



The Perception of Police Officers

AMONG UVU STUDENTS

Group #7

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What's Your Perception?

Law Enforcement has become more than just a profession. It has also become a highly contentious subject, even political.

In our study we wanted to find out what Utah Valley University Students opinions of police officers are.

Are they supported or hated?



The Media's Influence

The public impression of police use of force, as brutality, in modern day policing continues to be a sensitive issue for law enforcement agencies across the nation. Police agencies across the United States deal with accusations of misuse of force on a daily basis. Justified or not, images of police utilizing force continue to strike a nerve in the American public.

However, police use of force incidents are often misconstrued by the community due to the media frenzy utilizing misrepresentation of facts and propaganda techniques. These techniques undermine the authority of the police and diminish the trust that the community has in its police force.

We were curious to know that in our conservative state, county, and school if college educated individuals have the same perception of police officers as what is portrayed in the media. And maybe get a little insight on their opinion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- ▶ It's important to research other studies and the data that they collected.
- ▶ Studying others research can help us understand the population that we want to study.
- ▶ Incidents involving police have been drawing the attention from both researchers and the public, in recent decades. In our study we surveyed Utah Valley University students to find out their perception of police officers. So, other similar research from other states can be informative to compare with our survey results.

LITERATURE REVIEW


- ▶ Brown, Ben, Benedict, WM Reed. (2002) "Perceptions of the police: Past findings, methodological issues, conceptual issues and policy implications", Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management, Vol. 25 Issue: 3, pp.543-580, <https://doi.org/10.1108/136395102104>

In this study, their goal was to expand on an article called, “Citizen attitudes toward the Police” in addition to 100 articles on perceptions of and attitudes toward the police. The researchers review of literature found that only four variables have a consistent affect on attitudes toward police. These variables are age, contact with police, neighborhood, and race. They did acknowledge that there are other variables that are not understood yet.

They found that people viewed the police more negatively in 1995 than in previous years. This is thought to be because of the high-profile cases that year and the criticism of how they were handled. They also found that demographics can be an influence on a person’s perception of police.

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- ▶ Girgenti-Malone, Alicia. Khoder, Carla. Vega, Gabriella. Castillo, Denise. (2016) “College Students’ Perceptions of Police Use of Force: Do Suspects Race and Ethnicity Matter?”, Police Practice and Research: An International Journal, Vol. 18 Issue: 5, pp.492-506, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15614263.2017.1295244>

This studies research examined the relationship between race and ethnicity and perceptions of police use of force among college students. When doing this study they were seeking to answer the following question: “Do suspect race and ethnicity affect college students perceptions of police us of force?” Students were randomly selected to a group to answer a questionnaire. The results of this study show that race and ethnicity do not predict perceptions of police use of force among college students. And, as expected, they found that White Males were significantly more likely to perceive police use of force as justified.

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- ▶ Antrobus, E., Bradford, B., Murphy, K., & Sargeant, E. (2015). **Community norms, procedural justice, and the public's perceptions of police legitimacy**. *Journal Of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 31(2), 151-170. doi:10.1177/1043986214568840
 - ▶ Dunham, R. G., & Alpert, G. P. (1988). **Neighborhood differences in attitudes toward policing: Evidence for a mixed-strategy model of policing in a multi-ethnic setting**. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* (1973), (2). 504. doi: 10.2307/1143473
 - ▶ Hinds, L. (2009). **Public satisfaction with police: The influence of general attitudes and police– citizen encounters**. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, 11, 54–66. doi: 10.1350/ijps.2009.11.1.109
 - ▶ Mbuba, J. M. (2010). **Attitudes toward the police: The significance of race and other factors among college students**. *Journal Of Ethnicity In Criminal Justice*, 8(3), 201-215. doi:10.1080/15377938.2010.502846

RESEARCH DESIGN

We chose to gather our research with a Survey Research Design.

Our Sample Selection is randomly selected through UVU Institutional Research and Information Department.





Survey Format

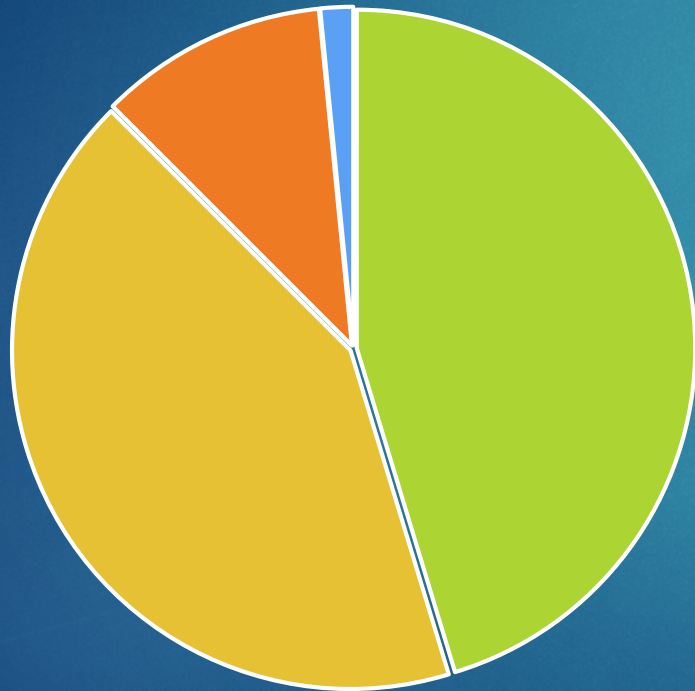
The survey is compiled of 19 questions, which include multiple choice and ranking questions.

