Crim 860

Assignment 2: Creating a Likert Scale of Attitudes Regarding the Police

A previous 860 class decided to create a Likert scale dealing with attitudes about police, and the sample of people who filled in our survey included a good range of views from critical to supportive. For the first part of the assignment, each student sent me six (6) statements that we could potentially use in such a scale. Two were supposed to be "poor" statements, accompanied by an explanation of why the student believed them to be "poor" items. The remaining four statements were intended to be "good" items for inclusion in the scale; two were written in a "positive" direction, while the other two were written in a "negative" direction. After I received all the statements, I put them together in a survey format and each student was instructed to send a survey link to friends and family – a convenience sample. We ended up with 100 respondents among the class and others.

For this Assignment, see the email I sent you on Friday, October 16th, which contained an attached SPSS data file from the survey as well as a copy of the survey and frequency distributions from Survey Monkey. Your job in this assignment is to use these data to create a scale of attitudes about the police. Send me a brief report explaining the choices you made along the way, a copy of your final scale, and an explanation of what you would do next, after you do the following:

a. We started with an item pool of 67 statements, roughly half of which were written in a pro-police direction, and the other half in more of a "critical" direction. You can see the full list of items and whether their author considered each one to be positively or negatively worded in one of the files I sent on the 16th. Let's say that we are hoping to end up with a scale that's 12-ish items long.
b. We did the first couple of iterations in class on Friday. Your job in the assignment is now to clean up the loose ends on your own or with a partner where you have a look through the item-whole correlations we had after a couple of rounds in class, and either deciding on a set of items that broadly sample the domain, or further whittling down the pool of items to put together a tentative scale, explaining why you chose the particular set of items that you did.
c. Compute a split-half reliability (to pay homage to Likert) along with the Spearman Brown Prophecy and compute Cronbach's alpha for your scale.
d. Question 69 asked respondents to self-report an overall attitude about the police. Use responses to that question as a preliminary validation measure. You can do so by either recoding q69 into two groups, or using the "cut" option to split the sample at some appropriate point in the distribution.
e. Let's say that we decide that the scale you create in (b) is one we will go forward with and subject to further analysis. What would you be looking to do before you would feel comfortable actually using it in a research situation, e.g., if Vancouver's Mayor were to ask you to evaluate Vancouverite's support for the police, or if you were now interested in looking at other correlates of those attitudes?

Your assignment is due by 23 October.