The Influence the Media has on Peoples' Perceptions of Law Enforcement

Group 1:

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Research Question

- How does the media affect the way people perceive law enforcement?

- Depending on the results of our survey we will be able to determine:
  - How police are perceived by the general public
  - Whether or not the media influences this perception
  - What the public generally thinks of law enforcement in general and law enforcement in their community

Literature Review

- Associated Press-Why it matters: Race and Policing
- PeoplePress.org Press Widely Criticized, But Trusted More than Other Information Sources.
- American Sociological Review--American Police Violence and Citizen Crime.
- Canadian Journal Of Criminology & Criminal Justice.
- Race, Street Life, and Policing: Implications for Racial Profiling.
- Why Do Media Hate the Police?
- Police body cameras and us: Public perception of the justification of the police use of force in the body camera era.

Research Design

- For our research we conducted a survey that was sent out to a simple random sample of 500 Utah Valley University students sent out by student email addresses.
- Confidence Interval: 95% Level of Confidence
- Response Rate: 57
- We first sent out the survey on the 9 July 2018 and received 32 responses. In order to maximize our response, on 14 July 2018 we sent out a reminder email to people who did not respond and received a total of 17 more responses. We sent out an additional reminder email on 19 July and recieved 8 more responses making the total number of responses 57

Demographic Information

Response Rate: 11.4% (57 responses out of 500 surveys)

2% of respondents work or have worked in law enforcement

57% of respondents know someone in law enforcement

Race / Ethnicity

6.00%
14.00%
2.00%
2.00%
2.00%
74.00%
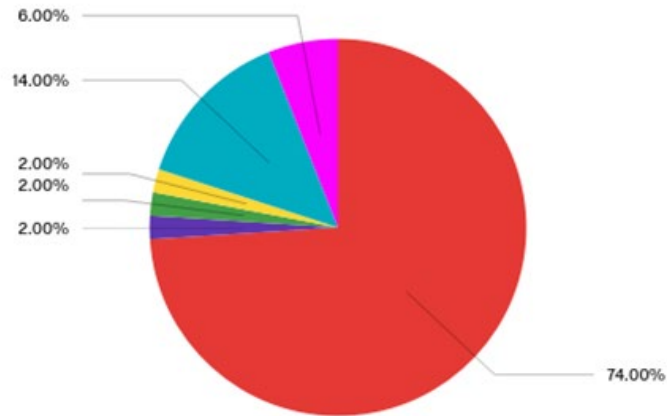
White   Black or African American   American Indian or Alaska Native   Asian   Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander   Hispanic or Latino
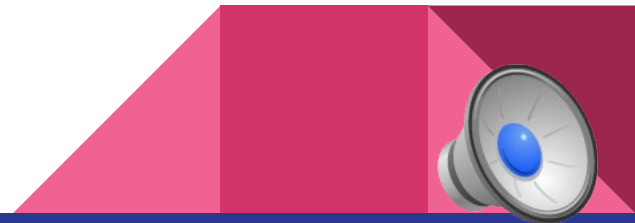
Other