All the questions are aimed at assessing if UVU students have a positive or negative perspective of police officers.

Survey Questions & Results

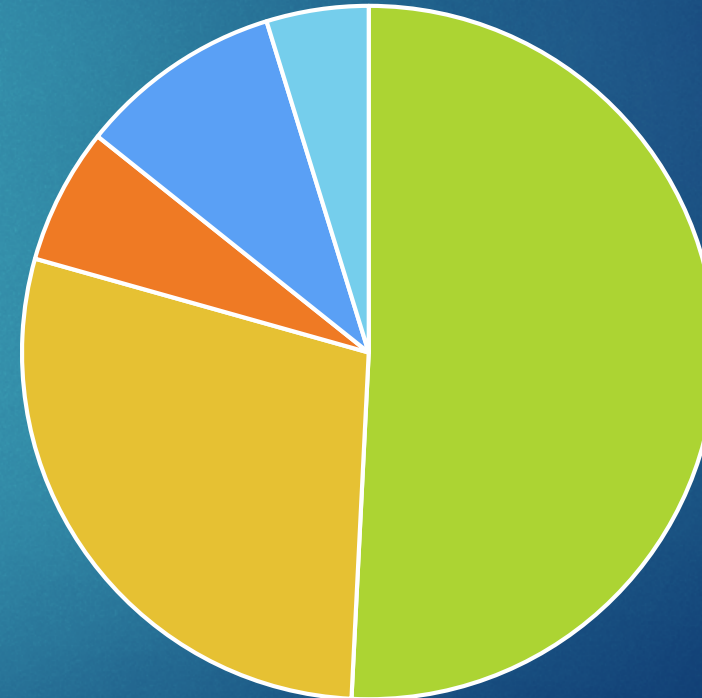
- ▶ Out of 500 Emails being randomly sent out our survey received **64** respondents to the survey.

Gender



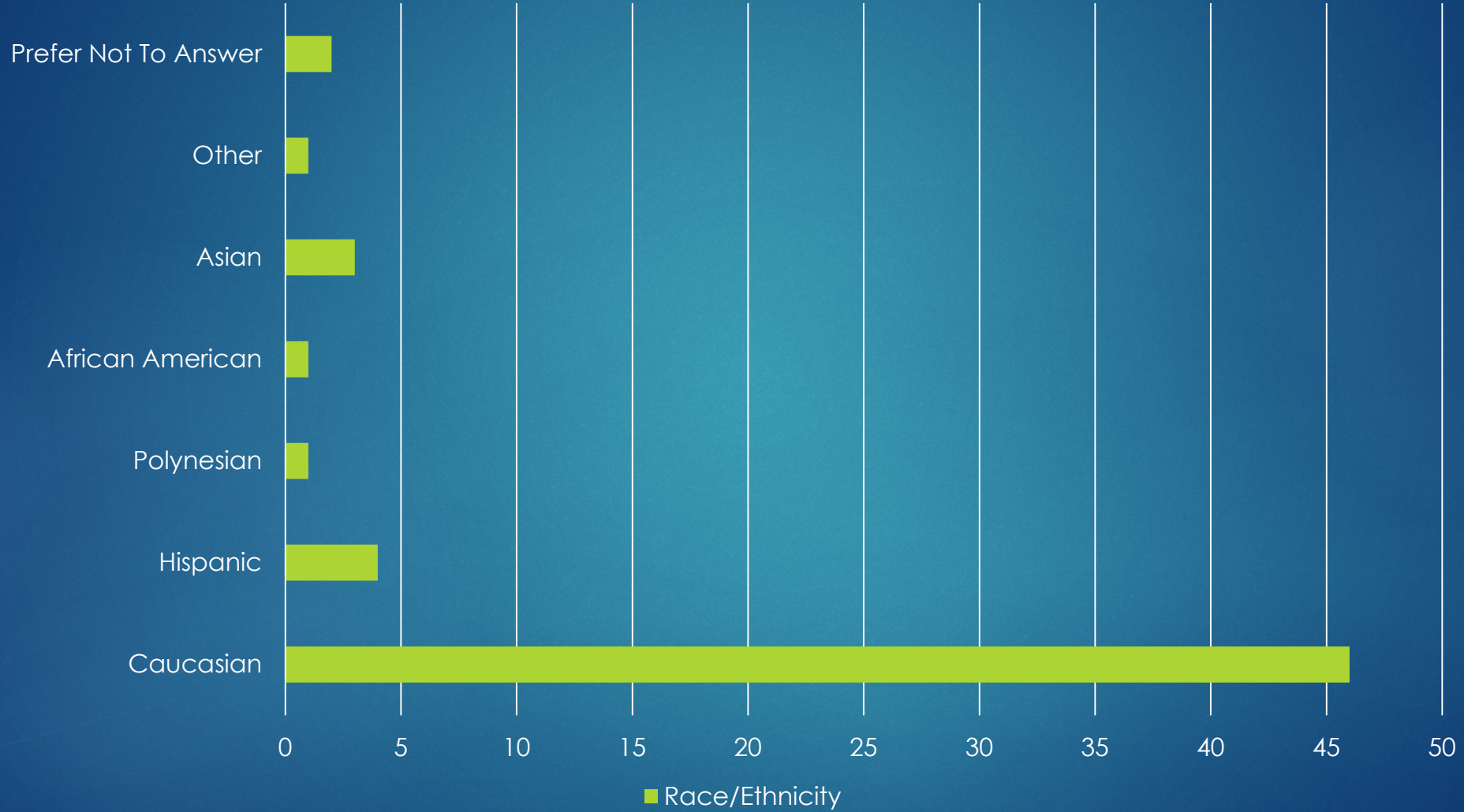
■ Male ■ Female ■ Prefer To Not Respond ■ Other

