

2020

How Crime-Based Media Affect Perceptions of Crime, Race, and Fear of Crime

Sharonda Cage Hatter
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Sharonda Cage Hatter

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

How Crime-Based Media Affect Perceptions of Crime, Race, and Fear of Crime

by

Sharonda Cage Hatter

MS, Grambling State University, 2014

BA, Grambling State University, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 2020

Abstract

The effects of crime-based media have long been an area of study among scholars. The problem addressed in this study is the media's representation of how crimes are perpetrated and processed within the criminal justice system; it is difficult for society to separate and understand factual depictions from fictional portrayals. Researchers have demonstrated that media negatively influences society's perceptions of police officers' violent encounters with individuals, particularly African American men, but they have not established wide-ranging contributing factors. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore whether crime-based media influences society's perceptions of others based on crime, race, and fear of crime. There were 8 participants interviewed for this study. The participants were residents of Louisiana who acknowledged being consumers and viewers of crime-based media. The theoretical framework for this study included the social cognitive theory and cultivation theory. In-depth individual interviews were analyzed through inductive coding and thematic analysis. The findings of this study indicate that participants distrust law enforcement officers, have a fear of governmental control, and sense injustice and inequality within the criminal justice system. Understanding the results of the study may improve police-community relationships and minimize the perceptions of injustice and inequality among Americans.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my late grandparents, Clemmie and Prevelle Cage. Thank you so much for everything that you taught me in life. Thank you for your unconditional love and wisdom that you imparted daily. I promise to keep your legacy of love going as long as I live. I love you.

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband. James, You deserve this recognition as much as I do. Your hard work and dedication to me did not go unnoticed.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my grandsons Antonio, Kace, and Bryson. You guys are so dear to my heart. I love you with everything in me. Always remember to keep God first in your life and that you can do anything you want to do and be whoever you want to be. The sky really is the limit.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I thank God for blessing me to complete this journey. There is no way I could have done this without Him in my life. During this journey, God taught me more about his immeasurable favor, grace, and mercy. When I wanted to give up, He came to my rescue every time! The last time that feeling came, He reminded me of Phil 4:13, I can do all things through Christ, which strengthened me. From that day forward, God pulled me through. Lord, I never would have made it without You! I am stronger! I am wiser! I am better—much better! All the glory belongs to you!

To my husband, James, thank you for your support. Not once did you discourage me; all you did was encourage me and remind me that I could do it; for that I am grateful. Thank you for doing things without complaining. I thank God every day for blessing me with the best husband in the world. I could not have done this without your support. I love you!

To my daughters, Brenaja, Shabrea, and Justice, you are my motivation. When God blessed me with you, I was inspired to be the best mother I could be so that you would have someone to look up to. Thank you for your love and support. I love you!

To my mother Brenda, (Mama), thank you for giving me life. Thank you for your prayers that I felt when it was rough. Thank you for all the encouraging words and support you showed. And, of course, thanks for all the money you invested in me. I could not ask for a better mother. I love you and I did it! To my two brothers, Lorenzo and Decarlos, thank you for believing that nobody, absolutely no one, was smarter than your sister. I love you with all my heart.

To my mentor and boss Richard “Rick” Gallot Jr., I thank you so much for believing in me and pushing me to go beyond the minimum. You saw in me what I did not see (potential). Thanks for applying pressure at Gallot Law Office; without it, I would not be Dr. Sharonda Hatter. Last, but not least, a special thanks to my chair, Dr. Gregory Campbell, who encouraged me from the beginning of Dissertation 9000. You went above and beyond what was required and for that I am grateful. A special thanks to my SCM Dr. John Walker, my URR Dr. Darius Cooper, and mentors Dr. Monique Allen and Dr. Anna Douglas. To Dr. Maria Stephenson, my accountability partner then but now my sister, we are bonded for life! Thank you.

Finally, to my friends, extended family, and my church family at Miracle Temple C.O.G.I.C., my pastor and wife, Superintendent Thomas Kennedy and Missionary Virdie Kennedy, Thank you for your continued support and prayers. To all, thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The growth of technology has created numerous ways for people to consume media all over the world. Whether printed, broadcasted, advertised, or shared, sources of media are outlets for communication among society. For some people, printed media, such as newspapers and magazines, inform them of what is going on locally, statewide, and nationally. Some individuals rely on television media and social media for information and news, and others observe media for entertainment purposes. No matter why media is consumed, it has the power to influence public perception on crime, race, and fear of crime and the way individuals feel about themselves, others, and the world (Hollis, Downey, Alex, & Dobbs, 2017; Jamieson & Romer, 2014). According to Collica-Cox and Furst (2019), crime-based media continues to gain popularity, and if heavily consumed, crime-based television media could sway the opinions of its consumers. The issues that arise regarding media affects of crime, race, and fear of crime include injustice, stereotypes, preconceived bias, and social movements (Hollis et al., 2017; Intravia, 2018; Miethe et al., 2019; Smiley & Fakunle, 2016). In this study, I examined what impact, if any, the exposure and/or consumption of crime-based media had on a group of individuals from south Louisiana. The results of this study have the potential to redefine cultural labels and promote positive social awareness.

In Chapter 1, I discuss the background on previous research regarding crime-based media affects. The problem statement provides evidence that examining the affects of crime-based media consumption is significant in exploring whether a phenomenon exist among individuals regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. In addition, the purpose

and the theoretical frameworks related to the study approach are discussed. Finally, the nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, potential limitations of the study, and the significance of the study are explained.

Background

The human mind can become susceptible to the influences of events seen, heard, or experienced on daily basis. The power of these influences can be instantaneous or can develop over time. The impact media sources have on individual perceptions can be detrimental in an individual's decision-making process, both personally and professionally (Collica-Cox & Furst, 2019). The constant production and portrayals of fictional characters, such as prosecutors and defense attorneys, in crime-based television media increases the potential for viewers to adopt what is called the *CSI effect* (Collica-Cox & Furst, 2019). According to Collica-Cox and Furst (2019), real-time jurors who have been exposed to crime-based television media carry expectations that evidence is collected and presented in the same way they have seen on television; if not, a perpetrator may not be found guilty of committing the crime. Moreover, the consumption of crime-based media serves as a contributing factor to how viewers come to terms with the punishment of those who are convicted of crimes (Intravia, 2019). Intravia (2019) found that individuals who consume crime-based television on a regular basis are prone to be more punitive toward criminals. In addition to those who consumed crime-based television, individuals who were constant consumers of social media and/or who received information regarding crime on social media also developed punitive attitudes toward offenders (Intravia, 2019).

In the United States, African Americans hold the highest number among the prison population in mass incarceration, over Caucasians and Hispanics (NAACP Criminal Justice Fact Sheet, 2009–2016). Over the past decade, there has been a decrease of 17% of incarcerated African Americans and a decrease of 10% incarcerated Caucasians, but the Hispanic prison population remained the same at 37% (Kann, 2019). Thus, African Americans are associated with crime, feelings of injustice, and issues with the criminal justice system (Smiley & Fakunle, 2016). According to Smiley and Fakunle (2016), the criminal justice system altered racial prejudices; African Americans who died at the hands of law enforcement were depicted as thugs and criminals instead of law-abiding citizens, suggesting that police officers were doing their jobs. Furthermore, Smiley and Fakunle asserted that mass incarceration of African Americans is a prime example of how race plays a part in the way society views crime and safety. Smiley and Fakunle attributed portrayals of Blackness in television media as making African Americans feel enslaved and satisfied with how they are viewed by others.

As it relates to crime-based media's connection to fear of crime, Jamieson and Romer (2014) concluded that television violence does not attribute to the perceptions of predicted crime rates locally or nationally over time, despite popularity of violent television. However, they did find a relationship between violent television consumption and fear of crime (Jamieson & Romer, 2014). By defining violence into segments, Jamieson and Romer broke down the difference between physical acts and intentional acts, which was important in developing the understanding of violence in media's role in public perception. Overall, the public's outlook on crime and fear of crime was based on

the violence consumed through television media (Jamieson & Romer, 2014). Jamieson and Romer recommended future researchers investigate perception of fear across diverse viewers of violent television, such as race, age, socioeconomic status, and gender, with controlling variables such as political attitudes and amount of television consumption. Furthermore, Hollis et al. (2017) found an insubstantial relationship between feelings of safety among individuals and reported crimes in their own vicinity than in other surrounding areas where more crimes were reported. The public's perceptions of police-citizen relationships via media sources were found to be detrimental to the mindsets of its viewers (Miethe et al., 2019). In other words, Miethe et al. (2019) found that if police officers are the media providers present justification that "use of force" was required, society will have more positive perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime. Moreover, Prot et al. (2016) found that the affects of media content and circumstances tend to be harmful when the viewed content demonstrates aggression and/or violence as well as stereotypical portrayals of certain groups.

This phenomenological study of how crime-based media affects society's perception based on crime, race, and fear of crime is significant for various reasons. First, the results give value to Gerber and Gross's cultivation theory that television exposure is a contributing factor of society's perception of diverse feelings about themselves and others (Jamieson & Romer, 2014). Second, this study's results provide understanding of the various forms of communication that play a part in individual perceptions of crime and fear of crime (Hollis et al., 2017). Third, this study's results expose media's potential to cause distrust in the criminal justice system (Intravia, 2019; Smiley & Fakunle, 2016).

In addition, the results of this study can promote an understanding of social awareness and consent. Finally, the results of this study provide a reasoning for the affects of media sources and the role they play in perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime.

Problem Statement

Media's presentation of how crimes are perpetrated and processed within the criminal justice system is flawed. This problem makes it difficult for society to separate and understand factual depictions from fictional portrayals (Jamieson & Romer, 2014). Perceptions of crime and violence portrayed in media are a problem that needs additional research to understand society's attitudes toward the criminal justice system and its entities (Jamieson & Romer, 2014). In addition, individuals who place trust in the media to provide factual details regarding crime will be influenced in one way or another, which may impact how they view crime, race, and fear of crime (Donald, 2019). The way the media portrays crime is significant in exploring whether a phenomenon of interest exists among ethnicities, criminality, and perceptions of fear. Citizens' trust in the police, fear of police misconduct, whose lives matter, and the emergence of social movements continue to be debated throughout various media outlets, resulting in feelings of indignation (Miethe et al., 2019). Similarly, Smiley and Fakunle (2016) indicated that mass media sources illuminating police officers' use of deadly force on African Americans contributes to a phenomenon of injustice in the United States. The gap in literature results from the unknown influences media has on society's perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime (Collica-Cox & Furst, 2019; Prot et al., 2015).

Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore whether crime-based media influences society's perceptions of others based on crime, race, and fear of crime. Data were collected through in-person interviews using the purposive sampling approach via a Facebook research group from Louisiana. Other sources of data included Kuhn and Lane's (2013) instrument on fear of crime and Schmucker's (2019) instrument on media influence for police officers. The two instruments were modified and combined into one instrument. My intent for this study was to gain an understanding of society's perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime because of exposure to crime-based media. Findings may be used to understand cultural differences among society and to improve policing strategies and police-citizen relationships. The goal of this study was to identify the media's role in contributing to attitudes concerning crime, race, and fear of crime.

Research Questions

This phenomenological qualitative study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on criminality?

RQ 2: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on race?

RQ3: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on fear of crime?

Theoretical Framework

This qualitative study explored the possibility of a phenomenon among individuals who have been exposed to or consumed crime-based media in one form or another. The framework identified for this study supported Bandura's (1925) social cognitive theory, which belongs to a class of human behavior theories that assume thoughts, beliefs, and expectations are influenced or shaped by an individual's environment (Shahzalal & Hassan, 2019). The growth of the media platform has the potential to be a contributing factor of who or what an individual fear (Bandura, 2019). Further, based on social cognitive theory, an individual's responses to stimuli are based on four circumstances: (a) observation, (b) retention, (c) reproduction, and (d) motivation (McLeod, 2016). This study combined social cognitive theory with cultivation theory, conceptualized in the 1960s and 1970s by Gerbner. Cultivation theory has been revised and expanded to grow with the advancements of the media (Mosharafa, 2015). For instance, police officers using various social media outlets have the potential to impact societies' perceptions of the criminal justice system either positively or negatively (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). By reversing the traditionalized theoretical approach to cultivation, Williams and Fedorowicz (2019) focused on law enforcement as the fabricator of media content to investigate the perceptions based on viewing and responding. Using the concepts of these two theories, the perceptions of attitudes toward crime, race, and fear of crime as a result of watching crime-based media were analyzed.

Nature of the Study

This qualitative study consisted of a phenomenological research design. I formulated research questions based on topics that relate to the impact of exposure to criminality through various media sources and what affects this exposure has on societal perceptions of police officers, themselves, fear of crime, and other races. According to O'Sullivan et al. (2017), a researcher should draw sample units with the goal of revealing evidence about a large population using a small population. Using this purposive sampling approach, I solicited participants through Facebook, and participants were required to be a resident of Louisiana. Creswell (2014) stated that a phenomenological study involves seven to 10 participants. I interviewed eight participants, at which point I reached data saturation. The in-person interviews involved intensive use of open-ended questions conducted on the same day at a chosen site (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). Each participant was given a date and time to be interviewed. Participants unable to meet on the selected interview date were given the opportunity to have the interview conducted via Skype or telephone. I used NVivo software to identify significant and common themes within the data.

Definitions

Below are the terms applied throughout the current study and their definitions.

Crime: An act or violation of local, state, or national law punishable by sanctions, fines, and/or incarceration (Regoli, Hewitt, & Kosloski, 2018).

Race: Groups of people identified by biological similarities (Huguley, Wang, Vasquez, & Guo, 2019).

Fear of crime: An expression of worry and anxiety based on mindsets that crimes are possible and can cause harm (Yamamoto, Ran, & Luo, 2019).

Media: The production of content and information as a means of communication (Nimark & Pitschner, 2019) through a variety of forms, including television, radio, newspaper, and Internet sites.

Cultivation theory: The belief that consumption of mass media will distort the views of society because of the distinction between what is portrayed and what is relative and factual (Intravia, 2019).

Social cognitive theory: The belief that individuals acquire characteristics and behaviors from each other by remembering and imitating what they observe (McLeod, 2016).

CSI effect: The results of consuming or being exposed to excessive crime-based television (Collica-Cox & Furst, 2019).

Social movement: A group of people or organization focusing on a specific issue to promote change in society (Young, Summers, & Coursaris, 2019).

Injustice: The unfair distribution of basic human needs and demands by imposing oppression, deprivation, and inequality that results in dangerous harm (Dover, 2019).

Assumptions

There were three assumptions in this study. First, I assumed that most African Americans feel that the criminal justice system has demonstrated and currently does demonstrate injustice across racial lines when it comes to adjudication. Second, I assumed that people exposed to crime-based media develop feelings of fear of harm not

only by perpetrators, but also as a result of police misconduct. Lastly, I assumed that social media serves as a contributing factor to negatively influencing society's perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime. Although unable to not be proven, all assumptions were necessary to the phenomenological qualitative study and helped provide an understanding of society's perceptions of criminality, themselves, and others.

