

# Do UVU Students Understand How A Criminal Sentence is Decided and Do They Think the Process is Fair?



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# The Survey Questions



## The first Problem...Do you understand our system?

- We needed to prove or see what an average person knows about the judicial system
- Questions needed to be simple enough for someone who has or has not had experience with our criminal law

## The second Problem...Do you feel that it is fair?

- We wanted to find peoples' idea of how they feel about our justice systems.
- We needed to change the dynamic of our survey and its questions for more accurate responses.

# The Survey Set Up



## The Knowledge Set Up

- Mostly simple questions all of us know on a whim
- True or False: can the polices detain you because you upset them
- How much evidence is considered probable

## The Fairness Model

- They were leveled answers so we could get a good idea how they feel about the justice system.
- In your opinion....Questions
- Sentences are equal to

Q2.1 How much evidence is needed for probable cause?

- Enough to have 100% surety that the crime happened. (1)
- Enough to convince a reasonably cautious person that an arrest is justified. (2)
- At least one piece of evidence. (3)
- No evidence is needed just suspicion of the crime. (4)

Q2.26 In your opinion you...

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
Believe sentences are equal to the crimes that are committed. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



- Our sample we received was 500 out of UVU's stated 34,977 students for Fall 2016
- Not the best response rate 😞 One more response needed to get 3%
- Our survey was thrown out to the world for two weeks
- The first week we only 5 responses
- Two reminder emails were sent and nearly tripled our response rate before we closed our survey.

# Weaknesses



- Did embedding the question help?
- I froze every question, did that make it too linear?
- We could have disclosed the exact number of questions so they knew it wasn't too long.
- We did our best by sending reminder emails.
- And Thanking them and letting them know the importance of the survey

# Literature Reviews



- Julian V. Roberts: public opinion regarding mandatory sentencing laws
- Anthony N. Doob: public attitudes towards sentencing in Canada should move away from the simple rhetoric hash or soft sentencing
- Mark A. Cohen, Roland T Rust and Sara Steen: methodology looked at the public access to and the priorities in the criminal justice sending
- Michael Turner, Francis Cullen, Jody Sundt and Brandon Applegate: public attitudes toward rehabilitation were studied by means of a survey of a randomly selected sample of 1,000 Ohio residents



# Methodology



- Application turned in to IRB on November 1
- The IRB approved our request on November 8
- We used a quantitative research approach
- We administered a survey that consisted of data that can be ordered in terms of magnitude
- We did not use qualitative research because we did not do participant observation, interviewing, or ask open ended questions to the participants in our survey



# Our Study



- Survey was distributed to 500 Random Utah Valley University Students
- The survey was sent out 3 different times
- Total of 1500 emails were sent out
- We received 14 responses and 8 completed the survey





# Problems with the study

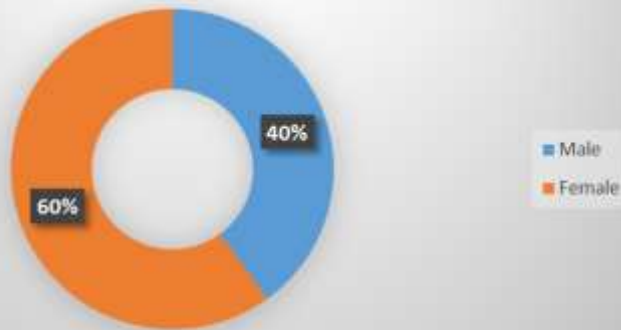


- Sample of 500 is a small number and may not be a true representative sample of the thousands of students enrolled at UVU
- Some individuals may have felt that an email survey isn't anonymous
- Limited amount of time people were able to respond to survey may limit the number of respondents
- Of the surveys received not all were complete