Age



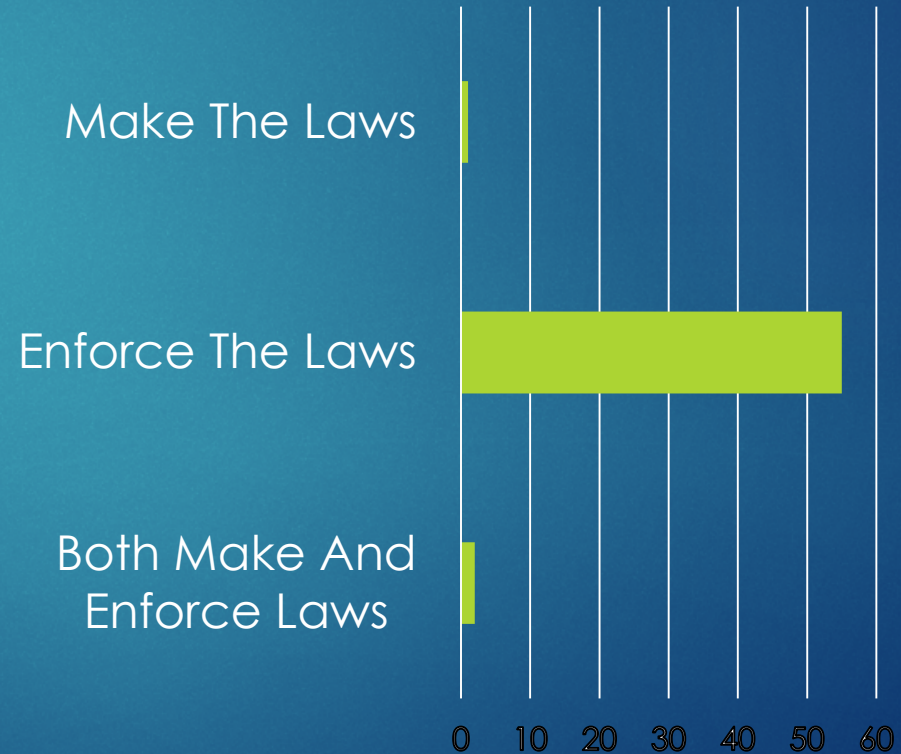
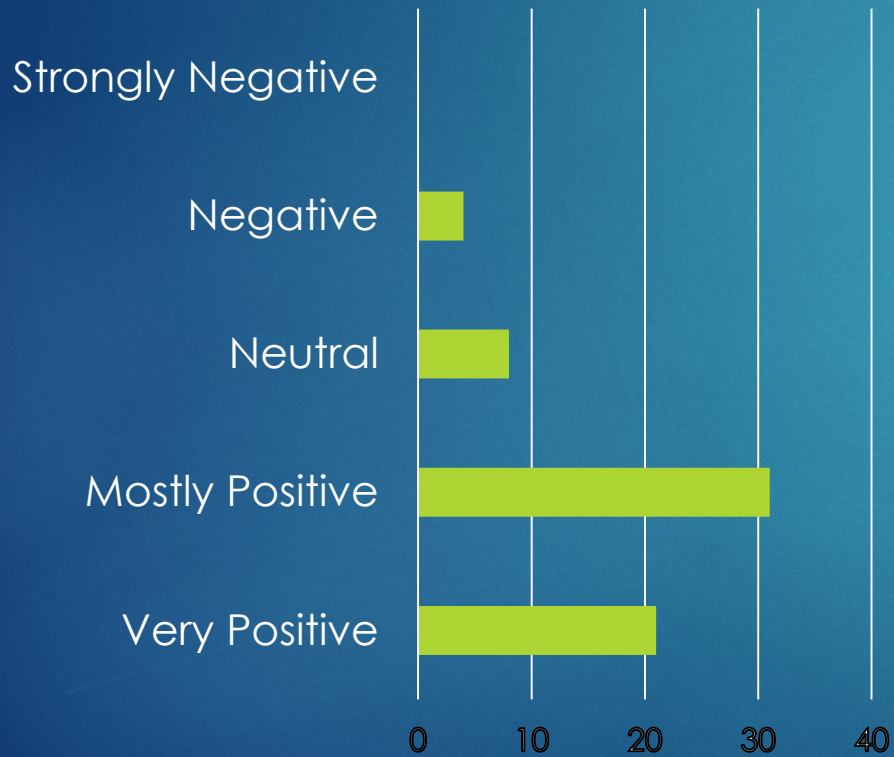
■ 18-22 ■ 23-26 ■ 27-30 ■ 31-34 ■ 35-45

