



Evaluating Young People's Perception of the Police in Carmarthenshire

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for deposit in the University's digital repository.

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Date 10/03/2021.....

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Abstract

Little is known about young people's perception of the police compared to adults. Research has shown that young people have a problematic relationship with the police which can result in lack of trust, confidence, and cooperation. This study aims to identify young people's perception of the police and determine what influences can cause their attitudes to change.

A mixed method approach was designed to carry out this study. An online survey was distributed to young people living in Carmarthenshire to gain knowledge and understanding of their attitudes towards the police. Online interviews were also used with young participants, to gain a more in-depth understanding of their views and attitudes. A qualified youth worker was also questioned during the online interviews to gain a different perspective on this topic.

The results in this study suggest that young people in Carmarthenshire have a positive perception of the police in their area, compared to other studies. There is evidence to suggest that young people aged 15 to 21 have a more problematic relationship with the police than those aged 22 to 24. The results also indicate that there is a numerous amount of influences that can cause young people to have a negative perception of the police, traumatic experiences being most favourable.

It is clear that social influences have a direct impact to a young person's opinion of the police. It is recommended that the police aim to provide a positive experience to all young people, in the hope that it improves trust and confidence in the police, rather than spending time trying to change negative attitudes into positive ones. Once an individual has a negative attitude towards the police, it is very difficult to change. The aim must be to ensure all future young people leave with a positive encounter, before poor experiences shape their attitudes. More research is needed to identify what

policies and approaches the police have in place to prevent young people having traumatic experiences with the police and whether these policies work.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Public perception is an ongoing challenge among police forces. Sindall et al (2003) claims that there is plenty of knowledge on public trust and confidence in the police, yet, less is known about public perception of the police amongst young people and how their views are formed. Therefore, it is vital to evaluate young people's perceptions of the police and identify what has influenced their opinions.

There has been numerous research already conducted on this topic, particularly by Butts et al (2008), Clayman and Skinns (2012), Ramshaw et al (2018) and Gleeson (2018) on young people's perception of the police in cities such as London. However, there has been little research on young people's perception of the police in rural areas, specifically in the county of Carmarthenshire.

According to Gleeson (2018) most of the research that has been conducted on young people's perception of the police is usually quantitative research, with qualitative research in this field being rare. It is important to not only focus on what young people's attitudes are of the police, but to also establish why they have these attitudes in the first place.

This topic is very important as young people's willingness to cooperate and support the police is essential to police effectiveness and efficiency (Hinds, 2007). This means that if young people have a poor relationship with the police, it will result in non-compliance with the law and it could prevent young people from reporting crime in the future. Hinds (2007) also claims that a poor attitude with the police as a young person, is likely to cause them to have the same judgement as adults. This can potentially cause generations of poor relationships with the police, reducing police efficiency and also an issue of policing by consent.

This dissertation aims to evaluate young people's perception of the police in Carmarthenshire during 2020/2021. The county of Carmarthenshire is a rural area, covering Ammanford, Llanelli and Carmarthen. The research also aims to identify any causal factors to why young people have negative opinions on the police. This will allow comparison, to see whether there are any similarities or differences amongst young people's perception of the police in rural areas compared to those who live in urban areas. This study also aims to identify any patterns or trends between young people's perception, their age and gender.

The objectives of this study is to identify young people's perception of the police in Carmarthenshire, analyse research to see if age and gender can affect young people's attitudes towards the police, and to discover what influences can cause young people's perceptions of the police to change.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Summary

In this chapter, relevant published research will be identified and discussed on young people's perception of the police. This chapter will also include a critical outline of previous research projects on young people's perception of the police between 2008 and 2020, in order to identify any gaps in research.

Young People's Perception

Public perception of the police is important. If an individual has a positive perception of the police, their public confidence and trust is likely to be positive. According to Myhill and Beak (2008) research suggests that fair and respectful treatment of citizens is associated with confidence and trust in the police, as well as viewing the police as legitimate. Legitimacy is then associated with the willingness to cooperate with the police and assist in preventing and responding to crime, as the individual will have a greater compliance with the law. This means that if an individual has trust, confidence and views the police as legitimate, they are more likely to comply with the law and assist the police during investigations. However, the police must provide fair and respectful treatment, in order for an individual to have trust and confidence in the police. Similarly, Jackson and Bradford (2010) believe that trust and confidence within the police can encourage active citizens to participate with the police. This implies that public confidence will provide secure public cooperation with the police, as well as individual compliance with the law. This will strengthen the relationship between the police and the public. According to Morell (2016) public confidence is a key aspect in policing, as it provides an insight into the performance and engagement of the police. This means that measuring public confidence allows the police to evaluate their

effectiveness and evaluate their performance with the public. If individuals do not have a positive perception of the police, they are likely to disobey the law and are unlikely to cooperate with the police.

There has been plenty of research conducted on adult perception of the police over the years, but, young people's perception has only recently been considered. This is supported by Sindall et al (2017) who states that much is known about public trust and confidence in the police, but less is known about public perception of the police amongst young people. Hurst and Frank (2000) suggest that young people's attitudes towards the police are less favourable compared to adults. Suggesting that young people have a negative perception of the police in comparison to adults. In addition to this, Sindall et al (2017) believes that the trust and confidence in the police is more fragile amongst young people than adults.

There is evidence to suggest that the trust and confidence in the police can be impacted by people's satisfaction and specific encounters (Myhill and Beak, 2008). This claims that if an individual does not have a pleasant encounter with the police, they are likely to have negative attitudes towards them. Sindall et al (2017) believes that young people are more likely to get police interaction as they make greater use of public space. This means that if lack of trust and public confidence is associated with negative interactions, it is likely that young people tend to have negative encounters with the police in order for them to have an unfavourable attitude towards them. UK Parliament (2014) supports this, by claiming that the first contact with the police is important in shaping young people's attitudes, if they have a traumatic experience, it will be reflected in their perception of the police. This means that a young person's experience with the police is important, as they will develop their perception based on the encounter. Police and Crime Commissioner Cambridge and Peterborough (2014)

states that once a negative encounter has occurred between the police and a young person, it takes time and hard work to change their ingrained attitudes, which can also be passed on from one generation to the next. Therefore, the police need to understand the views of young people and improve their overall treatment towards them. This could potentially increase their trust, confidence and cooperation. However, according to Hinds (2007), police surveillance on young people to detect crime can make individuals feel like they are being harassed. In turn, can cause a negative impact in their attitudes towards the police.

UK Parliament (2014) believes that some young people fear the police, causing a negative influence on their perception. Also, Ramshaw et al (2018) believes that early engagement between young people and the police is important to build a positive relationship. Therefore, if individuals are engaged by the police early, and have a positive engagement, they are unlikely to be fearful of the police and can perceive them trustworthy. This allows them to cooperate with the police confidently.

Young people's attitudes towards the police is essential to police effectiveness and efficiency. A poor relationship can lead to non-compliance with the law and prevent individuals from reporting crime (Hinds, 2007). This suggests that young people's perception of the police is paramount to police effectiveness, as they are more likely to cooperate with the police if they have trust and confidence.

Influence

Skelton and Valentine (1998:253) believe that young people have a sense of 'Territoriality' which can be understood as a 'spatial strategy to effect, influence or control resources and people by controlling area'. This suggests that young people tend to be restricted to their local areas as they are 'safe spaces' rather than going to

other areas where there could be racist violence as they belong to other gangs and communities. This suggests that leaving their area can cause fear, violence and conflict. Rural areas geographically bigger areas that may not have the same effect. Territoriality can cause negative perceptions of the police as young people often do not feel safe in their community, resulting in less confidence in the police.

Good community policing allows young people to feel safe in their area, Cummings (2019) claims that good community policing increases trust in young people resulting in an improved perception. This means that young people are more likely to have trust and confidence in the police if they feel secure. Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994) claims that community policing was created in order to improve public safety which can result in a positive perception. This suggests that if young people are surrounded with good community policing, it would enhance their feeling of security, providing more confidence in the police.

The media can also be a big influence on young people's perceptions. Today, the media is very accessible, which can cause detrimental impacts to young people's opinions on the on the police. This is supported by Leishman and Mason (2003) who claim that the media can have a harmful impact on the levels of confidence in the police. The media can capture malpractice and wrongdoings in an organisation, highlighting it for the whole world do see. This means that young people are likely to witness police brutality and wrong doings, resulting in negative perceptions.

Lastly, friends and family can also have an impact on young people's perception of the police. Davis et al (2003) claim that individuals whose family and friends have had negative contact with the police also had less confidence in the police. This shows that young people can be influenced by the experience of their family and friends with the

police. Davis et al (2003) also state that reducing the number of negative encounters police have with individuals can be more important for improving public perception of the police than increasing the number of positive interactions. This suggests that individuals are less likely to change their opinion once it has been influenced, therefore it would be more appropriate to reduce the risk of negative perceptions by introducing more positive interactions.

Previous Research

Since the importance of young people's perception of the police has been established, there has been many studies conducted to evaluate their perceptions of the police. In order to see if there has been any development in this subject area, it is important to research the studies in chronological order.

Firstly, Butts et al (2008) created a study with the Metropolitan Police Authority, titled '*Seen and Heard – Young people, Policing and Crime*'. This research was conducted to build a comprehensive picture of youth crime, in order to identify what causes some young people to be associated with criminality. To do this, the authors wanted to hear from young people about their views of crime. This study includes their views as citizens, victims and perpetrators of crime, in order to understand young people's views to improve policing (Butts et al, 2008). This means that the results of the study will allow individuals to understand youth crime more comprehensively, which could also lead to better policing.

The researchers conducted a multi method study, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This allows for a more in-depth study. Butts et al (2008) states that they created their study based on a six-month programme of community engagement with Londoners in 2007-08 in order to create recommendations for the

Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA). This will allow MPA to improve policing in London, making the city a safer place for young people. During the study the researchers also conducted one to one interviews with 28 adult stakeholders, including organisations such as Barnados, Beatbullying and Active Charge Foundation. This was done to see what their organisations are doing to tackle youth crime and victimisation as well as their views on the MPS youth strategy 2007-2009 (Butts et al, 2008). This research method is great to gain in-depth information and to gain a better understanding of youth criminality in London. Butts et al (2008) also carried out a Youth Survey in order to collect the views and experiences of young people in London, about the police and criminality. This is a very good research method to collect a large amount of information quickly and without having to spend a lot of money (Kara, 2017). This research method is also great for maintaining participants' anonymity allowing them to complete the survey in their own time (Kara, 2017). This means that the researchers were able to administer and collect a large sample of information in a quick and cheap way. However, using this method makes it difficult to identify if an individual is not being honest with their answers, as Kara (2017) states that there is no way to check the accuracy of the responses. During their study, the researchers were able to have a diverse selection of more than 1,000 young and adult Londoners take part in the various consultations and found the number of young people that are involved in offending behaviour is significantly lower than the public currently perceive it to be (Butts et al, 2008). The results also suggest that individual encounters between young people and police officers have a direct impact on the perception that young people have on the police as a whole (Butts et al, 2008). This claims that if an individual has a negative encounter with the police, they are likely to have a negative impression of the entire police service. This result supports the statement that UK Parliament

(2014) made, which claims that contact with the police is important in shaping a young person's perception and attitude towards them.

