

Natalie Breanne Whitman

Title of your project: The Influence of Teacher and Parent Perceptions upon the Student Perceptions and Experiences Involving Cyberbullying within School Communities.

Abstract:

Society's methods of communication have been exposed to dramatic upgrades throughout the past few decades and are still evolving today (Sticca & Perren, 2013). Updated technologies are continually being invented and enhanced. As a result, individuals are able to share material in ways that are more efficient, more engaging and much quicker (Sticca & Perren, 2013). Children growing up in the midst of this technological evolution have become attached to their devices. On average, parents buy cell phones for their children around the age of ten. Of those parents, only 4% purchase the basic mobile plan that does not include unlimited calls and texts as well as Internet access (Perin, 2013). As a result, children are allotted constant access to cyberspace resulting in the exposure to new crimes, such as cyberbullying. Researchers have shown that the frequency of cyberbullying peaks during middle school, but is also widespread throughout elementary and high schools (Beale & Hall, 2007). This study involved a survey design, in which surveys were distributed to students, parents and teachers at St. Benedict Catholic School in Amherst, New York with various questions related to cyberbullying. The purpose of this study was to examine the influence that parent and teacher perceptions on cyberbullying have on the students within school communities. The results of this study suggest that student attitudes and perceptions on cyberbullying are related to the responses generated by their parents and teachers. The survey results demonstrated that when students, parents and teachers have similar perceptions on the awareness, intervention and prevention of cyberbullying, there is a smaller chance that students will experience cyberbullying within their school community.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss, Professor Carraugh Reilly-Nowak

Scott Kashino

Title of your project: The Effect of Police Uniform Style on the Perception of Police Citizen Interaction

Abstract: In the recent past, several high profile incidents have occurred in the United States that cast the police in a negative light. As a result of these incidents many police departments across the country are attempting to develop strategies to improve the police citizen interaction. This research study was conducted to determine if the style of uniform worn by police has any effect on the police citizen interaction. Study participants ($N = 106$) were shown two separate videos. One video showed an officer interaction with a citizen with the officer dressed in a traditional navy blue uniform. The second video showed the exact same interaction with the officer dressed in a SWAT style uniform. The tool used to measure this interaction was the procedural justice scale. The scale consisted of 10 questions measuring traits of the officers such as competency, honesty, ability, safety, demeanor, professionalism, trustworthiness, and approachability. A seven point Likert scale was used to measure the participant's responses to each question. Responses were analyzed by sex, race, residence, and college major. A t -test was utilized to determine if there were significant differences in responses to the questionnaire by the two video groups. 109 individuals (68 women [62.4%] and 41 men [37.6%]) volunteered to participate. Median age was 20 years ($M = 21.4$) with the youngest aged 18 and the oldest age 56. 84 (77.1%) participants in the sample identified as Caucasian. There were 15 (13.8%) who identified as African-American. Three percent or less of the remaining participants self-identified as Native-American, Hispanic, Middle-Eastern, West-Indian, or "Other". The responses to the Procedural Justice Scale were not statistically significantly different between the two uniform conditions, $t(107) = 0.60$, $p = .552$. Future research on the topic should include a larger sample size on participants with more diverse demographic characteristics and would likely provide the researcher with a better opportunity to obtain statistical significance regarding the two uniform conditions and the police citizen interaction.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Iwanenko Dr. Paoni

Vickie L. Smith

Title of your project: Ethical Dilemmas in Law Enforcement

Abstract:

Police Ethics and Integrity are issues of concern to the public, Law Enforcement Agencies and Criminal Justice Leaders. While previous studies have focused on police officers, supervisors and police leaders, little research has focused on new hires -the police recruits. Additionally, the effects of misconduct and unethical practices on the public and its trust with the citizens was explored.

This study aims to capture the perceptions regarding ethical dilemmas faced in law enforcement by police recruits interested in becoming police officers. Recruits from various law enforcement agencies across Erie County (n=265) were surveyed, from January 2013 until December 2014, over a two year period, to determine their attitude towards various ethical dilemmas of police work, including misconduct and the impact of ethical decision-making. Moreover, the impact of successfully completing a 16-hour formal Ethics criminal justice academy course upon their perceptions was also examined.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss,

Professor Kathy Perino

Sarah A. Tracy-Watkins

Title of your project:

INCENTIVE PREFERENCES TO PROMOTE JOB SATISFACTION, INTENT TO STAY, AND RETENTION FOR NEW GRADUATE REGISTERED NURSES IN A COLLEGE SETTING