Race/Ethnicity



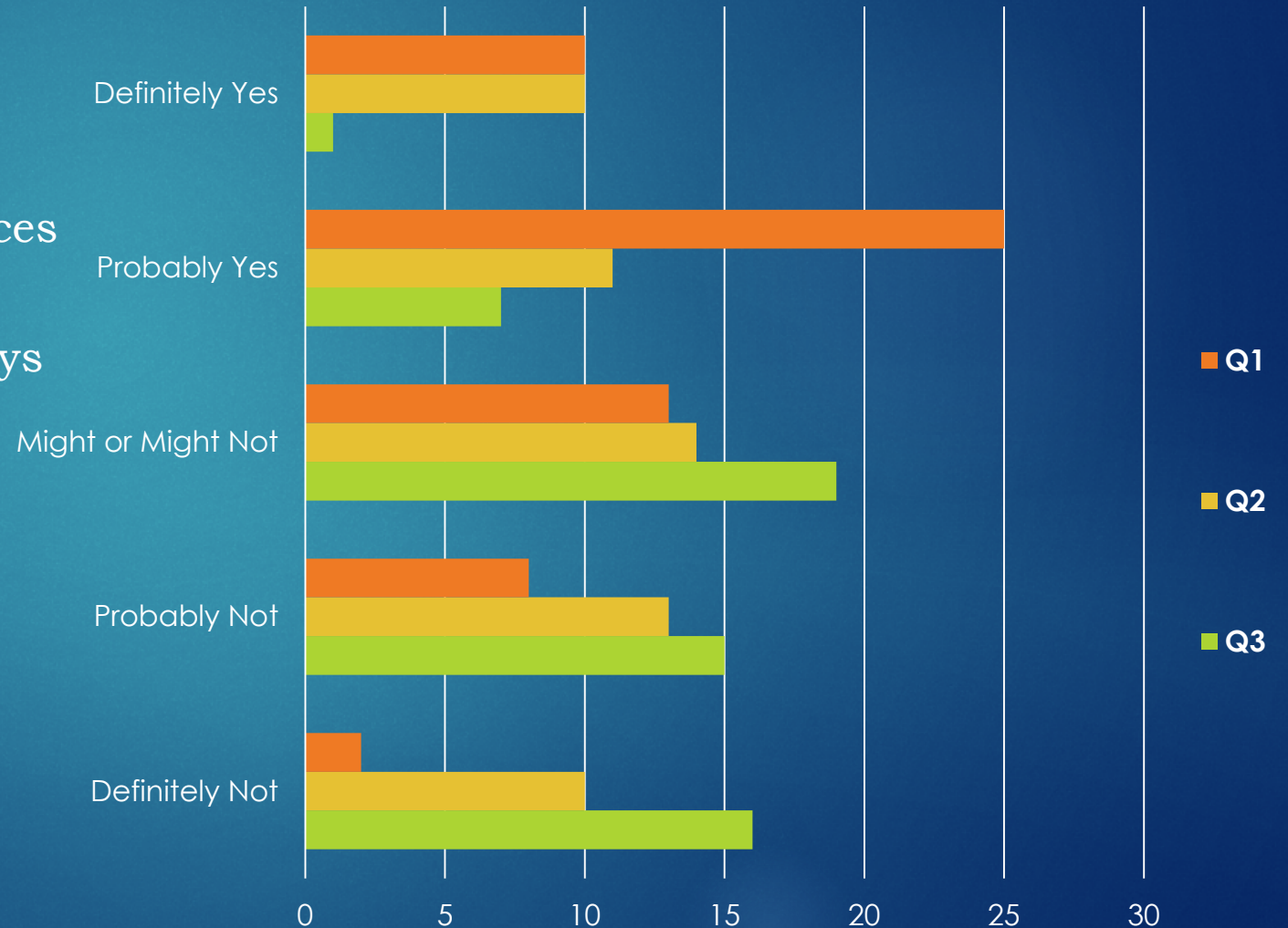
What Is Your View Of Police Officers?

Police Officers...