Scope of Delimitations

The scope of delimitations for this phenomenological qualitative study consisted of eight interviews with individuals who acknowledged consuming crime-based media on a regular basis at a minimum. The amount of consumption was examined using a crime-based media consumption questionnaire prior to interviews. The questionnaire broke down media consumption in three categories: (a) traditional media, (b) specific media, and (c) entertainment media. The consumption of crime-based media was measured on an hourly scale to estimate hours spent consuming per week. This focus was selected because the media serves as a leading source of information to society as well as an emergent form of its communication. The study included adult men and women in Louisiana; the city of study was diverse in race and ethnicity. Individuals under the age of 18 are considered minors in the state of Louisiana and were therefore excluded from the study. Cultivation theory and social cognitive theory commonly relate to the area of study given its inclination to analyze the data.

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study. The first limitation of this study was that it was qualitative instead of quantitative; a quantitative study would have allowed for

a larger sample size. This study was conducted with a small population that cannot be generalized. The sampling and recruitment of participants for this study were limited to people who reside in one specific parish who had active Facebook accounts. Second, some participants had greater consumption and/or exposure to crime-based media sources than others. Lastly, the research design consisted of open-ended research questions, which were time consuming during inductive coding and thematic analysis; moreover, there was no way to verify that participants were truthful when answering the open-ended questions or describing their lived experiences.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study filled the gap in understanding how individuals in southern Louisiana perceive fictionalized television crime dramatizations and crime-related social media debates in comparison to their own lived experiences. Further, this study revealed whether some fiction and/or real-world occurrences of crime and law enforcement responses were positive or negative factors that shaped these individuals' views of crime, race, and fear of crime. According to Stringer, Maggard, and Scott (2017), the media is a powerful source that can influence the opinions of many people. This qualitative study explored the professional practices of the criminal justice system in the United States. This study's implication for social change illuminated the media's role in perceptions, formalized opinions, and increased criminal activity as it related to crime, race, and fear of crime. The findings from this study can raise social awareness and tolerance for consenting that all lives matter.

Summary

Crime-based media portrayals have a significant impact on society's perception of crime, race, and fear of crime. Crime-based media consumption has the potential to affect individual perceptions as well as ingroup/outgroup perceptions. The growing world of technological advancement within media has enhanced the evolution and progress of more social movements contesting issues involving crime, race, and fear of crime, consequently contributing to media's power to positively or negatively influence society. Examining the affects of crime-based media can lead to opportunities of social change by ensuing better community policing, cultural acceptance, and transparency of the criminal justice system. Chapter 2 is a synthesis of the historical and current literature viewpoints concerning crime-based media affects based on crime, race, and fear of crime.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is a problem with the media's representation of how crimes are perpetrated and processed in the criminal justice system, leading society to struggle to separate and understand factual depictions from fictional portrayals (Jamieson & Romer, 2014). Crime-based media sources in the United States include television, social media, local and national news, movies, and reality television. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of whether crime-based media influences individuals' perceptions of others based on crime, race, and fear of crime. Also, in this study, I examined why and how certain people develop feelings of fear, injustice, and trust or distrust in the criminal justice system as a result of exposure and consumption of crime-based media.

Depictions of violent crimes, police misconduct, and the handling of criminal affairs within the justice system are highly publicized in both historical and modernized media sources (Intravia, 2019; Prot et al., 2015). Media have a suggestive impact on audiences as some individuals do not understand which stories are fictional versus which stories are real (Intravia, 2019). The parties involved in criminal conduct, whether the perpetrators, victims, or members of law enforcement, are susceptible to the scrutiny of their audience. The perceptions developed from consuming this media create potential problems in society. Mass media consumption has plausible affects of cultivation theory in which individuals may be susceptible to feelings of fear of being victimized or fear of being mistreated by the criminal justice system (Wright & Unah, 2017). Likewise, law

enforcement officers may acquire feelings of fear as a result of retaliation or sensing that the world is more dangerous than it actually is.

According to Rockford (2016), advocates for human rights and social movements are prominent throughout the United States and use media outlets to promote its cause. Many social movements have been successful in enhancing communication and public awareness regarding crime, race, and fear of crime via social media platforms (Bailey & Leonard, 2015; Rockford, 2016). Members and participants of social movements react to media's representation of stories related to criminality. Social movements may have negative or positive affects (Obasogie & Newman, 2016), depending on how the observer distinguishes between a protest and a riot. By applying social cognitive theory, an explanation of the attitudes that some individuals have acquired regarding crime, race, and fear of crime by observing certain behaviors and outcomes may become evident (Bandura, 1986; Surette, 2013). The media supports the recognition of social activist movements that feasibly result in personal perceptions about that specific subject.

In Chapter 2, I present an analysis and synthesis of the study's theoretical framework: cultivation theory and social cognitive theory. The literature review includes prior assessments of crime-based media's influential factors that affect viewers' perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime. In addition, I include a description of various media sources to show different methods media is consumed. The literature review is organized into sections that include the culture and advancements of modern media portrayals. The history of social activist movements is also presented within the literature review to illuminate the awareness of social issues that has evolved among

individuals, society, and the criminal justice system. The literature review concludes with an overall summary of the components associated with media, crime, race, and fear of crime.

Literature Review Strategy

This literature review includes multiple sources, including peer-reviewed journals, books, dissertations, and scholarly journals. Walden University databases and Google Scholar were searched with the following keywords: *media effects, cultivation theory, social cognitive theory, fear of crime, race, crime, social media, social activist, portrayals, victimization, criminal justice system, fiction/nonfiction, Black Lives Matter, blue lives matter, and CSI effect*. The search was filtered by time since 2015, apart from the theoretical framework for historical purposes. More than 150 articles were located, of which 125 were relevant to the topic.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of whether crime-based media influences society's perceptions of others based on crime, race, and fear of crime. Critical race theory and labeling theory were among many potential theories for this study. However, Bandura's social cognitive theory and Gerbner and Gross's cultivation theory are more appropriate for this study. Thus, in the next section, an evaluation of cultivation theory is presented.

Cultivation Theory

The dynamics of media technology continue to enhance how individuals communicate for personal, business, and leisure purposes. Although numerous forms of

media sources have developed over time, the most popular is television (Gerbner et al. 1986; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999; Wayne, 2018). By the 1980s, television had become mainstream, unifying a diverse community of people by providing entertainment, messages, and images collaboratively (Gerbner et al., 1986; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999; Shrum, 2017). Because of television's gift of storytelling through news and programming, television became part of its audiences' everyday lives (Mosharafa, 2015; Shrum, 2017). To imagine life today without access to certain media sources could be upsetting for television viewers.

Cultivation theory appears applicable to understanding the role of television and its impact. Gerbner was one of several researchers who sought to understand this role (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999; Shrum, 2017). Gerbner was enthused by the concepts of television's impact and moved toward a theoretical approach by devising "cultural indicators" combined with "cultivation analysis" in order to refine the concepts of theory as it applies to television (Shrum, 2017, p. 1). Cultivation theory perhaps contributes to a conceived notion regarding crime, race, and fear of crime.

Television media carry messages across a broad spectrum for viewers. As early as 1958, Gerbner attempted to provide a premise regarding the social implications of television's approach to mass media (Shrum, 2017). According to Gerbner's cultivation theory (1976), heavy television consumption initiates specific perceptions that the images and messages portrayed are reality (Gerbner et al., 1986; Mosharafa, 2015; Shrum, 2017). In other words, Gerbner sought to discern the effectiveness and traditional aspect of mass communication.

Cultural Indicators Project 1969. Despite cultivation theory's scientific contributions, it still faced opposition. These critiques were based on the mistaken idea of what cultivation means in the world of television media (Mosharafa, 2015; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). The purpose of cultivation in the realm of television media is to assess the relationship models concerning socialization and belief systems among society (Gerbner et al., 1986; Shanahan, 1999; Mosharafa, 2015; Shrum, 2017).

In 1969, Gerbner created the Cultural Indicators Project. The purpose of the project was to provide resolution to the conflicts of the policies on culture symbols between political and private entities (Mosharafa, 2015). Gerbner continued to contribute to the prospective influences of cultivation theory.

The Cultural Indicators Project consisted of a three-fold structure. Gerbner comprised questions about mass media messages, images, content, and relationship to examine its influence on its audience (Gerbner et al., 1986; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Gerbner's cultural indicators weighed heavily on three units of the project, insisting that the affects of one are null without the other (Gerbner et al., 1986, p. 6; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). First was the production of media messages. Next, the message systems monitor the composition of the media's content and how character roles are depicted. Last was image conception of how viewers perceive what they see (Gerbner et al., 1986; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). The Cultural Indicators Project's components are essential to this study and could reveal possible influences, affects, or causations resulting from consuming crime-based television media.

Cultivation theory's relation to crime. Television media provides another form of communication to educate, entertain, and relay messages to society. The entertainment industry delivers an assortment of programs to engage viewers. Television consumption was examined to explore whether it had an impact on the rise of crime and violence (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999; Shrum, 2017). In 1972, the Cultural Indicators Project received a portion of an appropriated \$1 million to enhance its research on television violence and social behavior (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). The interest of cultivation theory's relationship with crime extends the necessity to explore further whether crime-based media consumption affects individual perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime.

Social Cognitive Theory

The development of media in all its forms continues to have a profound influence on individuals and audiences. The perspectives of two ideas concerning crime are battling for support on whether criminal conduct showed on media influences an individual to commit crimes or whether an individual who commits a crime would have done so without ever being exposed to violent television (Surette, 2013). The basic tenets of social cognitive theory purport that individuals interact with and observe behavior of others and adapt to the behavior observed (Bandura, 1986). Nonetheless, the media also advances education and inspires cultural curiosity.

Den Hamer and Konijn (2014) and Moore (2011) presented that exposure to violent media has a profound negative affect on adolescents, validating social cognitive theory's relationship with behavior and media consumption. These learned behaviors include violent fictional characters portrayed on television and in video games (Lai et al.,

2015). Thus, exposure to either media source could influence perceptions based on crime, race, and fear of crime (Moore, 2011). Individual exposure to crime-based media content is important to consider in this study.

The use of social cognitive theory has been persuasive concerning the criminal justice system (Moore, 2011). Social cognitive theory suggests that behavior responses, including criminal behavior, are caused by an event or circumstances of the environment (Moore, 2011). Bandura (2009) explored human functionality and explained that exposure to mass media could be unidirectionally correlated with behavior. Bandura (2009) added that determinants such as environment or an event could also be adapted and embedded into human thoughts and perceptions adding to the process of self-reflection. Further, Neuendorf and Jeffres (2017) found that Bandura's framework of social cognitive theory has recognized both strong and unlikely links between the media's fabricated and distant power to alter an individual's orientation and behavior. According to Abdullah and Rahman (2017) and Lai et al. (2015), violent television media, when repeatedly observed by children, is a risk factor for developing long-term aggressive and violent behaviors. This revelation is significant in that juvenile delinquents have the potential to become adult criminals after observing and absorbing violent media content.

The human mind memorizes events by storing information from media. *Media priming* is the affect or feeling incurred as a result of media content consumed (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2009). Media priming impacts individual perceptions and relates to race based on stereotyping (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2009). Roskos-Ewoldsen and Roskos-Ewoldsen (2009) discovered that individuals who were

exposed to media content involving African Americans formed opinions of that racial group after consuming media content that had no connections to or with them. Figure 1 shows the connection of the literature surrounding mass media, the theoretical framework, and its relationship with crime, race, and fear of crime.

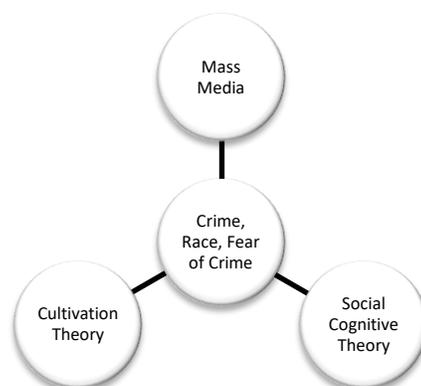


Figure 1. Connection of the literature between media, theoretical framework, and crime.

Literature Review

National Media Sources

One of the leading sources of shared communication among people is the media. Whatever is observed in the media can affect individual thoughts about reality when consumed (Lai, Chung, & Po, 2015; Levan & Stevenson, 2019). Viewing national media sources might influence individual perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime. National media representations of crime tend to concentrate on violent offenses, such as riots as a result of police shootings of African American men (Crichlow & Fulcher, 2017). Crichlow and Fulcher (2017) and Hutchings (2015) added that media's focus on such violent crimes habitually portrays African Americans and Latinos unfavorably, which therefore can lead to distorted racial perceptions regarding crime, race, and fear of crime.

Individuals are either exposed to the media through public outlets, socialization, or they obtain news and information through media instruments. National media sources have a way of representing crimes that attract numerous amounts of public attention throughout the United States (Levan & Stevenson, 2019; Smith et al., 2014). National media sources representing twenty-four-hour news coverage regarding citizens and police violence have increased (Crichlow & Fulcher, 2017). Levan and Stevenson (2019) indicated that media representations of encounters that depict law enforcement as negative perpetrators of violence have the potential to negatively influence its audience. Therefore, individual perceptions are developed based on crime, race, and fear of crime. Some people place their trust in the narratives that involve criminality provided by the media despite the media's potential to erroneously disclose all the facts.

According to the current Pew Research Center report, 20% of adults claimed print newspapers as their main source of information. Of the same report, 25% stated radio, 35% online, and 57% stated television (Mitchell et al., 2016). Also, Mitchell et al. (2016) disclosed that 75% of the people reported trusting both local and national news to some extent. News reporters are valuable characters that narrate the meat of the good and the bad on "hot topics" both locally and nationally. Therefore, the power of the media to have either negative or positive influence on an individual as it relates to crime, race, and fear of crime is possible.

Media Literacy

To analyze the influence or affects of media exposure on individuals, it is equally important to inquire about consumer literacy, and comprehension of the message reported

as well as the character portrayed within the media. Scharrer and Ramasubramanian (2015) and Aufderheide (1993) defined media literacy as having the ability to not only evaluate but also communicate various forms of messages after a process of assessment and analysis. According to Scharrer and Ramasubramanian, even young adolescents can easily recognize the role media plays in race and prejudice practices among minority groups. The media serves as a powerful discrimination tool by portraying certain identities of racial and social groups in a negative way (Saleem & Ramasubramanian, 2019). Furthermore, Saleem and Ramasubramanian (2019) found possibilities of media literacy to assist in coping with the negative images of minorities represented in the media by using these same media sources to depict positive images of African Americans.

Mass media. The information provided to the public through mass media outlets is significant in shaping individual perceptions. Crichlow and Fulcher (2017) stated that viewers who relied heavily on the mass media for stories' attitudes and beliefs were influenced heavily by the power of the media. Kort-Butler and Habecker (2018) found that the more individuals relied on the media to inform them about crime, the more they developed feelings of outrage concerning crime and feelings of support for the criminal justice system. Conversely, individuals who did not rely on the media expressed neither negative nor positive feelings about crime nor support for the criminal justice system. Intravia, Wolff, and Piquero (2018) revealed online news consumption negatively impacted society's attitude toward police legitimacy, while social media consumption weighed favorably toward police legitimacy when social media consumption was

compared to reading news online. Equally important, Yuen (2008) stated that the mass media is the major representation of the stereotypes of racial minorities. These findings suggested that the perceptions of consumers of crime-based media can be either positively or negatively influenced.

