

*An Examination of the Role of Age, Gender and Student Status upon
Perception towards Sentencing and the Criminal Justice System*

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Abstract

With public attitudes towards crime loosely informing criminal justice system procedures and the appropriateness of sentences handed down over time, the need for renewed understanding around these perceptions remains important. Particularly, when considering past research suggests demographic features such as gender play an important role in both attitudes towards crime and different sentences offenders receive based upon their gender (Quas, Bottoms, Haegerich & Nysse-Carris, 2002). The aim of the present study was therefore to examine gender differences and the role of participant demographics upon perceptions towards crime and the criminal justice system. Participants were a combined sample of university students and members of the general public (n=157). Procedures involved exposing participants to the same six crime vignettes, in which both male and females commit comparable crimes. The experiment looked to observe how the gender of the participant and the gender of the “criminal” influenced the length of sentence given. Other variables such as age and education status were examined. Findings displayed although no significant differences in sentencing were found between with male and females for serious crime scenarios, a significant difference in the length of sentence for minor offences such as drink driving offences was found. Further analyses also displayed the importance of participant demographics on conviction proneness and confidence held in the criminal justice system. Theoretical and practical implications for findings are discussed.

Key terms: *Drink driving, Burglary, Sexual offences, Conviction Proneness, System Confidence*

Introduction

The Pervasiveness of Crime

Crime is an undisputed problem all over the world. Statistics taken from a survey undertaken in March 2001, in England and Wales, identify that there have been general year-on-year decreases for reported burglary offences, compared to the statistics reported in the early 1990s. The statistics display around 2 in 100 households record an experience with burglary, as opposed to the 9 in 100 households reported in 1995 (ONS, 2018). Another highly recorded crime in the UK is driving under the influence of alcohol. Approximately 85,000 people are convicted of drink driving related offences each year in England and Wales alone. The majority of those convicted (approximately 85%) are male (Drink Driving Statistics UK, 2018). Sexual offences are also a problematic crime throughout the world (see Boduszek et al, 2017 & Willmott, Boduszek, & Robinson, 2018), and in particular within the UK (Willmott, 2016; Willmott & Boduszek, 2016). There was a total of 121,187 sexual offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in the year ending March 2017. The number of sexual offences recorded has increased by 14% compared with the previous year (ONS, 2018). Sexual offences are currently at the highest level recorded since the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002 (Booth et al, 2017). As shown from the previous statistics, crime is a huge problem in the UK. Whilst research displays a proportion of criminality is linked to atypical development motivated by pathological abnormalities (see Ryan et al, 2017) most offending behaviour can be explained by criminal identities and socially constructed norms and attitudes (Debowska, Boudszek, & Willmott, 2018; Debowska et al, 2018; Sherretts et al, 2017; Sherretts & Willmott, 2016). With the majority of crime rates either increasing or at an all-time high, thus displays the importance for further research, with indication to explore how individuals perceive crime and the criminal justice system. Based upon past research, it would not be a contradiction to hypothesise the fact that men tend to commit more crimes in comparison to women. The majority of studies conducted investigating the relationship between gender and crime often emphasise the fact that males dominate the criminal perspective (Cohen & Harvey, 2006). Due to offender based research, men are stereotypically associated to commit more crimes compared to females (Kaatz, Vogelmann & Carnes, 2013). Research has been widely conducted over many years looking for an explanation as to why there is such a large gap between crimes committed and gender, with various findings. Tibbetts (1999) concluded that there are a number of factors which appear to account for greater numbers of men performing anti-social behaviour in comparison to women. In the results, Tibbetts

concluded that in situations which are not seen as socially acceptable, women tend to think before performing the behaviour and contemplate the morals and risk of what they are about to do. Whereas men on the other hand, seemed to get some form of pleasure from not following society's expectations (Tibbetts, 1999). Furthermore, men's motivations for crime are found to be more varied than women's (Willmott & Ioannou, 2017) despite traditional psychological explanations suggesting motivational drives operate identically regardless of gender (see Willmott et al, 2018). One possible basis for this difference, in terms of aggressive crimes, is that aggression may be linked to the male sex hormone testosterone (Balraj, 2016). None of the results indicate that women simply do not commit crimes; just that men commit significantly more crimes.

Attitudes Towards Criminality

People's attitudes are based on their perceptions of the criminal justice system and the way it operates, which informs individual's perception of criminals and how they should be treated (Elffers, de Keijser, van Koppen & van Haeringen, 2007). "It is better that ten guilty individuals escape, than that one innocent suffers" (Xiong, Greenleaf & Goldschmidt, 2017). Xiong et al's (2017) experimental approach involved placing an individual which had been incorrectly convicted, hierarchically above correctly convicted criminals. However, it would be assumed the safety of innocent civilians displayed more importance in contrast to innocent prisoners. Remarkably, the participants in this study were asked their thoughts and feelings on this opinion, and their analysis indicated a considerable disagreement. The latter is the expectation that would be assumed when contemplating the freedom of guilty convicts. Tough sentencing overrules any kind of empathy. Three explanations dominate as to why people support tough sentencing of criminal offenders. The first is an instrumental perspective: people are concerned about becoming a victim of crime and they look to punishment to reduce future harm. The second is a relational perspective: people are concerned about community breakdown, and they support punishment to restore moral boundaries. The third is a psychological model based on ideological preferences: people desire conformity and authority in society, and they look to institutions to punish transgressions that threaten collective security (Gerber & Jackson, 2015).

There are a large number of studies exploring multiple factors around sexual offending from both the victim and offenders perspective. Debowska and colleagues explored the developmental consequences of sexual abuse experiences in childhood (Debowska, Willmott, Boduszek, & Jones, 2017; Debowska et al, 2018). Willmott explored how the justice system deals with serious sexual offences from a jury perspective (Willmott et al, 2017; 2018). Kernsmith, Craun and Foster (2009) explored the public perception of sexual offenders. In this offender focused exploration, through the use of a telephone survey, participants were questioned about their levels of fear around a compilation of different sexual offenders. Practically all of the participants within this study demonstrated signs of anxiety and fear when discussing the offenders. The results from this study support the legalisation of offenders being on a sex offender register. However, there is a conflict in attitudes towards sex offenders who have served the sentence length and those who have been released from prison entirely. Individuals responsible for sex crimes are often portrayed in the media as incurable predators and outcasts of society (Malinen, Willis & Johnston, 2013). The media sensationalises sexual crimes through its focus on exceptional cases, creating a false image of what remorse sexual offenders portray as (Thakker & Durrant, 2006). Inaccurate representations may serve to perpetuate myths about sexual offending, such as, most sexual offenders, upon release from prison, are likely to reoffend (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007). It is not expected for the public to have open arms towards released sex offenders, however, when the public personally interfere with the offenders, such as ensuring they do not get employed or any housing support, it increases the risk of sexual recidivism (Willis & Grace, 2008). To summarise, when released sex offenders are denied equality into society and are faced with hindrances that deny community rehabilitation, they are more likely to reoffend.