Overall, this research was very successful, as the researchers were able to gain knowledge on youth criminality and create recommendations to improve policing. These include increasing the visible presence of police in areas surrounding schools and improve the reporting mechanisms for young people (Butts et al, 2008).

However, there was little information on how young people perceive the police as a whole and the research was also based solely in a busy capital city. There was no research in any rural areas. Therefore, there is a gap in research to study young people's perceptions of the police in Carmarthenshire, where it is rural.

Secondly, Stephen Clayman and Layla Skinns conducted a study titled '*To snitch or not to snitch? An exploratory study of factors influencing whether young people actively cooperate with the police*'. This study was conducted after the death of Adam Regis aged 15, in March 2007, where a murder investigation took place which highlighted how difficult it was to encourage young people to cooperate with the police, to get information for a successful conviction (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). This meant that during the investigation, young people were unwilling to provide information to the police, allowing the police to make an arrest. The researchers wanted to explore the relationship between the police and young people to identify why young people do not 'snitch'. The researchers carried out a multi method qualitative study on young people, the police, teachers and youth workers (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). This research was hoped to provide information on what factors prevent young people from cooperating with the police.

According to Clayman and Skinns (2012) no witnesses came forward during the investigation of Adam's death, which is frustrating to not only the police, but to his mother. To this day (2021), the police have not been able to charge anyone with Adam's murder. This case shows how vital police cooperation is. Without the help of young people, the police cannot carry out their role effectively and arrest those who have committed crimes.

The researchers believe that there are many factors that prevent young people from 'snitching' (sharing information to the police), such as social groups or 'gangs', negative repercussions, their relationship with the police and their trust in the police (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). This means that young people can be easily influenced by these factors, which can prevent them from cooperating with the police. It is important that young people comply and cooperate with the police in order for the police to work efficiently and effectively. As said previously, Hinds (2007) states that if young people have a poor relationship with the police, they are less likely to report crime.

In order to explore why young people do not 'snitch', Clayman and Skinns (2012) conducted 24 in- depth interviews with young people aged 13 and 16 years old. The researchers also conducted two focus groups with teachers, youth workers and police officers.

An interview is a good research method to gather in-depth information on an individual's thoughts and feelings (Alsaawi, 2014). This will allow the researchers to gather qualitative research on how young people feel about 'snitching'. Interviews are also good for exploring an individual's experiences regarding specific issues (Alsaawi, 2014). This suggests that interviews allow the researcher to understand the complexity

of how other people view specific topics. In this case, the interviews will allow the researchers to understand why young people do not want to pass information on to the police, while providing an insight to their thoughts and feelings towards them. On the other hand, interviews can be very time consuming and is very limited on what the interviewee wants to share (Alsaawi, 2014). Although interviews are very time consuming, Clayman and Skinns (2012) conducted 24 interviews which lasted 25-40 minutes long, then transcribed them. The researchers are experienced enough to conduct the interviews successfully.

The findings from interviews conducted by the researchers suggest that all young people had some form of contact with the police. Either as suspects, witnesses, victims or through community policing (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). This is evidence that states that all individuals have spoken to the police at least once. The majority of the police interactions with the young people were due to the police conducting a stop and search. Many of the young people believed that they were treated like criminals and were incorrectly targeted (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). This means that many of the young people felt that the police would stop and search them for no reason. This then gave them a negative perception towards the police. However, the results also suggest that some of the young people had experiences of being witnesses and victims. They say that they were treated well by the police and have had a positive experience (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). If the young people have a positive experience with the police, they are more likely to cooperate with them.

In terms of snitching, Clayman and Skinns (2012) study suggest the young people believe that if they snitch, then they are likely to have negative repercussions against them from their social groups and gangs (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). This means

that the young people fear for their own safety and decide not to snitch. The negative repercussions prevent them from cooperating with the police.

When conducting the research, the researchers also used focus groups. Unlike interviews, focus groups allow a collection of data from multiple people at once. Focus groups are a good tool for easily gathering a broad range of opinions while being inexpensive (Lazar et al, 2010). However, it is important to do more than one focus group in order to gain effective information. As Lazar et al, (2010) states that one focus group session is discouraged as a single group can be unresponsive or unrepresentative. On the other hand, focus groups take time, therefore the interviewer would be limited on the amount of questions that can be asked (Lazar et al, 2010). This claims that unlike interviews, the researcher will have to carefully chose a small number of questions.

The results of the focus groups suggest that the teachers believe that snitching is seen as negative which can result in retribution (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). This means, that if the young people snitch, they could either get hurt or excluded by their social group. The focus groups also suggest that most participants had not actually experienced negative repercussions from snitching, as most had never snitched before (Clayman and Skinns, 2012). This claims that if someone speaks to the police, they will receive negative repercussions, however it was rare for any negative repercussions to occur, as the young people had never provided information to the police before. This means that the feelings of their personal safety out-weighs the need to snitch to the police.

Overall, this was a successful study. The researchers identified factors that influence young people to keep quiet, and not cooperate with the police. The main factor was

social influence. The young people were too scared of what would happen to them if they were caught snitching by their peers.

The authors conducted a multi method study using both interviews and focus groups allowing for a more valid and representative sample. Although the researchers touched upon the relationship between the police and young people in their study, the overall research was about why young people are not willing to cooperate with the police. This provides a gap in research when researching young people's perception of the police, and why they have a particular opinion about them. Like many other studies, this study is also based in London, a busy city. There is very little research conducted in rural areas such as in Carmarthenshire. This would allow for a comparison between young people's perception of the police in different geographical areas. This would identify any similarities and differences between young people's perceptions of the police in cities compared to smaller villages. There is also no comparison between ages or gender within this study.

Thirdly, Nicole Ramshaw, Barry Charleton and Paul Dawson created a study with the Mayor of London office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) in 2018, to gather views of young Londoners about crime and safety. This study was conducted with young people aged 11 to 16 and a total of 7832 young people took part (Ramshaw et al, 2018). The researchers state that early engagement between the police and young people is important in order to build a positive relationship as only half of young people nationally, hold a positive view of the police (Ramshaw et al, 2018). This means that half of the population of young people hold negative views of the police, and this may be because they have not had a positive experience with them. The main aim of this research was to discover and highlight the views of young people about policing and crime.

This research was based on a London Youth Online Survey, where the survey comprised of 50 questions and was hosted online using a secure portal (Ramshaw et al, 2018). This suggests that the study was based on quantitative research. Muijs (2011) suggests that quantitative research is based on analysing data in a numerical form in order to explain a particular phenomenon. The researchers used this research method in order to collect data on the views of young people on crime and policing, while analysing the reason for their feelings. Ramshaw et al (2018) used an online survey to collect their data. This method is a good choice when wanting to collect data quickly without spending a lot of money according to Bhaskaran and LeClaire (2010). Online surveys are cost-effective as there is no need for staff to distribute them. Online surveys offer real-time responses allowing for faster feedback while gaining a mass of data quickly (Bhaskaran and LeClaire, 2010).

Although this is a very good method to use, there can be some drawbacks. Not every young person has access to the internet and respondents can lie about their answers (Bhaskaran and LeClaire, 2010). This means that young people that have access to the internet are more likely to respond to the survey, resulting in a weaker representative sample, as some young people cannot afford to use the internet. Also, some responses can be unreliable, as anonymity online can result in less honest answers.

The researchers' survey included topics such as views and perception of the police, feelings of safety and experiences of crime victimisation (Ramshaw et al, 2018). These topics will give a better understanding on how young people view policing and crime.

In their findings, the researchers found that 44% of young victims said they reported their crime to the police, however only 29% of these were happy with the service

provided by the police. Also, when individuals were asked why didn't they report their crime to the police, 32% believed that the police would not help them, 23% did not feel comfortable talking to the police and 22% said that they did not like the police (Ramshaw et al, 2018). This means that there are many young individuals in London that feel like they cannot report crime to the police, leaving these crimes unreported and leaving the criminals without charge.

This study was successful overall. There was a large sample of participants allowing for a representative sample of young people in London. However, according to the United Nations (2020) young people are those aged between 15 and 24 years old. Therefore, this provides a gap in research when creating a study on young people between those ages. This study was also based in London. This means, there was no comparison between a busy city and rural areas. Although the study did identify young people's perception of the police, there was little understanding of why they had this perception. This also leaves a gap in research in order to use a qualitative approach to identify the reasons why young people feel uncomfortable talking to the police and why they do not like them.

Next, Gleeson (2018) created a study titled: *Exploring the meaning of young people's attitudes towards the police. A qualitative study of Irish youth*. She believes that a growing autonomy coupled with legal restrictions in adolescence can often mean that the relationship between young people and the police are problematic (Gleeson, 2018). The researcher also states that many of these studies are usually quantitative, which mean that underlying influencing factors in attitude formation are not being included. This suggests that the majority of research does not include factors that influence young people to have the perceptions that they perceive. Instead, they give

statistics on the views of the young people. This excludes any external factors that influence their opinions of the police.

The author of this study created this research based in the Republic of Ireland, in order to identify the relationship young people have with the police, why young people are less likely to report crime, or trust the police compared to adults (Gleeson, 2018). This would allow a more comprehensive understanding of how young people view the police, and what experiences led them to have that particular view. This would then allow the police to adapt their technique in order to build a more positive relationship with young people.

In order to investigate a broader understanding of factors affecting young people's views and attitudes towards the police, the author decided that participants that have most likely had interactions and experiences with the police not related to criminal activity were appropriate to take part in the study (Gleeson, 2018). To do this, two youth centres in one city in the West of Ireland took part in the research.

The researcher used interviewing as her research method because she wanted to carry out a qualitative study. According to Lazar et al (2010) this research method has the ability of gaining deep good quality data. Researchers have the ability to ask questions that gives the participants the freedom to provide detailed responses. This suggests that interviews allow participants to have their chance to talk, providing in-depth information to the researcher. The interviews can be extremely flexible as it allows the researcher to re-order questions based on responses (Lazar et al, 2010). This suggests that the interviewee can tailor the questions based on the responses, allowing a better opportunity to gather more data that would be particularly useful in

the study. Gleeson (2018) carried out interviews that lasted an average of 45minutes each and later transcribed them for analysis.