Social media. Social media is an expansion of modernized interaction tools for consumers. Social media has been defined as forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (Kane, 2017). Other sources of social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat) can be comprised of criminal content. Mitchell et al. (2016) stated that people choose their source of news, which affords them the opportunity to frame their narratives of crime. On the other hand, Bejan et al. (2018) fashioned social media as a contagious informant that members of society have incubated. With the advancement of social media comes conflicts, criticisms, opinions, and perceptions about viewers' feelings and perceptions.

According to Shjarback et al. (2017), individuals can observe police encounters with controversial citizens, or they may witness violent acts of crime between the two because of social media contagion. Moreover, Carney (2016) inserted that social media debates regarding race and racism are now widely exemplified in the United States. Ideas and information concerning crime are spread quickly via social media which takes away the control of police to communicate accuracy, transparency, and lawfulness (Graaf & Meijer, 2019). Smith et al. (2016) assured that various groups who are exposed to consistent criminal media coverage, perceive race and police misconduct in distinctive

ways. Clark, Bland, and Livingston (2017) added that the affects of social media representations enabled society to form their view of violent encounters between citizens and law enforcement based upon race and disbelief in police. Therefore, the perceptions of viewers of any crime-based social media are potentially impacted.

Printed media. Printed media is a basic source of information available to individuals who choose to obtain their news by reading, or for individuals who read for entertainment. Media articles announcing police officers as perpetrators of violence, as well as articles announcing acts of violence committed against police officers, have increased (Levan & Stevenson, 2019). Similarly, Schouten and Brennan (2016) stated that these media reports had led some to believe certain shootings reflect “war on police,” although statistically, this was not the case (p.610). Schouten and Brennan revealed several indicators for police officer violence: suicide because of police pursuits, progression of criminal enterprises, and acts of planned retaliation. However, Hayes (2017) stated other factors such as improved police officer training, improved safety equipment, and better community-police relationships have contributed to decreased police officer violence. Crichlow and Fulcher (2017) declared that it does not matter if the underlying forces displayed by the media reveal violence on police officers or by police officers, the media contributes to individual perceptions regarding crime and the criminal justice system.

Online News and Newsworthiness

There are various ways in which news concerning crime can be observed by individuals. Mitchell et al. (2016) found that people choose their source of news, which

affords them the opportunity to frame their narratives of crime, especially when the specific source is the Internet. Greer and Reiner (2015) stated that crime news is not newsworthy because it excites or causes one to fear crime, but instead its worthiness gives the reader an opportunity to examine themselves on how they feel about crime. Frisby (2016) inserted that using framing, media outlets determine what is newsworthy based on instinct and awareness. Conversely, Al-Rawi (2019) contributed that crime news is considered newsworthy because it often presents narratives on politics, trailed by personal interest, crimes, and entertainment. Online news can be considered a source of entertainment among audiences regardless of its potential to influence perceptions of crime, race, or fear of crime.

Local news. Individuals who constantly view local news might be influenced by the depictions and characteristics of others. Falsification of the race of perpetrators reported on local news programs was discovered through previous analyses of crime, race, and fear of crime (Dixon, Azocar, & Casas, 2003). For instance, Dixon and Linz (2000a) noticed that local television news portrayed an African American as a perpetrator of a crime twice as much as they did a Caucasian. Furthermore, Dixon, Azocar, and Casas (2003) concluded that when intergroup were presented in crime narratives on the news, network news was precise on the race of the perpetrator, more likely to present Caucasians as victims and officers, and less likely to describe African Americans as victims and officers. Further, Van Dijk (2015) alluded that the press is viewed as ethnic minorities' enemy in that it has consistently exposed minority groups in a negative light.

These findings suggest that the content of what is shown on local news could attribute to the opinions of the viewers.

U.S. Media Portrayals

Individuals continue to utilize media sources as a means of information and entertainment. How perpetrators and characters are portrayed could influence perceptions based upon crime, race, and fear of crime. For example, Carney (2016) and Welch (2007) stated that media portrayals involving African Americans and criminal justice policies have a direct impact on the ideologies acquired by its audience. The evolving beliefs surrounding the stereotypes placed on the African American men are led to be a contributing factor of racial profiling, accounting for the numerous representations of African Americans in the criminal justice system (Carney, 2016; Welch, 2007). For instance, African American men are shown committing crimes sundry times in the media affiliating them with violence and anger (Welch, 2007). Therefore, when the media portrays a certain race in a negative light, individuals are susceptible to adapt what is portrayed despite fabrications or facts.

Individuals in society that are exposed to any source of media are susceptible to both negative and positive influences based upon crime, race, and fear of crime. Media portrayals that involve violent police encounters with people of color and minority victims have the power to influence society negatively (Dukes & Gaither, 2017). Dukes and Gaither (2017) indicated that race played a major role in media depictions and that these depictions were powerful in affecting how society felt about certain shooting incidents. When negative stereotypes of African American male victims were portrayed

by the media, society perceived that the victim was more blameworthy of his death and therefore paraded the shooter less at fault (2017). These findings suggest urgency in further exploration of crime-based media's potential to influence individual perceptions concerning crime, race, and fear of crime.

Media Portrayals of African American Athletes

Several studies have been conducted to explore how the media depicts athlete behaviors. Athletic cultures in United States media portrayals are detrimental in affecting society's perception based upon crime, race, and fear of crime (Ash et al., 2017; Frisby, 2016). Brown et al. (2015) indicated that the culture of athletes' behavior in the media had been connected to race, violence, and sports. Further, Brown et al. and Angelini et al., (2014) concurred African American athletes are negatively represented in the media more often than any other race and that the media illustrated African American athletes in disturbing issues more so than Caucasian athletes. Frisby (2016) added that the media coverage involving African American male athletes were inconsistent when the narratives involved crimes such as domestic violence and sexual abuse. Media coverage of criminal conduct among athletes is essential, but incidences involving all races and genders are equally important.

Media portrayals of athlete performance have the potential to sway individual perceptions of offenders and victims. Ash et al. (2017) found that a relationship existed among the description of the accuser and the perpetrator. This finding added to the negative affects of the rape myth of athlete privilege. The image of the violator can be altered to the image of a victim when gender and race are considered (2017). Thus, it is

suggested that individual perceptions concerning athletes might be based upon misrepresentations of the media and therefore warrants further exploration.

Television Portrayals

The production and broadcasting of both fiction and nonfiction crime-based television have not decreased and is recognized as one of the most admired genres. As such, media portrayals of both genders and all races have been consistently consumed by viewers although minorities, mainly Asians, Latinos, and Native Americans, rarely acquire roles in sitcoms or movies (Leavitt et al., 2015; Tukachinsky et al., 2015). Parrott and Parrott (2015) and the FBI (2012a) expressed that United States fiction-based media portrayals preferably disclose Caucasian women as victims of being violently attacked, raped, or murdered by a stranger when the reality is men are the majority of victims that are attacked or murdered by friends, family members, or associates. Hochschild et al., (2018) denoted that the media is persistent in the misrepresentation of minority groups and continually present other ethnicities in positive portrayals such as intelligent and heroic citizens. According to Tukachinsky, Mastro, and Yarchi (2015), African American women as well as Latino women were more likely to perform unprofessional roles such as compulsive sex addicts or were often performing dysfunctional sex patterns. The paradigms in performances of these particular outgroups led Caucasians to form negative perceptions of African American and Latino women where they stereotyped them as less-skilled and having poor work ethic (Tukachinsky et al., 2015). Therefore, it is imperative that we look at factors such as media misrepresentations of race and minimal minority

role appearances as contributing factors to individual perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime.

Use of force. Portrayals of police use of force are commonly shared through various media vehicles. According to Miethe, Venger, and Lieberman (2019), the attitudes of the public can be shifted after watching videos on police use of force. This crime-related activity's overall message is mind-altering in nature especially when encounters involve a specific race (Miethe et al., 2019). Lee et al. (2014) contributed that police use of force on African Americans was the highest of all races. Also, Swaine et al. (2015) mentioned that unarmed African American men are fatally shot by police officers at a minimum of three times more than unarmed Caucasian men. Individual perceptions are probable when police use of force depictions are exchanged across media outlets.

Numerous individuals have been exposed to police use of force on African Americans. As it relates to crime-based media, law enforcement officers, citizens, and perpetrators conduct is shared throughout electronic devices subjecting them to opinionated judgment from society's point of view (Levan & Stevenson, 2019). According to Miethe et al. (2019), increased public awareness of such incidences via media sources contributed to the rage of African Americans view of police officer conduct. Hutchings (2015) highlighted tenacious racial disparities within the criminal justice system despite unparalleled media attention regarding allegations of police misconduct in African American neighborhoods. Therefore, Crichlow and Fulcher (2017) concluded that the media's representation of hostility between African Americans and police should be respectfully studied.

Fiction and nonfiction. The motion picture and network television industry could be contributing to individual perceptions as it relates to crime, race, and fear of crime. McGovern and Lee (2014) recognized that both fact and fiction portrayals in crime-based television are becoming widespread. According to Surette (2015), the actualities of reality-based programs that involve police most times portray Caucasian police officers fighting African American criminals but protecting Caucasian victims. Surette (2015) indicated that television media portrayals have led viewers to faulty perceptions of good cop as well as bad cop themes. Therefore, Donovan and Klahm (2015) concurred that exposure to crime-based television documentaries and films have the potential to influence individual perceptions based upon crime, race, and fear of crime.

Modern television programs present to viewers that investigation methods using sophisticated technology are readily available to law enforcement officers (Kappeler & Potter, 2018). However, Kappeler and Potter (2018) signified that these modernized television shows exhibit that criminal entitlements outweigh victim justices. Levan and Stevenson (2019) and Lee and McGovern (2014) concluded that fiction-based crime television shows rarely portray law enforcement officers making mistakes or participating in police duties. Also, Lee and McGovern (2014) added that documentary fashioned shows most common operations shown involved police conducting normal routine operations, drug-related investigations, and patrol, which could also affect viewer perception based on media portrayals. Therefore, the character performances represented in television media could influence individual perceptions surrounding crime, race, and fear of crime.

Performance perceptions. The performance and ethnicity of the actor/actress in televised media are essential in affecting an individual's perception of crime, race, and fear of crime. Yuen (2008) affirmed that individuals rely heavily on the roles characters portray on television and film productions to form beliefs about certain ethnicities and races. According to Yuen (2008), various forms of exposure to media are a significant contributing factor in aiding the social representation of framing; thus, resulting in racial stereotypes produced by these media images. Hochschild et al. (2018) and Van Dijk (2015) confirmed the media's role in portraying minorities as a threat to society, deviant in nature, and prone to crime and violence. Conversely, while African Americans, Latinos, and Hispanics are faced with media misrepresentations and negative depictions, Native Americans are seldom portrayed at all (Leavitt, Covarrubias, Perez, & Fryberg, 2015). According to Leavitt et al. (2015), Native Americans feel a lack of social acceptance within society due to mass media limitations. Figure 2 shows the relationship between the literature and the potential affects of media consumption and exposure.

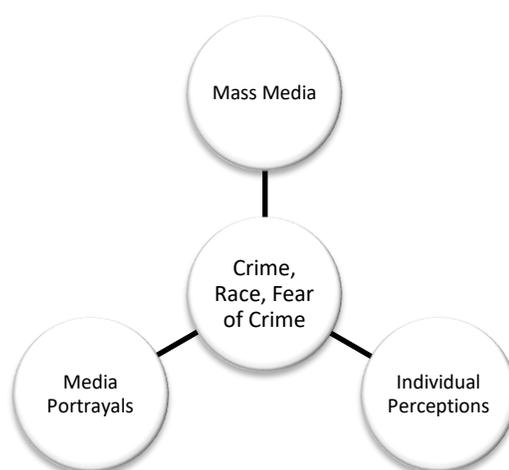


Figure 2. Connection of literature relating to mass media portrayals, crime, and individual perceptions

Modern Media Advancements

The advancement of modern media and emergent technology devices has been a promotion tool for enhancing communication. Technology advancements in the media world continue to launch and gain more communication paths for individuals and groups to socialize (Intravia, 2018). Baker (2011) defined this progression as the *mediated crowd* that has been enabled to exchange information personally and publicly. The phenomenon of new social media was salient in the construction and forward movement of organized riots (Baker, 2011). However, Baker (2011) specified that the advancement of new social media was not the cause of the criminogenic nature of rioting, nor did owning a technology device or joining social networks cause individuals to be victimized. Graaf and Meijer (2019) added that the affects of technology advancements of social media have resulted in disagreements between effectiveness and lawfulness; therefore, contributing to society's perception or misconception of crime, race, and fear of crime.

Social networking. Technology devices have enhanced how society communicate, network, and consume news. Internet and social media have become the new platform for how society observe and share news (Intravia et al., 2018). Social networking is prominent demonstrating negative and positive influences on users (Singh et al., 2017). Singh et al., (2017) noted positive influences of building strong relationships and improved work speed. On the other hand, negative influences such as addiction, overutilization, mental fatigue, and distraction from productive daily practices were discovered (Singh et al., 2017). Individuals use various technology devices to build social media platforms to promote conversations concerning crime, race, and fear of crime.

Modern policing. Today, the transparency of law enforcement officers is more evident due to modern media advancements. Modern media sources and devices are now used by law enforcement as a tool to identify and investigate criminal conduct (Patton et al., 2017). Patton et al. (2017) learned that this new era of media advancement built a platform for individuals within society to expose their daily routine experiences, thus leading to the exposure and capturing of their criminality. Moreover, Patton et al. revealed the use of social media policing affected African Americans more than any other race. The ability to witness citizen-police encounters can be credited to the advancement in modern media.

Several studies have been conducted to explore the perceptions of individuals because of observing social media. For instance, Graaf and Meijer (2019) concluded that consuming social media brings about values in both participation and transparency between law enforcement officers and citizens. However, these findings raised concerns and expectations about new conflicts such as equality, but there was no evidence of this conflict (Graaf & Meijer, 2019). Graaf and Meijer further stated that police were more prone to stick with traditional attitudes of police, even with the innovations of new media technology. Also, Lupton (2014) concluded that the inclusion of violence perpetrated by criminals, victims of crimes, and the justice system have all become a collaborative part of a digital society. It is important to further explore the affects of modern media advancements for its use within the criminal justice system.

Public awareness and consumption. Public awareness is heightened when the media suggest that an incident is worthwhile to report. The coverage of particular

episodes is framed by the media with the motive of gaining spectators (Kearns et al., 2019). Kearns et al. (2019) examined why certain crimes of violence received more coverage than others and affirmed that the amount of time the media spends on a particular incident cautions society that the issue is crucial in how they perceive their environment. Kearns et al. acknowledged that the media has the potential to influence various opinions regarding violence, being that it is one of the most blatant topics in news media. Media representations of crime increase public awareness by embellishing the potential dangers of crime while advocating punitive consequences for its cure (Greer & Reiner, 2015). Overall, media advancements enlighten public awareness on pertinent topics relating crime, race, and fear of crime.