Attitudes towards drink driving has transformed over time. Studies have shown that at a general level the community tends to hold negative views regarding drink driving viewing it as a serious social problem (Homel et al., 1988; Loxley et al., 1990). Baum (2000) conducted a study observing general attitudes towards people convicted of drunk driving. The results identify that individuals portray a strict verdict on those convicted, to the extent that an opinionated agreement was formed suggesting the length of sentence for drink driving was to be increased. Similarly, results obtained from research conducted by

Ferguson, Watson, Davey and Sheehan (1999) discovered that the attitudes towards drink driving around the early 1990's was more lenient, as opposed to the attitudes towards drink driving in society today. One possible suggestion for the change in attitudes over the last 20 years is due to the promotion of educational programmes (Popkin, 1994). The lack of awareness and knowledge around drink driving, the legal aspect of drunk driving and the sentencing guidelines associated could be a possible explanation for the leniency of attitudes towards drink driving offences before the year 2000.

Public attitudes towards burglary has altered over time. It seems reasonable to assume that respondents, before the year 2000, who have themselves been victimised by a burglary will opt for more severe sentences to the extent that they rate the incident as more serious (Van Dijk et al. 1990; Van Kesteren, 2009). The interpretation that opinions have genuinely become less punitive is supported by the finding that since 2000, respondents in most developed countries have been less often victimised by crime, are less fearful of crime and more satisfied with their local police (Van Dijk et al. 2008).

Interestingly, one crime where public perceptions have long been punitive and heavily critical, is sex offences. Brown (1999) was initially one of the first researchers to conduct a study observing the public perception towards sexual offenders. The study found that participants categorised sex offenders into a class which deserves no support, and deserve all the punishment they receive. The findings from Brown's (1999) study has been replicated across a number of studies (Kernsmith, Craun & Foster, 2009; Harper, Hogue & Bartels, 2017). Another study, however, found that a number of participants admitted to allowing the offender luxuries following their release. These luxuries consisted of new privacy, new telephone numbers, housing equality and the opportunity to regain employment (Levenson, Brannon, Fortney & Baker, 2007). These findings completely contradict the findings of Brown (1999).

It is clear from the evidence presented that there is a significant difference in perception and attitudes towards a variety of crime types. Findings have been collected which both

support and contradict previous findings. Thus, supporting the need for further investigation towards public perception towards crime.

Role of Gender in Perceptions towards Crime and the Criminal Justice System

The importance of gender in sentencing perceptions was explored in a study in a university in California in 2002. Quas, Bottoms, Haegerich and Nysse-Carris (2002) presented 274 undergraduate students with four constructed scenarios of sexual abuse. Participants were asked to display how long they perceive the correct prison sentence to be. The results from the current study discovered that the sentences provided by the male participants were more lenient, with the female participants producing more severe sentences. Also, a women perpetrator was evaluated more leniently than a male perpetrator, especially by male jurors. In fact the role of gender and other demographics have been considered important determinants of juror decisions in numerous past research (see Oostinga & Willmott, 2017; Willmott, 2017). Similar lenience towards women defendants was found in studies conducted by Finkelhor and Redfield (1984) and Hetheron and Beardsall (1998). These findings might reflect society's general unwillingness to label women as sexual predators (Hetheron, 1999). Consistently throughout the study, male participants were significantly more in favour for shorter sentences. Waterman and Foss-Goodman (1984) found that female participants within a mock jury frequently assigned less blame to girls assaulted by a man. Sexual assault by a woman tends to be perceived less negatively than sexual assault by a man Hetheron and Beardsall (1998).

One possible explanation for the leniency in sentence length by male participants for sexual offences, could be the theory of rape myths. Rape myths, stereotypical or false beliefs about the culpability of victims, the innocence of rapists, and the illegitimacy of rape as a serious crime may act as "psychological neutralizers" that allow men to turn off social prohibitions against hurting others when they want to use force in sexual interactions (Bohner et al., 1998; Burt, 1980), Debowska, Boduszek, Dhingra, Kola & Meller-Pruncka, 2014). Men frequently subject sexual offenders to more lenient prison sentences, and place more blame on the victim as men are more likely to endorse adult rape myths (Burt & Albin, 1981). One limitation identified for the research conducted by Quas, Bottoms, Haegerich and Nysse-Carris (2002), was the generalisation of the results

collected. It would be unfair to assume that men provide more lenient prison sentences overall compared to women, as the current study only tested for one criminal offence. The only offence examined was sexual offence, however, to make the results generalisable, more offences that are associated towards a specific gender would have to be tested against both male and female participants, such as burglary, gambling or drink driving.

Educational Influence on Sentencing Perceptions

A vast variety of influential factors regarding criminal sentencing have been examined, but limited research has been conducted examining the influence of educational status. Does the level of educational degree affect an individual's perception on criminals and the criminal justice system? There have been substantial findings from multiple pieces of research that suggest those of the general public display a lack of knowledge in relational to the criminal justice system (Berry, Philo, Tiripelli, Docherty & Macpherson, 2012). In a MORI (2003) poll 49 per cent of respondents admitted that they knew 'not very much', 'hardly anything' or 'nothing at all' about the court system in Britain. Most people who have not progressed into further education display little knowledge about sentencing guidelines, maximum penalties or the range of punishments that courts can impose (Hough, 1996). Public ignorance and confusion regarding sentencing may be partly a consequence of the complexity around the understanding of the legal system. Research surrounding perceptions of criminal sentencing has found limitations entwined with survey methods, predominantly the use of public opinion polls, as this is one of the most popular methods (Roberts and Stalans, 1997; Sprott, 1996). First, there is evidence people responding to general poll questions tend to answer punitively because they have the worst offenders in mind. Second, when judging sentencing policy, respondents tend to recall unusually lenient sentences that are heavily reported in the media. Thirdly, respondents typically do not consider the full range of sentencing options available to courts (Berry, Philo, Tiripelli, Docherty & Macpherson, 2012). The study is solely interested in each individual opinionated sentence length. One limitation identified within the research conducted by Berry, Philo, Tiripelli, Docherty and Macpherson (2012) was the participants involved. The results suggest that the general public portray a lack of knowledge and understanding around criminals, sentencing and just the whole justice system in general. However, the results within their research was tested against general

members of the public on the basis of their perception created from the media. Whilst the media is an influential contributor on the majority of individual's perception of crime, it is not really a comparable factor. It could be believed that those who go further with their education, for example go to university, are more aware of the correct terms and procedures around the justice system, especially if an individual was to study a law or criminal law based degree, or even share accommodation or become friends with someone involved on one of those courses. A number of factors could explain why people in higher education have a better understanding, however, going to university does not simply mean the knowledge and understanding is instantly greater. People could simply choose not to go to university but still have the choice, and could have a better academic performance, criminal knowledge and understanding than someone who is participating in a university degree. This is why the variable of educational status is measured.

One hypothesis put forward to attempt to explain the influence of gender when prosecuting perpetrators is the chivalry theory. The chivalry hypothesis, in its purest form, suggests that females will receive more lenient treatment compared with men (Griffin & Wooldredge, 2006; Koons-Witt, 2002). The theory suggests that society as a whole encounters some form of unconscious protectiveness, in which when people are asked to make a decision regarding a criminal sentence, people tend to take a relatively lenient approach toward female offenders (Herzog & Oreg, 2008). Females are traditionally viewed as more communal and generally exhibit more caring traits compared with men who are seen as aggressive, assertive, and competitive (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Overall, the theory suggests that the criminal justice system is dominated by the male gender, with men being less punitive of women, which in turn results in crime committed by a female to be approached and dealt with, with more lenience.