The findings in this study suggest that the initial views of the police tended to be negative amongst the young people, however the participants did express a desire for a better relationship with the police (Gleeson, 2018). The majority of the young people stated that they often feel like they are being stereotyped as suspects due to their age and felt that they had no control over how decisions about them were being made (Ibid). This suggests that due to their age, they felt like the police would see them as suspicious of committing a crime, and they had no say during any interactions with the police, making them feel helpless and controlled. Gleeson (2018) also stated that the young people felt that the police would see them all as troublemakers, whether they had committed an offence or not. This claims that all young people are branded regardless of their actions. On the other hand, the findings of this study also suggest that if the young people get shown some measure of respect from the police, it encourages them to also be more respectful of the police and the law (Gleeson, 2018). This means that if the police respect young people, they are more likely to obey the law and have a positive attitude towards the police.

This research study was successful. It provides a comprehensive understanding of how young people in the Republic of Ireland view the police and provides evidence of why they have these views. The sample of young people was representative, providing validity to the study.

After carrying out this literature review, it is clear that there have been many studies conducted to analyse the relationship between young people and the police. However,

there has been one main theme emerging, and that's how young people feel when talking to the police.

Emotions

The evidence suggests that young people often feel threatened by the police as they are often viewed as suspects. They feel that their age is often used against them and are seen as criminals towards the police, even if they are not. However, if they get treated fairly by the police and have a positive encounter, they are more likely to have a positive perception of the police and obey the law. These factors cause young people to dislike the police, as they feel stereotyped and controlled. This will then cause young people to despise the police and make them less likely to respect the law.

It is also important to note that fear is also a strong emotion that young people feel towards the police. Parliament (2014) claims that of a young person's first encounter with the police is traumatic, they are likely to be fearful of the police. This would then suggest that their perception would be the result of their experience. If they have a negative encounter with the police, they will have a negative perception of them. Clayman and Skinns (2012) also suggest that young people fear for their personal safety when cooperating with the police, as it can lead to negative repercussions from their social groups. This would in turn cause young people to dislike the police or be too fearful to cooperate. In the study conducted by Ramshaw et al (2018), young people did not feel comfortable talking to the police, resulting in less crime being reported. This means that if young people did not feel confident when talking to the police it would prevent them from cooperating and reporting crime. This leaves many crimes unreported.

It is clear that emotions play a huge part in the decision making of young people. If they do not feel confident or comfortable, they are less likely to comply with the police. This will also cause them to resent the police in the future. In order to gain a good relationship with young people, it is important that police officers are seen as approachable and trustworthy.

Conclusion

Young people's perception of the police has become more recognised. Since 2012, there has been more research conducted on the topic which shows development of thinking in the subject area.

All the above studies suggest that if young people have a negative experience with the police, they are more likely to have a negative perception towards them. Once a young person gets a negative perception of the police, it is very difficult to change. All studies also suggest that emotions play a role in whether young people want to comply with the police or not. However, the research created by Clayman and Skinns (2012) states that although young people are unwilling to cooperate with the police, it is due to social influences rather than negative encounters. Young people are too scared to speak to the police in case they get excluded or hurt by their social group. This could be a factor that causes young people to have a negative perception of the police, without having any actual contact with them.

There are many gaps in research that has been identified. The majority of the studies are either qualitative or quantitative studies. A multi-research approach could be very beneficial. Most of the studies are conducted in large capital cities. Therefore, there is a gap in research for rural areas such as Carmarthenshire. This would allow a

comparison between cities and rural areas. It is important to note that due to the current pandemic, all research must be conducted online. This could be a potential weakness as although the majority of young people often use internet technology, many young people may not have access to the internet as they may have a lower economic status. Lastly, the United Nations state that a young person is between the ages of 15 and 24 (United Nations, 2020). There are little studies that provide a sample of participants of these ages. A study containing young people of these ages would add to existing knowledge.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Summary

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this study. It provides a clear plan on how this research project was carried out, while considering ethical issues that could have been raised during the research. Due to the 2020 Global Pandemic, there was no physical interaction between any individual involved in this research, ensuring that all participants were safe, and the spread of Coronavirus was prevented.

Introduction

There have been many studies conducted on young people and their attitudes towards the police. However, there is little understanding of their opinion of the police and what has influenced them to feel this way. According to Sindall et al (2017) young people have more contact and conflict with the police as they have greater use of public space. This could mean that young people tend to feel targeted by the police, resulting in a fragile relationship between them and the police. However, it is important to identify how young people really feel about the police and how their views are formed. It is also crucial to see whether all young people have the same perceptions of the police, or whether there will be difference of opinion between force areas within the UK.

In order to gain an understanding of young people's perception of the police, a research study was needed in order to gather young people's views of the police and what interactions they have had with the police in the past.

Methodological Approach

The main research problem that occurred was that there was little understanding on how young people perceived the police and what influenced their decisions. When carrying out this study, important decisions needed to be made on what methodological approach to use. Choosing the correct methodological approach is the backbone to gaining a detailed research study, Creswell (2014:3) states that: 'research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation'.

McCusker and Gunaydin (2014) believe that in order to justify the selection of a methodological approach, attention should be focused on all of the methods in order to perceive their differences and chose one that is relative to the field of study. Therefore, it was important to understand the concepts of all three research approaches in order to decide which approach was appropriate to use within the study.

Quantitative Research

This type of research is based on the measurement of quantity (Kothari, 2004). Similarly, Creswell (2014) states that this approach involves collecting, analysing and interpreting data in order to get results. This suggests that this approach is based on collecting numerical data to identify patterns or averages. This approach is based on collecting data on individuals that have familiar responses. Newman and Benz (1998:2) believe that quantitative research approaches tend to 'emphasise that there is a common reality on which people can agree'. This approach suited the study, as it provided data on how many young people like or dislike the police, allowing for a

comparison of opinion and age range. It also provides data collection on how many males have the same perception of the police as females, providing results that can be compared between gender. On the other hand, this approach does not provide data on behaviour and opinions. Therefore, there is no way to identify why young people have these specific perceptions with this methodological approach.

Qualitative Research

This type of approach is concerned with a phenomenon relating to quality (Kothari, 2004). It is based on discovering underlying motives and desires relating to human behaviour. This implies that qualitative research is based on identifying and assessing attitudes, behaviours, and opinions. According to Creswell (2014) qualitative approaches involve the collection of open-ended data. Therefore, this approach will suit the field of study as it will allow data collection of opinions and perceptions from the participants, as well as past experiences that they have had with the police. This would provide a reason why they perceive the police in a particular way. However, this approach will not allow data collection of figures. This will make it difficult to understand how many people like the police, compared to how many participants dislike the police. It would also make it difficult to compare age and gender of the participants against different perceptions, preventing the identifications of any themes that could occur between these factors.

Mixed Methods

Mixed methods research involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data in a study (Creswell, 2014). This approach incorporates the elements of both quantitative and qualitative approaches which could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research, rather than only using one approach. A mixed method

approach combines data collection of opinion, viewpoints, figures and analysis. Tashakkori & Creswell (2007) cited by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) defines a mixed method approach as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study. Therefore, both approaches can be combined together in order to create an exceptional in-depth study.

In order to close that gap between qualitative and quantitative research, a mixed method approach would allow for a mixture of data including figures and opinion. This approach suited the field of study more competently, rather than using one approach alone. This would then allow a more comprehensive and thorough study to take place. This research will be more beneficial and best answered using a mixed method approach.

Research Paradigm

It is important to identify the research paradigm before deciding on a research design. According to Blaikie and Priest (2017) the research paradigm provides the particular type of philosophical assumptions and particular logics of inquiry. This would allow the researchers to be fully aware of what the researcher is trying to do. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) supports this by stating that research paradigms are used to identify a philosophical way of thinking. This means that deciding which paradigm should not be taken lightly, and it is important to understand each paradigm before choosing one. Blaikie and Priest (2017) and Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) believe that the choice of the research paradigm should be conscious and justified as well as one that the researcher considers will provide the greatest likelihood of being able to answer the research question. Ergo, the paradigm was decided after gaining knowledge and

understanding of all of the paradigms. The paradigm guides the research and has significant implication for every decision made within the research process. It also reflects the researcher's beliefs about the world (Lather, 1986 cited in Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). The decision on which paradigm to use should be considered carefully.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1965) cited in Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) a research paradigm comprises of three elements, it is important to have a firm understanding of these as they comprise the basic assumptions, beliefs and norms that each paradigm holds. These are epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions. Creswell (2007) states that ontology is the nature of reality, epistemology is the knowledge of the researcher and axiology is the role of values in the research. Much like Creswell (2007), Killam (2013) defines ontology as the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality, referring to the study of existence about what is real or true and determine what can be known about reality. Ontology and epistemology are closely linked. Similarly, Killam (2013) states that epistemology examines the relationship between knowledge and the researcher during discovery. It refers to 'how we come to know what we know' (Killam, 2013:p8). Lastly, like Creswell (2007), Killam (2013) defines axiology as the nature of ethical behaviour. Axiology refers to what the research believes is valuable and ethical.

Positivism suggests that all phenomena should be understood through the employment of scientific method (Collins, 2010 and Kivunja and Kuyini 2017). This paradigm would not have suited the research as it is purely based on quantitative scientific research. This paradigm does not involve truth or reality, and only focuses on what works regarding the research question (Morgan,2014). After researching this paradigm it was decided that it would not suit the research as the research focuses on more than just the research question, it also focuses on human experience and

behaviour. Interpretivism also known as constructivism is typically associated with qualitative approaches where understanding is formed through participants and their subjective views (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018, Hallebone and Priest. 2019). This paradigm provides answers by using human experience instead of discovering answers from knowledge. Interpretivism does not aim to report on an objective reality, but rather to understand the world as it is experienced by human beings (Collins, 2010).

After researching the different paradigms, it was difficult to decide on which one to use as there were some overlap. After conducting more research on each paradigm, it was clear that Interpretivism would have been the most suitable paradigm to use for this research. This paradigm is concerned with human behaviour, opinions and experiences. Therefore, it was the best paradigm to use in order to understand young people's perceptions of the police and while creating an insight to why they have these perceptions.

Chosen Research Methods

Good research projects are based on good evidence. This is why research methods are important when conducting research (McNeil and Chapman, 2005). Choosing what research methods to use depends on what methodological approach is being used in the research. Due to this study being a mixed method approach, both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used.

After researching the available research methods, it has been decided that online surveys and unstructured online interviews were the best research methods to use.

They are both qualitative and quantitative methods and are the best methods to use during the current 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic, as they can both be conducted online.

