ASSESSING THE AFFECT OF THE CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SAFETY REALIGNMENT ACT (AB 109) ON PUBLIC SAFETY: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership

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ASSESSING THE AFFECT OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY REALIGNMENT ACT (AB 109) ON PUBLIC SAFETY: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

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Date Approved: June 6, 2014
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to determine through statistical analysis any relationship between public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109, and the variables of age and gender for San Diego County. Sixty-eight participants answered two-survey instrument, the Public Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS) and a demographic instrument. The resulting data were obtained from 68 purposively selected citizens in San Diego County. The study findings revealed statistical significant relationship between public perceptions of public safety and age. The study findings did not indicate a significant relationship between public perceptions of public safety and gender. The focus of this study was to contribute to the literature by exploring perceptions of public safety regarding AB 109 from the public perspective, a population not included in previous research.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation especially to my sons George and Michael and my granddaughter Nikky who provided their full support and understanding during this strenuous journey. I made a promise to my children that I would make an effort to make California a better and safer place to live. I also wish to recognize my family and friends that in some way offered their support and encouragement and was always asking, “Can we call you Doctor yet?” I also dedicate this dissertation in memory of my friend Lupe Sangerman who suddenly passed away last year. She was always supporting my efforts to continue with my education. Last, but not least, a special dedication in memory of my father, Dr. Edumndo Dominguez, my inspiration, my hero, and my role model. I promised to you that our family would have another Dr. Dominguez. I love you father and miss you immensely.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank Dr. Gonzales, my doctoral mentor and chair for who remained a constant supporter of my dissertation and providing his encouragement during the most difficult times of the doctoral process. Many times Dr. Gonzales was busy spending time with his family, but he would always find time to answer my questions and concerns. To my committee members Dr. Hall and Dr. Fitzjarrell, thank you for sharing words of wisdom and providing me the tools to complete this journey. I wish to acknowledge Dr. M. Waruingi for all the undivided support he provided during this journey and in helping me accomplish this goal. I appreciate T. Schulte, my former supervisor who provided challenging questions and suggestions to refine my critical thinking skills. I also like to acknowledge doctoral candidate Lynda Majerowicz who was always willing to provide her support and assistance during the most stressful times. Each and every one of you made the journey a less stressful and more rewarding experience. You are all my heroes from my point of view and I admire you all greatly.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

The California Prison System has experienced overcrowding problems since the creation of the prison system in 1858 (McCray, Newhall, & Snyder, 2012). With overcrowding prisons comes expansion of the prison system, high costs of incarceration, recidivism, and threats to public safety. One of the greatest changes influencing the prison population is the sentencing laws created during the 1990s, which includes the Three Strike Law, enacted in California in 1996 (Freedberg, 2004; Turner, 1995).

One of the purposes of the Three Strikes Law is to protect victims of crime and prevent further victimization of the public by ensuring repeat offenders are confined to state prison (Turner, 1995). As a result of the Three Strike Law, a staggering increase of the prison population forced the state to build more prisons (Beck, 2010). Building more prisons provides a sense of public safety because felony rates decreased by 52% since the inception of the Three Strikes Law (Misczynski, 2011). However, the correctional system was so effective in keeping criminals behind bars but the prison population continued to increase, reaching an amount that extended beyond capacity, resulting in prison overcrowding (Smith, 2001).

Three California prisoners filed a lawsuit indicating overcrowding conditions was a violation of the Eighth Amendment that protects American citizens from cruel and unusual punishment (Wood, 2011). The lawsuit involved a motion of inappropriate medical care that culminated in 2011 with imposing an order by a federal court to lower the prison population to 30% within the next 2 years. (Wood, 2011).
Because of prison officials’ inability to reduce the prison population as declared by, and at the urging of the federal court, the governor and the legislature developed a plan to reduce the prison population and at the same time maintain public safety (Misczynski, 2011). In view of the court order, the newly appointed Governor, Jerry Brown, agreed to sign Proposition AB 109 into law and it became The California Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) in April 2011; however, the law was not effective until October, 2011 (Krisberg & Nicholson, 2011). This new law transfers responsibility of low level offenders from the supervision from state parole agencies to the supervision of the county (Krisberg & Nicholson, 2011; Sullivan, 2012). The intent of enacting the law was to reduce prison overcrowding, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety (McCray, Newhall, & Snyder, 2012). However, following the implementation of AB 109, there was a significant increase in crime in different counties in the State of California (Cook, 2012; Valenzuela, 2012).

Lofstrom, Petersilia, and Raphael (2012), to assess the effect of the law on public safety, conducted an evaluation of the California Public Safety Realignment Act. The assessment revealed that counties were working toward rehabilitating felons in the community to reduce recidivism and improve public safety; however, it is unknown whether counties were successful in keeping offenders from committing new crimes (Lofstrom, Petersilia, & Raphael, 2012). Proponents of the law argued that arresting more people and imposing longer sentences are poor proxies for public safety. Conducting more arrests for technical violations, such as drug use and curfew violations, creates a temporary sense of safety for the community. However, proponents of the law argued that there are better alternatives to incarceration that were proven to be more effective in maintaining public safety, such as substance abuse programs or other community-based programs (Dale, 2008;
Smith, 2001; Travis, 2007). Additionally, imposing extended sentences for low-level offenders can be detrimental to their rehabilitative efforts because of limited in-custody resources (Dale, 2008; Smith, 2001; Travis, 2007). Furthermore, criminal justice leaders recommended using evidence-based practices and other community resources in lieu of incarceration to rehabilitate offenders and improve public safety (Michael, 2010; Petersilia, 2010; Wolfgruber, 2010).

Despite the intent of the law to improve public safety, AB 109 has been a continuing discourse between advocates of public safety and opponents of the law. The Crime Victims Action Alliance (CVAA) made several attempts to stop the law from being implemented because of concerns with the effect on public safety (Crime Victims Action Alliance, March 2013). Additionally, Advocates for Public Safety (APS), a special interest group that advocates in favor of peace officers rights and victims of crime, are concentrating efforts to repeal the law (Advocates for Public Safety, 2012). Diverse opinions are characteristic of citizens in California, indicated by a recent poll of voter’s concerns regarding this law (DiCamillo & Field, 2011). The poll revealed that 51% of the participants were in favor of transferring low-risk offenders from state prison to the jurisdiction of the counties, and manage the offender’s supervision under community-based programs. Thirty-seven percent of the voters indicated transferring low- risk offenders to local officials is a bad strategy because officials are just simply transferring the state problem at the local level (DiCamillo & Field, 2011). Voters believed AB 109 jeopardized public safety because the law does not guarantee community resources properly to address the offender’s barriers to reintegrate offenders into the community successfully (DiCamillo & Field, 2011).
Background of the Problem

Prisoners and state officials litigated for years that overcrowding in prisons was depriving prisoners of constitutional rights to adequate health care (CDCR, 2012). Governor Schwarzenegger assigned Corrections Secretary Roderick Hickman to develop and direct a plan to create alternatives to prison for parole violators and low-risk offenders in response to prison overcrowding. The strategic plan was called The New Parole Model (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). Governor Schwarzenegger also designated a Corrections Independent Review Panel (IRP), at the direction of Former Governor Deukmejian to ensure the new plan was implemented effectively. The primary purpose of creating the IRP was to assess the correction's department and introduce new strategies to improve prison overcrowding, reduce recidivism, and promote public safety (Dale, 2008; Little Hoover Commission, 2007). One aspect of the New Parole Model was to create a community-based program, as an alternative sanction to address the offender’s parole violations in the community and to gradually reduce the prison population to meet the requirements of Supreme Court orders. Despite correctional staff efforts to implement the new parole model, the plan was largely unsuccessful (Little Hoover Commission, 2007).

In 2006, a three-judge panel was created as a result of California court case *Plata v. Schwarzenegger*, indicating that overcrowding conditions in California prisons resulted in unconstitutional medical care (CDCR fact sheet, 2012; Owen & Mobley, 2012). Governor Schwarzenegger and the Legislature had the responsibility and authority to fix the correctional system (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). The Little Hoover Commission, along with members of the Legislature, proposed to California Governor Schwarzenegger a new plan to reorganize the California correctional system and re-structure the parole system.
to improve the rehabilitative efforts in the community for low-level offenders, to reduce recidivism and to improve public safety (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). Petersilia (2011) concluded that the sentencing system also needs to re-evaluate its current practices to develop guidelines to be aligned with the new post-release program. Researchers (Edward, 2007; Petersilia, 2011; Solomon, 2006) suggested that imposing longer sentences for serious offenders and developing community-based sanctions for low-level offenders that posed a lesser risk in the community were necessary. Subsequently, the Adult Correctional Agency name was changed to California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). A new correctional system was developed to initiate rehabilitative efforts while prisoners were incarcerated, providing a means for offenders to make a smooth transition into community-based treatment programs. Although the revision of the plan was espoused by the Senate, members of the assembly did not act on the proposal. Thus, the problem of prison overcrowding continued to grow in California (Corrections Independent Review Panel, 2004; Wolff, 2008).

In 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger determined that the California prison system necessitated more drastic measures to reduce the prison population. As a result, the Prison system initiated an immediate transfer of inmates to other states (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). In December 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger revealed a new prison reform plan that incorporated changes recommended by the Independent Review Panel (IRP). Changes included implementing prior reform recommendations, improving public safety by using community-based resources to assist offenders with reintegration into the community, and trying offenders for new crimes. Additional changes included shifting post-release supervision responsibility to the community, county probation office, or the sheriff’s
department, and making changes to the sentencing commission to create policies to enhance public safety (Deitch, 2012; Hoffman, 2010; Little Hoover Commission, 2007).

In 2006, CDCR created the Expert Panel to review current policies and make recommendations on recidivism reduction to improve public safety (Edward, 2007). Recidivism, according to Petersilia (2011) is referred as the number of instances an offender is returned to custody for violating his/her parole supervision rules. The preceding Judge imposes a 3-year or 5-year term on parole supervision following the prison sentence. If the offender violates conditions of parole, parole is revoked and the offender returns to prison for a time established by the Parole Board. The number of occurrences an offender returns to prison on a parole violation refers to recidivism (CDCR Adult Institutions Outcome Report, 2011). Public safety is achieved when offenders are properly supervised in the community and positive efforts to rehabilitate the offenders are in place (Gomez, 2008; Smith, 2001). Given the evidence, the Expert Panel summarized that despite the efforts to reduce prison overcrowding, the problem continues to grow.

There are some factors preventing efforts to reduce prison overcrowding (Edward, 2007; Petersilia, 2011; Solomon, 2006). Edward (2007) posited, “something is preventing the programs from achieving the intended effects or something is wrong with the programs themselves” (p. 12). The Expert Panel, according to Edward (2007), made the decision to use evidence that came from research and experience prior to the recommendations. Edward (2007) noted the Expert Panel introduced, for the first time, the California Logic Model with recommendations from evidence-based practices that involved a change in offender rehabilitation programs and recommendations for staff training to appropriately interact with offenders prior to reintegration into society. The California Logic Model recommendations
suggested that all risks and needs of offenders must be assessed. As a result of the Expert Panel recommendations, the California Logic Model was implemented by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to monitor the effectiveness of parole supervision, its effectiveness in reducing recidivism, and increasing public safety. Despite the recommendations suggested by the California Logic Model, the recidivism rate continues to increase (Edward, 2007; Wikoff, Donald, & Morani, 2012).

On October 13, 2009, the Parole Reform Task Force was created with the purpose of revising existing practices with those proven to provide positive results in rehabilitating offenders (Braithwaite & Turner, 2011). The Parole Reform Task Force consisted of 19 staff members from four parole regions in California, including Parole Agent’s Association members. Braithwaite and Turner (2011) reported that the corrections system, evidence-based practices from internal and external stakeholders, and research from previous parole models resulted in the California Parole Supervision and Reintegration Model (CPSRM). The CPSRM program was developed to incorporate a paradigm shift in offender supervision by proving the resources necessary to reintegrate offenders in the community in a positive environment rather than return them to prison for a parole violation (Turner, Braithwaite, Tatar, Omori, & Kearney 2011). The creators of the CPSRM stated to reduce recidivism and increase public safety, a shift in offender supervision is necessary. Kleiman and Hawken (2008) contended that incarcerating offenders for parole violations increased negative behavior and created a greater risk in the community by compromising public safety.

Braithwaite and Turner (2011) clarified the point that the most significant changes of the CPSRM concentrated on supervising offenders that posed a threat to public safety, and the discharge of parole supervision low-level offenders. Parole agent’s caseloads were
reduced from the traditional caseload of 70 offenders per parole agent to 53 offenders per agent. This reduction in numbers was intended to enable staff to provide resources offenders needed on the basis of risk and criminogenic needs (Jalbert, Rhodes, Flygare, & Kane, 2010). Training staff was also addressed in the CPSRM model that included using motivational interviewing techniques to facilitate offender willingness to change his or her behavior (Braithwaite & Turner, 2011). The CPSRM model suggested a more personalized approach, including a paradigm shift that would change from a surveillance-based approach to a more balanced supervision-oriented approach that focused on intensive interaction by parole agents in the lives of offenders (Braithwaite & Turner, 2011).

In 2006, The United States Supreme Court convened a three-judge panel to oversee the prison overcrowding concerning medical care. As a result, the United States Supreme Court ordered the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to “reduce the prison population to 137.5% capacity by May 2013” (Freedman & Menchin, 2012, p. 6; Krisberg & Nicholson, 2011). The Prison Litigation Reform Act affirmed that overcrowded California prisons cannot offer proper medical health care for ill inmates and, therefore, do not meet constitutional standards (DiCamillo & Field, 2011; Owen & Mobley, 2012).

In January 2012, the United States Supreme Court tried the case *Plata vs. Schwarzenegger* and upheld that prison overcrowding was a contributor factor to inappropriate medical care in the California prison system (Ryan, 2007; Taylor, 2011). In response to the Supreme Court order and the California Departmental Corrections inability to meet the court order of reducing overcrowding, Governor Jerry Brown approved Proposition AB 109 to become law as the California Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) effective
April 4, 2011 (Owen & Mobley, 2012; Taylor, 2011). AB 109 was created with the intent to effectively transfer supervision responsibility of “non-violent, non-serious, non-sex offenders” (Misczynski, 2011, p. 13) from the state supervision to the responsibilities of the counties (Petersilia, 2011). The provisions of the realignment law were mainly designed to affect felony sentencing, pretrial, and post-conviction credits, post release supervision, and parole revocations (Petersilia, 2011; Taylor, 2011). On October 1, 2011, AB 109 law became effective. There are 58 counties in the state of California, and every county receives funding, based on the need of each county’s offender population. Additionally, each county is responsible for creating a program to implement AB 109 effectively (Taylor, 2011). Under AB 109, thousands of offenders on parole supervision are discharged within 6-months of the inception of the law. Non-serious offenders currently serving prison sentences are released to County Post Release Supervision (CPRS) (Males, 2012). Only sex offenders, serious offenders, and violent offenders are under supervision of state parole agents by the provisions of AB 109. Rushford (2012) indicated that AB 109 has accomplished one of its goals to reduce the prison population by 40% but there are flaws in the law that compromise public safety. While the prison system continues to reduce the prison population, AB 109 is a recurring concern among opponents of the law and citizens of California. An evaluation of the public perceptions about AB 109 will reveal if the law is indeed compromising public safety.