A recent study, conducted by Hosch, Culhane, Tubb and Granillo (2011), examined how university student and general members of the public differed in their sentencing and punishment severity for convicted criminals. As expected, there were demographic differences between students and non-students, for example age, as the majority of students start university at the age of 18 years old, with the few exceptions of older adults starting a degree. The results from this study identify that students were more punitive

than the general members of the public for both sentence recommendations and fines. As mentioned above, interacting in an educational environment daily could increase the knowledge around the criminal justice system, with this in mind, Hosch, Culhane, Tubb and Granillo (2011), suggest it could be a limitation. The results from this study propose that students, especially those who have gone straight into higher education, lack the life experiences of those, especially the older participants, from the general public, therefore future research should seek to reduce this factor, to then measure the neutral difference between the two groups. Homogeneity does lead to important differences when participants are asked to pursue punishment on an offender. One key influential factor is the distinct difference in experience from a young student to an older adult. The older adult is at a higher likelihood to have experienced some form of crime whether being a witness or a victim, in comparison to young students. One critique from this study was the concept of younger people, and even older participants who have experienced some form of involvement with the criminal justice system, with most of the participants who fell into this category had been on jury service. If an individual, whether that be a student or non-student, has had experience such as jury service, they are going to be more adapted and understanding of the expectancy within criminal sentencing. The results from this study found this to be incredibly influential on the younger students who had been on jury service. To ensure the richest results were to be collected from this study, the researchers should have strictly ensured all participants had no prior experiences within any criminal setting.

Participant Age as an Influential Factor for Criminal Perception

When observing the influence age has on criminal sentencing, the majority of research conducted is predominantly focused on the age of the perpetrator, not the juror or participant. As society is forever changing, people are having to adapt to the social expectations of their age group. With this being said, some people have their own opinions targeted towards particular groups of people which cannot be changed, and this could be explained by the era that they were raised in. The age of participants within a criminal sentencing experiment must be considered as an influential factor.

Previous research has suggested that juror age is an important factor influencing juror decision making. For example, Hepburn (1980) found that the age of mock jurors was correlated with their verdicts, with older jurors more likely to render a guilty verdict. Both defendant and mock juror age are extra-legal factors, or what Devine, Clayton, Dunford, Seying, and Pryce (2001) call "participant characteristics." Although these characteristics should have no influence on the verdicts of the jury, multiple pieces of research have discovered that it can potentially influence the jury's verdict (Dane & Wrightsman, 1982). It is important to discover the influence of the jury's age, as it can potentially predict jury bias.

In a recent study conducted by Higgins, Heath and Grannemann (2007), participants were categorised into two groups, younger individuals and older individuals. The participants were presented with a number of criminal vignettes and were asked to construct their own personal appropriate sentence length. The sentence length scores were then compared between the two groups. The findings from this study displayed significantly greater sentence lengths within the older individual group, with younger participants displaying a more defensible perspective. The results indicate that older participants were significantly greater to punish the perpetrator to a stricter verdict as they presented a lack of empathy for the perpetrator, holding them fully responsible to the situation they put themselves in. One possible explanation for adults perusing a stronger sentence is through the impact of social schemas in attributional processing (Blanchard-Fields, 1996). Older people, in contrast to younger individuals have accumulated many years of experience, some of which may increase knowledge around criminal sentencing, or create a personal stigma towards criminals, or different types of people committing antisocial behaviour.

One limitation from the research conducted by Higgins, Heath and Grannemann (2007) was age requirements to be categorised into either young or old. In the younger people category, the ages ranged from 18 to 46 years old. In terms of being categorised as a youth, it is believed that 46 should not be categorised as "young". By no means is 46 years of age old, but it is certainly closer to being categorised as old than it is young. This provides an imbalance with the results as people aged older may offer results that does not correlate with the hypothesis for older people, but because they are classified as

“young” they fit the wished results. Another critique of Higgins, Heath and Grannemann’s (2007) experiment, again with the age of participants, is disregard for middle aged people. As stated previously, the cut off point for the “young” category was 46 years old, however, the “older category” age requirements were from 55 years up to 90 years old. Anyone from the age of 47 to 54 years of age was not applicable for this study. This could potentially be problematic as individuals with this age may not have the same opinions on criminal sentencing then those reported in the “older” category, but that information is non-existent as these statistics were not recorded for.

Limited research has been conducted observing the influence of participant gender when measuring criminal perception, however, Mitchell, Angelone, Kohlberger and Hirschman (2008) conducted an experiment measuring the influence of participant gender. The participants were randomly assigned into one group out of a possible four. The groups were sexual offences committed by a male, sexual offences committed by a female, minor assault offences committed by a male and minor assault offences committed by a female. Once assigned into a group, participants were told you predict a suitable prison sentence based on the vignette they were provided with. The results from this experiment indicated that female participants were more punitive to the offender. Females provided significantly longer prison sentences for male offenders in the sexual offence vignette. Overall female participants provided longer sentences for male offenders in all conditions, in comparison to the male participants.

Current Study Rationale

Previous studies, limited however, have indicated a relationship between the gender of the observer and the length of sentence perceived as appropriate for a given criminal offence. Within previous research, certain methodological limitations have been identified, which have allowed for the procedure and findings to be scrutinized. Research which has explored the influence of gender, predominantly expose participants to criminal vignettes, but do not notify the participant that it is a fictional scenario, this unconsciously implements a thought within the participant as if they are actually deciding the fate of the offender. This impression does not fully reflect the participant’s individualism, more answering to what they are believed is to be “legally factual”, although they may perceive

the correct sentence length, they may not agree with it but refuse to dispute their opinion as it wouldn't be accepted in society. This is called relational perspective. People are concerned about community breakdown, and they support punishment to restore moral boundaries, ignoring personal perspective and personal opinion (Gerber & Jackson, 2015).

Situational factors have been neglected in previous research, many of which constitute to the findings out research, and of which are influential. Although researchers cannot control what experiences participants have encountered in their lifetime, if identified experience which may benefit or put the participant at a disadvantage compared to other participants, they should be removed, however, this was not always the case. In the experiment conducted by Hosch, Culhane, Tubb and Granillo (2011), a number of participants had reported that they had encountered prior experience in some form within the criminal justice system. The study was exploring the contrast in knowledge around the criminal justice system between university students and general members of the public, however, those, regardless of educational status, who had participated in jury service or had some form of experience within the criminal justice system are more than likely to have a better understanding compared to those who have had no experience at all. The study does not correctly test what is in question. Participants who had prior criminal justice system experience should have been disregarded from the results.

Additionally, the age of the participant has been discovered to be extremely important when observing differences in criminal sentencing and perception. Hepburn (1980) noted that individuals who are older are more likely to determine a longer criminal sentence for an offender, in comparison to a younger individual. Theories have been suggested to try and give an explanation for the reasoning of this discovery, popular explanation was that older people have accumulated more experience in their life, which formulate to social schemas when they are asked to provide an appropriate criminal sentence for an offender. Younger people may not have even half of the experience of someone older, which supports this theory (Blanchard-Fields, 1996). Whilst observing age as a constitutional factor, there is one critique discovered. Higgins, Heath and Grannemann's (2007) tested how different age groups contrast to each other when punishing an offender

in terms of sentence length, two groups were created for this experiment and young group, and an old group. Although this is a legitimate way of testing age, this study completely disregarded individuals aged from 47 to 54 years of age. By disregarding such an extensive age gap, could potentially not provide sufficient or well represented results.