Online Survey

A survey is a method of obtaining large amounts of data from a large number of people (McNeil and Chapman, 2005; Sue and Ritter, 2012). This research method usually takes the form of a self-completion questionnaire, where the participants will answer questions given to them by the researcher. However, advanced technology has allowed surveys to be taken online. Sue and Ritter (2012) state that the rapid development of technology has created new environments for conducting survey research. Therefore, surveys can be conducted and sent out online at low cost.

Surveys produce large amounts of statistical information quickly allowing comparisons to be made between different groups and populations (McNeil and Chapman, 2005; Evans and Mathur, 2005). This is a major advantage when conducting this study, as it provides comparisons between gender and age of the participants against their perceptions of the police.

There are many other strengths to using online surveys. Due to advanced technology, online surveys have a global reach (Evans and Mathur, 2005). This means that surveys can be completed by people who are even in different countries. Online surveys are very low in cost and are very quick. Online surveys also provide results that can be easily interpreted (Evans and Mathur, 2005; Sue and Ritter, 2012).

There are also some potential weaknesses to using this research method. Individuals often identify them as junk mail, making the response rate lower. There is very little participant and researcher communication, making answering instructions unclear

(Evans and Mathur, 2005). This would make it difficult for participants to know if they are answering the questions correctly.

This research method was chosen for the study as it allows a large sample of participants, allowing more data to be collected. It also allows the researcher to choose a sample of participants. This research method also allows comparison of results between gender and age, against young people's perceptions to see if there was a theme.

The survey consisted of multiple-choice questions with specification boxes for more information. The aim was to have 25-30 young people aged between 15 – 24 to answer the survey. However, 48 young people responded to the survey. This research method was appropriate as 99% of people aged 16 to 44 years have access to the internet in the UK (Office of National Statistics, 2019). Therefore, the sample was most likely to use the internet and have access to the online survey.

When making the survey, the age of the participants was considered. The participants will undoubtedly have a range of different intellectual capabilities, therefore the survey questions had to be worded carefully to ensure that all participants will understand. The participants age range was between 15 – 24, making it important that all participants can answer the questions effectively. The survey needed to be young people friendly, therefore it began with simple tick box questions. The survey then had question box answers towards the end, in order to get as much information from the participants as possible. It was important that the survey was easy to complete, as young people may not finish it, if it seemed like hard work.

The survey was created using an online survey programme to ensure it was accessible and sent to willing participants as a link through social media and text message. This

allowed them to go straight onto the survey anonymously. It was decided that the link needed to be accessible to all devices that have internet access. This includes phones, tablets, laptops and computers. This ensured that all participants could access the online survey and answer it at their earliest convenience. All surveys were included in the study and the results were placed into graphs using the online survey programme.

The results show that 100% of the sample were either male or female, despite other options being available. There was a greater number of females in the sample, than males. According to Curtin et al (2000); Moore and Tarnai, (2002) and Singer et al (2000) Cited by Smith (2008) young women are more likely to participate in online surveys than men. However, the process of sampling could also be the reason for a higher percentage of females within the participants. The participants are individuals that belong to local youth organisations, such as the Army Cadet Force, Cwmamman Youth Club and the Carmarthenshire Youth Justice Team, where there seems to be a higher percentage of females.

The results show that over 80% of the participants were aged 15 to 17 and 18 to 21. As stated in previously, it was important to gather research on participants between the ages of 15 and 24 years old because individuals between these ages are considered young people according to the United Nations (2020). Many other studies, such as Ramshaw et al (2008) only included individuals aged 11 to 16. Therefore, using individuals aged 15 to 24 in the study, would represent the population of young people more accurately. However, only 9 individuals (18.75%) aged 22 to 24 participated in the survey. Young people aged 22 to 24 often have work commitments, making them less likely to participate in local youth organisations. This suggests that

individuals aged 22 to 24 were not expected to respond as well as those that are younger.

Online Unstructured Interviews

According to Cassell and Symon (2004) interviews remain the most common method of data gathering in qualitative research. King and Horrocks (2010) support this by stating that undoubtedly, interviewing is the most common used method of data collection and has many advantages for researchers. The goal of any research interview is to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee and to understand why they have this particular perception (Cassell and Symon, 2004). Interviews allow researchers to get in-depth information from participants, which involve their experience, thoughts, and feelings. The relationship between the interviewee and interviewer is crucial to the method (King and Horrocks, 2010). If the interviewer is aggressive, the participant is less likely to feel comfortable answering the questions. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the participant feels comfortable and confident when answering the questions, to ensure the best chance of acquiring truthful responses.

There are many advantages of using interviews as a research method. Unstructured interviews are flexible, allowing the researcher to change the questions depending on how the interview is going. The ability to 'go deep' is perhaps the strongest argument in favour of interviewing (Lazar et al, 2010:p178). Interviews allow the researcher to explore in-depth information provided by the participants. Interviewees will provide answers at great length, generating evidence that would not be possible through surveys (Lazar et al, 2010). This will allow the researcher to gather qualitative information on human experience and perception.

However, there are also some disadvantages to using this research method. Interviews are particularly difficult to conduct compared to surveys. They require skill from the researcher (Lazar et al, 2010). Interviews are also limiting, as they take time, making it difficult to generate a large sample (Lazar et al, 2010). It would be more beneficial to conduct interviews with a relatively small sample. This would allow the researcher to gain as much information as possible from a smaller sample.

In a matter of very few years, the internet has consolidated itself as a powerful platform that has changed the way individuals communicate (James and Busher, 2009). This now allows researchers to conduct interviews online in real time. This means that researchers can interview participants from different locations. In order to conduct an online interview, it is more beneficial to conduct it through video chat. This would make the interview almost face to face in real time. This allows the researcher to also see the interviewee's facial expressions (Johnston, 2013).

This research method was chosen as it provided in-depth qualitative data along-side the online survey. This method allowed a comparison of data between the participants and the online survey, increasing the reliability of the research. This method also allowed information to be collected from a small sample of the participant's experiences and why they have their particular perceptions on the police. It was decided that 4 interviews would take place. Three with young people aged 14-24 and one interview with a qualified youth worker. This provided information on the young people's perceptions of the police and information on why the young people have these perceptions based on their experiences. The interview with the qualified youth worker provided information on how the young people react and respond to the presence of police officers as they often visit youth clubs in Carmarthenshire to see the young

people. After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed and used in the research.

The overall findings of this research were transcribed, and analysed, then descriptive and analytical coding was used to find any recurring themes. The results were then compared to existing research from other areas in the UK to identify similarities and differences of results. It was hoped that this study has provided information on how young people truly perceive the police in Carmarthenshire.

Participants

All participants were young people who live in the county of Carmarthenshire. During the study, it was hoped that young people from the local comprehensive school and other organisations such as young firefighter cadets and local youth clubs could take part in the study. But, due to the global pandemic, many organisations and schools were closed and were unable to respond. Thankfully, the participants were young people that belong to local youth organisations, such as the Army Cadet Force, Cwmamman Youth Club and the Carmarthenshire Youth Justice Team aged 15 - 24.

Ethical Issues

There are many ethical issues that had to be considered before and during this research project. Prior to carrying out this research project, an ethical approval form was submitted to University of Wales Trinity Saint David in order for any ethical issues to be assessed and reviewed before the research took place.

According to the United Nations (2020), young people are aged between 15 and 24 years old. Therefore, the participants were between these ages. It was ensured that all participants were kept anonymous during this study in order to protect their identity.

All participants involved were volunteers who wanted to take part in the study. They were also aware that they could withdraw at any time. An email address was provided in case participants wished to withdraw. All participants under the age of 16 would only take part with parent's or guardian's consent.

In order to provide complete protection, a qualified and experienced youth worker was present during the online interviews. This would provide further protection if any problems or issues were to arise. If any participant was to show any signs of distress during the research, it would have stopped immediately. The safety and welfare of the participants was paramount.

All information obtained was stored on a personal, password protected laptop. Which was only accessible by the researcher. If any information that was to be leaked or lost then IT Services, the participants and the research supervisor would have been informed. In worst case scenarios, the police would have also been called. There were protocols put in place to protect the participants. Thankfully, during this study they were not used.

All data will be destroyed 12 months after the research project is submitted in case of review or query.

Research Limitations

During the time this research project was started, there was a global pandemic due to the Coronavirus (Covid-19). Therefore, it made it difficult to conduct research during lockdown. All contact had to be conducted online to ensure that there was no contact between any individuals involved to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Luckily, the research methods chosen were appropriate to use online. This however did make it difficult to gather information from participants of varied ages, as it was impossible to

seek younger participants through schools or youth clubs. It is hoped that the information that was gathered is sufficient to identify themes and patterns in the research.

Chapter 4 – Results and Analysis

Summary

The overall aim of this research was to evaluate young people's perception of the police in Carmarthenshire. The results indicate that some young people have a difficult relationship with the police, however the relationship between young people and the police in Carmarthenshire is overall positive. The study demonstrates that the strain in the relationship between both young people and the police can cause an overall negative perception. The data also suggests that young people's perceptions are easily influenced by the media, friendship groups and a single traumatic experience with the police. The research results also confirm clear similarities and differences between research carried out during the literature review chapter.

Findings and Interpretations

There were many themes that occurred during the research. These themes interpret young people's perceptions of the police, and why they have these specific attitudes. These include experience, authority, community safety, and emotions.

Experience

Do you believe that the police treat people fairly in your area?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0

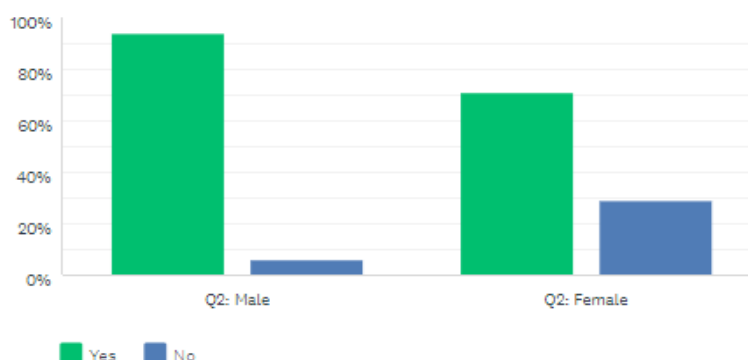


Figure 1: 'Survey Results on how young people are treated in their area'.

When the young people were asked 'Do you believe that the police treat people fairly in your area?' overall, 79% responded positively. However, 21% said no. When placed into gender classification, 29% of females believed that the police do not treat people fairly in their area and 6% of males felt the same. When broken down into age group, 35% of individuals aged 18 to 21 believe that the police do not treat people fairly. The recurring explanation was due to '*the police targeting people*' and '*the police stop and search people for no reason*'.

