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Examining the Impact that Mental Health Services, Youth Resources and Facilities within the Education System and Communities of Low Socio-Economic Areas can have on Youth Delinquency and Anti-Social Behaviour.

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MA in Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the impact that mental health services, youth resources and facilities within the education system and communities of low socio-economic areas can have on youth delinquency and anti-social behaviour. Areas that are considered low socio-economic areas are often stigmatised and deemed to have an influx in crime rates compared to more affluent areas (Masho et al., 2019). Crime rates and poverty may not be directly related, but there is a correlation between lower class areas and criminal activity (Blau & Blau, 1982). There can be many reasons as to why there may be higher crime rates within these areas, however one that will be critically analysed throughout this paper is the role of youth resources and mental health facilities as a deterrent to crime, as well as the availability of these within disadvantaged areas of the community. A qualitative study was carried out by semi structured interviews with ten participants who work directly with youth under the ages of eighteen, five secondary school teachers and five scout leaders. The data collected was then analysed by using the method of a thematic analysis to deduct several reoccurring themes. The method of data collection chosen for this research was participant interviews which were chosen due to the variety and richness of first-hand information that can be gathered by this method. Snowball sampling was used to gather participants for this research. This method provided access to participants who have had first-hand experiences with individuals under the age of eighteen. These interviews allowed in-dept, personal experiences of working with youth to be collected, which is beneficial to the area of research. The methods used within this research paper are an overall strength to the study as this qualitative data is ideal for gathering personal opinions and views on social topics such as juvenile offending and youth resources within lower socioeconomic areas. Throughout many of the interviews the issues of lack of awareness of mental health facilities as well as the importance of extracurricular activities and structure arose. Many participants focused heavily on the mental health aspect of this research and discussed the importance of intervention and positive mental wellbeing within schools as well as outside of the educational system. It was concluded from this study that participants had a strong opinion on the importance of youth clubs and extracurricular activities in regard to the aid they provide in deterring youth from delinquency and antisocial behaviour within the community. Participants, both scout leaders and teachers emphasised the importance of mental health and how positive programmes and information on the topic of mental health awareness could be implemented through the community as well as through youth resources. The information gathered throughout this study could support recommendations to aid with mental

wellbeing of young individuals and further aid with deterring youth from delinquent behaviour and entering the criminal justice system, not solely within lower socio-economic areas.

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Chapter One - Introduction

Crime is often correlated with areas of low economic status (Quinney, 1964). Criminal activity among young individuals has become a problem within society today as violent behaviour is often a result of recreational use of substances as well as loitering among young people (Baron, 1998), especially due to the lack of resources available to them within their communities (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2015). There are many individuals who enter the criminal justice system at a young age, and often, never leave the system (Van Der Laan et al., 2021). This study will examine and discuss the research surrounding delinquency and antisocial behaviour which can lead to juvenile offending in regard to low socio-economic area's access to mental health and youth resources. Data for this study will be collected as qualitative data from interviews and analysed through a thematic analysis. It will focus on the current research surrounding access to facilities for youth and mental health resources as well as examining whether these facilities can act as a deterrence for youth from entering the criminal justice system.

It can be argued that there is a strong need for research within this area in today's society as juvenile offending is evident within lower socio-economic areas as research indicates that poverty can be associated with neighbourhood crime rates (Patterson, 1991). Criminal behaviour can be directly linked to the income inequality gap that can be seen across societies (Gümüş, 2004). If studies are showing how poverty and low income within lower socio-economic areas can be predictors of crime (Kennedy et al., 1998), then there should be a focus on what areas of these communities can play a part in preventing this criminal behaviour, which this study will go on to discuss.

Another issue within today's society is the topic of negative mental health which is also on the rise. One main reason for this could be linked back to the increase in social media today which can result in the increase in mental distress and certain negative behaviours (Abi-Jaoude, 2020). Issues surrounding mental health and wellbeing can often result in negative or potentially violent behaviour if an individual is experiencing distress or self-injurious behaviour (Abi-Jaoude, 2020). The need for mental health facilities, functioning and adequate services for young people can have a huge impact on the crime rates and youth delinquency. It can also have a positive impact on an individual's mental health and wellbeing, which is extremely important in the age of technology that they are growing up in (Aboujaoude and Starcevic, 2015).

In Chapter Two, academic literature will be examined and discussed in relation to topics such as juvenile offending, mental health, juvenile crime in lower socio-economic areas, youth resources, delinquency and youth facilities as well as their impact on youth and society. This discussion will then lead to the current research being carried out in this paper. Chapter Three will discuss the research methods used throughout this study to collect and analyse data. Qualitative data using semi-structured interviews were used to gather information from individuals who work alongside youth. This data provides first-hand information and experiences from individuals who have worked with youth in lower socio-economic areas. The data collected through these face-to-face interviews were then compared through a thematic analysis to provide the findings of this study. This will then lead on to the thematic analysis of collected data in Chapter Four where the qualitative data is critically analysed providing insight to the research gathered.

Finally, to conclude, the research data will be discussed in regard to the findings, limitations and strengths of the research, as well as the possibility of future research. From the research and the data gathered, recommendations will also be provided with empirical support from other countries' intervention and deterrence programmes. The aim of these recommendations is to hopefully aid with the deterring of juvenile offending and delinquency within low socio-economic areas and the improvement of mental health support and awareness.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

Juvenile offending within Lower Socio-economic Areas

According to the Department of Justice, youth crime contributes to 15 per cent of all crime within Ireland (The Irish Youth Justice Service, 2013). A child within Ireland is defined as any individual under the age of 18 years old under the Children Act 2001. The age of criminal responsibility within Ireland is twelve years old (Children Act 2001). There is data to support the idea that most youth tend to grow out of their criminal activities, such as the data surrounding juvenile offenders and how delinquent behaviour may stem from risk taking (Murray et al., 2021) and decision making based on risk assessment through adolescent years (de Ruigh et al., 2021). Delinquency can be defined as minor criminal acts that are often committed by young people under the age of eighteen years (Howell, 2008;2009;2012) while antisocial behaviour is often defined as actions that do not fit social norms which may cause distress or harrass others (Demetriou, 2020). The misuse of drug and alcohol amongst under eighteen-year old's is the most common type of crime that young people become involved with (The Irish Youth Justice Service, 2013) and is often a main factor in why youth not only enter the criminal justice system, but often reoffend (Weber and Lynch, 2021). This behaviour can stem from boredom and the urge for something to occupy their time (Spaeth, 2015), especially within areas where there are few resources available to the younger generation after school hours.

Lower socio-economic areas, also called disadvantaged areas are regions within a country where the socioeconomic status of the area is considered quite low based off census data. These areas often measure low on several social and economic indicators such as employment, education levels, income, and access to resources (Adler et al., 1999). Socio-economic groups often classify groups of the population together into one of ten groups which are determined by education level, skills or occupation according to the Central Statistics Office (2016). Individuals within the same household as dependant family members are automatically grouped within their socio-economic class group (Central Statistics Office, 2016). Many of these areas tend to have high rates of crime and often display issues such as community safety and fear of youth (Kershaw, 2005). However, these views from community members towards youth can have a negative influence on young people and may only fuel the

issue of delinquency within an area (George and Twyford, 2021). Information regarding these indicators often come from the census and provide an oversight to the socio-economic status of an area.

Areas that would be considered lower socio-economic areas showed signs of a 40% higher frequency of criminal activity (Heinzeroth, 2021;2020). Many of the crimes that occurred were acts carried out with an economic incentive, highlighting further the socio-economic issues that are evident in these disadvantages areas which can lead to higher rates of criminal activity within these regions (Heinzeroth, 2021;2020). One study carried out suggested that youth who are unsatisfied with the life they are living tend to seek out risks such as substance abuse, which can lead to criminal offending and entering the criminal justice system as a juvenile offender (Hanniball et al., 2021). These areas where youth are exposed to higher levels of community disorder (Turner et al., 2021) can have a detrimental impact on life satisfaction which can influence many negative outcomes for youth with findings showing that improvements to life satisfaction could aid in preventing adolescent offending in the future (Hanniball et al., 2021).

A healthy environment to grow and develop, especially for young individuals is not always available or easily accessible (Wäsche et al., 2021). No communities are equal and these limitations of access to facilities and resources are a barrier that needs to be overcome within certain communities to help better the environment for the families who live there (Kim et al., 2021). Access to amenities and resources are extremely beneficial to the positive development of young people, as well as the huge benefits that afterschool programmes and extracurricular activities can have on students (Kim et al., 2021).