Abstract:

Nursing shortages, job satisfaction, intent to stay, and nurse retention is an issue of global importance. A comparison of nursing incentive preferences, intent to stay, and retention methods showed nurses are dissatisfied with workplace conditions. The literature review findings in this study indicated non-financial issues were rated high as factors nurses considered when accepting employment. Salary was not viewed as an important issue for employment. The aim of this study was to explore the relationships among nurses' job satisfaction through incentives, nurses' intent to stay, and retention. The instrumentation included, *The Nurse Incentives Index* and *Intent to Stay Index*. The surveys were a cross-sectional study design measuring benefits that nurses see as important factors for job satisfaction, intent to stay, and retention. The General Systems Theory is the theoretical framework examined in this study, and there is sufficient empirical evidence to show that nurse incentives effect job satisfaction, intent to stay, and retention outcomes. This descriptive study used quantitative measures to explore the development of multiple dimensions of nursing self-concept and employment incentive preferences leading to job satisfaction, intent to stay, and retention.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Dr. Dana Bagwell

Fortuna Semere, MPA

2016

Certified Nursing Assistant Organizational Commitment

Abstract: This research study explored the organizational commitment of Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) in nursing home facilities. There are several behavioral and work-related factors that affect CNAs' commitment in long term care facilities. Those factors include age, education, marital status, conflict in the work place, work conditions, and management support (Cho & Johantgen, 2012). Research developed by The National Nursing Assistant Survey (NNAS) conducted in 2004 identified the average turnover rate annually for CNAs in nursing homes at 74.5%. The literature review shows that marital status and work conditions are the most influential factors in whether a CNA is committed to the long term care facility or has intentions of leaving the work place. This research study utilized the 2004 NNAS survey to investigate organizational commitment. The sample used in this analysis consisted of 1,343 of the original 3,017 respondents who were still working at the nursing home at the time of the interview and who provided complete information on the variables of interest. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between organizational commitment and various environmental attributes. Organizational commitment is defined as the likelihood that the CNA would leave the organization in the next year. CNAs who reported a high level of work conflict demonstrated a higher likelihood of leaving the organization, $R^2 = 0.883$, $F(6, 1343) = 1690.20$, $p < .001$.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Ron Eskew and Dr. Carol A. Nowak

Krysten Goins-Singleton

Title of your project:

New York Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative: The Impact of Secure and Non-Secure Detention on Recidivism

Abstract:

Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) was launched by the Annie E. Casey foundation in 1992, to provide opportunity for all youth involved in the juvenile justice system to develop into healthy, productive adults. The Casey Foundation focuses on the juvenile detention component of the juvenile justice system, due to studies showing that youth are often unnecessarily or inappropriately detained, which result in long-lasting negative consequences for both safety and youth development. The purpose of this study is to determine if recidivism rates are higher in secure detention compared to non-secure detention for the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative and to identify if there is a racial disparity within the detention centers. The research was conducted by analyzing data from Western New York Juvenile Detention database. The current study used a sample of 2,624 juveniles that were placed in either a secure or non-secure detention. The study focused on overall recidivism and racial disparity as identified through the Casey Foundation. To test for differences of recidivism rates for male and females, whites, blacks, Hispanics and other juveniles an Independent Samples T-Test and Chi-Square Test was used. Significant finding should show that recidivism rates are higher in secure detention centers compared to non-secure detention and that there are more blacks than whites within the system.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss and John Culhane

Mercedes M. Jordan

Title of your project: EMPLOYMENT, RECIDIVISM AND ITS RELATION TO THE BUFFALO COMMUNITY

Abstract:

The United States (U.S.) has the highest incarceration rate in the world (Glaze 2011), which at yearend 2013 was 1,574,700 persons in state and federal prisons (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), National Prisoner Statistics Program, 2013). The Center for Employment Opportunities utilized a rigorous assignment design to a sampling of 977 offenders assessed at COMPAS risk level 1 of which the participants were randomized to a program group or a control group. It compared outcomes for individuals assigned to the program group, who were given access to CEO's jobs and other services, with outcomes of those assigned to the control group, who were offered basic job search assistance at CEO along with other services in the community. The purpose of this research was to determine the impacts of CEO's transitional employment model on reducing recidivism for individuals released to parole. Secondary research objectives were to analyze some of the previously unexamined variables in the CEO data set and uncover additional factors that were associated with completion of the program. The following research questions were examined: Was there a significant difference in time to incarceration for employed versus unemployed persons? Was there a significant difference in percentage of individuals employed in the program group as compared to the control group following the first three months post release? And, was there a difference in percentage of offenders incarcerated for a technical parole violation from the treatment group as compared to the control group? Descriptive statistics were calculated on the participants' demographic variables (e.g., age) while means and standard deviations were calculated on all measured level data. The research questions were analyzed with the chi-square test of independence. Employment is paramount if offenders are to overcome barriers and reduce recidivism. It is without a doubt that we all have a stake in the successful reintegration of all individuals in our community if we are to affect change.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Dana Bagwell, Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Trisha P. Camp