This question was important to identify any underlying causes to why young people like or dislike the police. It was evident in the literature review, that if the police treat young people fairly, then the individual is more likely to have trust and confidence within the police (Jackson and Bradford, 2010; Myhill and Beak, 2008). This would result in a positive perception. The results in *figure 1* suggest that the participants do not believe that the police treat people fairly because they 'target people'. These results are supported by the study conducted by Gleeson (2018) stating that young people often feel like they are targeted by the police due to their age. They are often stereotyped as suspects. The results of this research are also similar to Clayman and Skinns' (2012) results, confirming that young people feel that they are often stopped and searched by the police for no reason.

Interviewee 2 stated that '*young people often get stopped and spoken to by the police... from experience they stop and search you for no reason*'. This is additional evidence that young people often get stopped by the police for no reason.

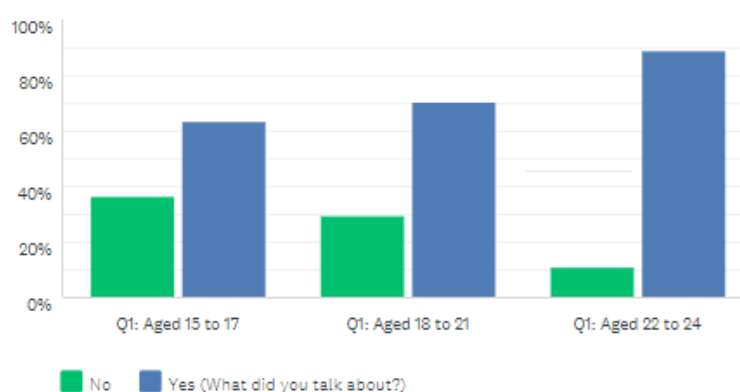
Overall, 79% of young people during the survey believe that the police treat people fairly in their area. This is not surprising, as the area is small a close-knit community. Skelton and Valentine (1998:p253) claim that young people have a sense of

'Territoriality' which can be 'best understood as a spatial strategy to effect, influence or control resources and people by controlling the area'. This causes young people to stay in their local areas as a 'safe space' rather than moving outside. This suggests that individuals find comfort when staying in their local areas, as everyone is known by one another. They do not like to leave, especially if they are ethnic minority due to racist violence, or if they belong to different gangs. This suggests that the young people who are living in a close knit community, like the participants in the study, are more likely to have a positive perception of the police, as the police keep the community safe and they are well known by young people. Cities have many small communities, that due to territoriality can result in higher volumes of violence as it is easier for young people to cross borders between communities. This would result in a higher police attendance causing friction between both the police and young people involved. Results in this study show that young people are less likely to have or develop a negative perception towards the police in rural areas.

Figure 2: 'Survey Results on whether young people have had contact with police officers'.

Have you ever spoken to a police officer?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



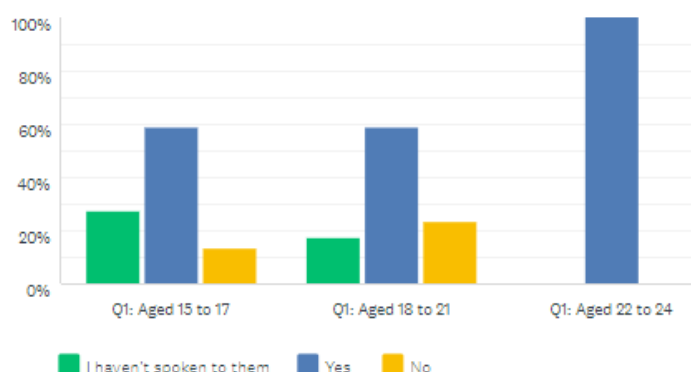
These results show that majority of individuals aged 22 to 24 have spoken to a police officer. 89% of 22 to 24-year olds, 71% of 18 to 21-year olds and 64% of 15 to 17-year olds have spoken to a police officer in the past. However, when broken down into gender the results are very similar. 70.59% of males and 70.97% of females have spoken to the police before. The young people were then asked, 'What did you talk about?'. The majority of the respondents answered with '*A friendly chat*' and '*they came to my school to educate us on drugs and county lines*'.

It was important to establish how the young people felt when talking to the police officers, therefore the question 'Did you feel comfortable talking to them?' was asked.

Figure 3: 'Survey Results on whether the young people felt comfortable when in contact with the police.'

Did you feel comfortable talking to them?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



These results show that individuals who are aged 22 to 24 were 100% comfortable talking to the police. Whereas, 14% of young people aged 15 to 17 and 24% of young people aged 18 to 21 did not feel comfortable talking to the police. Those that felt comfortable talking to the police said that it was because '*the police were very nice and professional*' and '*the safety of their community was their top priority*'

On the other hand, those that felt uncomfortable said that it was because they '*felt intimidated*' and '*made to feel like a criminal*'.

There was very little difference between male and female responses.

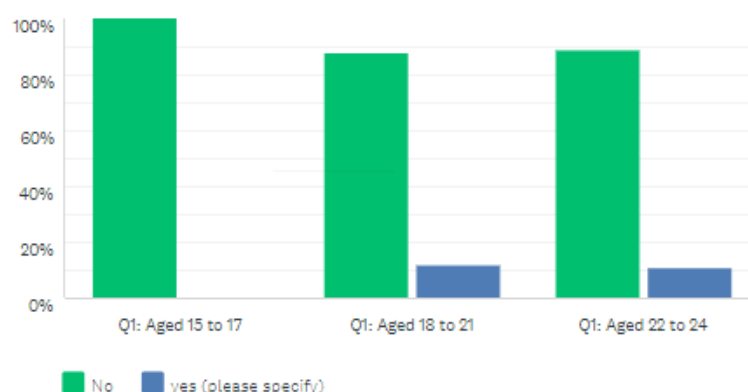
These results show that majority of the participants that have spoken to the police have been comfortable doing so, which in turn would increase their confidence in the police. Evidence suggests that confidence in the police can be impacted by people's satisfaction, and if young people do not have pleasant encounter with the police, they are more likely to have negative attitudes towards them (Myhill and Beak, 2008). The survey results show that most of the participants that have spoken to the police have had a positive experience, suggesting that they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards them. 100% of individuals aged 22 to 24 were comfortable talking to the police. This could be due to having more experience with the police, or more confidence due to them being older. As stated in the literature review, Jackson and Bradford (2010) claim that confidence will provide public cooperation resulting in a stronger relationship between young people and the police.

During an online interview with a qualified youth worker, the interviewee stated that police officers and PCSO's often interact with young people at the local youth centre and *'the young people enjoy their company'* and they *'get excited when they see the local police'*. This suggests that the young people are comfortable talking to local police officers and that there is a good relationship between the young people and the police. This is evidence that Jackson and Bradford (2010) are essentially correct. Comfort and confidence can result in a positive relationship.

Figure 4: 'Survey Results on history with the police'.

Have you ever been in trouble with the police before?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



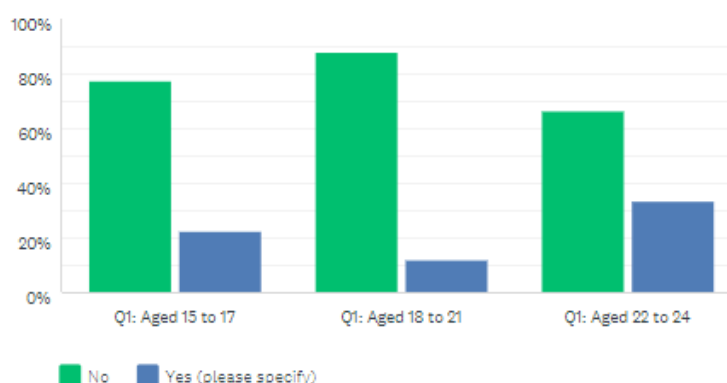
When asked this question, the graph shows that only 6% of the overall participants confirmed that they had been in trouble with the police in the past. When broken down into age group, only 12% of aged 18 to 21-year olds and 11% of aged 22 to 24-year olds have been in trouble with the police. Their specifications were '*getting into a fight*', '*being in a party that got shut down*' and '*fighting on the football pitch resulting in being charged with ABH*'.

In order to gain more information on young people's perception of the police, it was also important to see if they have every experienced help from the police as well as if they had never been in trouble before.

Figure 5: 'Survey Results on whether the participants have needed police assistance in the past'

Have you ever needed help from the police before?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



Overall, 79% of the participants have never needed help from the police before, and 21% who have. Figure 5 shows a breakdown of results by age. According to the graph 21% of young people aged 15 to 17 and 12% of young people aged 18 to 21 have needed help from the police. However, young people aged 22 to 24 have had the most participants needing help from the police at 33%. The young people specified their answers with '*bullying, fighting, missing persons*' and '*assault*'.

These questions are important to identify the experience young people have had with the police. As stated in previous chapters, Parliament (2014) states that the first contact with the police is important as it shapes young people's attitudes towards the police. The results in *figure 4* suggest that only 6% of individuals have been in trouble with the police. *Figure 5* states that only 21% of individuals have needed help from the police. This claims that there has been little contact between the young people and the police, while the police have been carrying out their duties. This means that it is less likely for the young people to have negative encounters with the police. During the online interviews, two participants had negative experiences with the police. Interviewee 2 stated that she had been wrongly arrested on suspicion of assault, when

it was her that got assaulted. During this time, she was told to '*shut up*' giving her an overall uncomfortable and negative experience. She since, has not liked the police. Interviewee 3 had a negative experience when he was attacked on a night out and was '*choked*' until he was '*unconscious*'. After defending himself, he was arrested and spent a night in a police cell. His experience made him '*feel small and scared*' which made him dislike the police all together. Sindall et al (2017) states that young people tend to have unfavourable attitudes towards the police if they have a negative experience. This means that having a traumatic experience will reflect in their perception of the police. The Police and Crime Commissioner Cambridge and Peterborough (2014) states that it will then take time and hard work to change their interrailed attitudes

On the other hand, positive experiences can cause positive attitudes to form. Interviewee 4 (qualified youth worker) states that she has had to have assistance from the police when working with young people. Many times, she has had to '*request support from the police to do welfare checks on young people*'. These interactions have always been helpful allowing young people to feel safe.

Authority

Authority can be seen negatively amongst young people. Police officers are authoritative figures in the community which can either reassure individuals or make them feel intimidated.

During the online survey, young people were asked 'Do you think that police officers are approachable in your community?'.

When asked this question, almost all participants believed that the police officers in their community are approachable. However, some did also feel intimidated by them.

Individuals aged 15 to 17 said:

'yes, they are calm, friendly to talk to and always willing to help' and 'although they do seem intimidating and authoritative, I know I could approach them if I had an issue'.

