of community and were willing to provide mutual protections against criminals are significantly more content with law enforcement than citizens who have outsourced their safety to law enforcement agencies. Therefore, students may have positive perceptions of their community conditions.

Findings may also be attributed to Reisig and Parks's (2000) neighborhood context model, which focuses on the neighborhood or macrolevel. Jacob (1971) found that culture influences people's opinion about the quality of police services in their neighborhood. Schafer et al. (2003) found that citizens' perceptions of the police are formed within the milieu of their neighborhood culture and context. Therefore, male and female students may have had positive contacts with the police, which may be linked to

positive attitudes about the police. Researchers have found that citizens' opinions and behaviors are shaped by their encounters with police officers working in official or semiofficial capacities (e.g., Bordua & Tiff, 1971; Dean, 1980; Fursentberg & Willford, 1973; Jacobs, 1971; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Scaglione & Condon, 1980; Schuck, 2013; Smith & Hawkins, 1973). Hence, both male and female students' attitudes toward the police may be determined by the quality of their encounter with law enforcement officials.

### **Limitation of the Study**

Limitations are possible weak points in the study and are often beyond the control of the researcher (Simon & Goes, 2011). This quasiexperimental quantitative research study had several limitations. Generalizing the results of the study was one possible limitation since a purposive sample of 60 male and female students who were 18 years and older and who were enrolled in the 12th grade at two high schools in the State of Massachusetts were used. Eight of the students noted that they were below 18 years of age. The findings were limited to 12th-grades students who are 18 years of age and older, which can only be generalized to a similar population of students in the State of Massachusetts and not to students attending private schools or students in other grade levels. To address this limitation, future study could be replicated with charter or private high school sample populations and younger students from public, charter, or private high schools, and the results could be compared to the findings that were found in this study.

A second limitation was the use of SurveyMonkey to collect data anonymously, which was recommended by Walden University's IRB. While the use of SurveyMonkey

ensured complete anonymity for participants so that I could not identify individuals based on their responses, eight students who were not invited to participate in the study completed the survey on SurveyMonkey. To address this limitation, future study could be conducted using a different data collection procedure, where data could be collected in the classroom to ensure that only students who met the study's criteria completed the survey and surveys from the two schools could be numbered or coded to protect participants' identities.

Third, in order to obtain information on students' attitudes toward the police, students were asked to self-report their attitudes using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from agree to strongly disagree. In future studies, researchers could incorporate other measures of juveniles' attitudes toward the police. In addition, a quasiexperimental research design was used in this study. Therefore, the same variables were only measured on one occasion for each participant. The question of causality could not be tested definitively but the relationships obtained could be used to support potential causal interpretations. This design helped me to determine the direction and the strength of the association between the variables.

A fourth limitation of the study was self-report or social desirability bias, which had to be considered as students may have wanted to be perceived positively so they may not have responded honestly. However, it is assumed that students openly and honestly answered the survey questions. In addition, when completing self-report data, participants may not accurately or fully self-evaluate themselves. However, in order to address this



bias, the Likert scale format was used; therefore, students were not able to include additional information that they believed were important.

Fifth, the study was limited in scope because students' attitudes toward other areas of the criminal justice system was not examined as the focus was on participants' attitudes toward the police. Policing is only one of the three primary elements of the American criminal justice system; while the prison and court systems are the other two elements. Therefore, in future studies, researchers could further examine high school students' attitudes about all three elements of the criminal justice system.

### **Recommendations**

Some of the recommendations for future research were discussed in the limitations of the study section. Limitations included the recommendation to replicate the study with charter or private high school sample populations and younger students from public, charter, or private high schools, and the results could be compared to the findings that were found in this study. In this study, participants attended two high schools that were located in suburban communities. It is recommended that in future studies, researchers examine 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police in other communities, such as urban inner city high schools. In addition, future study could be conducted using a different data collection procedure, where data could be collected in the classroom to ensure that only students who met the study's criteria completed the survey. These surveys from the two schools could be numbered or coded to protect participants' identities. In future studies, researchers could incorporate other measures of

juveniles' attitudes toward the police as well as examine high school students' attitudes about all three elements of the criminal justice system.