**Statement of the Problem**

The general problem is that several researchers found that public safety might be a serious concern for California citizens following the implementation of AB 109 (Graves, 2012; Krisberg, 2011; Petersilia, 2012; Silbert, 2012). AB 109 essentially transfers oversight
responsibility of low-level offenders to county jurisdictions. Under the provision of AB 109, the offender’s prior criminal history is disregarded, and offenders are considered high or low-risk solely based on the most recent crime committed (McCray et al., 2012). Low-level offenders are those considered to have “non-violent, non-sexual, and non-serious crimes” that are generally known as “non, non, non” (also known as the 3 nons) (Misczynski, 2011, p. 13). Despite the provision’s definition of low-level offender, offenders classified under AB 109 criteria are usually already a high risk to public safety and highly prone for recidivism (Pew Center on the States, 2011). A deeper examination of offenders’ criminal backgrounds deemed low-level under AB 109 revealed an average of six to eight prior felony convictions (Walsh, 2012; Wikoff et al., 2012). The researchers indicated that offenders with extensive criminal histories are less successful in reintegrating into society; therefore, increasing the likelihood of reoffending and compromising public safety (Krisberg & Marchionna, 2013; Lee, 2009; Owen & Mobley, 2012).

The specific problem is the perception of California citizens have about public safety following the implementation of the California Public Safety Realignment Act, AB 109. Public perception about public safety following the implementation of AB 109 can be the result of a formed public image about political leaders, media reports, special interest groups (victim’s rights and advocates of public safety), and the government (Brown, 2012; Owen & Mobley, 2012; Rushford, 2012). The specific problem is in need of further research because the citizens of California were not afforded an opportunity to voice their opinion about the law. Although AB 109 was intended to reduce prison overcrowding, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety (McCray et al., 2012), it is unclear whether the citizens of California enjoy a sense of safety with this law in place. There is extensive research
focusing on how the law is affecting the criminal justice system; the courts, the jails, police, and community supervision, but a gap in the literature exists pertaining how the public perceives public safety following the implementation of AB 109 (Owen & Mobley, 2012).

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) contended that in deciding the research problem there must be a topic that provides recommended practices to the research community. Furthermore, the problem researched needs to be a phenomenon that needs an explanation or there is a need to address a new topic of inquiry. This study focused on a topic in need of further investigation because no literature was available related to the public perceptions regarding AB 109 and public safety, a population not included in prior literature (Creswell, 2009). The results of this study can provide valuable information to educate and inform researchers, educators, and law enforcement leaders concerning how safe California citizens feel with the implementation of AB 109. A quantitative correlational design was used to obtain the necessary data to determine whether there is a relationship between the citizen’s perceptions of public safety, age, and gender in San Diego County.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between public perceptions of public safety, age, and gender for San Diego residents currently under the implementation of AB 109. This study used a quantitative correlational, cross-sectional research design. Quantitative methodology provided the parameters to describe the correlation between variables without establishing causation. This type of inquiry requires a numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of the population under study (Creswell, 2009).
In determining a design for a research study, it is imperative to identify the specific goal of the research. The type of inquiry in this study was to examine any relationship among variables without establishing causation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Research requires a comprehensive approach and a holistic understanding of the research process. This type of research design measured participants at a single point in time (cross-sectional) to establish only a relationship between the variables. Through quantitative research, numeric information of a specific population can be identified (Creswell, 2010). This type of research design enables a researcher statistically to test variables without manipulation or randomly assigning participants to a group (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2010). The independent variables were gender (female, male), and age (18 years and older), variables that were not manipulated during the study and determined if a significant relationship exist between the variables. The potential relationship of public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender (female, male,) and age group (18 years and older) provided the appropriate statistical data that would not have been accomplished through a qualitative study alone. The purpose of selecting the variables of age and gender was to determine if these variables were statistically related to perceptions of public safety.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it is the first effort to understand how citizens in California perceive public safety by age and gender after the implementation of AB 109. This study design included providing an appropriate instrument to obtain the necessary data to address the research question. A pilot study was also implemented to test and refine the survey questions for this study. This study is also significant because the intent of a quantitative approach is to collect numerical data where the researcher remains objective.
during the study and with greater possibilities to eliminate the influence on the participants (Neuman, 2006). The following research questions guided this research:

RQ1: What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age (18 years and older)?

RQ2: What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender (female or male)?

RQ3: What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the linear combination of age and gender?

The purpose of the research questions is to examine the relationship among variables and make generalizations based on the expected outcome (Creswell, 2009). The phenomenon under study is the citizen’s perceptions of public safety following the implementation of AB 109, a newly introduced law in California to reduce prison overcrowding, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety.

The California Realignment Act, AB 109, was signed into law April 2011, with an effective date of October 2011. After the implementation of AB 109, state agencies and professional organizations became concerned about whether AB 109 eased the prison population, released low-level offenders into the jurisdiction of counties, and improved the safety of citizens and communities (Owen & Mobley, 2012). There are 58 counties in California and every county was responsible for developing a plan to implement AB 109 based on the offender population and the resources available in the community. Owen and Mobley (2012) explained that some counties were experiencing a high incidence of crime, while other counties were reporting no significant changes in crime after the implementation of AB 109. However, advocates of public safety indicated that AB 109 was a deceiving
measure to save state money rather than improve public safety (Vitiello, 2012). Previous researchers have demonstrated the effects of AB 109 on law enforcement agencies, the court system, and trends in crime rate (McCray et al., 2012; Freedman & Menchin, 2012; Scott, 2012; Stewart, 2012). However, there is no empirical research pertaining to citizen’s perceptions about public safety following the implementation of AB 109 (Owen & Mobley, 2012).

**Significance to Leadership and Literature**

The purpose of this study was to obtain a better understanding of the public perceptions toward the implementation of AB 109 and its implications on public safety by age and gender in San Diego County. Owen and Mobley (2012) posited that AB 109 was a law created by legislators and passed in a budget committee meeting and not in a public safety committee meeting. The State of California has made progress in reducing the prison population with AB 109 in place and as mandated by the federal court but it is unknown from the public perspective if AB 109 compromises public safety (Males, 2012). Nevertheless, Rushford (2012) reported several counties were experiencing an increase in the crime rate after the implementation of AB 109. Petersilia and Spencer (2013) commented that an increase or decrease of crime across California after the implementation of AB 109 could be the result of several factors including allocation of money for each county to enforce and implement the law, law enforcement personnel available to prevent and detect crime, and community resources available to rehabilitate offenders. Lofstrom et al. (2012) posited that a close monitoring of each county’s strategies to implement AB 109 in California is deemed necessary to determine what strategies are working and what areas need improvement to guarantee the safety of the communities.
Whether the causes of increased crime are or are not associated with AB 109, it is possible that releasing offenders in the community without proper intervention and supervision can increase the victimization and jeopardize the safety of the community.

However, the implementation of AB 109 has been a work in progress since its inception and many counties are still struggling with other factors affecting crime rates such as economy, immigration, and unemployment. A closer examination of each county in California would be necessary to determine what strategies are actually working in improving public safety and what factors are making other communities less safe. Additionally, more studies are necessary to compare crime rates before and after AB 109 to decipher if AB is a contributing factor in crime rates across California.

An examination of public perception of public safety following the implementation of AB 109 can serve as a starting point in determining if AB 109 is compromising the safety of the communities. The results of this study revealed insight on how the public perceives the implementation of the law and its effect on public safety. The findings can also assist criminal justice leaders with information to base corrective actions and revise expectations regarding how and what law enforcement agencies need to do to improve community safety. Results of the study could potentially inform criminal justice leaders how to make changes, or improve current practices to improve public safety as suggested by the results of the study.

**Nature of the Study**

This study used a quantitative correlational, cross sectional design. A quantitative design is structured to describe the correlation between variables without establishing causation. The purpose of selecting the variables of age and gender was to determine if these variables were statistically related to perceptions of public safety.
Correlational designs enable a researcher to determine the relationship between variables and to make statistical generalizations about the perceptions of the population (Neuman, 2006). This type of research design measures participants at a single point in time (cross-sectional) to establish a relationship between the variables. Through quantitative research, a researcher has the ability to focus on numeric information and trends in perceptions of a specific population (Creswell, 2010). Variables were examined to determine the actual nature of a relationship and to test the hypothesis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Furthermore, the researcher collected and analyzed data from a sample population to make generalizations representing the general population under study.

Quantitative researchers desire to examine variables and make inferences from the general population. A quantitative approach uses numbers and data that are represented in numerical values to determine the actual nature of the relationship between variables. In contrast, qualitative researchers desire to explore participant’s perceptions and lived experiences of the phenomenon under study. A quantitative approach provides researchers with numerical data to demonstrate descriptions, analysis of the population’s perceptions or beliefs. A quantitative research method was therefore the most appropriate method to construct statistical data and describe statistical significance of the findings (Neuman, 2006).

**Data collection and analysis.** Two survey instruments were used to collect data and assist with the analysis of public perceptions of public safety following the implementation of AB 109 in San Diego County. Individuals who reside in San Diego, California, over the age of 18, and participants not currently employed as sworn peace officers were selected for this study. This specific sample was chosen because San Diego is one of the 58 counties that are implementing AB 109 (CDCR, 2012). Additionally, the sample population needed to be
over the age of 18 to ensure the participants met the age eligibility requirement had AB 109 been available on the ballot for the citizens of California to decide. Sworn Peace officers were excluded from participating in this study because police officers and other law enforcement officers are currently enforcing AB 109 and their participation in this study could have been biased.

A sample population of 68 residents of San Diego was purposively selected. The sample size was determined using a statistical power analysis technique. Power analysis assists the researcher to determine the sample size required to get a significant difference among groups if a difference exists (Cohen, 1988). The purpose of selecting this sampling technique was to ensure the target population stays within the inclusion criteria. The sample population consisted of residents of San Diego County who are familiar with AB 109. The researcher contacted several organizations and businesses within San Diego County to determine if they were willing to participate in the study and if they were familiar with AB 109. Five organizations agreed to participate and acknowledged familiarity with AB 109. All five organizations provided a signed permission to use the premises and the study commenced once IRB approval was confirmed (Appendices F, G, H, I, and J). A formal invitation was presented to participate in the study, and the informed consent was hand-delivered to people who were willing to participate in the study. Once a participant agreed to the terms and conditions of the informed consent form, the survey instrument was provided to the participant. The data collection took place at five different organizations within San Diego County. The survey consisted of 10 questions administered to the qualifying members of the sample population. Survey data was collected, compiled in Microsoft Excel, coded, and analyzed in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions are frequently used in survey research and in most quantitative studies (Creswell, 2009). This quantitative correlational, cross-sectional research study was focused on examining the relationship between public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 1099, and the demographics of age and gender in San Diego County. The following research questions and hypotheses were used in this study.

**RQ1** What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age (18 years and older)?

**H\(_{01}\):** There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age.

**H\(_{A1}\):** There is a significant relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age.

**RQ2:** What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety with AB 109 in place and gender (male, female)?

**H\(_{02}\):** There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender.

**H\(_{A2}\):** There is a significant relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender.

**RQ3:** What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and linear combination of age and gender?

**H\(_{03}\):** There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the linear combination of gender and age.
**H3:** There is a significant relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the linear combination of gender and age.

**Theoretical Framework**

According to Babbie (2008), the theoretical framework of a study is the structure that supports the theory to explain reasons why a problem exists. Cone and Foster (2006) explained theoretical framework as the foundation of the research study because it explains the relationship among variables and describe statistical significance of findings and empirical reality. In essence, guidelines for data collection and analysis are provided by the theoretical framework (Shank, 2006).

The implementation of AB 109 in California includes evidence-based strategies to reduce prison overcrowding, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety (Owen & Mobley, 2012). AB 109 mandated the prison system to release low-level offenders into community supervision and to offer community-based resources to assist offenders in the reintegration back into the community. The theoretical framework for this study entails the broad research area regarding how the implementation of AB 109 changed the way offenders are supervised in the community and its implications on public safety. Individuals can experience fear and uncertainty about the security of his or her environment, quality of life, and ability to pursue higher goals and activities when lack of safety is relevant in the environment. This phenomenon is explained through Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs can be used to elaborate on the elements of public safety because it emphasizes ways of fulfilling people’s needs (Conley & Hsieh, 2007). Creswell (2009) contended that in selecting a theory appropriate for a study, the research question, the hypothesis, and the data collection could reveal if the theory selected will affirm or be in disagreement with the results. Maslow’s theory was selected for this study because the topic focus addresses the safety of human beings. Maslow (1999) posited that people desire to fulfill human needs in the order of importance. Maslow’s theory was tested to determine if there is a relationship between the independent variables (gender and age) and the dependent variable (public perceptions of public safety) with AB 109 in place. Human beings strive to meet the necessities of life but aim higher toward the achievement of other desires. Maslow’s theory highlights human needs in five levels: physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization.

Maslow’s theory highlights that the lower levels of needs must be sustained before the high ranked needs are satisfied. Human beings must focus on fulfilling the fundamental needs before they can focus on higher or more sophisticated needs. The physiological needs depict the set of fundamental or biological needs, such as food, shelter, water, and clean air among others, that are necessary for survival (Helgoe, 2002). As pertains to public administration, physiological needs involve financial and human resources that sustain basic operations of an organization. The second tier in Maslow’s theory involves security needs in all forms. People must be guaranteed physical, economic, health, and financial security. Human beings need to be assured of the safety of the environment to increase productivity.
The objective of fostering public safety may be realized by creating a safe environment for citizens to exist peacefully with each other.

The third tier of Maslow’s theory focuses on social needs such that human beings must possess a sense of belonging. Human beings need to experience positive relationships and overcome feelings of alienation. Social needs are important for human beings because of the need to form emotional relationships, such as friendship, family, and intimacies. The sense of belonging among human beings is important because humans desire to live together in harmony (Latham, 2006). This can be achieved through the promotion of creativity, ingenuity, and freedom among people to promote cohesion.

The fourth tier of Maslow’s theory involves the esteem needs that include the essence of self-respect and respect from other people (Conley & Hsieh, 2007). It is important for human beings to fulfill esteem needs because of the need to be accepted and valued in society. The notion of recognition is the motivation for people to participate in different activities to gain a sense of value in society. Low self-esteem and inferiority complexes are detrimental to human relations because people work hard for the respect of other people. People have to learn to value and accept themselves before other people can do the same. Deprivation of esteem needs can lead to the exhibition of negative personality traits and a sense of helplessness.

The implication of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs on public safety is used as a guideline to maximize public safety. In relation to AB 109, the introduction of re-entry programs and alternatives to incarceration have facilitated an overhaul of the justice system (ACLU of California, 2012). These programs have helped reduce the recidivism rates of the prisoners, guaranteeing a safe environment for the citizens of California (Jones, 2004).
Definition of Terms

The definitions of the following terms will provide clarity of key terms used in this study.

**Board of Parole Hearings (BPH):** Board of parole hearing conducts parole consideration hearings and parole revocation hearings.

**Criminogenics:** Criminogenics is defined as the traits and conditions that produce factors correlated with a propensity to reoffend (Latessa & Lowenkamp, 2005).

**Community-based program:** Community-based programs refers to programs designed to assist offenders in areas to address their risks and needs while such as employment, education, medical referrals, and substance abuse programs. The programs provide a variety of services through collaborative efforts from different organizations to help offenders in their adjustment in the community. Community-based programs include but are not limited to substance abuse programs, educational services, medical, relapse prevention, anger management (Taxman, 2002).

**Evidence-based practices (EBP):** EBP refers to the use of direct and evident scientific information to make decisions for optimal results (Ferguson, 2002).

**Offender supervision:** Offender supervision is the act of monitoring an offender in the community after released from custody either at the county or state level (Petersilia, 2003). Offenders are monitored while supervised and receive direction and opportunities to successfully reintegrate in the community.

**Parole agent:** Parole agent is a sworn peace officer responsible for monitoring a caseload of adult offenders sentenced to state prison to ensure the provision of adequate
services and assisting offenders in the reintegration in the community (Petersilla, 2011; Solomon, 2006).

**Probation officer:** Probation officers are sworn peace officers who supervise offenders in the community after sentenced from a preceding judge at the county level.

**Purposeful sampling:** Purposeful sampling is a method to select only participants engaged with the phenomenon under study. This sampling technique requires participants with certain attributes and knowledge relevant to the study.