Individuals aged 18 to 21 said *'yes, they are very friendly and easy to approach'* and *'no, they are too intimidating'*. Lastly, the participants aged 22 to 24 said that *'Yes, they are very approachable and always focus on community policing'*.

These results show that although the majority of participants believe that the police are approachable, some individuals aged 15 to 21 see them as intimidating.

Results from the online interviews suggest that the police are not approachable because *'they may seem intimidating'* to young people and it is hard to gain trust as they *'hold so much authority'*.

Interviewee 2 states that she does like the police, but there are some police officers that are *'only there for power'* and they can *'let the power get to their heads'*. Similarly, Interviewee 3 states that *'there are a lot of stories about them abusing their power online'*.

Another question that was asked to the young people during the online survey was *'How do you feel about the police?'*. This question is compatible with this theme due to the responses given by the participants.

When the young people were asked this question, there were many different responses. The majority of individuals had positive views of the police, many of the

individuals suggest that the police are '*essential, good and allow them to feel safe and confident in their area*'.

However, one male individual said that:

'As a whole, I do not have any faith in nor do I trust the police, while I am reluctant to generalise, I feel there is too much abuse of power and corruption within the police, and I feel many police officers often use their power for personal gain'

One female also stated that '*I think the majority of them do a good job, it's just the dangerous few who are power hungry that make me dislike the police*'.

This question is important, as it can influence the way young people perceive the police.

According to Mayhill and Beak (2008) research suggests that individuals who view the police as legitimate are more likely to cooperate. Individuals that believe that the police are '*corrupt*' and '*power hungry*' are unlikely to believe that the police are legitimate, reducing trust, cooperation and confidence in the police. Those individuals that believe that the police are approachable and are doing a good job, are more likely to believe that they are legitimate, resulting in a positive perception.

As mentioned in the literature review, The Police and Crime Commissioner Cambridge and Peterborough (2014) claims that the police need to understand the views of young people can be difficult to change after a negative experience, therefore they must improve their treatment with them. If police officers are often seen as authoritative, intimidating, and abusing their power then they are less likely to build a positive relationship with young people, which would create a gap within the community. Butts

et al (2008) states that if a young person's perception of one police officer, can have a direct impact on the police as a whole. This suggests that poor experience with one police officer, can cause young people to dislike the police service all together.

Although the results suggest that the majority of young people in this study have positive perception of the police and find them very approachable, it is important to note that there are a select few that believe that police officers are seen as individuals that are corrupt and use their powers to their own advantage.

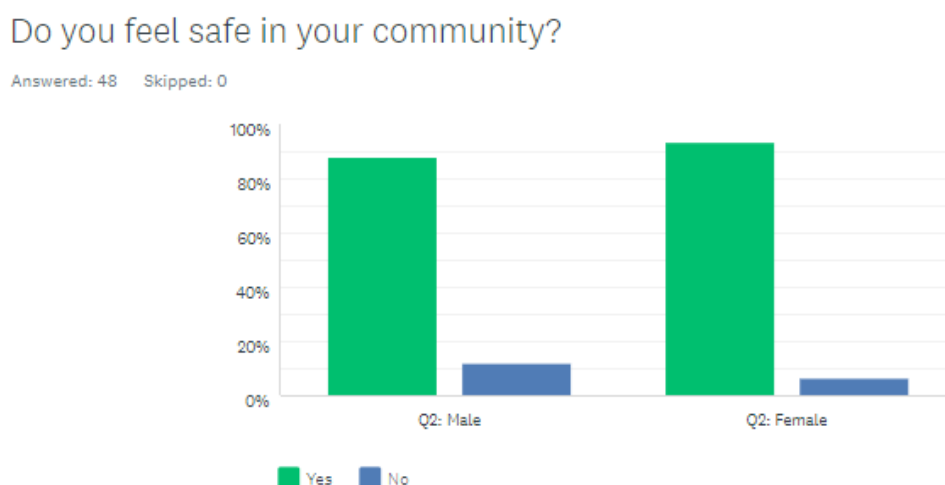
Ramshaw et al (2018) suggest that nationally, only half of young people hold a positive view of the police in England. However, the results of this research suggest that 90% of young people that participated, have got a positive perception of the police in Carmarthenshire.

Community Safety

Community policing

It was important to establish whether young people feel safe in their community as it could impact their decision on whether they like the police or not.

Figure 6: 'Survey Results on whether young people feel safe'.



The results on this question suggests that 92% of young people feel safe in their community, with 8% of individuals feeling unsafe. When investigating further, the results suggest that 88% of males feel safe in their community, with 12% feeling unsafe in their community. 94% of females believe that they feel safe in their community, with 6% feeling unsafe. When breaking the results down into age group, 75% of those individuals that answered 'no' are aged between 15 and 17.

The participants were also asked whether the police should be more involved in the community and only 15% believed that they should not. All other participants believed that if the police were more involved in the community as *'it would bring young people and the police together'*

Community policing allows young people to feel safe in their community. Cummings (2019) states that good community policing can increase young people's trust in the police and also improve their perception of the police. These results are supported by Morell's (2016) claim, that public confidence is a key aspect in policing resulting in good attitudes from young people.

Figure 6 shows that 92% of the participants feel safe in their community, suggesting that public confidence has a direct link to police effectiveness (Morell, 2016). According to the Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994) community policing was created to improve public safety. The results of this survey suggest that community policing works, allowing young people to feel safe in their communities and enhancing the quality of their lives. Additionally, Interviewee 1 stated that he likes the police *'because they keep the community safe'* and makes him feel *'secure'*. He also added that he knows that he *'could rely on them if needed'*. Interviewee 2 also suggested that police

officers '*are there to help people and look out for people*'. This implies that community policing and security improves young people's perception of the police.

Figure 6 also shows that young people aged 15 – 17 are more likely to feel unsafe compared to young people who are older. This is supported by Sindall et al (2017) who believes that young people are more likely to make use of public space. Those aged 15 – 17 are still in education, making them unlikely to drive or have any employment. Therefore, they are more likely to be making greater use of public space making them more vulnerable to crime than young people who are older. This could result in them feeling unsafe. Interviewee 3 claims that '

'Young people often hang around in public places in numbers, people always think the worst and report them for hanging around. The police then have to investigate and talk to them, ask them questions...young people do not like to get disturbed and just want to enjoy being out with their friends without being hounded by the police'

This could also make young people feel unsafe, as this study suggests that they are often reported by others in the community, resulting in an encounter by the police.

The survey results show that 85% of young people believe that the police should be more involved with young people in the community, as it would bring young people and the police together and reduce crime. Gleeson (2018), supports these results by stating that participants expressed a desire for a better relationship with the police. Hinds (2007) claims that young people who have a poor relationship with the police are less likely to report crime, therefore building a positive relationship could improve young people's perception of the police and allow them to feel comfortable when

reporting crime. Interviewee 4 (qualified youth worker) believes that the police should be more involved with young people in the community, she states that:

'if the police are more involved with the young people in the community, they will not just associate them for responding to trouble and crime but creating a more positive impression and interactions.'

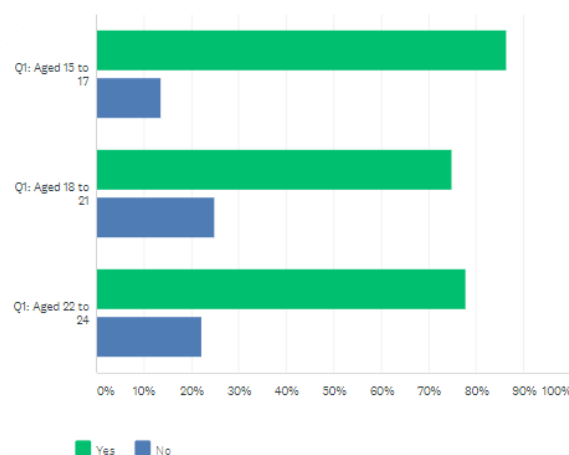
A better relationship with the police and the community would not only improve public perception, but allow young people to feel secure, resulting in more confidence to talk to the police and obey the law.

Emotions

After conducting the literature review, it was evident that emotions play a huge part in young people's perception of the police and police interaction. It was important to ask young people these questions in order to gain information based on their thoughts and feelings.

Figure 7: Survey Results on whether the participants would assist the police'.

Would you feel comfortable helping the police in order to catch a criminal?



When asked this question, most of the respondents said that they would assist the police in order to '*help make the community safer*'. Figure 7 shows that 14% of 15 to 17-year olds, 25% of 18 to 21-year olds and 22% of 22 to 24-year olds said that they would not assist the police because they were '*too scared*' or they '*would be known as a snitch*'

Figure 7 states that over half of all age groups would feel comfortable helping the police to report crime in order to make the community safer. Myhill and Beak (2008) believe that if young people have trust and confidence in the police, they will be more likely to assist the police when responding to crime. These results are supported by this claim. It has been established that the young people feel safe in their community, due to trust and confidence in the police. Figure 7 results suggest that they are willing to assist the police in order to catch a criminal.

However, similarly to Ramshaw et al (2018) figure 7 shows that 14% of 15 to 17-year olds, 25% of 18 to 21-year olds and 22% of 22 to 24-year olds suggest that they are uncomfortable assisting the police. If they feel like they cannot assist the police, then they are less likely to report crime at all.

Their main response was that '*they would be known as a snitch*'. This response is supported by the study created by Clayman and Skinns (2012) where young people are afraid to talk to the police in-case they are branded with the term snitch.

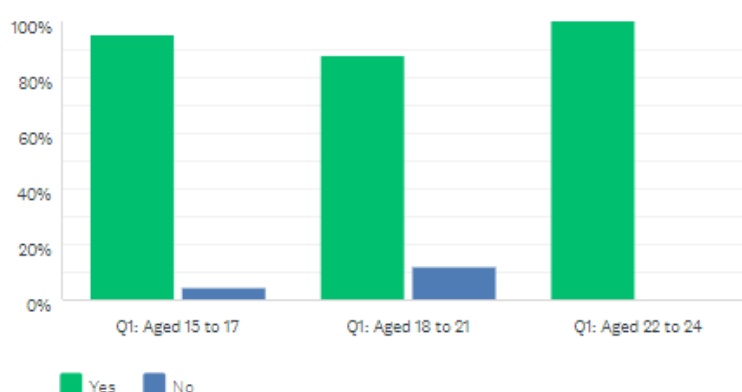
A minority of the participants in this study believe that it can be dangerous to assist the police because it could have negative repercussions against them from their social group. Interviewee 4 (qualified youth worker) also supports this claim suggesting that there is a '*don't snitch culture*' amongst young people that can result in issues in their social lives. However, she also suggests that young people understand that '*the police*

are here to enforce law and protect the community', therefore without the help of young people, the police are less likely to keep the community safe. Although the results are similar to Clayman and Skinns (2012) claim to snitching, the results show that the young people are more likely to help the police catch a criminal, than be fearful of snitching.