Gender

32% Male   **66%** Female

■ Male ■ Female ■ Other

Age

28.7 years old is the average age of respondents

Ages ranged from 18 to 54

Marital Status

44%
Never Married/Single

52%
Married

Never Married/Single   Married   Divorced   Separated   Widowed

Political Affiliation
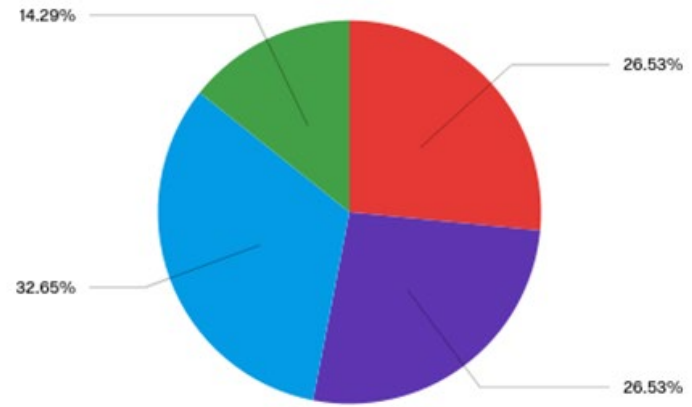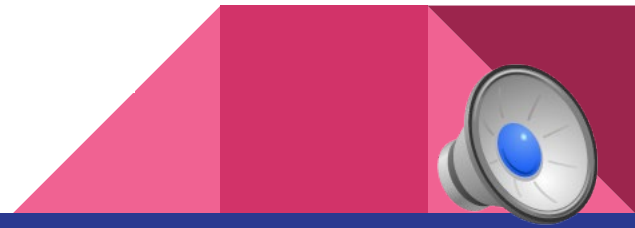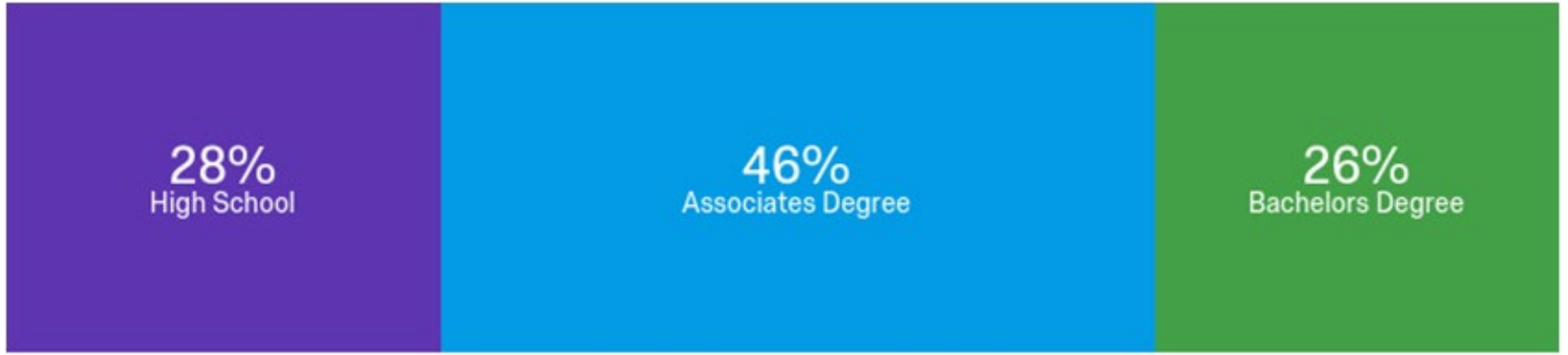
Education Level
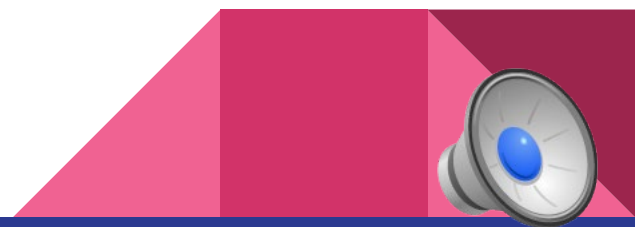
To what extent is law enforcement effective at proactively preventing crime?

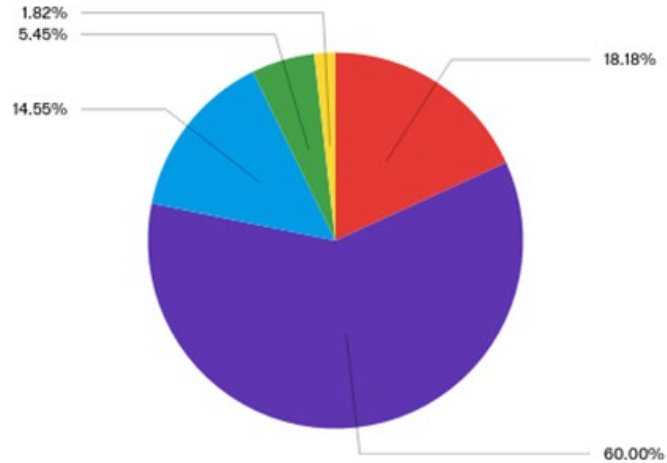|	
5.45%	3.64%
9.09%	29.09%
52.73%	
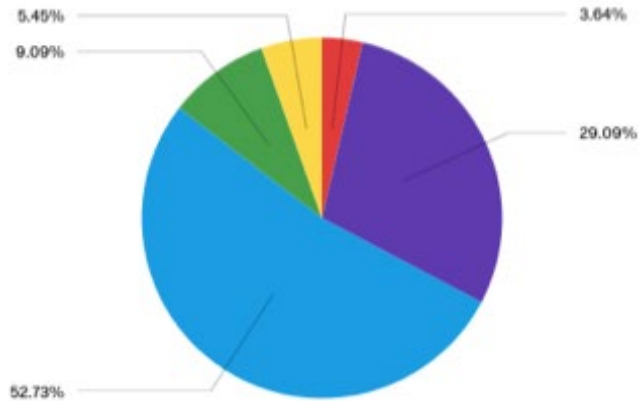
■ Extremely effective ■ Very effective ■ Moderately effective ■ Slightly effective ■ Not effective at all