Due to the contrast between lower socio-economic areas and more affluent area's rates of employment, a correlation between crime rates and unemployment rates in these disadvantaged areas can be deducted. Evidence has shown that a reduction in unemployment can stimulate a decrease in crime rates within areas (Zielińska-Szczepkowska et al., 2021). A study completed on many local authorities within England found a relation between unemployment and violent crime rates in an area. It was found that as little as a 1 percent increase of unemployment in an area had resulted in a 1.25 percent rise in the rate of violent crimes (Tarling et al., 2016). One issue with unemployment that may result in youth becoming involved in criminal activities in a non-affluent area is the issue with youth resource fees. Many youth clubs and after school programmes may require a small joining fee, that of which may

not be met by a household due to unemployment. This may not be a major contributor to juvenile offending and delinquency; however, it is an issue within areas of a low socio-economic status. According to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the 2016 census found that 12.5 percent of Irish nationals were unemployed. An unemployed household can lead to young individuals going out and seeking their own form of recreational activity and enjoyment on the streets if their parents cannot afford to pay membership fees. Youth may also venture onto the streets to reduce boredom due to the lack of resources available to them within their community which may then lead to delinquency and juvenile offending.

The Importance of Mental Health Resources

According to The World Health Organisation (WHO), 10-20 percent of adolescents experience mental health problems globally. The idea that delinquency and mental illness co-occurs is often discussed not only within the field of criminology, but also within the field of psychology (Underwood et al., 2016). The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland has proposed research findings that show that by thirteen years of age, one in three youth in Ireland have had some experience with mental health or have developed some form of mental health issue (The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), n.d). This can go on to lead to the further development of mental health difficulties at an older age with research suggesting that the suicide rate for teenagers between the ages of fifteen and nineteen years within the EU is the fourth highest, an extremely alarming figure (The National Youth Council of Ireland, n.d).

Research shows that many juvenile offenders have a history of negative environments growing up. Many were victims of neglect or abuse, as well as growing up in areas that already have high crime rates (Basto-Pereira and Maia, 2019). Neurobiological research shows that continuously being exposed to these neglected environments which can result in situations of high stress, can eventually lead to the dysregulation of biological response to certain situations (Basto-Pereira and Maia, 2019). This can negatively affect the development of the brain and result in negative and violent reactions to environmental stimuli, which can develop further into criminal activity within young individuals.

Adverse childhood experiences are events that occur during childhood, that are extremely traumatic to a child and can have a huge and lasting impact on a young person. Some examples of adverse childhood experiences are neglect, abuse and witness to traumatic events such as criminal activity (LaNoue et al., 2020). These childhood experiences have recently

been researched in relation to criminogenic factors and amongst youth (Jones and Pierce., 2021) and have a negative impact on the development of a child in many ways (Perez et al., 2016). The exposure to the adverse childhood experiences are predictors of risk incidents that can result in the entering of the criminal justice system, especially as a juvenile offender (Harris et al., 2021). At a global level, exposure to these negative experiences during early childhood and young adulthood can increase the risk of mental health problems as well as delinquent behaviour later in life (Basto-Pereira and Maia, 2019). This research highlights the importance of access to mental health services for youth, especially within lower socioeconomic areas where these risk factors are higher. An increase to easily accessible mental health resources could play a huge part in deterring youth from the criminal justice system (Jones and Pierce, 2021).

As adverse childhood experiences have been deemed a negative influence on young people's development and mental health, this can in turn influence behavioural issues such as delinquency (Martins et al., 2021) and it is important to take this into consideration when working with youth. Protective factors have a huge impact on youth, whether it be through the educational system or the community. Research has found that when protective factors are introduced into a young person's life, there is a decrease in negative mental health issues and substance abuse due to exposure to adverse childhood experiences (Lensch et al., 2021). Research within this field suggests that not only more research is needed on this topic but teachers and influencing figures in a young person's life need to consider adverse childhood experiences as an influential factor of delinquent behaviour (Bae, 2020).

Mental health resources should be easily accessible to youth as it can have many benefits other than acting as a deterrent for criminal activity. The idea that an increase in mental health services for youth is not only a concept proposed within Ireland, but globally (Barry et al., 2013). Canadian researchers argue that increasing mental health resources for youth should be a priority within Canada and can aid to reduce and prevent the early onset of substance abuse (Malla et al., 2018). This shows the global understanding of the need for accessibility to mental health resources for youth. A system of care should be provided at a community level for children under the age of eighteen to meet their mental health needs as findings suggest that the more improved and available mental health resources are, the likelihood that there is a reduced risk of juvenile involvement (Foster et al., 2004).

Evidence shows that individuals between the ages of 15-to-25 years of age globally have the highest rate of developing mental illnesses, yet their mental health facilities that are available to them have the worst standards when compared to other age groups (McGorry et al., 2013). There is a need for early interventions from mental health facilities which need to be up to the standards for the targeted group of people (O'Reilly et al., 2015). A study on individuals who engage with the Jigsaw organisation within Ireland showed that there were high levels of distress felt amongst 15-to-25-year old's (O'Reilly et al., 2015) which are feelings that can have long term negative effects for youth. Providing well researched support and opportunities for young people can be extremely beneficial among these young individuals, who are considered a vulnerable group who experience mental health issues. This group of individuals must be heavily considered when researching and promoting action plans and experiences as at this age, these experiences can heavily influence and impact everyday choices and behaviour (Eklund et al., 2021). Life satisfaction and a young person's perception of their quality of life can influence their mental health and this must be taken into consideration as mental health is a subjective experience which differs from person to person (Yoon et al., 2021).

Ireland has several mental health services set up for young individuals, however there is an issue with accessibility to them throughout the country. There is an issue with mental health services in general throughout the country with many individuals in need of help, not able to access any mental health facilities (Hyland et al., 2021). Jigsaw is a widely advertised service within Ireland that provides help for youth from the ages of 12-to-25 in regard to their mental health. Their focus is on intervening into a child's life to provide support at an early age by operating 13 services across Ireland (Jigsaw.ie, The National Centre for Youth Mental Health, 2021). Their services are free and confidential, however the number of operating services within communities, 13 for the entire island of Ireland is an extremely low number and cannot keep up with the need for their services. This resource is recognised internationally as an established service providing professional help to youth as well as advocating and promoting mental health within Ireland (O'Brien, 2021). A larger range of accessible facilities within the community could potentially help reduce the link between crime and mental disorders.

Research suggests that there is a relationship between mental disorders and crime (Cuellar et al., 2006) (Valuri et al., 2021). Many policies focus their attention on the rehabilitation and treatment of these individuals to reduce criminal activity. There is a focus on

deterrence and rehabilitation rather than enforcing stricter punishments, especially among juvenile offenders (Cuellar et al., 2006). Behavioural issues that stem from mental health issues in childhood can often extend or develop further into adulthood, such as the example of physical aggression, which males tend to carry through from adolescence to adulthood, promoting antisocial behaviour (Broidy et al., 2003). Among youth who have spent time within youth mental health facilities, the arrest rates are known to be high for individuals who fall under the category of young adulthood and adolescence (Davis et al., 2004). Cuellar (2006) carried out research on a mental health diversion program that was implemented in Texas within the United States. It was found that these programs are effective in reducing and preventing youth recidivism. Over the course of one year, researchers found that there were 63 fewer arrests that had occurred per 100 youths that served time for a criminal act (Cuellar et al., 2006).

A study carried out by Basto-Pereira and colleague (2019) focused on the psychology behind mental health and criminal acts. One hypothesis the researchers investigated was that of mental health problems among youth. They researched the mediators between early adversity and crime in young adults and focused on whether mental health problems are a mediator between early adversity and persistence in crime. The age range of these crimes committed occurred between 12-to-15 years of age, which is supported by research that has shown that risk adverse outcomes such as substance abuse and risk taking can become criminogenic factors, statistically occurring during adolescence (Dever et al., 2012).

There is a lot of research carried out focusing on the need to increase or implement mental health services for young offenders within youth detention centres. While this research is greatly beneficial, there is a lack of information surrounding the need for mental health services provided to youth before they enter the criminal justice system to deter them from entering the system in the first place. A study carried out across England and Wales explored the mental health needs for young offenders in custody, but also within the community (Chitsabesan et al., 2006). It was concluded from this research that there are several needs of young people within the community, one of which is the high level of mental health assistance for young individuals. It was discovered from their research that 31 percent of the young offenders had a mental health need (Chitsabesan, et al., 2006).

Impact of Extracurricular Activities and Youth Clubs

Clubs and facilities such as extracurricular activities within schools as well as youth clubs outside of children's educational system are extremely important for youth. These facilities not only positively impact the development of youth, but also the development into adulthood where dealings with the criminal justice system have been avoided (Ettekal and Agans, 2020). After school activities or groups and clubs within the community can often act as deterrents to delinquent behaviour amongst young people. Youth programmes can aid in promoting and developing positive youth development which can in turn impact society in a positive manner, helping mold youth into these mature and responsible adults (Ettekal and Agans, 2020). Clubs and organisations within the community can help reduce the inequities in areas such as social and environmental opportunities which have a huge impact on youth (Borraccino et al., 2020). The availability of these youth resources and extracurricular activities also allows young people to avoid loitering around the streets in search of entertainment which can influence delinquent behaviour (Spaeth et al., 2015). Research suggests that youths' involvement in certain environments influence their behaviour drastically and adolescents tend to model the delinquency they have viewed or learned from their peers (Defoe et al., 2021) resulting in co-offending, as there is a link between peer offending and delinquency. Protective factors and promotive factors against substance abuse and delinquent behaviour among youths can be promoted by school relationships, participation in sports as well as peer monitoring (Dever et al., 2012).