Figure 8: Survey Results on whether the participants would report a crime'.

Would you report a crime to the police?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 0



According to figure 8, the majority of the participants are happy to report a crime. Only 5% of young people aged between 15 to 17 and 12% of young people aged 18 to 21 would not report a crime as they believe that *'it is up to the police to catch criminals'* and that it is not their *'responsibility'*. However, those who said that they would be happy to report a crime said it was *'the right thing to do'* and to *'prevent it from happening again'*. However, the most popular response to both was *'it depends on the severity of the crime'*.

Figure 8 states that only a minority of individuals would not report crime to the police. This suggests that they have trust and confidence in the police and believe that reporting crime is the right thing to do. Gleeson (2018) agrees with this by suggesting that young people are encouraged to be more respectful of the police and law if they have also been shown some measure of respect from the police themselves. It has

already been established that the young people support the police, therefore it will make them more likely to report crimes themselves. Jackson and Bradford (2010) also supports these results by suggesting that young people will actively participate and cooperate with the police, as well as comply with the law if they have confidence in the police. Interviewee 4 (qualified youth worker) also states that

'If the relationship is positive [between the police and young people], then they are more likely to assist the police as well as report crime. They are also more likely to reach out for help and support if they require it'.

It is also important to note that individuals aged 22 – 24 in the survey are 100% happy to report crime to the police. This could be due to their age. They could have more confidence to report crime, than those who are younger.

Influence

There are many influences that can cause young people's attitudes towards the police to change. Media, friends, and family are the main influences identified in this study.

Media

The participants were asked if they believe that the media, music or social networking sites can change young people's attitudes towards the police.

The answers to this question were very similar to all age groups. The majority of the participants said that social networking and the media can negatively influence young people's attitudes towards the police. Individuals aged 15 to 17 said that *'although personal experiences have been good, the media portray the police system as badly flawed'* and they also said that *'other countries have had bad experiences with the*

police. Especially America with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Campaign, which makes people think that all police officers are the same',

Similarly, individuals aged 18 to 21 stated that *'young people always have negative views of the police because they always listen to social media',*

Lastly, young people aged 22 to 24 suggested that *'the media was full of news about George Floyd, making everyone think that all police officers treat white people, different to black people, even though our countries are completely different.*

Those that do not believe that the media, music or social networking sites can influence their own perception of the police said that it does have an effect on other young people. The effect on music was not mentioned.

All responses to this question were very similar. All participants believed that the media could influence the attitudes of the police amongst young people. Young people often see media coverage on incidents in other countries, making them dislike the police all together. These results uphold the claim made by Leishman and Mason (2003), where media can have a harmful impact on public perceptions of the police and levels of confidence in them. The media are able to capture malpractice and wrongdoings in the organisation, highlighting it for the world to see.

Interviewee 3 states that:

'young people often see stories of police brutality on social media, especially in America. This makes young people think that the all police officers are going to be the same here. So, it makes many young people scared or hate the police'.

These results support the idea that the media could be the leading influence on young people's perception of the police. Young people tend to use social media more than

those who are older, making it more influential. It is clear that young people's attitudes can be easily changed once they see negative coverage of the police, regardless if it's British or not.

Friends

In order to identify whether young people's attitudes on the police are influenced by their friends, the participants were asked 'How do your friends feel about the police?'. The most popular answer to this question was '*they have the same opinion as me*'. Many stated that they have had positive experiences with the police. However, some individuals stated that they have a mixture of different friendship groups, where some like the police and others do not. One individual stated, '*My group of friends have always been quite sensible, and they too know that police are always there to help as much as they can*'. However, in contrast to this, one individual stated that '*unlike me, my friends really do not like the police. They like to do drugs and do not want to get caught*'.

In addition to this, Interviewee 2 claims that:

'young people's perceptions can be changed through stories that other people have told them. Like, after I was arrested a lot of my friend's opinions changed, and they didn't like the police anymore'.

This suggests that young people often get influenced by their friendship group through experience as well as opinion. Interviewee 3 also states that:

'Young people like to share stories and experiences, once one person tells them about a bad experience, they all believe it, and all hate the police. It's almost like they are defending their friends by not liking the police for them'.

Davis et al (2003) supports these results, by suggesting that individuals whose family and friends have had a negative experience with the police are more likely to have a

poor perception of the police. This shows that young people learn from other people's experience and tend to change their perceptions depending on how the experience went. This also shows that young people are often easily influenced by their friends.

Parent(s)/guardian(s)

According to The Police and Crime Commissioner Cambridge and Peterborough (2014) negative encounters between the police and young people are hard to change, which can then be passed on from one generation to the next. This means that young people often have the same opinion of the police as their parents and guardians. To see whether this statement was true for young people living in Carmarthenshire the participants in the online survey were asked 'How do your parents(s) or guardian(s) feel about the police?'.

When asked this question, the majority of the young people stated that their parents liked the police and that *'they have the same view as me, they are grateful for the police'*.

However, the most popular answer was *'I don't know, we have never spoken about it'*. Although the claim given by The Police and Crime Commissioner Cambridge and Peterborough (2014) was somewhat reliable, as many individuals said that their parents *'had the same opinion'* as them, the majority of the participants stated that they did not know. Therefore, their perceptions could not have been influenced by their parents. As stated previously, there is evidence to suggest that individuals whose family have had negative contact with the police also had less confidence in the police (Davis et al, 2003). However, the results are not directly supported by this, but this could be due to the fact that there have been little negative encounters made by the police towards the participants family.

Conclusion

It is clear that the results do agree with previous research, particularly with previous experience. Young people can easily be influenced by negative interactions with the police, which can shape their attitudes, resulting in negative perceptions. However, the results suggest that young people in Carmarthenshire have an overall positive perception of the police and are more likely to report crime and assist the police during investigations. This shows that young people in this area have more confidence in the police compared to those in previous studies. This could be due to policing styles that differ between forces, even though policing policies in England and Wales should remain the same. The results claim that those who live in rural areas in England and Wales are generally more likely to have positive perceptions of the police.

The results of this study suggest that there are very slight differences between gender. However, there are bigger results between age groups. Young people between the ages of 15 and 21 are more likely to have negative perceptions towards the police than those aged 22 and 24. This is due to fear, experience and greater use of public space. Those who are aged 22 and 24 are more likely to assist the police and report crime. It is also clear that influences such as the media, friends and family can cause a major impact in young people's perception of the police.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

The main aim of this dissertation was to evaluate young people's perception of the police in Carmarthenshire. It is evident that based on the quantitative and qualitative research analysis, the overall perception is positive. It can be concluded that young people in Carmarthenshire have trust and confidence in their local police force. These results indicate that the young people living in Carmarthenshire find police officers in their area approachable and they are comfortable assisting the police and reporting crime.

After conducting the literature review, it seemed likely that the young people in this study would have unfavourable perceptions on the police. However, the results changed the researcher's expectations. Unlike the other research studies on this topic, young people in Carmarthenshire have an overall positive perception on the police. After researching previous studies on this topic, it was evident that there were influences that could cause young people's attitudes to change towards the police. These include past experiences with the police, the media, and family/friends. The results of the study illustrate that these factors can dramatically influence young people's perception of the police. Negative encounters with the police was found to have the most effect. The results show that young people tend to base their perceptions on whether they have had a positive or negative encounter with the police. Once they have created that view; it is very difficult to change their minds. The police should focus on ensuring that all young people have a positive experience, to prevent them from feeling scared, stereotyped, and mistreated, resulting in a poor perception. This research was conducted with quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to gain as much in-depth knowledge and information as possible on young people's thoughts and feelings on their local police force. It was decided that using a

mixed method approach would be beneficial to this study as it would allow the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research. This allowed a thorough study to take place, rather than just using one method alone.

The methods in this research were able to answer the research question effectively, while also identifying influences that can cause negative attitudes in young people towards the police. The research methods that were chosen were effective, as it allowed young people to take part in the research from the comfort of their own home. The participants were able to take part in the research safely, without having to have direct contact with the researcher or other participants. This was very important due to the global pandemic. The methods were also effective as it allowed young people to express how they feel about the police without the pressure of being judged or getting into trouble. This allowed the young people to express their thoughts and feelings towards the police freely, which provided honest results. The research methods were also effective as they were adaptable. The age of the participants was considered, allowing all questions to be worded carefully, as young people have a range different intellectual capability. This ensured that all participants understood each question before answering.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that police identify any problematic issues that can cause young people's perception to be influenced. The police should implement better strategies that can be used amongst young people in order to prevent them from feeling intimidated, scared and traumatised when dealing with the police. This will then prevent young people's attitudes to be shaped by negative encounters with the police.

The overall results did not only exceed the expectations of the study, but they also raise the questions on what procedures are in place for the police to consider when dealing with young people and would these change young people's perceptions. The results show that young people can often feel scared and intimidated by the police, especially if they have had a negative experience in the past. Therefore, the police should consider using a different approach towards young people, rather than using the same approach as adults.

The research conducted in this study identified issues that young people face when coming into contact with the police. It provides a better understanding on why young people can have a negative perception on the police. This research addressed the causal factors on young people's perception of the police. It also identified that perceptions between age and gender can differ. For example, individuals aged 22 to 24 are more confident talking to the police than those who are younger.

Limitations

The overall research methods were very successful as they were able to provide good quality primary research. However, doing the research online did not provide the quality interaction between researcher and participant. Due to COVID-19 it was impossible to do face to face research. Face to face research could have provided a better insight to how young people felt about the police without the nerves of talking through a computer screen during the interviews. Creating a research project during a global pandemic made it difficult to gain a representative sample of young people. It was difficult to get in touch with organisations that work with young people due to them being closed. This resulted in a sample containing more females and those aged 15

to 21. If this research was conducted in a more appropriate time, it would have been easier to gain a more representative sample, allowing the results to be more reliable. Although the limitations may have impacted the study, it was beyond the scope of this study to address the question of young people's perception of the police in Carmarthenshire.

Recommendations

Further research is needed to establish young people's perception of the police in rural areas such as Carmarthenshire, to see if there are more differences compared to those who live in busy cities such as London.

To improve the understanding and implications of these results, future studies could consider police involvement and address the issues implemented by the police that can cause young people's perceptions to be influenced. These studies could be conducted within the police force to discover whether there are any policies or procedures in place for young people and to identify whether they are affective or not. Further research could also be addressed to better understand how relationships such as family and friends as well as the media can affect young people's perception of the police. Lastly, research could also be conducted to see whether there are ways to change young people's integrated perceptions to more positive opinions.