On the basis of results and findings from previous research, particular research questions have been created, and the findings have led to the use of the research objectives. The overall aim of the present study was therefore to examine the extent to which observer characteristics can influence and explain difference in perceptions towards sentencing outcomes and perceptions towards the criminal justice system.

Specific research objectives are as follows;

- 1) An examination of the role of gender in sentencing scores a variety of crimes, specifically drink driving, burglary and sexual offences.
- 2) An examination of the role of observer characteristics, including age, gender and student status, upon attitudes towards crime, specifically conviction proneness and confidence in the criminal justice system.

Method

Design

An experimental design was adopted for the present study. The independent variable (IV) for the current study was observer gender, which had two levels, male and female participants. The dependant variable (DV) for the present study was the length of sentence participants gave, scored continuously. The answers to the Pre-trial Juror Attitudes Questionnaire sub-scales were cross-sectional as participants completed the experiment at one-time point only. For the regression analysis, the predictor variables are the participant demographics, such as participant age and whether the participant is a student or not, and the outcome variables were the conviction proneness scores and the system confidence scores extracted from the Pre-trial Juror Attitudes Questionnaire.

Participants

An opportunity sample of 156 participants were recruited and took part in the study. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 81 years old ($M = 27.27$, $SD = 13.14$) and consisted of 48 males and 108 female participants. Participants varied in terms of educational attainment with 115 participants (71.9%) currently enrolled on a university degree course, whilst the other 42 participants were general members of the public and not currently in full-time education. Student participants who were recruited from the University of Huddersfield, and enrolled on a psychology undergraduate degree course, were granted course credits for taking part. This study was approved by the University of Huddersfield's Ethics Board, and all participants were treated in accordance with British Psychological Society (BPS) ethical guidelines. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants was maintained throughout. Please refer to the appendices for information sheet, consent form and debriefs provided.

Measures

Two sub-scales of the Pre-trial Juror Attitudes Questionnaire (PJAQ: Lecci & Myers, 2008) were used to assess individual's thoughts, feelings and opinions surrounding proneness to convict individuals who accused of a crime and confidence in the criminal justice system more broadly (see Appendix 3). Two subscales were measured, System Confidence (CON) and Conviction Proneness (CP). System Confidence consisted of six item questions, for example one question included was "Out of every 100 people brought to trial, at least 75 are guilty of the crime with which they are charged" and secondly another question was "When it is the suspect's word against the police officer's, I believe the police". The second sub-scale, Conviction Proneness, consisted of five items, for example "Too often jurors hesitate to convict someone who is guilty out of pure sympathy" and "Criminals should be caught and convicted by "any means necessary". The questionnaire consists of 29 questions, which is measured over a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Dis, 5 Strong Agree).

Procedure

On arrival, participants were seated within a classroom environment and asked to read the information sheet and consent form. Once the consent form had been signed, each participant was given the opportunity to ask any further question, following this each participant was advised on how to complete the experiment, and the approximate duration of the study. Firstly, participants were given a series of questions to answer surrounding confidence in the criminal justice system and conviction proneness, sub-scales derived from the Pre-trial Juror Attitudes Questionnaire (see Appendix 3). Next, participants were asked to read six crime vignettes pertaining to male and female drink driving offences, male and female burglary offences and male and female sexual offences (see Appendix 4). The six vignettes were presented to the participants in an unsystematic order. After reading each vignette, participants were asked to indicate on a scale beneath the vignette how long they perceive the correct prison sentence, in years, to be upon the information they had previously read. Once they had indicated how many years the perceived to be a justifiable prison sentence, participants were asked to convey a piece of justification as

to why they believe this is the correct verdict. This was the end of the experiment; participants were asked to read the debrief form (see Appendix 5). Participants were assured about the confidentiality of their participation and informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Participation was voluntary, with selective rewards attainable, only university students at the University of Huddersfield, and studying psychology, could gain any form reward, this was a SONA credit which contributed towards a final grade in a module.

Results

Descriptive statistics for age, Conviction Proneness and System Confidence sub-scales of the Pre-trial Juror Attitudes Questionnaire (PJAQ) for all participants are presented in Table 1 and frequency values of the study sample by gender and student enrolment are presented in Table 2. Figures display a mean participant age of 27.27 years old (SD = 13.14), and that most participants were female (69.4%) and enrolled on to a university degree course (73.2%).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for age and the Pre-trial Juror Attitudes Questionnaire (PJAQ) sub-scales for all participants (n = 157).

Scale	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	27.27	13.14	18	81
CON	17.56	3.36	9	26
CP	15.14	2.86	7	22

Note: CON = System Confidence total score; CP = Conviction Proneness total score.

Table 2

Frequency endorsements for gender and student enrolment categorical variables (n = 157).

Variable	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	48 (30.6%)
Female	109 (69.4%)
University Student	
Yes	115 (73.2%)
No	42 (26.8%)

Descriptive statistics presented within Table 3 below also display mean scores in the length of sentence (in years' imprisonment) participants gave perpetrators based upon different experimental crime scenarios. The Male Drink Driving offender was given a mean score of 3.03 years in prison (SD = 3.82), while for Female Drink Driving, 2.36 years in prison (SD = 3.18) was the mean sentence score. For the Male Sexual Offence scenario, the perpetrator was given a mean sentence of 11.16 years in prison (SD = 6.32), with the Female Sexual Offence perpetrator given a mean sentence of 11.20 years (SD = 6.57). Finally, for the Male Burglary offence a mean sentence of 3.72 years was observed (SD = 3.48) and for Female Burglary, 3.75 years in prison (SD = 3.31).

In order to evaluate the influence of gender upon sentencing scores between crime scenarios, a series of six independent sample *t*-tests were conducted where the independent variable was participant gender, and the dependant variable was mean length of sentence given in years' imprisonment. Independent samples *t*-tests were chosen as all parametric assumptions were met. Specifically, before examining group differences between male and female participant sentencing scores, Levene's test for equality of variance were conducted and displayed no significant difference between male

and female participant sentencing scores, ensuring homogeneity of variance across all crime scenarios.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the sentencing scores of male and female participants for the male drink driving crime scenario. Results displayed there was a significant difference between the two groups, $t(63) = 2.426$, $p < .05$, with male participants ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 4.97$) scoring higher than female participants ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 3.02$). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.88 , 95% CI: -0.33 to 3.16) was small ($d = .46$), however approaching a medium affect size.

An independent samples *t*-test was also conducted to compare the sentencing scores of male and female participants for the female drink driving crime scenario. Whilst approaching statistical significance, results displayed there was no significant difference between the two groups, $t(64) = 1.745$, $p > .05$). Results of an additional four independent sample *t*-tests displayed no statistically significant differences were detected in the length of sentences given for more serious burglary and sexual offences, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator (see Table 3).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and group differences in mean length of sentence given between gender; male (n = 48) and female (n = 109) participants.