**Recidivism:** Recidivism is referred as the number of episodes an offender is returned to custody setting for infringing parole supervision rules (Petersilia, 2011).

**Re-entry programs:** Re-entry programs are designed to assist offenders in the reintegration in the community.

**Assumptions of the Study**

The quantitative correlational, cross sectional study involved administering an on-site survey to five organizations in San Diego County. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between public perceptions of public safety and the demographics of age and gender in San Diego County. It was assumed that participants had an interest in exploring how public safety is compromised with the implementation of AB 109. Further, it was assumed that participants provided truthful answers to survey questions in reporting their perceptions. It was also assumed that participants might have their own opinion of what is affecting public safety in their community without considering the implementation of AB 109.
Scope of the Study

The scope of the study consisted of 68 purposively selected participants residing in San Diego County who is currently under the implementation of AB 109. The sample population provided demographic information to ensure only residents of San Diego were included in the sample. Participants who live in areas outside the San Diego limit were excluded from the study. The participant’s contribution to this study revealed a better understanding if public safety has been compromised after the implementation of AB 109. The results of this study cannot be generalized to the remaining of the counties in California because every county is expected to develop individual strategic plans to implement AB 109 and every county has a dedicated set of law enforcement agencies assisting with AB 109 implementation and enforcement (ACLU of California, 2012).

Limitations of the Study

Creswell (2009) suggested that limitations of a study focus on inherent exceptions, reservations, and qualifications of research conducted. Limitations of the study can potentially indicate any weakness or strengths of the study beyond a researcher’s control. This study was limited to the geographical area of San Diego County in California. Therefore, methods to implement AB 109 and efforts to improve public safety that are prevalent in San Diego County may be different in other counties (Simon, & Francis, 2001). The results of the study can only provide suggestions to conduct further research, in other counties, with similar demographics to those in California, or to consider other demographics, such as income, education, or neighborhood. Participants received an on-site invitation to participate in the survey, which is another limitation because the participants needed to be available on the day the survey was administered.
The specified independent variables for the study, gender and age, are also limitations. These independent variables can be influenced by other factors not included in the study and can represent bias in the survey instrument, such as a participants lack of knowledge of AB 109 or a variation in cultural trends within the participants. Furthermore, the variables age and gender can have a limitation on the study because other variables, such as education and income could have been used to determine if there is a difference in perceptions toward the implementation of AB 109 and public safety. The use of purposive sampling was also a limitation because there was a possibility that 68 participants may not respond to the recruitment or return a completed survey. However, the researcher was able to recruit the sample population required for this study without using an alternative sample technique such snowball.

Finally, this study was also limited to the literature available for this study and its new implementation. The California Realignment Act, AB 109 is a relatively new law that was implemented in California in 2011 and very limited research is currently available. Additionally, the implementation of AB 109 is a work in progress and no data were available to determine whether AB 109 is the true cause of increasing or decreasing crime across California. Research conducted before AB 109 regarding recidivism in Californian indicated that factors such economy, unemployment, and immigration trends are great contributors to an increase in crime (Kelly & Data, 2009)

**Delimitations of the Study**

Delimitations of a study are factors where a researcher may have some limited control. The researcher selected a sample population from San Diego County in California who are currently under the implementation of AB 109. Participants not currently employed
as sworn peace officers and residing in San Diego County delimited the population. Other counties in California are also under AB 109 but there is a specific funding allocated to each county to address the effect of AB 109 separately. Sworn peace officers are currently implementing AB 109 and they could potentially report the true effects of the law but were not included in this study. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other counties in California. The results are only generalizable to San Diego County. The findings of the study can help with identifying suggestions and implications for further research.

Summary

The quantitative descriptive correlational study was conducted using surveys to examine the relationship between public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109, and the demographics of age and gender in San Diego County. The California Public Safety Realignment Act, AB 109, is a recent law implemented in California to reduce the prison population, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety. The law also mandated the release of low-level offenders to probation supervision and the discharge of offenders that pose a lower risk in the community (Wikoff et al., 2012). Proponents of the law argued that legislation was needed to redefine laws regarding crime and use evidence-based strategies and alternative sanctions to reintegrate offenders into the community. Opponents of the law are in disagreement because they have seen an increase in crime in their communities after the implementation of AB 109 (Crime Victims Action Alliance, 2013).

Chapter 1 contained a comprehensive framework to support the relevance of the study design, the theory used to test the hypothesis, and empirical studies providing useful but limited information about the public’s perceptions on public safety and the implementation of
AB 109. The purpose of the study and relevant research questions and hypotheses were cited. A theoretical framework upon which to base the collection of data was described and the nature of the study was revealed. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature pertaining to the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 2 also includes empirical research relevant to the study and addresses any of the gaps in the literature.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter provides a detailed review and exploration of the literature that reveals information about the implementation of AB 109, the law’s intended purpose, and the affect that the legislature has had on public perceptions of safety. The chapter begins with an overview of the literature focusing on public safety in the state of California, and the conditions under which AB 109 developed. Public perspectives of safety were explored, with particular emphasis on prior research in the state of California and in relation to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the implications of the perceptions toward public safety regarding how AB 109 may influence those perspectives.

The purpose of the literature review is to determine the parameters of the literature relevant to legislation in California and public safety, recidivism as it pertains to public safety, public perspectives about public safety, and the implementation of AB 109. A literature review is a practical approach to answer questions associated with the relevant literature appropriate for the study. The literature review also reflects the extent of the knowledge investigated from the literature available for this study (Creswell, 2010). The search revealed little prior research into the effect of AB 109 on public safety and the public perceptions of the law; this suggested that the study could provide a foundation for this topic. A literature review is a presentation of relevant studies and theoretical articles found in journals, books, research documents, professional documents, and published reports. Sources involved University of Phoenix Dissertations and Thesis, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database, Wiley Online Library, EBSCOHost, Sage Journals, Gale Power Search,
National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), scholarly peer-reviewed journals, and the World Wide Web. Title searches were conducted with the key words: public safety, California Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109), recidivism, public perceptions, Maslow Hierarchy of Needs, reentry, and evidence-based practices.

The results obtained using University of Phoenix database produced relevant information about recidivism, reentry, and evidence-based practices; specifically on AB 109, media and news articles and one peer-reviewed article provided most information. Searches conducted, using the World Wide Web, yielded reports from the National Institute of Justice, the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, and the Public Policy Institute of California; additionally, current studies conducted by students from Stanford University and University of California Berkeley were also provided. The literature compiled for this study revealed numerous recent studies on AB 109 concerning how counties are implementing AB 109 and how the law is affecting the prosecution process, defense attorneys, judges, sheriffs, and probation officers. Additionally the literature provided information on how AB 109 is affecting the recidivism rate and the effect on the prison population. However, there is a consistent gap in the literature on the effect of AB 109 on public perceptions of the law and the safety of communities in California. Approximately 85% of the references were published since 2006.

**Public Safety and Community Corrections in California**

To understand the factors that contributed to the creation of the California Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) in California, it is imperative to understand the historical events that took place after the inception of the Determinate Sentencing Law (DSL), which had an influence on the creation of AB 109 (Krisber, 2011; Males, 2012; Rogers, 2012). In
1976, the Governor of California, Jerry Brown, signed DSL to make changes to the sentencing system and categorize each offense with a specific sentence term. Additionally, the DSL determined a period of incarceration set by the court in a state prison, followed by a period of parole supervision (Bradley O'Connel, 2004). The Board of Prison Terms (BPT) was responsible for revoking the offender’s parole status based on parole violations resulting in a return to prison for up to 1 year (Solomon, 2006).

According to Little (1980), DSL was created to shorten the period of incarceration in an attempt to alleviate overcrowding in California prisons. Gradually, more offenders were released to the community under parole supervision. Sutton (2013) contended that the parole system was aggressive in returning most parole violators for technical violations. This trend in returning parole violators was a dangerous measure because the system did not afford victims the right to have the perpetrator prosecuted to the extent allowable by law (Little, 1980). Violent cases, such as robberies and rapes, were traditionally settled at a parole revocation hearing, without referring the case to be prosecuted in a court of law (O’Connel, 2004). An excessive amount of technical parole violations resulted; DSL was a factor that contributed to the increase of the prison population (Barker, 2006).

In 1992, opponents of the Determinate Sentencing Law initiated a campaign to amend the law after the murder of Kimber Reynolds by a repeat offender in Fresno, California (Lifsher, 1994). California lawmakers, in response to the voters’ request, introduced the Three Strikes Law into legislation but the bill was rejected by the Public Safety Committee (Lifsher, 1994). In 1993, a repeat offender in Petaluma, California, kidnapped Polly Klass and the debate over the Three Strikes Law emerged again (Taylor, 1998). In 1994, the California Three Strikes initiative was later presented to voters as Proposition 184 and was
passed into law (Taylor, 1998). According to Gollner (1994), 72% of the voters were in agreement with Proposition 184, which mandated harsher penalties to deter offenders from committing new crimes. Under the Three Strikes Law, offenders with two prior serious convictions or strikes, committing a new offense, were subject a conviction of 25 years to life in prison, regardless of the seriousness of the third offense (Walsh, 1999; Wolfgruber, 2010). According to a survey report generated by Pew Center on the States (2011), after the Three Strikes Law went into effect, the courts convicted approximately 80,7500 offenders, contributing to overcrowding in California prisons.

Overcrowding conditions resulted in limited rehabilitative efforts; thus, prisoners had difficulty transitioning back into society after their release. The rate at which offenders returned to prison as a result of either a parole violation or conviction from a new offense increased recidivism in California (Greene, 2008; Lin, Grattet, & Petersilla, 2008; Warren, 2003). An increase in recidivism increases the potential for victimization, leading to unsafe communities (Taxman, 2007; White, 2007; Yahner, Visher, & Solomon, 2008). Taxman (2007) contended that public safety can be best achieved when efforts are concentrated in rehabilitating offenders. Travis, Davis, and Lawrence (2012) reported that there is a disconnect between prisons and parole, because offenders are not properly prepared to overcome the challenges they face when they are released to the community.

**Recidivism and Public Safety in California**

The literature available on the AB 109 also addressed measures to reduce the recidivism rate in California (Krisberg & Taylor-Nicholson, 2011). Lofstrom, Petersilia, and Raphael (2012) contended that every county under realignment was responsible for developing measures to reduce recidivism using alternative community sanctions to address
offenders’ risks and needs. Prior to AB 109, the efforts to stop the revolving door were ineffective because offenders under parole supervision were returned to prison for technical violations (Petersilia, 2010). According to Hynes (2009), alternative sanctions to reduce recidivism in California were rarely an option. The increasing numbers of inmates who become recidivists within the first years of release caused a variety of economic and social problems that risked public safety for Californians (Crayton, 2012). The Little Hoover Commission (2007) found California’s recidivism rate was 67%, compared to 35% nationwide (Fisher 2005; Petersilia, 2006). The CDCR Adult Institution Outcome Report (2011) indicated the 3-year recidivism rate for felons released from 2006-2007 was 65.1%. The report further indicated that, among the 65.1% of offenders, all were returned for technical violations; only 34.9% successfully completed 3 years of parole, which indicated that not much has been done to prepare offenders for successful reintegration.

The problem of recidivism has gained much attention from law makers and correctional stakeholders in recent years because the problems associated with prison overcrowding (Jannetta, 2007). Warren (2007) asserted that punishment, incarceration, and other sanctions did not reduce recidivism and, instead, jeopardized public safety. Supporting literature on the effects of recidivism in the criminal justice system include those from Petersilia (2007), Travis (2007), and Solomon, Osborne, Winterfield, & Elderbroom (2008), who posited that successful reentry to society is paramount to enhancing public safety.

Researchers have extensively investigated the elements necessary to alleviate the great influx of parole violators in California prisons (Fischer, 2007; Hanley & Allen, 2006; Ireland, 2007). Petersilia (2007) reported that the recidivism occurred because habitual offenders were not adequately prepared with the right treatment to reduce the offenders’
potential to re-offend. The need to formulate new programs to reform the rehabilitation system was noted by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation CDCR as a way to improve public safety, provide community resources to offenders, and reduce the chance of offenders committing new crimes (Petersilia, 2007). Salomon (2006) argued that CDCR’s interest was less about protecting public safety than about establishing a mechanism by which to control overcrowding in prisons. A rehabilitative model may be able to protect public safety while simultaneously reducing overcrowding if a well-designed system is in place (Taxman, 2011).

It is estimated that approximately 120,000 offenders are paroling from California prisons every year into some form of community supervision (Petersilia, 2007). The criteria used to place offenders under parole supervision are determined after the offender has been convicted by a court of law. All California inmates are released for a period of 1 to 3 years of parole supervision. Regardless of the level or severity of the crime, the court imposes an automatic release to the community under parole supervision. The parole department generates a set of conditions, which if violated can send the offender back to prison (Ditton & Wilson, 1999). Unlike California, other state court systems, such as that of Ohio, Massachusetts, and Florida, only impose parole supervision to inmates who are considered high risk (Petersilia, 2003); as a result, parole officers in these other states have fewer cases to supervise, and their supervisory efforts can focus on parolee’s risk to re-offend, reducing recidivism, and improving public safety. The National Institute of Corrections reported that the parole system needs to focus the attention on strategies to improve public safety through rehabilitative efforts and using evidence-based practices to deter and prevent new crimes from taking place (Solomon, 2006).
AB 109 was implemented in an effort to reduce recidivism in California, which has demonstrated an effect on the safety of citizens. The purpose of Community Corrections in California is primarily to enhance public safety by using community resources to assist inmates adapting from prison to the community and by using parole reforms and strategies to reduce offender’s likelihood of committing new crimes (Petersilia, 2007). The increase of recidivism is problematic in California prisons because it has demonstrated major implications for public safety; the more often a repeat offender is returned to prison, the less likely the offender will be rehabilitated. Travis et al. (2012) reported that the recidivism continues to be a revolving door in California prisons, and policymakers were not adequately addressing strategies to rehabilitate offenders and avoid their propensity to reoffend.

Latessa (2011) reported that an increase in crime also means increasing victimization and compromising public safety. Over the last 40 years, policy makers have invested their efforts in creating sanctions that are more punitive, with longer and harsher laws to hold offenders responsible for their actions; this negatively affected the rehabilitative process. A harsher penalty means fewer opportunities to rehabilitate the offender in a positive way. Wolff (2008) contended that the safety approach strategy to reduce recidivism consists of developing programs to rehabilitate offenders using evidence-based practices that were proven to work within the offender population.

Petersilia (2011b) determined that appropriate community-based programs, if applied correctly, could reduce recidivism and improve public safety. A key factor in achieving positive outcomes in community-based programs is to provide rehabilitative programs appropriate to the risk and needs of the offender. According to Chang (2011), four strategies were proven effective for reducing recidivism, (a) risk assessment, (b) motivational
interviewing, (c) evidence-based programs, and (d) fiscal incentives. Each strategy must be carefully examined to supervise offenders with strategies tailored to meet their specific needs and risks in the community.

**Assessing risk to the community.** Risk assessment provides a holistic approach to determine who is appropriate for community supervision and who needs to remain in an institutional setting to protect the public from repeat offenders. Cincinnati, Ohio, has successfully implemented a risk assessment in its Prison Diversion Program to determine placement of offenders and provide more individualized programs to reduce the offender’s propensity to reoffend (Bales & Piquero, 2012). Hynes (2009) contended that streamlining the right program for the right offender is a difficult task. Turner, Myers, Sexton, and Smith (2007) reported that a risk assessment were intended to provide the threat of the offender in the community, but there is a need to monitor the effectiveness of the alternative sanctions to determine if interventions are going to be effective.