Title of your project: The Relationship of Socioeconomic Factors on Hospital Readmissions

Abstract:

The Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program (HRRP) was established in 2010 through the Affordable Care Act. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services developed a hospital readmission reduction program also known as HRRP. A readmission is defined as any patient that is admitted to a hospital and then readmitted to any Medicare eligible hospital thirty days post discharge. This program is intended to improve the quality of care given to hospital patients by creating incentives and penalties to reduce the amount of hospital readmissions in the health care system. Readmissions can be very costly for both the Center's for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and the hospitals themselves. The penalties through CMS vary from one to three percent. The higher the percentage the less reimbursement the hospital receives from CMS. The hospitals being penalized are those with higher than average readmission rates. The problem lies in that the hospitals that reside in low socioeconomic areas are more vulnerable to higher readmission penalties. The cause behind these higher readmissions for lower socioeconomic patients is that they have fewer resources after discharge, more cultural challenges, and high illiteracy rates that might contribute to readmission. This study will analyze the relationship between socioeconomic status and 30-day readmissions for all New York State hospitals. The outcomes will expose the unfair circumstances for the hospitals serving the less fortunate populations.

Faculty mentor(s):

Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Josh Walsh-Steines

Gap Analysis of Law Enforcement Training Needs in Erie County, NY

Abstract:

The Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation (ECLEF) is a non-profit organization that seeks to improve law enforcement in Erie County, New York. The foundation recognizes that there are several areas where law enforcement needs more training in Erie County. The foundation sponsored this project so that the most significant training need for law enforcement in Erie County could be identified and arrangements could be made to help improve training in this identified area.

The Researcher began the project by researching law enforcement training throughout the United States. The research was conducted by using a cross-sectional research-design. By using the research on training the research was able to develop a survey that was administered to 20 training officers and 26 regular officers that represented 20 different law enforcement agencies in Erie County, New York. The survey was designed asking questions in the form of a S.W.O.T analysis. These questions asked officers questions about the methods and approaches of their current training, the areas of training in which they feel lacking, and their attitudes towards training. The survey also asked for feedback on how they would improve the training that they received. The surveys were then collected and analyzed. The surveys identified communication skills, specifically communicating with subjects as the area where both training officers and regular officers felt they need more training. Both the training officers and regular officers identified that they feel that they received the most training in firearms. The surveys also identified that the officers felt that the most effective form of training was practical training. The officers also state that they found hands on training and classroom based trainings as also being effective.

The next phase of the project will be to use the survey results to write a grant. The grant will seek to obtain funds on behalf the ECLEF. The ECLEF will then use the funds to conduct trainings of community relations for law enforcement agencies in Erie County.

Faculty mentors:

Martin Floss, Ph.D.

Orsolya Huszár

Title of your project:

The United States of America's Immigration Policies and how They Contribute to Unauthorized Immigration

Abstract:

The United States of America is a nation that was once built of many immigrants who were hoping to find new opportunities and a new home for themselves and their families. For many people this country still symbolizes the hope of a better life, but the attitude toward these people has changed and the opportunity to enter the United States and start a better life here is becoming more and more limited. This research paper analyzes the current immigration system in the US and the legal pathways to permanent residency and/or citizenship. The research examines if the current immigration policies contribute to the issue of the millions of undocumented immigrants residing in the country. A secondary data analysis was conducted comparing the number of visa applicants in the Family-sponsored and Employment-based preferences, to the numerical limits to the annually allocated visas based on the Immigration and Nationality Act. The analysis will also examine the visa applicants by country, showing which countries have the most visa applicants each year. The basis of the analysis is the 2015 annual report of immigrant visa applicants registered at the National Visa Center, the data set from all USCIS applications, and the numerical limits issued by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. The analysis will show that the numerical limits on immigrant visas, and on top of that the per-country limits, create an impossible situation for applicants from certain countries, who by law meet all the requirements for a green card, but because of the strict limits have to wait decades to cross the border. This study points out that a comprehensive immigration reform is long due to solve the issue of about 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States and the other millions waiting outside the border in the hope of reuniting with their families someday.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Sean P. O'Neil