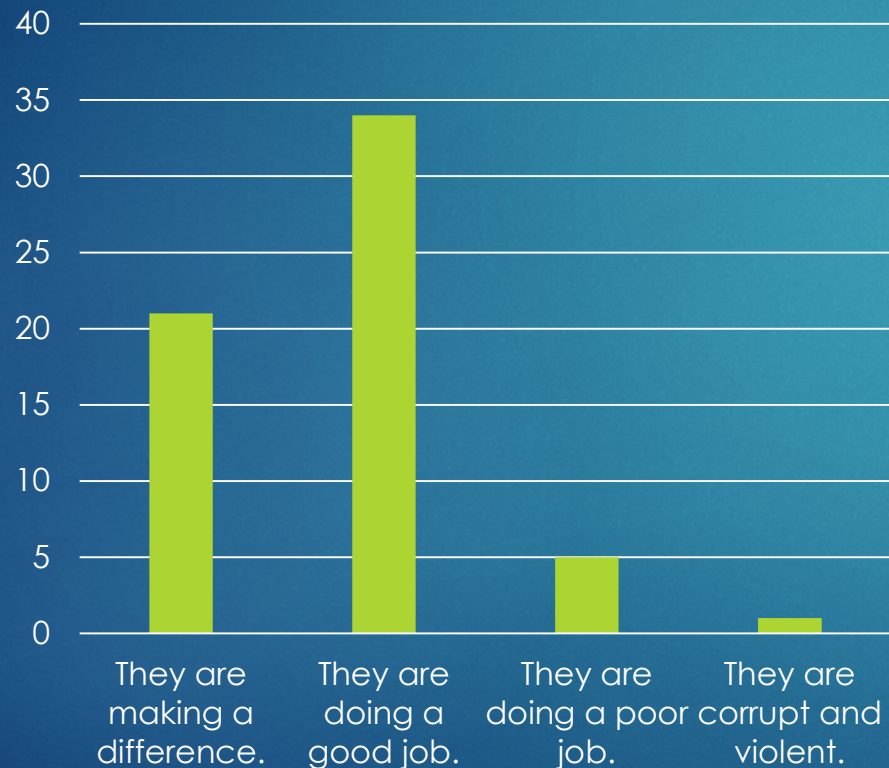


Answer The Following:

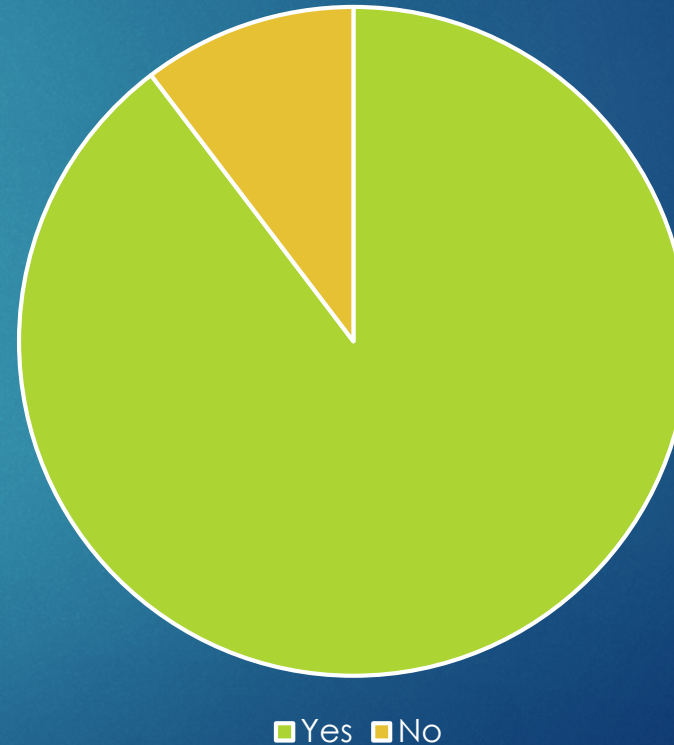
1. Do you feel that most police officers are sufficiently trained?
2. Do you think the media influences the way you view the police?
3. Do you believe the media displays an accurate picture of police?



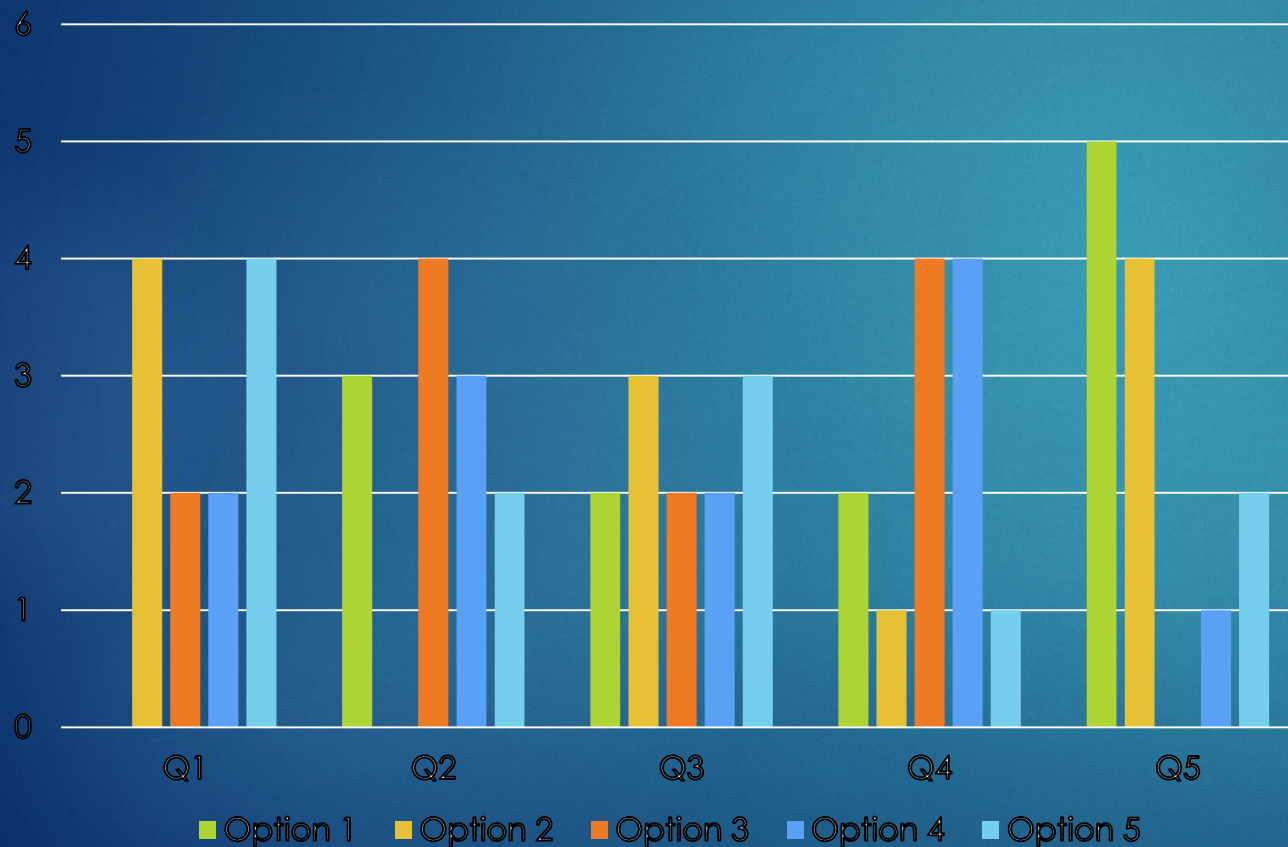
What is your overall view of police officers?



