

# Research in criminal justice essay sample

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Criminal justice is one of countless career fields that utilizes research in its everyday functions. Each and every department or organization has its own type of research, as well the focus of that research. From psychological research and criminal analysis, to advances in the way crime scenes and evidence are processed. Research is a very important part of the technological advances and information gains in the world of criminal justice. In criminal justice there are two types of research that are used regularly. The first one is called pure research. Pure research is a systematic study directed towards greater knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena.() Pure research is a very basic form of research and normally does not involve the thought of a specific result. It is often used to gain further knowledge on existing methods or theories. The second type of research used in the criminal justice field is called applied research. Applied research is a form of systematic inquiry involving the practical application of science. (Cherry, 2015)

This form of research is used to discover new information and found new theories and methods that can benefit the respective fields. Research is used to solve crimes and convict criminals on a regular basis. The two most common methods of research that are used to do so are qualitative research and quantitative research. Qualitative research puts a greater focuses on the meaning and characteristics of a given event or set of events. Determining the type of personality that might fit a crime or string of crimes is an example of qualitative research called profiling. Quantitative research is a much less personable type of research. This kind of research collects information using science. Cross referencing a DNA sample, collecting

geological information from trace evidence, and even performing ballistics studies on weapons and ammunition are all prime examples of the quantitative research methods.

Just as important as the information that can potentially be yielded by good research, is the know-how of conducting that research. Targeting the right populations or samples is one important aspect of some types of research. In the criminal justice field, information is constantly changing due to research, so it is also very important to be familiar with the flow of that information and research in order to stay on par with the new data. Keeping on par will also allow you to conduct your own research along the way, adding to the already existing information. Case studies, interviewing, and profiling are the ways that police, criminal justice professionals, and investigators gain the help they need to get the knowledge of why crimes are committed in the first place (Hagan, 2010).

Each of those examples are ways that research contributes to the criminal justice field. Case studies are used to compare similarities and possibly gain new aspects on criminal cases. Profiling is a collection of characteristics that is used to assist law enforcement officers and agents in determining the kind of person is most likely to have committed a crime. Interviewing can be a number of different interactions between any criminal justice professional and a suspect, witness, victim, or person of interest. The purpose of an interview is to acquire knowledge. All are methods of research and all are evidence that research assists the overall process. The data, new processes, and information that is obtained from conducting research, helps and assists

each and every member of the criminal justice system, citizens who become involved with it for whatever reason, and the many commodities within the field. Law makers, judges, attorneys, forensic scientists, officers and agents, and all of the other persons in the criminal justice system have their own respective duties.

Research is a part of every one of those duties. A judge uses research to keep abreast of the law books in order to provide oversight for a fair trial. Attorneys use research to mount a solid defense or present good evidence for a prosecution. Forensic scientists use a more scientific style of research to provide undisputed evidentiary findings. Law enforcement officers have research at their fingertips as they can access the many different systems and databases whenever they need to. They also conduct research in their daily routines. Running a license plate or driver's license is definitely a form of research. Here again we see how research plays a vital role in the criminal justice system. As previously mentioned, it is important for every commodity to conduct research. Equally as important as each individual's research responsibilities, is the interpretation of the collected data. Knowing how to access and interpret the data gained from research can be just as important.

Additionally, knowing how to present the information gained from research is crucial. Both presenting and interpreting the information gained from research can be made much easier by learning the terminology and methods of distributing the data. Distributing the information can mean inputting into a national database, or accurately filing a report. Interpreting the information can involve knowledge of the databases, development of professional

relationships, and familiarization with the language used in criminal justice research. Terms such as theoretical, empirical, nomothetic, idiographic, and inference are all common place in criminal justice research. Knowing what these terms mean can be the difference between accurate gathering and interpretation, and blindly gathering information that one cannot use properly.

Social research is theoretical, meaning that much of it is concerned with developing, exploring, or testing the theories that social researchers have about how the world operates.(eLearn Portal, n. d.) Empirical means that the information obtained is based on perception of the surrounding world, as you perceive it to be. The term nomothetic just means that something pertains to a case or situation in general, nonspecific. Laws that can be applied to an individual are called idiographic. Inference relates to the probabilities in research. Each of these terms are important to understand when conducting, reviewing, or interpreting research. Failure to understand these and the numerous other terms would make any member of the criminal justice profession's job very difficult.

In conclusion, research exists to create new information, develop new methods of criminology, and reinforce or enhance existing knowledge. From the highest officials in criminal justice all the way to the low man or woman on the totem pole, research is a key part of the occupation. Educating oneself with the research process can mean the difference in a job done efficiently and a sloppy version of justice. Research will always be a part of every aspect of life, and very vital part of the criminal justice system.

## References

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