Title of your project: Corruption in New York State Government and its Effect on Voter Turnout and Apathy

Abstract: This project will study the impact of perceived corruption in New York State government has on voter turnout and apathy. This project's hypothesis is simple: After seeing years of corruption of varying degrees (sexual harassment, misappropriation of tax dollars) many voters in New York have decided to stay home on Election Day. In the 2015 election cycle, for example, turnout in Erie County was 24 percent. Both political parties have suffered from the effects of low turnout. In the end, the people have thrown up their hands, assuming both parties are corrupt and not worthy of holding office.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Walter Iwanenko, Dr. Brian Poliner

Nathan Turner

Police Officer Perceptions:

The perception and impact of the use of the body-worn camera (BWC)

Abstract:

High profile police incidents have motivated the conversation of body-worn cameras (BWC) being used by police officers during the course of their duties. BWCs will provide a point of view from the police officer that will allow the review of police officer and citizen conduct during the course of an incident. Police officers have perceptions on the use of body-worn cameras and the impacts they have on their job. It is important to study the relationship of these perceptions of the police officer prior to deployment and then after they are deployed.

The purpose of this study is to assist the planning and implementation of the deployment of BWCs for police officers for the Village of Depew Police Department. The national rhetoric calling for body-worn cameras on police officers from high profile police shootings has created the need for review on the perceptions and impacts these cameras will have on police officers. The research and implementation must be careful to review the effects and challenges regarding job performance, privacy issues, and contractual and financial obligations.

The study will evaluate the perceptions of police officers of the use of BWCs prior to deployment. The 20-question survey will create a baseline of the perceptions and attitudes on the impacts of a BWC will have on the job. The focus of the study will evaluate the police officer's perceptions of whether or not the camera is beneficial to the job, if the use of a BWC will reduce false claims of misconduct, if a BWC will impact the citizen's behavior, and if a BWC will impact an officer's behavior. Other perceptions will also be included on the survey.

Initially, the research will seek 5 voluntary officers to conduct a 12-month long study wearing a BWC for their entire shift. These officers will be matched to a control group of 5 officers having the same demographics such as age, years of experience and rank. The research will be based on a quasi-experimental design that will compare the 2 groups. The data of citizen interaction reports will be gathered and compared at the end of the 12-month period. Officers will be given the same survey as a post test and their results will be evaluated and compared to their initial survey.

Faculty mentors:

Martin Floss, Ph.D. and John Culhane, J.D.

Philip McGrath

Effect of the PTFIT program on sick leave use among agents in the U.S. Border Patrol's Buffalo Sector

Abstract: Physical fitness is important to everyone. However, many adults fail to maintain acceptable levels of fitness (Haskell, Lee, Pate, Powell and Blair 2007 p. 1081). In a 2013 article, Fock and Khoo compare obesity, which is a condition where a person is extremely overweight, to an epidemic (pp. 59-62). To underscore the danger posed by obesity, several sources show that obesity is related to a reduced lifespan. Fock and Khoo (2013) state that obesity reduces the lifespan by an average of 6 to 7 years (p. 59). Lam, Huang and Chiu also state that obesity is associated with increased mortality (2010 p. 277).

Of more immediate concern is that obesity is often associated with sickness absence from work. Moreau et al. (2004) found a significant increase in sick leave taken by obese subjects. In their study, it was found that while only 23% of non-obese men had a high incidence of sickness absence, 32% of obese men did (p. 577). Pronk (2004) et al found in a study of absenteeism, productivity and work satisfaction that severe obesity, as measured by Body Mass Index, was "significantly associated with absenteeism" (pp. 20-23). Bungum, Satterwhite, Jackson and Morrow (2003) also found that high BMI correlated to a higher amount of absence from work among municipal workers in a large southwestern city (p. 460).