Sports clubs are a more prominent youth resource found within Irish communities, especially amongst young males. There is an extensive range of sports within Irish communities and within the education structure. These clubs promote the development of many social, physical, interpersonal skills as well as allowing them to form an identity (Carr et al., 2021). Studies carried out show the positive attitudes of students towards physical activity. One studied carried out by Elipkhanov and colleagues (2020) involved a survey completed by over two thousand students within education on the topic of sporting activities and the impact it can have on individuals. The study concluded that many students found sporting activities to have a positive impact on young people and believe it is a necessary factor to the lives of youth (Elipkhanov, 2020). Physical activities and involvement in sports associations, especially at a young age, have been associated with having a positive impact on youths' emotional regulation as well as the development of teamwork and initiative (Saikh, 2019). Findings have shown that as well as involvement in sporting activities, whether it be within the education system or the

community, the relationships that are formed within, between coaches and fellow team members are a huge part in the positive development of an individual as well as the positive experience (Hogan et al., 2021).

Extracurricular activities provided by the education system can also have a positive impact on young people, their behaviour and life satisfaction. One study's findings carried out by Siddiqui and colleagues (2019) suggest that the opportunities of extracurricular activities availed of by students during out of school hours showed an increase in the young person's reading and math's performance skills. Not only are life skills and behaviour impacted by these resources available within schools, but also academic skills are becoming more enhanced during participation which can be carried forward throughout life. Other improvements included further development of skills such as social responsibilities and teamwork due to their involvement (Siddiqui, 2019), skills that can impact a young person's behaviour and attitude towards situations and can be carried forward in their life experiences in a positive manner (Black et al., 2021).

The involvement in these activities outside of the family or educational environment within their local communities can have an enormous impact on youth. Studies suggest that the participation of these clubs by young individuals, whether it be sports or social, can be extremely influential in developing their life skills which can in turn have a positive impact on their behaviour as young individuals growing into adulthood (Mueller et al., 2011). The participation in these programmes can provide supportive experiences, promote healthy development of life skills, form supportive relationships, and impact their view and development of social norms, all of which hugely impact a young person in a positive manner (Lerner et al., 2012;2009) reducing the chances of negative behaviours and habits developing.

Availability of Youth Resources in Low Socio-economic Areas

An issue that is often seen within low socio-economic areas is the access to certain resources. Limited access to youth resources and programs for children could have a detrimental effect on their actions and could heavily influence the criminal activity within an area (Smith, 2014). The use of illegal substances at an early age can lead to a path towards the criminal justice system.

There is evidence of a strong relationship between alcohol and violence, as well as influencing violent responses to certain stimuli (Parker et al., 2013;2012;2014). Many youths tend to turn to drugs or alcohol as entertainment due to lack of resources and facilities for youth. This substance abuse can lead to violence and aggressive behaviour. Research within the fields of criminology and youth justice show how youth violence can be prevented with several measures. Studies have found that the use of drugs and alcohol is only a minor factor as to why individuals progress into criminal behaviour. The use and violent nature associated with these illegal substances are associated with recreational use as they are a risk factor to promoting antisocial behaviour and delinquency among youths (Jäggi et al., 2021).

It is evident that criminal careers and violent actions are short lived for young people, and many tend to grow out of this behaviour after their criminal peak as a late adolescent (Hoffman et al., 2010;2011). Hoffman (2010;2011) also highlights how community level programs are extremely beneficial to deter young people from criminal activities and can help them avoid these years of criminal behaviour during adolescence. Basto-Pereira and colleagues' (2019) research indicates and supports the idea that exposure at an early age to negative factors such as neglect and abuse are related to criminal activity (Basto-Pereira and Maia, 2019), so providing a safe environment for young people during the short period where they display antisocial behaviour and delinquency can potentially have a huge positive impact on their future criminal behaviour. The setting up of youth services within communities allow spaces for young people to gather and meet with friends, providing a safe environment that may also provide some guidance, leading them away from entering the criminal justice system.

Areas that tend to have higher criminogenic risk factors tend to be considered low socio-economic areas. These criminogenic risk factors often stem from poor social and home environments that involve abuse, substance abuse, low income, and unsuitable parenting (Harrikari, 2013). These environments and their criminogenic risk factors often result in 'difficult' children within the school system and the community. Harrikari (2013) discussed how these factors can be identified at an early age by focusing on these lower socio-economic areas with high criminogenic factors. This allows early intervention to take place, which can be in the form of youth resources and activities within the area, as well as the implementation of mental health facilities for these young people. The creation of youth facilities and sports clubs can have a huge positive impact on the younger generation. Many authoritative figures within these clubs are often seen as positive influences on young people and are looked up to for guidance and as role models (Preventing Youth Crime Through Sport, 2020).

The Department of Education, London investigated aims in an attempt to help prevent youth crime. They found that the use of providing education around the topic of youth crime and juvenile offending created a higher sense of awareness of the severity of the situation (Brook Lapping Productions, 2008). They used education to their advantage and provided the school with an officer who had a history of restorative justice among juvenile offenders and provided first hand information and education surrounding programs available to them and the youth criminal justice system. Restorative Justice can be defined as an approach which encourages an offender to take responsibilities for their actions (Johnstone, 2013). The families of the victim, communities and the offender often come together through a restorative justice approach to sit and reflect on the consequences to the offenders' actions, the needs of the victims and how this has impacted all parties (Schormair and Gerlach, 2019;2020). Restorative justice acts as an alternative approach to thinking about wrongdoing (Zehr, 2015) and is often an action discussed when implementing action plans to deter criminal activity (Calkin, 2021). However, restorative justice has shown that it does prevent offenders from reoffending, especially amongst juvenile offenders (Smith, 2014). This however does not provide help to youth before they have committed criminal acts or help them avoid entering the criminal justice system. This use of education and information provided could play an active role in deterring a youth member from the criminal justice system.

Within Ireland there have been programs set up to help reduce and prevent youth from entering the criminal justice system. One of the main programs is the Irish Garda Youth Diversion Project. This project aims to involve children who are between the ages of 12-to-17 years who are potentially at risk of developing criminal behaviour or show anti-social behaviour (Garda Youth Diversion Projects, n.d.). There are several ways that these projects attempt to implement diversion policies. One of the main ways is aiming their services at behaviourist types of interventions with youth (Swirak, 2016). More of these programs targeted at individuals within areas with high crime rates are needed to allow a higher rate of deterrence to take place, especially in low socio-economic areas.

Conclusion

There is an abundance of research relating to the importance of mental health services and youth resources for young people. However, there does not seem to be a lot of research regarding the impact of limited access to mental health facilities and youth resources in low

socio-economic areas impact on delinquency and antisocial behaviour. The current research does not focus on the negative impact the lack of these services can have in relation to juvenile criminal activity and how it is prevalent in lower socio-economic areas. Many research papers look at the importance of mental health resources after a child has already been in contact with the criminal justice system, however there should be a focus on providing these services before a child gets a chance to commit these illegal acts and enter the system. Often, once an individual has entered the system, their chances of leaving it decreases. Future research can fill in some of the gaps in these areas, hopefully raising awareness of how the lack of these services directly impacts delinquency and antisocial behaviour among youths within certain areas. Future research involving the public views on the impact of these resources on juvenile crime in low socio-economic areas, as well as individuals who work directly with minors would be extremely beneficial to this field of study. Hopefully, this research could lead to recommendations to aid with the deterring of youth from criminal acts by means of supporting the need for more youth and mental health services within disadvantaged areas.

Chapter Three – Methodology

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a detailed discussion of the methodology used, as well as why these methods were used to carry out the research for this study. The aim of this research is to look at the impact youth resources, and mental health facilities have on delinquency and antisocial behaviour within low socio-economic areas. This chapter will discuss the methods, design and course of data collecting that took place during the period of this study. Then the chapter will discuss data analysis, any ethical issues that may arise from the chosen methodology as well as strengths and limitations to the chosen methods for this study. The specific methodology chosen for this research focused on the potential to gain as much valuable information as possible all while following the current restrictions in place due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Ethical Approval

This study received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee in the Department of Law within Maynooth University. A comprehensive information sheet was created and provided to every participant before conducting the interviews as well as verbally informing them on the research topic and aims, as well as their options during the interviewing process. This information sheet can be viewed in section [A] in the appendices chapter at the end of this research paper. The interviews were voluntary and resulted in no penalty if the participant decided to remove themselves from the interview. This information was provided to the participant before conducting the interview.

Discussions surrounding youth, especially regarding topics such as mental health and children who are considered ‘troubled children’, can always potentially result in the discussion of sensitive topics and could potentially cause distress to the participant. However, individuals were informed that no answers would be forced and that they may stop the interview at any moment or take breaks if they felt they needed to.