Some individuals obtain knowledge about criminal issues through media sources, and some individuals become aware of experience with the criminal justice system. Pickett et al. (2015) stated that people who had experience and knowledge of the criminal justice system did not depend on the media sources for factual crime information. Pickett et al. maintained that people who did depend on the media for crime information had little knowledge of criminal sentencing policies. Greer and Reiner (2015) added that the role of media representation is to frame criminal matters in the perspective that depicts a criminal justice system of law and order. Pickett et al. concluded that public awareness and public consumption via media outlets informed society with factual information regarding new laws, daily functions, and procedures of the criminal justice system. Consuming crime-based media might be a source of entertainment for some but could persuade individuals to foster biases or perceptions about themselves or others.

Crime Scene Investigation Effect

The crime scene investigation (CSI) effect is the perception that the crime-based television affect jury verdicts when there is a lack of forensic evidence. Attributable to media presentations, members of the criminal justice system, as well as society, have accepted the CSI effect as a phenomenon (Townson et al., 2016). According to Bull, (2015) *CSI* was the most popular crime dramatized shows mentioned as a contributing factor to this phenomenon. Bull (2015) and Lam (2015) noted shows such as *CSI*, *NCIS*, and *Without a Trace* portray scenes where forensic evidence is collected, tested, and matched to a perpetrator within minutes; as a result, an audience of potential jurors are affected by this depiction. Moreover, *CSI* along with several other crime-based dramas continues to air on public television.

Juror perceptions. The crime-based television drama *CSI* has been broadcasting since 2000 and concluded its final season in 2015 (crimemuseum.org). The phenomenon of the CSI Effect has been an ongoing passionate topic of debate exploring whether there are positive or negative effects influencing juries' decisions in criminal trials (Lam, 2015). The CSI effect on the attitudes of society for law enforcement has since fluctuated over time (Suniga, 2016). Shelton, Kim, and Barak (2006) proffered that television alone did not change how jurors viewed evidence although jurors were found to have higher expectations of forensic evidence due to advancements in technology. Podlas (2006) and Shelton et al. (2006) harmonized that the CSI effect was non-existent and was missing empirical evidence to support either negative or positive influence on juries. Further, Partma (2009) concluded that although the media cautions the public of a CSI effect,

there was no evidence to support it. These results warrant exploration of the possible CSI effect on individual perceptions based on crime, race, and fear of crime.

The impact of DNA in the CSI effect. The potential of the CSI effect stems from media messages that portray individuals using forensic evidence such as DNA to investigate and solve serious crimes. The CSI effect revealed the power in shaping society's perception that such evidence can be quickly retrieved, tested, and reliable to the criminal justice system (Townson et al., 2016). Townson et al. (2016) revealed through perceived reliability, that individuals who were confident in DNA results supported increased funding for DNA testing labs for the criminal justice system. Further, it was discovered that overall time spent watching television was not related to the support of increased spending on DNA labs; however, respondents who stated they were regular viewers of crime dramas such as *CSI* were likely to pay attention to stories that involved DNA forensics in all sources of media, therefore reinforcing the CSI effect (2016).

Louisiana CSI effect. Flawed criminal practices in an investigation might weaken an individual's trust in the criminal justice system. Felder (2009) concluded that Louisiana has a faulty crime investigation system that is contributory to wrongful prosecutions. Felder affirmed that without revisions to the current statutes regarding supervision of death investigators, Louisiana citizens would continue to be dishonestly informed about crime-related investigations. Rudner (2010) described portions of America's death investigation team, such as medical examiners and coroners in Louisiana, as inadequate lay members, presumed to be professional experts. Felder

opined that public misconceptions, or CSI effect, contradict the reality of what evidence is found during a death investigation against what evidence is required. Lack of understanding what it takes to run a successful and accurate investigation may have either negative or positive influence on individual perceptions relating to crime, race, and fear of crime.

Despite the lack of empirical evidence to support a CSI effect, the media was mentioned as having some influence on individuals. Dioso-Villa (2014) found no evidence to support the existence of the CSI effect but asserted that it does carry some influence on viewers. Also, Scanlan (2015) noted a lack of empirical data to support the CSI effect. However, Scanlan indicated clear influence of the CSI effect in that some crime labs have enforced policies to minimize its negative effects, especially in the criminal justice system's role to pursue and conquer justice. Scanlan further expressed that due to a series of backlogs regarding victims who had been sexually assaulted, Louisiana enacted a law (Act 124) to combat the issue of having valuable evidence that could lead to the discovery and conviction of perpetrators.

Personified attitudes. The media can be a contributing factor in altering individual attitudes about the criminal justice system. Enns (2014) and Pickett et al. (2015) expressed the media's influencing power on the attitudes of individuals involving the policies of the criminal justice system. There have been contradicting arguments on whether the media positively or negatively portray law enforcement officer conduct (Chermak et al., 2006; Surette, 2007). Consequently, these mixed illustrations concerning the potential affects of media consumption have imposed personified attitudes among

some members of society (Intravia et al., 2018). For example, Weitzer and Tuch (2004) found that people who were subjected to news media portrayals of police misconduct felt that police mischief was ordinary in their daily procedure. On the contrary, Chermak et al. (2006) uncovered no evidence that news media consumption of police misconduct affected the attitudes of individuals in any way. Any source of media consumption is prone to affecting the attitudes of its viewers.

Intravia et al. (2018) established that crime news platforms, portrayals of law enforcement conduct, depictions in crime-based dramas, and social media are all credible in affecting the perceptions and attitudes of individuals toward police officers. Intravia et al. discovered that online news resulted in negative affects on individual perceptions regarding police legitimacy, while social media consumption revealed positive affects on the same subject. As it relates to entertainment media, Donovan and Klahm (2015) found that people who were heavy viewers of crime-based television dramas perceived that media portrayals of police officer conduct were fair and just. These findings suggest that the literature revelations are mixed and warrant further exploration of the media's role in influencing personified attitudes about crime.

Trust in the Criminal Justice System

Society's trust in the criminal justice system has been tested in countless aspects surrounding crime, race, and fear of crime. Predominately, law enforcement officers are at the forefront of the criminal justice system which places them in society's judgment seat of potential police bias accusations (Kahn & Martin, 2016). Thus, any issues with policing policies, especially negative outcomes with racial minorities, offer an irresistible

social justice (Kahn & Martin, 2016). Kahn and Martin (2016) noted that officers that respect and obey biased administrative policing policies would result in racial inequalities. Swaine et al. (2015) revealed that out of approximately 500 police officer killings in 2015, African American men were three times as likely to be killed. Moreover, Cox et al. (2014) uncovered that police officers' decision to shoot could be affected by the racial makeup of the neighborhood as well as the officer's race.

Historically, police officers tend to sense that some minorities, especially African American men are often hostile or violent. Kahn and Martin (2016) found that officers who feared to be stereotyped as racists against minorities lead to increased use of force against racial minorities. Further, Kahn and Martin discussed the destruction of society's trust in the police as a result of perceived police bias regarding race, which also places minority neighborhoods at a disadvantage when police protection and service is required. Kahn and Martin concluded that the media's negative portrayals involving police, public perceptions and relentless racial disparities in policing are all contributing factors of trust in the officers of the criminal justice system (2016).

Nationwide Cultivation of Fear

Portrayals of crime, violence, and victimization have been researched and examined to test whether fear of crime is cultivated as a result of consuming media violence. Television depictions of violence and crime are displayed through a variety of media markets; from local to national news, advertisements, and movie productions (Chadee, Smith, & Ferguson, 2019). Ascenio et al. (2014) tested the association of fear of crime, victimization, and self-esteem; however, there was no correlation. Rollwagen

(2016) explored the relationship between fear of crime and dwelling type. Rollwagen recognized a minute sense of fear of crime for citizens who dwelled in apartment complexes, whereas citizens dwelling in both low- and high-rise units were less likely to fear crime during evening hours. Also, Callahan (2016) asserted a relationship between media portrayals of crime and society's perception of safety in their neighborhoods. Nonetheless, other factors have been mentioned and examined in an attempt to capture other logics and factors that could initiate fear of crime.

Fear of crime and victimization. Any individual who consumes or is exposed to crime-based media that involves crimes of violence may well attain feelings of fear. For instance, Callahan (2016) recognized exposure to various crime-related media among three racial groups (African American, Caucasian, and Latino) intensified risk perceptions and fear of crime. In addition, Jamieson and Romer (2014) found that television violence was related to society's fear of crime. For example, Jamieson and Romer disclosed there was a relationship between fear of crime and television violence without intercession of local crime rates. Also, national crime rates caused some discernment of local crime rates triggering a relationship between crime rates and fear (Jamieson & Romer, 2014). Jamieson and Romer concluded that society's perception of modifications in local crime rates might be subtle to modifications in police reports of crime, but not through modifications in the volume of television violence.

Crime news serves as a large portion of information regarding events, incidents, terrorism, and other matters that occur in the world. According to Kohm et al. (2012), local television news consumption was the most predominant source of all media outlets

that contributed and enhanced fear of crime. Hollis et al. (2017) found a strong relationship existed between fear of crime, television media, and city crime reports, which influences society and consumption of social media. Moreover, Yamamoto et al. (2019) added that an unreasonable feeling of fear could develop from consuming crime news, whereas Chadee et al. (2019) concluded that between media and fear of crime there was no relationship. Individuals who live in communities that have high crime rates encounter the struggle to prevent themselves from the vulnerability of being attacked or caught up in street violence.

Fear of inequality. Information regarding criminality will reach individuals across media outlets or through word of mouth. Based upon what source of media society depends upon, as well as what is portrayed or framed in the news, it will have an impact on an individual's perception regarding crime (Wright & Unah, 2017). Wright and Unah (2017) asserted that media influence is not the same across different racial and ethnic populations, especially when outgroups or minorities acquire feelings of inequality within the criminal justice system. A sensible human being would acknowledge that understandings of slavery, discrimination, and segregation have imparted some feelings of distrust in African Americans regarding governmental institutions (Wright & Unah, 2017). Therefore, the fear of inequality as a result of media portrayals is essential to consider in the current study.

The above-referenced facts, as well as other incidences of African Americans being murdered by Caucasian police officers have contributed to the stereotypical label that African American men are criminals. Aymer (2016) and Bonilla-Silva (2015) found

that the relentless killings of African American men and police brutality intimately resembles inequality is not a new phenomenon in America. Recent yearly reports compiled by local police departments revealed African Americans were killed by police nearly twice in 1 week from 2005-2012 (Johnson, Hoyer, & Heath, 2014); this heeds to the suggested representation of inequality among the citizens of the United States.

According to Moore et al. (2018), police officers are more often justified in the killings of unarmed African American men based upon the belief system that all African American men are angry, hostile, and criminals. These perceptions alone emphasized and justified that Caucasian police officers killed out of fear (Carney, 2016; Wright & Unah, 2017). These findings are necessary to the current literature that implies fear of inequality affecting individual perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime.

Police-Citizen Related Outcomes

The outcomes of police encounters with all races are of importance. For example, February 2012, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin (unarmed African American teen) was shot and killed by a volunteer neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman in the State of Florida; Zimmerman was acquitted under the Stand Your Ground Law. July 2014, Eric Garner, a 43-year-old African American male died of a chokehold by police officer Daniel Pantaleo; No charges were filed against Pantaleo. April 2015, in the state of Maryland, 25-year-old African American male Freddie Gray died of life-threatening injuries as a result of police brutality; six officers inclusive of 2 African American men, three Caucasian men, and one African American woman did not face any charges in this death. In July 2016, an African American man by the name of Philando Castile was shot

and killed by a Caucasian police officer in the course of a routine traffic stop. Castile was obeying the officer's command to present his driver's license when this incident occurred. Chan (2016) submitted a statement by now-former Chief of Staff, Dennis McDonough, in which he clearly stated he felt if Castile had been Caucasian, it never would have happened. However, approximately one year later the officer was found innocent of the charges (Smith, 2017). Thus, these findings call to fruition the need to address the media's role in high profiled cases.

The media's role in capturing and portraying these tragic events are crucial in the impact on individuals' perception of crime, race, and fear of crime. Walter Scott, a 53-year-old African American male, was shot and killed fleeing from police officer Michael Slager in South Carolina; however, Slager was sentenced to 20 years for second-degree murder and obstruction to justice. America is drastically exposed to news coverage as well as other media sources that continue to highlight the persistent problems police misconduct (Faber & Kalbfeld, 2019). Portrayals of police misconduct involving African Americans and the adjudication of these cases continue to stimulate social movements across the United States.

U.S. Respectability Politics

Some people might be apprehensive of the discourse regarding the political standpoint of crime, race, and fear of crime. Obasogie and Newman (2016) discussed the politics of injustice attitudes that African Americans can dodge discrimination, stereotype, police misconduct, and disrespect by demonstrating satisfactory conduct in the way they speak, dress, and represent themselves. *Respectability politics* means an

individual who works hard and abides by the law will not be hindered from going after the American dream. Race and racism are closely related to American respectability politics and is further influenced in one way or another by the media's portrayals of crime, race, and fear of crime (2016).

Social Activist Movements

Social activist movements are a result of a disturbance or retaliation toward the misuse of power and authority often experienced by an individual with little to no power. Social activist movements are recognized for advocating or alerting society that the rights of an individual, or that a race, gender, or group has been violated in some fashion. Westby (2002), transparently stated that social activist has the primary goal of strategically framing and raising awareness of the realities of such violations by gaining as many supporters as possible. Bosi et al. (2016) further stated that people who become involved with social movements are likely to undergo personal change or amend their perspective regarding that issue. Bosi et al. also noted that social activist movements have the power to convert society's views in unintended ways. The current impact of social activist movements on society can be alarming in its association with crime, race, and fear of crime.

Black Lives Matter. African American lives have been taken in disturbing rates due to violence. Black Lives Matter is a social movement that was devised in the summer of 2013 after the killing of Trayvon Martin (Bailey et al., 2015; Carney, 2016; Obasogie & Newman, 2016; Olteanu et al., 2016; Rockford, 2016). Its origination is contributed to Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi with the help of the African American

community (Bailey & Leonard, 2015). Black Lives Matter campaigns against racial inequality experiences involving African Americans and law enforcement, and the criminal justice system (Bailey & Leonard, 2015). The Black Lives Matter movement was not created solely in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin but as a response to social injustices created against African Americans in general.

This movement gained more stability, recognition, and growth as it was primarily used on social media as #BlackLivesMatter following constant police killings of African Americans (Carney, 2016; Rockford, 2016). Black Lives Matter is publicized significantly through social media to deny Caucasians supremacy of the oxygen it needs to prolong the dehumanization of African Americans not only by violent beatings and killings, but also by racial profiling, stereotypes, and mass incarceration (Bailey & Leonard, 2015; Rockford, 2016). Bailey and Leonard (2015) and Carney (2016) indicated that Black Lives Matter purpose was not to dismiss the value of life in other races but to spotlight hypocrisy in the justice system of America that maintains that all are created equal and entitled to freedom filled life in pursuit of happiness. This social activist movement has had a prolific impact on the recognition of the social injustice that surrounds the lives of African Americans living in America.

The media has been a contributor to the exposure of social activist movements such as Black Lives Matter. The media forms the transparency and realization of events after police officer killings, which makes it difficult to change how these stories are presented to society (Obasogie & Newman, 2016). Interested in whether the media's narratives concerning police officer killings changed after the formation and promotion

of Black Lives Matter, Obasogie and Newman (2016) evaluated the public's perception of local news reports on deaths involving police and citizens. Obasogie and Newman highlighted Black Lives Matter believes that regardless of African Americans' past or whether they engaged in criminal activity, it does not constitute the use of deadly force. Since the media provides a considerable amount of exposure to social activist movements, individual perceptions regarding crime, race, and fear of crime might be acquired.