Findings indicated that there was no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not. In addition, findings indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police. Thus, the null hypotheses for the two research questions were accepted and the alternative hypotheses were rejected. However, it is recommended that this study is replicated using a modified version of Hurst's (2007) survey instrument by removing the neutral option as I had observed that participants overwhelmingly selected the neutral option. The findings could then be compared to the findings in this study. Although the neutral option was designed with the goal of reducing instances of false responses, researchers have found that including a neutral option significantly increases the number of participants who state that they have no opinion when they actually do (Bishop, 1987; Johns, 2005; Kalton, Roberts, & Holt, 1980; Krosnick et al., 2002; Nowlis, Kahn, & Dhar, 2002). Edwards and Smith (2016) noted that three factors likely influence participants' decision to falsely report through the neutral option: (a) cognitive effort, (b) ambivalence, and (c) social desirability (Edwards & Smith, 2016). Krosnick et al. (2002) related that individuals tend to avoid the cognitive effort that is needed to select a satisfactory answer when providing attitude reports. In regard to ambivalence, Bishop (1987) reported that individuals' responses often gravitate toward a neutral option because they want to avoid the negative feelings associated with their conflicting feelings

on the issue. Krosnick et al. (2002) related that participants may choose a neutral option because they are reluctant to give a socially undesirable opinion. Hence, this study should be replicated using a modified Hurst's (2007) survey with the neutral option remove and findings compared to those found in this study.

### **Implications**

Even though the findings indicated that there was no significant difference in 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police between students who have taken a criminal justice course and students who have not, and there was no significant difference between male and female 12th-grade students' attitudes toward the police, this quasiexperimental quantitative study has far reaching social change implications at the individual, family, organizational, and societal or policy levels. Finding from the study added to the literature and advanced knowledge by filling a gap in the public policy and administration literature with respect to 12th-grade high school students' attitudes toward the police. Even though no significant differences were found between the two groups, education policymakers may be encouraged to continue to look for ways to improve juveniles' attitudes toward police, but a course in the middle and high school curricula may not be the best way to spend those limited resources. As previous researchers have found (Hinds, 2007; Hurst, 2007; Schuck, 2013; Watkins & Maume, 2012), adults tend to perceive the police more positively than juveniles. In addition, Schuck (2013) related that juveniles, especially minority youths, are more subjected to surveillance, harassment, and derogatory treatment by the police. The researcher related that such scrutiny by the police contributes to juveniles' negative attitudes of law enforcement. As Gadek (2016)

reported, 99% of high schools in the United States do not offer criminal justice courses in their school curricula. Thus, it is recommended that school district leaders continue to look for ways to improve students' attitudes toward police that positively affect their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors, which could improve community relations between juveniles and law enforcement officials, along with saving the lives of many youths.

In addition, along with the field of public policy and administration, a wide array of other fields might be interested in the research findings, to include the fields of criminal justice, criminal law, and criminal psychology. The findings from the study are also applicable to many agencies and organizations, to include the department of education and law enforcement agencies, police unions, and neighborhood crime watch groups. University and college leaders, such as the deans of the criminal justice department, may also be interested in the research findings. Findings from study will lead to positive social change by assisting students, parents, educators, governmental officials, and law enforcement professionals in better understanding the relationship between students' attitudes toward the police and criminal justice courses, which in turn can be used to develop policies and programs geared towards improving juvenile and police relations.

### **Conclusion**

The mean score (36.96) indicated that the sample consisting of 12th-grade students from two school districts in Massachusetts have higher scores; hence, more positive attitudes toward the police. These findings may be attributed to positive policing styles, which may have contributed to positive student-police relations (Scaglione &

Condon, 1980). Finding in this study are encouraging as past research on juveniles' attitudes toward the police suggested that they are generally less positive in their attitudes toward the police than are adults (Hurst, 2007; Watkins & Maume, 2012). Therefore, police officers should continue to build positive juvenile-police relations by showing that they can exercise their authority fairly and equitably. By doing this, juveniles are more likely to be supportive of the police and respect the broad range of discretion that comes along with police work (Gau & Brunson, 2010).

Unprofessional behaviors among law enforcement officers can negatively affect juveniles' opinions and attitudes about police officers. Therefore, law enforcement administrators should fully implement community policing, where police officers are properly and continuously trained to partner with community members, including youths. Schafer et al. (2003) argued that the police can only achieve their objective when having the full support of the community. Scaglione and Condon (1980) found that broad-based programs that focus on police officers and citizens acting in an official capacity are considerably more effective than traditional programs aimed at improving police relations with the community. According to Trojanowicz (1990), community policing requires police departments to see members of the community as potential partners in addressing crime in the community, not potential adversaries in the fight against crime. In order for police officers and community members to form strong partnerships and engage in collaborative initiatives to solve crime, trust must be built. Thus, police and youths should engage in collaborative working initiatives, which will provide opportunities for

each side to dispel any negative stereotype that may have existed between them (Chapman-Nyaho et al., 2011).