Scale	Group	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Male DD	Males	4.33	4.97	2.426*	.46
	Females	2.45	3.02		
Female DD	Males	3.15	4.17	-0.305	.33
	Females	2.00	2.57		
Male BUR	Males	4.42	4.14	1.680	.28
	Females	3.40	3.10		
Female BUR	Males	4.35	3.40	1.543	.27
	Females	3.45	3.24		
Male SO	Males	10.92	5.91	-0.322	.06
	Females	11.27	6.52		
Female SO	Males	10.96	6.34	-0.305	.05
	Females	11.31	6.69		

Note: Male DD = Male Drink Driving length of sentence; Female DD = Female Drink Driving length of sentence; Male BUR: Male Burglary length of sentence; Female BUR: Female Burglary length of sentence; Male SO: Male Sexual offence length of sentence; Female SO: Female Sexual offence length of sentence. Cohen (1977) suggested that $d = 0.2$ be considered a small effect size, 0.5 represents a medium effect size, and 0.8 denotes a large effect size. * $p < .05$

Additional linear multiple regression analyses were also conducted to establish the impact of age, gender, and student enrolment upon confidence in the criminal justice system and conviction proneness. Preliminary analyses were conducted and displayed no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Additionally, the correlations among the predictor variables included in the study were examined, and these are presented in Table 4. All correlations were weak to moderate, and the VIF and tolerance values were within acceptable ranges, indicating that multicollinearity was unlikely to be a problem (see Table 3).

Since no a priori hypotheses had been made to determine the order of entry of predictor variables, a direct method was used for multiple linear regression analysis. Firstly, a test of the complete model relating to system confidence was undertaken. Containing all predictor variables against a constant only model, the complete model was statistically significant. The model as a whole explained 9% of the variance in 'system confidence' participant legal attitudes ($F(3, 149) = 5.03, p < .01$). As displayed in Table 5 below, two variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model (participant age and non-student status). Non-student status recorded a higher Beta value ($\beta = .39, p < .001$) than participant age ($\beta = .28, p < .05$) and gender ($\beta = .07, p > .05$).

Table 4.

Table of bivariate correlations for all continuous variables (N = 157)

		1.	2.	3.	4.
Model 1	1.System Confidence				
	2.Age	-.02			
	3.Gender	.09	-.04		
	4.Uni Student	-.21**	-.67***	-.04	
Model 2	1. Conviction Proneness				
	2.Age	-.08			
	3.Gender	.05	-.04		
	4.Uni Student	-.09	-.67***	-.04	

Note. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Secondly, a test of the complete model relating to conviction proneness was undertaken. Containing all predictor variables against a constant only model, the complete model was non-statistically significant. The model as a whole explained 4% of the variance in 'conviction proneness' participant legal attitudes ($F(3, 151) = 2.24$, $p > .05$). As displayed in Table 6 below, the same two variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model (participant age and non-student status). Non-student status recorded a higher Beta value ($\beta = .25$, $p < .05$) than participant age ($\beta = .24$, $p < .05$) and gender ($\beta = .03$, $p > .05$).

Results constructed from the multiple regression analysis indicate that younger individuals, when put into comparison with older people, score significantly higher in terms of conviction proneness. This result identifies that overall, younger people show more willingness and eagerness to convict a perpetrator, in comparison to older individuals who displayed a lower likeliness to convict a perpetrator. Out of the two age categories, the multiple regression analysis signifies that between older and younger people, younger individuals have more faith and confidence within the justice system. Younger individuals scored higher in the system confidence, displaying more faith within the criminal justice system, in contrast to older participants, who displayed

emotions of untrustworthy and unrealisable towards the criminal justice system. When measuring contrasts between university students and members of the general public, the multiple regression analysis identifies that members of the general public significantly score higher on the conviction proneness predictor. Members of the general public are more likely, in comparison to university students, to convict somebody accused of committing a crime. The final section of the multiple regression analysis signifies that those who are classified as a member of the general public, significantly present more confidence within the criminal justice system than individuals who are labelled as a university student. Members of the general public scored higher on the system confidence predictor.

Table 5.

Linear regression model of demographic predictors of confidence in the criminal justice system (n = 153).

Variables	R^2	β	B	SE	(95% CI)
Model	.09**				
Age		-.28*	-.07	.03	(-.12/-.02)
Gender		.07	.50	.57	(-.63/1.63)
Student enrolment		-.39***	-2.96	.80	(-4.53/-1.37)

Note: R^2 = overall variance explained by predictors; β = standardised coefficient; B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error. 95% CI = confidence interval. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 6.

Linear regression model of demographic predictors of conviction proneness (n = 153).

Variables	R^2	B	B	SE	(95% CI)
Model	.04				
Age		-.24*	-.05	.02	(-.10/-.01)
Gender		.03	.21	.50	(-.77/1.18)
Student enrolment		-.25*	-1.62	.70	(-2.99/-0.25)

Note: R^2 = overall variance explained by predictors; β = standardised coefficient; B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error. 95% CI = confidence interval. * $p < .05$.

Discussion

The aim of the recent study was to investigate an examination of the role of gender in sentencing scores a variety of crimes, specifically drink driving, burglary and sexual offences. Simultaneously, a second aim of the current study was to observe an examination of the role of observer characteristics, including age, gender and student status, upon attitudes towards crime, specifically conviction proneness and confidence in the criminal justice system which was derived from the Pre-trial Juror Attitudes Questionnaire (Lecci & Myers, 2008).

Results displayed that there were participant gender differences in sentencing scores by crime types only for minor offences such as drink driving, when the offender is a male, with men recording significant higher sentences than women. For other offences however, there was no significant difference between gender and sentencing length for burglary and sexual offences. The results displayed that there was a significant difference between participant demographics and sentencing scores. The results identified that younger people are both more conviction prone and display higher confidence in the criminal justice system. Finally, the results showed that non-student participants are also more conviction prone, and displayed higher confidence in the criminal justice system. The current study results are in accordance with some past research that found women are sentenced to more lenient verdicts. For example, Quas, Bottoms, Haegerich and Nysse-Carris (2002) found that female offenders are exposed to lesser sentences, in comparison to male offenders. However, the results from the present study do not match the results previously attained by Higgins, Heath and Grannemann (2007), who discovered that older participants scored higher for conviction proneness. One possible explanation for adults perusing a stronger sentence is through the impact of social schemas in attributional processing, and the years of experience accumulated in comparison to younger people. (Blanchard-Fields, 1996)

The results displayed that there will be a significant effect of participant gender and “perpetrator” gender on the length of sentence given, was not fully supported, with a minority of criminal vignettes proving to be supported significantly. Similarly, the first research objective, to examine whether significant differences are identified between

male and females in driving, burglary and sexual offences regarding length of sentence, was supported marginally. Finally, the last research objective resulted in a positive correlation, discovering that participant demographics do predict legal attitudes to some extent.

Findings from the current study indicated that a significant difference was identified between male and female participants in terms of prison sentence length, specifically within the drink driving vignettes convicted by men. Whilst approaching statistical significance, no significant difference was identified between length of sentence provided between male and female participants within the female drink driving vignette. The mean length of sentences within the sexual offences and burglary vignettes was comparable, but was not significantly different, this was completely regardless of the gender of the participant or the gender of the offender. The only exception for significance was in the minor offence vignette. The results support the results congested by Baum (2000), which identified that when observing drink driving offence, participants identify this offence seriously, which results in strict prison sentence.