Social activist media platforms. Individuals communicate on issues about crime, race, and fear of crime using media platforms. Olteanu et al. (2016) found that African Americans deeply engaged with the #BlackLivesMatter via Twitter, an online media communication tool. Olteanu et al. remarkable detailed events triggered individuals to engage in hasty conversation regarding the Black Lives Matter movement. Olteanu et al. found that Twitter was the emerged platform of discussion and reflection that allowed individuals to share stories, discuss police reform and race, and also minimized negativity and anger.

The Black Lives Matter social movement succeeded in public awareness by permitting the African American community and its supporters to connect socially and cope with their experiences of being mistreated altogether (Olteanu et al., 2016). Olteanu et al., (2016) revealed past rates of police killings of Blacks was linked to the way people responded on social media regarding Black Lives Matter. Moreover, Olteanu et al. illustrated that the manifestation and advancement of new social movements on social

media are influential in affecting society's perception of crime and race regarding law enforcement.

Individuals often express their position on social movements on the internet. Gerbaudo and Trere (2015) coined these expressions as social media activism. Notably, Carney (2016) conducted a study between two social movement ideologies presented on the social media platform: #BlackLivesMatter and #AllLivesMatter. Carney implied that social media supplied strong and weak influences on society; public opinions were identified as weak influences, while strong influences signified that states were propelled to enact new legislation or to reform its present laws. To date, there is no empirical evidence of media presentations on Blue Lives Matter or All Lives Matter having an impact on individual perceptions concerning crime, race, or fear of crime.

Blue Lives Matter. Blue Lives Matter began in December 2014 after New York Police Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu were both shot and killed by African American Ismaaiyl Brinsley. Brinsley publicly announced the intentions of this violent act on a social media outlet (Instagram) and stated it was retaliation in the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown. Although the unjustifiable malicious act committed by Brinsley cannot be ignored, Blesset (2017) argued that Blue Lives Matter was organized in an attempt to diminish the significance of African Americans' experiences of inequality. Biesecker (2017) asserted that the media could be credited for its recurring depictions of police violence and protests that appear to converge, Black Lives Matter, Blue Lives Matter, and All Lives Matter. However, Biesecker opined from a historical and philosophical view, that Black Lives Matter was the sound of pain from the wounds

of injustices African Americans feel all over the world. Notwithstanding, Keith (2016) chimed Blue Lives Matter fueled the slogan Making America Safe Again should be the ultimate required goal and mission within society. Blue Lives Matter is also titled “Police Lives” known for offering support to other police officers and their families whose lives have been lost serving their duty.

Crime-Based Media Related Influence

Prior studies have constructed crime-based and media related instruments to examine what factors contribute to crime, race, and fear of crime. Using scenarios from the Travon Martin incident, Kuhn and Lane (2013) sought to answer whether racial socialization and fear of crime could influence the way individuals respond to certain situations. In short, when gender and race variables were adjusted, findings revealed women were weak and submissive and likely to surrender to any suspicious person while men were found to respond powerfully and strong (Kuhn & Lane, 2013). Further, when variables of race and mistrust were tested, participants responses were likely to result in shooting (Kuhn & Lane, 2013). Recommendations for future research were to apply a qualitative component to measure individual perceptions regarding crime, race, and fear of crime (Kuhn & Lane, 2013).

Law enforcement officers use media platforms for various reasons: socializing, entertainment, and information. In fact, some law enforcement officers have acknowledged consuming some sort of advanced modern media in their everyday lives (Schmucker, 2019). In a study that examined law enforcement officer stress as a result of consuming crime-based media, Schmucker (2019) detected a strong relationship when

two or more platforms were used collectively. The Police Officer Media Consumption Questionnaire (POMCQ) was pilot tested for reliability on all 3 platforms: traditional media, social media, and entertainment media (Schmucker, 2019). Both the traditional media and social media scores were found to be reliable while the entertainment media score was insufficient (Schmucker, 2019). The five questions that reduced the reliability of the instrument were removed.

Summary

There is a problem in how society may be influenced by being exposed to some form of media that portrays images of crime, race, and fear of crime (Prot et al., 2015). The media's presentation of who committed crimes, how crimes are committed, and the way criminals are handled within the criminal justice system is significant in impacting society's perception of crime, race, and fear of crime. Media portrayals of criminality and administration of the United States judicial system, whether real or fiction, have the potential power of influence on its consumers (Collica-Cox & Furst, 2019). Additionally, African Americans represent the highest incarceration and prison population in comparison to Caucasians and Hispanics; therefore, contributing to the feelings of inequality among the Black race.

This literature review included a synthesis of many studies conducted on the affects of various media sources as it relates to crime, race, and fear of crime. In brief, the inclusion of two essential theories, cultivation theory and social cognitive theory, was described as the frameworks to help understand the role of the media's impact on the human mind and to explore how media exposure may contribute to criminal behavior.

Several performances, cultures, and types of media sources and portrayals are presented to stipulate the different meanings that were acquired across studies. The review of current literature revealed positive and negative media influences on society's perception of crime, race, and fear of crime. Notable, building social networks and public awareness were identified as positive influences whereas citizen distrust in law enforcement and misconception of individual depictions were recognized as negative influences. Social media was labeled as a platform for debates regarding crime, race, and fear of crime; ultimately enacting and promoting social movements.

It is important to realize the significance in the pursuit of justice across all racial, political, and governmental boundaries. The United States contends to be a nation united. However, society's perception of crime, race, and fear of crime gives the impression that the United States is divided. This assumption is based on the media portrayals of what is real and what is false.

Chapter 3 includes the data collection method selected for the study. I discussed the rationale for the research design as well as provided an explanation of the interview questions and the target population.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore whether crime-based media influences individual perceptions of others based on crime, race, and fear of crime. Rudestam and Newton (2015) described the phenomenological approach as an evolving qualitative research strategy used to examine daily lived experiences and how individuals perceive the world they live in. In this phenomenological qualitative study, I explored the perceptions of individuals who use, consume, or are exposed to crime-based media. The purpose of this study was to examine whether crime-based media has negative or positive influences on individuals concerning crime, race, or fear of crime. The main goal of this study was to analyze individual perceptions and gain an understanding of a possible phenomenon regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. Chapter 3 presents the rationale for the research method and provides an explanation of the interview questions and the target population.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Design

This phenomenological qualitative study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on criminality?

RQ 2: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on race?

RQ3: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on fear of crime?

In this study, I used a qualitative design with phenomenological methods, which afforded me the opportunity to observe participants as they described their lived experiences. Rudestam and Newton (2015) noted that participants are the experts on what they have experienced and thus should be selected accordingly. O'Sullivan et al. (2017) stated that a phenomenological qualitative study permits the researcher or interviewer to ask open-ended questions that are flexible and can be adjusted if the previous answer warrants it. I used a modified version of open-ended questions to investigate individual perceptions surrounding crime, race, and fear of crime. This qualitative approach was used to gain a clear understanding of individuals' perceptions as a result of consuming crime-based media.

O'Sullivan et al. (2017) noted that research methods are used to assist the researcher in drawing conclusions from the words and themes collected while interviewing participants. Subsequently, these data can be analyzed and developed into a phenomenon concerning that particular matter. A case study design would be appropriate for a particular target population, but this was not the situation in this study. The grounded theory approach was not suitable for this study because I was not attempting to develop a theory from the data. There was no particular population interest; therefore, a focus group was not appropriate for this study. O'Sullivan et al. stated that focus groups are often used in collaboration with quantitative research and help expound upon the data collected in survey questionnaires.

Rationale

Prior researchers have used qualitative research methods to explore individual perceptions of crime and race as a result of media portrayals (Carney, 2016; Crichlow & Fulcher, 2017; Kort-Butler, 2016). Rudestam and Newton (2015) stated that interviews are the preferred method to collect data; they allow the researcher the opportunity to guide the discussion on the topic of interest. Furthermore, the data collected during in-person interviews allow the researcher to explore the feelings and beliefs on participants' experiences that typically lead to a phenomenon or new theme (Creswell, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rudestam and Newton, 2015).

In this study, I conducted in-person interviews and formed general questions to learn more about participants' lived experiences and understanding of the difference between media's depiction of factual criminality and fictionalized criminality. Although participants were selected through Facebook, the interviews were held in-person at an agreed upon location. There are disadvantages to in-person interviews, including location and time constraints and costs. The advantages of in-person interviews are visual observation and the opportunity to build rapport with participants.

Role of the Researcher

During my phenomenological qualitative study, I conducted in-person interviews using open-ended questions to collect data from participants. My role as the researcher was to ensure I was free of any preconceived bias that would complicate or thwart the interviews. To ensure that I took the proper steps to prevent bias, I followed Ravitch and Carl's (2016) suggestion of recording researcher identity memos. Researcher identity

memos allow researchers to journal thoughts and feelings about their study and reflect on them throughout the study. In addition, researchers are advised to share these memos with stakeholders or other research team members for constructive criticism or overlooked researcher bias. Rudestam and Newton (2015) explained that interviews may be flexible and structured in a way that directs focus on the research questions. The participant is the instrument in data collection for qualitative research (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The researcher is responsible for the outcome of the study. Therefore, Ravitch and Carl (2016) added the significance of researcher experience, practice, and qualification to conduct in-person interviews. Before conducting interviews on the selected participants for this study, I practiced mock interviews with volunteer friends and family members. Prospective participants were provided a clear and concise description of the study and were allowed an opportunity to volunteer without coercion.

Participants selected for this study met criteria based on their responses to the following questions:

- Are you between the age of 18-40?
- Are you a resident of Louisiana?
- Do you consume, utilize, or view any source of media, including, but not limited to, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, social media, internet, smartphones/computers/tablets?

Creswell (2014) specified that a researcher's descriptive goal is to seek to describe a phenomenon or experience. My goal was met in this study in that the participants had experience with and/or knowledge of modern media. Creswell noted that participants'

answers to interview questions lead a researcher to create forms called *protocols*. In turn, protocols contribute to emerging themes as the interviews continue. This phenomenological qualitative study was carried out by experience and practice, instrumentation of flexible interview questions, and qualified participants.

Methodology

For this study, I used a qualitative methodology to explore the perceptions of the target population. This study included a purposive sampling approach through a Facebook research group. Other sources of data included a modified version of Kuhn and Lane's (2013) instrument on fear of crime and Schmucker's (2019) instrument on police officer media consumption (see Appendix A). The study intended to gain an understanding of the phenomenon of society's perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime as a result of exposure to crime-based media.

Creswell (2014) stated that a phenomenological study involves seven to 10 participants. I interviewed eight participants, at which point data saturation was reached. The target population was men and women of all races, ages 18–40, who were residents of Louisiana. The rationale for this sample size, population, and geographic area was significant to this study, as Louisiana has numerous culturally diverse cities. The purposive sampling technique provided the opportunity to select participants from various ethnic groups, to explore different beliefs, and to identify a new phenomenon surrounding crime, race, and fear of crime.

Participation Selection

Ravitch and Carl (2016) indicated that participants should be well-informed about the specific goal(s) of the phenomenological qualitative study. The purposive sample participants for this study was solicited through a Facebook research group given that part of the criteria was for the participant to be a consumer/viewer of at least one media outlet. This qualitative study considered 12 potential candidates for interviewing. I used random sampling as a secondary selection method by placing all candidate names in a box and drawing one at a time. I selected 10 potential candidates which was enough for qualitative interviews (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The data were collected after eight participants consented to participate by responding “I Consent” via email. Once participants agreed to participate in the study, I secured a location and setup a day and time to conduct the interviews.

Instrumentation

This phenomenological study was conducted using qualitative interviews to explore the perceptions of people who consume and are exposed to various forms of crime-based media. There were three instruments used for this study: myself (the researcher), a modified version of a previously used assessment tool devised by Kuhn and Lane (2013), and Schmucker’s (2019) Police Officer Media Consumption Questionnaire. The two instruments used in previous studies were modified and combined into one. The authors provided permission to use and modify the assessment tools via email communications (see Appendix B). I used these tools to discover any unknown potential affects of crime-based media consumption.

The assessment tool consisted of a minimum of 15 items that asked participants to identify their demographics, what kind(s) of media they used, and how much of the media is crime-based. The questions were open-ended to necessitate an explained answer regarding the participants' own experience, feelings, and knowledge about the topic. To reduce bias, I used an audio-tape recorder to collect the data from participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I, the researcher, was the only interviewer for this study. All questions were mapped to concentrate on the potential impacts of crime-based media consumption.

Data Collection Instruments

As previously stated, there were two instruments combined and modified into one instrument. This instrument was used during the qualitative interview course of this study. The open-ended questions asked participants about their preferred method of media consumption and what feelings they acquired about crime, race, and fear of crime after viewing crime-based media. I conducted three mock interviews with acquainted individuals to rehearse the flow and clarity of the research questions as well as to become comfortable with the instrument (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Rehearsing instruments before original participant interviews allows the researcher to establish whether the instrument will be sufficient in collecting the desired data (2016). Participants were asked to partake in a one-hour face-to-face interview that was scheduled on the participant's convenient day, time, and location. Prior to the interview, participants received the informed consent form that included information on voluntary participation instructions. Overall, these two instruments were used to answer research questions on what, if any, impact crime-based media has on individuals concerning crime, race, and fear of crime.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders for crime-based media affects on individual perceptions were municipal police departments, sheriff's offices, department of corrections, elected political officials, and community leaders. This study provided these stakeholders with data that is beneficial not only to law enforcement agencies, but also to citizens within each community. By identifying the impending positive and negative impacts of crime-based media, stakeholders could formulate collaborative efforts to help minimize the tension and/or pre-conceived biases between the community and police. Equally important, the results of this study could influence perceptions across all facets of each stakeholder as it presents vital evidence of how each group or individual observes the other. Having knowledge of crime-based media affects on individual's perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime could serve as guiding principles for improving relationships among the stakeholders and the citizens in the communities.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

The instrument used in this study has been used in prior studies which therefore confirms reliability and validity. In order to show evidence of reliability and validity, it was extremely important that transparency of how and why this study was conducted and documented is crucial (O'Sullivan, Rassel, Berner, & Taliaferro, 2017). Schmucker's (2019) correlational study was the substance for my study in that my study also examined media consumption. Schmucker's (2019) used Police Officer Media Consumption Questionnaire as an instrument for his study. In this study, I used a modified version of this instrument named Crime-based Media Consumption Questionnaire.

The worth of this phenomenological qualitative study can be improved if the test for both validity and reliability are designed. A pilot study was conducted to test/retest the reliability of the Police Officer Media Consumption Questionnaire. The study itself has the potential for a similar research inquiry using the same data collection techniques with a different population. Ravitch and Carl (2016) defined validity as the way in which the researcher verifies that the results are true and reflective of the participants' real-life experiences. One potential threat to validity within this study was that the participants' experiences might have been exaggerated or inaccurate.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

As previously stated, this qualitative study considered 12 potential candidates for in-person interviewing. The population of participants was identified via Facebook research group link. I used random sampling as a secondary selection method by placing all candidate names in a box and drawing one at a time. Participants were asked to partake in a one-hour face-to-face interview that was scheduled at the participant's convenient day, time, and location. The assessment tool consisted of a minimum of 15 items that asked participants to identify their demographics, what kind(s) of media they use, and how much of the media is crime-based. I used an audio-tape recorder to collect the data from participants, which was later stored away in a private location in my home. Participants received and signed the Informed Consent form that included information on voluntary participation instructions and participant's rights prior to the interview.