Even though there were no significant findings in this study, education should be used as a tool to improve juveniles' attitudes toward police. Numerous researchers have examined the level of influence education has on changing peoples' attitudes, opinions, and behaviors on a wide range of subjects (Cowburn, 2014; Fox & Cook, 2011; Graves et al., 2011; Lambert et al., 2011; Mandracchia et al., 2013; Papastergiou, 2008; Strunk et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2011). Therefore, educational policymakers and leaders should continue to look for ways to improve juveniles' attitudes toward police. This will lead to positive social change by improving community relations between juveniles and law enforcement officials, which in turn may save the lives of many youths.

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## Appendix A: Cooperation Request Sent to School With Curriculum

## Letter of Cooperation Request

Mr. Willie H. Bradley  
[Phone number redacted]  
[E-mail address redacted]

February 6, 2016

Principal's Name  
School Address

Dear [Principal's Name],

As a doctoral candidate at Walden University, I am currently working on my dissertation, titled, *Effect of the Criminal Justice Curriculum on the Attitudes of 12th-Grade Students Toward the Police*. This research project will add to the literature by filling a gap in the public policy and administration literature, as well as the criminal justice literature, by comparing the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. Your school has been identified as one of the few schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that offers a comprehensive criminal justice curriculum to your 12th-grade students. The study will provide a more accurate depiction of the police; increase juveniles' knowledge of the police history, role, and practices; may improve juveniles' attitudes toward the police; promote goodwill between juveniles and the police; improve community relations; introduce juveniles to career opportunities in law enforcement; and may encourage education policymakers to implement criminal justice courses in all middle and high school curricula.

Twelfth-grade students who are 18 years of age and older in your school will be asked to complete Hurst's 2007 survey on SurveyMonkey, which will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete. This survey measures students' attitude toward the police. I have attached a copy of the survey for your review and I can provide you with a copy of my proposal upon your request. Upon your approval to conduct the study at your school, I will coordinate data collection with all 12th-grade homeroom teachers in order to coordinate data collection. I will give the homeroom teachers the invitation to participate letter, which will be stapled to a hard copy of the consent form, to distribute to all 12th-grade students in their class. The invitation to participate letter invites all 12th-grade



students who are 18 years of age or older to participate in the study by going to the SurveyMonkey link noted in the letter. Students can keep the hard copy consent form.

The consent form will also be available on SurveyMonkey and participants will have to first read the consent form before completing the survey. Therefore, implied consent will be used rather than signed consent as participants will be informed on the consent form that completing the web link survey will indicate their voluntary consent to take part in the study. The SurveyMonkey account will be set to ensure complete anonymity so that I will not be able to identify individuals based on their responses; hence, participants' identities will be anonymous. No compensation is offered for students' voluntary participation.

After the study is complete, a summary report of the findings will be shared with all 12th-grade students in your school as I will not know the identity of the students who participated. I will also provide a summary report of the findings to you, the superintendent, vice principal, and teachers. I also hope to be able to share the results of the study by speaking at a meeting. Data will be kept secure in a locked file cabinet and password protected computer in my home office where I will be the only one with access to the records.

Your cooperation and permission is needed in order to obtain approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This board reviews all research to ensure that the study will be conducted in an ethical manner and that the rights of the participants are protected. Therefore, before obtaining IRB approval and conducting the study, I need to have a cooperation letter from you, indicating your cooperation and permission to conduct the study at [School's Name].

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact me at [Phone number redacted] or my e-mail at [E-mail address redacted]. Please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance with this important research project.