The Pretrial Juror Attitudes Questionnaire results indicated that demographics do predict conviction proneness and system confidence. The age of the participant and whether the participant was a university student was the demographics being recorded. The findings indicate that younger individuals are more conviction prone, whilst they also portray a higher level of confidence for the criminal justice system. The findings from the current study also conclude that individuals of the general public, those who are not a university student, shower higher likeliness to convict a perpetrator accused of an offence. Lastly, the results identify that participants of the general public are more likely to have confidence in the criminal justice system, as opposed to university students. The result support the findings discovered by Hosch, Culhane, Tubb and Granillo (2011), which identify that non-student members of the public are more likely to convict an offender, which could be explained by the difference in life experience accumulated.

The current study findings may be interpreted in different ways by different researchers. Limitations of previous research has been scrutinised and explored previously, which led to the formation of the current study. With this being said, the present study is not flawless. There are limitations in the present study, some of which may have influenced the findings. By identifying the methodological issues enhances the opportunity a researcher to conduct an advanced piece of research within this field, but without the limitations present in this study.

The results from the current study accept the chivalry theory, to some extent. The chivalry theory suggest that the criminal justice system is dominated by male offenders. Whilst this may be statistically true, the results only support this theory in one type of offence, minor offences, e.g. drink driving. Drink driving offences was the only offence which identified a significant difference between male and female participants, which was the condition of a male offender.

Further Theoretical Discussion

From the results, it can be identified from the mean scores that male participants sentenced perpetrators to lengthier sentences, in comparison to the length of sentence women gave for both male or female drink drivers. The length of sentence given by both male and female participants was however similar within burglary offences and sexual offences, regardless of the gender of the perpetrator. Although significant differences in male and female sentencing drink drivers was discovered, it is worth noting that a number of participants believed that the appropriate sentence length for someone being charged with the crime of drink driving was 25 years' imprisonment, which is a comparable sentence to murder.

Research reviewed has displayed consistent explanations targeting the male gender as the "ideal criminal". Predominantly, research around criminal perceptions have discovered that men are the common gender to commit crimes and are generally more associated with crime, all with supportive statements and findings. Traditionally, the majority of research conducted comparing gender differences in a criminal setting are

predominantly sexual offences. The consistent finding among sexual offence research is that it is completely male dominated. Men are perceived to be the main threat within sexual offences. When women are questioned around sentencing guidelines for sexual offences, it is frequently discovered that they perceive a longer prison sentence than they would provide a female. Gender differences in personality traits, attitudes, and perceptions between men and women are widely reported and accepted in psychological research (see Dlamini et al, 2017; Willmott et al, 2017) and thus this finding is not a surprising one. It must also be noted that men tend to show a lack of empathy towards victims of sexual abuse, as a result of being associated with the mainstream theme of sexual offences (Hockett, Smith, Klausing & Saucier, 2015). This claim is well supported, however, in the present study the results indicated that there was no significant difference in male and female participant groups for both male and female sexual offences. These findings completely contradict the consistent findings that women judge men in a stricter context. Male and female offenders were subject to equal punishment. One explanation for this anomaly could potentially be the fight for gender equality in society. Women have fought endlessly for gender equality for centuries, and now gender equality is implemented in today's society, that could be the potential explanation as to why male and female sexual offenders are perceived as equal severity in their offences. Similarly, burglary is a completely male dominated crime. Female involvement in burglary is apparent, however it is still predominantly male offenders. It must be noted that the majority of women who are convicted of burglary tend to offend as a co-offender, with a male offender leading the crime in most cases (Rennison & Melde, 2013). Simultaneously to the findings discovered within the sexual offences, there was no significant difference identified between male and female participants within the burglary vignette, regardless of offender gender.

One vignette which provided a significant difference between the length of sentence provided by male and female participants was the drink driving vignette. A significant difference was identified in the sentence length for male offenders who drive under the influence of alcohol. Drink driving is a global problem, one which is not mainstreamed by one gender. It is common for both male and female individuals to be convicted for drunk driving. This could possibly be due to how accessible alcohol is, and with the majority of individuals in the UK owning a vehicle, the temptation is unbearable.

Statistically, men are reported for perceiving a greater use of alcohol abuse, which in itself results in a higher report in alcohol related risks, such as driving under the influence of alcohol. However, women are also associated with drink driving offences. One possible explanation for the slight increase in male drink driving offences in comparison to female drink driving offences is the societal aspect. It is more stereotypically associated for a male to go down to the pub on a weekend and socialise with his companions, this type of association is not affiliated with women. This then increases the likeliness of men to commit a drink driving offence (Chan, Neighbors, Gilson, Larimer, & Marlatt, 2007). Another possible explanation for this finding is the innate confidence alleged by men around their driving abilities. Rhodes and Pivik (2011) conducted an experiment observing the driving behaviours between men and women. Men frequently engaged in more dangerous driving situations due to their confidence in their driving ability. Combining over confidence and alcohol in men will only increase drink driving rates.

Higgins, Heath and Grannemann (2007), suggested that one confounding factor was predominantly influential when observing the differences within male and female criminal perceptions, and this was the age of the participant. The results from their study concluded that the age of the participant surveying a criminal vignette can be influential when deciding a perpetrator's fate. The pattern in the results indicate that older individuals tend to distinguish lengthier prison sentences, in comparison to those of the younger generation. Older individuals deemed to show lack of empathy towards offenders, whereas younger individuals seemed to look deeper into the perpetrator's situation, by considering factors such as mental stability and family problems for example. Blanchard-Fields (1996) attempted to retrieve a better understanding as to why older individuals portray perpetrators to a stricter sentence in comparison to younger people. One possible theory Blanchard-Fields suggested for the correlation between older people and stricter prison sentences was through the impact of social schemas in attributional processing. This concept identifies that older individuals in most cases, have achieved more, conducted more and experienced more life changing experiences in comparison to younger people. Older people are more prone to financial problems, family traumas, marriage, divorce and overall more problematic experiences than younger people. It is possible for a younger individual to experience

more advancing life experiences; however, it is more common for older people to be more experienced. With accumulating more life experiences, comes the opportunity to encounter criminal experiences, whether that be from an individualistic perspective or a family or friend being subject to the criminal justice system. This will unconsciously increase the knowledge around sentencing and the criminal justice system, so as a result, older people are at a higher likeliness to understand the correct sentencing, therefore perceiving a lengthier sentence, as younger people may not fully understand the sentencing guidelines.

Findings from the present study contradict the findings presented by Blanchard-Fields (1996) and Higgins, Heath and Grannemann (2007) that older people are more likely to convict a perpetrator, and will more likely increase the severity of the sentence length. The findings from the present study indicate that younger people are more likely to convict perpetrators to a longer sentence, in comparison to older people. The results from the present study also indicate that younger people portray greater confidence in the criminal justice system. One potential explanation for the previous results could be a result of the findings concluded from previous research. As younger people are associated with a lack of knowledge around the criminal justice system, younger individuals could be encouraged to be educated around the criminal justice system. Especially in educational settings, schools and university's regularly invite members of the law, such as police officers, to come in a discuss all the information available regarding their specific criminal field. By doing this, increases the awareness and understanding within young people in the criminal justice system. A second suggestion for the increased awareness in young people could be the rise of social media. It is much more accessible to research the correct terminology and sentencing guidelines then it was many years ago, with a lot of crimes also being published online, making it available for younger people to read and learn the outcome of a particular crime.