Have you ever come in contact with a police officer?



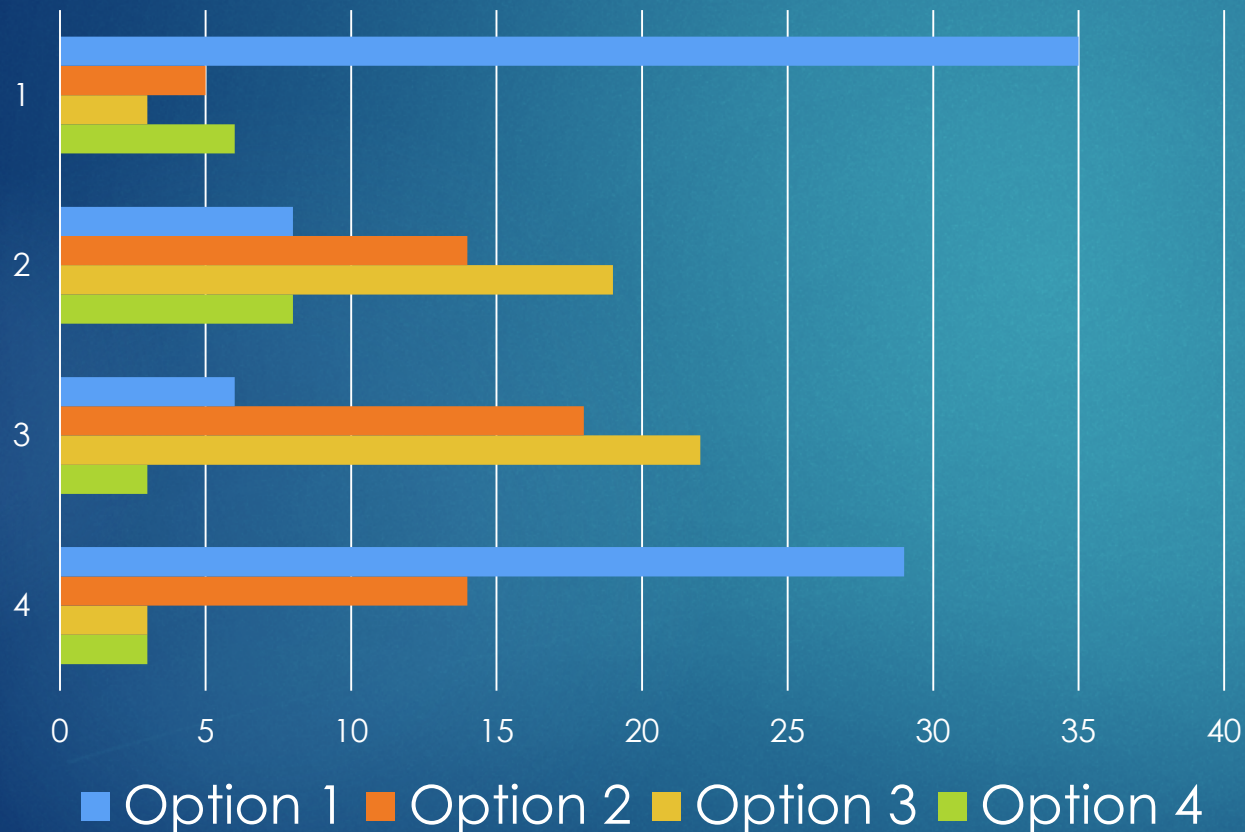
What do you perceive is the most negative aspect of policing? (Rank 1-5, 1 being the most negative)



- 1. Police officers are corrupt.**
- 2. Police officers are racist.**
- 3. Police officers are too aggressive.**
- 4. Police officers are bias.**
- 5. Police officers lack proper training.**

What do you believe is the most positive aspect of policing?