Sincerely,

*Willie H. Bradley*

Willie H. Bradley

[Phone number redacted]

[E-mail address redacted]

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any

other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

## Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation from School With Curriculum

## Letter of Cooperation

Principal's Name  
School Address

Date Will Be Inserted Here

Dear Mr. Willie H. Bradley,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study, titled, *Effect of the Criminal Justice Curriculum on the Attitudes of 12th-Grade Students Toward the Police*, at [School's Name]. As part of this study, I authorize you to coordinate data collection with 12th-grade students' homeroom teachers, which will include giving homeroom teachers the invitation to participate letter with the SurveyMonkey survey link and a hard copy of the consent form for students to keep, to all 12th-grade students in their classes. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. After the study is complete, I give you permission to give a summary report of the findings to all 12th-grade students, the school's superintendent, principal, vice principal, and teachers.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: confirming to teachers and students that you have our permission to conduct the study at [School's Name], assisting you in the data collection process by handing out the invitation to participate letter and hard copy consent form, and assisting you with disseminating a summary report of the findings. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University's Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Principal's Signature  
Principal's Name  
School Address

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any

other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

## Appendix C: Cooperation Request Sent to School Without Curriculum

## Letter of Cooperation Request

Mr. Willie H. Bradley  
[Phone number redacted]  
[E-mail address redacted]

February 6, 2016

Superintendent's Name  
School Address

Dear [Superintendent's Name],

As a doctoral candidate at Walden University, I am currently working on my dissertation, titled, *Effect of the Criminal Justice Curriculum on the Attitudes of 12th-Grade Students Toward the Police*. This research project will add to the literature by filling a gap in the public policy and administration literature, as well as the criminal justice literature, by comparing the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. Your school has been identified as one of the schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that does not offer a comprehensive criminal justice curriculum to your 12th-grade students. The study will provide a more accurate depiction of the police; increase juveniles' knowledge of the police history, role, and practices; may improve juveniles' attitudes toward the police; promote goodwill between juveniles and the police; improve community relations; introduce juveniles to career opportunities in law enforcement; and may encourage education policymakers to implement criminal justice courses in all middle and high school curricula.

Twelfth-grade students who are 18 years of age and older in your school will be asked to complete Hurst's 2007 survey on SurveyMonkey, which will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete. This survey measures students' attitude toward the police. I have attached a copy of the survey for your review and I can provide you with a copy of my proposal upon your request. Upon your approval to conduct the study at your school, I will coordinate data collection with all 12th-grade homeroom teachers in order to coordinate data collection. I will give the homeroom teachers the invitation to participate letter, which will be stapled to a hard copy of the consent form, to distribute to all 12th-grade students in their class. The invitation to participate letter invites all 12th-grade

students who are 18 years of age or older to participate in the study by going to the SurveyMonkey link noted in the letter. Students can keep the hard copy consent form.

The consent form will also be available on SurveyMonkey and participants will have to first read the consent form before completing the survey. Therefore, implied consent will be used rather than signed consent as participants will be informed on the consent form that completing the web link survey will indicate their voluntary consent to take part in the study. The SurveyMonkey account will be set to ensure complete anonymity so that I will not be able to identify individuals based on their responses; hence, participants' identities will be anonymous. No compensation is offered for students' voluntary participation.

After the study is complete, a summary report of the findings will be shared with all 12th-grade students in your school as I will not know the identity of the students who participated. I will also provide a summary report of the findings to you, the superintendent, vice principal, and teachers. I also hope to be able to share the results of the study by speaking at a meeting. Data will be kept secure in a locked file cabinet and password protected computer in my home office where I will be the only one with access to the records.

Your cooperation and permission is needed in order to obtain approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This board reviews all research to ensure that the study will be conducted in an ethical manner and that the rights of the participants are protected. Therefore, before obtaining IRB approval and conducting the study, I need to have a cooperation letter from you, indicating your cooperation and permission to conduct the study at [School's Name].

If you have any questions or require more information, please contact me at [Phone number redacted] or my e-mail at [E-mail address redacted]. Please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance with this important research project.

Sincerely,

*Willie H. Bradley*

Willie H. Bradley

[Phone number redacted]

[E-mail address redacted]

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other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

## Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation from School Without Curriculum

## Letter of Cooperation

Superintendent's Name  
School Address

Date Will Be Inserted Here

Dear Mr. Willie H. Bradley,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study, titled, *Effect of the Criminal Justice Curriculum on the Attitudes of 12th-Grade Students Toward the Police*, at [School's Name]. As part of this study, I authorize you to coordinate data collection with 12th-grade students' homeroom teachers, which will include giving homeroom teachers the invitation to participate letter with the SurveyMonkey survey link and a hard copy of the consent form for students to keep, to all 12th-grade students in their classes. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. After the study is complete, I give you permission to give a summary report of the findings to all 12th-grade students, the school's superintendent, principal, vice principal, and teachers.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: confirming to teachers and students that you have our permission to conduct the study at [School's Name], assisting you in the data collection process by handing out the invitation to participate letter and hard copy consent form, and assisting you with disseminating a summary report of the findings. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University's Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Superintendent's Signature  
Superintendent's Name  
School Address

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other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

## Appendix E: Data Collection Coordination Request

## Data Collection Coordination Request

**Date Will Be Inserted Here**

Dear Teacher,

I have obtained the [insert research approver's title] support to collect data for my research project, titled, *Effect of the Criminal Justice Curriculum on the Attitudes of 12th-Grade Students Toward the Police*.