# Demographics

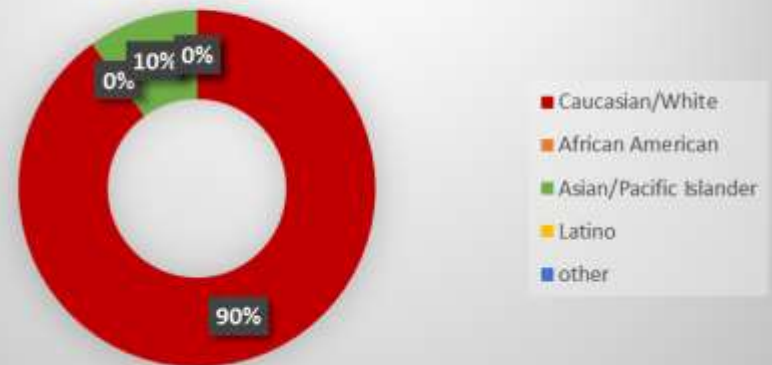
Gender



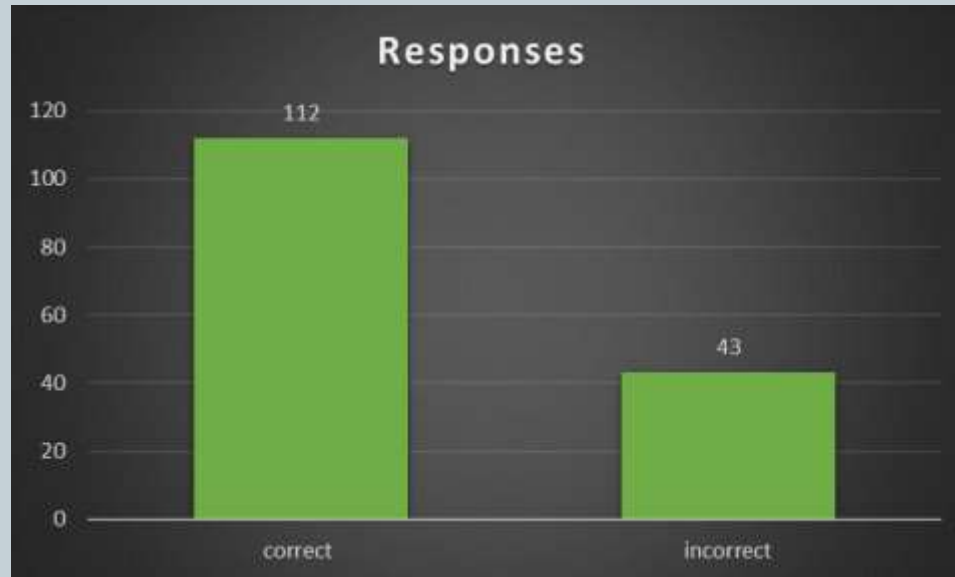
- 10 people participated in our survey
- 6 were male
- 4 were female

- 9 were Caucasian
- 1 was Asian or pacific Islander
- 0 African American, Hispanic or any other race
- 1 Caucasian and 1 Asian or pacific Islander did not finish all the questions

Ethnicity



# Responses



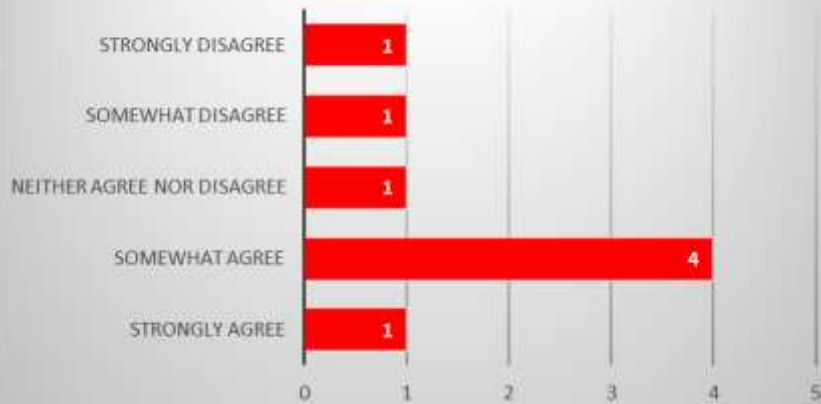
Correct answers were 112 (72.3%)  
Incorrect answers were 43 (27.7%)



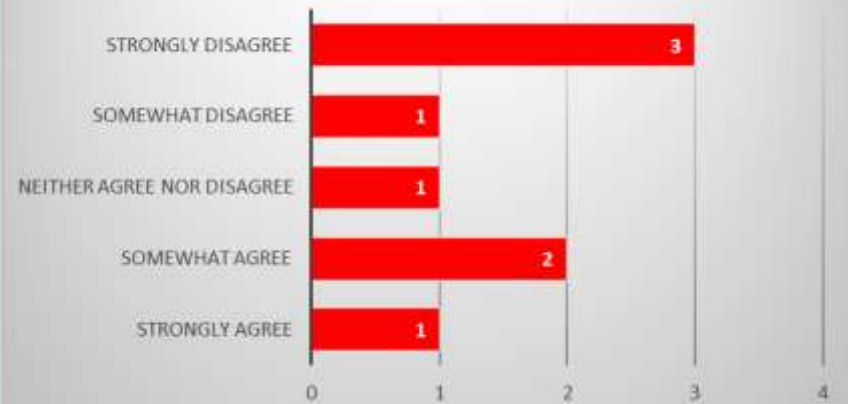
# Opinions



## Court System and Process



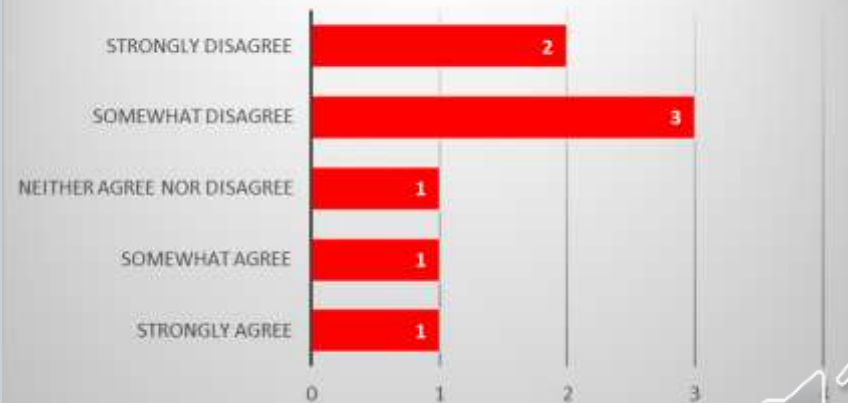
## Are Sentences Equal to the Crime



## Would You be Treated Fairly in the Criminal Justice System



## Is the Justice System Fair





# Conclusion



- Unfortunately we did not have enough time to get good results for the study. A study like this can not be done within a few months or even just two weeks
- Non the less this study could still help with contributing to the knowledge on our students. Do we need to do seminars on the law to educate our students
- The results show that students were fairly knowledgeable about the criminal justice system
- The majority of the results came from Caucasian, and we only received in total 14 surveys completed
- This project was just the beginning and could be further worked on to get a better look on what students really know about the criminal system