Data Analysis Plan

An accurate qualitative data analysis plan can be useful in helping the researcher draw conclusions and establish validity. I used a recording device during interviews to ensure clarity of participant responses. Ravitch and Carl (2016) discussed one data analysis strategy known as member checks to help provide validity to the data collected from participants of a particular study. Therefore, in this study I completed member-checks with the participants after I have transcribed the interviews to ensure that I interpreted their responses precisely. Transparency remains the responsibility of the researcher in helping the reader understand how they arrived at a certain conclusion. Ravitch and Carl detailed the significance of transparency as the capability of verifying rigor within the data collected by the researcher. To that end, I examined and summarized the interviews by inductive coding and thematic analysis. The codes and themes were used as a narrative in my concluding statement. This phenomenological qualitative study attempted to identify and reveal the perceived feelings individuals have acquired as a result of consuming crime-based media. Therefore, the questions designed in the data collection instrument were analytically and ethically presented. The blended research question for my study: How does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based upon crime, race, and fear of crime? The research and interview questions both compliment and align with this qualitative study. According to Ravitch and Carl, once data saturation is reached, the researcher is permitted to stop forming themes from the data. The application of NVivo software was used to identify significant and common themes within the data.

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability

The terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are often used simultaneously throughout research process. However, Ravitch and Carl (2016) explained that each term can assist the researcher during various stages in conducting, engaging, and planning his/her study. A major facet of a qualitative study is credibility because it is the link that connects the researcher's instrument and data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In this study, I employed open-ended questions throughout the interviews to justify credibility. Transferability, also known as external validity, explains the thick description of the data that permits the researcher's audience to consider the distinctive ways in which they can convey the findings of a specific study without duplicating the research design (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The findings from this study is valuable for impending replicated studies. Ravitch and Carl maintained that dependability is the argument for the consistency and the reliability of how the collected data answers the research question(s). The data collected in this study were examined and summarized subsequent to the interviews through inductive coding and thematic analysis in order to achieve dependability. Finally, confirmability in qualitative research is the researcher's goal in eliminating objectives while acknowledging the challenges of his/her findings to be scrutinized (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Thus, this study pursued confirmability if any biases and prejudices are identified within the data.

Ethical Strategies

I confirmed that this phenomenological qualitative study met the requirements of the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Institutional Review Board

(IRB) has the duty of making sure the researcher abides by the ethical guidelines in safeguarding participant information and confidentiality (O'Sullivan et al., 2017; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Furthermore, participants had the right to withdraw from participating in this study and/or decline to answer any question(s) at their own discretion (See Appendix C). Participant confidentiality was guaranteed by excluding actual names and replacing with P for participant, 1,2, 3, etc. for the order in which each interview was taken, followed by a letter code for race (B/W) and a letter code for gender (M/F). (i.e.: P1BM). In addition, the recorded interviews were locked away in a safe box and stored in a secure location in my home. The ethical procedures were explained in-depth to the participant during initial selection as well as prior to the interview.

Ethical issues

The recruitment process for this phenomenological qualitative study began by posting a request for participants on Facebook. However, in that manner, Rudestam and Newton (2015) stated that informed consent might not be afforded to potential participants. To alleviate this ethical issue, interested participants were prompted to email the researcher for additional information which included the informed consent form. O'Sullivan et al., (2017) noted the necessity of providing informed consent to participants after they have concluded the assessment. Overall, the confidentiality and safety of participant communication and identification was guaranteed, and this study was faithfully voluntary.

Summary

In summary, Chapter 3 included the rationale for selecting a general qualitative methodology and phenomenological research design for this study. It explained the purpose and goal of this study extensively: to explore what, if any, affects crime-based media had on individual perceptions based upon crime, race, and fear of crime. This chapter also included the research questions, sampling techniques, procedures for recruitment, data analysis plan, and ethical issues that were addressed. It explained the choice for using open-ended questions when interviewing, which was appropriate for exploring and understanding the lived experiences of participants in a phenomenological study. Evidence to support coding themes and memos were provided as support throughout the methodology section. Chapter 4 includes the demographics on the participants, an account of the data analysis, and coding themes that emerged during the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore whether crime-based media influences society's perceptions of others based on crime, race, and fear of crime. This chapter contains the results of the general phenomenological study conducted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on criminality?

RQ2: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on race?

RQ3: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on fear of crime?

This chapter also includes a discussion of the analysis conducted. In addition, it provides that the analysis was consistent with the study's theoretical framework and methodology. Moreover, it provides how the investigation correlates with the research questions. Lastly, this chapter offers diagrams of sample demographics using tables to present detailed code and theme data and figures that demonstrate participants' perceptions regarding crime, race, and fear of crime.

Setting

The setting of the interviews in this study was each participant's local library. I reserved the private meeting room in advance after scheduling the interview date and time. The interviews were conducted in person. I received permission from participants to record interviews using an electronic recording device. Data were collected from

participants using open-ended questions. Collecting data through in-person interviews allowed me to explore the feelings and beliefs of participants' experiences that typically lead to a phenomenon or new theme (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Although there are disadvantages to in-person interviews, such as location and time constraints and costs, visual observation and the opportunity to build rapport with participants are valuable in qualitative studies. I conducted eight interviews over a period of 2 weeks, ranging from one to three interviews per day. There were no respective conditions that influenced the participants' responses that may have exaggerated the results of the study.

Participant Demographics

Eight participants were interviewed for this study. The participants were solicited via a Facebook recruitment post. The criteria for potential participants was provided in the recruitment post as well as the informed consent. All participants acknowledged being consumers or viewers of crime-based media.

Six (75%) of the participants were African American and two participants (25%) were Caucasian. All participants shared their political party affiliation, with the majority (62.5%) identifying as Independent and the remaining identifying as Democrats (37.5%). The ages of participants varied. Participants who were 26–39 years old represented 37.5% of the sample, 25% were 40–59 years old, and 37.5% of the participants were 60 years old or above. There were six male participants (75%) and two female participants (25%) in the sample. The demographics are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participants	8
Race	
African American	6
Caucasian	2
Age	
26–39 years old	3
40–59 years old	2
60 or older	3
Gender	
Male	6
Female	2
Political party	
Democrat	3
Republican	0
Independent	5

Data Collection

Once IRB approval was granted (approval #01-31-20-0726294) from Walden University, I recruited participants, scheduled interviews, and collected data from eight individuals who met the inclusion criteria. After reviewing the informed consent form and consenting to participate in the study, participants were contacted via email to confirm the location, date, and time of the interview. There were eight in-depth interviews scheduled with individuals who acknowledged being consumers or viewers of crime-based media. Prior to the start of each interview, I formed a rapport with participants to help them feel comfortable about sharing their lived experiences.

I conducted one to three interviews per day using a modified version of interview instruments from previous studies (Kuhn & Lane, 2013; Schmucker, 2019). The interview instruments were coalesced into one instrument that guided the study. The

length of the interviews ranged from 25 to 35 minutes. Each interview was recorded using an electronic recording device and each participant consented for the interview to be recorded. The participants explained and shared their own experiences, feelings, and knowledge about the phenomenon of interest. At the end of the interviews, the recording device and informed consent forms were placed in a lockbox and a secure location to ensure privacy. There was no deviation from the data collection plan presented in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

At the end of completing all interviews, I used NVivo's transcription software to transcribe the data verbatim. I reviewed the transcribed interviews to confirm the accuracy of the questions and responses. According to Patton (2015), the aim when using qualitative data is to essentially answer research questions by understanding the data collected. Furthermore, transcribing the interviews allows the researcher the opportunity to look for themes, find patterns, and become immersed in the data (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). After completing a thorough review of the transcribed interviews, I uploaded them into NVivo to confirm the themes.

My data analysis was constructed on Moustakas' (1994) foundation of phenomenological research approach to analysis (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Using this approach, I explored, examined, and scrutinized the interviews performed in the study. This analysis approach allows the researcher to recognize when data saturation is reached (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The process of my data analysis included (a) reviewing each statement for how well it described the participant's perception of crime, race, and

open-ended interview questions. I enhanced the identified themes by studying each participant's response collaboratively for subject consistency, which added to the validity of the results of this study. Furthermore, I used member checking to ensure participants' responses and lived experiences were reflected accurately.

The transferability of this study was established to the degree that the findings can be applied for future studies without replication. Ravitch and Carl (2016) conveyed that transferability is how findings from one study's context can be applied to another through thick descriptions. Furthermore, transferability was ascertained by specifying the full description of the research purpose, methodology, data collection, and analysis process. I used purposive sampling to certify that participants could provide detailed, relevant, and sufficient information to capture themes and identify a potential phenomenon regarding crime, race, and fear of crime.

To establish dependability, I examined and summarized the data by coded themes. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), if data are consistent and answer the research question, dependability is proven. I pursued confirmability by mandating precise criteria and intentionally selecting from a pool of participants in a diverse city in Louisiana. I then used audit trails to break down the narratives that are presented by the codes and themes in the results section.

Results

All participants viewed a form of crime-based media. The data revealed that the participants viewed crime-based television on a daily basis averaging 3 hours per day. Participants viewed fiction crime-based television shows just as much as nonfiction. Most

participants stated that they consumed crime-based television shows for enjoyment, entertainment, or leisure. Table 2 shows crime-based media television shows often viewed by participants.

Table 2

Crime-based Television Show Consumption

Television show	Frequency	Time consumed	Fiction/nonfiction	# of participants
<i>Law & Order</i>	Every day	1–3 hours	Fiction	8
<i>48 Hours</i>	Every day	0.5 hours	Nonfiction	6
Documentaries	Every day	0.5 hours	Nonfiction	6
<i>CSI</i>	Every day	1 hour	Fiction	4

The data revealed that the participants rarely watch crime-based movies, but when they do, it was more likely to be a fiction movie. In addition, women were more likely to view fiction movies, whereas men were more likely to view nonfiction movies. Table 3 shows crime-based movie consumption.

Table 3

Crime-Based Movie Consumption

Participants	Race/gender	Frequency per month	Fiction/Nonfiction/Both
P1	AA/F	Once	Nonfiction
P2	AA/M	Once	Fiction
P3	AA/M	Once	Fiction
P4	AA/M	Once	Fiction
P5	C/M	Once	Both
P6	C/F	3 or more	Nonfiction
P7	AA/M	2 or more	Both
P8	AA/M	Once	Fiction

The data revealed that three participants consumed crime-based television news every day for at least 1 hour. Two participants consumed crime-based television news 3 to 5 days a week for at least 1 hour. Two participants consumed crime-based television news at least once a week, and one participant rarely consumed crime-based television news. Table 4 shows crime-based television news consumption per participant.

Table 4

Crime-Based Television News Consumption

Race/gender	Frequency	Time consumed per day
AA/F	Once a week	1 hour
AA/M	Every day	1 hour
AA/M	3-5 days per week	1 hour
AA/M	Once a week	1 hour
C/M	Rarely/none	Rarely/none
C/F	Every day	1 hour
AA/M	3-5 days per week	1 hour
AA/M	Every day	1 hour

The data revealed that five participants read the newspaper daily for crime-based news. Five participants viewed crime-based news online. Three participants stated they do not read the newspaper or go online for crime-based news. Table 5 shows crime-based printed and online news consumption viewed by participants.

Table 5

Crime-Based Printed and Online News Consumption

Media source	# of Participants
Printed	5
Online	5
Neither	3

The data revealed that half of the participants consume crime-based news on social media platforms. Table 6 shows crime-based consumption viewed by participants via social media platforms.

Table 6

Crime-Based Consumption via Social Media Platforms

Frequency	# of Participants
Daily	4
None	4

Three crime-based media consumption themes were identified. The three main themes were: (a) distrust in police officers/law enforcement, (b) injustice/inequality, and (c) fear of governmental control. Moreover, an unintended consequence of the study yielded four personal experience themes: (a) guilty until proven innocent, (b) protect and serve, (c) community-police relationships, and (d) discrimination. Table 7 displays the crime-based media consumption themes.

Table 7

Crime-Based Media Consumption Themes

Themes	Description	Total # of references
Distrust in police officers/law enforcement	Police misconduct/brutality, harassment, wrongfully accused, resentment	6
Injustice/inequality	Labeling, racial profiling, illegal, feelings of sadness, angry at the criminal justice system, frustration, corruption	8
Fear of governmental control	Disrespectful, demeaning, above the law	4

Distrust in Police Officers/Law Enforcement

Six out of eight participants shared that they could not trust police or law enforcement officers based on media portrayals. All African American participants were terrified that their sons would have an unfavorable encounter with a police officer. Furthermore, they expressed acquiring a negative perception about police officers. For example, Participant 1 stated:

But going back, talking about fear. Yes, I do think I fear my son could be a victim of police brutality. It be in the back of my mind. It's hard to trust some police officers when you see what's happening in the media. To African American men.

One participant mentioned that most shows he had seen proved that just because police officers wear a badge does not mean they do not commit crimes. He articulated his belief that behind the badge is a human being. Notably, "I am also a big believer that those entrusted with the law can also break the law...sometimes they are the biggest transgressors of the law." A number of participants described how they felt about the narratives often seen in news media. For instance, Participant 3 stated:

Distrusting. Because everything you see on the news is not necessarily the true story of what actually happened. I think the news media oftentimes will hold information for the sake of not making law enforcement necessarily look illegal or guilty when it comes to the African American men community.

Participant 8 added:

This one movie shows that officers and the bosses, which are the chiefs of police, they may have evidence based on what they see in the media... and I give an

example of that. At the point they actually were in briefing. They are watching a critical shooting, school shooting where officers shot this African American male in his car and his girlfriend filmed the shooting. And what you got from the officers and Caucasian officers, was that the officers were defending the actions of the officer and the African American officers were defending the actions of the African American male.

Injustice/Inequality

Eight out of eight participants have expressed that injustice and inequality exist within the criminal justice system. Participant 1 viewed that Caucasian women are not dealt with in the same fashion as their counterparts. As an example, the participant stated:

So, there was this one article about a teacher that had been caught in in a list of things. And it was a Caucasian woman and she was not convicted. And so in the media, it was a conversation about if she were black or African American, more things would have happened to her. Per say, but because of her race, she did not get punished severely.

Participant 3 stated that the perception that injustice is based on both fiction and nonfiction media as well as reality. The participant expressed:

I would have to say the majority of social media I consumed basically deals with how we hear about and see basically how communities dealing with occasional officers deal with people in the black community and other communities. And basically, just seeing the unfairness of how there seems to be a system in race

where you live, depending on your economic status, seems to be something that I would say in our city, even in the U.S.A.

Participant 5 voiced that injustice and inequality was evident. The participant stated:

I mean, I guess the biggest arrest are African American are a minority, so you have to think, racial profiling or some of them point out the current injustice highlights. And then a lot of illegal immigrant crime that takes place in the U.S.