**Motivational interviewing.** Correctional staff, to manage offenders in a more efficient manner, implemented motivational interviewing. Several studies concluded that motivational interviewing techniques provide relevant personal skills to appropriately interact with offenders while encouraging positive behaviors (Bogue & Nandi, 2012; Doran, Hohman, & Koutsenok, 2011; Walters, Vader, Nguyen, Harris & Eells 2010). Bueerman (2012) commented that effective offender supervision with appropriate staff intervention could result in a substantial reduction in offender recidivism.

**Evidence-based programs.** Bogue and Nandi (2012) elucidated that a change in correctional staff to interact effectively in the lives of the offender is far from perfect. Miller and Mount (2001) commented that a Power Point presentation once a year is not going to
change staff’s perceptions to embrace changes in the management and rehabilitation of offenders adequately. Ireland (2007) reported that changing the behavior of correctional staff to supervise offenders effectively in the community is difficult. According to Laurence (2008), Turner and Braithwaite (2011), and Craig (2012), when supervising offenders in the community, much importance should be given to the value of good interpersonal skills to facilitate offenders’ willingness to change their behavior.

Despite a plethora of studies on factors that affect public safety in California, researchers continue to report that evidence-based practice has been effective in reducing recidivism (Cross, 2008; Nash, 2009; Seave, 2012). Latessa (2012) contended that correctional agencies must be willing to try new methods of supervision and use new strategies to effectively address criminal behavior and improve public safety. Hanley and Allen (2006) contended that supervision alone does not reduce recidivism, but implementing best practices in assisting in the rehabilitation of offenders can increase public safety.

The State of Maryland has been implementing a Proactive Community Supervision program that assisted in a significant reduction in recidivism (Vernarelli & Julious, 2012). The program focused on investing more intense efforts to rehabilitate offenders with the greatest risk in the community. The program is also intended to provide low-risk offenders with the appropriate resources in the community to manage their lives in a more effective manner (Turner, 2010). Such programs show promise in the value of rehabilitative models.

**Fiscal incentives.** In terms of fiscal incentives, building more jails and incarcerating offenders has not achieved the goal of increasing public safety (Hanley & Allen, 2006). Miller and Miller (2010) found that alternatives to prison could improve the lives of the offender with the appropriate intervention. According to Beeler (2009), community
resources, such as education, job skills, and other services are attributes of a cost-effective offender supervision strategy, which reduces recidivism reduction and improves the safety of the communities.

**Public Safety and the Offender Rehabilitation Service Act of 2007, AB 900**

The Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Act of 2007, AB 900, was one of the actions taken by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to reduce the overcrowding of prisons prior to the implementation of the California Public Safety Realignment Act, AB 109. Community corrections were not achieving desired results of decreasing prison population, improving recidivism, and increasing public safety; and as a result, it raised legislature’s attention to develop a plan to solve California’s prison overcrowding (Little Hoover Commission, 2007; Misczynski, 2011).

AB 900 was the result of rehabilitative programming to reduce recidivism and improve public safety. This reform was created with the intent to change the way California institutions rehabilitated offenders. The Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Act of 2007 provided solutions to help offenders succeed in the community and reduce their propensity to commit new crimes (Misenas, 2010). Cate (2012) commented that AB 900 used evidence-based practices to improve academic, vocational, substance abuse, and other rehabilitative programs. Misenas (2010) found that poor administrative support resulted in not achieving the intended results of AB 900. The problems associated with offender recidivism and overpopulated prisons continued to grow despite actions taken by CDCR to reduce prison overcrowding. AB 900 was the predecessor of AB 109.
The Creation of AB 109

As AB 900 was inadequate, in 2011, the California Prison Realignment Act, best known as AB 109, was created to reduce prison populations, as ordered by a federal court, by placing low-level offenders under the jurisdiction of respective counties (Owen & Mobley, 2012). The court ordered CDCR to reduce the prison population from 162,466 to 132,887 within 2 years (Males, 2012).

The conditions that evolved AB 109. From 1980 to 2006, the quantity of prisons in California increased because of a direct effect of the creation of laws that increased penalties for serious and violent offenders (Silbert, 2012). This discretionary approach to sentencing offenders created longer terms of incarceration and fewer opportunities for rehabilitation. The Pew Center on the States (2011) indicated that extended periods of incarceration with minimal rehabilitative efforts did not deter criminal behavior. Romano (2010) contended that the Three Strikes Law decreased the opportunity to rehabilitate the offender by positive means. Proponents of the law argued that the Three Strikes Law was intended to make offenders accountable for their behavior and to reduce crime in California (Schafer, 1999). Since the implementation of the Three Strikes Law in 1994, the courts have sentenced approximately 80,000 criminals to state prison, resulting in an increase of the inmate population of 5,000 to 45,000 by 2004 (McCullogh, 2002). The continued growth of the prison population and the aging of prisoners contributed to significant implications in the prison system, specifically an increased need for medical care services (Philips, 2012).

Kelley and Datta (2009) noted that these demands resulted in releasing more offenders into parole supervision in an attempt to decrease the quantity of prisoners and to offset costs. However, the establishment of numerous parole stipulations caused an increase
in the percentage of recidivism in California (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). Solomon (2006) commented that, with the burgeoning increase of the number of prisoners in recent years, parole supervision has become more difficult because parole workloads range from 70 parolees per parole agent and caseloads were no longer manageable.

Because of the lack of preparation for reintegration after living in prison, 70% of inmates were returned to custody for parole violations (The Little Hoover Commission, 2007). The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation reported that during 2006-2007, almost 73.5% of the offenders became recidivists within the first year of release (Lawrence, 2012). The significant percentage of recidivists appears not to be surprising during the last three decades in California, since the general policy of tightening laws about using and spreading drugs and immigration policy has caused the mass increase of the inmate population (Jesse, 2007).

The California Corrections Independent Review Panel recommended reform for the whole system of rehabilitation of inmates, including all departments and structures of state power (Little Hoover Commission, 2007). The increasing numbers of inmates required hiring additional staff and additional services necessary to provide offenders with basic needs, such as food, clothing, and medical services. Based on the CDCRs inability to provide proper medical care to prisoners, the Supreme Court ordered a reduction of the prison population within 2 years (Petersilia, 2011). The AB 109 was created to reduce the prison population and was signed into Law April 2011, and became effective October 2011 (McCray, Newhall, & Snyder, 2012). The implementation of AB 109 also included a change in sentencing options, which introduced the California Penal Code 1170, subsection (h),
where the offender will serve jail time or community supervision rather than a sentence to state prison for certain offenses (Silbert, 2012).

**Advocates for AB 109.** According to advocates of AB 109, the shift from state to county offender supervision will increase public safety because offenders are afforded an opportunity to experience more rehabilitative efforts in the community at the county level (McKibben, 2012). Rushford (2012) disagreed with proponents of the law, indicating that “non-violent, non-serious, non-sex offenders” (p. 5) are inmates that have committed serious and violent crimes in the past, and the law disregards the potentially lethal consequences for public safety in California. In a poll conducted by DiCamillo and Field (2012), California voters agreed to transfer low risk offenders to the supervision of community-based programs or other county diversion programs. However, Rushford (2012), indicated that the criteria to classify low-level offenders under AB 109 only considers the most current offense, disregarding prior criminal history.

Prison conditions and the costs of maintaining prisons are another driving force in an effort to return prisoners to the community and avoid recidivism. Krisberg and Nicholson (2011) reported that the California prison system has sought reform in part as a response to the severe and ongoing state budget crisis. In 2006, plaintiffs representing three inmates in California filed a motion indicating the prison conditions were deplorable because overcrowding, and inmates were not afforded appropriate medical care. The landmark case of *Plata v. Schwarzenegger* reported that the lack of appropriate offender medical care was a violation of the Eighth Amendment and the Americans with Disabilities Act (Owen & Mobley, 2012). The United States Supreme Court determined the condition of prison
overcrowding was depriving prisoners from obtaining proper medical care, and the court ordered CDCR to lower its prison population to meet its prison capacity.

Several researchers concluded that the violations in the Plata case were the accumulation of an increase in prisoner deaths from inadequate medical care and the absence of rehabilitative efforts (Krisberg & Nicholson, 2011; Lofstrom, Petersilia, & Raphael, 2012; Rogers, 2012). Since the mandate issued by the Supreme Court to reduce the prison inmate capacity, the legislature and the Governor of California passed AB 109 in 2011. Silbert (2012) contended that the federal court order included a mandate to reduce the prison population within 2 years; this was projected to bring a decrease of approximately 33,000 prisoners by May 2013. Whitehurst (2012) reported that the conditions under which AB 109 was implemented included the release of “non-violent, non-serious, non-sex offenders” (commonly referred as 3 nons) to the jurisdiction of county supervision (Miczynski, 2011, p. 13). Moreover, AB 109 mandates returning parole violators to the county jail, and allows counties to have the discretion to implement community supervision and alternative rehabilitation sanctions to provide offenders rehabilitative options to address violators’ risk and needs (Whitehurst, 2012).

Under the provisions of AB 109, each county was responsible for developing a plan to supervise offenders released into the community (Petersilia, 2011b). Following the implementation of AB 109, significant dialogue emerged between advocates and opponents of the law. Rushford (2012) argued that AB 109 is, in essence, transferring the existing overcrowding problem from the state to the counties rather than providing a realistic solution to rehabilitate offenders properly. Petersilia’s (2011b) data suggested that it is too early to determine if AB 109 is a success or failure because counties are constantly working to
develop strategies to address problems as they arise.

**Concerns related to AB 109.** In an analysis of AB 109, Rushford (2012) indicated that, although the plan was to reduce prison overcrowding as mandated by the federal court and improving public safety, the efforts to reduce recidivism and improving public safety have not been successful. After the implementation of AB 109, arguments against the law involved discourse on how the release of repeat offenders jeopardizes the public safety in California. Under AB 109, California penal code, section 1170(h), was created to make some felonies ineligible for state prison; this sent offenders with new convictions within the guidelines of Section 1170(b) to the custody of the county jails instead of state prison (Silbert, 2012). In 1170(h), AB 109 indicates that offenders sentenced based on a new “non-violent, non-serious, non-sexual offenses” are remanded to county jails, regardless of the accumulation of a prior violent criminal history (Misczynski, 2011, p. 13; Owen & Mobley, 2012). The new sentencing criterion provides convicted offenders shorter sentences followed by community supervision at the direction of the counties. Owen and Mobley (2012) commented that part of the sentencing criteria, under section 1170(h), judges have two sentencing options, which include, sentencing a person to the county jail only and discharging after serving time, or sentencing the person to a split sentence, including county time and mandatory supervised release (MSR).

Rushford (2012) found that media information reports and “statements by county government and law enforcement officials reported an increase of serious crimes, such as rape, burglary, and murder, were committed by offenders released under AB 109” (p. 9). San Mateo Police Chief, S. Manheimer, reported in a news conference that an increase of 23% in property crimes were reported in the Bay area and were possibly linked to the prison
realignment (Lee, 2013). Additionally, Chief Manheimer indicated that the community meetings were conducted more often to discuss the effects of AB 109 and the effect of the law on the safety of communities (Lee, 2013).

In the months after the implementation of AB 109, concerns were centered on understanding whether counties have the ability to manage offenders in a more efficient manner than the state (Owen & Mobley, 2012; Rushford, 2012). There are 58 counties in California, and the allocation of money depends on the offender population and the resources in the community to rehabilitate offenders. Counties were left with no option than to do more with less, and counties are expected to operate at the county level with less funding than what the state was receiving to do the same job (Owen & Mobley, 2012). Lee (2013) reported in an online newspaper article that Antioch Police Lieutenant, D. Aguinaga, noted the discrepancy with AB 109 is that offenders are released based on the offenders last conviction and with a total disregard that these offenders had some type of violent criminal history in the communities.

Lynn Brown, founder of the Advocates for Public Safety (APS), reported that prior to AB 109, the Board of Parole Hearings had the discretion to return parole violators to prison based on their risk to public safety, the propensity of reoffending, and to protect victims of crime (Brown, 2012). After AB 109, parole violators could only receive a return to custody for up 180 days in the county jail (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2013). Brown also argued that county supervisors are not properly trained to supervise offenders previously supervised by state parole agents (Brown, 2012). The most convincing argument, according to opponents of the law, is that most “non-violent, non-serious, and non-sex offenders” have a criminal history of six or more felony convictions (Misczynski, 2011,
p. 13; Owen & Mobley, 2012; Rushford, 2012). Opponents of AB 109, as previously stated, argued that the citizens believe they are not safe within the community. Whether citizens are less safe may be an unresolved question that is the focus of this study; however, the perception of a lack of safety is relevant for the communities. Just as individuals experience fear and uncertainty about the security of their environment, his or her quality of life, and the ability to pursue higher goals and activities become limited. This phenomenon is explained through Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

In previous studies, researchers have attempted to identify what factors under the correctional umbrella affect public safety, and what measures are necessary to improve the safety of the cities when offenders are released into community supervision. The creation of new sentencing laws, with harsher penalties to incapacitate and deter repeat offenders, provides a temporary sense of public safety. An increase of harsher penalties has been proven to be a factor that contributes to an increase of offenders’ criminal behavior and pose a risk to communities (Beck, 2006; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

Public perception concerning public safety provides important information to political leaders and researchers to determine what measures are necessary to ensure the safety of the community. Public safety is compromised when a condition of time and place is at risk with the presence of a vulnerable person and the presence of a potential offender (Solomon, Osborne, Winterfield, & Elderbroom, 2008). A theory of how human needs are satisfied can contribute to understanding how people perceive safety in their communities, and what measures are necessary to protect them from further personal and property damage.
Dimensions of the hierarchy. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is a seminal theory of human behavior (Gordon-Rouse, 2004; Hagerty, 1999; Heylighen, 1992; Koltko-Rivera, 2006). Maslow’s hierarchy of needs consists of five dimensions presented in a pyramid, consisting of lower basic needs at the bottom of the pyramid, and higher needs on top (Figure 1). According to Maslow (1970), people need to fulfill basic needs prior to achieving higher needs. Basic needs, according to Maslow (1970), are defined as physiological needs such as food, water, sleep, and shelter. The next level in the hierarchy is safety. Safety, according to the Maslow’s theory, can be best achieved when people feel secure, protected, and stable in their homes and communities.

Figure 1. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Chika and Chidiebele (2012) reported that safety could be related to different safety needs, such as free of fear in public places and free of threat to an individual person and property. Social and self-esteem needs are those that include a desire to achieve interpersonal relationships and obtain respect from others (Best, Day, McCarthy, Darlington, and Pinchbeck, 2008). Elliot and Williams (1995) found that when social needs are fulfilled,
people are more effective in dealing with problems presented to them. The last level of the hierarchy is self-actualization; this refers to problem solving, spontaneity, creativity, tolerance, and morality.

The construct of public safety in Maslow’s theory is the focus of this study. Safety has been proven to be not only a basic need but also to be a physical and psychological need. Specific motives prompt an individual to concentrate more on safety needs than other needs, particularly when his or her surroundings are compromised from protection and security. Maslow’s analytical perspective indicated people strive to pursue and fulfill safety needs because people like to be secured in their body and property (Jones, 2004). The presence of physical safety can prevent an individual from becoming a victim of crime, violence, or abuse. The lack of physical safety can result on the individual’s psychological distress. Circumstance also plays a role in how a particular individual selects safety over another level in the hierarchy. Jones (2004) determined that a person in fear might opt not to pursue other needs unless safety needs have first been met. Several researchers have incorporated Maslow’s theory to demonstrate that people will strive to fulfill his or her full potential when basic needs are met, but it is not possible to achieve the highest levels of the hierarchy without a solid base at the earlier levels (Gambrel & Cianci, 2003; Gordon-Rouse, 2004; Hagerty, 1999).