I am requesting your cooperation in the data collection process. I propose to collect data on **Date Range Will Be Inserted Here**. I will coordinate the exact times of data collection with you in order to minimize disruption to your instructional activities.

If you agree to be part of this research project, I would ask that you assist me by giving all of the 12th-grade students in your class an invitation to participate letter, which will be stapled to a hard copy of the consent form, to distribute to all 12th-grade students in their class. The invitation to participate letter invites all 12th-grade students who are 18 years of age or older to participate in the study by going to the SurveyMonkey link noted in the letter. Students can keep the hard copy consent form. After the study is complete, I will ask you to assist me by giving a summary report of the findings to all 12th-grade students in your class.

If you prefer not to be involved in this study, that is not a problem at all.

If circumstances change, please contact me via telephone [Phone number redacted] or e-mail [E-mail address redacted].

Thank you for your consideration. I would be pleased to share the results of this study with you if you are interested.

I am requesting that you reply to this e-mail with "I agree" and your electronic signature below to document that I have cleared this data collection with you.

Sincerely,

*Willie H. Bradley*

Willie H. Bradley

Walden University Doctoral Student

[Phone number redacted]

E-mail address redacted]

Printed Name of Teacher

Date

Teacher's Electronic\* Signature

Researcher's Electronic\* Signature

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*Willie H. Bradley*

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Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

## Appendix F: Invitation to Participate in the Study

Dear 12th-Grade Students,

My name is Willey H. Bradley. You may already know me as the Director of Security for the Randolph Public School System, but I'm writing to you outside this role.

I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University and I am comparing the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course. The study is not sponsored by the Randolph Public School System.

You have to be 18 years of age or older to take part in this study. If you meet the age requirement, I would greatly appreciate your participation.

This would involve going to the following SurveyMonkey link [**I Will Insert the Link Here**], read the consent form, and then complete the survey, which will take 5 to 10 minutes. I will not collect your signed consent as completing the survey will indicate that you gave your implied consent. This will protect your identity and make the data collection anonymous so that no one can identify you. Therefore, you cannot be identified in any of the study's report that I prepare.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to e-mail me at willie.bradley@waldenu.edu or give me a call at [Phone number redacted]. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Walden University Staff Member, Dr. Leilani Endicott, at [Phone number redacted].

If you are interested in participating in the study, please go to the following SurveyMonkey link [**I Will Insert the Link Here**] and complete the survey by [**End Date Will Be Inserted Here**].

Thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance with my research project.

Sincerely,  
Mr. Willie H. Bradley

## Appendix G: Consent Form for Students

### Consent Form for 12th-Grade Students 18 Years of Age or Older

You are invited to take part in a research study on the effects of criminal justice curriculum on the attitudes of 12th-grade students toward the police. The researcher is inviting all 12th-grade students who are 18 years of age and older, and who have taken a criminal justice course and those who have not to be in the study. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Willie H. Bradley, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Some of you may already know the researcher as the Director of Security for Randolph Public School System, but this study is separate from that role. The study is not sponsored by Randolph Public School System and data collection is separate from my role as an employee.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to compare the attitudes of twenty-six 12th-grade students from a school district in Massachusetts who took a criminal justice course to twenty-six 12th-grade students from another school district in Massachusetts who did not take a criminal justice course.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete Hurst’s (2007) survey on SurveyMonkey that examines youths’ attitudes toward the police. This will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

Here are some sample questions:

1. In general, I trust the police.
2. In general, police officers do a good job.
3. The police do a good job of stopping crime.

#### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the High School will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

#### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as becoming upset due to the nature of the questions. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. Therefore, it is unlikely that participation will arouse any acute discomfort, however, you can see the

school psychologist or social worker should you experience any negative effects from taking part in this research endeavor. Counseling is provided at no charge and is kept confidential.