What is your reasoning behind your answer to the prior question regarding the extent law enforcement is effective at preventing crime?
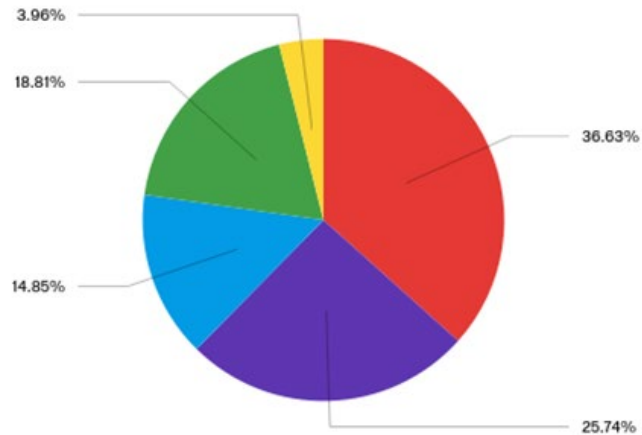

- 14.63% Personal experience(s)
- 39.02% Observations made in the area you live
- 19.51% Information obtained through media outlets
- 14.63% Information obtained through friends and/or family
- 12.20% Other
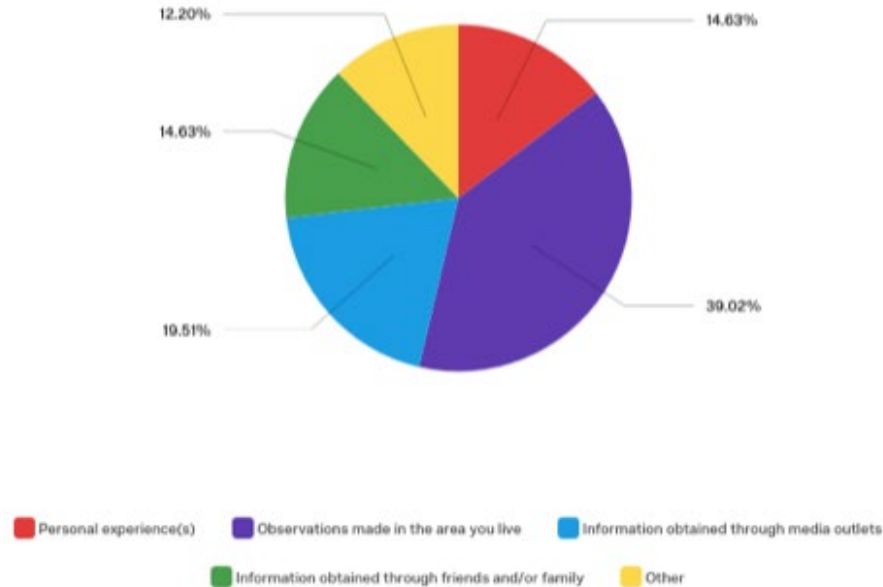
To what extent do you trust your local law enforcement?