One participant expressed feeling complete frustration when justice is not served regardless to status or race. Reminiscing on the media, Participant 6 expressed, “OJ Simpson and Ted Bundy cases. Both were upsetting. Injustice on all levels. Crimes against women. Repeatedly.” Participant 7 expressed the heartrending state often felt when justice is not served especially when individuals are murdered or killed. Participant 7 stated:

But at the same time, you should be able to get closure in knowing that something has been done within the criminal justice system. Life is a precious thing.

Inequality and the injustice needs to stop. I just feel sad about it.

Figure 3 illustrates the participants’ mixed perceptions about injustice and inequality within the criminal justice system.

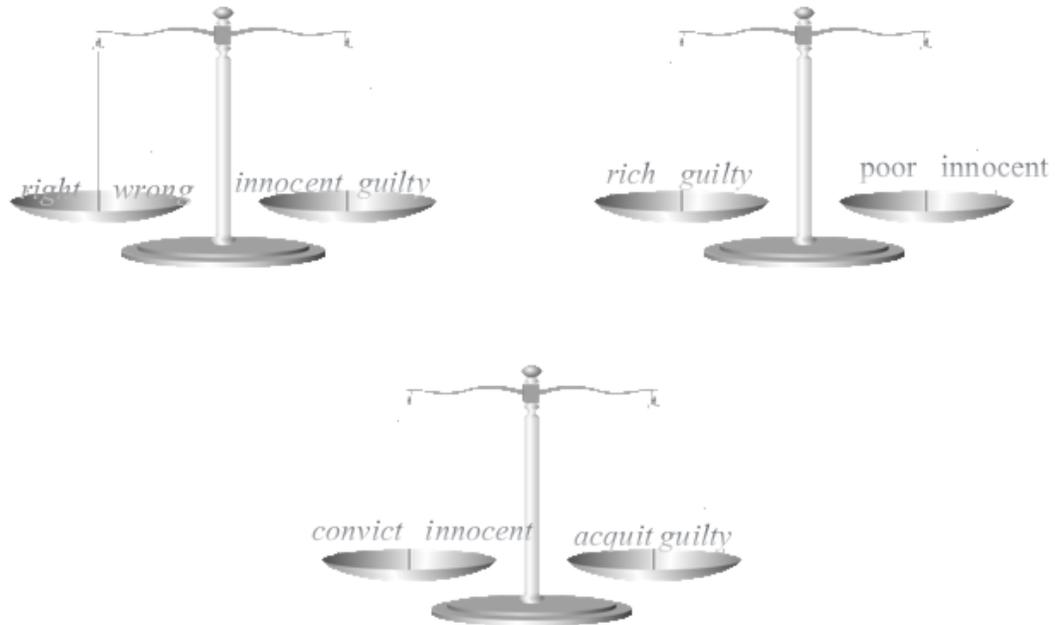


Figure 4. Scales of justice.

Fear of Governmental Control

Four out of eight participants stated they felt that the president of the United States abuses his powers, acts as if he is above the law, and is disrespectful not only to members and employees of the White House, but also to the citizens of this country. Participant 2 shared that since Donald Trump became the president of the United States, every time the participant turns on the television to watch the news it has something to do with a law the President has broken. Participant 2 disclosed that:

Partly, I watch a lot of CNN and then there is in my opinion that the president administration that's the biggest crime that's going on right now, there is so much going on. So, to me, I watch more than anything else.

The most recent crime related news stories recanted were the deeper concerns that involved the president or some other politician. To clarify, Participant 4 expressed:

Politicians know all of the stuff swirling around. To me, that is crime done right in the face of the people at this point. Seems like [the president is] above the law. The laws of the land do not apply to him. That's the portrayals I see.

Figure 4 illustrates the media consumption themes and personal experience themes.

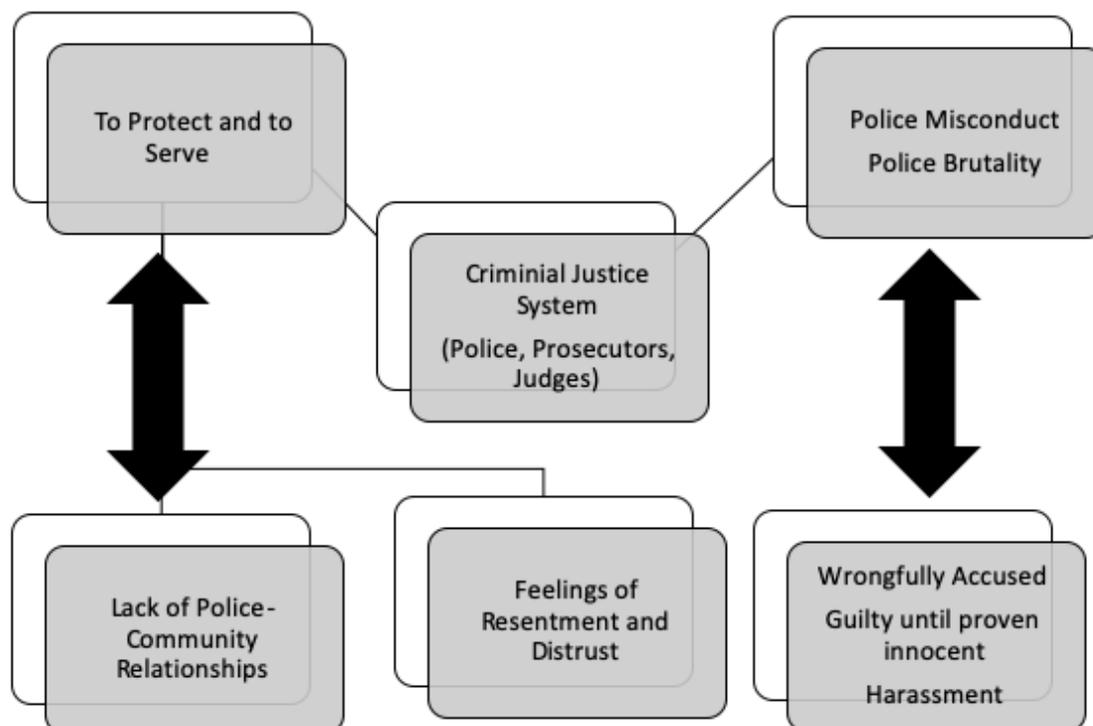


Figure 5. Hierarchy flowchart of individual perceptions regarding crime, race, and fear of crime.

Guilty Until Proven Innocent

Participants shared lived experiences aside from crime-based media consumption that influenced their views of crime, race, and fear of crime. Four participants shared that they could not trust police or law enforcement officers based on their own lived experiences or the lived experiences of family members and friends. In detail, Participant

2 stated, “We live in a time now whereas you’re guilty until you’re proven innocent. It’s not the other way around.”

Several participants reminisced about being a man of color in the wrong place at the wrong time seemed to be a crime. Participant 3 recalled that the officer said, “You look like a criminal”. In addition, the participant shared his teenage son was also harassed by police officers during a traffic stop. He recalled being upset at the sound of the son’s voice trembling saying, “He waved a gun in my face asking me what took me so long to pull over.” The officer profiled the participant’s son by stating, “Whose car are you driving”? The participant further displayed feelings of fear and resentment stating, “What if he had accidentally shot my son?”

Participant 4 remembered being placed in handcuffs, harassed and handled by police officers in an aggressive way while attending a basketball game one evening. Participant 4 stated:

My cousin and I had to use the restroom and upon walking in I heard a strong voice say, ‘Here they are right here.’ I was like guilty and did not have an opportunity to prove my innocence. No evidence. Just trying to wrap up this case without me.

One participant added:

Pretty much the same as being frustrated and knowing that we live in a system that is corrupt. That is how people of the African American race are treated. That who you are says that you are in a sense guilty until proven innocent.

Protect and Serve

Some police officer's lack of respect for all people regardless of their race also uncovered a negative phenomenon among the participants. As an illustration, participant 3 stated:

We would see on the side of cars, of course, to protect and to serve and protect depending on where you live in the reverse. But we've never felt that we were being protected not that we ever will feel that moving through.

Participant 4 added, "It's supposed to be to protect and to serve. Do you really believe it? Do you aspire to do what it says? Protect and Serve"? He further indicated:

Even now I get a lot of calls from organizations. Would you make a donation to our policemen? This is the first thing in my mind. You want me to make a donation so you can abuse me, mistreat me, or maybe even kill me? I'm sure you have all respect. And given the chance to be nice. No, thank you.

Community-Police Relationships

Some participants felt that police officers do not interact with people in the community in non-enforcement situations. Moreover, several participants' perception regarding community policing was that police officers failed to show interest in being committed to seeing justice served, but were more eager to make an arrest without accessing the conditions. Participant 2 stated, "That's what we need to start teaching our young African American children on the street. This is not the place to confront police officers. Because all what happens is one thing leads to another and it escalates."

Based on some participants' personal experiences, the trust that police officers would do the right thing to prevent crime in their community was nonexistent. One participant disclosed that police officers should start respecting people in his community and others, and then he would have more confidence in them. Participant 3 expressed:

As for how a system of justice seems to treat people and how maybe we can have a better relationship in our communities among law enforcement and the community itself. There is a lot that can be done as far as relationships between law enforcement and the community.

Both personal experiences and crime-based media consumption are significant in forming better relationships between police officers and the community. Participant 8 asserted, "In addition to the community relations aspect of it actually show the challenges that we have between the police and the community, but also particularly pertains to this...what the media puts out there."

Discrimination

Several participants communicated that they have a fear of crime due to discrimination and prejudices they have witnessed or experienced for themselves involving the criminal justice system. Participant 2 stated:

If they have the right kind of powers or stroke or whatever and this person is trying to bring it to somebody. They will get this person fired or terminated. And get them out the way so they can continue doing their thing or what not and I've seen that happen many, many, many times in criminal justice.

I know situations where prime example and this is just an example, where a young man was arrested for distribution of cocaine. The district attorney walked to the door, told him if he don't plead guilty I'm going to make sure they give you 30 years. I heard him with my own ears. I witnessed the whole thing. I have a problem with the judicial system when it comes to race because I seen a lot of things first hand for myself.

Participants shared that various races are committing crimes frequently, but it appears that minorities are the ones being arrested. For instance, Participant 3 stated:

Mostly White law enforcement, most profiling or harassing those in the Black community are minority communities. Let me say it that way. It's not just Black, Hispanic also and also a lot of seemingly Black on Black community issues that take place among people.

If you take that prejudice in any way or race relations that fearful of some of the things that I've seen for myself, that I witnessed, I am fearful for some of the young African Americans and minorities who were coming out now, who are faced with the same type of profiling and fear for their very lives for young kids. Participant 4 added "Based on my personal experiences. Maybe some were prejudiced, bad things that have happened to others."

Table 8 displays the personal lived experience themes.

Table 8

Personal Lived Experience Themes

Themes	Description	Total # of references
Guilty until proven innocent	Police misconduct/brutality, harassment, wrongfully accused, resentment	4
Protect and serve	Safety, commitment, service, respect for all people	4
Community-police relationships	Service in all communities, confidence in police, respect	4
Discrimination	Racial profiling, prejudice, illegal arrest, illegal charges, corruption, race/racism	4

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the perceptions of whether crime-based media influenced society's perceptions of others based upon crime, race, and fear of crime. The phenomenon of interest was individuals' perceptions regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. Furthermore, the goal of this study was to identify whether the media influenced individual perceptions of others regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. Eight participants were interviewed for this qualitative phenomenological study. All participants were adults and residents of Louisiana. Each participant acknowledged being consumers or viewers of crime-based media.

There were three research questions that guided the research study. Data were collected from participants by using open-ended questions. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and recorded using an electronic device with the consent of each participant. I used NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software program to store, organize, and code the collected data. I followed steps based on Moustakas foundation of phenomenological

research approach to analysis to explore, scrutinize, and examine the interviews conducted. There were three themes that emerged from crime-based media consumption and four themes that emerged from personal experiences. All seven themes answered the research questions.

The first theme related to crime-based media consumption was distrust in police officers/law enforcement. Six out of eight participants felt that they could not trust police or law enforcement officers. Four out of six participants disclosed feelings of fear regarding police or law enforcement officers. Two out of eight participants expressed neither negative nor positive feelings concerning distrust in police or law enforcement officers.

The second theme related to crime-based media consumption was fear of governmental control. Four out of eight participants felt that the President of the United States abuses his powers. Four out of eight participants expressed neither negative nor positive feelings concerning fear of governmental control.

The third theme related to crime-based media consumption was injustice and inequality. All participants noted that injustice and inequality exist within the criminal justice system. Two out of eight participants felt that inequality exists for Caucasian women who commit crimes and are not punished or received lighter sentences than their counterparts. Three out of eight participants felt that justice is not always served when race or economic status exists. All participants expressed frustrations, sadness, or resentment, concerning the injustice and inequality within the criminal justice system.

There were four lived/personal experience themes that emerged as an unintended consequence of the study.

The first theme that emerged from personal experience was guilty until proven innocent. Four out of eight participants shared lived experiences about themselves, family members, or friends who had at least one negative encounter with police officers or law enforcement.

The second theme that emerged from personal experience was to protect and serve. Four out of eight participants were concerned with police officer commitment to their duties and services, safety, and respect for all due to past experiences involving police officers and law enforcement.

The third theme that emerged from personal experience was community-police relationships. Four out of eight participants felt that police officers are not concerned with building relationships within certain communities. Additionally, participants felt they could not trust police officers and did not have confidence that they were doing the right things to combat crimes.

The fourth theme that emerged from personal experience was discrimination. Four out of eight participants witnessed corruption, illegal arrests, racism, or some form of prejudices within the criminal justice system. These findings support implications for changes discussed in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the setting, demographics, data collection method, evidence of trustworthiness, results for data analysis, and a synopsis. In Chapter 5, I

discuss the interpretation of the findings, limitations, recommendations, implications for social change, and provide a conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore whether crime-based media influences society's perceptions of others based on crime, race, and fear of crime. The phenomenon of interest was individuals' perceptions regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. The goal of this study was to identify whether media influences individual perceptions of others regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. Individuals who trust the media to provide factual details regarding crime will be influenced, and this influence may impact how they view crime, race, and fear of crime (Donald, 2019). I obtained qualitative data through in-depth semistructured individual interviews.

Qualitative methodology allows for a phenomenon to be explored in a study with the use of open-ended questions (Yin, 2014). According to Jamieson and Romer (2014), society's perceptions of crime and violence portrayed in the media are a problem that needs more research to understand the attitudes of society toward the criminal justice system and its entities. My study filled a gap in understanding how individuals in southern Louisiana perceive fictional television crime dramatizations, crime-based online and printed news, and crime-based social media. Additionally, further exploration of crime-based media consumption and lived experiences reveals negative factors that shape individuals' views of crime, race, and fear of crime. The results of my study may lead to criminal justice reform, improved policing strategies, and strengthened police-citizen relationships.

Chapter 5 provides a detailed summary of my study, including the interpretation of the findings, limitations of my study, recommendations for future research, implications for social change, and a conclusion. Three research questions guided the research study:

RQ1: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on criminality?

RQ2: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on race?

RQ3: In what ways, if any, does crime-based media consumption impact a person's perceptions of others based on fear of crime?