Another ethical issue that can arise during interviews is the potential mentioning of names of underage individuals. However, all personal or identifying information that may have

been mentioned throughout the interviews will be anonymised for the protection of the participant as well as the protection of the individuals and organisations they are discussing.

Research Design

The interview design was intended to focus on topics surrounding youth offending, education and youth facilities within lower socio-economic areas. Several questions were planned in advance for the interviews (these set questions can be viewed in the appendices chapter, section [B] at the end of the research paper). However, semi-structured interviews allowed for a natural flow of the discussion to take place. The use of semi-structured interviews allows for the change in conversation with the potential for questions that may arise due to responses by the participant. This discussion between the researcher and participants “is actively constructing knowledge in partnership with the respondent who is constructing answers to questions that may require them to consider issues in a depth not explicitly previously engaged in” (Husband, 2020, p. 8). This engagement allows for a deeper discussion and information to be gathered that may not have otherwise been discussed while strictly following the set questions.

The survey questions were formatted with the research topic in mind and in clear and concise English, so that the participants had a clear understanding of the questions being asked to them. The interview itself was recorded on a digital voice recorder so that the data can be listened back and transcribed for further data analysis, a thematic analysis.

Participant Recruitment

The use of convenience sampling was applied for this research study as it allowed the collection of data from individuals who had experience working with youth in a professional manner. Convenience sampling also allowed for a specific pool of participants to be interviewed which would provide more detailed responses to the topics discussed. Snowball sampling was used to find individuals who worked within specific fields relating to working with youth. As Rutberg and colleagues discussed (2018), individuals with an experience or exposure with the investigated content is needed when using qualitative research. Snowball sampling is defined as the method that is used to locate and involve individuals that are from specific areas or fields, allowing researchers to gain participants by means of referral by an acquaintance of the research sample pool (Cohen and Arieli., 2011).

Participant Sample

The subjects consisted of ten participants. Five secondary school teachers who are currently working in the education system with youth and five individuals who worked alongside minors within a scouting facility in the community. The gender of the selected participants was split evenly with five female participants and five male participants. This selection of an equal ratio of male to female participants was unintentional as the gender was not a priority or preference for this specific study.

The interviews took place roughly over a thirty-minute period, depending on how much or how little the participants chose to answer and were conducted in a semi structured manner to provide a comfortable environment. The participants were made aware that they did not need to answer any questions if they did not wish to. Their answers could be as short or as long as they wished, and no answers would be forced. All this information was disclosed to them within an informed consent form that they read prior to the interview and the information was further reiterated verbally just before the commencement of the interview.

Data Collection

The chosen form of data collection for this study was qualitative, semi-structured interviews. This method of data collection allowed for a vast amount of qualitative information to be gathered around the research topic by gaining first-hand and detailed answers through human perceptions and personal experiences (Rutberg and Bouikidis, 2018). Due to the current restrictions in place due to Covid-19, these interviews were carried out over zoom to follow social distancing guidelines and to create a safe and comfortable environment for the participants.

The use of snowball sampling, a method of convenience for gathering data from hard-to-reach populations (Heckathorn, 2011) was used to gain information and collect data for this research paper. This form of data collection was beneficial due to the potential struggle with getting individuals to conduct interviews due to Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions at the time.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis of the information gathered through interviews was used. A thematic analysis is used to analysis qualitative data. Its aim is to find common and recurring themes and patterns within data to produce findings. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a method of organising and describing data with rich detail provided by the interviewee. The use of a thematic analysis for this study allows for a more analytical and deeper insight into the data collected (Clarke and Braun, 2013) as this approach is not just a singular homogenous approach to analysing data (Terry et al., 2017). A thematic analysis examines patterns within language, experiences and practices (Clarke and Braun, 2013).

The interviews that were conducted with ten participants were transcribed carefully and checked by listening to the recorded interview whilst reading the transcript. The transcription documents of these interviews were then analysed. The use of a thematic analysis allowed for codes to be taken from the transcribed interview based on what was discussed by participants and the researcher. After reading the ten transcriptions and analysing them, certain topics, phrases or opinions that were often mentioned were highlighted as they formed reoccurring codes between the participants responses (Nowell et al., 2017). Then, certain themes that were evident across several discussions based on these codes were interpreted and discussed as the findings of the study. The themes and corresponding codes can be viewed in the coding table in the appendices chapter, section [C] at the end of this research paper.

This thematic analysis allows qualitative data, data that is based on personal experiences, opinions and feelings, to be interpreted and analysed for research purposes (Caulfield and Hill, 2018). Reoccurring themes surrounding the topics of youth justice, delinquency, youth resources and lower socioeconomic areas were then further discussed. It was then used as data to support the discussion that limited youth resources and mental health services in lower socioeconomic areas have an impact on youth delinquency and antisocial behaviour in these areas.

Chapter Four - Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis has been conducted on the qualitative data collected throughout the course of this study. Interviews were conducted with five secondary school teachers and five scout leaders, who provided their first-hand experiences of working with youth in lower socioeconomic areas. A thematic analysis looks at personal experiences, focusing on the behaviour and emotions of an individual, expressed through words (Clarke and Braun, 2014). The recorded interviews were transcribed and studied to deduct codes that were evident across the interviews, then themes were formulated from these gathered codes. Three themes were evident throughout these interviews which will be discussed critically, these include: the value of structure from education and extracurricular resources in a child's development, the importance of access to mental health facilities and their issue with awareness and the role of family structure and routine in deterring youth from delinquent behaviour.

Theme 1: The Value of Structure from Educational and Extracurricular Resources in a Child's Development

Throughout many of the interviews, the role that education plays within children's lives was heavily praised. It was evident across both groups of individuals, that school plays an important role in deterring children from committing criminal and inappropriate behaviour. The educational system should not only place emphasis on the educational aspect as this is a time where children are still developing behaviourally. *"A lot of schools put pressure on the children to kinda just learn the syllabus when they should be maybe taken out of a specific subject to talk one on one to someone or even if there were teachers who would"* (P5). Providing this one-on-one environment with a teacher can allow a student to feel more comfortable with their educator, allowing them to trust and respect this authoritative figure. There are teachers and schools who acknowledge this as one participant explains that there are *"teachers that might take them out and say 'come on we just kick a ball around together', that's really important"* (P5). This provides a child with an understanding that their teachers are there to support them and if they need time out then that can be provided for them as the education system should not just focus on the intelligence and studious aspects of a child, but also their mental health and growth. This provides students with the view that schooling is not this strict environment

where rules must be followed, but a safe and secure environment. This allows youth room to grow and develop, not confining them to this routine of educational learning.

Many of the teachers interviewed for this research were currently in or have had experience within DEIS schools, which were defined as delivering equality of opportunity in schools by the Department of Education and Skills (2011). Codes such as safety and security, which is provided to students by their school, supports the important role that education plays for youth. It is not just the daily school life that was mentioned to have an impact on individuals, but the heavy praise that extracurricular activities and resources that is provided to the children. Several teachers mention how the schools they have worked in provide a breakfast club to children, which allows children to come into school early and avail of a meal before they start their day. This provides many benefits for children as mentioned by participant 1, *“when they come to school that they can get a breakfast, they know that they’ll be sitting in a warm facility, they know that there’s somewhere they can be heard and listened”*. Many families within these lower socio-economic areas may not be able to provide a breakfast for their children so these supports provided by schools can have huge positive impact on youth who are from a struggling home life.

As well as a breakfast club, several schools provide the option to stay on after the school day for a homework club. This allows children to remain in the school environment and complete some of their homework, or time to study. One participant explains the importance of these after school clubs and how *“the likes of homework club and that it kinda keeps kids in the school for a little bit longer and some will actually stay back... so I suppose that in itself is kinda helping some of them stay off the streets”* (P4). Schools vary regarding to what after school clubs they provide, but all tend to benefit children greatly and often keep them in a safe environment after school hours. Some extracurricular activities or facilities mentioned were boxing clubs, running clubs, many sports teams and debating societies, all of which play a huge role in keeping children from going to the streets to entertain themselves which can act an educational deterrent to crime.

The issue of boredom and youth having too much free time within lower socioeconomic areas were codes that were evident throughout several interviews. This was an issue discussed which was believed to aid in juvenile offending within these areas. One youth leader discussed how once school is over for the day, there is no longer structure within a young person’s life unless they are active in a club or youth facility *“they come into a structured environment*

where they get you know, they know, they get taught right from wrong, they're not left to their own devices, they gain respect for themselves, they gain respect for others” (P3). This structure and positive environment can play an active role in deterring young people from criminal activity and loitering around the streets as discussed by one teacher *“I think they’d need it because like school ends at 4 o’clock, where do they go then when, if their background is troubled, they’re going to just go out on to the streets again really aren’t they or stand at the shop corner and sure we know what happens then” (P1).* These facilities play an active role in providing an outlet for youth and a safe place with a positive environment for children to be when they are not in school. Another participant, a scout leader mentioned *“I’ve seen people who haven’t had the resources go one way” (P7).* This participant discusses how people from his childhood or his community who were not involved in similar resources as him *“[Scouts] definitely helped” (P7)* or did not have access to these facilities took a different and negative route in life; *“I know some people I grew up with who kind of went off the rails” (P7).* This supports the research suggesting that these facilities within the community or within the educational system can have an impact on youth and can play a role in deterring young people from delinquency and the criminal justice system.