1.82%
5.45%
14.55%
18.18%
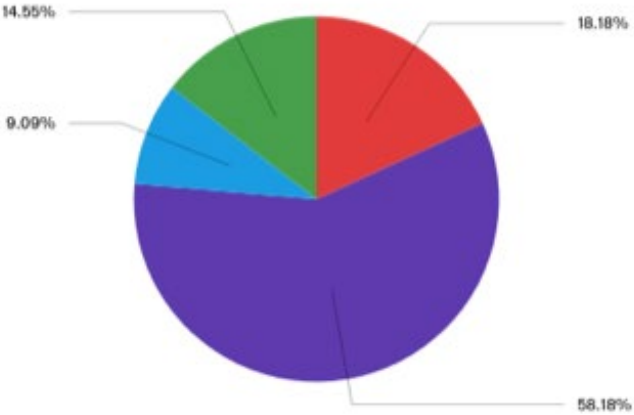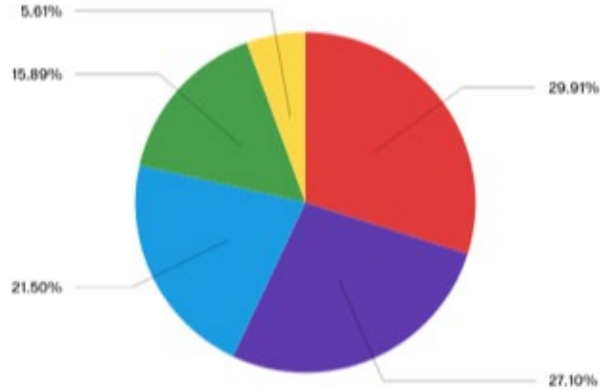60.00%

Always   Most of the time   About half the time   Sometimes   Never

What is your reasoning behind your answer to the prior question regarding trust in your local law enforcement?

To what extent do you trust law enforcement in general?

14.55%

18.18%

9.09%

58.18%

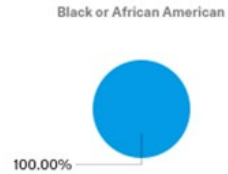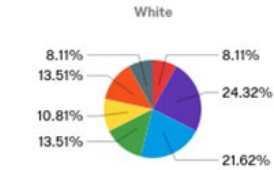■ Always ■ Most of the time ■ About half the time ■ Sometimes ■ Never

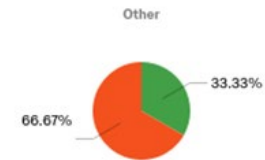# What is your reasoning behind your answer to the prior question regarding trusting law enforcement in general?

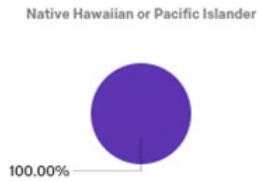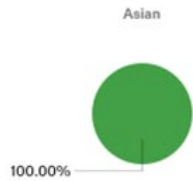# Law enforcement officers are generally fair to all people regardless of their race and ethnicity.
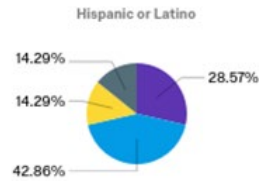
What is the reasoning behind your answer to the prior question regarding law enforcement being fair to all people regardless of race or ethnicity?

Does law enforcement use unethical behavior, excessive force, and abuse their power?

5.56%
16.67%
11.11%
18.52%
9.26%
7.41%
31.48%
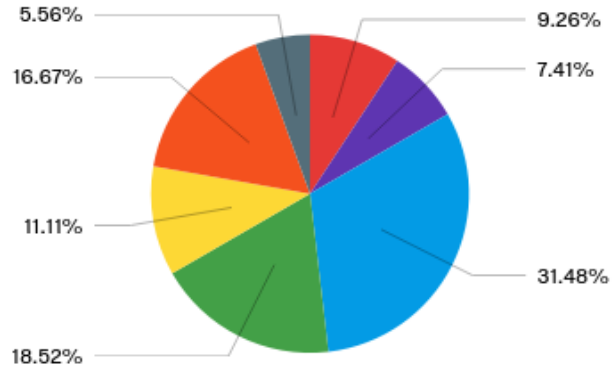
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

What is the reasoning behind your answer to the prior question regarding law enforcement using unethical behavior, excessive force, and abusing their power?