(Rank 1-4, 1 being the most positive)



- 1. Police officers keep society safe.**
- 2. Police officers are kind and helpful.**
- 3. Police officers are professional and unbiased.**
- 4. I have family members/friends who are police officers.**

What influences your perception of officers the most? (Rank 1-5, 1 being the most influential)

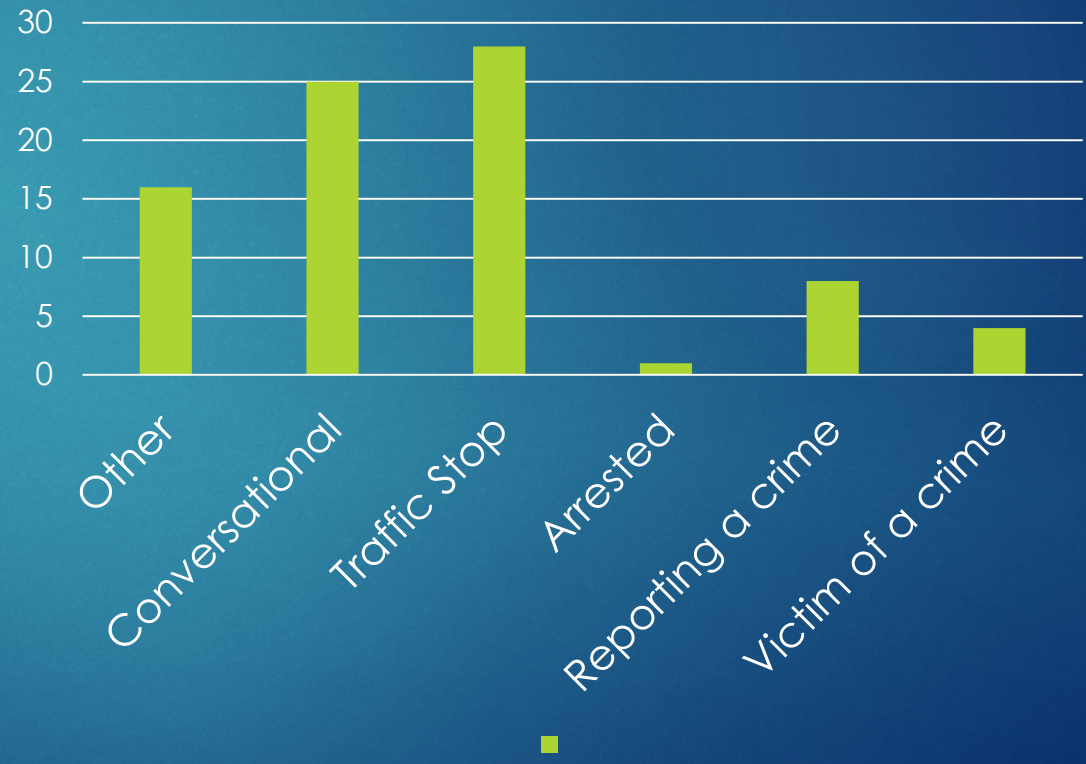
- 1. News
- 2. Family
- 3. Friends
- 4. Entertainment (TV, Music, Video-Games)
- 5. Social Media



How frequently do you come in contact with a police officer?



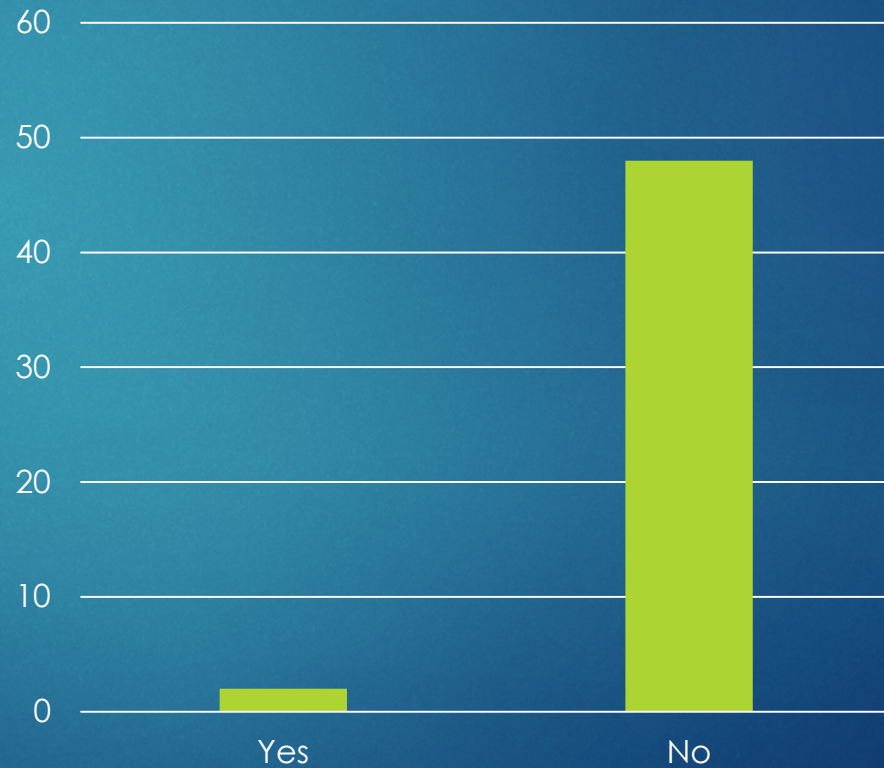
What were the interactions you had with police officers?