**Criticism of Maslow’s theory.** Heylighen (1992) noted that Maslow’s theory has been criticized because ranking the needs in a specific order, as suggested by the hierarchy, is not always the case in real life. According to Hagerty (1999), Maslow’s theory was based on the observation of only 18 participants who were currently suffering from neurosis. Maslow postulated that the neurosis corresponded to deficiencies accumulated by lack of good health
or basic needs. Maslow further concluded that once people satisfy basic needs they can aspire to higher levels of striving and desires (Maslow, 1999). From a scientific standpoint, Maslow’s theory only applied to the participants selected for the clinical study, and these specific qualities may or may not be found in the general population (Elliot & Williams, 1995).

Furthermore, Elliot and Williams (1995) argued that people living in poverty could still achieve the means to fulfill basic needs, such as safety, food, sleep, and shelter. A research study by Chika and Chidiebele (2012) evaluated the perceptions of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs by Nigerian university workers, and found that Maslow’s theory did not provide the most accurate indicators to determine what motivates people to reach his or her full potential. Furthermore, the findings indicated that other factors motivated people to overcome obstacles in reaching personal goals, such as values, education, and economic status.

A substantial body of research revealed Maslow’s hierarchy of needs was established to describe the path that individuals navigate to achieve their full potential by identifying their basic needs and gradually expanding their needs in a hierarchical manner (Dye, Mills, & Weatherbee, 2005). Despite the criticism by Chika and Chidiebele (2012) and other researchers (Gambrel & Cinaci, 2003), Maslow theory continues to be a sociological framework for exploring what motivates humans to pursue individual life goals and therefore will serve as the framework for this current study.

The role of public policy in supporting the hierarchy. Little (2000) found that the public fear of offenders in the community presents a challenge to correctional leaders. The correctional system has a responsibility to find ways to manage offenders in the community
without presenting a great risk to the public. Little (2000) argued that public officials have developed legislation and policies to manage offenders in the community without considering public opinion. According to Taylor-Nicholson and Russi (2007; 2012), public policies concerning public safety are developed not only to enhance the safety of the communities, but also to consider the relative costs of housing offenders versus the cost of using alternative sanctions in lieu of incarceration.

A study conducted by Pacheco (2012) examined how public opinion has influenced public policy, and concluded that public policy is never intended to satisfy the citizen’s needs. On the contrary, policy makers must determine what works best for the community as a whole. Duncan’s (2012) study of the role of public opinion with regard to sex offenders revealed that public opinion could inform, guide, and influence policy makers in addressing the basic needs of the community when the safety of citizens is compromised.

**Attitudes Toward Public Safety**

A review of the literature concerning public attitudes toward public safety revealed that most of the efforts in research concentrated in explaining variations of crime, punishment, and the financial effect on the criminal justice system. McKibben (2012) suggested that limited attention was provided to the role public perception and their concerns with public safety after the implementation of the law. The Criminal Justice Foundation revealed that research conducted after the implementation of AB 109 demonstrated a positive effect on the court system, recidivism, county jails, probation, and the availability of resources to implement AB 109, but public opinion appeared to be ignored (Rushford, 2012). Rushford (2012) noted that public safety, after the implementation of AB 109, was compromised because of a massive release of offenders in the community without adequate
supervision. People who voted for AB 109 were primarily composed of democratic legislators who passed the law as part of the budget bill in an effort to avoid public debate (McKibben, 2012; Rushford, 2012). The Crime Victims Alliance and the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation attempted to inform the legislature and administration of the potential dangers of the law, and its possible effects on public safety, but those efforts were unsuccessful (Rushford, 2012).

One of the key issues after the implementation of AB 109 is that the law gave rise to the Victim Rights Organizations in the fight against AB 109 and its implications on public safety (Petersilia & Spencer, 2013). The Crime Victims Alliance and the Criminal Justice Legal Foundation worked to warn the public about the effects of the law and its effect on the community (Rushford, 2012). Rushford (2012) noted that reducing the prison population and sending habitual offenders into inadequate county supervision as measure to save the state money only increases the likelihood of putting public safety at risk.

In 2012, Lofstrom, Petersilia, and Raphael evaluated the effects of AB 109 on public safety by measuring outcomes, such as crime rates, offender recidivism, and prosecutorial criteria (e.g., plea bargains, sentencing, court processing, and cost and fiscal affect) to assess the efficacy of the law. The Lofstrom et al. (2012) study reported that the prison system was effective in reducing the offender population to meet the court order mandate, and counties were supervising low-level offenders under the Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS) as directed by the law. Additionally, Snyder and Petersilia (2013) commented that AB 109 is a work in progress because the results of the ongoing studies targeting questions about realignment can provide suggestions and recommendations to make adjustments in areas that are compromising public safety.
**The role of government and legislature.** In response to the problems associated with prison overcrowding and lack of appropriate medical care that resulted in the landmark case *Brown v. Plata*, the court mandated a reduction in the prison population within 2 years (Owen & Mobley, 2012). The Governor, with the approval of the legislature, introduced the California Public Safety Realignment Act, AB 109 in October 2011. The purpose of the law was to reduce the California prison population while simultaneously maintaining public safety. Since the inception of the law, there were debates among the legislature, government, and advocates for victims’ rights about whether the law is serving its intended purpose of protecting the public.

Freedman and Menchin (2012) contended that the law was intended to resolve the problem of *Brown v. Plata* to remedy the lack of appropriate medical care. The California Penal Code 3450, in reference to AB 109, indicated that the intent of the law was to reduce recidivism and create alternative sanctions in the community to rehabilitate offenders (Lofstrom et al., 2012).

The problem with overcrowding has been the result of previous laws that were enacted with the intent to incarcerate offenders and undermine the possibility of rehabilitation. After AB 109, the legislature contended that there are better ways of reducing prison populations by confining only offenders that pose a great risk to society and releasing offenders into the community, determined to be non-violent or that pose a lesser risk to public safety. In considering the offenders’ eligibility for community supervision in lieu of incarceration, only the last offense is taken into consideration. The legislation provides the allocation of funds to the 58 counties in California, and every county develops a strategic plan to implement AB 109 (Lofstrom et al., 2012).
The Stanford Criminal Justice Center, in conjunction with the National Institute of Justice, the James Irvine Foundation, and the Public Welfare Foundation are working to monitor and provide progress reports on the effects of AB 109 (Lofstrom et al., 2012). Additionally, Stanford Law School students were conducting research studies on different aspects on the effects of AB 109 and reporting their findings to the Governor. There is a constant concern among researchers regarding AB 109, noting that counties across the state face challenges supervising offenders with serious and violent criminal histories and have traditionally been supervised by state parole agencies (Arroyo, 2012; Johnson, 2012; Stewart, 2012).

The role of law enforcement. The law enforcement position in public safety presents an important role in reducing crime and administering justice (Travis, Davis, & Lawrence, 2012). The job of law enforcement and public safety has been traditionally guided toward using incarceration as means of controlling crime. In the early 1990s, community policing was introduced as one of the major efforts to bring crime rates down, and to improve communication between the public and the police (McEwen, 2002). Community policing was established with the intent of having more police presence in the community to discuss crime trends and possible solutions. Schafer (2002) found that despite the good intentions of community policing, incarcerating offenders was deemed the best effort to conserve public safety. Travis et al. (2012) suggested that the best effort to reduce crime includes the involvement of law enforcement in the reentry of prisoners to help stop the cycling in and out of jail.

Researchers have determined that the role of law enforcement in public safety has been an important aspect of decreasing criminal activities (Armstrong, 2006; Grohe,
Devalve, & Quinn, 2012; Mayer, 2006). After the implementation of AB 109, the role of law enforcement has been not very effective in preventing crime, because police departments were forced to operate with limited resources because of budgetary constraints (Krisberg & Marchionna, 2013). Krisberg and Machionna (2013) contended that investing in police, rather than custody settings, is a more effective manner to improve public safety. Travis et al. (2012) suggested that the role of law enforcement should be supportive and involved in offenders’ reentry rather than offender punishment.

After the implementation of AB 109, the focus was on expanding the role of law enforcement beyond punitive means and creating strategies to interact with community members to stop criminal activity and reduce crime. A survey of best practices by the United States Conference of Mayors (2009) suggested that more interaction of law enforcement in offender reentry offered the greatest potential to foster safer communities. Conversely, some law enforcement agencies practiced community policing with little success, leading these agencies to continue with the traditional focus of arresting people and allowing the courts to decide on these individual’s future.

**Threats to perceptions of public safety.** A sense of vulnerability often results from some type of loss of property or personal damage. Many different issues can create a sense of fear. Lemieux and Felson (2012) reported that people react differently to public safety threats depending on the neighborhood in which they live, the means they use to protect their property and their persons, and the accuracy of police response. In California, every county has developed a system to implement AB 109 depending on the budget and community resources available. This disparity in resources has created counties that have higher incidences of crime than others do. A county with extensive resources and proper police
response times are less likely to have a fearful community than a county with minimal resources.

**Implications of AB 109 on the Citizens of California**

A review of the literature exploring the effects of AB 109 on the citizens of California revealed that several research studies were completed and some were still in progress to determine the true effect of AB 109 in California (Petersilia, 2011b). The Stanford Criminal Justice Center received a grant to conduct four different research projects following the implementation of the law: (a) analyzing 58 county approaches to realignment, (b) county case studies, (c) a statewide judges and prosecutor’s discretion study, and (d) front-end effects and best practices (Petersilia, 2011). Studies concerning the opinion of victims of crime and citizens of California after the implementation of AB 109 were limited.

**Identified challenges.** According to Lofstrom et al. (2012), it is undetermined if AB 109 will increase or decrease crime in California, because every county has different resources, police force strength, and funding to implement AB 109. Counties attributed a high incidence of crime to the early offender releases from custody because of jail overcrowding and the lack of proper community supervision. Other counties were more effective in keeping crime rates down by using community intervention to address the offenders risk and needs in the community (Lofstrom et al., 2012).

News reports and the media created a negative dialogue by exposing the increase of crime and relating how the release of offenders to the community without the proper supervision affects the safety of the citizens in California (Manzer, 2013; Valenzuela, 2012). After the implementation of AB 109, community groups and organizations, such as Criminal Justice Legal Foundation, Advocates for Public Safely (APS), and California Peace Officers
Unite have worked to educate the public about the dangers of AB 109, and suggested amendments to AB 109 to improve public safety. However, these recommendations have not been implemented (Beck; 2010; Rushford, 2012).

According to a field poll by DiCamillo and Field (2011), public opinion supported the reduction of custody time for offenders who posed a lower risk in the community. No data were available to know whether this opinion existed before the provisions of AB 109, or if the public was aware of the release criteria. Rushford (2012) argued that several deficiencies with AB 109 have not been clearly presented to the public. Rushford found that not every county is equipped with sufficient law enforcement personnel to protect the public from repeat offenders released under AB 109. Rushford (2012) also added that there is a need for evidence-based practices to be implemented correctly, as proposed by the creators of the law but at the same time, to provide constant training to supervise offenders that pose a high risk to communities adequately.

Possible solutions. There is a sustained debate about the role of the parole system and the efforts to rehabilitate offenders in the community. Successful reentry efforts can potentially increase public safety (Travis et al., 2012). Conflicts exist between the release of the offender and the rehabilitation process (Petersilia, 2010). Petersilia (2003) reported that post-release supervision is referred to as invisible punishment because offenders are released into the community under numerous restrictions, and this often restricts offenders’ ability to obtain lawful employment. The criminal record also hinders offenders’ potential to achieve law-abidingness in the community (Petersilia, 2003).

According to Taxman (2007), correctional systems are not typically designed to engage offenders in positive behaviors. In many instances, offenders are incarcerated with
the intent of incapacitation or behavior control rather than an effort to provide rehabilitation and reintegration into the community (Taxman, 2007). However, these controls do not produce long-term effects on public safety. Petersilia, (2007) indicated that California parolees do not get the help they need to improve their lives in the community. Petersilia (2007) added that at any given time only 20% of the parolee population is participating in a substance abuse treatment plan, obtaining an education, or receiving job training while on parole supervision. This disparity in numbers is associated with the minimal interaction between the supervising agency (probation or parole) and the offender. As a result, more offenders are sent back into custody because of technical violations for not receiving the appropriate assistance while under community supervision.

To achieve positive results and improve public safety, the correctional system needs to evaluate the high- and low-risk offenders and concentrate on offenders that pose a great risk in the community. Travis and Lawrence (2003) posited that to have an effective crime prevention program and to increase public safety, correctional organizations need to invest the effort toward promoting successful offender outcomes. According to a report generated by Public Safety Performance Project, offenders are successful when they take charge of their lives by leading a productive lifestyle and reducing the likelihood of re-offending (Pew Center on the States, 2011). Rogers (2012) contended that there is a need to continue supervision with an intense surveillance and treatment strategy, but also proper intervention to meet the offender’s needs may improve public safety.

Bogue and Nandi (2012) reported that, although the use of external control is important to reducing crime, achieving an effective correctional intervention requires an improvement in staff-offender interactions. Community supervision is the most critical
aspect in the lives of offenders. For public safety to exist, the focus of corrections administrations should be on improving staff-offenders interactions, engaging offenders in behavioral change, and promoting motivation to improve the offender’s lives (Petersilia, 2007; Rogers, 2012; Solomon, 2006; Stewart, 2012).

Summary

Chapter 2 provided a detailed review of the literature to present the historical background of the factors that provoked the creation of the California Public Safety Realignment Act, AB 109 and the intended purpose, the affect that government has had on public perceptions of safety. Public perceptions of safety were explored with particular emphasis on prior research in the state of California and in relation to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The chapter concluded with a review of the implications of the perception toward public safety, and relating how AB 109 influenced those perspectives.

Chapter 3 includes an overview of the central research questions, hypotheses, population under study, and an explanation of the research methodology. Chapter 3 will also include (a) the research design, (b) the research method and design appropriateness, (c) the informed consent process and form, (d) the sampling process, (e) the geographic location of the study, (f) the data collection process, (g) the survey instrument, (h) issues related to validity and reliability, and (i) the data analysis process.
Chapter 3

Research Method

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between public perceptions of public safety and the demographics of age and gender for San Diego residents after the implementation of AB 109. This study used a quantitative correlational, cross-sectional research design. Quantitative methodology provided the parameters to describe the correlation between variables without establishing causation. The principal objective of this quantitative correlational study was to provide a description of a particular phenomenon and examine the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2009). The following research questions were designed to determine if any relationship exist between citizens’ perceptions of public safety and the demographics of age and gender. The researcher designed three questions to guide the present study.

RQ1: What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age?

RQ2: What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender?

RQ 3: What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the linear combination of age and gender?

In Chapter 3, the central research questions, hypotheses, population under study, and the research methodology will be explained. Chapter 3 will also include (a) the research design, (b) the research method and design appropriateness, (c) the informed consent process, (d) the sampling process, (e) the geographic location of the study, (f) the data collection process, (g) the survey instrument, (h) issues related to validity and reliability, and (i) the
data analysis process. *Pearson r* was used as the data analysis to measure the linear relationship between the variable age and gender. The independent variables provided numerical data to make possible the strength and direction of the relationship (Steinberg, 2008).

**Research Method and Design Appropriateness**

**Research method appropriateness.** This study used a quantitative correlational, cross-sectional research design. Quantitative methodology provided the parameters to examine the correlation between variables without establishing causation. The focus of this study was to examine the relationship between public perceptions of public safety about AB 109, and the demographics of age and gender in San Diego County. This type of inquiry required a numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of the population under study (Creswell, 2009).

In determining a research design of the study, it was imperative to identify the specific goal of the research. The type of research design selected for this study guided the researcher to decide what problem the researcher intends to solve, in this case the type of inquiry was to examine the relationship between variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). This type of research design measured the participants at a single point in time (cross-sectional) without manipulating the study or influencing the participants in its natural setting. Through quantitative research, the researcher compared groups at single point in time without establishing cause and effect and to determine only if a relationship exists among groups (Creswell, 2009). This type of research design also enabled the researcher to test variables statistically without manipulation or randomly assigning participants to a group (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2010). The potential relationship between public perceptions of AB 109
on public safety and gender (female or male) and age (18 years and older) provided the appropriate statistical data that would not have been available through a qualitative study alone.