6.25%

21.88%

17.71%

23.96%

30.21%

■ Personal experience(s)   ■ Observations made in the area you live   ■ Information obtained through media outlets

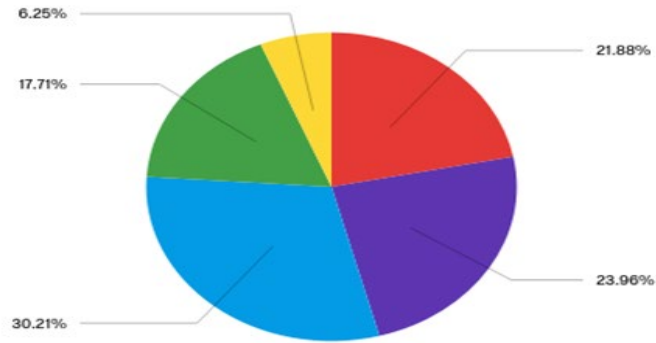■ Information obtained through friends and/or family   ■ Other

If someone resisted arrest, even a little, most law enforcement officers would become overly assaultive if they thought they could get away with it.

Pie chart data:
- 9.26%
- 16.67%
- 16.67%
- 18.52%
- 7.41%
- 16.67%
- 14.81%

Legend: Strongly agree | Agree | Somewhat agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree

What is the reasoning behind your answer to the prior question regarding law enforcement officers becoming assaultive if they could get away with it?

The majority of law enforcement officers use offensive language in their dealings with citizens to impose authority.
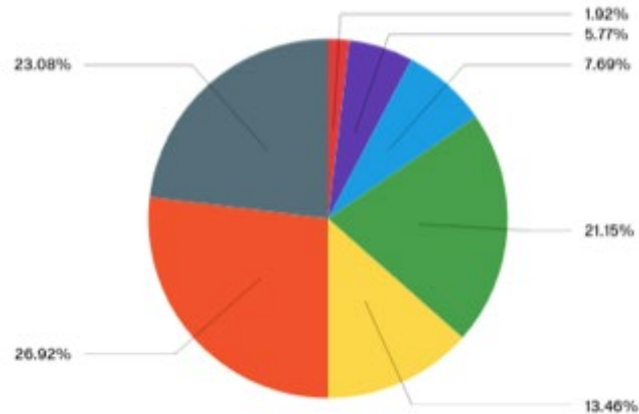
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

1.92%
5.77%
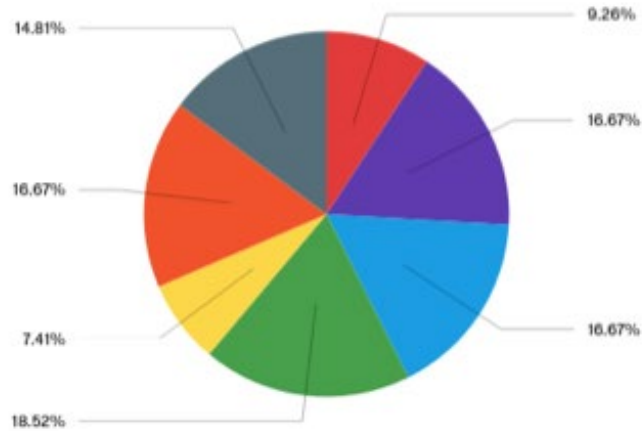7.69%
21.15%
13.46%
26.92%
23.08%