One participant discussed how his parents support for his active role in clubs and extracurricular activities helped him to not fall into delinquency as a young person. *“To be honest my parents ... it was more so my dad ... he was happy for me to be in any sport or any activity as long as it can be kind of physically active ... but kind of give me an outlet for something else and also for making friends” (P4).* He acknowledged how becoming active in these facilities within the community provided him an outlet to get stuff off his chest or to just be with friends and have a support system away from school and his home life, keeping him off the streets and away from acting out as a young person. Another participant who is a leader to youth within the scouting organisation discusses how more time away from home and in a positive environment can provide an outlet for youth and you can see an obvious change in them;

“There’s kids that would be troublemakers every week in the hall then you get them up on a hike or get them away for a couple of days or get them away on camp and they’re a completely different person, they’re still a troublemaker but they seem to be able to put their energy into something else” (P7)

This time spent with individuals who volunteer is extremely beneficial and provides an encouraging and positive environment for children to develop and grow, *“you can definitely see a change in kids when you have them for a longer period of time”* (P7). These extracurricular activities, whether they be implemented through the schools or whether they be youth clubs and facilities within the community, play a huge role in keeping youth from loitering and potentially getting involved in criminal activity which could in turn result in young individuals entering the criminal justice system.

Theme 2: The Importance of Access to Mental Health Facilities and their Issue with Awareness

As studies have suggested, young people’s access to mental health facilities or individuals with specialised training is extremely beneficial as many issues surrounding mental health begin in adolescence (Bostock et al., 2011). Intervening at an early age can aid with early detection and provide a better recovery rate and teachers are in the perfect position in children’s lives to detect warnings signs of a decline in mental health (Bostock et al., 2011). One study on students in New Zealand concluded that students who display mental health problems do not seek help from professionals and suggest that it is important for encouragement and information regarding the seeking of help be provided, which can help identify adolescents with these difficulties (Mariu et al., 2012).

Positive mental health development can have a positive effect on not only a child’s mindset, but also their behaviour and development as one teacher explained that *“a lot of kids do well in the likes of football... Extracurricular things can make a big impact as a behavioural way as well... And mental health.”* (P5) The education system can play a huge role in not only providing education and skills, but also setting youth up with positive mental health and a support system that can aid them down the right path in life.

Not all educational systems are failing in regard to providing awareness and resources to youth for their mental health and wellbeing. One participant discusses how her knowledge of mental health facilities within the community as well as the children’, are from a specifically dedicated mental health week within the school. *“We’ve only had mental health week, about five or six weeks ago where they were made aware again but it’s, it’s everywhere”* (P1). This provides an insight into the difference and variation within the educational system and how it is not a necessary requirement for schools to provide this information as there is a different

level of exposure to this information throughout schools. This participant had a greater knowledge of local resources available for issues regarding mental health, as well as nationwide networks who provide support, “*we’d always tell the lads like that they can speak to the likes of Jigsaw and Bernardos*” (P1). The dedication of a week within the schooling calendar becoming a ‘*mental health week*’ provides students with extremely beneficial information and insight into resources and facilities available for them where they can be heard and understood as this teacher has expressed. During mental health week they have become “*very aware that there’s people to talk to and places to go*” (P1). This highlights the importance of exposure to information on mental health services and youth resources schools need to provide to influence a positive impact on young individuals.

There was a significant lack of knowledge however amongst many of the individuals who participated in this research regarding what mental health facilities were available within the area. Many of the participants knew very little about the resources available in the area where they currently work, but also lacked knowledge on the resources available in the areas where they had grown up or now live in. One particular participant who is heavily involved within the scouting community in the area where they grew up and live had no knowledge of any active mental health resources in their local area; “*I can’t even name a mental health facility in [area], and I’m from here and I’ve lived here all my life*” (P3). This is a negative reflection of the knowledge and lack of access to services for mental health within areas, especially for an individual who has grown up, went to school and volunteered in a low socio-economic area. This participant is a volunteer within the scouting organisation, the head of their troop and discussed how Scouting Ireland provide their own facilities and resources for youth regarding mental health. “*I know from a scouting point of view that there [are] certain health services available*” (P3). If a leader were to encounter a member who may need to access one of these services, there are resources and information available to leaders to allow them to point the youth member in the right direction. However, outside of this organisation, there is no knowledge of professional help available to youth who are not active within the scouting community, which can be quite detrimental for the youth in the wider community who are not involved.

As well as awareness of these facilities, participants who were aware of the available resources in their community did not speak very highly of them with descriptions such as “*fairly poor at the moment*” and “*sub-par*”. One participant discusses how her negative view

of these facilities stem from her first-hand experience of growing up in a lower socioeconomic area.

“Speaking from my own experience of a teenager living in these areas as well, like they haven't ever been up to scratch, it's really hard for children to get help in regards to their mental health ... I know that's kind of the general consensus in every aspect of the Irish health care system, is they're sub-par, their resources aren't great, but it is really hard for those who are seeking help to get help” (P8).

The issues surrounding the lack of knowledge on the available facilities within areas directly relates to the need for exposure to information to provide adequate resources for children to understand what help and services are available to them. A reoccurring code that was seen throughout the interviews was the lack of information that the participants had regarding mental health facilities within their area. Many who worked or volunteered in a different area to where they were living were also unaware of facilities within the area they worked as well as their own community *“a lot of people wouldn't really know what's kinda out there for them” (P9)*. The issue of schools becoming the only source of information for youth is an issue that arose, as there is a lack of exposure from the community around these topics, *“unless they encounter it in schools so if you're not involved in any extracurricular things you're only exposed to what you have to be exposed to which is in school and your home life so if you don't know these things are there, you're not gonna benefit from them” (P3)*. The need for knowledge and education on resources and facilities available for youth in terms of their mental health was heavily highlighted by participants, shedding light on their own lack of knowledge on the topic.

However, as mentioned previously, it does not seem that all schools suffer from this lack of exposure to information for youth, as one participant's school advertises and provides information on resources available to the students in their local area. This is a very positive approach to mental health awareness which should be active within many schools, regardless of the economic areas they are situated and could hopefully influence other schools to carry out similar awareness events.

Theme 3: The Role of Family Structure and Routine in Deterring Youth from Delinquent Behaviour

The theme of intergenerational criminal behaviour came from codes such as lack of support, lack of care and unsuitable backgrounds, as a child's homelife has a huge impact on the development of a person "*our structures made at home y'know. Your parents give you the structure*" (P3). These codes all relate to the personal home lives that some youth may be experiencing. Many participants discussed how they felt their role in clubs and resources as a youth themselves helped determine the path they took to where they are now and deter them from delinquent behaviour, as one participant explains "*I do also feel like you need like a parental role as well because we can only do so much in a school and during school hours, they kinda need to be monitored after school as well so that they don't fall into these kinda crime situations*" (P9). Another participant describes how children are left off at their scout meetings; "*they're thrown out the door with the car moving kind of thing because the parents want a break from them*" (P3). This shows the lack of care that some parents have towards their children, using youth facilities as not a support or developmental factor for their child, but as more of a baby-sitting facility for some time off for themselves.

Participant 5 discussed how children within their school are brought up to think that the "*Guards are out to get them*" which sets them up to form a hatred and biased opinion on this group of individuals who serve and protect the community. This highlights the issue of intergenerational criminal activity. The environment that they are brought up in, which is an environment that involves criminal activity, negativity and delinquency can often become imprinted onto a young person if they are exposed to this constant cycle of crime and lack of support. The participant discusses how creating a close relationship with the local Gardai could help change this behaviour within youth as they are brought up to "*think that the guards are like these big bad men that come in, raid their houses, destroy their lives, destroy their families lives and so on*" (P5). Forming a bond between the youth and the Guards could help break this intergenerational hatred and criminal behaviour, which is all they may know, as "*the police force aren't out to get you...they might then have a different perception on crime*" (P5). Breaking this intergenerational behaviour that has passed down biased views of the police force could reduce delinquency among youth and breaking it could promote the deterrence of crime among this new generation of young people.

Providing a relatable example to youth within disadvantaged areas was discussed as a positive aspect to deterring individuals from low socioeconomic areas who grow up watching criminal acts as they have very little support from home, *“they mightened be able to do [homework] at home as their house might be overcrowded...fights broken out at their house”*(P2). One participant who is a volunteer scout leader, but also a member of their university’s outreach team and student nurse, found that their personal experience of coming from a low socioeconomic area had a huge impact on students with a similar background.

“Especially in these areas they respond really well to someone kind of coming from similar backgrounds to them, the way I see it is kind of a ripple effect. They see someone similar to them doing things they could do which kind of inspires them in a way, so I find they engage with me really well” (P8).