Anticipated benefits include gaining a more accurate depiction of the police; increase juveniles' knowledge of the police history, role, and practices; may improve juveniles' attitudes toward the police; promote goodwill between juveniles and the police; improve community relations; introduce juveniles to career opportunities in law enforcement; and may encourage education policymakers to implement criminal justice courses in all middle and high school curricula.

**Payment:**

No compensation is offered for your voluntary participation.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept anonymous. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure in a locked file cabinet and password protected computer where only the researcher will have access to the records. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you or your parents have questions about the research, you may contact the researcher via [redacted] or [redacted]. After the study is completed, you will receive a summary report of the research findings. The researcher's dissertation chair is Dr. Robert Schaefer who can be reached at [redacted] or by e-mail at [redacted]. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University staff member who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is [redacted].

You were given a copy of this form by your homeroom teacher to keep.

**Obtaining Your Consent**

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by completing the survey.

## Appendix H: Permission to Conduct Research Using SurveyMonkey



SurveyMonkey Inc.  
[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

For questions, visit our Help Center  
[help.surveymonkey.com](http://help.surveymonkey.com)

### Re: Permission to Conduct Research Using SurveyMonkey

To whom it may concern:

This letter is being produced in response to a request by a student at your institution who wishes to conduct a survey using SurveyMonkey in order to support their research. The student has indicated that they require a letter from SurveyMonkey granting them permission to do this. Please accept this letter as evidence of such permission. Students are permitted to conduct research via the SurveyMonkey platform provided that they abide by our Terms of Use, a copy of which is available on our website.

SurveyMonkey is a self-serve survey platform on which our users can, by themselves, create, deploy and analyze surveys through an online interface. We have users in many different industries who use surveys for many different purposes. One of our most common use cases is students and other types of researchers using our online tools to conduct academic research.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact us through our Help Center at [help.surveymonkey.com](http://help.surveymonkey.com).

Sincerely,

**SurveyMonkey Inc.**

## Appendix I: Permission E-Mail to Use Hurst's Survey

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 10, 2015 11:04 AM  
**To:** Hubbard, Peggy  
**Subject:** Fwd: Permission to use your Likert Survey

Hello Ms. Hubbard,

My name is Mr. Willie H. Bradley. Below, please see the email correspondence I sent to Dr. Hurst and Mr. Springman requesting Dr. Hurst's permission to modify her survey instrument to be used in my dissertation research. Mr. Springman suggested that I reach out to you and seek your help in getting in touch with Dr. Hurst as she is out of a research sabbatical. I am seeking her permission to use the survey instrument she created in her (2007) study titled: Juveniles attitudes toward the police: An Examination of Rural Youth. Any help you can offer in getting her permission to use the survey instrument will be deeply appreciated. Thank you in advance for your prompt response to my request, Mr. Bradley,

Thanks,  
Willie H. Bradley

-----Original Message-----

From: Hubbard, Peggy <[redacted]>  
To: deputywhb <[redacted]>  
Sent: Wed, Mar 11, 2015 3:25 pm  
Subject: RE: Permission to use your Likert Survey

Mr. Bradley,  
Dr. Hurst said yes/gave her approval.  
Peg Hubbard, Criminal Justice, Xavier University



## Appendix J: Students' Attitudes Toward the Police Questionnaire

**Students' Attitudes Toward the Police Questionnaire**

Participants' identities and survey responses are anonymous.

---

**Section I Demographics**

What is your gender? Male Female

What you 18 years of age or older? Yes No

What grade are you current in? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you reside with both parents in the household? Yes No

If No, please indicate which parent you reside with or title of whom you reside with: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you taken a criminal justice course in your high school? Yes No

---

For each question below, please select the option that best describes your attitude towards the police, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

**Section II: Juveniles' Attitudes Toward the Police**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>General Questions</b>					
In general, I trust the police.	1	2	3	4	5
In general, I like the police.	1	2	3	4	5
In general, I am satisfied with the police in my neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5
In general, police officers do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Specific Questions</b>					
The police do a good job of stopping crime.	1	2	3	4	5
The police do a good job of stopping people from using drug.	1	2	3	4	5

The police do a good job of stopping people from selling drug.	1	2	3	4	5
The police do a good job of keeping my neighborhood quiet at night	1	2	3	4	5
The police will help you if your car is broken down and you need help.	1	2	3	4	5
If the police see someone who is sick and needs help, they will help them	1	2	3	4	5
The police do a good job of stopping people from hanging out and causing trouble	1	2	3	4	5

---

## Appendix K: NIH Certificate