Upon outline variable that influence individual's criminal perception, Hough (1996) suggests that the degree of which people have progressed into education may be influential. Hough (1996) conducted a study observing the understanding and

knowledge around the criminal justice system. The findings indicated that individuals who continued to progress into education by starting a university degree, displayed a lack of knowledge around sentencing guidelines, maximum and minimum penalties and the range of punishments that the court can legally implement. Similar to the influence of age, Hosch, Culhane, Tubb and Granillo (2011) suggest that younger people present a lack of knowledge around criminal sentencing, in comparison to older people, due to the lack of accumulated life experience. Generically, individuals who have entered into university life surround themselves with people who share the same aspirations and ambitions, and not people who either familiarise with people, or regularly commit antisocial behaviour. In contrast, people who go straight into work could build a relationship with anybody, with any criminal history and could potentially familiarise themselves with somebody who regularly is involved with the criminal justice system, therefore increasing their awareness around the subject. Findings from the current study support the hypothesis that non-student members are more conviction prone and are likely to convict an accused perpetrator. The results also support that non-students declare to be more confidence in the criminal justice system.

Methodological Explanations

The current study findings may be interpreted in different ways by different researchers. Limitations of previous research has been scrutinised and explored previously, which led to the formation of the current study. With this being said, the present study is not flawless. There are limitations in the present study, some of which may have influenced the findings. By identifying the methodological issues enhances the opportunity a researcher to conduct an advanced piece of research within this field, but without the limitations present in this study.

One methodological limitation that may have resulted in ungeneralizable results was the balance of the sample size. The participant capacity of 156 participants is a fairly large sample size, however, the more participants, the richer the data available. Following this, is the unbalance identified within the collected participant. First of all, as the present study observes gender differences, it would be suitable to have an

equal variance of male and female participants. Unfortunately, in the present study there was a lack of equality in the participant gender, with 48 males and 108 female participants. Providentially, as the sample size is fairly large this should not have a damaging impact on the results, however, for future research, if possible try and accumulate as equal number of male and female participants as possible, to enhance the supportiveness of the findings. Gender differences are common in a broad range of forensic research (see Ryan et al, 2018) though not always displaying statistical significant differences (Willmott, 2017; Willmott & Sherrets, 2016) and thus sample same balance is recommended in future work to overcome possible type two error.

Another shortfall which may have implemented unnecessary problems is the structure and organisation of the vignettes. The six vignettes were presented randomly, however with the number of vignettes being limited, two out of the three vignette offences resulted in following on from each other. The main problem that this has potentially raised is participants may remember that the previous vignette is very similar, which invites them to refer back to their previous answer to ensure that they are not discriminating against a gender. This therefore does not provide their initial perspective, more that they want to seem "fair". In future research it would be beneficial to ensure that all the vignettes are as randomised as physically possible, this will ensure the highest possibility of participants not fully being aware of the comparable measures being recorded between male and females.

Additionally, a limitation identified with the present study that must be considered is the time limit available. The study was very brief in duration, around ten minutes, and therefore future research should seek to examine attitudes in a more detailed and lengthy method. One example of how to execute this would be the use of video recorded crime scenarios, instead of vignettes. This would give greater exposure to the crime under scrutiny and may lead to greater participant consideration of their individualistic views. Another benefit of implementing lengthier procedural methods is the opportunity to balance out participants, as opposed to having one gender dominating the participant statistics.

Methodological limitations in the present study have been identified previously, in optimism that further research is to be conducted exploring gender and demographics

influences on criminal perceptions, and to be conducted in a manner which restricts the number of limitations.

The current study has aimed to firstly introduce significant findings which may catalyse future research, but to also identify limitations to support the need for future research. The current study can be implemented to support scenarios and experiments, examining gender and demographic differences for criminal perception. Overall what can be obtained from the present study is that criminal perception can be influenced by many factors, including gender, age and educational status. All factors can be testified in any setting, making the study available for progression. In order to contribute further to understanding why such factors have such influence on criminal perceptions could be to conduct an in-depth analysis with each individual, to observe how individual's personality counteracts these factors, and to see how effective it is. Overall the findings can significantly contribute to the understanding of gender and demographics around criminal sentencing, but there still is areas to improve.

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Appendix

Consent Form- Participant Copy

Full Name: _____ Todays Date: ___/___/___

Age: _____

Gender: (Please Circle) Male / Female / Prefer not to say

Are you a university student or not? (Please Circle) Yes / No

Please tick one box per question below:

I have read and understood the information sheet.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have had my questions answered and I am satisfied with the response given.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give an explanation.	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my identity will be protected and that all data will be anonymous. Only the experimenter and their supervisor will have access to my data	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am able to receive a full copy of the results by emailing the researcher	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

*****Please be aware by ticking all of these boxes you have given the researcher your consent to continue with the study. This is to retain your confidentiality by not writing your signature*****

Questionnaire

Please select how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	I strongly disagree	I disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	I agree	I strongly agree
1. If a suspect runs from police, then he probably committed the crime.					
2. A defendant should be found guilty if 11 out of 12 jurors vote guilty.					
3. Too often jurors hesitate to convict someone who is guilty out of pure sympathy.					
4. In most cases where the accused person presents a strong defence, it is only because of a good lawyer.					
5. Out of every 100 people brought to trial, at least 75 are guilty of the crime with which they are charged.					
6. For serious crimes like murder, a defendant should be found guilty so long as there is a 90% chance that he committed the crime.					
7. Defence lawyers don't really care about guilt or innocence; they are just in business to make money.					
8. Generally, the police make an arrest only when they are sure about who committed the crime.					
9. Many accident claims filed against insurance companies are false claims.					
10. The defendant is often a victim of his own bad reputation.					
11. Extenuating circumstances should not be considered; if a person commits a crime, then that person should be punished.					
12. If the defendant committed a victimless crime, like gambling or possession of marijuana, he should never be convicted.					
13. Defence lawyers are too willing to defend individuals they know are guilty.					
14. Police routinely lie to protect other police officers.					
15. Once a criminal, always a criminal.					
16. Lawyers will do whatever it takes, even lie, to win a case.					
17. Criminals should be caught and convicted by "any means necessary."					
18. A prior record of conviction is the best indicator of a person's guilt in the present case.					
19. Rich individuals are almost never convicted of their crimes.					
20. If a defendant is a member of a gang, he/she is definitely guilty of the crime.					

21. Minorities use the "race issue" only when they are guilty.					
22. When it is the suspect's word against the police officer's, I believe the police.					
23. Men are more likely to be guilty of crimes than women.					
24. The large number of African Americans currently in prison is an example of the innate criminality of that subgroup.					
25. A Black man on trial with a predominantly White jury will always be found guilty.					
26. Minority suspects are likely to be guilty, more often than not.					
27. If a witness refuses to take a lie detector test, it is because he/she is hiding something.					
28. Defendants who change their story are almost always guilty.					
29. Famous people are often considered to be "above the law."					

Appendix 4.