They also placed emphasis on how growing up within a lower socioeconomic area and not falling into a path of crime could be down to the support of her family and the environment she grew up in at home;

“I grew up, I saw my I saw my mom go to college while I was in primary school. Then I saw my sister going to college and I knew that there was more to the world than [lower socio-economic area participant grew up in], not that that’s a bad thing but more than what was in my direct line, I knew there was more to that” (P8).

The participant also discusses how her experience as a scout during her childhood had an impact on potentially deterring her from a negative path as a young individual and had an impact on her journey towards higher level education after finishing secondary school.

“I also think the fact that I was in scouts, it’s like I would have looked at people older than me, [names of older scouts] ...people who are older than me in this doing other things, doing things that weren’t leaving school, getting a job or like having kids young, sure there’s no problem with that, that’s what people want to do, but that’s just some people viewed as the only path your life can take because it’s all they know...I think exposure to wider groups of people in that sense made me realise like there’s more to life than what I can see” (P8).

These claims were further supported by several participants who believed a supportive homelife as well as partaking in groups and clubs within the school and community played a role in deterring young people from the criminal justice system as juvenile offenders. *“I see people who are not involved in any organizations and their trust, the manners aren’t being*

taught and things like that, they're not properly taught things, maybe in skills, whatever, but then some of them are just running around the streets, causing a bit of trouble (P6)". Intergenerational behaviour plays a role in criminal activity among young people and breaking this chain could reduce and possibly prevent criminal behaviour within lower socioeconomic areas who experience high youth delinquency and antisocial behaviour, *"I think it's how they're brought up" (P7)*. Providing access to individuals who have similar backgrounds can help aid with deterring individuals from delinquent behaviour as it shows them that there are other opportunities outside of the life they know. This can be extremely beneficial to individuals who have not got this supportive, structured homelife and need a positive influence to deter them to a different path as *"Kids tend to come out of their shell" (P7)*. The role of a supportive home and family structure can have a huge impact on youth.

Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The research findings from this study provides evidence that supports the idea that there is a link between mental health facilities and youth resources within lower socio-economic areas acting as a deterrent for youth delinquency and antisocial behaviour. The interviewed individuals who work alongside young people believe that these resources and facilities can help deter youth from spending excessive amounts of time on the streets which can unfortunately lead to these young individuals carrying out criminal behaviour. This view was supported by first-hand accounts from individuals who work directly with youth within lower socio-economic areas. The participants discussed the importance of these facilities available within the education system and the community which can provide a safe and controlled environment for youth.

The findings also suggest that there is an issue with the awareness and standard of mental health facilities in general and not solely for young individuals. A factor that can be linked to poor access to mental health facilities can be the design of mental health systems which are not suited towards the younger generation (McGorry et al., 2013). The standards of these resources can have a huge impact on youth and their mental wellbeing as many further problems can stem from these issues. Mental health issues can often result in acting out (Cohen et al., 1979) or behaviour that can be deemed delinquent behaviour or may in turn lead to criminal behaviour if left untreated. The lack of awareness on these topics and facilities may only result in the unfortunate circumstances of many falling into this form of antisocial behaviour due to not knowing how to seek help for their mental health.

The issue of intergenerational crime and the problematic relationship between policing figures and the community was also discussed. The findings found that there is a stigmatised view on the Gardai, which may be inherited from their families negative experiences. These findings show how the importance of introducing young people by means of youth resources can broaden the views and opinions that they are exposed to, removing themselves from the negative and biased environment they are in. Youth clubs and facilities within the community and the educational system can help shape a young individual, enlightening them on many

topics that they may not arise at home, allowing them to view things from different perspectives and form their own opinions towards certain things.

This furthermore highlights how big of an impact these resources can have on young people, potentially deterring them from this inherited biased view and potentially intergenerational crime. Overall, the findings supported the discussion that youth resources and mental health facilities within lower socio-economic areas can have a positive impact on young people, potentially aiding in deterring them from criminal activity. There are many positive factors that can be taken away from these research findings such as the potential positive impact that providing a positive relationship with the local Guards could have on breaking intergenerational criminal activity within families in low socioeconomic areas. These findings allowed for recommendations to be formed in an attempt to help further support the idea that mental health facilities and youth resources can have a huge and positive impact on reducing and deterring juvenile offending.

Recommendations

Several recommendations have been formed based on the findings of this research study. Many recommendations can be focused on improving the knowledge around mental health facilities within the educational system, but also within the community. The lack of information and exposure to information regarding what facilities and services are available to young people within their areas was reflected from the participant's lack of knowledge on where they could send a child. As one participant discussed, involving the children in a mental health week within schools and having teachers play an active role in learning about and discussing what resources are available would expose them to these facilities, and in turn could result in them further spreading their knowledge outside of the education system. Events like these not only expose the children to the topic of mental health and the facilities available, but it also exposes the teachers to this information. The research findings within this paper, could support further studies which could in turn further highlight how impactful implementing a mental health week within schools could be. Making a mental health awareness week in schools compulsory and part of the curriculum could potentially be recommended to the board of education as it has many positive factors.

A similar event highlighting mental health resources and what information is available could also be carried out within the community to increase awareness further. As the research

found, most of the adult participants were not aware themselves of what mental health facilities were available within their own areas. A community-based event, potentially held by mental health facilities, but also in conjunction with the local schools could heavily increase the knowledge of the resources available.

In terms of education and informative events within schools, a day where students are made aware of clubs, societies and facilities within their community and the school could also promote and increase knowledge and membership of these groups. A day dedicated to this could promote extracurricular activities within and outside of school, reducing youth's time spent on the street to reduce boredom. Implementing strategies to aid with reducing the number of young people turning to antisocial behaviour can be essential for forming a safer future for communities and it's citizens (Patel et al., 2018). Speakers and active members can become involved by holding demonstrations or talks on what is available and what occurs within these resources and clubs. These events can help with promoting knowledge and awareness of what is available for them out in the community.

One such after school intervention programme is "Safe Passage" which provides support for disadvantaged youth in California in the United States. This is a prime example from the US of how these after school supports can have a positive impact on youth. This programme provides a safe place for students after school with support and care, as well as tutoring opportunities to aid with their education. This programme brings several parts of the community together: the local police force, the educational system as well as the recreation and park department in California (George & Twyford, 2021). The coming together of these different sectors provides a positive and supportive relationship to form, also allowing students to gain an understanding that law enforcement can be positive influences within the community. Members within the community as well as the police officials who took part in this intervention programme agreed that the overall relations formed through participation had a huge positive impact (George & Twyford, 2021). This programme also reduces young people's time spent on the streets after school, loitering and carrying out antisocial behaviour as a result of boredom.

Another example of a school-based intervention programme is the Olweus Bully Prevention Programme (OBPP) within the United States, specifically areas with high crime rates and poverty which may be classed as disadvantaged areas. This is a violence prevention programme which also uses family intervention to prevent and deter community violence by

youth between the ages of 10-to18 years (Masho et al., 2019). Studies found that areas which provided this programme within their educational system showed a lower risk of violence in comparison to areas where this programme was not in place. This school level intervention was associated with a reduction in the percentage of youth violence and delinquency within the participating communities (Masho et al., 2019). There is a huge benefit that can be seen from these school-based intervention programmes which can have a huge impact across the community as well as positively influencing youth to stay away from antisocial behaviour and acts of delinquency.

As well as educational awareness events, public awareness campaigns are also important to highlight the need for home and school environments that can aid with helping youth with their mental health and wellbeing in today's society (Abi-Jaoude, 2020). The importance of structure and support not only within school but starting at home was found. Discussing how this support structure and home environment impacts a child can be discussed through workshops or events for the public. These public campaigns can also aid with individuals, like the participants within this study, who have no awareness of knowledge of mental health facilities within their community that can help them or provide help for their children. This can in turn result in these individuals sharing their knowledge and potentially helping someone in mental distress or leading a life of crime in their youth (Bayat et al., 2021). Increasing knowledge on not only mental health resources, but also facilities and clubs within the community can have an extremely positive impact on many young people.

Forming a positive relationship between the youth and figures of authority is a recommendation that is directly derived from one participant's discussion on the topic. Due to the heavily negative and stigmatised view of the Gardai, it can be recommended that the positive development of their relationship could be extremely beneficial and may reduce juvenile criminal activity in these low socio-economic areas where Gardai are viewed as the villain in society. Previous negative contact with these legal bodies is known to promote youth's negative judgement on the policing body and their actions (Hinds, 2007). If there is a view that the policing authority are legitimate keepers of the peace and there is a level of trust evident, the relationship between these two groups can become a positive one and can also increase the want to assist these policing figures (Hinds, 2009). Introducing classes with speakers or trips to local stations could aid with building a positive and supportive relationship between youth and An Garda Siochana. This could be implemented within the schooling day or within the community, bringing together these two groups, eradicating these negative views

and creating a positive bond. This in turn could promote a reduction in criminal activity, especially juvenile criminal activity within communities. Evidence has suggested that any negative interaction with the criminal justice system often promotes delinquency (Motz et al., 2020), yet the increase in knowledge on the possible punishments as a consequence to criminal actions can discourage the engagement in these activities (Motz et al, 2020).