**Research design appropriateness.** Qualitative methods and a mixed methods design were not selected for this particular study. Qualitative methods describe the lived experiences of participants, and the researcher is a part of the environment where the research is taking place (Creswell, 2009; Simon, 2006). A qualitative approach centers the focus of the study on exploring a phenomenon rather than testing a hypothesis or research question (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Neuman, 2006). Mixed methods, on the other hand, are the combination of collecting quantitative and qualitative data. In essence, the researcher is looking to provide a better understanding of the research problem. A quantitative approach is generally intended to gather information on perceptions and behaviors to enable the researcher to make inferences on the numerical data collected (Creswell, 2009). A qualitative approach was not selected because it consists of open-ended information where the researcher collects data by means of interviews or observations and the data collected reflects the lived experiences of the participants in their own words. Mixed method was not selected for this particular study because the study is intended to analyze the numerical data collected by surveys to answer the research question and a hypothesis. The administration of a survey was used to examine the central research problem and allowed the researcher to quantify data to determine trends, differences, or similarities among variables and to represent empirical reality (Creswell, 2009).

According to Neuman (2006), each methodology offers different sets of techniques to conduct a study. Neuman (2006) asserted that although both methodologies share basic
principles of science, they both have weaknesses, strengths, advantages, and disadvantages. The decision to select one method over the other relies mainly on the need of the researcher and focus of the study. A quantitative methodology was the most appropriate approach to quantify the data and demonstrate the relationship between the variables under the study. The intent of the study was to examine how the implementation of AB 109 affected public perceptions on public safety. According to Black (1999), three conditions must exist to select this method, (a) a process of inquiry to an identified problem (b) test an empirical hypothesis (c) analyses data using statistical measures. A quantitative study in this case was the most appropriate design to obtain numerical data from the population under study who had a direct affect with the identified problem under the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Three research questions were derived from the literature and theoretical framework. RQ1 and RQ2 were answered using correlation and descriptive statistics. The findings of descriptive statistics revealed demographic information collected from participants (Christensen, Burke, & Turner, 2011). For hypotheses 1 and 2 a Pearson correlation was used to determine whether to retain or reject the null hypotheses. For Hypotheses 3, an Ordinary least multiple regression model was selected to examine the association between public safety and the combination of age and gender.

**RQ1** What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age (18 years and older)?

**H₀₁**: There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age.
**H_{A1}:** There is a significant relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age.

**RQ2:** What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender (male, female)?

**H_{02}:** There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender.

**H_{A2}:** There is a significant relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender.

**RQ3:** What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and linear combination of age and gender?

**H_{03}:** There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the linear combination of gender and age.

**H_{A3}:** There is a significant relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the linear combination of gender and age.

**Population and Sampling Frame**

The population for this study consisted of citizens who reside in San Diego County. There are approximately 1,321,315 residents in San Diego County in California (U.S. Census, 2011). Creswell, (2009) described a population as any group of individuals having common characteristics. The sample population consisted of San Diego resident over the age of 18 and having knowledge of AB 109. Participants not residing in San Diego County or being employed as sworn peace officers in San Diego County were excluded from the study.

According to Creswell (2009) and Leedy & Ormrod (2012), survey research is used to measure variables by selecting participants who have close experience or is experiencing
the phenomenon under study. The California Public Safety Realignment Act, AB 109 went into effect October 1, 2011, in the State of California. Fifty-eight counties are within the state of California and San Diego is one of the counties implementing the law (CDCR, 2012). Therefore, selecting residents of San Diego for this study was relevant to the central issue of the research.

The sample for this study consisted of individuals who reside in San Diego County in California and being over the age of 18 to ensure the participants met the age eligibility requirement had AB 109 been available on the ballot for the citizens of California to decide. The sample excluded participants currently employed as sworn peace officers in any law enforcement agency. Law enforcement agencies in California are currently implementing and enforcing AB 109 and the participation of sworn peace officers in this study could have introduced bias in the study. There are approximately 1 million people over the age of 18 who reside in San Diego County (U.S. Census, 2011). A sample population consists of all members from a defined group from whom information is gathered (Hagan, 1993). Leedy & Ormrod, (2010) suggested that a sample population for a quantitative correlational, cross-sectional study is calculated based on the following criteria: the total population size, how alike, or different the population is with respect of the researcher’s interest, and the degree of precision to draw conclusions.

The criteria strategy to select the sample population for this study was purposive sampling. Additionally, a snowball technique was considered in the event the target population was not achieved. According to Yin (2009), a purposive sample is best described as the means the researcher uses in selecting the sample population. In essence, the researcher selected the sample population that was accessible to the researcher and familiar
with the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Willis, 2007). The purpose of selecting a purposive sample was also to select the participants based on the criteria required to answer the research question and to select only participants that meet the criteria to represent the sample population (Creswell, 2009). This technique is commonly used when the researcher wants to identify a target population relevant to the study otherwise not able to achieve by means of randomization. This technique is also appropriate when the researcher has restrictions related to time, money, location, and availability of sites (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

A statistical power analysis technique was used to determine the sample size. Before conducting a power analysis three parameters must exist to determine an accurate sample: (a) expected effect size, (b) power, and (c) critical alpha (Cohen, 1988). Power analysis assisted the researcher in determining the sample size required to obtain significant results (Cohen, 1988). Additionally, performing a power analysis assisted in establishing the difference between groups selected for the study. To determine the sample population for a multiple regression model, the G*Power 3.1 software program was used (Faul et al, 2009). With two independent variable (age and gender), based on a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), an alpha level of $\alpha = .05$, the needed sample size to achieve sufficient power (.80) was determined to be 68 participants. Power analysis is usually calculated at 80% or .80, indicating that there is an 80% probability that there will be a significant difference among groups, if a difference exists. The sample size for this study was representative, meaning that the sample was adequate to find a significant relationship between the variables.
Informed Consent, Withdrawal, and Confidentiality

Informed consent. This study included residents of San Diego County, in California. The participants were advised about their participation to be voluntary and confidential. The participants were briefed on the purpose of the study via invitation (Appendix A) and followed by the informed consent form. All participants that agreed to participate in the study were required to sign the informed consent form (Appendix B) and return it to the researcher prior to receiving the survey instrument. The informed consent form provided background information about the researcher, provided information about the purpose of the study, what it was expected of participants, and the time commitment to answer the survey instrument. In addition, the informed consent form ensured that participation was anonymous and voluntary, and declaring any potential risks, vulnerabilities, and confidentiality issues (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). The contact information of the researcher was also provided in the event participant had any questions or concerns about participating in the study.

Withdrawal process. Participants were informed how to withdraw from the study without any penalty or repercussions. Participants were presented with an option to withdraw from the study, before, during, or after the research study.

Confidentiality. Participation in this study was voluntary and it was expected to pose no risk or harm to participants. The survey protocols used in this study met all Institutional Review Board (IRB) standards of approval, and provided clear instructions prior to the participant responding to surveys. Participants were ensured that responses would not be shared with anyone or seen by anyone other than the researcher and the researcher’s statistician as provided by the signed non-disclosure agreement (Appendix C). Names of
participants were not included in the study. The researcher developed a coding system to identify the participants in the study. The coding system consisted of assigning each participant a numeric value 1 through 68.

There was a pilot study conducted prior to the real study to validate the survey instrument, and both phases of the study used the same processes: onsite survey administration, protection of the data, and disposal of the data after the completion of the dissertation. The coding system for the pilot study consisted of assigning each participant a numeric and alpha value of 1P through 20P. The protocol used by this researcher in protecting the participant’s data consisted of storing the participant’s responses separate from the signed informed consent document. Both documents were secured in a locked cabinet file located in the researcher’s office where only the researcher has access to the key. The raw data was recorded into a Microsoft Excel file and was further analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS). Additionally, the data analyzed was stored in a password protected external storage device to assure confidentiality. All data used during this study will be destroyed after 3 years from the date of approval of the dissertation.

**Geographic Location**

The geographic location selected for this study was San Diego County, in California. Participants were invited to take part in this study on site. The survey instrument (Appendix D) was the only form of data collection. To assure participants met the inclusion criteria for the study, a demographic questionnaire (Appendix E) was included with the survey instrument with the question: Do you reside in San Diego County, California? All participants selected for this study were San Diego residents.
Data Collection

In this quantitative study, the data was collected from participants who reside in San Diego County, California. The method of data collection was on site survey administration. The researcher contacted several organizations located within San Diego County that were interested in participating in the study. Only the organizations that agreed to participate and indicated having knowledge of AB 109 were selected for this study. Five organizations within San Diego County agreed and signed the permission to use their premises to recruit participants for the study (Appendices F, G, H, I, and J). The data collection started once the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study. The method of collecting the data was inviting the participants on site with an invitation letter (Appendix A) and a consent form (Appendix B). Once the participant indicated that he or she was willing to participate, the participant received an envelope with an invitation to participate in the study along with an informed consent form. Once the informed consent form was ink signed and returned, the participant received a second envelope with two survey instruments, the demographics questionnaire and the PPIS instrument. The consent envelope was labeled with a number value (1 through 68) and the letter C, and the survey envelope was labeled with a number (1 through 68) and a letter S. The researcher collected the consent envelopes in a 9” x 12” manila clasp envelope labeled consent forms. The survey instrument was collected in a 9” x 12” manila clasp envelope labeled survey instrument. Upon completion of the data collection, all forms were transferred to a locked storage receptacle, where only the researcher had access.

Participants were asked to provide demographic information: if they are employed as a sworn peace officer in San Diego, their geographic location, and if they are over 18 years
of age. These procedures were done to ensure participants were located in San Diego County, California, were over the age of 18, and were not employed as sworn peace officers. All raw data was recorded using Microsoft Excel. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program was used to analyze the data.

**Instrumentation**

A quantitative correlational, cross sectional method was used as the structure for this study. Black (1999) asserted that when developing an instrument appropriate for a study, it is important to devise an instrument that results in the necessary data to resolve the research questions. To analyze the data for this study it is imperative to use an analytical method of analyzing descriptive statistics (Neuman, 2006). The intent of the instrumentation process was to define the steps in gathering data. The research question determined what type of data was needed to resolve the research questions.

Two survey instruments were used for this study: Demographics instrument (Appendix E) and the Public Perceptions on the Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS) (Appendix D). The demographics survey instrument included a five-item questionnaire and the Public Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 scale (PPIS) survey instrument was a five-item questionnaire with closed-ended questions.

**The demographics instrument.** The demographic instrument (Appendix E) was designed to collect data appropriate for this study. Resident status, age, ethnicity, gender, and employment status was included in the demographic instrument. Additionally, there were two items in the demographic section to determine if participants met the criteria for inclusion or exclusion in the study (question 1, and 2). Question 1, was intended to ask the participants if they are employed as a sworn peace officer in San Diego County, if the answer
was yes, the survey was not included in the study and it was disposed of appropriately. Question 2, was intended to recruit only participants who reside within San Diego, Do you reside in San Diego County? If the answer was yes, the survey was included in the study.

**The public’s perceptions on the implementation of AB 109 scale (PPIS).** The Public Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS) (Appendix D) is a five-item questionnaire created to measure public perceptions on the implementation of AB 109. The 6-point Likert-type scale was intended to indicate the level of agreement of public perceptions on the implementation of AB 109 responses. The sample population completed the questionnaire on how he or she perceives public safety after the implementation of AB 109. The responses were categorized using Likert-type scale options as follows: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 4 = *slightly agree*, 5 = *agree*, 6 = *strongly agree*. The responses were reported as interval data, meaning the data reflected a relationship or a difference between individual’s perceptions (Neuman, 2006). Interval measurements were appropriate because they demonstrated more precisely the real difference between the numbers to determine the relationship among them (Hagan, 1993). The results were a score represented by adding values across five items for each case and dividing the number of the total questions (Hagan, 1993). The scores were represented ranging between 1 and 6 indicating the maximum score is 6 and the minimum score is 1.

The PPIS was an appropriate tool because the survey provided the numerical data of public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109. The results were compared among the participant’s demographics such as gender and age to identify any relationship that contributed to the conclusion of the hypothesis.
Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are two different concepts that are commonly used in research to determine the appropriate measures to achieve a valid and reliable data (Newman, 2006). Reliability, as defined by Creswell (2009), is a measure used during the study that has been consistently proven to yield the same results. The basic assumption that the measure is applied again and most likely would replicate the results. In quantitative studies, the researcher is looking for reliability to demonstrate consistency in the process of inquiry rather than consistency with the results. Neuman (2006) identified and reported that one of the ways to improve reliability is to use a pilot study. A pilot study using a small sample with same characteristics of the sample population would indicate whether the preliminary set of questions is clear and concise. Christensen, et al. (2011) postulated that a pilot study is intended to resolve any problems associated with the data collection instrument and to make corrections as suggested by the pilot test.

Validity is referred to as the accuracy of the instrument to measure the intended concept of the study (Neuman, 2006). Validity also is important in research to determine if the instrument to collect data is more likely to produce meaningful data appropriate to address the intent of the study (Creswell, 2009). Creswell, (2009), and Neuman (2006), contended that there are three forms of validity: content validity, predictive validity, and construct validity. Content validity refers to the degree of which the content of the measure is likely to produce the intended outcome. The content validity can also be improved by conducting a pilot study (Neuman, 2006). Predictive validity simply indicates that the measure used should be similar to an existing measure to produce similar results (Neuman, 2006). Construct validity is required when the researcher wants to improve the validity of
the instrument by comparing the consistency of scores from similar instruments (Neuman, 2006).

**Pilot study.** The Public’s Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS) is a self-developed survey that used Likert-type questions to examine the effect of the Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) on public safety. To measure the internal consistency of the PPIS instrumentation, a pilot study was conducted with 20 participants. Neuman (2006) asserted that when conducting a pilot study a small set of participants is deemed as necessary. The rationale behind conducting a pilot study was to determine if the questions were relevant to answer the research question. The questions were not modified into the final form. The participants selected for the pilot study were not included in the final study.

The sample pilot study of 20 participants completed the PPIS instrument and data was analyzed using Cronbach’s alpha. Cronbach’s alpha is an approach to indicate the internal consistency of an instrument (Black, 1999). Cronbach’s alpha is not a statistical test but rather a coefficient of reliability. A coefficient of .70 or higher is considered reliable or acceptable means of consistency, thus the construct measuring the dependent variable is considered reliable (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004). After the pilot study was completed, the survey instrument was determined to have a Cronbach’s alpha= .930, which indicated a highly reliable scale.

**Data Analysis**

In this quantitative study, the data was collected from participants who reside in San Diego County, California. The method of data collection was on site survey instrument. There were two instruments administered on site to collect data, a demographics instrument, and the Public’s Perceptions on The Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS). The
demographic instrument was used to report descriptive statistics into summaries about the population under study. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were initially used to summarize the data. The analysis procedure was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Student Version 20.0. Alpha level for this study was set at $p < .05$.

For hypothesis 1 (relationship of perceptions with age), Pearson correlations were used. For hypothesis 2 (relationship of perceptions with gender), a point-biserial correlation was used. For hypothesis 3, (relationship of perceptions with the linear combination of age and gender), an Ordinary least squares multiple regression model was created using the perception score as the dependent variable with the respondent’s age and gender as the two independent variables. The purpose of selecting the variables of age and gender was to examine if these variables were correlated to perceptions of public safety.

**Summary**

The methodology used to address the quantitative correlational, cross-sectional study was revealed in Chapter 3. The intent of the study was to provide a description of how the implementation of AB 109 affects public perceptions on public safety by examining the relationship between the independent variables (gender and age) and the dependent variable (public’s perceptions toward AB 109 effects on public safety. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were initially used to accomplish the purpose of this study. Additionally, the central research questions, hypotheses, data collection process, and population under study, were explained in this chapter. The results of the data collection and data analysis are presented in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109, and the demographics of age and gender in San Diego County. Chapter 1 presented the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 introduced the literature available for this study, including an explanation of the theoretical framework selected for this study, how the theoretical information would assist with answering the research questions, hypotheses, and address the variables. Chapter 3 reported the study methodology, design, and data collection processes. Chapter 4 provides the survey data, the analysis, results, and findings and addresses the research questions.