For Border Patrol new agent trainees, Physical Fitness is attained through a rigorous Physical Techniques program. Physical Techniques, or PT, forms a significant portion of the United States Border Patrol's Academy training. New agent trainees initially engage in organized PT led by a certified instructor every other day, and then escalate to daily PT sessions. This training culminates in a physical fitness test which must be passed before graduation. Agents who fail this test are removed from training. Despite this initial emphasis on physical fitness, after graduation agents are expected to maintain their own physical fitness program. Until recently, exercise was to be performed by individual agents on their own time. In 2012, the Buffalo Sector of the U.S. Border Patrol was assigned as the pilot program for an on duty physical fitness program. This program allows Agents to exercise on duty, up to three times a week, for up to one hour per session. Agents are given a vast array of acceptable exercise activities, including weight training, swimming, running, martial arts, extreme programs such as Crossfit and P-90X, and a myriad of other exercises that they can participate in under this program. To date, no additional research has been done to determine what, if any, benefit this provides the individual agents or the U.S. Border Patrol.

Faculty mentors:

Faculty Committee: Dr. Martin Floss, Professor John Culhane, Dr. Carol DeNysschen

Vanita Jagroop

Title of your project:

PERCEPTION ON PATERNITY LEAVE IN THE ERIE COUNTY SHERRIFS OFFICE

Abstract:

In the golden age fathers and mothers had specific responsibilities. Traditionally the father was the sole income provider whereas the mother's job was to care for the home and children. Businesses now accommodate both parents by incorporating paternity leave into their employee family policies. My research will examine the Theory of how Person Organization Fit has transformed the workplace and its effects on men taking paternity leave. Person Organization Fit can have many benefits and can help both employers and employees. If a company has family-oriented policies, studies have shown that retention rates are higher, productivity rates are higher, and morale is higher. A male dominated occupation such as law enforcement may not be so eager to adopt these new paternity leave policies. This makes for an interesting issue, whether male dominated occupations will take advantage of paternity leave policies. The purpose of this research is to administer a survey to the Erie County Sheriff's deputies to assess their perception of paternity leave and if managerial support may affect the decision to take paternity leave among the employees. The research design is a descriptive cross-sectional survey. The survey will be sent via email to all participating Erie County sheriff's employees and administered via Survey Monkey. The survey will measure the demographic of each participant as well as their satisfaction with managerial support regarding paternity leave. The study will analyze the survey responses, as well as if perception of managerial support has an impact on the Erie County Sherriff's deputy's perceptions of paternity leave.

Faculty mentor(s): Walter Iwanenko

Abstract

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy as a Method of Reducing Recidivism: A study Measuring the Rate of Recidivism of Federal Probation Parolees upon completion of CBT.

The Western District of New York Probation and Pretrial Services commenced Reentry court which will target high risk offenders. The WDPPS is conducting reentry courts in Buffalo and Rochester, their primary objective is to reduce recidivism through identifying barriers and needs of high risk offenders leaving prison and entering our communities. Participants are linked to services specific to their needs to reduce the likelihood of recidivism and promote reentry back into the community. The reentry court is dedicated to working closely with agencies that offer treatment services, employment, and Cognitive Behavior Life Skills Programs. Cognitive behavioral therapy has emerged as the most effective treatment option in reducing recidivism

Data in this study was collected through the Probation and Pretrial Services Automated Case Tracking System (PACTS). The data set in this study comprised 141 participants in the Buffalo and Rochester office of Federal Probation and Parole who attended Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Data was collected on 16 variables which included, gender, race, recidivism prediction index (RPI), completion, rearrests, etc. This study continues the research begun by prior researchers into the impact of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy by analyzing correlations of completion/graduation from the program and calculating federal parolee's rate of recidivism throughout their supervised release. A quasi-experimental design will be used to test the null hypothesis: Completion of Cognitive Behavior Life Skills Programs has no effect on the rate of recidivism of offenders released under WDNYS's supervision.

Faculty Members

Martin Floss, Ph.D

Jordan Ashley Weixlmann

Title of your project: The Effect of a Single Bout of Exercise on Women Self-Esteem

Abstract:

Self-esteem is essential for a successful and satisfying life and is the central aspect of psychological well-being. Unfortunately, low self-esteem affects roughly 85% of people worldwide. Research indicates a trend that more frequent participation of physical activity leads to improved self-esteem. This study explores whether a single bout of exercise affects self-esteem and which characteristics of the session can affect the results. In addition, it examines whether preexisting health measures affect any observed benefit of exercise on self-esteem. The participants ($N = 89$) were all members of the Buffalo Athletic Club for Women and were between the ages of 18-69 ($M = 47.39$, $SD = 14.33$). Participants were asked if they would like to participate in a research study as they entered the facility. Before exercising, they completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale which they returned to the front desk prior to exercising. Upon completing their exercise, the participants completed the Rosenberg Scale again along with questions regarding their session and demographics. Of the 89 participants, 84 came back to complete the posttest (94.38%). All data were entered into Microsoft Excel. Following reversal of some questions, the responses to the questions were summed to create a total self-esteem score. A paired t -test was conducted to compare pretest and posttest Rosenberg Scale results to determine changes in self-esteem levels. The self-esteem score values before and after exercising were statistically different, $t(83) = -5.84$, $p < .001$. The pretest scores were lower ($M = 33.84$, $SD = 4.41$) than the posttest ($M = 35.31$, $SD = 3.65$). Linear regression was also performed on the demographics and the different aspects of their workouts comparing how they affect the self-esteem scores. It was concluded that no matter the type of training, how they performed it, and who they were, the self-esteem scores could increase.