Three crime-based media consumption themes and four personal lived experience themes emerged from the data. The three crime-based media consumption themes were (a) distrust in police officers and law enforcement, (b) injustice and inequality, and (c) fear of governmental control. The four personal lived experience themes were (a) guilty until proven innocent, (b) protect and serve, (c) community-police relationships, and (d) discrimination. My data analysis was constructed on Moustakas' (1994) foundation of phenomenological research approach to analysis. Using this approach, I explored, examined, and scrutinized the interviews performed in the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

I explored the perceptions and lived experiences of eight participants who acknowledged being consumers or viewers of crime-based media. The results of my study align with the theoretical framework of Bandura's (2009) social cognitive theory

and Gerbner and Gross's cultivation theory (1976). Neuendorf and Jeffres (2017) found that Bandura's social cognitive theory has recognized both strong and unlikely links between media's fiction and remote model power to alter an individual's orientation and behavior. The findings for all three research questions can be applied to the study's theoretical framework.

Social cognitive theory suggests that behavior responses, including criminal behavior, are caused by an event or circumstances of the environment (Moore, 2011). According to Gerbner and Gross's cultivation theory (1976), the affects of heavy television consumption initiates specific perceptions that the images and messages portrayed are reality. Because of television visually tells stories through news and programming, television has become cultivated into the family as part of people's everyday lives (Mosharafa, 2015; Shrum, 2017). My phenomenological study aligned with all three research questions and yielded three significant themes that aligned with social cognitive theory and cultivation theory.

Distrust in Police and Law Enforcement Officers

The first crime-based media consumption theme was distrust in police and law enforcement officers. Social cognitive theory assumes that thoughts, beliefs, and expectations are influenced or shaped by an individual's environment or response to stimuli based on observation, retention, reproduction, or motivation. (Moore, 2011). Media's portrayals of crime, race, and fear of crime negatively influence individuals' perceptions of police officers and law enforcement. Miethe, Venger, and Lieberman (2019) asserted that the attitudes of the public could be shifted after viewing crime-based

media. To that end, I inferred that the participants presented explicit bias. *Explicit bias* refers to attitudes and beliefs about a person or group on a conscious level, a direct result of a perceived threat (Daumeyer et al., 2019).

As a result of consuming crime-based media, the participants perceived that a great deal of the criminality displayed in crime-based fictional television and movies was accurate and synonymous with what is happening in society. The depictions and narratives involve illegal arrests made by police officers, prosecutors using illegal tactics to obtain convictions, and police officer corruption. On the other hand, crime-based news consumption was informative and entertaining for Caucasian participants. In addition, Caucasians were not apprehensive of being harassed or wrongfully accused by police officers, but their African American counterparts were.

Injustice and Inequality

The second crime-based media consumption theme, injustice and inequality, aligns with previous studies. Dukes and Gaither (2017) referenced media's power to negatively influence an individual's perception when violence between police officers and minorities occurs. This study revealed that African American men have a fear of being victimized, harassed, or killed unjustifiably by police officers and that the criminal justice system is unfair in the incrimination of other races and genders. Also, this study disclosed that Caucasians describe similar feelings about injustices, prejudices, and corruption within the criminal justice system, which substantiates that society overall recognizes injustice and inequality. Awareness of injustice and inequality is not a new phenomenon. The frustration, sadness, and anger felt toward the criminal justice system

disclosed in this study have appeared in prior studies. Specifically, Wright and Unah (2017) asserted that media influence is not the same across different racial and ethnic populations, especially when outgroups or minorities acquire feelings of inequality. Moore et al. (2018) revealed that police officers are more often justified in the killings of unarmed African American men based on misconceptions.

Fear of Governmental Control

The third crime-based media consumption theme that emerged in the study was fear of governmental control. Participants voiced their concern surrounding issues with the president of the United States, Donald Trump. Based on observation, the act of observing rules or laws, participants believed that the president's personality, actions, and speech are demeaning and disrespectful. The participants expressed that the president repeatedly degrades various groups of people based on their ethnicity, religion, and social class. Further, the participants perceived that the government demonstrates either the inability to establish and maintain governance within the United States or denial that the president is unmanageable. Notably, Al-Rawi (2019) reported that media repeatedly present plots on politics, personal interest, and criminal activity as a way of reflecting crime as newsworthy. Although surprising, this finding is consistent with previous literature regarding political issues.

Guilty Until Proven Innocent

Several themes of this study were a direct result of personal or lived experiences regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. Police officers are the main face of the criminal justice system. Therefore, when they have negative encounters with minorities, the

outcome will be deemed as racial inequality (Kahn & Martin, 2016). Thus, in this study, African Americans were resentful toward police officers for reasons such as being wrongfully accused of crimes they did not commit and experiencing police misconduct first-hand. The criminal justice system firmly stands on the affirmation that the accused are innocent until proven guilty; however, my findings revealed that participants perceived this as being the opposite.

Protect and Serve

There were added factors acquired from the lived experiences, expectations, and thoughts about police officers. The duties of police officers are to protect and serve, but individuals have negative opinions about the quality and commitment of police officers in their communities. They lack trust and confidence in the officers that serve their neighborhoods. Consistent with my study's findings, Kahn and Martin (2016) publicized that minority neighborhoods are disadvantaged when it comes to police protection.

Community-Police Relationships

The lack of community-police relationships has been detrimental to the impact on individual perceptions concerning crime, race, and fear of crime. Individuals within society who endeavor to be law-abiding citizens are often disturbed by the way police officers handle procedural justice. This study revealed that there is no harmony between police officers and the people in the communities they serve. Some individuals are under the impression that police officers have no interest in neighborhood unity but are eager to make arrests in their neighborhoods. This challenge alone has placed both parties at a disadvantage and continue to present challenges within the criminal justice system.

Discrimination

Discriminations such as stereotyping, racial profiling, illegal arrests, and corruption were all contributing factors to participants' perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime. This study uncovered that some individuals encounter discrimination daily, while others anticipate its dreadful manifestation with hopes that it will eventually fade out. Further, this study shows that the Caucasian race rarely experiences the same issues as minorities, such as being harassed or wrongfully accused by police officers, or discriminations such as racial profiling. For all these reasons, there is a potential urgency of criminal justice reform in the United States.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to the trustworthiness of this study. The first limitation was that it was qualitative instead of quantitative; consequently, the results were limited to the population included in the study. A quantitative study would have allowed for a larger sample size that could be generalized. To this end, the second limitation of this study was the small sample size. According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), six to eight interviews are sufficient to reach data saturation. There were eight participants included in this study and data saturation was reached. The majority of the sample were African American men. Therefore, the findings of my study could be race-specific or gender-specific. The third limitation was that some participants had higher consumption of crime-based media sources than others. Additionally, there was no way to verify that participants were truthful in answering the questions or that their responses were accurately recalled. Although attempts were made to safeguard confidentiality, it is

not uncommon for individuals to be hesitant to share experiences that may be viewed in a negative light. However, the interviews were structured in a way that permitted follow-up questions if clarification of responses were needed.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations for future research as a result of this study. According to Collica-Cox and Furst (2019), crime-based media is popular among individuals of society. However, the media's portrayals of crime, race, and fear of crime have the potential to negatively impact an individual's perception of the criminal justice system (Intravia, 2019; Smiley & Fakunle, 2016). For this reason, my first recommendation is the enhancement of transparency within police departments in every state collaborated with community policing to improve and repair relationships between police and citizens.

The media's approach in presenting how crimes are perpetrated and processed within the criminal justice system is difficult for some individuals in society to separate and understand fiction portrayals from factual depictions (Jamieson & Romer, 2014). Therefore, media literacy has the potential to assist in reducing misconceptions and negative perceptions that may be acquired by individuals regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. Media literacy is defined as having the ability to evaluate and communicate various forms of messages after a process of assessment and analysis (Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2015). My second recommendation is increased public awareness on media literacy contained in crime-based fiction television. Furthermore, there should be

an increase in highlights of more positive depictions of police officers and law enforcement in crime-based media.

My third recommendation would be for future studies to use a purposive sampling technique to target a particular population. Police officers and law enforcement officers of various demographics such as age, gender, and race may offer a different perception of crime, race, and fear of crime as a result of crime-based media consumption. The focus of my study were individuals from Louisiana. The perceptions and lived experiences of individuals from other parishes in Louisiana, as well as other states, should be explored to determine whether there are similar or diverse experiences based on location. My fourth recommendation would be a quantitative study to survey more participants. My final recommendation would be a qualitative study of this same caliber that excludes African Americans. Researchers should continue to explore the affects of crime-based media to improve police-community relationships, minimize preconceived biases, and provide an opportunity for criminal justice reform.

Implications

The results of my research study have the potential for positive social change in police-community relationships and the criminal justice system. A redesigned system of media literacy, public awareness, and positive crime-based media portrayals would invoke positive social change among individuals in society. As a result, the perception of injustice/inequality within the criminal justice system may be minimized.

Participants of my study revealed an unexpected theme, fear of governmental control. This study implies that improvements in governmental performance could restore

individuals' trust in political leadership. Furthermore, the participants of my study reflected on crime-based media consumption which led to the disclosed personal lived experiences regarding crime, race, and fear of crime. There are positive social change implications for individuals in society and individuals within each law enforcement entity to understand the significance of whose lives matter. The impression that social movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, #BlueLivesMatter, #MeToo, and #ICantBreathe represent one race against another or is gender favored could be resolved. Therefore, the findings of my study may encourage individuals in society to acquire positive perceptions of themselves and others regardless of race or gender. These implications are not beyond the boundaries of this study.

Conclusion

In this study, I controlled personal bias for validity purposes to ensure the results speak directly to the lived experiences of the participants. 1 Corinthians 13:6 says "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in truth" (The Holy Bible; KJV). It is not the intention of some African Americans to pull the race card for acts of injustice no more than it is the intention of some Caucasians to assume that all African American men are criminals. This is the hand we have been dealt for over 100 years by ancestors and the system of justice that has been put in place. Therefore, I do not rejoice in the iniquities of the past, but I rejoice in the truth.

The truth, according to the study's results, is that what African Americans consume through crime-based media is the reality of our everyday lives. Caucasians consume the same crime-based media, but they cannot relate to the same experiences of

African Americans. Most Caucasians are desensitized to the reality of fiction and nonfiction crime-based media portrayals. Furthermore, although Caucasians do not have the same lived experiences with the criminal justice system as African Americans, racial injustice could not be denied. This was evident as the crime-based media consumption themes converged with the personal lived experience themes. All of the participants acknowledged feelings of injustice and inequality, but only the African American participants encountered it.

This study sought to examine the affects of crime-based media consumption on individuals' perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime. The results of this study helped to fill the gap in the literature on the unknown negative influences the media has on individuals regarding crime, race, and fear of crime (Collica-Cox & Furst, 2019; Prot et al., 2015). Additionally, findings from this study have important implications for future research and positive social change. The findings of my study provided answers to the research questions concerning crime-based media affects on individual perceptions of crime, race, and fear of crime.

Several studies explored the perceptions of individuals as a result of observing crime-based media. As with prior studies, this study also included various forms of media sources to establish sufficient data in an attempt to answer the research questions. In doing so, the findings of this study revealed that many individuals distrust police officers and law enforcement as a result of media portrayals and that injustice and inequality continue to exist within the criminal justice system. Unexpectedly, the findings showed that individuals feel insecure in governmental control and are appalled by the current

president's lack of respect for the citizens of this country. Furthermore, the lived personal experience of African Americans revealed a lack of trust and confidence in police officers, law enforcement, and the criminal justice system. Many individuals have the perception that the criminal justice system is backward in its pursuit of justice, guilty until proven innocent, instead of innocent until proven guilty.

The answers to the research questions uncovered the necessity of transparency within the criminal justice system, the demand for criminal justice reform, and the need for more positive crime-based media portrayals. It is essential to realize the significance of pursuing justice across racial, political, and governmental boundaries. In spite of respectability politics, African Americans are still apprehensive about the criminal justice system because socioeconomic class, education, or prestige cannot change the color of our skin. The United States proudly affirms to be a nation united and must, therefore, make every effort to guarantee this affirmation is upheld within the criminal justice system concerning crime, race, and fear of crime.

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Appendix A

Title: Modified Response to a Suspicious Person and Police Officer Media Consumption

1. What is your sex?
 male

 female
2. What is your age? (enter below)
3. Do you currently reside in Louisiana?
 yes
 no
4. Which of the following comes closest to describing your racial/ethnic identity?
 Black/African-American
 White/Caucasian
 Latino/Hispanic
 Other
5. Politically, how would you describe your views? In other words, would you identify yourself as
 Democrat
 Republican
 Liberal
 Independent
6. Tell me about the neighborhood you where you reside? For example, what are some of the diverse cultures that exist in your neighborhood? What is the racial majority/minority of your neighborhood?

7. Tell me, have you ever feared being a victim of a crime in your neighborhood? If so, what kind of crime have you been afraid to be a victim of? Why?
8. Tell me about your crime dramas and reality television consumption? For example, which crime-based television series do you view and how often?
9. Tell me about your printed or online news consumption. How often do you read the newspaper (via online or print) for crime-related news?
10. Tell me about your media consumption of law enforcement related information on any television news platforms? How did you feel about the narrative? Describe the portrayals you viewed? For example, what was the gender and race of the law enforcement officer? What was the gender and race of the perpetrator? (traditional media)
11. Tell me how much time you spent in the last week reading nonfictional law enforcement related information? How did you feel about the narrative? Describe the portrayals you viewed? For example, what was the gender and race of the law enforcement officer? What was the gender and race of the perpetrator? (traditional media)
12. Tell me how much law enforcement related information did you consume via social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube) just in the last week? Describe the portrayals you viewed? For example, what was the gender and race of the law enforcement officer? What was the gender and race of the perpetrator?

13. Tell me about your media consumption of both fiction and nonfiction law enforcement related television show platforms? How did you feel about the narrative? Describe the portrayals you viewed? (entertainment media)

14. Tell me about your consumption of both fiction and nonfiction law enforcement related motion pictures (i.e.: movies, cinemas, films) in the past month? (entertainment media)

15. In regard to the previous question on your consumption of fiction and nonfiction law enforcement related motion pictures, describe the following: (entertainment media)

- (a) What was the narrative?
- (b) What gender/race/ethnicity was most often portrayed?
- (c) What was the race/gender/ethnicity of the law enforcement officer?
- (d) What was the race/gender/ethnicity of the perpetrator?
- (e) What was the most common crime committed?
- (f) Explain your emotions after viewing?

Appendix B

Permission to Modify Instruments

Email Correspondence 04/22/2019 from Patrick Schmucker, Ph.D.

Sharonda,

Sure you can use it and yes it is ok to modify it to fit your research. I will send you the POMCQ. The nine -items were the only one which showed reliability after my pilot study. Let me know if you need any other help.

Email Correspondence 04/30/2018 from Jodi Lane, Ph.D.

That is fine. Please just make sure you cite us and indicate you modified our instrument. We have a paper under review, but for now you can use this cite:

Kuhn, Ashley and Jodi Lane. (2013). The Impact of Racial Socialization and Fear of Crime on Expected Reactions to a Situation Similar to the Trayvon Martin Case" for conference proceedings, *At Close Range: The Curious Case of Trayvon Martin*. Center for the Study of Race and Race Relations at the University of Florida. Conference proceedings March 20, 2013. Published at: http://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=csrr_events.

Jodi Lane, Ph.D.