This study used a quantitative correlational, cross-sectional research design. Quantitative methodology provided the parameters to describe the correlation between variables without establishing causation. Data from 68 participants residing in San Diego County were gathered for this study. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) were the methods used to accomplish the purpose of this study.

Pilot Study

Two survey instruments were used for this study: Demographics instrument (Appendix E) and the Public Perceptions on the Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS) (Appendix D). The demographics survey instrument included a five-item questionnaire and the Public Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 scale (PPIS) survey instrument included a five-item questionnaire. The Public’s Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS) is a self-developed survey that used Likert-type scale questions to obtain the
necessary data to resolve the research questions. To measure the internal consistency of the PPIS instrumentation, a pilot study was conducted on January 20, 2014 and concluded on January 25, 2014. The participants were selected from the five organizations within San Diego County that provided permission to recruit participants. The pilot study consisted of 20 participants purposively selected to participate in the study. The pilot participants and their responses were not included in the final study, but were reported separately.

The rationale behind conducting a pilot study was to determine if the questions were relevant to answer the research question and test the reliability of the questionnaire. The sample pilot study of 20 participants completed the PPIS instrument and Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine the reliability of the scale. Cronbach’s alpha is an approach to indicate the internal consistency of an instrument (Black, 1999). Cronbach’s alpha is not a statistical test but rather a coefficient of reliability. A coefficient of .70 or higher is considered reliable or acceptable means of consistency, thus the construct measuring the dependent variable is considered reliable (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004). After the pilot study was completed, the survey instrument was determined to have a Cronbach alpha= .930, which indicated a highly reliable scale.

**Pilot Study Results**

Table 1 displays the frequency counts for selected variables. Ages of the participants ranged from 21-29 years (20.0%) to 60-69 (10.0%) with a median age of 44.50 years. There were slightly more female participants (55.0%) than there were male participants (55.0%). The most common racial/ethnic groups were Caucasian (40.0%) and Hispanic (40.0%)
Table 1

*Frequency Counts for Selected Variables from the Pilot Study (N = 20)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Category a</td>
<td>21 - 29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Age: *Mdn = 44.50 years.*

Table 2 displays the results of the reliability analysis for the total perception score.

This scale was measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 6 = *Strongly Agree*). The total score (*M* = 2.98, *SD* = 1.33) was created based on aggregating the five individual perception scores. The resulting Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the total score was *α* = .93 which suggested that the scale score had an acceptable level of internal reliability (Black, 1999).

Table 2

*Reliability Analysis for the Total Perception Score Using Pilot Study Data (N = 20)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scale was based on a 6-point metric: 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 6 = *Strongly Agree.*
The final survey instrument was modified within the demographic section only to improve the participant’s inclusion in the study. During the collection of the pilot study, 20 surveys were administered and five were eliminated because participants were completing the survey while indicating “no” to demographic question 3, “Are you familiar with AB 109?” Five more surveys were administered to meet the sample population for the pilot study. Question 3 was intended to recruit only participants with familiarity with AB 109. Based on the results of the pilot study, the researcher eliminated demographic question 3, which was not included in final survey instrument. During the final study, the participants were encouraged to indicate whether they were familiar or not about AB 109 during the invitation process to ensure the participants were meeting the inclusion criteria of familiarity with AB 109. Additionally, the participants were asked to express any concerns or questions about the survey instrument. The changes suggested by the pilot study were included in the final version of the instrument. The participants selected for the pilot study and the data collected were not included in the final study.

**Data Collection**

The data collected for this study consisted of 68 participants completing a five-item Public Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS). The participants were selected from five organizations within San Diego County. Each organization previously provided a permission to recruit participants for the study. An invitation letter was distributed among potential participants along with the consent form. Only the participants that voluntarily expressed knowledge of AB 109 and willingness to participate in the study were considered for the study. The participants were also afforded the opportunity to take the survey home and return it to the researcher within 48 hours.
Following the collection of the informed consent form, 90 surveys were distributed among the participants. Data collected reflected 82 surveys and eight surveys were not returned to the researcher. Following a visual examination of the surveys, 14 surveys were excluded. The reason for excluding 14 surveys included (a) employment as peace officers, (b) signing the informed consent form but not marking accepting or not accepting the terms, and (c) living outside San Diego County. A complete visual examination was conducted on all 68 completed surveys to ensure there were no other missing data. The data collected and retained from 68 surveys were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and were later analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Student Version 20.0.

**Data Analysis and Findings**

Following the collection of the consent form, 90 surveys were administered, 14 were excluded, and eight were not returned. Descriptive statistics displaying the variables for this study (age and gender) were computerized and to demonstrate the frequencies and percentage. Table 3 displays the frequency counts for selected variables. Ages of the participants ranged from 18-20 years (4.4%) to 70 years or older (2.9%) with a median age of 39.50 years. The results indicated that there were somewhat more female participants (57.4%) than there were male participants (42.6%). The purpose of selecting the independent variables of age and gender was to determine if these variables were correlated to perceptions of public safety. According to Hasley & White (2008), age and gender are personal characteristics that can have a great influence on how people perceive public safety. The most common racial/ethnic groups were Caucasian (38.2%) and Hispanic (27.9%).
Table 3

Frequency Counts for Selected Variables (N = 68)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Category</td>
<td>18 - 20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21 - 29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70 years or older</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>29</th>
<th>42.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Race/Ethnicity

|               | African American | 5  | 7.4 |
|               | Asian            | 10 | 14.7|
|               | Caucasian        | 26 | 38.2|
|               | Hispanic         | 19 | 27.9|
|               | Other            | 4  | 5.9 |
|               | Prefer not to answer| 4 | 5.9 |

a Age: Mdn = 39.50 years.

Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for the six perception variables. These variables were measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree). The total score (M = 3.60, SD = 1.58) was created based on aggregating the five individual perception scores. The resulting Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the total score was α = .96 which suggested that the scale score had an acceptable level of internal reliability (Black, 1999). The five individual perception variables had similar mean scores to each other ranging from M = 3.40 to M = 3.79.
Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for the Perception Variables (N = 68)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Perception Score ( ^a )</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Implementation of AB 109 will eventually decrease recidivism rates on non-violent offenders and repeat offenders.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rehabilitation programs will probably be more effective in improving public safety because the local county has assumed responsibility for development and implementation.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Offender supervision after incarceration will be more effective in preserving public safety because the local county has assumed responsibility.</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Because offender oversight has shifted to the county, the interaction between probation officers and probationer will be more effective in improving public safety.</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Because offender oversight has shifted to the local county, public safety will likely improve.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( ^a \) Total score based on the five Likert ratings had a Cronbach alpha coefficient of \( \alpha = .96 \).

Note. Ratings based on a 6-point metric: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 6 = Strongly Agree.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Three research questions derived from the literature and theoretical framework. RQ1 and RQ2 were answered using correlation and descriptive statistics. For hypotheses 1, a Pearson correlation was used. For hypotheses 2, a Point-biserial correlation was used. For Hypotheses 3, an Ordinary least squares Multiple Regression model was used. Research Question 1 asked, “What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age (18 years and older)?” and the related null hypothesis predicted that, “There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age.” To answer that question, Table 5
displays the Pearson correlation between the respondent’s age and their total perception score. The resulting correlation was significant ($r = -0.35, p < .005$) which provided support to reject the null hypothesis. Inspection of Table 3 also found all five of the individual perception variables had significant negative correlations with the respondent’s age. The largest of those five correlations was between age and Item 1, “Implementation of AB 109 will eventually decrease recidivism rates on non-violent offenders and repeat offenders” ($r = -0.43, p < .001$).

Table 5

*Pearson Correlations for the Perception Variables with Age and Gender (N = 68)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception Variable</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Perception Score a</td>
<td>-0.35 ***</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Implementation of AB 109 will eventually decrease recidivism rates on non-violent offenders and repeat offenders.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.43 ***</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rehabilitation programs will probably be more effective in improving public safety because the local county has assumed responsibility for development and implementation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.24 *</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Offender supervision after incarceration will be more effective in preserving public safety because the local county has assumed responsibility.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.31 **</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Because offender oversight has shifted to the county, the interaction between probation officers and probationer will be more effective in improving public safety.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.31 **</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Because offender oversight has shifted to the local county, public safety will likely improve.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.33 **</td>
<td>-0.27 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Gender coding: 1 = Male 2 = Female.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .005$. **** $p < .001$.

The Pearson Correlation between gender and the dependent variable are point-biserial correlations.
Research Question 2 asked, “What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender (male, female)?” and the related null hypothesis predicted that, “There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender.” To answer that question, Table 5 displays the Point-biserial correlation between the respondent’s gender and their total perception score. The resulting correlation was not significant ($r = -.16, p = .19$) which provided support to retain the null hypothesis. Inspection of Table 5 also reveals one of the five individual perception variables to be significantly related with the respondent’s gender. Specifically, male participants had significantly more agreement with Item 5, “Because offender oversight has shifted to the local county, public safety will likely improve” ($r = -.27, p < .05$).

Research Question 3 asked, “What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and a linear combination of age and gender?” and the related null hypothesis predicted that, “There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the linear combination of gender and age.” The linear combination of gender and age was significant based on the overall $F$ Test $F (2, 65) = 5.62, p = .006$. $R^2 = .147$.), that provided support to reject the null hypothesis. It is not necessary that both predictors be significant to reject the null but only the overall $F$ Test. The answer this question, Table 6 displays the results of the Ordinary least squares Regression prediction model for the perception total score based on the respondent’s age and gender.
Table 6

*Ordinary Least Squares Regression Prediction Model for the Perception Total Score Based on Age and Gender (N = 68)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Category</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender a</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full Model: $F(2, 65) = 5.62, p = .006, R^2 = .147.$

*Gender coding: 1 = Male 2 = Female.*

Inspection of the table reveals the overall model was significant ($p = .006$) and accounted for 14.7% of the variance in the total perception score. Inspection of the beta weights found that the total perception score was negatively related to the respondent’s age ($\beta = -.35, p = .003$) but not related to the respondent’s gender ($\beta = -.15, p = .18$). This combination of findings provided support to reject the null hypothesis.

**Summary**

This quantitative correlational study examined data from 68 participants to measure the relationship between public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the demographics of age and gender. A pilot study was conducted to validate the survey instrument which revealed a Cronbach alpha= .930, which indicated a highly reliable scale. Hypothesis 1 (perception with age) was supported. Hypothesis 2 (perception with gender) was not supported. Hypothesis 3 (perception with the combination of age and gender) was supported. Chapter 5 provides a presentation of the conclusions and recommendations, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship if any, between public perceptions of public safety, and the demographics of age and gender for San Diego residents after the implementation of AB 109. This study used a quantitative correlational, cross-sectional research design. Quantitative methodology provided the parameters to describe the correlation between variables without establishing causation. This study was significant because this was the first effort to gather information pertaining to public perceptions of public safety following the implementation of AB 109, a population not included in previous literature. The purpose of selecting the variables of age and gender was to examine if these variables were correlated to perceptions of public safety.

The California Public Safety Realignment Act, AB 109, is a law implemented in California in 2011 to reduce the prison population, reduce recidivism, and improve public safety. The law also mandated the release of low-level offenders to probation supervision and the discharge of offenders that pose a lower risk in the community (Wikoff et al., 2012). Proponents of the law indicated that AB 109 could improve public safety because offenders are presented with more rehabilitative efforts in the community. Opponents of the law disagreed because of a notable increase in crime in their communities after the implementation of AB 109 (Crime Victims Action Alliance, 2013).

The literature available for this study revealed conflicting information regarding the implementation of AB 109, and the effect on public safety. The large proportion of studies related to AB 109 supported the fact that AB 109 is a work in progress and it is too early to determine whether AB 109 is the main factor that compromising public safety (Lofstrom et
al., 2012; Petersilia, 2011b). Conversely, opponents of the law contended that AB 109 was not a measure to improve public safety and reduce recidivism, rather a measure to release dangerous offenders into the community to reduce prison overcrowding and save the state money (Rushford, 2012).

A quantitative research method was selected for this study because the focus of the study was to determine quantifiable data pertaining to an agreement the implementation AB 109 and public safety. This type of research design measured participants at a single point in time (cross-sectional) to establish only a relationship between the variables. Through quantitative research, numeric information and trends in perceptions of the selected population was identified (Creswell, 2010). This type of research design enabled the researcher to test the variables statistically without manipulation or establishing causation (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2010).

The sample population for this study was 68 purposively selected citizens residing in San Diego County. The sample population consisted of participants from five different organizations selected within San Diego County. To obtain the necessary data for the study, 68 participants answered a five-item questionnaire, the Public Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS) (Appendix D). The 6-point Likert-type scale was intended to indicate the level of agreement of the public perceptions on the implementation of AB 109 as follows: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=slightly disagree, 4=slightly agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree. The scores were represented ranging between 1 and 6, indicating the maximum score is 6 and the minimum score is 1. This research study also included a demographic instrument (Appendix E) to collect the data appropriate for this study. Descriptive statistics (Mean, median, mode, standard deviation) were reported and compared
among the variables. Pearson correlation, point-biserial correlation, and ordinary least squares multiple regression model was used to determine if any relationship existed between the variables in question.

The results were compared among the participant’s demographics, such as gender and age, to identify any relationship that contributed to the conclusion of the hypotheses. The variables of age and gender were selected for this study to determine if these variables had an effect on perceptions of public safety. According to Schafer (2002), age and gender variations in perceptions can be related to a number of factors such education, income, and neighborhood. Additionally, Hasley and White (2008) contended that age and gender are personal characteristics that can have a great influence on how people perceive public safety. However, the resulting data indicated significantly that hypothesis 1 (perception with age) was supported. Hypothesis 2 (perception with gender) was not supported. Hypothesis 3 (perception with the combination of age and gender) was supported.

**Conclusion**

This study was an examination of the relationship between the public perceptions of public safety and the demographics of age and gender after the implementation of AB 109. AB 109 is a newly implemented law in California intended to alleviate the prison overcrowding, reduce offender recidivism, and improve public safety. A review of the literature indicated that advocates of the law believed that this law would improve public safety because rehabilitative efforts in the community produce better outcomes than recycling offenders through the justice system (McKibben, 2012). Opponents of the law disagreed because they believed AB 109 is releasing dangerous offenders into the community, which compromises the safety of the citizens in California (Rushford, 2012).
To determine whether AB 109 was affecting public safety, a study of public perceptions of the law using the variable's perceptions of public safety and the demographics of age and gender was the focus of the study. To achieve the results, the hypotheses were tested using a null hypotheses indicating that no significant relationship existed between the variables public perception of public safety and age and gender. Research Question 1 was, “What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age?” and the related null hypothesis predicted that, “There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and age.” The Pearson correlation between the respondent’s age and their total perception score indicated a score of -.35. The resulting correlation was significant \( r = -0.35, p < 0.005 \) which provided support to reject the null hypothesis.

Therefore, there was an indication that participants were within the disagree more than agree category. Moreover, all of the five individual perception variables had significant negative correlations with the respondent’s age. The largest of those five correlations was between age and Item 1, “Implementation of AB 109 will eventually decrease recidivism rates on non-violent offenders and repeat offenders” \( r = -0.43, p < 0.001 \).

The study findings regarding Research Question 2, “What is the relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender (male, female)?” and the related null hypothesis predicted that, “There is no relationship between citizen’s perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and gender.” The point-biserial correlation between the respondent’s gender and their total perception score resulted in a correlation not significant \( r = -0.16, p = 0.19 \) which provided support to retain the null hypothesis. These findings suggested that gender was not statistically significant to
public perceptions of public safety. However, one of the five individual perception variables was significantly related with the respondent’s gender. Specifically, male participants had significantly more agreement with Item 5, “Because offender oversight has shifted to the local county, public safety will likely improve” \( (r = -0.27, p < .05) \).