Vignettes

Bobby, 45, is a single father of two children. He works full time as a builder and therefore can only see his children on alternative weekends. One Friday evening after a very busy day on the building site, Bobby and a few of his colleagues went to their local pub for a drink to relax after a busy week. One pint led to another and before Bobby realised he had consumed five pints of beer. Bobby thought it was time to head home, as his children were coming the following day. Bobby believed he was in a fit state to drive and proceeded to unlock his car and drive home. On his travel home Bobby ended up losing control of his steering wheel and swerving onto the path, unfortunately there was a middle-aged woman waking on the path. Bobby did make contact with this woman, but luckily, there was no serious injuries to her. The police were called to the incident and breathalysed Bobby. Bobby was later arrested and convicted for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Please indicate on the scale below how long you believe Bobby should serve in prison. Please write in the box next to the scale the exact amount of time you believe Bobby should be imprisoned for. Finally, please provide a short justification for your verdict for Bobby.

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 12.5 15 17.5 20 22.5 25+

Kate, 27, is a recently single woman. Kate and her ex Tom recently split due to Tom losing interest in pursuing a long-term relationship with her. Although this is not what Kate wanted, she has finally come to terms with the separation. Kate is a mature student studying Drama at University and is known to be an outgoing and friendly woman. Tom had messaged Kate to come round to his apartment to take all of her belongings, which she was yet to collect. When Kate arrived both her and Tom ended up chatting and started reminiscing about old times. Tom suggested opening a bottle of wine and they began to have a laugh together. When pouring their third glass of wine, Kate had crushed and spiked Tom’s drink with Viagra. Having been unaware of what she’d done, Tom continued drinking with Kate and around two hours later with both of them very intoxicated

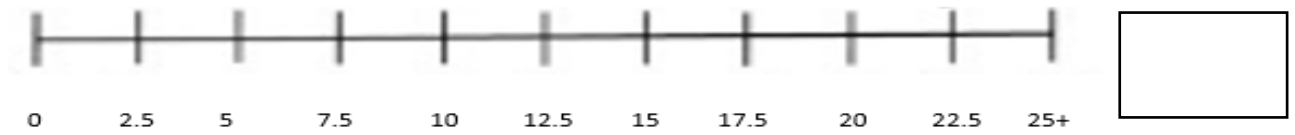
Kate had encouraged Tom to go through to the bedroom where he immediately passed out on the bed. Although he was unconscious, with the Viagra kicking in, Kate began to have sexual intercourse with him. When Tom woke up hours later, Kate told him that they had had sex and Tom got angry saying that he had not given his consent. Kate laughed it off telling him that she'd given him a Viagra and said he was clearly flirting with her before passing out, something she said showed her he had wanted sex. Tom contacted the police to inform them what had happened and Kate was arrested and charged with a serious offence. Footage later emerged from Kate's phone which showed her filming Tom unconscious whilst having sexual intercourse with him. In Court she was found guilty by a jury for a serious sexual offence which was comparable to a conviction of rape.

Please indicate on the scale below how long you believe Kate should serve in prison. Please write in the box next to the scale the exact amount of time you believe Kate should be imprisoned for. Finally, please provide a short justification for your verdict for Kate.

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 12.5 15 17.5 20 22.5 25+

David, 19, is a student currently in his first year of university studying Business at The University of Leeds. David finds his friend's flat mate, Lucy, very attractive, but she has never shown the same feelings towards David. One Saturday night David and many of his friends, including Lucy, go on a night out in Leeds city centre, going from a bar to various nightclubs. After a few drinks, David and Lucy get very close. Towards the end of the night David and Lucy end up going back to Lucy's flat, both very intoxicated. Lucy ended up passing out on her bed, and David began to have sexual intercourse with her. He also recorded it on his phone and sent it to his friends afterwards. The following day Lucy was very upset and told David that she never gave consent to any sexual intercourse taking place, whereas David says she did consent before she passed out. Lucy contacted the police and David was later arrested and charged with rape. In Court David plead not guilty to the charge of rape however was later convicted of the offense, after the jury decided he was guilty of rape.

Please indicate on the scale below how long you believe David should serve in prison. Please write in the box next to the scale the exact amount of time you believe David should be imprisoned for. Finally, please provide a short justification for your verdict for David.



Sarah, 27, is a single mother of a young girl. Sarah owns her own company so is constantly occupied with work, this has resulted in her ex-partner taking the majority of the responsibility for their child. Sarah takes care of her daughter on a weekend every two weeks. Due to the stress and work overload within Sarah's company one of her employees suggested going for a drink and a meal after work to relax, especially as Sarah rarely gets the time to do this. A few hours had passed and the Sarah had drunk a bottle of wine to herself. She recognised this was time to go home. Sarah thought she would be fine driving home as she only lived about 20 minutes away. As soon as Sarah pulled out of the car park, she ended up reversing into a parked Mercedes, with the driver sat in the car. Fortunately, the driver suffered no injuries, but unfortunately for Sarah there were two police officers walking past the incident. The two officers breathalysed Sarah, to which she was found over the limit. Sarah was then then arrested and convicted for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Please indicate on the scale below how long you believe Sarah should serve in prison. If you believe Sarah should not be imprisoned please mark 0 years. Please write in the box next to the scale the exact amount of time you believe Sarah was imprisoned for. Finally, please in as little words as possible write your justification for your verdict for Sarah.



Brian, 31, is an unemployed man who lives by himself in a 1 bedroom flat. He is a former university student, who was on the right career path until he began to suffer from a gambling addiction. Things deteriorated with debts piling up to fund his gambling addiction. Brian walked past this luxurious house everyday on his way to the bookies, noticing a former footballer and his wife lived there. Money got tighter and his addiction grew stronger than ever, so Brian decided he was going to break into this mansion, and steal some valuable possessions in order to sell and collect some money. Brian noticed that a window had been left slightly open, which gave him the desire to break in. The home owner heard a noise and came down stairs and noticed he had been burgled, so he then rang the police. Brian was stopped a few streets away with the valuable goods in his possession. Brian was then arrested and convicted for domestic burglary.

Please indicate on the scale below how long you believe Brian should serve in prison. If you believe Brian should not be imprisoned please mark 0 years. Please write in the box next to the scale the exact amount of time you believe Brian was imprisoned for. Finally, please in as little words as possible write your justification for your verdict for Brian.

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 12.5 15 17.5 20 22.5 25+

Leah, 55, is a former university teacher who lives on her own in a little council flat. Leah began to drink whilst she was teaching, this helped with the stress that came with her job. Leah’s drinking started as a coping mechanism, but drastically changed into a lifestyle. Until she knew it every penny she had was being spent on cheap vodka. Leah began to struggle for money as she was unemployed as a result of her drinking problem and no company would employ her. Leah saw on Facebook that a former colleague, Julie, had just been promoted and that her and her family had just bought a new, expensive house. Leah saw this as an opportunity to get a few quid, in order to buy a few cheap bottles of spirits. Leah planned to break into Julie’s house and take anything she could potentially sell on. Leah had sneaked through an open window and stolen some valuable possessions. Julie reported a burglary to the police and Leah was caught on CCTV running away from Julie’s property. Leah was later arrested and convicted of burglary.

Please indicate on the scale below how long you believe Leah should serve in prison. If you believe Leah should not be imprisoned please mark 0 years. Please write in the box next to the scale the exact amount of time you believe Leah was imprisoned for. Finally, please in as little words as possible write your justification for your verdict for Leah.