An example of a community-based intervention programme aimed at youth and deterring delinquency is the 'BackTrack' programme set up in Australia. This programme is run in the rural area of Armidale in New South Wales and focuses on youth between the ages of 14-to-17 years who would be considered high risk individuals (Edmunds et al., 2021). This programme aims to improve community safety by reducing youth crime and instilling community values and providing support for young people. High risk young people had a preference for community-based programmes in comparison to increased surveillance of the community to deter delinquency and anti-social behaviour. The community of Armidale also had strong support for the community-based intervention programme 'BackTrack' relative to an increase in policing within the community (Edmunds et al., 2021). This further supports the impact that programmes within the community that brings together youth, law enforcement as well as the community can have a positive impact on the entire community, as well as play an active role in deterring youth from the criminal justice system by aiding in the reduction of delinquency and anti-social behaviour.

A study carried out by Kupchik, and colleagues (2020) found that police officers who play an active role within schools have a desire to build positive relationships with students and build a level of trust between them and students. The importance of providing youth with an understanding of how the police can be trusted and relied on was emphasised by participating law enforcement (Kupchik et al., 2020).

There are many negative views of policing within communities as well as a negative stigma around the criminal justice system that is often portrayed by negative social media and news media. Individual negative and biased experiences with these legal sectors which are spoken of can also influence the negative view of policing within communities (Kupchik et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of community programmes which bring together the youth within the community and the policing bodies to aid with providing a positive relationship between youth and these legal bodies. This can positively impact the rate of criminal activity by youth, deterring them from an early life of delinquency as strong, positive

and reliable bonds are formed between these legal keepers of the peace and youth within communities.

These recommendations can be further supported by future research around this topic of discussion and can be further developed. Many recommendations are community-based suggestions and would be implemented on an individual, small-scale level. The recommendation to implement a mental health awareness level is a recommendation that could be brought forward to an official body with regards to introducing it on a large-scale level to the school curriculum. However, this would be the recommendation that would have the greatest impact on youth. Research has shown that many young people struggle with coping (O'Reilly et al., 2021), which highlights the importance of mental health resources and information in many settings that create high levels of stress, such as schools. One study supports the need for early intervention within these environments to avoid any long-term issues that may arise due to mental health issues or antisocial behaviour that may stem from high stress levels which many young participants believe play a huge role in their overall wellbeing (O'Rielly et al., 2015).

Future Research and Strengths and Limitations

There are several aspects to the research and the methodology used for this study that could further support the research findings. The research carried out for this paper had a limited range and number of participants. If the participant pool were to be expanded to include youth leaders from several different youth clubs and not just limited to the scouting organisation, then this could support the idea that these issues and themes are seen across several voluntary youth groups, further developing the reliability of the research findings (Ochieng, 2009). Having a larger sample size would also allow an increase in the validity of the research findings (Lakshmi and Mohideen, 2013). If a larger study were to be conducted, it could be possible to take a comparative approach and look at several jurisdictions and regions, studying the impact that limited youth resources and mental health facilities in lower socioeconomic areas can have on youth delinquency and antisocial behaviour.

One issue that was brought up across several interviews was the issue of Covid-19 and the children's lack of access to the educational system and its facilities during the pandemic. This topic could be an entire study itself highlighting the issue of reducing young children's access to in person education and resources.

The continuous research and discussion around this topic can only further support the findings and provide more insight to potential recommendations and methods of deterrence for youth crime and delinquency. There are many ways that this research paper could be carried out in a different manner to gain more information and supporting information which will be discussed through the limitations and strengths of the paper and research methods.

The use of qualitative data is a strength to this study as it provides detailed, first-hand accounts of experiences within the specific field of study. The collection of qualitative data from ten individuals from two different areas of working with youth, provides a solid variety of information. This number of participants, ten individuals, is extremely beneficial for the research topic and provides a range of data to be analysed. Qualitative data provides extremely rich and in-dept narratives that are extremely informative and enlightening on the discussed topic (Rutberg and Bouikidis, 2018). Weick (2007) argues that the richness of information based on human experiences is powerful regarding human behaviours within society, “the power of richness lies in the fact that it feeds on itself in ways that enlarge our understanding of the human condition” (Weick, 2007, p. 18). The use of qualitative research and data by the researcher is a strength to this paper as it builds findings from first-hand information and is based on human behaviour and interactions. Increasing the participant number can only strengthen the research findings in future studies.

The use of convenience sampling, specifically snowball sampling could be considered a limitation to this study. This method of sampling allows the researchers to gain participants through collecting contacts from personal acquaintances. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this form of sampling was the most convenient method to gain participants and data for this research. Snowball sampling however provides information from a limited and targeted pool of individuals which could be considered a limitation (Ochieng, 2009). Snowball sampling uses a non-random method of collecting data from participants who have been specifically chosen for the research (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997). This method can limit the pool of participants and may not provide a full insight to public opinions and views on a topic. However, this method used did allow for individuals who were working with youth to be involved in the study, so snowball sampling was not only a limitation to this study, but also provided some strength behind the methods. Using a larger number of participants from several different fields could further aid the research on this topic.

Throughout the interviews, there were a miniscule number of participants who did not agree with statements the majority were making. Due to the number of participants within this study being quite small, the outliers did stand out. However, within a larger study conducted with a larger pool of participants, these outliers may have more of an impact on the findings or may remain outliers to the consensus of the findings.

Conclusion

This study was carried out to research and examine the impact that mental health services, youth resources and facilities within the education system and communities of low socio-economic areas can have on youth delinquency and anti-social behaviour. Evidence was found that these resources and facilities can have a greatly positive impact on these disadvantaged areas and can often deter individuals away from criminal activity as well as influence positive mental health for youth. However, the research also shows evidence that there is a lack of information and knowledge regarding what facilities are available to youth as well and the facilities that are available, not meeting certain standards. The importance of education and a structured environment is also found to have a positive influence on youth and was also strongly evident within the data collected. The impact that all these factors, from school to home environment, were both highlighted throughout the findings, showing how their impact is huge for young individuals. Many resources and facilities available to youth can improve their behaviour and deter them from loitering on the street in search of entertainment, which often results in delinquency and potentially juvenile offending. The research carried out has allowed for recommendations for increasing these facilities and increasing their standards, as well as providing recommendations for future research which could further aid with this issue and hopefully deter many youths away from a life of crime. There is empirical evidence that supports the benefits of these diversion and intervention programmes recommended, yet they are still heavily criticised (Samuels-Wortley, 2019). Only future research on this topic and support for these recommendations can fill in the gaps within the research and can further help deter youth from delinquent acts and antisocial behaviour, especially within communities that are considered low socioeconomic areas. Further research and empirical support can help improve the life of youth within low socioeconomic areas and may help provide them with more resources and access to facilities that should be easily available to every young individual.

Appendices

[A] Informed Consent Form:



INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Information Sheet

Purpose of the Study.

I am Holly Kenny, a Masters student, studying Comparative Criminology and Criminal Justice in Maynooth University.

As part of the requirements for my Masters' degree, I am undertaking a research study under the supervision of Dr. Avril Brandon.

The study is exploring the impact of youth and mental health services on juvenile criminal activity. The research aims to focus on young people who commit criminal acts and how the availability of resources in their areas may play a part in this criminal activity. The study will also focus on lower socio-economic/disadvantaged areas as well as the role education and these services can play in deterring these young individuals away from the criminal justice system.

What will the study involve? The study will involve individual interviews with those who work directly with youth in low socio-economic/disadvantaged areas. Each interview will last approximately thirty minutes. The aim of these interviews is to gain an understanding of the current resources available to the youth in these areas, as well as the impact they have. The information gathered through these interviews will then be transcribed into text and used to provide insight on the impact these resources can have on youth and the crime rates in disadvantaged areas. The information gathered and the research conducted will then be presented in a paper and submitted to Maynooth University on the 27th of August 2021.

Who has approved this study? This study has been reviewed and has received ethical approval from Maynooth University. You may have a copy of this approval if you request it.

Why have you been asked to take part? You have been asked to take part because you play an active role in young people's lives, either through being a secondary school teacher or a leader of a youth club in a lower socio-economic/disadvantaged area. The information that you can provide is extremely beneficial to the topic currently being researched and could help with understanding the role that these services have on young people.

Do you have to take part?

No, you are under no obligation whatsoever to take part in this research. However, we hope that you will agree to take part and give us some of your time to answer some questions through a one-to-one interview with a researcher, which will last roughly 30 minutes. You do not have to complete the interview or answer every question asked by the researcher. The researcher will stop the interview if the participant wishes to stop at any given time. It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not you would like to take part. If you decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form and will be given a copy as well as given the information sheet for your own records. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and/or to withdraw your information up until the end of the interview and debriefing. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect your relationships with Maynooth University.