In reviewing the research literature of public safety and the implementation of AB 109, a general idea was supported that a positive outcome from the law is still a work in progress (Krisberg and Nicholson, 2011). Every county is making significant progress in preserving public safety despite the criticisms of the law (Petersilia and Spencer, 2013). Petersilia’s (2011b) data suggested that it is too early to determine if AB 109 is a success or failure because counties are constantly working to develop strategies to address problems as they arise. This study was intended to provide a starting point for educators, practitioners, and community leaders concerned with the implementation of AB 109 and its implications on public safety. An exploration of other variables through further research, such as other cities and specific communities where crime appears to be a great concern for citizens and law enforcement officials, is recommended. This study was not intended to compare with other counties because no empirical research was available concerning the implementation of AB 109 and public perceptions of public safety.

**Implications**

This study indicated a number of implications for educators and researchers concerned with the implementation of AB 109. This study focused on finding a relationship between public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 and the demographics of age and gender. The demographics of age and gender were the only variables used in this study, revealing a significant negative relationship between public
perceptions of public safety and age. When examining the results, the null hypothesis was supported regarding public perceptions and gender because there was no relationship between the two variables. Although the results of this study suggested that there was no significant relationship between public perception of public safety and gender, future research should focus in considering other demographics to determine if other variables affect public perceptions. Additionally, this study used a quantitative approach employing a survey instrument with close-ended questions to gather the data. It is possible that conducting a qualitative study will assist the participants to express their real sentiment of the law. Furthermore, similar studies should be conducted in other cities in California to compare the results and findings and decide the true implications of the law on public safety and which neighborhoods are more affected and why.

Another implication of this study is a recurring concern regarding whether the public understands the law in its entirety and how the law is affecting public safety (Beck, 2012; Rushford, 2012). This study consisted of a five-item survey instrument. The questions were closed-ended without providing an opportunity to present the participant’s point of view.

The California Realignment Act, AB 109, was implemented in October 2011, and because of the limited research available, it was unknown at the time of this research whether the causes of high crime rates in some areas in California were attributed to the implementation of the law. Given the evidence presented by this study, public perceptions of public safety after the implementation of AB 109 is in need of further exploration.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. This study used a quantitative research approach, which only reported responses derived from a survey instrument with close-ended questions.
It is possible that better results could have been obtained if participants were presented with an opportunity to express their lived experiences about the law. Another limitation encountered during this study was the sample population. The participants were recruited from five organizations located within San Diego County. Collecting data in this capacity is unclear whether these results are generalizable to the residents of other counties in California.

Additionally, a limitation regarding the variables was noted. This study was limited to the variables age and gender; other demographics, such employment, education, and income should be considered for future research. Hasley and White (2008) contended that personal characteristics such as age and gender do have an influence on perceptions of public safety but also other personal characteristics such as income, education, and location can determine perceptions of their safety. This study was also limited to San Diego County residents only. As noted previously, this study can be replicated to other counties with similar demographics in California to make comparisons and draw conclusions about the demographics in question. The limitations however, provided valuable information to researchers and educators to explore other demographics, neighbors, or geographical areas not covered by this study.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study was to examine the relationship between public perceptions of public safety, with the demographics of age and gender after the implementation of AB 109. There was little investigation about understating how the citizens of California feel about their safety after the implementation AB 109. This study was specifically important because of sustained debates among advocates and opponents of the law and their efforts to preserve public safety. The California Public safety realignment
act may achieve the goal of reducing prison overcrowding, but recidivism and public safety remain questionable. There are a number of factors preventing the criminal justice system from achieving the goal of preserving public safety. The ongoing state budget crisis continues to be a problem because it limits the resources to rehabilitate offenders in the community. Criminal justice stakeholders need to develop plans that address the reasons why people commit crimes and address the population accordingly. The lack of resources also forces the rehabilitation process to be a one-size-fits-all approach rather than centering the attention to a more personalized strategy to rehabilitate offenders. A drug offender would not benefit with incarceration unless the custody setting is specifically designed to target offenders with substance abuse problems. However, a drug offender without the proper intervention and rehabilitation can potentially jeopardize the safety of the communities.

The results of this study indicated its limitations and further research could address areas not explored by this study. Because AB 109 appears to be a work in progress, it is unclear if the citizens of California have an acceptance or full understanding of the law. Furthermore, future research should focus on more in-depth questions to have a better understanding how the citizens of California feel about AB 109 and how is affecting their communities. For public safety to occur, a collaborative effort is necessary from all stakeholders, including not only community leaders, law enforcement officials, and legislators, but also to take into consideration the public’s opinion.
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Appendix A

Invitation to Survey Participants

Dear Participant,

I am a student at the University of Phoenix working on a doctorate in Management in Organizational Leadership. I am conducting a research study entitled: Assessing the effect of the Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) on public safety: A quantitative study of public perceptions. The objective of the study is to examine how implementation of AB 109 affects the public perceptions on public safety.

Your participation will involve a closed-ended survey including a brief demographic questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary and will consist of collecting your honest responses as it presents an important component for this study. You may select to withdraw from participating in this survey at any time without any penalty. The information collected from this survey will be kept confidential and your name will not appear on any document related to this study. Your participation will remain anonymous and surveys will be coded to ensure anonymity. The results of the study will be published as a dissertation, but because your participation in this study is anonymous, your name will not be associated with any results. Participants under the age of 18 and persons working in any law enforcement capacity will be excluded from the study.

This research poses no foreseeable risk to any of the participants in the study. All collected consent forms and survey instrument will be codified and saved in secure file in the researcher’s office. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, the possible benefit of your participation may help by informing law enforcement leaders how the implementation of the Public Safety Realignment Act, best known as AB 109 is affecting the citizen’s public safety.

Please review all instructions carefully including the informed consent form. Should you choose to withdraw from this study, you may do so without any repercussions and all your survey information will be deleted. The results of this study will be published and the results of the study will be available to you. Additionally, it is expected that this research will provide information of how safe the citizens of San Diego feel after the implementation of AB 109.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please e-mail me at xxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxx

Sincerely,

/s/Maria Dominquez
Researcher and Doctoral Candidate
University of Phoenix
Appendix B
Informed Consent: Participants 18 Years of Age and Older

Dear Survey participant,

My name is Maria Dominguez and I am a student at the University of Phoenix working on a doctorate in Management in Organizational Leadership degree. I am doing a research study entitled Assessing the effect of the Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) on public safety: A quantitative study of public perceptions. The purpose of this quantitative correlational study is to obtain a better understanding of the public perceptions toward the implementation of AB 109 and its implications on public safety. Perceptions will be explored by gender and by age to understand any variations in perceptions by these demographic characteristics. Reviewing the existing literature regarding the Public safety Realignment Act, AB 109 indicates California residents were not afforded the opportunity to voice their opinion of the law before the implementation. Learning about public perceptions toward AB 109 may provide insight into public perceptions of their safety following implementation of the law and an opportunity to address a population that were not included in previous research. The sample population consists of 68 San Diego residents over the age of 18 and not currently employed in any law enforcement capacity.

Your participation will involve answering an onsite survey questionnaire. Two survey instruments will be used for this study: Demographics instrument and the public perceptions on the implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS). The demographics instrument includes a 6-item instrument that will take about 5 minutes to complete. The public perceptions on the implementation of AB 109 scale (PPIS) is a 5-item instrument that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

You can decide to be a part of this study or not. Once you start, you can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits and all your survey information will be disposed of appropriately. The results of the research study may be published but your identity will remain confidential and your name will not be made known to any outside party.

In this research, there are no possible risks to you. Although there may be no direct benefit to you, a possible benefit from your part of this study is significant because it would be the first effort to understand how citizens in San Diego perceive public safety after the implementation of AB 109.

If you have any questions about the research study, please call me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx. For questions about your rights as a study participant, or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via e-mail at IRB@phoenix.edu.
As a participant in this study, you should understand the following:

1. You may decide not to be part of this study or you may want to withdraw from the study at any time. If you want to withdraw, you can do so without any problems.
2. Your identity will be kept confidential.
3. Maria Dominguez, the researcher, has fully explained the nature of the research study and has answered all of your questions and concerns.
4. Interviews will not be conducted nor will any audio or video recordings take place. The collection of data will consist of administrating a survey instrument onsite. The researcher will develop a way to code the data to assure that your name is protected.
5. Data will be kept in a secure and locked area. The data will be kept for three years, and will be destroyed.
6. The results of this study may be published.

“By signing this form, you agree that you understand the nature of the study, the possible risks to you as a participant, and how your identity will be kept confidential. When you sign this form, this means that you are 18 years old or older and that you give your permission to volunteer as a participant in the study that is described here.”

☐ I accept the above terms. ☐ I do not accept the above terms. (CHECK ONE)

Signature of the participant __________________________  Date ____________

Signature of the researcher /s/ Maria Dominguez _________  Date __1/06/2014__
Appendix C

Non-Disclosure Agreement Statistician

Non-Disclosure Agreement

Tom Granoff, Ph.D. acknowledges that in order to provide the services to Maria Dominguez (hereinafter "Researcher") who is a researcher in a confidential study with the University of Phoenix, Inc., Tom Granoff, Ph.D. must agree to keep the information obtained as part of his services (as more fully described below) confidential. Therefore the parties agree as follows:

1. The information to be disclosed under this Non-disclosure Agreement ("Agreement") is described as follows and shall be considered "Confidential Information": data preparation, data analysis, statistical tutoring, and proofing of Results Chapter after the Researcher completes the first draft of the Results Chapter. All information shall remain the property of Researcher.

2. Tom Granoff, Ph.D. agrees to keep in confidence and to use the Confidential Information for technical evaluation, scientific evaluation, and statistical analysis only and for no other purposes.

3. Tom Granoff, Ph.D. further agrees to keep in confidence and not disclose any Confidential Information to a third party or parties for a period of five (5) years from the date of such disclosure. All oral disclosures of Confidential Information as well as written disclosures of the Confidential Information are covered by this Agreement.

4. Tom Granoff, Ph.D. shall upon Researcher’s request either destroy or return the Confidential Information upon termination of this Agreement.

5. Any obligation of Tom Granoff, Ph.D. under this Agreement shall not apply to Confidential Information that:
   a) Is not part of the public knowledge through no fault of Tom Granoff, Ph.D.
   b) Tom Granoff, Ph.D. can demonstrate was rightfully in its possession before disclosure by Researcher/research subjects; or
   c) Tom Granoff, Ph.D. can demonstrate was rightfully received from a third party who was not Researcher/research subjects and was not under confidentiality restriction on disclosure and without breach of any nondisclosure obligation.

6. Tom Granoff, Ph.D. agrees to obligate its employees or agents, if any, who have access to any portion of Confidential Information to protect the confidential nature of the Confidential Information as set forth herein.

7. Tom Granoff, Ph.D. shall defend, indemnify and hold the Researcher and the University of Phoenix harmless against any third party claims of damage or injury of any kind
resulting from Tom Granoff, Ph.D. use of the Confidential Information, or any violation of by Tom Granoff, Ph.D. of the terms of this Agreement.

8. In the event Tom Granoff, Ph.D. receives a subpoena and believes it has a legal obligation to disclose Confidential Information, then Tom Granoff, Ph.D. will notify Researcher as soon as possible, and in any event at least five (5) business days prior to the proposed release. If Researcher objects to the release of such Confidential Information, Tom Granoff, Ph.D. will allow Researcher to exercise any legal rights or remedies regarding the release and protection of the Confidential Information.

9. Tom Granoff, Ph.D. expressly acknowledges and agrees that the breach, or threatened breach, by it through a disclosure of Confidential Information may cause irreparable harm and that Researcher may not have an adequate remedy at law. Therefore, Tom Granoff, Ph.D. agrees that upon such breach, or threatened breach, Researcher will be entitled to seek injunctive relief to prevent Tom Granoff, Ph.D. from commencing or continuing any action constituting such breach without showing or providing evidence of actual damage.

10. The interpretation and validity of this Agreement and the rights of the parties shall be governed by the laws of the State of California.

11. The parties to this Agreement agree that a copy of the original signature (including an electronic copy) may be used for any and all purposes for which the original signature may have been used. The parties further waive any right to challenge the admissibility or authenticity of this document in a court of law based solely on the absence of an original signature.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf:

Printed Name of Third Party/Vendor: Tom Granoff, Ph.D.

Date: January 6, 2014

Printed Name of Researcher: Maria Dominguez

Date: January 6, 2014

Current version 032012
Appendix D

Survey Instrument

The Public’s Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS)

Public’s Perceptions on Implementation of AB 109 Scale (PPIS)

Instructions: After the implementation of the California Realignment Act, best known as AB 109, a recurring concern among opponents of the law and citizens of California and the effect on public safety. Because the prison system continues to reduce the prison population, it is unclear whether the citizens of California enjoy a sense of safety with this law in place. An evaluation of the public perceptions about AB 109 will reveal if the law is indeed compromising public safety or not. AB 109 essentially realigns where offenders serve time, state prison or county jails. Additionally, AB 109 transfers the supervision of low-level offenders, traditionally supervised by state parole agents to the jurisdiction of the counties under probation supervision. Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.

1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = disagree more than agree, 4 = agree more than disagree, 5 = Agree, 6 = strongly agree

1. Implementation of AB 109 will eventually decrease recidivism rates on non-violent offenders and repeat offenders .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Rehabilitation programs will probably be more effective in improving public safety because the local county has assumed responsibility for development and implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Offender supervision after incarceration will be more effective in preserving public safety because the local county has assumed responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Because offender oversight has shifted to the county, the interaction between probation officers and probationer will be more effective in improving public safety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Because offender oversight has shifted to the local county, public safety will likely improve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree more than Agree</th>
<th>Agree more than Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Instructions – Please respond to all questions by putting “X” for the best choice.

1. Are you currently employed as a sworn peace officer in San Diego County?
   ________Yes
   ________No

2. Do you reside in San Diego County, California?
   ________Yes
   ________No

3. What is your age category?
   a) 18-20
   b) 21-29
   c) 30-39
   d) 40-49
   e) 50-59
   f) 60-69
   g) 70 years or older

4. What is your gender?
   ________Male
   ________Female
   ________Prefer not to answer

5. What is your ethnicity?
   _____ African American
   _____ Asian
_____ Caucasian

_____ Hispanic

_____ Other

_____ Prefer not to answer
Appendix F

Permission to Use Premises

PREMISES, RECRUITMENT AND NAME (PRN) USE PERMISSION

Name of Facility, Organization, University, Institution, or Association

Please complete the following by check marking any permissions listed here that you approve, and please provide your signature, title, date, and organizational information below. If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please contact the University of Phoenix Institutional Review Board via email at IRB@phoenix.edu.

☐ I hereby authorize Maria Dominguez, a student of University of Phoenix, to use the premises (facility identified below) to conduct a study entitled “Assessing the affect of the California Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) on public safety: A quantitative study of public perceptions”.

☐ I hereby authorize Maria Dominguez, a student of University of Phoenix, to recruit subjects for participation in a conduct a study entitled “Assessing the affect of the California Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) on public safety: A quantitative study of public perceptions”.

☐ I hereby authorize Maria Dominguez, a student of University of Phoenix, to use the name of the facility, organization, university, institution, or association identified above when publishing results from the study entitled “Assessing the affect of the California Public Safety Realignment Act (AB 109) on public safety: A quantitative study of
Appendix G

Permission to Use Premises

Name of Facility, Organization, University, Institution, or Association

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Appendix H

Permission to Use Premises

[Permssion form]

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Appendix I

Permission to Use Premises

University of Phoenix

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Appendix J

Permission to Use Premises –