What is the reasoning behind your answer to the prior question regarding law enforcement officers using offensive language with citizens to impose authority?
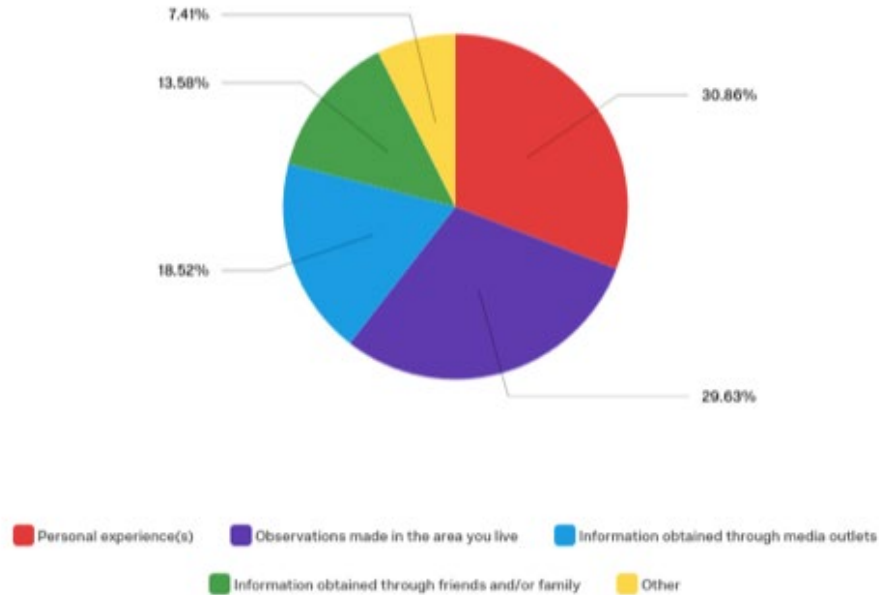
Do you believe that law enforcement is a career with a bad reputation?

1.89%
9.43%
11.32%
9.43%
22.64%
15.09%
30.19%

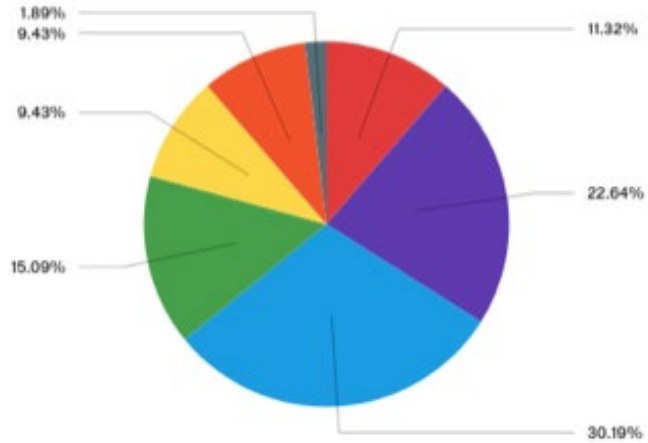■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

What is the reasoning behind your answer to the prior question regarding law enforcement being a career with a bad reputation?

In the past 12 months, how many times have you had contact with your local law enforcement for any reason?

13.21%

5.66%

60.38%

20.75%

Legend: 0 | 1 - 3 | 4 - 6 | 7 or more
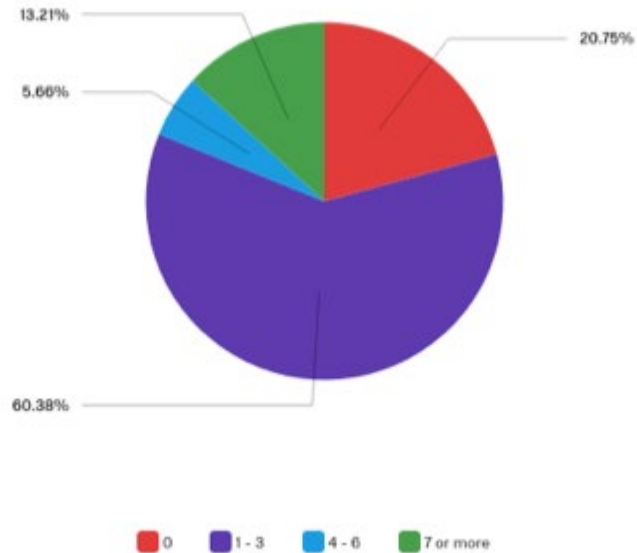
I am satisfied with my interaction(s) with my local law enforcement?
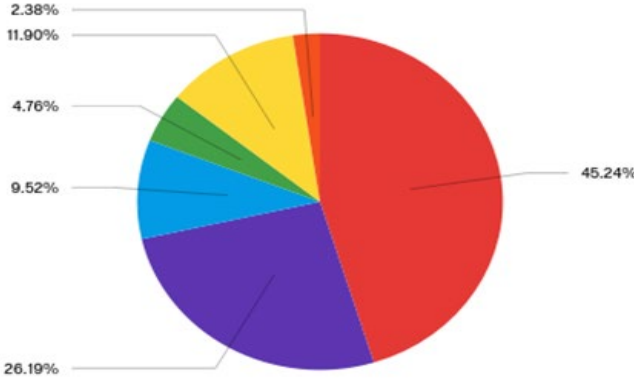
2.38%
11.90%
4.76%
9.52%
45.24%
26.19%