What information will be collected? Qualitative data will be collected for the purpose of this research. Qualitative data within this research is data collected through interviews and involves the participants verbally answering questions from the researcher. The questions asked and the information provided will be focused around your role working with youth, low socio-economic areas, mental health and youth resources and education. Once I have collected this data, I will transcribe the audio into text and begin analysing the data.

Will your participation in the study be kept confidential? Yes, all information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept confidential. No names of any individual, place or organisation will be identified at any time. All information will be electronic information and will be encrypted and held securely on the researcher's personal computer, who is the only person with access to the device. The only other individual who will view the data before submission is the research supervisor.

No information will be distributed to any other unauthorised individual or third party. If you so wish, the data that you provide can also be made available to you at your own discretion.

'It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'

What will happen to the information which you give? All the information you provide will be kept at Maynooth University in such a way that it will not be possible to identify you. On completion of the research, the data will be retained on the researcher's password protected laptop until the completion of their degree. After the completion of the degree, all data collected will be destroyed by the researcher themselves.

What will happen to the results? The research will be written up and presented as a dissertation research paper submitted to Maynooth University. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you upon request.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part? I do not envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part, however it is possible that talking about your experience, especially with troubled youth may cause some distress. You will be free to take breaks and/or leave the interview at any time without reason or penalty.

What if there is a problem? At the end of the interview, I will discuss with you how you found the experience and how you are feeling. You may contact my supervisor, Dr. Avril Brandon at Avril.Brandon@mumail.ie if you feel the research has not been carried out as described above.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me: Holly Kenny, holly.kenny.2018@mumail.ie

If you agree to take part in the study, please complete and sign the consent form overleaf.

Thank you for taking the time to read this

Consent Form

I.....agree to participate in Holly Kenny’s research study titled ‘Examining the impact of limited access to mental health facilities and youth resources in low socio-economic areas rates of juvenile crime’.

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me verbally and in writing. I’ve been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily.

I am participating voluntarily.

I give permission for my interview with Holly Kenny to be audio recorded.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data right up to the end of the interview and debriefing.

It has been explained to me how my data will be managed and that I may access it on request.

I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information sheet.

I understand that my data, in an anonymous format, may be used in further research projects and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

[B] Participant Interview Questions

What is your current role that involves working directly with individuals under the age of 18?

What is the age range of the individuals you work with?

How long have you been working with youth in this manner?

Are you currently working in an area that is considered a low socio-economic area or a disadvantaged area, or have you worked in these areas in the past?

How would you describe your time working within these areas and working with the youth within these areas?

How would you describe the mental health facilities and youth resources available to young people in your area, whether they be available through school or independently ran?

Can you name any mental health facilities or (other) youth services that are available for youth in this area?

Do you believe that there is a link between the availability of these facilities and the crime rates in lower socio-economic/disadvantaged areas?

Have you ever had an experience with a child, where you saw first-hand, how mental health services and youth resources have either positively or negatively impacted a child?

Do you think there can be improvements made to the availability of these services for young people?

Do you think education can play a bigger role in deterring young people from the criminal justice system? If so, how?

If you have worked in both a lower socio-economic area and a high socio-economic area, have you noticed differences between resources for youth and children who would be considered 'troubled'?

[C] Coding Framework

Theme	Initial Codes	Data Extract Sample
<p>The Value of Structure from Educational and Extracurricular Resources in a Child’s Development</p>	<p>Structure</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>Security</p> <p>Support</p> <p>Safe Environment</p> <p>Routine</p> <p>Boredom</p> <p>Loitering</p>	<p>P1: “When they come to school that they can get a breakfast, they know that they’ll be sitting in a warm facility, they know that there's somewhere they can be heard and listened”</p> <p>P1: “The likes of homework club and that it kinda keeps kids in the school for a little bit longer and some will actually stay back... so I suppose that in itself is kinda helping some of them stay off the streets”</p> <p>P1: ”I think they’d need it because like school ends at 4 o’clock, where do they go then when, if their background is troubled, they're going to just go out on to the streets again really aren't they or stand at the shop corner and sure we know what happens then”</p> <p>P8: “I also think the fact that I was in scouts, it's like I would have looked at people older than me, [names of older scouts] ...people who are older than me in this doing other things, doing things that weren’t leaving school, getting a job or like having kids young, sure there's no problem with that, that's what people want to do, but that's just some people viewed as the only path your life can take because it’s all they know...I think exposure to wider groups of people in that sense made me realise like there's more to life than what I can see”.</p> <p>P6: “I see people who are not involved in any organizations and their trust the manners aren't being taught and things like that, they're not properly taught things, maybe in skills, whatever, but then some of them are just running around the streets, causing a bit of trouble.”.</p>

		<p>P3: “They come into a structured environment where they get you know, they know, they get taught right from wrong, they're not left to their own devices, they gain respect for themselves, they gain respect for others”.</p> <p>P2: “They mightened be able to do [homework] at home as their house might be overcrowded...fights broken out at their house...”</p> <p>P7:“There’s kids that would be troublemakers every week in the hall then you get them up on a hike or get them away for a couple of days or get them away on camp and they're a completely different person, they're still a troublemaker but they seem to be able to put their energy into something else” (P7)</p> <p>P3: “Unless they encounter it in schools so if you're not involved in any extracurricular things you're only exposed to what you have to be exposed to which is in school and your home life so if you don’t know these things are there, you’re not gonna benefit from them”</p> <p>P5: “Teachers that might take them out and say ‘come on we just kick a ball around together’, that’s really important”</p> <p>P7: you can definitely see a change in kids when you have them for a longer period of time”</p> <p>P5: “A lot of schools put pressure on the children to kinda just learn the syllabus when they should be maybe taken out of a specific subject to talk one on one to someone or even there were teachers who would”</p> <p>P7: “I’ve seen people who haven’t had the resources go one way”</p> <p>P7: “[Scouts] definitely helped”</p>
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		<p>P7: "I know some people I grew up with who kind of went off the rails"</p> <p>P7: "It's kind of why I do it I suppose"</p>
<p>The Importance of Access to Mental Health Facilities and their Issue with Awareness</p>	<p>Lack of Awareness</p> <p>Mental Health Events</p> <p>Failure of System</p> <p>Poor resources</p> <p>Extracurricular activities and positive mental health</p>	<p>P3: "I can't even name a mental health facility in [area], and I'm from here and I've lived here all my life"</p> <p>P1: "We've only had mental health week, about five or six weeks ago where they were made aware again but it's, it's everywhere".</p> <p>P8: "Speaking from my own experience of a teenager living in these areas as well, like they haven't ever been up to scratch, it's really hard for children to get help in regards to their mental health ... I know that's kind of the general consensus in every aspect of the Irish health care system, is they're sub-par, their resources aren't great, but it is really hard for those who are seeking help to get help".</p> <p>P1: "We'd always tell the lads like that they can speak to the likes of Jigsaw and Bernardos"</p> <p>P1: "Very aware that there's people to talk to and places to go"</p> <p>P3: "I know from a scouting point of view that there [are] certain health services available"</p> <p>P9: "A lot of people wouldn't really know what's kinda out there for them"</p> <p>P5: "A lot of kids do well in the likes of football... Extracurricular things can make a big impact as a behavioural way as well... And mental health."</p> <p>P8: "Fairly poor at the moment"</p>

		P8: “Sub-par”
The Role of Family Structure and Routine in Deterring Youth from Delinquent Behaviour	Deterrence Guidance Intergenerational Crime Negative view of policing Structure Peers from similar backgrounds Lack of support Lack of care Unsuitable background/home life	P4: “To be honest my parents ... it was more so my dad ... he was happy for me to be in any sport or any activity as long as it can be kind of physically active ... but kind of give me an outlet for something else and also for making friends” P9: “I do also feel like you need like a parental role as well because we can only do so much in a school and during school hours, they kinda need to be monitored after school as well so that they don’t fall into these kinda crime situations” P5: “Guards are out to get them” P5 P3: “Our structures made at home y’know. Your parents give you the structure” P3: “They’re thrown out the door with the car moving kind of thing because the parents want a break from them” P8: “I grew up, I saw my I saw my mom go to college while I was in primary school. Then I saw my sister going to college and I knew that there was more to the world than [lower socio-economic area participant grew up in], not that that’s a bad thing but more than what was in my direct line, I knew there was more to that.” P5: “the police force aren’t out to get you...they might then have a different perception on crime”. P5: “Think that the guards are like these big bad men that come in, raid their houses, destroy their lives, destroy their families lives and so on”

		<p>P8: “Especially in these areas they respond really well to someone kind of coming from similar backgrounds to them, the way I see it is kind of a ripple effect. They see someone similar to them doing things they could do which kind of inspires them in a way, so I find they engage with me really well”.</p> <p>P2: “They mightened be able to do [homework] at home as their house might be overcrowded...fights broken out at their house...”</p> <p>P7: “I think it’s how they’re brought up”</p> <p>P7: “Kids tend to come out of their shell”</p>
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