Child saving versus Incarceration: How Much Are We Willing to Pay?

Dear Participant,

It is well known that the community prefers a punitive response to juvenile crime. However, many researchers have questioned whether or not this is worthwhile, because studies have found that the information may not be as accurate as once thought. Therefore the aim of this study is to investigate community attitudes towards juvenile offending and the ways that the criminal justice system approach juvenile offending. I am an honours student at Murdoch University and would be grateful for your participation in completing this study.

We encourage any members of this household over the age of 18 years to participate in this survey.

The following questionnaire will require approximately 15-20 minutes. Some questions ask about your attitudes towards the current criminal justice system and other ask about the future of the criminal justice system. The data collected will provide useful information regarding how the criminal justice system can be more effective in dealing with juvenile crime.

To keep this survey anonymous, please do not write your name anywhere on this survey and only answer the specific questions you have been asked. All of your answers will be kept confidential.

If you choose to participate in this study, please answer all questions as honestly as possible and return the questionnaires promptly through the return-paid envelope provided. Your participation is voluntary. You are under no obligation to complete this survey and can withdraw at any time. However, if you do choose to complete this survey you cannot withdraw your consent to participate once you have returned the survey due to the fact that the surveys are anonymous and there is no way to identify and withdraw your completed survey.

We ask that you return your completed surveys by 31 August, 2014.

The completed surveys will be stored in a locked cabinet in a locked room. The surveys and any information on the surveys will not be disclosed to any third parties unless required to do so by law. Once we have completed this research, the analysed information from this research will be published on the Murdoch University website. You will be able to access this feedback within 6-8 months. If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact Guy Hall, Academic Chair of Criminology and Legal Studies, Murdoch University.

Sincerely,
Guy Hall
Honours Supervisor
(08) 9360 6033

This study has been approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval 2014/147). If you have any reservation or complaint about the ethical conduct of this research, and wish to talk with an independent person, you may contact Murdoch University’s Research Ethics Office (Tel. 08 9360 6677 (for overseas studies, +61 8 9360 6677) or e-mail ethics@murdoch.edu.au). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Child Saving versus Punitiveness: How much are we willing to pay?

Participant consent

I have read the Information letter about the nature and scope of this survey. Any questions I have about the research process have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree that by submitting the survey I give my consent for the results to be used in the research. I am aware that this survey is anonymous and no personal details are being collected or used. I know that I may change my mind, withdraw my consent, and stop participating at any time; and I acknowledge that once my survey has been submitted it may not be possible to withdraw my data.

I understand that all information provided is treated as confidential by the researchers and will not be released to a third party unless required to do so by law.

I understand that the findings of this study may be published and that no information which can specifically identify me will be published.

Survey Questions

1. What is your sex? Male Female
2. What is your age? __________ Years
3. What is your highest level of educational attainment?
   Year Ten Year Twelve Tafe Certificate University Degree
4. What is your postcode? __________
5. What suburb do you live in? ___________________
Please read the following paragraph and then respond to each approach by circling which response you agree with most. Please circle only one response for each of the four approaches.

6. We are faced with many problems in the criminal justice system, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. For each of the following approaches, circle whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount.

**Police**

Too Much  Too Little  About Right  Unsure

**Detention**

Too Much  Too Little  About Right  Unsure

**Youth Crime Prevention Programs**

Too Much  Too Little  About Right  Unsure

**Offender Rehabilitation Programs**

Too Much  Too Little  About Right  Unsure

7. Distribute $100 between the four approaches used within our criminal justice system in a manner that reflects the relative importance of each approach in our criminal justice system.

______ Police
______ Prisons
______ Youth Crime Prevention Programs
______ Offender Rehabilitation Programs
There are a number of goals within the criminal justice system. For each of the goals below, please circle the response that reflects how important you think each of these goals are in the criminal justice system.

8. The main emphasis in juvenile detention should be rehabilitation.

1  2  3  4  5  6
Very Important Not at all important

9. The main emphasis in juvenile detention should be punishment.

1  2  3  4  5  6
Very Important Not at all important

10. The main emphasis in juvenile detention should be to protect society.

1  2  3  4  5  6
Very Important Not at all important

11. The best way to prevent future juvenile crime is to teach juvenile offenders a skill that they can use to get a job when they are released from prison.

1  2  3  4  5  6
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

12. The best way to prevent future juvenile crime is to try to help offenders change their values and to help them with the emotional problems that caused them to break them law.

1  2  3  4  5  6
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

13. The best way to prevent future juvenile crime is to give juveniles a good education.

1  2  3  4  5  6
Strongly Agree Strongly Disagree

14. Is there an age at which you believe it is too late to help a juvenile offender?

Yes  No

If yes, please write down the specific age at which point you think a juvenile can no longer be helped?
_______________
Please read the following paragraph and then respond to the 2 questions that follow by circling the amount you think most appropriate.

Currently in Western Australia, juvenile offenders who commit serious crimes, such as robbery, are put in jail for about one year. Suppose Western Australians citizens were asked to approve the addition of a rehabilitation program to the sentence for these sorts of crimes. Similar programs have reduced youth crime by 30%. Youths in these programs are also more likely to graduate from high school and get jobs. These programs may result in a rise in taxes.

15. What is the maximum amount you are willing to pay for this program to be implemented in Western Australia?

$0  $50  $100  $150  $200  $200+

Why did you choose this amount?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

16. What is the minimum amount you are willing to pay for this program to be implemented?

$0  $50  $100  $150  $200  $200+

Why did you choose this amount?

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
Almost there, we now have a few further demographic questions.

17. Do you believe that juvenile crime is an issue for your suburb? Yes  No

18. Have you been a victim of crime in the last twelve months? Yes  No

19. If yes, was it personal or property crime? Personal  Property

20. What would you rate your fear of crime?

1  2  3  4  5  6
Not Afraid  Very Afraid

21. Have you had any personal contact with the criminal justice system?

Offender  Victim  Jury Duty  Witness  Staff Member  Other

22. On a scale of extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (10), please circle your political preference.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
Extremely Liberal  Extremely Conservative
Please rate the following items on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 indicates that you completely disagree with the statement and 10 indicates that you completely agree with the statement.

1. We are entirely too soft on people convicted of crime.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Completely Disagree

2. Offenders should be harshly punished to make them pay for their crimes.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Completely Disagree

3. We should use the old saying "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" as a guideline for determining punishment for criminals.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Completely Disagree

4. To better control the crime problem, more prisons need to be built.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Completely Disagree

5. Prisons today are much too lenient.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Completely Disagree

6. Using the death penalty helps us to better control crime.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Completely Disagree

7. Prison and jail inmates deserve the humiliation, intimidation, and degradation they may receive.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   Completely Disagree
8. Drug dealers should be given life sentences for their crimes.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Completely Disagree

9. A person who sexually abuses children should never be released from prison.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Completely Disagree

10. Probation supervision is a joke.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Completely Disagree

11. A person who has three convictions for very serious crimes (felonies) should receive life without the possibility of parole.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Completely Disagree

12. People choose to commit crimes; therefore, they deserve the punishment they get.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Completely Disagree

13. Harsh and severe punishments are necessary to preserve a sense of justice in our society.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Completely Disagree

14. Speedy, severe, and certain penalties are the only way to prevent people from committing crime.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Completely Disagree

15. Inmates who participate in programs while confined (such as education, counselling, vocational training, etc.) do so only because they are trying to impress the parole board so they can possibly gain an early release.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Completely Disagree