Strongly agree · Agree · Somewhat agree · Neither agree nor disagree · Somewhat disagree · Disagree · Strongly disagree

I receive my news by:

- 13.39%
- 30.71%
- 20.47%
- 21.26%
- 14.17%
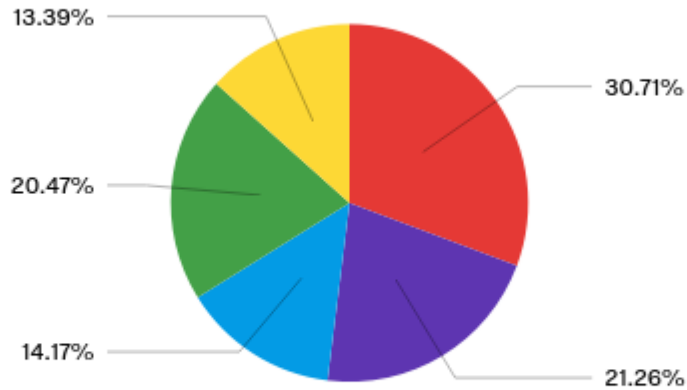
Legend:
- Social Media
- TV News
- Newspaper or Magazine
- Radio
- Other

How many hours a week do you spend reading, browsing, or watching various media outlets?

9.62%   7.69%
25.00%
57.69%

■ 0   ■ 1-5   ■ 5-10   ■ 10-20   ■ More than 20

Neither agree nor disagree
- 7.89%
- 31.58%
- 21.05%
- 18.42%
- 21.05%

Somewhat agree
- 20.59%
- 14.71%
- 20.59%
- 19.12%
- 25.00%

Agree
- 35.90%
- 5.13%
- 28.21%
- 17.95%

Strongly disagree
- 3.85%
- 30.77%
- 46.15%
- 7.69%
- 11.54%

Disagree
- 22.22%
- 27.78%
- 27.78%
- 16.67%
- 5.56%

Somewhat disagree
- 20.00%
- 40.00%
- 17.14%
- 8.57%
- 14.29%

- 25.00%
- 2.78%
- 5.56%
- 36.11%
- 30.56%
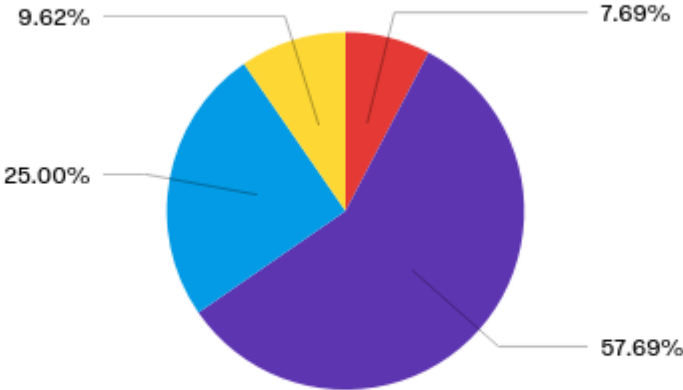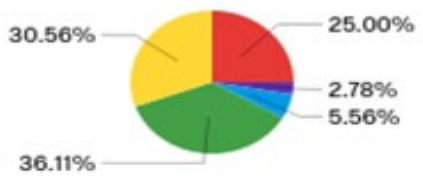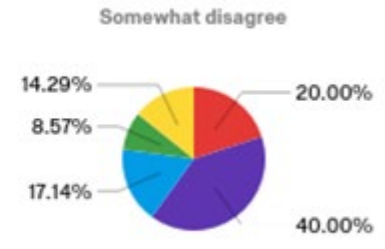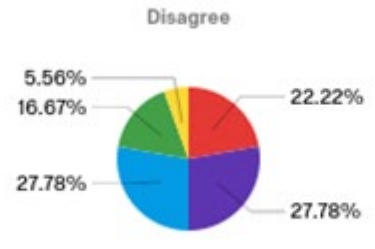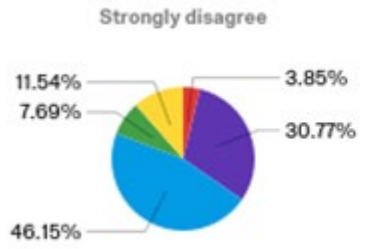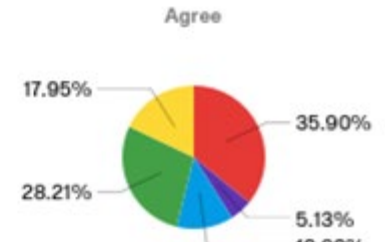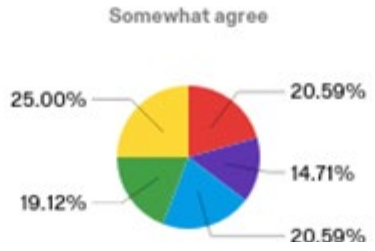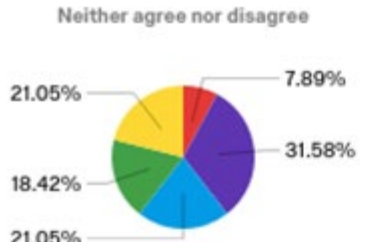
■ The media has turned society against law enforcement.   ■ I believe what is reported by the media.