Appendix

Online Survey

Young People's Perception of the Police in Carmarthenshire

Welcome to my online survey!

I am currently doing a Masters in criminal justice and Policing at University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and I need your help to carry out my dissertation.

I am interested in understanding how young people feel about the police. To do this, you will be asked to answer some questions about your feelings towards the police and what experiences you have had. Your responses will be kept completely confidential. I will not ask for your name and I will not know whose answers are who's.

The questionnaire should take you around 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study. The author of this study can be contacted at mmatthews.150004@student.uwtsd.ac.uk.

By conducting this survey, you acknowledge:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.
- You are aged between 15 and 24.
- If you are under the age of 16, you have asked for consent from your parent(s) or guardian(s).
- You are aware that you may choose to stop your participation at any time for any reason.
- PLEASE ANSWER HONESTLY

1. How old are you?

- ☐ Aged 15 to 17
- ☐ Aged 18 to 21
- ☐ Aged 22 to 24

2. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Gender Neutral
- ☐ Other (please specify)

3. What do you think the police are there for?

- ☐ To protect people and their property, keep people safe and make sure that people are following the law by catching criminals
- ☐ To do what they want and arrest whoever they want
- ☐ I don't know

4. Do you believe that the police treat people fairly in your area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Tell me why?

5. Do you see many police officers in your area?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ A moderate amount
- ☐ A little
- ☐ None at all

6. Do you feel safe in your community?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why do you feel this way?

7. Do you think that young people often commit crimes?

- ☐ All of the time
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

8. Do you know what a criminal is?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (What do you think it is?)

9. Do you know what a victim is?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (What do you think it is?)

10. Do you believe that police officers should be more involved with young people and the community?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Why do you think this?

11. Have you ever spoken to a police officer?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (What did you talk about?)

12. Did you feel comfortable talking to them?

- ☐ I haven't spoken to them
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why did you feel this way?

13. Have you ever been in trouble with the police before?

- ☐ No
- ☐ yes (please specify)

14. Have you ever needed help from the police before?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes (please specify)

15. Would you feel comfortable helping the police in order to catch a criminal?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please tell me why?

16. Would you report a crime to the police?

- ☐ Yes

☐ No

Please tell me why?



17. Have you ever been involved in a youth project or any other work with the police?

☐ No

☐ Yes (please specify)



18. Do you feel that the media, music or social networking sites change your attitudes towards the police? (please specify)



19. Do you think that police officers are approachable in your community? (please specify your answer)



20. Taking everything into account, how good of a job do you think the police in this area are doing?



21. How do you feel about the police?



22. How do your parent(s) or guardian(s) feel about the police?



23. How do your siblings feel about the police?

24. How do your friends feel about the police?

Online Interview Transcripts

Interview 1

(Male aged 20)

Researcher - Do you like the police?

Participant – Yes, I like the police because they keep the community safe and also make me as a regular person feel secure. I know that I could rely on them if I needed any help.

Researcher - Do you think that young people have a difficult relationship with the police? Why?

Participant – I do believe that young people have had a difficult relationship, which could be down to not enough education about the police. The police do not seem as approachable to young people as they may be to older generations.

Researcher – Why don't you think that the police are as approachable to young people?

Participant – I think it's because they may seem intimidating and there are not enough younger police officers in this area. If they are a closer age to young people, then they might seem more approachable.

Researcher - Have you had any experience with the police?

Participant – I personally haven't had an experience with the police but I believe that if I did, then it wouldn't be a bad experience. They seem friendly.

Researcher - Do you believe that young people often get influenced by their friends that can change their perception of the police?

Participant – Young people definitely get influenced by their friends which may change the perception they have on the police.

Researcher – Why do you think that young people get influenced by their friends?

Participant – I think its because everyone has different experiences with the police and young people can get very easily influenced by their friends. If their friends say that they do not like the police, then it could convince someone else not to like them too.

Researcher - **Why do you think that young people often dislike the police?**

Participant – I believe that there is a gap between young people and police, which is why they many do not seem as trustworthy to younger people. The police do not interact with young people enough to begin to bridge that gap. It is hard to gain trust from young people, especially from the police because they hold so much authority.

Interview 2

(Female age 18)

Researcher - **Do you like the police?**

Participant – I do like the police; I think majority of police officers are there to help people and to look out for people.

Researcher – you said that majority of police officers are there to help, why not all police officers?

Participant – From experience, some police officers are not as nice as others, which makes me think that they are only there for power.

Researcher - **Do you think that young people have a difficult relationship with the police? Why?**

Participant – Yes, I think that young people sometimes have problems with the police because one issue with one officer can make young people have a set opinion that all police officers are bad. Though word of mouth, people hear about a story and it goes on like that if that makes sense.

Researcher – Do you believe that young people often dislike the police from one bad experience? And this then causes more young people do dislike the police because they have heard what has happened?

Participant – Yes, exactly. One bad experience can cause lots of young people to dislike the police.

Researcher - **Have you had any experience with the police?**

Participant – Yes, I was arrested once on suspicion of assault when it was the other way around. I was told to 'shut up' when I tried to voice my side of the story, and when I tried to explain that it was me that actually got hit first.

Researcher – How did this make you feel?

Participant – I felt uncomfortable with the one officer that was speaking to me, he made it out that I'd never get a job after that night and said that id never get into university. There was also another police officer there that was very nice to me, and he was telling me that everything was going to be ok. I think he could see that I was scared and uncomfortable. I feel like some police officers can let the power get to their heads.

Researcher - **Do you believe that young people often get influenced by their friends that can change their perception of the police?**

Participant – yes, young people's perceptions can be changed through stories that other people have told them. Like, after I was arrested a lot of my friend's opinions changed, and they didn't like the police anymore.

Researcher - **Why do you think that young people often dislike the police?**

Participant – I think that young people do not like the police because they always get stopped and questioned when they are out. Especially when they are out drinking together. I know it is the police's right to stop them, because underage drinking is illegal. But it then makes young people dislike them because they take away their alcohol. I think young people often get spoken to by the police because they are always out in public areas in groups. But from experience, it makes you feel like a criminal when they stop you, even if you are not doing anything wrong. One bad experience will make everyone dislike the police.

Interview 3
(Male age 23)

Researcher - **Do you like the police?**

Participant – I don't really like the police because I have a bad experience with them before. Yes, they do a good job sometimes, but you also hear a lot of stories about them abusing their powers.

Researcher - **Do you think that young people have a difficult relationship with the police? Why?**

Participant – Yes, because young people often see stories of police brutality on social media, especially in America. This makes young people think that the all police officers are going to be the same here. So, it makes many young people scared of hate the police. I also think that young people have a difficult relationship with the police because the police often assume things. They assume that young people are up to something illegal when they are not doing anything wrong. This happened to me before. The police thought that I had been in trouble for drugs before because I was young. But I don't do drugs and I've never been in trouble for them either.

Researcher - **Have you had any experience with the police?**

Participant - Yes, I was attacked on a night out and I was choked until I was unconscious. When I woke up, I was attacked again but managed to push the person off me. The police

could see I was defending myself and I was still arrested. They put me in a cell overnight. In the morning they didn't give me a call to let my parents know I was safe until late that day, then released me late that night!

Researcher – How did this make you feel?

Participant – It made me feel small and a little scared. They treated me like a criminal when I was clearly the victim. I was upset and angry at the time, and this has made me dislike them all together.

Researcher - **Do you believe that young people often get influenced by their friends that can change their perception of the police?**

Participant – Yes, young people are very easily influenced these days, especially with social media. They see one video of police brutality and hate all the police for something just one bad officer has done! Young people like to share stories and experiences, once one person tells them about a bad experience, they all believe it and all hate the police. It's almost like they are defending their friends by not liking the police for them.

Researcher - **Why do you think that young people often dislike the police?**

Participant – I think that young people don't like the police because they spend so much time with them. Young people often hang around in public places in numbers, people always think the worst and report them for hanging around. The police then have to investigate and talk to them, ask them questions and then often assume some may have drugs. Young people do not like to get disturbed and just want to enjoy being out with their friends without being hounded by the police.

Interview 4

(Qualified Youth Worker)

Researcher - **Do you think that young people have a difficult relationship with the police? Why?**

Participant – Yes, I believe that young people understand that police are here to enforce the law and protect the community therefore, when they see the police they may assume they are in trouble or have done something wrong. As well as this, there is a “don’t snitch” culture where young people don’t like to be seen talking to police or being associated with them in-case it causes more problems in their social lives.

Researcher – **While working with young people, have you ever experienced them talking to the police?**

Participant - In the local community, we have a good relationship with our PCSO's and officers. They often come down and visit our youth centre and the young people enjoy their company. They interact with the young people and try to get to know them, in turn the young people also do this with them. The young people like to ask questions about their roles, their equipment such as their hand cuffs and they even give them demonstrations. The young people get excited when they see the local police.

Researcher – **Have you ever needed assistance from the police when working with young people? Were they helpful?**

Participant - Yes - I have requested support from the police many times to do welfare checks on young people when I have been concerned and unable to reach them. They have been very helpful with this and have always ensured that young people are safe. We have also requested support from the police if we have had trouble or problems in the youth centre and they have been great. It gives us peace of mind that they are there to assist if we need them.

Researcher – **Do you think that the police should be more involved with young people in the community? Why?**

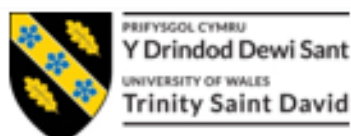
Participant – Yes, definitely. I think the police need to get to know the young people in their community and for the young people to get to know them. This relationship builds trust

between them making them more likely to assist the police and report crime. As well as this, if police are more involved with the young people in the community, they will not just associate them for responding to trouble and crime but creating a more positive impression and interactions.

Researcher – Do you think it's important that young people have a positive relationship with the police? Why?

Participant – Yes, Definitely. If the relationship is positive, then they are more likely to assist the police as well as report crime. they are also more likely to reach out for help and support if they require it.

Online Interview Consent Form



PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Young People's Perception of the Police in South West Wales

Name of Researcher: Megan Matthews

Please initial box

1	I understand that the participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	
2	I understand that any information given may be used in future reports, articles, or presentations by the research team.	
3	I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles, or presentations.	
4	I agree to take part in the above study.	
Name of Participant:		ANONYMOUS
Researcher:		Megan Wyn Matthews
Signature:		
Signature:		

Participants can end their involvement in the study at any time. Anonymity is a priority and will be through the duration of the study. Every precaution will be taken to hide identity. All materials generated from this study will remain confidential.

When completed one copy will be given to the participants and the original to be kept on the file.

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