Faculty mentor(s):

Dr. Dana K. Bagwell and Professor Steve Wischmann

Jaclyn M Strawbrich

Title of your project: Teacher's Knowledge and Perception of Preparedness to Teach Students With ADHD

Abstract: Teacher's Knowledge on Attention Deficit Hyper Activity Disorder (ADHD) and perception of preparedness to handle ADHD in the classroom, is important to research in order to assist in dealing with the many challenges ADHD students and their teachers face on a daily basis. ADHD diagnosis in adolescents is on the rise, the Center for Disease Control reports that 11% of children ages 4 to 17, have an attention disorder (2014). That is an increase of 42% in the past eight years. Research of teacher's knowledge and perception of preparedness on ADHD will assist in identifying contributing factors to poor student performance and dropout rates for students with ADHD. Proper ADHD training for teachers is crucial to the academic success of students with ADHD. This study surveyed 30 teachers from three different school districts. These teachers teach grades 7th thru 12th and deal with ADHD students on a daily basis. The survey asked 39 questions that examined knowledge of ADHD, nine questions that assessed teacher's perception of their preparedness to handle students with ADHD, and 11 short answer questions. The results of the survey will be analyzed to examine differences in knowledge and perception of ADHD.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr Walter Iwanenko, Dr Carol Nowak

Daniel S. Dytchkowskyj

Title of your project:

The King County Sheriff's Office Police Partnerships Model: A Non-Traditional Approach

Abstract:

In New York State, local governments have resisted consolidation efforts to reduce property taxes. Municipalities which provide police services are particularly reluctant to eliminate their police departments and contract with a sheriff's office or the state police; although, it may be less expensive, for various reasons: Loss of community identity, loss of control, residents not knowing their local police officers, police officers not knowing local residents (Matrix Consulting Group, 2011). The King County Sheriff's Office utilizes a unique contract model which provides standalone municipal police departments and economy of scale savings to contracted municipalities. This study introduced the King County contract model to a focus group of former county, town, and village elected officials. Questions to focus group members pertained to their opinions regarding police services consolidation and the King County Sheriff's Office police service contract model, and individual demographic information. The study reviewed the focus group's opinions and attitudes given prior to the informational lecture and after to examine if knowledge of the unique provisions within the King County model changed attitudes of focus group members toward police consolidation.

Faculty mentor(s):

Dr. Dana Bagwell and Dr. Walter Iwanenko

Timothy R. Melber

Title of your project:

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), Examining the Speed of the Pre Disposition Process for Juvenile Offenders in Erie County

Abstract:

Juvenile Crime is a pressing concern for our nation's future. Through the decades, public attitude towards the subject has shifted. During the 1980's and into the 1990's, a "get tough" on juvenile crime attitude swept through the country (Fagan, 2010). In 1993, there were 95,818, juvenile offenders incarcerated, by 2000, numbers peaked to 108,802. Researchers have shown that incarcerating minors as adults, and just a general "get tough" approach, increase recidivism rates (Fagan, 2010). The purpose of a diversion program is to prevent juvenile exposure to the justice system, usually in place of incarceration, to prevent future recidivism. Due to the fact that exposure to adult courts and sentencing at a young age can be very detrimental to a child, diversion is meant to decrease interaction with the system as much as possible. In Erie County, the interaction with the Juvenile Justice System starts with the admissions process. A goal of the JDAI collaborative is to be able to "map" decision making points in a juvenile offender's journey through the system. This research project examines the characteristics of the youthful offenders at the beginning of their journey through the Juvenile Justice System. After splitting offenders into two groups: offenders originating from a City of Buffalo zip code, and offenders from a suburban zip code, comparisons were made about the pre-disposition process. Results of this study suggested that offenders from a Buffalo zip code, spent a longer amount of time in the pre-disposition process, compared to offenders from the suburbs. Implications of this discovery should lead to future research, in order to improve the overall functionality of the pre-disposition phase for juvenile offenders in Erie County.