■ The media influences my perception of law enforcement.   ■ The information found in the media is sometimes bias against law enforcemer

■ The media can't be trusted to provide truthful reporting because they care more about ratings and corporate agenda.

What do you think is the main factor that influences people's perception of law enforcement in a positive or negative?

10.20%

14.29%
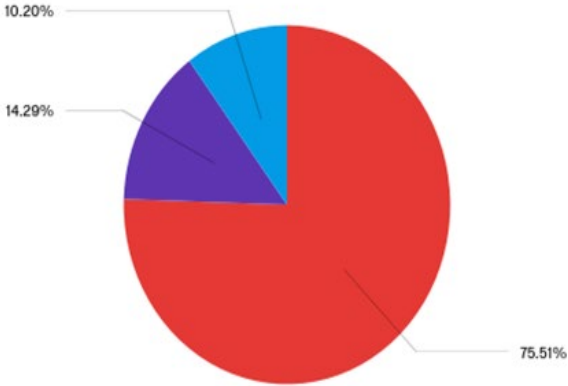
75.51%

■ Media (Facebook, TV, Movies, Internet)   ■ Their Own experience with Police Officers   ■ They just follow what others say

Other Observations

- 75.51% of our participants believe that media is the main factor that influences peoples' perception of law enforcement.
- From the total of our participants 26.53% are republican and 26.53% are democratic.
- The majority (30.71%) of our respondents receive their new by social media and they spend between 1-5 hours per week looking at it.
- 83.34% of participants who are affiliated with the republican party, are strongly satisfied with their interactions with law enforcement, while 66.66% of democrats are satisfied

Other Observations Continued

- Those who are affiliated with the republican party (91.67%) almost all of them think that the media is the main factor that influences peoples perception of law enforcement and media is responsible and sometime bias against law enforcement, also they are less likely to believe what is reported by the media
- Those who are affiliated with the Democratic party (53.85%) believe that media is the main factor that influences peoples perception of law enforcement and 38.46% believe its peoples' interactions and experiences with law enforcement is what influences their views, also they are less likely to believe that the information found in the media is sometimes bias against law enforcement, and at least half of them somewhat believe what is reported by the media

Conclusions

- Society has more positive influences with law enforcement when they form their opinions from personal experiences rather than media portrayal.
- Society forms their opinions by what is portrayed in the media.
- People tend to form negative perceptions of law enforcement when they get their information from the media.
- There may be a correlation that those who affiliate with the republican party are satisfied with law enforcement interaction, are more likely to support law enforcement, believe that media influence peoples views, and are less likely to believe what is reported by the media, while democratic affiliates are less satisfied with law enforcement interactions, at least somewhat believe what is reported by the media, and at least half of them believe that the media influences peoples perceptions