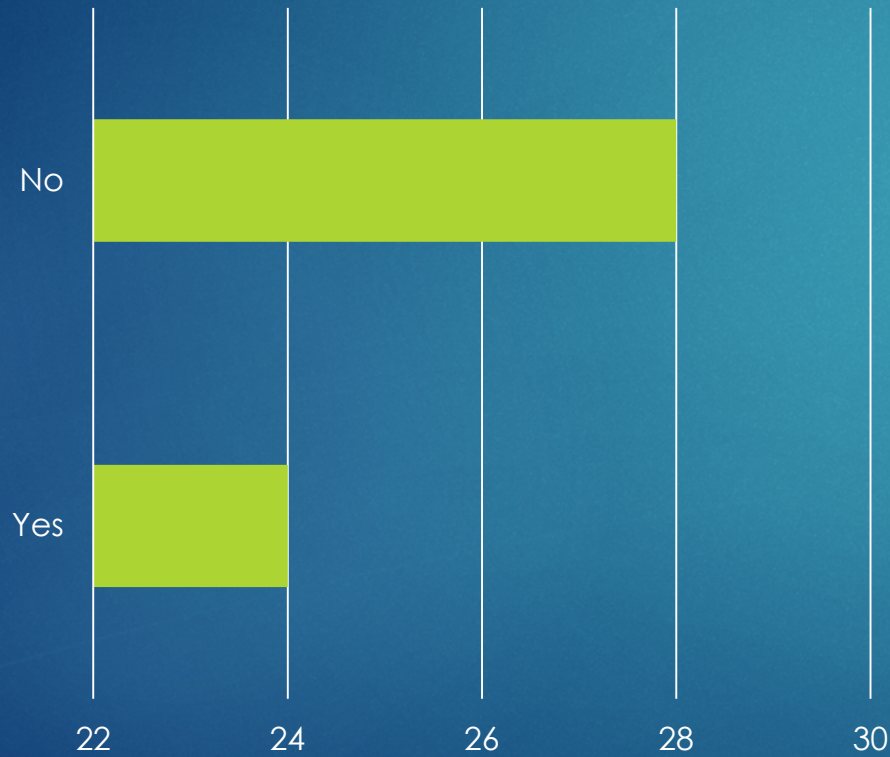
Have you ever been arrested/detained?



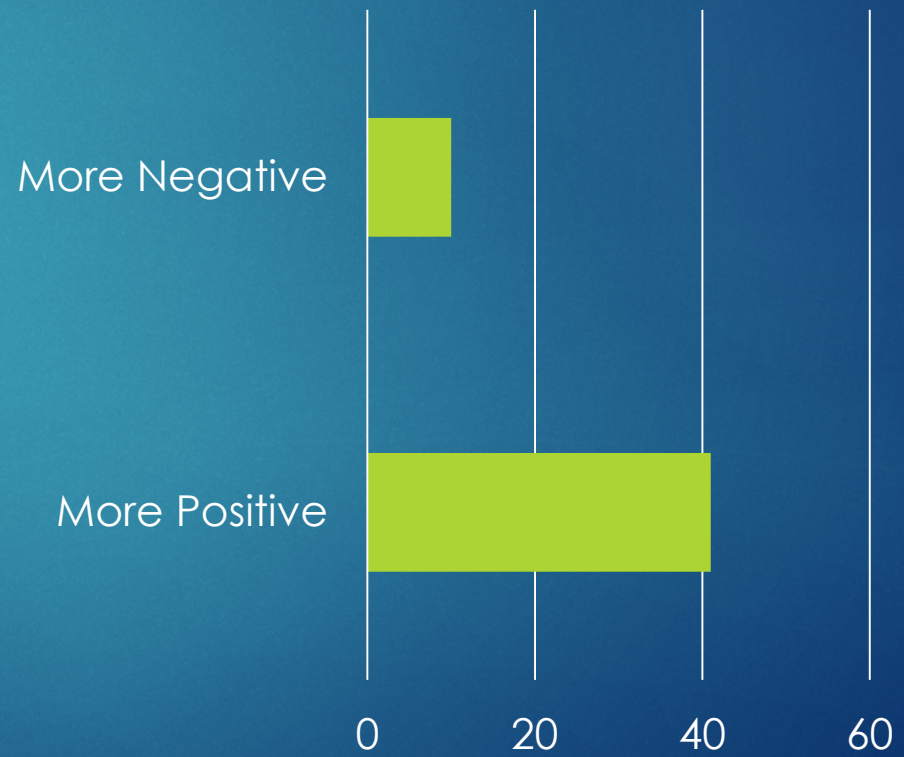
Has being arrested or other interactions changed your perception of officers?



Has your perception of officers changed as you have had interactions with them?



Has your perception become more negative or positive toward officers?



CONCLUSION

- ▶ Our conclusion is that, based on those that responded to our survey, the majority have a positive view of officers and are in support of the local law enforcement.
- ▶ Most UVU students have a positive perspective of law enforcement and how officers currently conduct themselves.