Faculty mentor(s):

Dr. Martin Floss & John Culhane, J.D

Richard Landahl

Title of your project:

Assessing Officer Stress and Levels of Fitness

Abstract:

Many ideas are thought and spoken about the effects of stress, the effects of exercising and being physically fit, and the results of job performance of police officer from the stress they perceive from work. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between physical activity and stress specifically with police officers. The research design is an observational cross-sectional design. This study recruited participants with access to a computer and internet connection; thereby, providing easy accessibility. The participants were recruited by Supervisor Deputy Daniel Dytchkowskyj of the Erie County Sheriff's Department. The questionnaire that will be taken will be administered through Survey Monkey, an online survey website. Once the data is collected the results will be then taken and separated in different ways. The main purpose of this study is to see if the deputies' level of physical activity has an effect on their level of work stress. Their work stress will be scored using certain questions from the questionnaire. Their exercise will be scored in four different ways: intensity of workout, duration of workout, and frequency of workout. Those three categories will then help to score the fourth category which will be overall physical activity level score. Overall work stress can be seen as a negative side effect in many professions, especially one such as a police officer. This research will hopefully be a step in the direction of using exercise as a tool to deter and buffer this stress from work.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Iwanenko

Valerie A. Nowak

Title of your project:

Increasing Utilization of Mental Health Counseling Services

Abstract:

Mental illness has been a growing problem throughout the years. Often individuals suffering with mental health concerns do not seek help due to the attached stigma, which can not only compound symptoms, but can also interfere with people seeking mental health treatment. The literature revealed a number of interventions to reduce stigma including contact-based education. The purpose of this study was to determine if positive mental health messages prior to the initial treatment session would be effective in increasing retention of individuals for second treatment sessions. In addition, the study explored if there would be a reduction in self-stigma due to a video intervention. This study utilized a quasi-experimental single group pretest-posttest design (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). Mental health clients ($N = 30$) who attended an initial session at a small mental health clinic agreed to participate in the study when they contacted the clinic to schedule their initial appointment. All participants were at least 18 years of age ($M = 41.70$, $SD = 12.86$), comprised 16 women (53.33%) and 14 men (46.67%). Each participant was administered the Self-stigma of Seeking Help Scale (SSOSH) prior to their counseling appointment; they were then instructed to watch the video and were administered the SSOSH post intervention. A paired sample t -test compared the pretest stigma scores to the posttest stigma scores; the difference was not statistically significant, $t(29) = -0.19$, $p = .854$. Stigma scores were relatively low at pretest ($M = 22.17$, $SD = 3.95$) and at posttest ($M = 22.30$, $SD = 4.56$) where a possible minimum score was 10 and maximum score was 50. One possible explanation is that individuals who decided to enter treatment already had low stigma and thus a change in scores would not be expected. Changes in stigma scores might be observed if this study were conducted among the general population.

Faculty mentor(s):

Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Dr. Dana Bagwell

Jonathan L. Adamowich

Title of your project: Comparing Police and Public Perceptions of Use of Force and the Use of Force Continuum

Abstract:

In the wake of recent events in Ferguson, Missouri and in New York City, there have been uprisings and protests in cities across the United States condemning the amount of force used by police officers in day-to-day encounters with citizens, especially minority citizens. This has created conflicts between those who work in law enforcement along with their supporters, and those who are activists against police power and misuse of force. This is a national problem because it divides the country on a very important topic: trust in police. The police hold a very important function in the American society; they are public servants who are sworn to “protect and serve.” A general mistrust within the community encourages more conflicts between law enforcement and the public. This study will examine the perceptions of police use of force and the use of force continuum through the eyes of police officers, as well as from the eyes of the public. There may be certain variables that influence these perceptions by police and by the public such as age, race, income, and so on. These variables will be examined and it will be determined as to whether or not they play a part in their views of police and the use of force.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss

Che M. Harden

Title of your project: Needs Assessment to Address the Issues in the Treatment of Young Adults

Abstract:

Substance Addiction impacts the lives of millions of young adults throughout the United States. Often individuals are mandated to treatment. Treatment usually addresses the external problem, which is the substance addiction; however, additional contributing factors to abusing substances are often not addressed. Mental health disorders, for example, are a contributing factor to substance abuse and addiction. Facilities responsible for treating both mental health disorders and substance addiction often address one or the other, but not both. The goal for treatment is to help the individual return to society and become productive in the family, workplace, and community. This research study will analyze the number of individuals who received substance abuse treatment or mental health treatment over the course of one year. The demographic characteristics (e.g., age) and history of drug use of the individuals in the data set will also be analyzed. All information was provided at initial intake and discharge of individuals. Data was used from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health to analyze clinical diagnoses and treatment provided. The purpose of this study is to identify what the majority of individuals in the data set were treated for and if individuals were treated for both substance addiction and mental health disorders. Failure to address concurrent issues can result in higher rates of relapse and recidivism.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Dana Bagwell, Dr. Carol Nowak

Michael C. Mommertz

Title of your project:

Emotional Intelligence and its Role in Perceived Leadership

Abstract:

Does emotional intelligence (EI) make someone a better leader? Although emotional intelligence is a relatively new area of research, the study of leadership qualities and traits has been around for quite a bit longer. Supervisors ($n = 10$) at a local not-for-profit organization were surveyed regarding their perceived level of emotional intelligence and how it related to their perceived leadership abilities. At the same time, peers and subordinates ($n = 69$) of the same supervisors were given the same assessment on how they would rate the supervisors level of emotional intelligence and perceived leadership ability. Each respondent answered 10 questions in each of three subcategories, for a total of 30 questions on the supervisors perceived leadership abilities. There was also an open dialogue box at the end for free-hand comments. The three subcategories were Effectiveness, Leadership/Excellence, and Communication. Supervisors rated themselves higher than their employees in both Effectiveness and Communication, while employees rated the supervisors higher in Leadership/Excellence than the supervisors rated themselves. The overall assessment by employees of supervisors had a mean of 68.13 with a standard deviation of 25.46, while the supervisors' self-assessment revealed a mean of 70.40 with a standard deviation of 7.07. Analyses of the data will compare responses between the employees' assessment of the supervisor and the supervisors' self-assessment to determine each supervisor's level of emotional intelligence. After the results are known, the organization at that time will be able to cross-reference each supervisor's emotional intelligence ability and perceived leadership skills with their individual job performance and determine if further emotional intelligence training would prove beneficial.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Iwanenko

Alexander Figueroa, MPA
2016

Quality Indicators Predicting Overall Patient Satisfaction, and
Patient's Recommendation to others

Abstract: Patient Satisfaction is one of the core measures that every organization use to assess their level of quality performance. Research on patient satisfaction has been extensive in long term care settings and other areas of health care; whereas, there has been limited research on patient satisfaction in sub-acute care settings. This study comprehensively analyzed what quality indicators predicted overall patient satisfaction and patients recommendation to others in a sub-acute rehabilitation setting using a logistic regression model. Instrument used was My InnerView's Former Patient Satisfaction Survey, broken down into 4 domains: quality of care, quality of life, quality of service and rehabilitation, and discharge. Response options ranged from *Excellent* to *Poor*. The research design was secondary data analysis using previously completed surveys at Elderwood at Hamburg.

Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Walter Iwanenko and Dr. Dana Bagwell

Laura Horner

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative: Geographical Predictors of Readmission to Detention amongst Erie County Juveniles

Abstract:

The Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) was founded on the vision that all youth involved in the Juvenile Justice System have opportunities to develop into healthy and productive adults. The focus is Juvenile Detention because research has shown that youth are often unnecessarily or inappropriately detained at great expense which results in long lasting consequences for both public safety and youth development. In 2012, Erie County was selected as one of the six counties in New York State to participate in a nationally recognized Juvenile Justice System reform project launched in 1992 by the Annie E. Casey foundation. The purpose of this quasi-experimental design is to determine if there is a correlation between the neighborhood the juvenile resides in and their likeliness to be readmitted to detention. This study will test the null hypothesis: there is no difference in readmission to detention rates between juveniles whom reside in the Buffalo City Limits and the juveniles who reside within the suburbs of Buffalo. The experimental group consists of all the juveniles who reside in the city. The control group consists of all the juveniles that reside in the suburbs. The expected result of the study is that more juveniles from the Buffalo City limits are readmitted to detention than juveniles that are from the suburbs of Buffalo. The findings of this study will help the JDAI to accomplish their objective of eliminating inappropriate or unnecessary use of secure detention by determining where youth reside who are more likely to be readmitted to detention.

Faculty Members: Dr. Martin Floss and John Culhane J.D.